Collaborative Feedback for Language Development in L2 Writing

Park, Eun
(Dankook University)

Park, Eun. “Collaborative Feedback for Language Development in L2 Writing.” Modern Studies in English Language & Literature 57.2 (2013): 281-305. This paper examines the aspects of collaborative feedback in a Korean EFL beginner writing context. In particular, the study aims at investigating how Korean EFL novice writers at college level are guided by and appropriate the teacher’s collaborative feedback for linguistic development in teacher-learner tutoring sessions. The theoretical framework of the study is Vygotsky’s socio-cultural theories of collaborative assistance. The results reveal that teacher’s corrective feedback functions as collaborative assistance for learners’ language performance from teacher-regulated to learner-regulated change co-constructing learners’ cognitive process within ZPD. In addition, teacher’s corrective feedback plays as collaborative assistance for learners to generalize the use of target-like linguistic forms better in subsequent writings from those appropriated in a previous context. (Dankook University)

Key Words: collaborative feedback, language development, ZPD

I. Introduction

Good command of productive English such as writing is an important tool for Korean EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners in college levels to be successfully involved in the society academically and socially. In this regard, for beginner writers in Korean EFL college contexts to improve target-like language, helpful moves by a more capable tutor will be necessary. In particular, when the help
from a capable partner is collaborative, it can contribute novice writers’ confidence and readiness in the use of more target-like language. Collaborative feedback in response to learner errors will be important intermediary and helpful moves in terms of promoting learners’ cognitive processes for target-like linguistic forms in L2 writing. According to Vygotsky (1978), with the guidance or collaboration by a more capable person, a child’s cognitive development proceeds to a higher level of competence within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This means, the process of human development including linguistic development is firstly initiated by social interaction between people and then into inside the individual. For example, in the process of collaborative dialogues with a teacher as a capable tutor, EFL beginner writers can appropriate and internalize the information or linguistic features they have used responding to collaborative feedback.

Considering the significant role of collaborative assistance and language used in interactive dialogues, the present study intends to address how language development arises within learners' ZPD as a result of collaborative feedback by teacher. Thus, both the changes in learners' language performance and ability to generalize what they appropriate will be dealt with to see the aspect of language development by learners following teacher’s collaborative moves.

Ⅱ. Literature Review

2.1 Sociocultural learning within ZPD

One of Vygotsky's central notions in relation to L2 linguistic processes