DEVELOPING CONCEPTUAL UNDERSTANDING OF SARCASM
IN A SECOND LANGUAGE THROUGH CONCEPT-BASED INSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis reports on a study that used concept-based instruction (CBI) to mediate U.S. university learners of English (L1=Korean, N=9) into developing a conceptual and functional understanding of native speaker use of sarcasm. Derived from Vygotsky’s theory of consciousness and Gal’perin’s associated theory of educational development, this research represents the first attempt to provide direct instruction on sarcasm in any L2 environment. The study analyzes both qualitative data (i.e., individual interviews, in-class interaction, focus group discussions, student-produced SCOBA (Schema for the Orienting Basis of Action), interpretive-essay writings) and quantitative data (i.e., performance on pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests). Through these analyses, the study documents student development in (1) their conceptual knowledge of English sarcasm and (2) their functional ability to detect and understand the underlying speaker intent in sarcastic utterances produced by native U.S. English speakers. The analysis of CBI interactions and test scores reveals significant learner development. Students gained mature knowledge of the concept and improved their ability to comprehend different intentions and attitudes conveyed by sarcasm users. By developing scientific knowledge of sarcasm, students established a solid cognitive framework for understanding the L2 concept more readily, which in turn raised their awareness of the comprehension and use of sarcasm in their L1. More importantly, learners gained a sense of empowerment by finally understanding the subtle features of sarcasm that they had not previously recognized. The results highlight the importance of instructional quality and teacher-learner dialectics, referred to by Vygotsky with the Russian term obuchenie in which
learners interact with an expert tutor who offers pedagogically designed psychological tools and semantic-pragmatic explanations to promote a functional understanding of subtle concepts like sarcasm.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

“When someone uses sarcasm to me in Korean, I can at least show that I am offended by making an angry face or something…but in the English-speaking context, I simply become stupid. Even when someone is being sarcastic to me, I will not understand what is actually going on and they will think of me as a stupid person, which is obviously not true. (…) Just because of cultural differences and my limited ability to understand the language, I become a stupid person, and I hate that reality.”

- Quotes from the Pre-CBI interview with Cho

1.1 Sarcasm use

Sarcasm as a term has a long tradition; it was used in classical Greece. Roman rhetoricians, such as Quintilian, dealt with the concept and from there it has found its way into the European rhetorical tradition. Sarcasm is no longer an arcane rhetorical figure, but rather, similar to metaphor, it has become a common feature of everyday language use (Leech, 1983, p. 146). Sarcasm is so ubiquitous in contemporary society that many television shows in the U.S. feature characters that are known for their sarcastic personality. Almost all late night television show hosts are known to be sarcastic. Even television news anchors are occasionally found to be sarcastic while reporting news. The television screen is full of sarcasm.

Why do people use sarcasm? People of many cultures use sarcasm in their everyday lives to achieve various communicative goals. Sarcasm in the U.S. has been widely studied. A number of different theories explain how these diverse goals are

Other common goals for using sarcasm include criticizing (Claridge, 2011; Tracy, 2002), venting frustration (Ducharme, 1994), persuading (Sopory & Dillard, 2002), and improving relationships (Haiman, 1998). Thus, speaker intent and attitudes can be conveyed and understood on a continuum that ranges from negative to positive. Negative emotions such as contempt, anger, dislike and frustration may lead a speaker to use harsh and bitter sarcasm, whereas positive emotions can trigger a speaker to yield light-hearted sarcasm used in a friendly way.

A full understanding of one’s use of sarcasm and other types of verbal irony would entail some appreciation of why the speaker chose it to express his or her intent. After all, it is never necessary to use irony to convey a particular fact. However, people choose to use irony because “irony adds a nuance of meaning—usually humor and/or cruelty—that changes the force of what is said (Capelli et al., 1990, p.1824).”

1.2 Sarcasm comprehension by L1 English speakers

Sarcasm is at times difficult to recognize. This is because understanding sarcasm requires contextual knowledge of speaker intent. Research from various fields of study
has shown extensive disagreement about how L1 English speakers process sarcasm or any figurative language for that matter. Much of the disagreement originates from variations in methodology used to determine how individuals process sarcasm. The vast majority of processing studies utilize methods that measure reading time. Many of these studies claim that sarcasm requires longer time to process than literal language (Giora, 1997; Dews & Winner, 1999; McDonald, 1992). Participants in Pexman et al’s (2000) study took longer to read ironic statements than other non-literal statements. Colston & Gibbs (2002) found that people generally take longer to perceive irony than they do metaphor. They argue that irony requires longer reading time because more complex inferences need to be made in detecting irony than in recognizing metaphor. Gibbs (2001), however, claims that interlocutors process sarcasm/irony as fast as they process literal utterances.

Kreuz (2000) points out that interlocutors do not actually recognize a particular figure of speech (i.e., sarcasm), just the speaker’s intent. In other words, L1 English speakers do not usually recognize the fact that a speaker or writer is using sarcasm as such, but they still recognize and comprehend its underlying meaning without being able to label it. Kim’s (under review) study on how Korean EFL learners understand English sarcasm found a similar tendency from its native English-speaking participants. The NS participants reported that they had difficulty deconstructing the cues for detecting sarcasm while processing the sarcasm presented in video clips. However, despite this difficulty, they showed a high percentage of agreement in selecting the same or similar speaker intent for the eleven sarcastic utterances they identified.
Relevance theory (Sperber & Wilson, 1986; 1998) offers a useful cognitive linguistic account of ‘what’ items in one’s schema are possibly activated during irony processing. Yus (1998; 2000), relying on a theoretical background derived from Relevance Theory, provides specific contextual features that individuals consider while processing irony. Yus (2000) proposes seven irony-relevant contextual sources that can play out in the mutual cognitive environment of irony – simply put, the collection of thoughts a speaker and interlocutor attribute to each other in ironic communication (Sperber & Wilson, 1986).

1. Factual information
2. Physical setting
3. Nonverbal communication
4. Biographical data
5. Mutual knowledge
6. Previous utterances
7. Linguistic cues

(Yus, ibid., p. 354)

The main claim of Yus’s work is that the interlocutor’s simultaneous access to one or more of the contextual sources outlined above is essential for the interlocutor to effectively grasp the underlying meaning of ironic utterances. Once access occurs, the interlocutor should detect some kind of incompatibility between the information provided by these contextual sources and the potentially ironic utterance. The more
incompatibilities are detected, the less processing effort is required. In other words, if the level of redundancy in the incompatibility provided by all these contextual sources is high, the ironic interpretation of an utterance will be easier to process. However, if the number of contextual resources accessed and/or incompatibilities detected is not sufficiently high, a misunderstanding of the potentially ironic utterance might occur. The details of Relevance Theory and the irony-relevant contextual sources proposed by Yus are discussed in chapter 2.

1.3 Sarcasm comprehension by L2 English speakers

Successful understanding of sarcasm in L2 can be a substantial challenge for learners due to the inherent incongruity of meaning that is frequently exhibited in instances of sarcasm. Despite the possible challenge, little is known about how L2 learners process sarcasm in English. Presumably, L2 learners will process sarcastic utterances through the lens of their L1 knowledge system or schema (Mandler, 1979). The terms ‘schema(s)’ or ‘schemata’ are generally used to describe people’s cognitive structure, which consists of collections of knowledge from past experiences. This organization of knowledge can be categorized into related knowledge/pattern groups and is used to guide our perceptions and behaviors in familiar situations. Fiske and Linville (1980) explain schema as “cognitive structures of organized prior knowledge, abstracted from experience with specific instances…” (p. 543). Similarly, Foldy (2006, p. 351) states “schemata are knowledge structures or mental templates that individuals impose on
an information environment to give it form or meaning.”¹ Oftentimes, these complex cognitive systems develop and emerge out of knowledge among members of the same langua-cultural (Agar, 1994)² group over time. Such knowledge is called cultural schema, a mental structure that consists of perceptual and conceptual information, which enables an individual to interpret cultural experiences and expressions to make up meaning (Malcolm & Sharifian, 2002).

L2 research tested the assumption that L2 learners will use their L1 schema during their learning process. Ushakova’s (1994) study on L2 vocabulary development shows that learners’ L2 knowledge is incorporated into the classification system already available in their L1 and relies on the previously developed semantic system. Because learners’ conceptual systems operate based on their L1, it is likely that understanding sarcastic expressions and their meanings may depend on learners’ L1 translation equivalents and usages from the L1 setting. Kim’s (ibid.) study found that the most distinctive characteristic that Korean participants exhibited was the adoption of their L1 lens of cultural schema to process sarcasm in English. The study revealed several particular types of L1 cultural schemas that were involved in the process including semantic, pragmalinguistic, and phonological knowledge taken from their L1 schema. By modifying and elaborating irony-relevant contextual sources proposed by Yus, Kim developed sarcasm-relevant contextual sources for L2 learners. She raises a number of

¹ For more details about different categories and types of schema[ta], see Pazy (1994), Werner, Rhodes, and Partain (1998), Malcom and Sharifian (2002), and Nishida (1999).
² Agar (1994) proposes the term “languaculture” to represent the “necessary tie between language and culture (p. 60).” To Agar the two terms are inseparable and that one must think of the missing term whenever one of the terms is presented. To study the complexity of two languages in one mind, Agar describes languaculture as the following: “The langua in languaculture is about discourse, not just about words and sentences. And the culture in languaculture is about meanings that include, but go well beyond, what the dictionary and the grammar offer. (ibid., p. 96)”
important pedagogical considerations and points to the need for a systematic approach to teaching the concept. She also emphasizes the importance of using multimodal input (i.e., video materials) that contain various (combinations of) cues for conveying sarcastic meaning for teaching how to understand sarcasm. Kim suggests that by using learners’ L1 contextual sources for detecting sarcasm as a starting point, language educators can help learners expand their understanding of L2 sarcasm and promote their conceptual development. This dissertation study addresses the above-mentioned issues raised by Kim and applies the pedagogical ideas in the actual teaching setting of concept-based instruction, which is based on Vygotskian principles of developmental education.

1.4 Vygotskian sociocultural approach to development and learning: The relevance of culturally evolved cognitive tools

In classic Piagetian psychology, education is only effective when learners are developmentally ready to learn. According to this approach, abstract concepts should be taught when the learner reaches the stage of formal operational thinking and is developmentally ready to learn. This model is the basis for Krashen’s (1981) L2 natural order hypothesis, which holds that all learners, following the same internal natural syllabus, will acquire the features of a particular L2 in a given order with little deviation within and across learners. However, Vygotsky (1987) opposed the Piagetian approach arguing that effective instruction precedes development and that therefore properly organized instruction is a source rather than a consequence of development.
The central concept in Vygotsky’s (1978; 1981; 1983; 1988) cultural psychology is mediation. Human consciousness is mediated by psychological tools, including language, that have their origin in human socio-cultural activity. For Vygotsky, the specific structure of human interaction was “material” appropriated from the social into the individual domain. Human interaction mediated by cultural tools and symbols, for him, was the source of mental development.

Vygotsky's view of human development and education is an extension of his general approach to the development of higher mental functions. Consistent with his definition of development as socially determined, Vygotsky introduced a new relationship between education and development. Vygotsky opposed the theorists who believed that development occurs spontaneously and is driven by the processes of maturation and cannot be affected by education. Instead, education, for Vygotsky, was a specific form of activity that had unique and important developmental consequences. He considered education to be an intentionally organized (i.e., artificial) activity that restructures mental behavior (Vygotsky, 1997). For him the goal of formal education was to promote the higher scientific (or theoretical) ways of thinking through the intentional (i.e., artificial) forms of mediation. Therefore, for Vygotsky, instruction plays a key part in development by providing culturally evolved psychological tools, which, once internalized by the learner, mediate and advance the learner’s mental functioning.

1.5 Use of cultural tools in instruction and cognitive development: Gal’perin’s perspective
Gal’perin (1966; 1967) further elaborated Vygotsky’s approach by specifically focusing on exploring developmental processes of internalization of cultural tools as a specifically human form of the individual’s psychological development. Gal’perin operationalized Vygotsky’s concepts of cultural tools, mediation, and internalization by scrutinizing the ways in which the specifically human, internal, plane of mental activity is formed (For details, see Arievitch & Van der Veer, 1995; Haenen, 1996). In order to clarify the process of learners’ internalization of psychological tools and how the individual’s actions become internalized, Gal’perin provided the innovative analysis of three types of instruction with different developmental potential. Among the three main types of instruction analyzed by Gal’perin, systemic-theoretical instruction (STI) is most revealing with regard to the question of how instruction relates to development.

Gal’perin’s (1967; 1979; Talyzina, 1981) analysis of systemic-theoretical instruction elucidates the specific character of cognitive tools and instructional procedures that makes instruction truly developmental (i.e., development-generating). In STI, learners acquire general method(s) to construct a concrete orientation basis to solve problems in a given subject domain. Such method(s) involves a conceptual and theoretical analysis of objects, phenomena, or events in various subject domains. The analysis has to reveal the genesis and the general structure of objects, phenomena, or concepts. In such analysis, students learn to distinguish among different properties of the object or phenomenon, to form theoretical concepts on this basis, and use them as psychological tools in further similar problem solving. STI makes extensive use of symbolic, imagistic and graphic models as cognitive tools to represent basic relations between different properties of the concept, phenomenon, or object and the order of their
systematic analysis (Gal’perin, 1969; 1979). The essence of STI is in providing learners with means for theoretical and conceptually based generalization, which allows them to orient themselves in a systemic way in the subject being studied.

Gal’perin’s STI is comprised of multiple phases, which begins with presentation of the concept and ends with its automatization in practice following internalization. These phases are linked by two additional procedures, which are materialization and verbalization. Verbalization requires learners not to simply memorize the definition of the concept but rather to use the conceptual tool, SCOBA (Schema for the Orienting Basis of Action), as a guide to explain the concept to themselves (i.e., private speech). This helps learners to listen to themselves and determine whether they indeed understand the concept or not and ultimately aims to deepen their understanding and empowers their control over the concept. Materialization requires the conversion of the verbal representation of the concept into an imagistic presentation pursuing the idea that a concrete image can provide a more coherent, systemic and thus more comprehensible guide to understanding the concept. Gal’perin uses the term ‘SCOBA’ (Schema for the Orienting Basis of Action) to capture the process of materialization.

1.6 Specific research questions and organization of the dissertation

This study aims to examine the teachability of the concept of sarcasm in English as a second language. As such it focuses on the extent to which a specific pedagogical approach grounded in Vygotskian principles of developmental education is effective in assisting learners in grasping the concept of sarcasm in English including how it is
signaled through a variety of linguistic and extra-linguistic means; and the extent to which learners are able to use this conceptual knowledge to detect and appropriately interpret sarcasm in English. There are three inter-related research questions: (1) In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote theoretical understanding of the concept of sarcasm among L2 learners of English?; (2) In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote L2 learners’ improved comprehension of sarcasm as produced by native speakers of English?; (3) Were learners able to use appropriate cues in detecting sarcasm in natural speech?

This study will be of value to both researchers and educators in the field of second language learning/teaching in that it goes beyond the level of grammar instruction through concept-based language teaching within the Vygotskian framework of developmental education, and that it can provide important evidence for how L2 learners develop their understanding of the concept of sarcasm by engaging in newly-designed pedagogical and conceptual tools for teaching the concept.

This dissertation comprises nine chapters, including the introduction. Chapter 2 delves into further detail about the theoretical, empirical, and methodological underpinnings of the preceding discussion. Chapter 3 provides a description of the research design. Chapters 4 and 5 report the analysis of pre-CBI interviews and post-CBI interviews respectively. Chapter 6 provides the descriptions of three tests (i.e., pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test) and areas of confusion that students had regarding L2 sarcasm comprehension. The tests consisted of video scenes and were designed to examine whether the learners could control all possible contextual cues for detecting sarcasm by checking their abilities to fulfill the three tasks: (1) identify sarcasm, (2)
comprehend speaker intent, attitude, and underlying/intended meaning, (3) and detect (combinations of) sarcasm-related cues. Chapters 7 and 8 discuss the results from the microanalysis of individual learners’ developmental trajectories, which included the analyses of in-class video data, focus group discussions, interviews, writing samples, and other qualitative treatment of developmental processes during concept-based instruction. The later half of Chapter 8 focuses on the score results from the tests. Chapter 9 concludes the dissertation by summarizing the results of the study in relation to the research questions posed above, the implications and limitations of this research, and several directions for future research.
Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 2 lays the groundwork for the remainder of this dissertation by providing in-depth theoretical background for the topic—providing instruction on the concept of sarcasm to L2 learners of English. This study draws from theoretical and empirical traditions that engage Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theoretic account of human communication and Vygotskian sociocultural perspectives on language and cognitive development. Of these, relevant theorist Francisco Yus’s cognitive model for explaining the inference process of verbal irony, and educational psychologist Piotr Gal’perin’s approach of concept-based instruction serve as the primary theoretical foundations.

