A Comparative Study of Argumentation Structure between Native and Non-Native Speakers of English

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I. INTRODUCTION

English as a *lingua franca* has created the need for Korean students to be competent in their ability to effectively interact in English. Considering the increase of English-medium lectures at Korean universities, the significance of active spoken participation has become an essential component for academic success (Murphy, 2005). The rise in English-medium lectures has placed pressure on students in Korea to show high proficiency in English (Eun-Ju Kim, 2002). To participate in such academic discourse, students need not only to possess linguistic knowledge but also to the accepted sociocultural rules and conversational norms (Hymes, 1972). Knowledge of a particular variety of English enables the individual to engage successfully in various areas academic and professional areas, including higher education, international relations, and business (McKay, 2005). A fundamental goal of higher education is for students to develop a critical attitude towards knowledge and enhance their ability to formulate and present well-grounded arguments. Argumentation as a genre has been studied extensively in the field of writing. There have been comparative studies that have shown the different features of writing produced by L2 and native English speakers' texts in terms of how their claims are presented (Ferris, 1994 Kubota, 1998; Wang, 2000). Studies on Korean students regarding the genre of argumentation have also been covered through Contrastive Rhetoric (CR) studies between L1 and L2 texts (Choi, 1988b; Kim, 2005; Wang, 2000). These studies found many differences in the rhetorical structure of the argumentative text. Generally, there have not been any studies that compare L1 and L2 spoken argumentation for Korean students learning English as their L2. The significance of communicating and participating within the classroom, however, is on the rise due to an increase of English medium lectures mentioned earlier. The genre of spoken argumentation is an important pragmatic skill key to academic success as well as other aspects of life in which valid

opinions or claims are made during spoken interaction. The aim of this research is to identify the pattern and content of the genre-specific argument strategies employed by non-native and native speakers of English when engaged in argumentation.

Ⅱ. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Theoretical background on spoken interaction

Spoken interaction requires not only the individual ability to talk but also encompasses the shared social activity of talking (Luoma, 2004, p.20). The interlocutors construct the process together and contribute to the resulting outcome of the interaction. Therefore, meaning is developed mutually by both the speaker and listener during spoken interaction through a system of turn-taking. The meaning is thus determined by the context and not pre-determined in advance. As a result, conversational styles differ among various people and societies.

Spoken argumentation is a genre that encompasses the significant theoretical components that make up spoken interaction. This genre requires competency beyond grammatical and linguistic competence. The interlocutors are faced with maneuvering through various challenges such as turn-taking, sociolinguistic and discourse competence. Such factors require the interlocutors to be aware of the social norms of the particular discourse community, as well as the distinct features that characterize argumentation. The overview of the underlying theoretical components making up spoken interaction reveals the challenges that L2 students face when interacting in English. Spoken argumentation has specific rhetorical features that need to be taught and recognized by the interlocutors in order for the interaction to proceed. The genre has characteristics that can ultimately motivate students beyond their extrinsic motivation to cultivate their intrinsic motivation. According to Brown (2001), learners have to deal with their intrinsic motivation when language is the medium used to convey information of interest and relevance to the learner. When the content is perceived to be relevant beyond basic non-language goals, feelings of competence and self-determination can result in an increase of intrinsic motivation (Deci, 1975). Topics for argumentation are frequently based on prevalent issues that impact our society today. Frequently, such topics result in strong opinions from individuals who engage in argumentation. The ability to freely express opinions and claims while interacting in L2 is academically challenging. However, this also highlights the need for more focused instruction enhancing not only Korean EFL students' linguistic ability but also their knowledge and awareness of the genre of argumentation.

3. Components of Argumentation

Argument is a term with different meanings in various contexts. When used as a type of interaction as in "A and B were arguing about their schedule conflict with C,"the term is focusing on what is taking place between the interlocutors rather than on the content of what is being said. For this study, the term argument will focus on the content of what is said. Therefore, argument in this sense is reflective in Warnick and Inch's 1989 definition of "a set of statements in which a claim is made, support is offered for it, and there is an attempt to influence someone" (p. 6). Arguments constitute one form of communication and are thus a genre that is recognizable by its rhetorical characteristics.