This chapter is comprised of four overarching parts, which discuss the following areas: (1) Yus’s processing model, (2) Kim’s original empirical study on how Korean EFL learners process sarcasm in English, (3) Gal’perin’s approach to concept-based instruction (henceforth, CBI), and (4) empirical studies of concept-based L2 teaching and learning. In the first section, I sketch out Sperber and Wilson’s relevance theory and their relevance theoretic account of processing irony. Then, I focus on the processing model and irony-relevant contextual sources proposed by Yus, along with his analysis of data in which he applies these contextual sources. Finally, I provide an analysis of Yus’s processing model and discuss its applicability to explaining L2 learners’ processing of
sarcasm and its value for teaching the concept to L2 learners. In section two, I discuss Kim’s study on what specific L1 schemas Korean adult EFL learners use while processing sarcasm. Then I introduce sarcasm-relevant contextual cues for L2 learners proposed by Kim along with pedagogical ideas for teaching the concept of sarcasm to L2 learners. The next section situates for the reader the concept-based approach to instruction developed by Gal’perin (1989; 1992). Then I briefly discuss L2 teaching and learning studies grounded in concept-based pedagogy. Before further delving into the theoretical framework, it is appropriate to discuss the definition of sarcasm and the importance of defining it from the viewpoint of Vygotskian educational praxis.

2.1.1 Importance of defining concepts and Vygotsky’s educational praxis

Vygotsky (1978; 1987) explains praxis as a unification of theory and practice in which theory offers a basis to guide practice and at the same time practice functions to refine and extend theory. Formal schooling is a crucial context which yields an opportunity to integrate abstract, theoretical knowledge with everyday experience leading to conceptual development and fuller understanding of the world. This development occurs through mediation when the quality of instruction is ensured. The central property that defines the developmental potential of certain types of instruction (and their specific role in development) is the quality of cognitive tools that are provided to learners in the course of instruction to help them orient to (further) problem solving. When the cognitive tool(s) are complete and systemic, present essential characteristics of the concept in focus, and are theoretical in scope, instruction results in profound developmental progress and
directly generates cognitive development (Arievitch & Stetsenko, 2000). Thus, establishing an appropriate definition of the abstract concepts such as ‘verbal irony’ and ‘sarcasm’ is an important initial step to provide quality conceptual tools and instruction and to effectively implement Vygotsky’s theory of educational praxis.

2.1.2 Definition and use of sarcasm

Although sarcasm is a complex concept to define, it is generally considered to be a sub-category of irony. Verbal irony, indeed, can appear in a variety of linguistic forms (i.e., sarcasm, hyperbole, understatements, double entendre, and rhetorical questions) in which the speaker conveys a meaning \( x \), but through this meaning the speaker has the goal of communicating another contrasting meaning, \( y \), which is often, though not always, contrary to meaning \( x \). This contradiction with the speaker’s real intent, actual facts or reality is a crucial aspect of the definition of irony, which distinguishes it from the definitions of other figurative language such as metaphor, metonymy, etc.

Although both sarcasm and verbal irony generally describe utterances that express what is contrary to (or different from) the speaker’s true intent, their use and content differ. Sarcasm is generally used to offer criticism, and oftentimes to insult; whereas, other types of verbal irony can be used for making any type of comment – positive or negative – and for achieving different communicative goals. Kreuz & Glucksberg (1989) provide evidence of how ordinary English speakers perceive differences between irony and sarcasm. After completing an experiment on irony and sarcasm recognition, they asked monolingual U.S. students at Princeton University to define the two terms. The
participants defined sarcasm according to the following features: verbal (95%),
counterfactual (68%), intended to hurt (53%), intentional (23%). In defining irony, they
listed similar features, except for the “intended to hurt” and “intentional” components.
Instead, they added an “unexpected” feature (50%) for irony. That is, fifty percent of the
participants considered irony to involve surprising or unexpected events, while sarcasm
did not. These results, according to the researchers, suggest that the participants
perceived irony as “irony of fate” (p. 374) as used in situational or dramatic irony; and
sarcasm more as “a verbal device to express an attitude or to hurt someone” (p. 381).

Indeed, sarcasm does not necessarily involve irony, and vice versa. In other words,
sarcasm is not always defined by the double-meaning feature that other tropes of verbal
irony contain. Fowler (1965) states that sarcasm is “the intention of giving pain by
(ironical or other) bitter words (p. 535).” Therefore, sarcasm should be considered as a
sub-category of verbal irony, and ironic sarcasm (i.e., sarcastic utterances that contain the
feature of contrast between what is uttered by the speaker (i.e., literal meaning) and the
intended meaning) is a sub-category of sarcasm. The current study will focus primarily
on this particular form of sarcasm – ironic sarcasm. For the sake of simplicity, however, I
will refer to ironic sarcasm as sarcasm throughout most of this study, in accordance with
how that term is more commonly understood. (However, the distinction will emerge later
in the study and during the instruction that will be provided to learners.)

The working definition of sarcasm in this study is as follows: “a form of verbal
attack that oftentimes employs contradiction between literal meaning and intended
meaning to achieve various communicative goals–either negative or positive.”
2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Relevance theory of human communication

Relevance theory is an inferential approach to pragmatics, which originates from the Gricean philosophical assumption that an essential feature of most human communication, both verbal and non-verbal, is the expression and recognition of intentions (Grice 1989: chapters 1-7). The goal of inferential pragmatics is to explain how the interlocutor infers the speaker’s meaning.

Relevance theory places significant emphasis on the role of context during an interlocutor’s process of inferring speaker utterance and intent. According to Sperber and Wilson (1986; 1995), context is not fixed in advance, but is searched for the purpose of rendering an utterance relevant. Utterance interpretation is entirely dependent on the contextual information that is brought to bear. Once an interlocutor hears an utterance, contextual sources that the interlocutor finds relevant will come into his or her cognitive environment. The interlocutor will then process these contextual sources, select the most relevant item(s) among them, and will ultimately arrive at the speaker’s intended meaning. In other words, receiving communication is a process of sifting through the available inputs to find the communication of most relevance.

Relevance theory is worthy of note in that it turns away from mechanistic models (i.e., the computer metaphor) and acknowledges that human cognition is radically different from both “information processing” in computers and from cognition in animals. Relevance theory clearly acknowledges the role of culture and its systems of symbols in
cognition and communication by considering the interlocutor’s thoughts and assumptions about the world and his or her inferential processing to decipher the speaker’s intended meaning.

2.2.2 Processing of sarcasm from a relevance theoretic perspective

Sperber and Wilson (1995) hypothesize that relevance is the central trait of human communication and cognition. In the cognitive processing of ironic communication, this principle governs every step of irony comprehension: relevance leads the interlocutor to figure out the relevant properties embedded in, and beyond, an utterance, to discover the possible mutuality between the speaker and interlocutor.

Sarcasm (as well as other types of verbal irony) is a contextually determined phenomenon. The notion of context plays a crucial role in the relevance-theoretic account of one’s comprehension of sarcasm. According to relevance theory, context is not merely the physical situation of the utterance; rather, it is a psychological construct that consists of an interlocutor’s collection of thoughts and assumptions about the world, including the immediate surroundings, which affects his or her inferences regarding a speaker’s intended meaning. Therefore, context is established and developed in the course of an interaction, while the interlocutor selects relevant items from contextual sources in order to ultimately make a correct interpretation.

Relevance theory would predict that when L2 learners attempt to process a sarcastic utterance in L2, assumptions that have been accessed frequently before (i.e., general patterns and expectations residing in the L1 interaction context) will enter their
cognitive environment promptly and will lead them to an interpretation. However, this interpretation may be partial or incorrect if the learner happens to possess stronger contextual assumptions derived from their L1 linguistic and cultural backgrounds, which do not necessarily share the same social conventions and linguistic norms as those of the L2. Figure 2.1 depicts the general inference process of sarcasm by L2 learners. Therefore, it is this cognitive environment (which is mutually shared with L2 interlocutors) and the inference process that need to be enriched and strengthened, through systematic instruction, so that a learner can more appropriately interpret underlying meanings of sarcastic messages.

Figure 2.1. General inference process of sarcasm by L2 learners

2.2.2.1 A processing model for irony comprehension

Fransisco Yus (1998 & 2000) introduced a cognitive model of irony comprehension in human communication. This model, grounded in the principles of Relevance Theory, introduces seven irony-related cues that interlocutors may rely on to understand speakers’ use of verbal irony. Currently, this is the only cognitive processing
model that employs multiple items of contextual sources. This model shows how these contextual sources constitute interlocutors’ cognitive environments in order to explain interlocutors’ comprehension of verbal irony. However, no research has provided sarcasm-related contextual cues that can be used for sarcasm interpretation. Thus, I used Yus’s irony comprehension model as the foundation for developing sarcasm-related cues and for designing pedagogical SCOBAs to teach the concept of sarcasm.

Yus (1998) identified six irony-relevant contextual sources, and later added one more item (g) in his (2000) study, that are likely to be activated in L1 English users’ mutual cognitive environments for comprehending ironic utterances.

- a. Factual information
- b. Physical setting
- c. Nonverbal communication
- d. Biographical data
- e. Mutual knowledge
- f. Previous utterances
- g. Linguistic cues

(Yus, 2000, p. 354)

As briefly stated in Chapter 1, Yus argues that the interlocutor’s simultaneous access to one or more of the contextual sources outlined above is essential for the interlocutor to effectively grasp the underlying meaning of ironic utterances. Once the seven irony-relevant contextual sources enter the interlocutor’s cognitive environment, the
interlocutor should detect some kind of incompatibility between the information provided by these contextual sources and the potentially ironic utterance. The higher the level of redundancy in the incompatibility provided by all the contextual sources, the easier it will be for the interlocutor to process and reach the intended meaning of ironic utterances. The level of redundancy may be created by one or more incompatibilities arising from multiple contextual sources. Irony comprehension from a single incompatibility can occur if the incompatibility emanates from one contextual source but the level of contrast is sufficiently marked. If the number of contextual sources accessed and/or incompatibilities detected is not sufficiently marked, a misunderstanding of the potentially ironic utterance might occur.

Yus (1998; 2000) provides examples of analysis which range from rich contextual support to poor contextual support. One example of successful interpretation of irony is given in dialogue (1a) taken from Barbe (1989, p. 272). In the dialogue, speaker B is being ironic concerning A’s mistake (A’s ironic response is not analyzed in Yus’s work). Yus argues that the reason for A’s optimal interpretation of B’s irony lies in the number of contextual sources activated and the redundancy provided by the simultaneous incompatibilities that arise during comprehension. Yus summarizes the interaction in (1b).

(1)

(a) [A circle of close friends who know about each other’s strengths and shortcomings and who do not beat about the bush especially concerning the latter (Barbe, ibid.)]

A: Ok, let’s drink to their health again.
[A takes B’s glass by mistake.]

B: Preferably with other people’s glasses, (1) isn’t that so, A?
A: Oh, sorry, this was yours? No communicable diseases. At least I hope so.

(b) SOURCE     INCOMPATIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factual information</th>
<th>✓</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical surrounding</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical data</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual knowledge</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous utterances</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Yus, 1998, p. 403)

Note: The symbol ‘✓’ indicates an incompatibility occurred regarding the concerned contextual cue, whereas the symbol ‘x’ illustrates that no incompatibility occurred.

According to Yus’s analysis, A is aware of the fact that people generally do not prefer to take other people’s glasses when they want to drink (FACTUAL INFORMATION). A also knows how hypochondriac B is (Barbe, 1989, p. 273) and so it is unlikely that B agrees that other people’s glasses should be taken (BIOGRAPHICAL DATA). Finally, A picks up an exaggerated intonation that B uses in his final tag question, (1), (Barbe, ibid.) recorded dialogue (1b), which contradicts B’s usual paralinguistic behavior (NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION). Yus maintains that these
three incompatibilities produce a high level of redundancy, making B’s ironic utterance easy to identify and process.

However, it is unclear what Yus means by ‘factual information.’ He assumes that general consensus exists in the notion of ‘facts’ within a certain cultural group. Although his assumption is plausible, what are considered as ‘facts’ and ‘normal’ can differ even among members in the same linguistic and cultural community. Moreover, what seems reasonable to one person might seem unreasonable to another because the predispositions people use involve recognitions and interpretations that emerge out of their own knowledge and views of the world. This characteristic makes any type of interpretation subjective. The role of this inevitable subjectiveness in perceiving and interpreting world experiences is more pronounced when L2 learners who have already internalized their L1 cultural schema; cognitive systems that emerge among members of their same languacultural group over time. Therefore, a consensus on interpreting speaker intent and making identical value judgments is even more unlikely to occur.

Schemas that lead people to have certain perceptions, recognitions, and value judgments are involved in every step of processing speaker intentions. Interlocutors use their schemas not only to decode utterance meaning, but also to interpret nonverbal cues that speakers exhibit. In fact, what Yus simplifies as B’s ‘unusual paralinguistic behavior’ (Yus, 1998, p. 19) has significant implications for reading people’s intentions, especially in ironic communication. Studies show that English speakers in the U.S. tend to find nonverbal cues to be better indicators of speaker intent than verbal cues (McNeil, 1985; 1987; Baldwin, 1991; Carpenter, Nagell, & Tomasello, 1998). Research has also found that English speakers typically are more likely to believe nonverbal cues over verbal cues
(Burgoon, Buller, & Woodall, 1989; Zahn, 1973). That is, when the verbal portion conflicts with the nonverbal part of a sarcastic message, interlocutors are more likely to believe the nonverbal component of the message. As Kim’s study (under review) has found, people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds tend to find different meanings while interpreting various types of nonverbal cues, including facial expressions, gesture, and body movements.

The difficulty of applying the notion of ‘factual information’ arises in Yus’s (1998; 2000) two different analyses of the same data. In (2a), two strangers A and B have just met and strike up a conversation. In order to break the ice, A makes a comment on a newspaper headline. According to Yus (2000), B’s ironic remark lacks the minimum number of incompatibilities required for its optimal interpretation, as shown in (2b) and (2c), resulting in a misunderstanding.

(2)

(a) [passengers A and B sitting together on a train. After a while they strike up a conversation. A is reading a paper and makes a comment on one of the headlines.]

A: Listen, it says here that sixty percent of women are still unemployed in this country!

B: Yeah, Keep them in the kitchen where they belong!

A: Do you think all women should be housewives?

B: Of course not! I was only joking, for God’s sake!
In his early work published in 1998, Yus explains that the only source of incompatibility in example (2) is A’s stereotypical knowledge about women not
deserving to be kept in the kitchen (FACTUAL INFORMATION), as seen in (2b).
However, in Yus (2000), he changes his explanation saying that no source of
incompatibility in A’s accessible contextual information can be found. He adds, “Not
even A’s factual knowledge about women not deserving to be kept in the kitchen is
activated, because it is also a factual assumption that not everybody agrees on the role of
women in society” (Yus, 2000, p. 356). A does not find incompatibilities in the other
contextual sources, not even in B’s nonverbal behavior, since B utters his statement in a
grave, neutral tone of voice without any special facial expression or vocabulary choice.
Yus claims that A’s misunderstanding of B’s ironic utterance was predictable.

B’s use of a neutral tone of voice without any special facial expression may or
may not have derived from his intention to mask the irony or sarcasm of the utterance. If
he unintentionally failed to mark the utterance as ironic, it could actually mean that B was
really expressing his true opinion regarding women. When he was criticized by A,
however, he might have defended himself by saying that his utterance was ironic. If this
was the case, then no misunderstanding actually occurred. On the other hand, B may have
intentionally decided to use a grave and neutral tone of voice without any facial
expression or vocabulary choice in order to maximize the dramatic effect of his ironic
sarcasm.

The irony-relevant contextual sources suggested by Yus need modification to
make the model applicable to L2 learners’ processing of sarcasm. Kim’s (under review)
empirical study identified multiple types of L1 cultural schemas that Korean EFL learners
tend to incorporate when comprehending L2 sarcasm. In addition to revealing
characteristics that learners exhibited while detecting and understanding sarcasm, the
study also examined learners’ ability to successfully interpret the underlying meanings of sarcasm produced by native English speakers presented in video scenes. Kim provides the groundwork for designing pedagogical materials and for teaching the concept of sarcasm to L2 learners of English. The following sections discuss the two areas: (1) the ‘sarcasm-related contextual sources’ that Kim proposed and (2) the pedagogical ideas for implementing these items in L2 teaching.

2.2.2.2 How Korean L2 learners process English sarcasm

Kim examined how Korean adult EFL learners comprehend sarcasm produced by U.S. native English speakers. The results demonstrated what specific types of cultural schema the participants used during the process of detection and comprehension. The Korean L2 learners relied on their L1 cultural schema to process sarcasm in English. The study identified several particular types of L1 cultural schemas that were involved in the process. First, learners used L1 semantic knowledge throughout the study. They extracted meaning through the process of translation from L2 into L1. During or after the translation process, if any equivalent or similar sarcastic expression in the L1 (used in similar context) was found, the learners would use it as a guide to detect and comprehend L2 sarcasm.

Second, learners employed L1 pragmalinguistic knowledge of how to define and use sarcasm in the L1 context during their processing of L2 sarcasm. The Korean learners struggled to identify similarities and differences in the use and definitions of sarcasm between the two languages. In addition to consistently referring back to the Korean
definition of sarcasm, many of them repeatedly attempted to imagine similar contexts in which the sarcastic utterances could be used in the L1. The results also demonstrated that Korean L2 learners tend to regard sarcasm as a linguistic device that is primarily used to cover speakers’ negative (i.e., angry, subversive, etc.) emotions and to convey actual speaker intent in an indirect way. Their understanding of the role of sarcasm in English matches the characteristics they identify with ban-eo in Korean modern novels and poetry. This may indicate that there are fewer types of sarcastic expressions, and a lower frequency of sarcasm use, in the Korean context than in the English context. Moreover, the learners utilized their L1 phonological knowledge to detect sarcasm. Word stress and vowel elongation are prosodic cues that are commonly used in Korean to indicate sarcasm. When learners noticed word stress and an elongated vowel emphasized by the speaker, they suspected the possibility of sarcastic intention.

Third, the learners incorporated their L1 knowledge of linguistic strategies to produce sarcastic utterances, while processing L2 sarcasm. If they identified any overlapping strategy that coexists in both L1 and L2 sarcastic utterances, they would suspect the utterance might be sarcastic. Indeed, like English speakers, Korean speakers use multiple linguistic strategies to construe sarcastic messages. Some of the overlapping strategies include the following: use of irony, use of hyperbole, creating a hypothetical situation, providing obviously untrue alternative, false framing, use of certain visual and vocal cues. However, the fact that there exist these overlapping linguistic strategies for formulating sarcastic utterances may not guarantee that learners readily recognize and understand L2 sarcasm.
Fourth, Korean learners used their L1 perceptual knowledge of appropriate intensity and politeness in the use of sarcasm. These value judgments differed from those of NS participants’ in their understanding of the level of formality or register in some sarcastic utterances. While NS participants in general interpreted certain sarcastic utterances as light-hearted jokes that could occur in communication between close friends, many Korean participants found the same utterances to be insulting, biting and offensive. This perceptual difference between the two groups also corresponds with how they understand the role and use of sarcasm in general – while the NS group acknowledged the dual role of sarcasm – both positive and negative – by associating it with humor, Korean participants related it more as an attacking device that enables speakers to mainly insult and/or criticize interlocutors in an implicit way. These results may suggest that sarcasm is not used as frequently in a joking manner between close friends in Korean culture. An occasional shift towards positive meaning in sarcasm seems to be occurring in U.S. culture, whereas in Korea, sarcasm still is considered to be a mean act, even among close friends. This is an important difference between the two linguistic groups. In fact, during the initial interview, nine out of ten participants in the dissertation project defined Korean sarcasm, bi-kkom, as a mean, negative and almost unnecessary act that they hardly use even among close friends, regardless of gender.

Fifth, learners adopted their L1 linguistic knowledge of how certain visual cues are typically comprehended. For example, Korean participants recognized ‘sneering’ as an indicator of the speaker possibly being sarcastic. This may be because it is also generally understood as an indication of contempt and other negative emotions in the Korean context. Learners particularly showed a tendency to rely heavily on visual cues
such as a speaker’s facial expressions (i.e., smile, sneer, laugh, ‘blank face,’ angry look) and body movements that were being used during and after the production of sarcastic utterances. Although studies show that NSs of English in the U.S. also tend to prefer nonverbal cues as more obvious indicators of speaker intent than verbal cues, a greater percentage of Korean participants exhibited a stronger tendency to rely on nonverbal cues presented in most scenes than the NS participants did. One possible source of difference could be that the Korean L2 participants, unlike their NS counterparts, did not have a sufficient number of contextual cues to choose from. Thus, the lack of contextual sources to detect sarcasm may have led them to rely on salient visual cues. One reported reason that some visual cues were more noticeable than others was that certain types of facial expressions (i.e., raising eyebrows, upward and downward pull of mouth and cheek muscles, eyeball rolling) and gesture seemed “too exaggerated and unnatural” when viewed through the lens of Korean L1 schema. Another possible reason could be that there is a more restricted variety of nonverbal cues in the Korean context than in the English context. Therefore, there should be less overlap in the types of visual cues between the two languages. However, no research evidence exists to support this claim—an interesting area for future work.

Kim also identified four reasons why Korean L2 learners failed to notice certain instances of sarcasm resulting in different interpretations of speaker intent from those of NSs: (1) lack of knowledge of how sarcasm is generally used in the L2 context, (2) lack of the linguistic data of highly conventionalized sarcastic utterances, (3) lack of knowledge of the types of cues used to convey sarcasm, (4) and different expectations
and interpretations made towards some contextual sources for detecting and understanding sarcasm.

The Korean participants tended to comprehend some sarcastic utterances as more insulting than others, which did not correspond with how NS participants typically comprehended them. This may reflect that the Korean participants were not aware of one of the general tendencies in how sarcasm is used in the U.S. context (i.e., association with humor, expressing positive feelings). It may also be because of the difference in the types of sarcasm used between the L1 and L2 linguistic contexts and in the degree of register, politeness or rudeness that exist in the two contexts. Due to the absence of linguistic knowledge of conventional sarcastic expressions that are frequently used in the L2 context, many Korean participants either did not detect the same sarcastic utterances that most NSs identified or did not interpret the speaker intent the same way as the NSs did.

Many Korean participants were unable to appropriately interpret the meaning of a speaker’s facial expressions. Although some of them noticed a speaker’s ‘blank face,’ it failed to serve as a cue for sarcasm. The majority of learners did not know why the specific type of facial expression was used and how it should be interpreted. This may indicate the fact that there are different types of facial expressions used to convey sarcasm in the L1 context and/or that the participants are not aware of the fact that ‘blank face’ is one of the cues for sarcasm in the U.S. setting.

2.2.2.3 Sarcasm-relevant contextual sources
The above-identified tendencies suggest several areas where instruction should come into play. Kim (under review), as illustrated in Table 2.1, modified and elaborated irony-relevant contextual cues proposed by Yus, developed sarcasm-relevant contextual sources, and suggested guidelines for their use in L2 instruction.

Table 2.1. Comparison of Yus’s irony-relevant cues and Kim’s sarcasm-relevant cues for L2 learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factual information</th>
<th>Common assumptions in the L2 community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical surrounding</td>
<td>Definition and use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal communication</td>
<td>Speaker’s nonverbal behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biographical data</td>
<td>Physical setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mutual knowledge</td>
<td>Speaker’s biographical data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous utterances</td>
<td>Lexical cues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linguistic cues</td>
<td>(Yus, 2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Kim, under review)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Kim recommended that language educators assist learners in expanding their conceptual understanding of L2 sarcasm by using learners’ L1 contextual sources for detecting sarcasm as a starting point. Based on the sarcasm-relevant contextual cues suggested by Kim, I designed pedagogical materials for the concept-based instruction implemented in the dissertation project. The following section explains the six sarcasm-relevant contextual sources suggested by Kim and provides rationales for the revision from Yus’s irony-relevant contextual cues. Importantly, the section describes how I applied the
Common assumptions in the L2 community

Kim revised Yus’s seven irony-relevant cues into sarcasm-relevant cues based on the primary criteria—whether the cues were applicable to L2 learners’ ways of conceptualizing sarcasm. According to the criteria, the contextual source ‘factual information’ proposed by Yus needed to be modified into ‘L2 commonsense knowledge’ or ‘L2 cultural schema’ for detecting sarcasm in the L2. This is because what is considered to be facts for a certain cultural-linguistic group may not be as factual to other cultural-linguistic groups.

In addition to addressing the importance of clarifying terminology for each cue, Kim pointed out the need to understand the interrelationships among the multiple contextual sources. According to Kim, her sarcasm-related cues should be considered as sub-categories of the one overarching concept, ‘L2 commonsense knowledge’ or ‘L2 cultural schema’ for detecting L2 sarcasm. This is because common sense, in general, depends on collective tacit knowledge, which is encoded in the social norms, customs, and practices of a community. In a broad sense, the way interlocutors make sense of each cue to interpret sarcasm is derived from their cultural schemas, which are not necessarily identical with those of L2 learners.

Definition and use
In Kim’s study, learners’ understandings of the definition and use of sarcasm (and irony) coming from their L1 cultural schema did not match with those of NS participants. This mismatch originated primarily from learners’ lack of conceptual knowledge in L2 sarcasm use. The results of Kim’s study indicated that the mere presentation of the definition to L2 learners did not help them to select the same sarcastic utterances identified by NSs of English. The learners were unsure of how English sarcasm could be used in what types of contexts, and thus tended to resort to their L1 understanding of sarcasm and irony. Kim suggested that instruction should begin from the concepts that learners are already familiar with (i.e., ‘ban-eo,’ ‘bi-kkom’) and use this knowledge to promote their conceptual development of L2 sarcasm. Kim also argued that learners need a more complete definition of L2 sarcasm that concretizes its ambiguities, because the conventional definitions provided by linguists and dictionaries do not fully capture the nature of the concept. Concretization of relevant concepts is a crucial aspect especially in Gal’perin’s notion of Concept-based Instruction (CBI). In CBI, learners are expected to appropriate and internalize psychological tools that are designed to present the relevant concept in a systematic, concrete, and concise manner (see section 2.2.3 for more details in CBI). The pedagogically designed psychological tool for explaining the definition of English sarcasm manifests this principle, which will be introduced in Chapter 3.

In addition, in order to help learners to better understand different uses of sarcasm, Kim recommended that teachers provide a great amount of multimodal input (i.e., video clips) that feature different kinds of sarcasm use in various contexts. Consequently, during the CBI instruction in my dissertation project, I used seventy-five video clips to show actual examples of sarcasm use in the L2 discourse.
**Speaker’s nonverbal behaviors**

The Korean learners in Kim’s study made value judgments on how some facial expressions used by NSs of English (e.g., sneer) would be generally considered and evaluated (e.g., “That’s attractive”). This assumption happened to agree with what the NSs who participated in the study. However, L2 learners, unlike NSs, may not identify other types of nonverbal cues (e.g., raised eyebrows, tilted head) as indicators of sarcasm possibly because learners’ L1 culture may not incorporate them to convey sarcastic messages, or simply may not use those types of nonverbal cues at all.

There are various types of visual cues and combinations of cues which are employed by English sarcasm users. It is important that instruction addresses different types of nonverbal cues (i.e., facial expression, gesture, bodily movements) and the possible meanings they convey when used in particular contexts. For example, video examples that show how speakers use certain types of nonverbal cues and how different combinations of these are manifested in different contexts will be useful. The types of nonverbal cues should include the following: (1) facial expressions (e.g., blank face, eyebrow raising, upward and downward pull of mouth and cheek muscles, eyeball rolling), (2) gestures (e.g., open hands, slow claps), and (3) body movements (e.g., tilted head, nods, crossed arms, arms on the hip).

**Physical setting**

There are instances in which a physical setting plays a crucial role in understanding sarcasm. For example, places where a certain level of linguistic formality is expected and the power dynamics between interlocutors are relatively well-defined (i.e.,
court of law) should be taken into consideration when detecting sarcasm. Indeed, there exist more physical settings that allow speakers to use sarcasm in the U.S. (e.g., TV news broadcast) than in Korea. Providing examples of various L2 physical settings in which sarcasm is used is likely to help learners to better understand the ubiquitous and diverse use of sarcasm.

*Interlocutor’s background knowledge of speaker’s biographical data*

The interlocutor’s background knowledge of the speaker’s biographical data (i.e., personality, tendency and frequency in using sarcasm, social status, relationship between the two) oftentimes plays a crucial role in interpreting sarcasm. Especially with Korean speakers, the relationship between the two interlocutors (i.e., age difference, level of closeness) is one of the most important contextual sources that tends be activated for processing sarcasm. This is due to the fact that social hierarchy and power dynamics are largely defined by age. Instruction can address the different expectations and interpretations in the understanding of contextual sources such as relative power, social distance, and degree of imposition between the two linguistic settings.

*Lexical cues*

Instruction on linguistic cues for detecting sarcasm should not be limited to merely providing the list of adverbs (e.g., absolutely), adjectives (e.g., fantastic), and nouns (e.g., genius) that can be used in sarcastic remarks. They should be presented along with other contextual sources in which those expressions are situated in specific contexts. It is also important to provide conventionalized sarcastic expressions used by English
speakers in the L2 setting. In addition, instruction can cover similarities and differences of some common linguistic strategies that speakers typically employ to formulate sarcastic utterances in the two linguistic settings.

2.2.2.4 Role of instruction: Inhibition and addition

The sarcasm-related cues and pedagogical guidelines suggested by Kim (under review) provided the groundwork for designing the instructional program for the dissertation project. Additionally, I followed the principles of Relevance Theory and Gal’perin’s notion of CBI.

From a relevance theoretic point of view, it is expected that not all assumptions available from the potential context are equally accessible at any given point in time. For L2 learners, they are very likely to begin with those contextual assumptions that are most easily accessible, which are most likely to be retrieved from their L1 schema. Appropriate interpretation of speaker intent can be achieved if a learner’s cognitive environment is well-equipped with relevant L2 contextual sources for detecting sarcasm. Figure 2.2 shows the addition of L2 sarcasm-relevant sources to learners’ cognitive environments. This addition will produce an overlap of sarcasm-relevant contextual sources between L1 and L2. Instruction can guide learners to attend to relevant contextual sources only by inhibiting irrelevant L1 cues and adding/permitting relevant L2 cues for more reliably detecting sarcasm.
The following section primarily discusses the principles of Gal’perin’s approach to concept-based instruction, as it is the primary framework for the pedagogical project described in this dissertation.

2.2.3 Principles of concept-based instruction (CBI)

As a strong advocate of formal school education, Vygotsky argued that scientific\(^3\) concepts should be the primary focus of instruction. Following Vygotsky’s position on the value of conceptual knowledge in formal education, Gal’perin (1989; 1992) developed a CBI model referred to as ‘systemic-theoretical instruction (STI).’ STI considers Vygotsky’s (1986) notion of scientific concepts as the minimal unit of

\(^{3}\) According to Vygotsky, scientific and spontaneous concepts evolve under different conditions. Scientific or theoretical concepts are systematic, abstract and generalizable concepts that should be deductively formulated through formal education. Spontaneous or empirical concepts, on the other hand, are inductively formed and originate from the worldly experiences that people undergo on a daily basis. Scientific thinking is a top-down process proceeding from abstractness to concreteness. The potential weakness of scientific knowledge lies in verbalism (i.e. excessive abstractness and detachment from reality). However, Vygotsky argues that it is not concepts themselves that result in verbalism, but the way they are presented and taught.
classroom instruction. Under this principle, STI consists of a three-phase procedure: materialization, verbalization, and internalization. These phases share the ultimate goal of promoting learners’ internalization of relevant concepts.