The main components characterizing an argument are claims and supports. Claims are expressed as an opinion or a statement that the arguer wants the opposing interlocutor to accept. The second feature of arguments is the statements, which support the claims. The evidence for the claims varies in how they are formed. Regardless of how they are stated, they always function as the base in which the argument begins. The final characteristic of arguments is that they are attempts on the part of the interlocutors to attempt in influencing the opposing interlocutor. The focus needs to be placed on the term 'attempts,'since there is the possibility of not succeeding. It is up to the opposing interlocutor whether or not to accept the expressed opinion of the interlocutor.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Research Questions

(1) What differences characterize the argumentation for NS and NNS at the macro-level in terms of content and structure?

    a. How do NS and NNS construct their arguments when stating claims, justification, and counter arguments?

(2) How does the micro-level analysis of NS and NNS argumentation differ in terms of sub-structures, language use, and manner of speech?

    a. What types of argument strategies are used by the NS and NNS dyads during argumentation?

(3) How do NS and NNS perceive argumentative discussions?

> a. To what extend does the students' willingness to participate' (WTC) play a role when engaged in L2 interaction?
>
> b. What types of argument strategies do the participants perceive to have used during the argumentation?

2. Participants

A total of 20 NNS and NS participants participated in this study. The NNS participants for the study consisted of 10 Korean graduate students majoring in English education. Their ages ranged from 23 to 28 years of age. The participants were grouped into dyads resulting in 5 NS dyads and 5 NNS dyads.

3. Design of Study

The pre-questionnaire obtained the participants'views of the pros and cons of internet censorship. The second step consisted of forming dyads by pairing the participants with opposing views together for both the native speakers and the non-native speakers. The researcher set up times lots for each dyad to audio record the argumentation on internet censorship. The recordings were transcribed by the researcher and reviewed by two English native speakers with a background in teaching debate to Korean secondary students. The transcribed data underwent analysis in terms of the utterance types of discourse skills related to argumentation. After the recording, the participants were individually interviewed on their self-perceived performance on having engaged in argumentation. The interviews were also recorded and transcribed. The post-questionnaire was given after the interviews took place.

3. Data Collection Procedures

1) Assignment of dyads

Within the NNS and NS groups, the students were assigned to dyads according to the positions that they have identified on the topic of internet censorship on the pre-questionnaire.

2) Utterance types for coding

The skills employed for argumentation, the utterance types can be distinguished by their effectiveness in argumentation. In coding the individual utterances, Felton and Kuhn's (2001, 2003) and Felton (2004)'s coding scheme for arguments were adapted for this study. The coding system that was used is shown below in **Table 1**.

Table 1Analytic Scheme for Coding Argumentation

Transactive Questions	
Case-?	A request for the partner to take a position on a particular case or scenario.
Clarify-?	**A request for the partner to take a position on a particular case or scenario.**
Position-?	A request for the partner to state his or her position on an issue.
Transactive statements:	
Add	An extension or elaboration of the partner's preceding utterance.
Clarify	A clarification of the speaker's own argument in response to the partner's preceding utterance.
Counter-C	A disagreement with the partner's preceding utterance, accompanied by a critique.
Disagree	A simple disagreement without further argument or elaboration.
Interpret	A paraphrase of the partner's preceding utterance with or without further elaboration.
Nontransactive statement:	
Unconnected	An utterance having no apparent connection to the preceding utterances of either partner or speaker.