Materialization

Materialization requires the conversion of verbal representation of the concept into pedagogical diagrams. These pedagogical diagrams contain imagistic depictions that represent the concept in a systematic and complete way. During this phase, students learn how certain concepts and/or phenomena work through materialization of the concepts. This idea is based on the theoretical assumption that a concrete image is more coherent and more easily comprehended and thus serves as a better guide for understanding than a verbal definition. Gal’perin uses the term SCOBA (Scheme of a Complete Orienting Basis of the Action) to capture the role of materialization. The SCOBA is a practical example of a Vygotskian psychological tool offered to learners by a mediator at an external level. Learners are expected to appropriate and internalize this psychological tool. In other words, the SCOBA should be transformed into "the orienting basis of the action" (OBA): a mental schema which will guide the students' implementation of the concept. It can be considered to be an action plan in which the individual determines how the concept should be deployed in a particular context (e.g., communicative setting).

Verbalization

Verbalization requires learners to use the SCOBA as a guide to explain the concept to themselves in the form of private speech (i.e., whispering or speaking to themselves).
This asks learners to listen to themselves and determine whether they truly understand the concept or not. It also forces learners to externalize their rationales for deploying the concept as they do. Importantly, in Gal’perin’s STI, verbalization plays a dual role: to explain the concept and to explain use of the concept in communicative activity. Negueruela (2003), in his CBI instruction on Spanish grammar, acknowledged this dual role and defined verbalization as the intentional use of concepts as tools for understanding the relevant grammatical concept. Moving beyond the use of verbalization of the concept to promote conceptual understanding, Negueruela had his learners use the relevant concept as a tool for explaining the meanings they wished to express by consciously applying the concept to concrete communicative utterances. As Negueruela pointed out, verbalizations are activities where learners not only talk about the concept but also talk through the concept.

**Internalization**

The three-phase procedure terminates with the learner’s internalization in practice. In other words, once the concept is internalized, learners become able to exercise a full understanding of the concept without the guidance of the SCOBA. Thus, the SCOBA is transformed into the OBA, the internalized psychological tool that mediates the learner’s performance.

Through his STI studies, Gal’perin demonstrates that mental activity is not a mysterious internal process occurring solely within the brain of an individual. Instead, he argues, mental activity arises in and through practical and material activity, which is always linked to the problems of real-life material activity. Lantolf and Thorne (2006)
summarize these three stages of STI by noting, “These three principles are derived from Gal’perin’s general theory of human mental functioning according to which mental activity is controlled by three processes: orientation, execution, and control” (p. 304). The orientation process “determines what and how something is to be done” (ibid.), which the SCOBA is supposed to guide; the execution process represents the actual “doing” through externalization of the concept in concrete practical activity; and the control process evaluates whether, and to what extent, the orientation was successfully executed. Thus, the goal of concept-based pedagogy is to provide students with an orienting basis for action such that both mental and material activities are guided by coherent, systematic explanations of relevant concepts and/or how to plan and execute and evaluate (i.e., monitor) actions. In what follows, I provide brief descriptions of concept-based L2 grammar teaching research. I specifically focus on the types of SCOBAs and how they were implemented in particular instructional settings, since success of L2 grammar instruction depends upon the quality of explicit knowledge provided to students and the manner in which the knowledge is presented (Lantolf, 2006).

2.2.3.1 Concept-based second language instruction

Studies of concept-based L2 instruction have found that a meaning-based approach to designing pedagogical materials can effectively assist language learners to internalize relevant concepts. This research has also established that internalized linguistic concepts serve a powerful meditational role in L2 development and use. Table 2.2. shows the range of concepts taught and investigated so far.
Table 2.2. Concept-based L2 instruction studies to date

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concept/Topic</th>
<th>Reference(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>German passive voice</td>
<td>Kabanova (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French past tense</td>
<td>Oboukova et al. (2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish Genre in an ESL academic writing course</td>
<td>Ferreira (2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connection between literary and everyday language, including metaphor and verbal aspect</td>
<td>Yáñez Prieto (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English phrasal verbs</td>
<td>Lee (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French pronouns <em>Tu</em> and <em>Vous</em></td>
<td>van Compernolle (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese temporal grammar</td>
<td>Lai (2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learners in these studies engaged with various kinds of pedagogical SCOBAs (e.g., flow charts, 3-D clay models, pictures, etc.) and traced the developmental process of internalizing the target concepts. These studies argue that the quality of pedagogical material is a determinant of success in L2 learning. In what follows, I provide a description of the research carried out by Negueruela, Serrano-López & Poehner, and Lee,
cited above, as these projects have been the primary models for the research reported on in this dissertation.

Negueruela (2003)’s study was the first attempt in North America to apply CBI to everyday L2 classroom instruction. Participants in his study initially provided accounts of Spanish verbal aspect that relied on rules of thumb with a lack of completeness, coherence and systematicity. These participants provided a list of arbitrary properties that could accompany the imperfect or the preterit. In some cases, the definition that the students provided did not match the examples they used to illustrate their own rule of thumb. Negueruela also reported that most learners did not recognize that the use of aspect is not pre-established, but depends on the user’s perspective on the event that he or she intends to communicate to an interlocutor. In order to help students ultimately proceduralize the conceptual knowledge of the appropriate use of verbal aspect, Negueruela first created an algorithm (i.e., flow chart) that represented the concepts of mood, aspect, and tense in Spanish. The pedagogical model functioned as a psychological tool, which provided learners with a step-by-step guide for selecting appropriate grammatical forms for the meanings they wanted to create. Negueruela’s SCOBAs differed from lists of reductive rules and examples that are widely used in L2 instruction. The design was intended to promote deep understanding of a system of Spanish verbal aspect and thus to enhance the learner’s agency in meaning making.

Additionally, Negueruela assigned six at-home audio-recorded verbalization tasks in which students had to explain to themselves the relevant concepts. Students were also asked to engage in several spontaneous spoken-interactive tasks outside of class over the course of the 16-week academic term. Over time, participants provided definitions based
on more essential properties that were drawn from the SCOBA and came to understand that the user’s intention and perspective were decisive factors for determining verbal aspect in Spanish. It was also observed that the participants could eventually explain the grammatical concepts without directly referring to the SCOBA. Analysis found that learners’ verbalizations evolved from rule-of-thumb-based explanations of the use of perfective and imperfective aspect to meaning-based and conceptually-grounded understandings of the role of aspect in profiling a temporal framework for an interlocutor. This shift was an indication that these learners conceptualized grammar no longer as a set of fixed rules to follow but as a system of meaning potentials, which they could employ to accomplish their specific communicative purposes. Negueruela followed a similar procedure for instruction on verbal mood.

Serrano-López and Poehner (2008) report on a study that used clay modeling as a way of materializing and visualizing different meanings of Spanish prepositions. The approach, however, departed from Gal’perin’s original proposal of CBI and more closely aligned with a Davydov’s approach to developmental education (see Davydov, 2004; Ferreira, 2005). This is because the clay model SCOBA was not offered in a completed format, but was used as a means of illustrating students’ understanding of the grammatical items taught. Before becoming engaged in clay modeling, students were provided with explicit instruction (i.e., conceptual explanations) on some Spanish and English prepositions and were encouraged to think about the differences in meaning between the two. Then, students were asked to create clay models and to explain the meaning and signification of the model they constructed. Findings showed that the CBI helped learners clarify confusion about overlapping spatial concepts between Spanish and
English. Gradually, the students became less and less dependent on the external mediational tool as internal representation was established in their mind. Student performance was assessed through a Spatial Prepositions Usage Test. Results revealed that the CBI intervention had a significant effect both for the immediate and the delayed tests. Importantly, explicit instruction without the clay modeling activity had no significant effect for the immediate and the delayed post-tests. On the immediate post-test, no significant difference was found between the instruction-only group and the CBI group. However, on the follow-up test, the CBI group performed significantly better than the instruction-only group. These results indicate that the CBI accompanied by the clay modeling activity led to deeper understanding of the concepts and eventually to internalization. These results also confirm Gal’perin’s argument that the mere presentation of conceptual knowledge does not guarantee full internalization, but that external mediation is necessary to enhance the process.

In order to find ways to effectively materialize linguistic concepts, researchers can explore cognitive linguistics and applied cognitive linguistics. Lantolf (2006) points out that the concept-based nature of cognitive and applied cognitive linguistics is compatible with the STI method, because they see meaning rather than structure as the focal point of analysis. Consequently, linguistic concepts developed in cognitive linguistics are particularly relevant for materialization in CBI. Lee (2012) integrated a cognitive linguistics analysis for the semantics of English particles and phrasal verbs into the design of the SCOBAs used in her CBI project. The three particles included in her study were *out*, *up*, and *over*. The problem that most L2 learners have with phrasal verbs and particles is the metaphorical meanings they frequently carry. For example, while learners
usually do not have problems comprehending the literal meaning of a construction such as ‘The horse jumped over the fence,’ they do frequently encounter problems with sentences such as ‘The professor looked over the design of the research project.’ The SCOBAs Lee developed, based on cognitive linguistics, focused on helping learners perceive the connections between literal and metaphor uses of phrasal verbs that incorporate each of the three particles.

Six 50-minute class sessions were designed to highlight the systematicity of the semantics of phrasal verbs and to reinforce learners’ conceptual understanding with various learning activities. The analyses of pre- and post-test scores and three different types of verbalization tasks showed that CBI enabled the majority of students to externalize meanings of phrasal verbs in a more systematic manner. The results of the study also revealed that the guessing rate decreased, and learners’ explanations became semantically rich and image-oriented. In addition, the students were able to extend their understanding of the inherent connection between literal and metaphorical uses of phrasal verbs to new particles (in and down), which were not part of Lee’s instructional program. That is, not only did they develop understanding and control over the three particles and affiliated phrasal verbs, they were able to abstract from their experience the general relationship that holds for all particles and phrasal verbs in English.

2.3 Conclusion

Relevance Theory and Gal’perin’s notion of CBI provided the framework for designing this dissertation project. Concept development in L2 learners follows different
paths in comparison with monolingual speakers. Learners draw on the systems of meaning constructed through their L1 and incorporate the new L2 concept into their already existing system of meanings. Findings from Kim’s study (under review) support this claim by showing how Korean EFL learners tend to relate the concept of English sarcasm to its equivalent L1 meanings. Based on the findings of similarities and differences that exist in sarcasm use between Korean and English, Kim developed sarcasm-related contextual cues that (Korean) L2 learners should consider in order to recognize sarcasm. Through instruction that promotes inhibition and addition of relevant cues that operate in the two cognitive-linguistic environments, Kim predicted that learners would become better able to detect and grasp the meaning of sarcastic utterances (see section 2.2.2.4).

This dissertation project sought to further develop Kim’s study through implementation of a CBI instructional program based on Gal’perin’s theory of developmental education. Concept-based pedagogy emphasizes three procedural aspects of mental actions: orientation, execution, and control. In concept-based instruction, conceptual knowledge should be foregrounded as the central component of developing the ability to control the learner’s actions voluntarily to achieve his or her goal. Because concept-based pedagogy focuses on materialized scientific concepts as the minimal unit of instruction, I developed SCOBAs that represent two primary concepts—the concept of sarcasm (i.e., definition and use) and how to detect and understand it (i.e., sarcasm-related cues). Learners engaged with these psychological tools through CBI instruction, which was designed to promote the internalization of the concepts. Internalized concepts provide an orientation to action, and they also serve to control, monitor, and evaluate the
action. The concept-based instruction on sarcasm as described in the dissertation articulates the key aspects of concept-based pedagogy illustrated in this chapter. The next chapter explains the research design specifically focusing on the following: (1) instructional methods incorporated in CBI; (2) data collection methods; and (3) how (1) and (2) articulate the key aspects of concept-based pedagogy illustrated in this chapter.
Chapter 3

Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter describes the research design and the method of the study. In addition, it provides detailed accounts on how the target concept and features were materialized. An amalgam of the theoretical frameworks and findings from Kim’s empirical study enabled the researcher to design CBI for teaching the concept of sarcasm and to develop appropriate pedagogical materials.

3.2 Participants

Participants in the study included nine Korean advanced-level university learners of L2 English. They were recruited through an email advertisement for a study on instruction in L2 sarcasm. The advertisement included the purpose of the study, the importance of learning about the concept of sarcasm, the method of instruction (i.e., one-on-one tutorial sessions), the duration of each session, the number of sessions, and the amount of compensation for participating in the study. The advertisement was sent to PhD students and post-doc English learners in the departments of engineering, economics, computer science, and other science and math related majors at Penn State. Students who may have been exposed to any type of instruction on the tropes of figurative language
such as sarcasm and other types of irony were excluded. For this reason, the advertisement was not sent to students enrolled in Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, English, Comparative Literature, and Communications.

A total of twenty-three people volunteered, and ten participants were selected through a screening process. The process entailed a pre-test and an individual interview. The pre-test consisted of 10 test items and utilized the following materials: 10 video clips, video scene scripts, and test sheets. For each test item, volunteers were asked to watch a short video clip and fulfill three tasks: (1) a sarcasm identification task, (2) a speaker intent comprehension task, and (3) a potential sarcasm cue identification task. All three tasks were completed in the presence of the researcher. Volunteers used the scripts provided for each scene (i.e., dialogue transcript) to underline any sarcasm they identified in the video clip. Then they were asked to choose (i.e., checking a tick box) three cues from among eight sarcasm-related cues presented on the test sheet. Finally, the volunteers indicated in writing how they understood the underlying/intended meaning of the sarcastic utterances they chose. Once the test was over, the researcher held individual interview sessions with the 23 volunteers. During the interviews, the researcher asked ten questions (see Appendix A) mainly to check participants’ understanding of the definition and use of sarcasm in both L1 and L2. The researcher also asked participants to elaborate more on the answers for Task 3 test items, if necessary. Volunteers were also asked to verbalize their inferencing processes (i.e. explain why they think it is sarcasm) and how they reached the speaker’s intended meaning and attitude.

The researcher selected ten participants from the twenty-three volunteers based on their test scores and interviews. This recruitment was based on the following three steps.
First, volunteers who correctly identified more than fifteen sarcastic utterances out of twenty in the pre-test were excluded. Second, the researcher prioritized volunteers who previously had not watched or did not remember the majority of the video clips that were used in the three tests and CBI. Third, after the first two steps, volunteers who expressed interest (e.g., motivation and the need to learn) in the instruction were prioritized more than others.

As indicated in the advertisement, the ten volunteers were offered compensation for their time and effort in the amount of $120 for the study, which was prorated in the amount of $10 per session. Among the ten participants, one withdrew from the study on Week 4, due to a family emergency. The remaining nine participants all completed the sixteen-week study.

Table 3.1 displays basic information about these nine participants, including the pseudonym assigned to each. Six are male and three are female.

Table 3.1. Participant information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Number of years spent in the US</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BOA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>(No major)</td>
<td>6 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHO</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Workforce education</td>
<td>4 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HONG</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>Animal Science</td>
<td>4 months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JIN</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Accounting</td>
<td>3 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEE</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>2 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIA</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Educational Leadership</td>
<td>2 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOON</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>Mineral Science</td>
<td>3 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WANG</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>3 ½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOH</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>Civil Engineering</td>
<td>2 ½ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Concept-based instruction (CBI)

The goals of the concept-based instruction in the present study were to promote learners’ internalization of the concept of English sarcasm as well as to assist them to use this conceptual knowledge to detect and appropriately interpret sarcasm when uttered by native speakers of English. The instruction primarily consisted of four overarching topics: definition of sarcasm, and potential visual, prosodic, and contextual cues for detecting sarcasm. Additionally, learners’ engagement in SCOBAs always included the following three-steps: presentation of a SCOBA, discussion of the SCOBA, and discussion of video clip example(s) that represent and exemplify the concept in the SCOBA. The discussions also included analogies between learners’ L1 and L2 in terms of the meanings and use of relevant concepts and of multiple cues for processing sarcasm introduced in the SCOBAs.

3.3.1 Pedagogical diagrams: SCOBAs

As highlighted in chapter 2, a presentation of scientific knowledge itself is not sufficient for in-depth understanding of the concept. Researchers instead should devote more attention to how the knowledge is presented to and internalized by learners (Lantolf, 2006). Thus, the researcher/instructor developed eight pedagogical diagrams to provide learners with an orienting basis for both the mental and material activities discussed in the previous chapter. Through these diagrams the instructor sought to coherently and systematically explain the concept of sarcasm and how to detect and understand it when
used in spoken discourse. In what follows, I outline the goals of using each diagram and explain how participants engaged with each one of them.

SCOBA 1: Emotions and Communicative Goals in the Use of Sarcasm (Figure 3.1)

SCOBA 1 depicts various speaker intentions and communicative goals that speakers intend to accomplish via sarcasm. Speaker attitudes and intent exist along a continuum, at one end of which sarcasm conveys negative messages (i.e., to insult), while at the other end sarcasm expresses positive intentions (i.e., to bond). The instructor provided examples of sarcasm and situations in which these utterances are likely to be used to accomplish each communicative goal. The first discussion topic of session 1 was why participants should learn how to understand English sarcasm. While explaining the ubiquity of sarcasm in U.S. culture, the tutor further elaborated on possible types of emotions that may prompt speakers to convey various sarcastic intentions and attitudes. The tutor also provided real-life examples (i.e., observational verbal data) in which the various communicative goals are accomplished through uttering sarcasm in different contexts. Learners were also asked to think of some equivalent sarcastic expressions in Korean if available.
Figure 3.1. SCOBA 1: How different emotions may prompt a speaker to use different types of sarcasm to achieve various communicative goals

SCOBA 2: Definition and Types of Verbal Irony (Figure 3.2)

SCOBA 2 introduces ‘verbal irony’ as an overarching concept that entails five subcategories: ironic sarcasm, hyperbole, understatements, double entendre, and rhetorical questions. The diagram describes that not all sarcasm is ironic and vice versa by treating ironic sarcasm as a subcategory of both sarcasm and verbal irony. The diagram presents examples of sarcastic utterances that show that sarcasm and verbal irony are not identical in terms of their definitions and use.
Figure 3.2. SCOBA 2: Definition and types of verbal irony

SCOBA 3: Potential Sarcastic Facial Expressions I (Figure 3.3)

SCOBA 3 displays pictures of multiple types of facial expressions that sarcasm users tend to exhibit either intentionally or unintentionally (e.g., blank face, sneer, fake smile, etc.). After discussing each facial expression, the instructor provided video-clip examples in which sarcasm users incorporated these facial expressions.
Figure 3.3. SCOBA 3: Potential sarcastic facial expressions (Part I – Overall Face)

SCOBA 4: Potential Sarcastic Facial Expressions II (Figure 3.4)

SCOBA 4 concretizes the notion of sarcastic facial expressions by providing examples of potential sarcastic eye and eyebrow movements of a face. The instructor provided video clip examples of these expressions, which learners practiced analyzing and deconstructing by identifying how each of the detailed parts moved.
Figure 3.4. SCOBA 4: Potential sarcastic facial expressions (Part II – Eyes and eyebrows)

SCOBA 5: Potential Sarcastic Facial Expressions III (Figure 3.5)

SCOBA 5 focuses the mouth area by discussing movements of lips, lip corners, jaw and cheek muscles, and tongue.

Figure 3.5. SCOBA 5: Potential sarcastic facial expressions (Part III – Mouth area)
SCOBA 6: Potential sarcastic gestures (Figure 3.6)

SCOBA 6 illustrates potential sarcastic gestures by providing pictures. After leading a discussion on each gesture in the diagram, the instructor provided video-clip examples in which speakers incorporated the potential sarcastic gestures discussed.

Figure 3.6. SCOBA 6: Potential sarcastic gestures

SCOBA 7: Potential sarcastic body movements (Figure 3.7)

SCOBA 7 provides examples of body movements that sarcasm users tend to adopt.
Figure 3.7. SCOBA 7: Potential sarcastic body movements

SCOBA 8: How to detect and understand sarcasm (Figure 3.8)

SCOBA 8 presents a cognitive step as a guide to help learners detect (ironic) sarcasm when used in verbal discourse. The initial step asks interlocutors/learners to determine if there is a contrast between a speaker’s utterance and an interlocutor’s expectation of a non-sarcastic utterance, given the context of the communication. In other words, the interlocutor should sense some kind of mismatch between the speaker’s utterance and the non-ironic and/or non-sarcastic utterance(s) that could generally be expected within the given situation. For instance, if the speaker utters “What great weather!” when it had been thundering and raining for five consecutive days, the interlocutor should sense some kind of incompatibility between the way the speaker evaluated the circumstance and the utterance(s) the interlocutor might expect in non-sarcastic communication. The flow chart guides the interlocutor to possible next steps and other cues (i.e., visual, prosodic, contextual) needed to reach possible speaker intent.
of sarcasm or non-sarcasm. More details of how learners engaged in the above-mentioned SCOBAs will be discussed in section 3.5 and chapter 4.

Figure 3.8. SCOBA 8: Process of sarcasm detection and comprehension
3.4 Data Collection

The researcher collected two main sets of data: ethnographic (qualitative) data and quantitative data over a sixteen-week period.

3.4.1 Qualitative data

The primary sources of ethnographic data consisted of five main subsets: (1) Individual interviews (i.e., pre-CBI interview, post-CBI interview); (2) In-class video data (i.e., verbal explanations on homework; CBI interaction); (3) Group activity (i.e., visual cue miming); (4) Focus-group discussion; (5) Student writing (i.e., interpretive-essay writings; movie script writing); and (6) Student-produced SCOBA.

(1) Individual interviews

Each learner participated in two individual interviews throughout the tutorial. The initial interviews were held before CBI. The primary purpose of the initial interview was to discover the background knowledge of learners’ understanding of the notion of sarcasm both in their L1 (Korean) and L2 (English). It was expected that the learners would not have much conscious awareness of the details of how sarcasm functions in L1 or in L2. During the instruction, the tutor attempted to enable the learners to make their implicit knowledge of sarcasm in L1 conscious and then to connect this knowledge to the
new knowledge from English. In this way the developmental process started from what
the learners already knew, which is their knowledge of L1 sarcasm.

The post-instruction interview aimed to investigate students’ learning processes
and outcomes in regards to the instruction they received. The students were asked to (1)
verbalize how they define the concept of English sarcasm, (2) explain how they
understand certain sarcastic utterances, which were pre-recorded to ensure uniformity of
presentation for each learner, and (3) talk about their learning experience and overall
thoughts and feelings about the instruction they received.

(2) In-class video data

Instruction was conducted once a week for a twelve-week period. Each tutorial
session, which lasted approximately 50 to 60 minutes, was video-recorded. Participants
were engaged in CBI tutorial sessions individually in which multiple pedagogical
diagrams were presented to explain the theoretical knowledge of English verbal irony and
sarcasm and how to understand them.

Discussions of pedagogical diagrams always included video-clip examples that
concretized the relevant concepts. Throughout the tutorials, learners were provided with
more than 30 video clips that contained various instances of sarcasm with different
combinations of potential sarcastic cues. The clips were taken primarily from U.S. TV
shows (e.g., non-scripted talk shows, sitcoms, cartoons, etc.) and YouTube video clips
that featured political debates, TV news programs, etc. Additionally, the tutor used
written examples of sarcasm taken primarily from Amazon product reviews and Twitter
and Facebook commentaries.
Learners were expected to discover the relations among concepts, which often moved from abstract to concrete and vice-versa. The primary data from the in-class videos included two parts: (1) verbal explanations of learners’ interpretive-essay writing assignments; and (2) detailed processes of how learners made sense out of each of the pedagogical materials (i.e., diagrams, video clips) throughout the interaction with the instructor, which will be discussed in chapter 4.

(3) Group activity

In week 5, after discussions of SCOBAs 3 to 6, learners engaged in a miming activity in which the main goal was to have learners imitate the potential sarcasm-related visual cues. Participants were asked to create their own combinations of sarcastic visual cues by combining different kinds of potential sarcastic facial expressions, gestures, and bodily movements. Then they were asked to physically express/mime those combinations and to video-record them. Finally, the instructor asked peers to guess the types of visual cues incorporated by analyzing each recorded video clip. Later, learners were asked to select some of the visual cue combinations they created and use them for the characters in their movie-script writing assignment submitted in week 10.

(4) Focus group discussion

Focus group discussions were video-recorded with the expectation that learners would express their opinions based on what other participants said. The nine participants gathered in a conference room equipped with a wide TV screen and watched approximately a three-minute video clip taken from a non-scripted TV courtroom show.
The instructor provided a script for the video clip and asked the participants to underline every instance of sarcasm that they identified. The participants were also asked to prepare rationales for their selections. Learners then discussed which utterances they identified as sarcasm and provided the underlying meanings and possible speaker intent, attitudes, and communicative goals. Participants actively expressed their agreements and disagreements with each other’s interpretations of the selected sarcastic utterances and the roles and meanings of the relevant types of cues.

(5) Student writing

The primary data source of student-produced writing included two parts: interpretive-essay writing and movie script writing. For the interpretive-essay writing assignments, learners were asked to analyze and deconstruct the features to detect and understand speakers’ use of sarcasm in the video clips they watched as homework. In addition to the individual interviews, learners’ interpretive-essay writing was a good source of verbalization data. Learners had a chance to engage in self talk using relevant concepts as a tool for understanding different manifestations of sarcastic utterances.

For their practice activity, learners wrote snippets of a movie script in which they incorporated multiple kinds of sarcasm-related cues discussed throughout the tutorial sessions to express sarcasm in the movie scenes. Learners re-visited their own miming video scenes to select the visual cue combinations that they wanted to use for their movie snippets. The movie-script writing assignment was an activity that enabled the instructor to understand the depth of the learners’ theoretical knowledge of the concept of sarcasm.
and of each of the sarcasm-related cues presented on multiple SCOBAs. Details will be discussed in chapter 4.

(6) Student-produced SCOBA

In week 10, students were asked to summarize the knowledge they acquired throughout the tutorial sessions and create their own SCOBA that represents the inference process of the detection and comprehension of sarcasm in a coherent and systematic manner. Students’ products of the SCOBA-development-activity enabled the instructor to understand whether or not they internalized the concepts discussed during the CBI.

3.4.2 Quantitative data

Pre- and Post-tests: All learners were given a pre-test before instruction began as well as a post-test one week after instruction ended. Both assessments primarily consisted of two parts: a written test and an individual interview. A written test was conducted first and the individual interview followed.

As for the written test, learners were first given test sheets and watched a video clip for each of the ten test items in the presence of the instructor. On the test sheets, there were scripts for each scene (i.e., dialogue transcript) and all eleven sarcasm-related cues (as presented in SCOBA 8) were shown with a tick box next to each cue. Learners were then informed that there was one target sarcastic utterance and three sarcasm-related cues in each clip. They were also instructed that different combinations of three cues (out of eleven cues) might occur in different test items. During the test, the instructor played
the video clip and the learners were asked to do the following: (1) underline any sarcastic utterance they detect in each clip, (2) indicate the speaker’s intended meaning, and (3) choose the three sarcasm-related cues from among the eight presented which they attended to for detecting sarcasm by ticking the appropriate boxes. The instructor played video clips twice when asked by participants. Table 3.2 presents the written test sheet used during all three tests.

After the written test, the instructor conducted an individual interview with each participant in which they were asked to verbalize their inferencing processes (e.g. explain why they think it is sarcasm) and how they reached the speakers’ intended meaning and attitudes. Four weeks after the initial post-test, a delayed post-test following the same format was administered.
Table 3.2. Test sheet used in pre- and post-tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Questions</th>
<th>[Clip # ]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Underline the sarcasm you identified in the video clip.

2. Choose three cues you attended to while detecting the sarcasm.

- Speaker’s facial expression (화자의 얼굴 표정)
- Gesture (화자의 손동작)
- Body movements (화자의 손 이외의 혹은 손을 포함한 몸동작)
- Speaker’s use of prosodic cues (화자의 억양, 강세 등)
- Physical setting (화자와 청자가 있는 장소, 물리적환경)
- Previous context (i.e., dialogue, situation) (앞전에 일어났던 화자와 청자간의 대화 혹은 각자 혹은 그 들이 함께 처해있던 상황)
- Speaker’s biographical data (화자의 직업, 성격, 개인적 특징 등)
- Speaker’s current emotional state (화자의 현재 감정적 상태)
- Social relationship b/w speaker and interlocutor (화자와 청자의 관계 – 부모 자식간, 상사와 부하간, 교사와 학생간, 친한 친구사이 등)
- Speaker’s encyclopedic knowledge about the culture of the community (화자가 속한 사회와 그 문화 특성에 대한 화자 본인의 이해)
- Lexical cues (특정 단어나 표현)

3. Write the intended meaning of the sarcasm uttered by the speaker. Explain the speaker’s communicative goal(s), emotion(s), and/or motive(s) that could have been involved in the use of sarcasm.

___________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________

3.5 CBI Interaction

This section provides more details on the nature of interaction occurred during each tutorial session and how learners engaged in SCOBAs. The two basic theoretical framework adopted in the project include (1) rendering the addition and inhibition of
appropriate sarcasm-related contextual cues that exist in learners’ L1 and L2 cognitive environments, and (2) implementing Gal’perin’s pedagogical proposals of CBI. The first principle was accomplished primarily through in-depth discussions (held in L1) on the comparison and analysis of different manifestations of sarcastic utterances between L1 and L2. The tutor ensured the second principle by applying the notions of orientation, materialization, and internalization in the process of learners’ engagement in CBI interactions. Importantly, at the core of the interaction were the tutor’s semantic-pragmatic explanations to promote learners’ functional understanding of the concept (i.e., how various sarcastic utterances are used in diverse contexts to achieve different goals).

Session 1 of the CBI interaction attempted to assess learners’ actual level of development (i.e., what they knew and were able to do independently at the start of the instruction). Pre-test scores and individual interviews enabled the instructor to diagnose learners’ awareness and comprehension level in the definition and use of sarcasm in both L1 and L2. This first session also enabled the instructor to understand specific areas of difficulties for each individual.

Session 2 contained three primary topics: why study sarcasm, how speakers of English understand and use sarcasm, and the definition of sarcasm as a sub-category of verbal irony. First, the tutor began the session with a discussion of the reasons for studying sarcasm. Then, by using SCOBA 1, the tutor explained how sarcasm is used at a general level. The tutor elicited the ubiquity of sarcasm in everyday life by discussing how various emotions can prompt speakers to use different types of sarcasm to accomplish diverse communicative goals. After the discussion, the tutor provided learners with research evidence that demonstrates how ordinary people in the U.S. tend to
understand sarcasm and irony (Kreuz & Glucksberg, 1989). Fourth, the tutor provided written and video examples of sarcastic utterances used in different contexts. By doing so, learners were able to understand how the general notion of sarcasm is concretized in actual communication. Then, using the SCOBA, learners practiced identifying possible speaker emotions and communicative goals that corresponded to each example provided by the tutor. Sixth, the tutor introduced the concept of sarcasm with its overarching category ‘verbal irony’ and other sub-categories (i.e., hyperbole, understatements, rhetorical questions, double entendre) of verbal irony. SCOBA 2 enabled learners to understand the differences and relations among these concepts. Lastly, the tutor provided two dictionary definitions of sarcasm from American Heritage Dictionary (2002) and Macmillan English Dictionary (2007). Then, learners compared their understanding of Korean sarcasm to English sarcasm. As for the homework, learners were asked to bring examples of English and Korean sarcasm for the next session, which reflected their understandings of the various manifestations of sarcasm.

Session 3 introduced three overarching types of cues for detecting and understanding sarcasm: visual, prosodic, and contextual cues. The tutor explained the existence of various cues that speakers of English attend to while detecting and understanding sarcastic utterances. The tutor provided results from empirical studies that demonstrate the kinds of cues used in one’s inference process in ironic and sarcastic communication. Then the tutor led the discussion that centered on potential visual cues for detecting sarcasm, especially by focusing on facial expressions in an overall sense. After that, learners practiced deconstructing and identifying potential sarcastic facial
expressions presented in four video clips. The tutor provided another video clip for learners to analyze and on which to write interpretive essays as homework.

Session 4 continued with the discussion of potential sarcastic visual cues. However, it more concretized the notion of ‘sarcastic facial expression’ by dividing a face into three areas: eye, nose, and mouth areas. Additionally, the tutor provided SCOBAs that illustrated examples of other types of visual cues, which included gestures and body movements. Finally, learners practiced identifying the types of movements that occur in the three facial regions and other parts of a body from video-clip examples provided by the tutor.