Ⅳ. FINDINGS

1. Preliminary results and discussion

For the genre of argumentation, this study found that the rhetorical structure of the genre of argumentation needs to be taught to NNS students learning English as their L2. The basic components that make up arguments such as claims, supports, and counter-claims can be taught alongside the more traditional forms of English pedagogy, such as vocabulary and grammar. First and foremost, students need to become familiarized with the ability to determine an argument from other statements. From the analysis, there were numerous statements made that were unconnected to the preceding utterance or to the arguments being presented. The characteristic features of argument, which include putting forth a claim, offering support for the claim and making an attempt to influence someone, were features that most Korean students were not aware of. Though they knew that their role and viewpoint within the discussion would require them to get their claims accepted, the students did not

seem to know how to go about carrying for the their arguments in a strategic manner. For example, in terms of questioning the opposing interlocutor, the NS group used questioning as a device to further emphasize their claim and even undermine the claims or support stated previously. The NNS group, on the other hand, was unable to advance their claims beyond the basics of stating the particular claim. In order to effectively use their knowledge on the particular topic to produce counter-claims and evidence against the opposing interlocutor, L2 learners need to be aware of both the pro and con of the situation.

In terms of WTC, argumentation is a genre with possibilities in evoking the motivation of L2 learners in communicating in English. There are numerous topics used for teaching debate for both L1 and L2 learners of English. Having learners choose topics upon which they personally have a strong opinion will allow for learners to use their WTC in order to have their claims understood and to undermine the opposing claims as well.

In coding the utterances for the case study, it became evident that van Eemeren et al.'s 2007 characterization of speech acts for a critical discussion was truly an 'ideal' model as they have mentioned themselves in their study. In the process of applying the utterances to the codes for the Korean students, was very difficult. There were frequent instances in which a claim began with one interlocutor and was completed by another when the previous interlocutor experienced difficulty in formulating the proper word or phrase to complete their claim. There were many cases of new claims made with no address to the claims made by the opposing interlocutor. In the process of analyzing the NNS and NS transcriptions from the case study, the coding scheme of Felton and Kuhn (2001) was found to have greater adaptability for both NNS and NS groups' data.

The results of this study provided several key areas to consider in implementing explicit instruction for spoken argumentation. Explicit instruction on the genre of argumentation is need edas more Korean L2 students are faced with having to attend English medium lectures at the university level or beyond. As discussed above, there were several features which negatively influenced the NNS groups during argumentation. These particular features lead to the following pedagogical suggestions in implementing this genre into the Korean EFL context. First and foremost, the characteristics of this genre as expressed through various terms and expressions need to be instructed. There are expressions which can easily be learned for the purposes of indicating claims and supports. For example, students can be taught the difference between weak assertive and strong assertive through the following expressions: *I think that; I assume that; It seems to me that*. These expressions can be shown and compared with the following expressions characterizing strong assertives: *no doubt that; it*

is unquestionably; it is certain that (van Eemeren et al., 2007, p. 31).

   The study of argumentation as a genre is an area of increasing interest within the fields of speech and communications, especially in secondary schools and universities in the United States. Within this context, argumentation has become a means to promote critical thinking in teaching the ability to reason within all disciplines. The possibility of engaging students to generate and state their views and opinions for argument, as well as to research in search of evidence to analyze and evaluate others' arguments, indicate the potential impact of implementing this genre within the Korean EFL classroom. As shown previously, studies on the genre of argumentation for L2 learners have been scarce. Investigating the argumentation of Korean EFL students through detailed discourse analysis has provided more insight into how students interact when faced with the challenge of resolving differences of opinions. The informational content of the claims and supports of the participants were also closely analyzed through the data. The characteristics of L2 anxiety, motivation and perceived competence provided a deeper understanding on the individual characteristics affecting the participants WTC, a significant factor for FL students interacting in the L2. In terms of WTC, this study found that communication is a challenge for both NS and NNS groups. Argumentation is a genre that requires critical thinking and an awareness of the rhetorical structure of the genre itself. The features that were coded for analysis in this study, as well as the pragmatic aspects of how the features of argumentation are stated by the interlocutor, are areas which should be taught explicitly to L2 learners to ensure success in engaging in this genre.

Ⅴ. REFERENCES

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