Session 5 was conducted three times with three groups of learners. Each group consisted of three members. The groups of learners participated in a group miming activity in which learners were asked to carry out three tasks: (1) creating five visual cue combinations to achieve different communicative goals of sarcasm; (2) miming them while video-recording; (3) and deconstructing and identifying the types of visual cues that each participant was using during miming. In order to complete Task 1, learners used SCOBAs 3 to 7, which illustrate various kinds of potential visual cues for sarcasm. While each learner was miming the visual cue combinations, other participants were asked to identify the types of visual cues that the miming person was incorporating. After the completion of the tasks participants gathered together and shared their uptake and overall feelings about the session.

Sessions 6 and 7 dealt with prosodic cues for detecting sarcasm. Session 6 introduced different types of prosodic cues that English speakers adopt while conveying sarcastic messages. Video scenes provided concrete examples of a ‘sarcastic tone of
Participants discussed various examples of prosodic cues that included the following: a wide pitch range with greatly exaggerated pitch changes, monotone or flattened pitch range, heavier stress, vowel elongation, slower tempo in delivery, louder volume, nasalization, increased pause, slurred articulation, more precise articulation, and laughter.

The tutor also used written examples of sarcasm taken from various sources (e.g., corpus-data, novels, Amazon reviewer commentaries, Twitter comments) in which the writers attempted to convey specific kinds of tonalities through their use of particular verbs, punctuation markers, and emoticons. Participants practiced identifying these different kinds of prosodic cues embedded in multiple video scenes. Session 7 focused more on encouraging participants to independently identify various kinds of prosodic cues in diverse contexts.

The next two sessions turned from the discussion of prosodic cues to the analysis of contextual cues. Session 8 introduced diverse contextual cues that need to be considered in order to understand sarcasm. The primary goal of the session was to learn about different types of contextual cues embedded in sarcastic communication through multiple videos. The tutor specifically focused on explaining particular types of L2 encyclopedic knowledge that may not commonly exist in learners’ L1 cultural schemas.

Session 9 focused on video examples that required insider knowledge of the L2 culture to grasp speaker intent. The tutor also showed video examples where only a few of the contextual cues appeared while speakers did not use any particular type of visual and/or prosodic cue. The tutor and the learner discussed particular types of L2 cultural knowledge that need to be applied in order to understand the underlying meanings of
some sarcastic utterances. For a final project, learners wrote and drew six snippets of a movie script that contained sarcastic utterance(s). Learners were encouraged to include some of the cues for detecting and understanding sarcasm discussed during the tutorial sessions. Additionally, learners were asked to create their own SCOBA that represents the process of sarcasm detection and comprehension.

Session 10 was the second group-activity session in which groups of three students worked together. The tutor’s initial plan was to have group members present their movie scripts by acting them out with the expectation that learners may creatively imitate⁴ the combinations of visual cues they created and analyzed during session 5. However, the majority of learners openly resisted the idea because they felt uncomfortable. Consequently, the tutor asked the groups of learners to watch a 3-minute-long video clip that contained instances of sarcasm and some new contextual cues that they had not discussed in the previous sessions. Participants were asked to underline every sarcastic instance using the script provided. They were also asked to write the underlying speaker intent for each sarcastic utterance and record the types of cues they noticed during the video. No materials were provided other than the video scene script. Finally, learners shared their answers and their interpretations of the sarcastic instances. Often, learners did not agree on the selections and interpretations made by other participants.

⁴ Vygotsky (1987) and Tomasello (1999) make a distinction between repetition and imitation. According to Tomasello, imitation is a uniquely human form of cultural transmission that implies agency and intentionality, whereas repetition and mimicking do not. Through imitation, human mental capacity is formed in the transition from external to internal activity.
Session 11 featured a post-test that followed the same format as session 1: a written test and an individual interview. The post-test included the same number of items and used the same sheet as the pre-test. In this way, the session was designed to mirror session 1 as a means of comparing the pre-CBI and post-CBI developmental processes. Post-test results enabled the instructor to check whether learners have internalized the concept of sarcasm and the comprehension method.

Five weeks after session 11, session 12 was held to give participants a delayed post-test using the same test format. Table 3.3 presents an outline of the CBI interaction that occurred during a 16-week period. Every session starting with session 2 began with learners verbally explaining their homework (i.e., rationales for identifications, difficulties and overall thoughts about the homework). All sessions were video taped.

Table 3.3. Outline of the CBI interaction

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session</th>
<th>Tutorial content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Session 1 | - Individual interview #1  
|           | - Pre-test  
|           | - Homework:  
|           |   ‘Bring examples of sarcasm for both English and Korean.’ |
| Session 2 | - Why learn how to understand sarcasm? – SCoba 1  
|           | - Concepts of verbal irony and sarcasm – SCoba 2  
|           | - Video clip examples  
|           | - Homework: Interpretive essay #1  
|           |   ‘Analyze & deconstruct visual cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 3 | - How to detect and understand sarcasm – SCoba 8  
|           | - Visual cues (Part 1) – SCoba 3  
|           | - Video clip examples  
|           | - Homework: Interpretive essay #2  
|           |   ‘Analyze & deconstruct visual cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 4 | - Visual cues (Part 2) – SCOBA #4 to SCOBA #7  
| | - Video clip examples  
| | - Homework: Interpretive essay #3  
| | ‘Analyze & deconstruct visual cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 5 | - Group miming:  
| | ‘Create your own combinations of visual cues and express them.’  
| | - Focus group discussion #1 |
| Session 6 | - Vocal cues (Part 1)  
| | - Video clip examples  
| | - Homework: Interpretive essay #4  
| | ‘Analyze & deconstruct vocal cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 7 | - Vocal cues (Part 2)  
| | - Video clip examples  
| | - Homework: Interpretive essay #5  
| | ‘Analyze & deconstruct vocal cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 8 | - Contextual cues (Part 1)  
| | - Video clip examples  
| | - Homework: Interpretive essay #6  
| | ‘Analyze & deconstruct contextual cues for determining sarcasm in the video clip.’ |
| Session 9 | - Contextual cues (Part 2)  
| | - Video clip examples  
| | - Final project: Movie script writing  
| | ‘Write and draw 6 snippets of a movie script that contain sarcasm. Include some of the cues discussed in class.’ |
| Session 10 | - Focus group discussion #2  
| | - Homework: Student-produced SCOBA  
| | ‘Develop SCOBA that represents the process of sarcasm detection.’ |
| Session 11 | - Post-test  
| | - Individual interview #2 |
| Session 12 (Week 16) | - Delayed post-test |
3.6 Assessments

The data were analyzed both in qualitative and quantitative methods to answer the three research questions: (1) In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote theoretical understanding of the concept of sarcasm among L2 learners of English?; (2) In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote L2 learners’ improved comprehension of sarcasm as produced by native speakers of English?; (3) Were learners able to use appropriate cues in detecting sarcasm in natural speech? Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis revealed the results of learning from the CBI tutorial sessions.

3.6.1 Scoring of the pre-test, post-test, and delayed post-test

The basic unit of analysis was learners’ written answers in response to each test item. For each test answer, the researcher assigned a total score that reflected the accuracy of the answer (i.e., whether the participant identified the sarcastic utterance in the test item correctly or not) and the correct sarcasm-related cues that were selected to justify the answer.

As stated, each test item contained one sarcastic utterance and three sarcasm-related cues. Different combinations of three cues occurred in some video clips, while other clips contained the same combination(s). Learners were given one point for correctly identifying the target sarcastic utterance and selecting one correct cue, and an additional 2 points for correctly choosing the remaining two cues. Therefore, the score
distribution followed the formula ‘if \( x = a, p = a \) (\( a = 0, 1, 2, 3 \)),’ in which ‘\( x \)’ indicates the number of correct cues selected by the learner and ‘\( p \)’ refers to ‘point(s).’ However, if the learner failed to identify the target sarcastic utterance in the test item, this principle was not applied regardless of the number of correct cue(s) chosen by him or her. In all cases in which the learner failed to identify the sarcastic utterance, she or he was assigned zero points as a total score. A correct identification of sarcasm in every test item should satisfy the following condition: the learner not only correctly identifies the target sarcastic utterance but also selects one correct cue among the three target cues. The researcher used five codes and calculated the total scores as follows:

1. Correct identification with all correct cues (CCC): assigned when the participant correctly identified sarcasm in a test item and justified the answer by drawing on three relevant sarcasm-related cues. CCC answers were given 3 full points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Cue 1</th>
<th>Cue 2</th>
<th>Cue 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student answers</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Correct identification with two correct cues (CC): assigned when the learner correctly identified sarcasm and chose two correct cues but failed to select the third cue. The total score assigned was 2 points.
3. Correct identification with one correct cue (C): assigned when the learner correctly identified sarcasm and selected only one correct cue out of three answers s/he chose. Code C answers were given one point as a total score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Cue 1</th>
<th>Cue 2</th>
<th>Cue 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student answers</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Correct identification of the target sarcastic utterance with no correct cue (CI): assigned when the learner correctly identified the target sarcastic utterance but failed to choose a correct cue. CI answers were assigned a score of zero, since they did not meet the minimum criterion of a correct identification of sarcasm which not only required correctly identifying the target sarcastic utterance but also selecting one of the three cues that occurred in the test item. Thus, no points were assigned.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Cue 1</th>
<th>Cue 2</th>
<th>Cue 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student answers</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Correct</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Incorrect identification of the target sarcastic utterance (II): assigned when the learner incorrectly identified the target sarcastic utterance no matter how many correct cue or cues were selected. The total score assigned was zero.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Identification</th>
<th>Cue 1</th>
<th>Cue 2</th>
<th>Cue 3</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student answers</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Incorrect</td>
<td>Code: II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Points</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There was no correct sequence for selecting three cues.

3.6.2 Analysis of test scores

All data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Pre-, post-, and delayed post-test scores were compared via the two-tailed Wilcoxon signed-ranks test to assess for improved comprehension following CBI.
3.6.3 Native English speakers as judges

Three native English-speaking judges were recruited for rating the video clips for sarcasm and appropriate cues. The judges were trained to identify the target sarcastic utterances in all video clips (i.e., test items and video materials that were used for the tutorial sessions) and to label each cue that they found in accordance with the eleven sarcasm-related cues. This was a crucial step since it formed the basis for scoring learner responses.

3.7 Conclusion

The present study focuses on the development of both the conceptual knowledge and the comprehension ability of sarcasm through Gal’perin’s notion of concept-based instruction. The primary principles of CBI used in this dissertation project include the following: (1) the concept as the unit of instruction; (2) materialization of the concept into psychological tools; (3) learner engagement in interaction with the tutor who offers semantic-pragmatic explanations to promote a functional understanding of the concept; (4) internalization through verbalization; and (5) internalization through imitation.

Within the sociocultural framework adopted in the study, the qualitative data that reveals the nature of the interactions that occurred during instruction is important to understanding in what ways the CBI interaction promoted (or did not promote) learners’ internalization of the concept and conceptual development. Thus, the analytic emphasis of this dissertation is threefold: the outcomes of the study in terms of (1) internalizing the
concept of English sarcasm; (2) using this conceptual knowledge to detect sarcasm and
gain control over selecting appropriate cues to properly interpret speaker intent when
uttered by native speakers of English; and (3) the processes by which concept
development occurred. The detailed results of the study are presented in chapter 4.
Chapter 4

Results and Analysis of Pre-CBI Interviews

4.1 Introduction

Chapters 4 through 6 present the results and analysis of concept development among the nine students who participated in this study. The analysis centers on three specific areas: (1) concept development in the definition and use of sarcasm as evidenced in verbalization data (i.e., individual interviews; homework explanations; in-class discussion; focus group discussion), student-produced SCOBAs, and student writing (i.e., interpretive essay writing); (2) sarcasm detection and comprehension ability as evidenced by performance on the three tests (i.e., pre-, post-, and delayed post-test); and (3) the ability to use appropriate cues in detecting sarcasm as evidenced in the answers and the scores from the three tests. Multiple sources and types of data were collected and analyzed; thus the assessment of learners’ conceptual development was necessarily multidimensional. This approach allowed the researcher to finely-tune evaluation of learners’ abilities, which may not always be revealed by a single type of data collection instrument as argued in Kinginger (2008). All communication between the tutor and learners occurred in Korean. Excerpts of data presented in all chapters have been translated from Korean to English and then transcribed using the conventions shown in Appendix A.
This chapter reports the findings of the pre-CBI individual interviews in which learners were asked to describe their understanding of Korean and English sarcasm in three aspects: definition and example, possible speaker intent, and cues that indicate speaker intent to communicate sarcasm.

4.2 Verbalized reflections

As described in chapter 3, the individual interviews were designed to assess the learners’ general understanding of the concept of L2 sarcasm. In order to gauge the actual development level (i.e., where they have been so far) of learners’ conceptual understanding of English sarcasm, the tutor initiated the interview by discussing the Korean concept of sarcasm. The interview questions included the following primary topics: definition of sarcasm, examples of sarcasm, purpose of sarcasm (i.e., possible speaker intent and goals), and the types of cues to consider when detecting and comprehending sarcasm. Once the interview on Korean sarcasm was concluded, the same set of questions was used for discussing English sarcasm.

4.2.1 Korean equivalent words

As stated in Chapter 2, learners tend to incorporate new L2 concepts into the classification system already available in their L1 and rely on these previously developed meaning systems. Vygotsky (1986) also denoted the importance of the role of L1 in learning L2 semantics, arguing that the acquisition of an additional language is mediated
by the learner’s L1 in that the learner uses the semantics of the L1 as its foundation. Thus, the most likely way for learners to achieve understanding the concept of L2 sarcasm is through their L1 translation equivalent:

English word ‘sarcasm’ → Korean translation equivalent → Korean concept

The tutor began by asking participants to provide a Korean equivalent word(s) for the English word ‘sarcasm.’

Participants provided the following Korean equivalent terms for the English word ‘sarcasm’: 은유 (eun-yu; metaphor), 비유 (bi-yu; figurative language), 풍자 (pung-ja; satire), 조소 (jo-so; sneer), 비꼼 (bi-kkom; sarcasm), and 반어 (ban-eo; irony). Many learners expressed uncertainty while providing the equivalent terms. Mia, for example, assumed “은유적 표현 (eun-yu-jeok pyo-hyeon; metaphorical expressions)” and “비유적 표현 (bi-yu-jeok-pyo-hyeon; figurative expressions)” to be equivalent Korean translations.

*Excerpt 4.1*

Tutor: how would you translate the English word *sarcasm* into Korean? what would be a Korean equivalent term for it?

Mia: um + metaphorical expressions? figurative expressions?

Tutor: I see

Mia: or maybe not? ((laughs))

Tutor: I see. that’s how you understand it.

Mia: yes.

(Mia, pre-CBI interview)
Soon translated English sarcasm as ‘풍자 (pung-ja),’ which is the Korean equivalent of English ‘satire.’

Excerpt 4.2

Tutor: how would you translate sarcasm into Korean?

Soon: I think sarcasm + is like something similar to pung-ja (satire).

=you criticize but in a smooth way and in an indirect way.

Tutor: mhm

Soon: in a way it could be fun. I think it would feel a little like that. a little like pung-ja (satire)?

Tutor: mhm

Soon: yes. I’m not so sure. but I guess it’s something like that.

(Soon, pre-CBI interview)

Jin provided the term ‘반어 (ban-eo),’ the equivalent of ‘irony’ in English.

Excerpt 4.3

Tutor: so how would you translate the English term sarcasm?

Jin: something very similar to ban-eo (irony) but more playful. I don’t think it can be used with any person. only to close people.+ I think it’s different from bi-kkom (sarcasm)? + or maybe similar?
Tutor: how would they be different. *ban-eo* and *bi-kkom*

Jin: + I don’t know.

(Jin, pre-CBI interview)

Joon stated the two terms ‘조소 (*jo-so*)’ and ‘비꼼 (*bi-kkom*)’ as Korean equivalents of ‘sarcasm.’

Excerpt 4.4

Tutor: if you are going to translate the word *sarcasm* how would you translate it?

Joon: *jo-so* (snee)?

Tutor: *jo-so*

Joon: = *bi-kkom* (sarcasm)?

Tutor: I see.

(Hong, pre-CBI interview)

In sum, five out of nine participants identified *bi-kkom* as an equivalent of sarcasm. Two learners offered *ban-eo* and the three remaining learners mentioned *pung-ja*, *eun-yu*, and *jo-so* as equivalent terms for sarcasm. Table 4.1 shows the number of learners who provided each of the equivalent terms.
Table 4.1. Equivalent Korean words for ‘sarcasm’ provided by participants

<p>| | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bi-kkom</td>
<td>ban-eo</td>
<td>pung-ja</td>
<td>eun-yu</td>
<td>jo-so</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(sarcasm)</td>
<td>(irony)</td>
<td>(satire)</td>
<td>(metaphor)</td>
<td>(sneer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The numbers indicate how many participants provided each word.

4.2.2 Awareness of Korean sarcasm (*bi-kkom*): Definition and examples

After discussing their translations, the tutor informed the learners that the Korean terms most like the English word sarcasm are *bi-kkom* and *bi-a-nyang*. Then, she asked two questions to examine the level of learner awareness of the definition and use of *bi-kkom*. First, the tutor asked the participants to explain how they understood the concept by defining *bi-kkom* or *bi-a-nyang*. Then they were asked to provide examples of the concept, which resulted in a variety of definitions focused on different properties of the concept. Hong, for example, did not produce an exact definition of his own but expressed his opinions on the character of the speaker who uses *bi-kkom*.

*Excerpt 4.5*

Tutor: how would you define it

Hong: it’s something I might have used when I was in high school. I don’t use it anymore. the ones who use it have personality issues. in Korean culture

[lines omitted]

Hong: doing *bi-a-nyang* feels sneaky. (the speaker) is not facing the matter directly but evades it. s/he cannot mention the issue directly but (does it) in an indirect way + if someone keeps doing it it’s annoying
Tutor: can you think of any example?

Hong: I don’t remember any (that might have occurred) in (personal) conversations when you are listening to the internet news (programs) you might hear some

(Hong, pre-CBI interview)

In order to define the concept, Wang focused on the types of feelings the interlocutor might have when hearing expressions of bi-kkom. Like several other participants, Wang was not able to provide a concrete example of bi-kkom when first asked.

Excerpt 4.6

Tutor: how would you define bi-kkom or bi-a-nyang?

Wang: something you would feel bad about after thinking about it? ++ at first you wouldn’t know but after two seconds you would realize.

[lines omitted]

Tutor: can you think of any example?

Wang: I don’t remember any ++ I believe I might have heard many when I was serving the army.

Tutor: okay

(Wang, pre-CBI interview)
Some learners were able to provide examples of bi-kkom after receiving hints from the tutor. For example, Mia could not think of any example when first asked.

*Excerpt 4.7*

Tutor: if you look up a dictionary you will find bi-kkom and bi-a-nyang as Korean equivalent terms. now can you think of any example of these?

Mia: you mean Korean examples?

Tutor: yes.

Mia: well ++ bi-kkom ++

Tutor: imagine someone is doing bi-kkom or bi-a-nyang. what expressions do you think of.

Mia: bik-kom bi-a-nyang ++ ((laughs))

Tutor: ((laughs)) you don’t have anyone around you who uses them?

Mia: I don’t think so

Tutor: I guess people around you are all nice

Both: ((laughing))

Mia: well + well + I don’t have anything particular that I can think of

Tutor: is that so

Mia: yes

(Mia, pre-CBI interview)
However, when the tutor provided some hints, Mia was able to produce two examples of
*bi-kkom*.

*Excerpt 4.8*

1  Tutor: some people say that their bosses sometimes use it
2  Mia: mm
3  Tutor: someone says male peers use it for no specific reason to annoy each other
4  Mia: I see:: ((nods))
5  Tutor: also someone else has said that one of his parents
6  Mia: ((facial expression of showing strangeness and surprises)) I don’t think I have particularly heard any expression like that.
7  Tutor: okay
8  Mia: I guess the intention has to be bad in the first place right?
9  Tutor: do you think so?
10  Mia: isn’t that so? bad but in a metaphorical way
11  Tutor: I see.
12  Mia: are you a bear? something like this?
13  Both: ((laughing))
14  Mia: when you are acting very slow? + or at a company (workplace) when you did not submit documents quickly. are you a bear?
20 Tutor: ((laughs)) I guess that is a pretty nice way of using *bi-kkom*

21 Mia: yes. I guess I have heard something like that before.

22 Tutor: that’s pretty cute

23 Mia: you think so?

24 Tutor: did you feel bad when you heard it?

25 Mia: **of course** I did.

26 Tutor: oh you did?

27 Mia: yes.

28 Tutor: I guess it also depends on who said it to you.

29 Mia: yes. if I have bad feelings toward this person everyday it feels very bad

30 Tutor: I see

31 Mia: but if it’s someone who I have been close to then I would laugh it off even though s/he said it

[lines omitted in which Mia repeats what she said in line 29 and the tutor demonstrates agreement]

36 Mia: one more. is your head an accessory? that also depends on who says it.

37 if a boss who I dislike says it I would feel extremely bad to the point

38 where my back would sweat. but + if someone that I am close to

39 says it I may still feel bad a little bit but to the extent I can laugh

40 it off and move on

(Mia, pre-CBI interview)
The two examples (lines 16 and 36) from Mia include an animal metaphor (i.e., ‘Are you a bear?’) and an object metaphor (i.e., ‘Is your head an accessory?’). It might be that Mia assumed that bi-kkom should express some sort of a metaphorical meaning in order to convey negative messages through it—which, in fact, is not necessarily the case. In other words, bi-kkom does not require any type of metaphor just as is the case in English sarcasm. The fact that many animal metaphors in Korean convey negative messages might have influenced her understanding of bi-kkom, given that in Korean it generally has negative connotations.

Yoh provided his definition and examples of bi-kkom more readily than most other participants. He defined bi-kkom by focusing on its literal meaning, ‘twisting.’ He provided an example to explain what exactly the speaker might twist by using bi-kkom.

Excerpt 4.9
1 Tutor: how would you define the term?
2 Yoh: maybe something like twisting the situation or going against the
3 interlocutor’s intention?
4 Tutor: mm
5 Yoh: last week at church the pastor gave me some task to do and said ‘부담
6 갖진 말고 (bu-dam gat-jin mal-go; “No pressure”)
7 + in fact I am not supposed to do this work but he asked me again to
8 give a ride to someone by mentioning my name (when everyone else
9 was around).
10 he says “I’m not saying that (Yoh’s name) should be doing it”
and I went ‘네, 알아요 (ne ar-a-yo; “Yes, I know that”)

the implied meaning is that he is telling me to do it

but I intentionally did not understand that real meaning (because I didn’t want to do the work)

(Yoh, pre-CBI interview)

In lines 5 to 6, the Korean pastor is literally saying “Do not have burden,” which can be translated as ‘No pressure’ in English. According to Yoh, the pastor is well-known for his indirect speech in which he seems to ask favors of others in a non-forceful way, which Yoh did not particularly like about him. However, like many other Koreans, Yoh sensed the necessity of carrying out the job, possibly because of the way he understood the power dynamics between himself and the pastor (i.e., age, social status). Additionally, Yoh might have thought of other issues: the apparent circumstance that no other person could do the job; the consequences he might face after refusing; the impression he would give other people; the apparent obligation to have to help other people. All the emotions (i.e., dislike, frustration, discomfort) towards the pastor might have triggered his response to the request with what he thought of as bi-kkom (line 11).

In line 11, Yoh responded to the pastor’s utterance by saying, “Yes I know that.” By doing so, Yoh was choosing to respond only to the literal meaning of the pastor’s utterance. Yoh said that by intentionally ignoring the pastor’s intended meaning (i.e., ‘I want you to do the job’), he was using bi-kkom. In other words, the act of intentionally choosing to interact only with the literal meaning of his interlocutor’s utterance is a form
of *bi-kkom* because Yoh was ‘twisting’ the situation into a non-standard or unexpected one. Yoh also mentioned that even if the pastor did not realize what Yoh was intentionally doing, he would achieve the same result that he had aimed for (i.e., not providing the ride). Yoh had already suggested that he might end up not doing the job when he uttered “Yes I know that,” indicating he understood what the pastor meant in the literal sense.

When the tutor asked Yoh to provide the intended meaning of this utterance, he said he wanted to convey the message that he was not an easy-going person who would do everything the pastor told him to do. As demonstrated in Excerpt 4.9, Yoh’s understanding of Korean sarcasm focused on the speaker’s intent to create a non-standard form of communication (i.e., refusing to understand the interlocutor’s intended meaning). In addition, Yoh acknowledged the existence of meaning differences between the literal and intended messages in the speaker’s use of *bi-kkom* (i.e., “Yes, I know that” versus “I’m not a pushover”).

In the same vein, Lee provided a definition of *bi-kkom* focusing on a discrepancy between the literal meaning and the actual intended meaning of a *bi-kkom*-user’s utterance.

*Excerpt 4.10*

1 Tutor: how would you define it
2 Lee: it’s the case where the meaning of the expression itself and its actual implied meaning are different.
3 the most general example would be expressing jealousy to a
counterpart in an indirect way ++

Tutor: mm: so what would be some examples

Lee: well + something like ‘좋으시겠어요 (joh-eu-si-gess-oe-yo;

“You must be happy”)

Tutor: ah: ‘좋으시겠어요’:

Lee: [the intonation is important.

Tutor: ahh:: is it something like ‘좋으시겠어요?’

or how do you do it?

Lee: well: ((facial expressions that show reluctance))

Tutor: ((laughs))

Lee: I myself rarely use expressions like that

Tutor: I see

Lee: well there are people who use things like that.

Tutor: then what does it mean when somebody uses it with that different

intonation

Lee: well ++ well you are congratulating the person,

but it’s not necessarily something that’s sincere,

or from your heart

Tutor: mhm:

Lee: well something like that

Tutor: mhm:

you are saying you must be happy but there is no sincerity something

like that?
Lee: + well the real meaning would be more like if I have done it I would have been better than you

Tutor: ahh:

that much of meaning can be heard?

Lee: ((nods)) yes

Tutor: then

Lee: [oh wait this just came to my mind

Tutor: okay okay

Lee: years ago I took this exam,

(I found) the TA who graded my paper made a mistake so I went to talk to him to clarify the issue and he said

‘이 정도면 잘한 거 아니야? (i jeong-do-myeon jal-han geo a-ny-ya?; “Don’t you think you did well enough?”)

Tutor: mm:

Lee: that utterance is well there is a little bit of this atmosphere that mm there were a couple of labs and the one that I belonged to primarily consisted of students who were not so great in (academic) work

Tutor: ah:

Lee: this score in that lab is good enough=

=don’t you think you did well enough?

Tutor: I see

(Lee, pre-CBI interview)
The TA’s utterance in line 39 literally means ‘Isn’t this much good enough?’ Lee interpreted the actual meaning of the utterance as ‘Shouldn’t you be happy with this score, considering the fact that the students in your lab are not so smart?’ Lee denoted that a full understanding of the TA’s intended message requires certain background knowledge (lines 42 to 44). Lee demonstrated how the TA produced the utterance with an abrupt rising intonation (line 47), which was likely an additional cue that led him to believe that the TA was being sarcastic. The TA might have used sarcasm because he felt embarrassed and did not want to call attention to the fact that he made a mistake. Or, some Korean interlocutors may interpret the TA’s utterance as ‘Did you come all the way here to clarify this one little mistake I made so that you could get a few more points? Do you think it’s worth receiving those minor points, considering that the score you have already is good enough for you?’ When asked to put the utterance in line 39 in a more straightforward way, Lee stated ‘Shouldn’t you already be happy about the score (because I know the general ability of the members in your lab)?’ Whichever emotion or motive had triggered the TA to use sarcasm, Lee said the TA’s utterance made him feel unpleasant.

Overall, learners included the following three aspects in defining the term *bi-kkom*: double meaning of an utterance (i.e., literal and intended meanings), indirectness in conveying messages, and negative intended meaning. For both Yoh and Lee, *bi-kkom* was a means of indirect speech that they intentionally used to convey a different message than the literal meaning of the utterance. The intended meaning of Yoh’s utterance in line 11 (of Excerpt 4.9) was ‘I’m not an easy person,’ which conveys a non-obedient attitude
Lee’s first example of bi-kkom in line 7 (of Excerpt 4.10) originates from his feeling of disapproval regarding the capability of the interlocutor. The second example in line 39 (of Excerpt 4.10) conveys the speaker’s dislike towards Lee’s behavior or devaluing Lee and his lab members’ overall academic ability.

All the examples of bi-kkom provided by the two participants involve negative emotions that trigger the speaker to use bi-kkom. In addition, they include the double-meaning component in which the intended meaning of the utterance conveys the speaker’s negative feelings towards the interlocutor. However, the degree of harshness or bitterness may not be severe enough to consider these examples as sarcasm by an English standard. Korean sarcasm users’ tendency not to incorporate visual cues (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, etc.) may soften the severity of the level of seemingly attacking demeanors.

4.2.3 Awareness of possible speaker intent and communicative goals

After the discussion of the definition and examples of bi-kkom, the tutor asked the participants why they thought people use it. This discussion revealed that the majority of participants considered expressing negative sentiments directly to be rude in general, and thus regarded bi-kkom as a means of indirect speech through which negative attitudes and intent are conveyed. For many of the participants, using bi-kkom was a strategy to avoid the possibility of being too rude or giving a bad impression of themselves as speakers. Consequently, the two commonly mentioned kinds of speaker intent reported by the
learners included the following: in order not to ruin the atmosphere or the relationship between speaker and interlocutor, and to maintain a positive impression of the speaker himself or herself. Wang provided the same two kinds of possible speaker intent, as seen in Excerpt 4.11.

Excerpt 4.11

1 Tutor: so then why do you think + bi-kkom users speak like that rather than
2 speaking in a direct way?=
3 Wang: = atmosphere
4 Tutor: atmosphere:
5 Wang: in addition, atmosphere, and his/her image (impression).
6 Tutor: mm:
7 Wang: [you can secure them both
8 Tutor: have you thought of this issue before?
9 Wang: no this is my first time since it’s being discussed
10 Tutor: so this is your usual thought
11 Wang: oh well wouldn’t it be because of those? + I think so wouldn’t you?
12 the atmosphere might not be completely right (after using bi-kkom)
13 however you can maintain the (normal) atmosphere and also your
14 impression
15 Tutor: mm
16 Wang: if you say it directly you are spoiling the mood of the gathering
17 Tutor: I see so people use it for those purposes.
Wang (Excerpt 4.11) pointed out the fact that expressing *bi-kkom* conveys an attitude that is sufficiently negative to ruin the atmosphere of social gatherings (line 12). However, the level of harshness or rudeness is not more severe than uttering negative sentiments in a straightforward manner without using *bi-kkom*.

Along the same line, Mia (Excerpt 4.12) acknowledged the negative impression the speaker might convey if s/he says things directly. She further provided two other possible kinds of speaker intent, which are ‘to test if the interlocutor is understanding the speaker’s message correctly’ (line 4) and ‘to look down on someone’ (line 9).

*Excerpt 4.12*

1 Tutor: so why do you think they use *bi-kkom* what would be the intent
2 Mia: mm + if you speak directly there can be some integrity issue. ah=
3 =I guess there would be that issue compared to speaking directly, or,
4 mm also to test if that person is understanding my utterance meaning +
5 Tutor: [mm: ah:
6 Mia: yes to see how much this person is recognizing (my meaning).
7 Tutor: I see
8 Mia: yes I assume something like that would happen more often in the office or another one would be to look down on the counterpart?
Tutor: mm

Mia: I guess you could talk like that in a case like that,

Tutor: but why not just be direct when looking down on someone why do you need to use *bi-kkom* in that situation

Mia: his/her own integrity issue? ((laughs))

Tutor: so you’re saying when the person wants to maintain positive impression of his/hers but still want to look down on someone s/he would use it

Mia: yes yes

Tutor: ah

Mia: I assume that’s what it is. that’s my feeling I think

(Mia, pre-CBI interview)

Cho (Excerpt 4.13) also mentioned the possibility of a bad impression the speaker might convey if one puts things too directly (lines 7-8). Then she also provided other possible reasons, which include ‘in order not to hurt the interlocutor’s feelings’ and ‘to tease the interlocutor.’

*Excerpt 4.13*

1 Cho: there aren’t many around me who use it. and in the society of our country we are taught that we should have regard for other people’s feelings during conversations so I don’t think there are many people

2 who are like that
Tutor: okay. then those who do use it why do you think they twist-talk (use bi-kkom) instead of saying things in a straightforward manner?

Cho: hhh well + ((smile)) if you say things too directly it will be a little + like that for the speaker herself.

Tutor: mm

Cho: maybe because the listener gets hurt too much?

Tutor: mm

Cho: well? why would they be like that? I don’t know

Tutor: you mean so that the counterpart would feel not too embarrassed?

Cho: yes that could be one or someone might use it with rather bad intent

Tutor: is that so? with what kinds of intent

Cho: well + you know how there are situations where it is more helpful to say things more directly

Tutor: yes

Cho: but then saying it more like in a teasing way?

Tutor: ah in a teasing way

Cho: yes.

Tutor: in order to tease:

Cho: wouldn’t there be cases like that?

(Cho, pre-CBI interview)
Hong (Excerpt 4.14) considered the possibility of damaging the relationship between the speaker and interlocutor if the speaker is not sufficiently indirect (line 4). He also pointed out another possible speaker intent: that the bi-kkom user wants to play it safe by not saying things too clearly and straightforwardly.

Excerpt 4.14

1 Tutor: what would be some possible intentions
2 Hong: I think they are afraid. to say things directly
3 Tutor: mm: what would they be afraid of?
4 Hong: well + they are afraid that the relationship might worsen?
5 Tutor: mm I see. would it be about trying not to ruin the atmosphere also?
6 Hong: you are saying things but, I think it’s a subtle difference. revealing things saying things clearly, and twist-talking + well I didn’t fully get involved in this situation this kind of feeling
7 Tutor: mm: I see.

(Hong, pre-CBI interview)

In sum, discussions on possible speaker intent revealed that ‘indirectness’ was the key property learners identified from bi-kkom. Learners regarded using bi-kkom more as an indirect speech act than as a form of verbal attack. Certainly, bi-kkom involves the speaker’s negative intent and attitudes. However, learners considered the level of harshness conveyed through the use of bi-kkom as less rude than saying negative things
directly without using *bi-kkom*. Interestingly, the majority of participants, except for Yoh, did not report anything related to humor as possible speaker intent.

4.2.4 Awareness of cues that indicate sarcasm

As for the final question, the tutor asked participants what cues they considered in order to detect and understand *bi-kkom* when used in verbal discourse. Table 4.2 shows the different types of cues mentioned by each participant with a total of eight kinds of cues reported across all of the participants.
Table 4.2. Types of cues for detecting *bi-kkom* reported by each participant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Speaker’s tone of voice</th>
<th>Utterance(s) before or after</th>
<th>Previous incident(s) or knowledge shared by S&amp;I</th>
<th>Accumulated linguistic data (i.e., utterance-situation pair)”</th>
<th>Speaker’s eyes</th>
<th>Speaker’s characteristics (i.e., frequency, personality)</th>
<th>Relationship between the interlocutor and speaker</th>
<th>Overall context</th>
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</table>
Among the eight cues, speaker’s tone of voice and previous incidents shared by the speaker and interlocutor were the two most often selected. The majority of participants were able to provide one kind of cue when first asked, but no participant was able to provide more than three. Hong, for example, provided only one cue by using the word ‘(life) experience’ for one to detect and understand *bi-kkom*. As shown in Excerpt 4.15, Hong denoted the importance of metaphor and pragmalinguistic knowledge through which people understand speakers’ intended meanings in certain contexts.

*Excerpt 4.15*

1 Tutor: how would you explain how you detect when somebody is using
2 *bi-kkom?*
3 Hong: you know it from your life experience=
4 =well in fact using *bi-kkom* sometimes involves using metaphors +
5 right?
6 Tutor: yes
7 Hong: well it’s like I have knowledge of those things
8 Tutor: mm
9 Hong: when someone says like this in this situation, then it means s/he is
10 saying it with this mind (*maum*; i.e., emotion, thoughts, intent).
11 Tutor: mm
12 Hong: the types of knowledge that you come to know from your experience
13 Tutor: mm so you consider things based on your knowledge that had been
14 accumulated and determine if this is sarcasm or not
15 Hong: yes
16 Tutor: I see. is there any other cues you can think of?
17 Hong: no that’s all
18 Tutor: okay
Wang (Excerpt 4.16) considered shared experience between the speaker and interlocutor as the one cue for an interlocutor to detect and understand bi-kkom. He stated that when the interlocutor utters possible bi-kkom expressions, he would look back on his past and try to connect that memory to what the speaker is talking about through bi-kkom.

Excerpt 4.16
1 Tutor: what factors do you normally consider?
2 Wang: what I did in the past?
3 Tutor: mm
4 Wang: probably that? and it would have taken one to two seconds until that
5 Tutor: mm
6 Wang: ah that’s right it was like this. ah was it like this?
7 Tutor: mm so then are you looking back on what you did based on the content
8 in the sarcastic utterance about you?
9 Wang: that’s right. if I made some kind of a mistake since I was
10 inexperienced, um and when a similar situation occurs, the counterpart
11 will remember it
12 Tutor: mm
13 Wang: and then s/he will twist-talk about it
14 Tutor: mm
15 Wang: yes there would be cases like that
16 Tutor: so then when you first hear it at the moment you may not really
17 understand what it is about,
18 Wang: yes
19 Tutor: but then after some looking back and thinking, you would go oh that’s
20 right I did these things in the past so s/he is probably mentioning
21 about that. is it something like that?
Wang: yes. I would assume it will probably take about two seconds until that moment (of realization)

Tutor: ((laughs)) well then that would be related to contextual information of what you did in the past right?

Wang: yes

Tutor: would there be anything else you would consider?

Wang: hhh hhh + well roughly I think that would be the most (used) among personal relationships because there wouldn’t be other things that occur in a one-on-one situation.

Tutor: mm I see

(Wang, pre-CBI interview)

Mia (Excerpt 4.17) was the only learner who considered a visual component (i.e., “speaker’s eyes”) as one of the important cues in addition to the speaker’s tone of voice and the utterances that come after the bi-kkom utterance.

Excerpt 4.17

1 Tutor: what factors do you consider in order to reach the conclusion that this person is using sarcasm?

2 Mia: =first of all, the person’s tone of voice and eyes.

3 Tutor: ah

4 Mia: if you consider them you will see if ‘good job’ is really a good job or the meaning inside of it is bad intent=

5 =you will probably tell just by looking at the eyes, and the tone=

6 =a rising tone or a tone of voice?

7 Tutor: mm so you will be able to tell if the person means it or not based on those

8 Mia: yes you will know right away
12 Tutor: so those are the cues you primarily consider
13 Mia: yes
14 Tutor: anything else you see?
15 Mia: ‘잘했네, 잘했어 (jal haet ne, jal haess eo; “Good job, good job”).’
16 + well the utterance that comes after?
17 Tutor: mm
18 Mia: the utterance that comes after.
19 Tutor: what comes after
20 Mia: yes if an utterance that is a little negative comes after,
21 Tutor: that’s right
22 Mia: yes then
23 Tutor: it’s not a good job
24 Mia: yes it’s not a good job
25 Both: ((laughs))
26 Mia: it’s just an empty utterance? you would think

(Mia, pre-CBI interview)

In sum, participants did not consider visual components as an important cue in determining one’s use of bi-kkom. Rather, they prioritized the importance of recognizing “the speaker’s tone of voice.” However, learners were not able to specify in detail the exact nature of tone of voice that makes the utterance bi-kkom.

4.3 Awareness of the English sarcasm

When the discussion on the concept of bi-kkom was completed, the tutor asked the same set of questions in order to uncover learners’ understanding of the concept of English sarcasm. All nine participants assumed that English sarcasm would have the
same or at least a similar definition as it had in Korean. When asked to provide examples of English sarcasm, however, no participant was able to do so.

Only Soon and Lee raised the possibility of a slight difference between *bi-kkom* and English sarcasm in terms of its frequency of use. Additionally, they both acknowledged a possible connection between humor and sarcasm in English. Lee (Excerpt 4.18), for example, attempted to differentiate between general jokes and sarcasm when asked to provide examples (line 10).

*Excerpt 4.18*

1 Tutor: now speaking of sarcasm in English how would you define it
2 Lee: +++ well one thing I can feel is that it’s used a little more frequently here than in Korea + well I don’t know if there would be any difference in definition
3 Tutor: do you think it would be similar
4 Lee: yes
5 Tutor: but used more frequently
6 Lee: yes I think so
7 Tutor: well then can you think of any example have you heard anyone using it?
8 Lee: ++ well I guess I’ll have to distinguish it from general jokes but + I can’t think of any concrete example
9 Tutor: okay
10 Lee: ++ I don’t know it seems to appear a lot in soap operas
11 Tutor: mm it seems like you tend to relate it with jokes when you think about
Lee: yes um ++ I assume that it can be distinguished from jokes but (I’m not so sure)

Tutor: mm

(Lee, pre-CBI interview)

Similarly, Soon (Excerpt 4.19) acknowledged not only the possibility that sarcasm is used more frequently in the U.S. but also that it may be related to light-hearted humor.

Excerpt 4.19

Tutor: how would you want to define English sarcasm. would you want to define it differently or similarly

Soon: I wouldn’t define it differently but like what you wrote in your recruitment email it looks like it’s used quite frequently in everyday life

Tutor: mm

Soon: when I have conversations with them, when I’m listening to their conversations carefully, sometimes I feel like wow and it’s very witty

Tutor: mm

Soon: each and every word they say is like they’re not saying it for no reason, it’s very hh they say many things that make me think

Tutor: mm
it doesn’t really make me feel bad, but there are things that make me like oh I should probably need to correct these things

Soon: in Korea people are careful with what they are saying about other people,

Tutor: yes

Soon: here probably there is not much of hierarchy and age also ((nods))

Tutor: mm

Soon: yes so in a way I was envious of it

Tutor: mm

Soon: the fact that they have critical thinking soaked into their body

Tutor: so you are saying they criticize in a sound and witty way at the same time?

Soon: that’s right

so it makes me laugh and, at the same time it makes me think

Tutor: mm do they sometimes give you lessons?

Soon: yes that’s right they do

Tutor: I see

Tutor: so would you be able to think of any context where some examples of sarcasm can be used? I remember you were able to provide some while discussing Korean sarcasm

Soon: well when I hear someone uses it I guess I would be able to tell it’s
In terms of possible speaker intent and communicative goals, all learners assumed that English speakers in the U.S. would use sarcasm for the same or similar purposes as in Korean. As for the types of cues to consider for the comprehension of sarcasm uttered in English, all learners mentioned they would consider the same cues that they use for detecting and understanding Korean sarcasm.

4.4 Conclusion

The pre-CBI interviews revealed learners’ basic understanding about their L1 concept of bi-kkom, which is the closest equivalent of English sarcasm. The majority of learners assumed that L2 sarcasm would be the same as, or similar to, bi-kkom, in terms of its definition, possible speaker intent, and types of cues to consider for detection and comprehension. The majority of learners reported the following three aspects in defining the concept of bi-kkom: double meaning of an utterance (i.e., literal and intended meanings), bi-kkom as an indirect speech act, and negative intended message triggered by negative emotions (e.g., disapproval, frustration, dislike, etc.).

As for possible kinds of speaker intent, the majority of participants identified ‘indirectness’ as the primary purpose of using bi-kkom. Learners reported concerns about
‘saying things too directly’ due to these three possibilities: damaging relationships between the speaker and interlocutor, hurting the interlocutors’ feelings, and portraying a negative self-image. Consequently, participants regarded bi-kkom as a means to convey negative messages in an indirect and ambiguous way. They considered direct conveyance of negative intentions and messages ruder and harsher than indirect delivery of those using bi-kkom, as illustrated in Figure 4.1. This is an important cultural difference in that bi-kkom is typically used to mitigate criticism while English sarcasm is frequently used to intensify criticism. The majority of participants did not mention anything related to humor as possible speaker intent during the discussion on bi-kkom.

Learners reported a total of eight kinds of cues that they use for detecting and understanding bi-kkom: speaker’s tone of voice, utterance(s) that come before and after the bi-kkom utterance; previous incident(s) or knowledge shared by the speaker and interlocutor; database on how bi-kkom is typically used (i.e., utterance-situation pair); speaker’s eyes; speaker’s characteristics (i.e., personality, frequency of using bi-kkom); the relationship between the speaker and interlocutor; and the overall context of the
interaction. Among the eight cues, speaker’s tone of voice and previous incidents or knowledge/experience shared by the speaker and interlocutor were the two most selected. The next most selected cues included “data base,” “speaker’s characteristics,” and “the overall context.” The majority of learners provided only one kind of cue when first asked, and no participant provided more than three. Among all learners, only Mia reported anything related to visual cues. Table 4.3 summarizes findings from learners in regards to the three areas.

As for the concept of English sarcasm, all participants stated that they would define it in the same way or in a similar way to how they defined bi-kkom. Among the nine participants, two—Soon and Lee—mentioned that there might be a difference between sarcasm and bi-kkom in terms of its frequency of use and association with humor. They assumed that English sarcasm might be concerned with humor, and that it might be more frequently used by English speakers in the U.S. No participant among the nine was able to provide any example of English sarcasm.

The next chapter presents the results and analysis of post-CBI individual interviews.
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<th>Definition</th>
<th>Possible speaker intent &amp; communicative goals</th>
<th>Cues</th>
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<tr>
<td>Boa</td>
<td>“the utterance does not carry the meaning by itself; it depends on the situation and who the speaker is, and its meaning can offend the interlocutor”</td>
<td>“when you are upset and cannot keep your frustration to yourself and thus need to vent in some way, you express it in an ambiguous way since you cannot do it directly”</td>
<td>“overall context; tone of voice”</td>
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<td>Cho</td>
<td>“an act of saying things indirectly; negative messages are involved”</td>
<td>“saying things directly may hurt the interlocutor too much; people may use it to make fun of someone”</td>
<td>“utterances before and after; atmosphere”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hong</td>
<td>“an act of saying things indirectly”</td>
<td>“the speaker is afraid to say things directly; the speaker is afraid that the relationship might worsen”</td>
<td>“life experience”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>“saying the opposite of the intended meaning”</td>
<td>“to tease each other, but only among close friends”</td>
<td>“knowledge shared by the speaker and interlocutor; tone of voice”</td>
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</table>
| Lee   | “irony; an utterance that has a meaning difference between the literal meaning and intended meaning” | “because the speaker will be criticized less than when speaking directly”  
“it may be funny (English sarcasm)”                                                                                                                                                                                                         | “intonation; situation; speaker’s characteristic”                                          |
| Mia   | “saying things metaphorically with bad intent”                            | “speaking directly may affect one’s impression of the speaker’s integrity; to test the interlocutor’s understanding of the speaker’s message; to attack the interlocutor and maintain a good impression of the speaker at the same time; to look down on the interlocutor” | “tone of voice; eyes”                                                                     |
| Soon  | “something similar to satire; criticizing in a smooth and indirect way”   | “speaking directly may spoil the atmosphere”  
“it may sound funny to people listening to the”                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | “the speaker’s everyday speech patterns; personality”                                     |
<table>
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<th></th>
<th>Speaker (English sarcasm)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Wang</td>
<td>“utterances that make you feel bad after thinking about them; utterances that contain real intended messages inside of them”</td>
<td>“atmosphere; self-impression”</td>
<td>past incidents; mistakes the interlocutor made</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yoh</td>
<td>“twisting situations or going against the interlocutor’s intent”</td>
<td>“humor codes used only among familiar people”</td>
<td>the intended meaning of the utterance; previous contexts; the relationship between the interlocutor and speaker</td>
</tr>
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Chapter 5

Results and Analysis of Post-CBI Interviews

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of post-CBI individual interviews in which learners were asked to verbalize their understanding of English sarcasm after a twelve-week period of CBI interaction. As in their pre-CBI interviews, learners described their understanding of English sarcasm in three aspects: definition of sarcasm, possible speaker intent, and cues that indicate speaker intent to communicate sarcasm.

5.2 Findings from the comparison of pre- and post-CBI interviews

The comparison of pre-CBI and post-CBI interviews revealed several important changes in learners’ orientations to the concept of sarcasm as well as to L2 learning and human communication in general. First, learners demonstrated increased awareness in their functional understanding of sarcasm during the post-CBI interviews. This was manifested through the inclusion of the following aspects while learners defined the term: diverse speaker intent and communicative goals, the necessity of considering sarcasm-related cues, and the actual examples of sarcasm used by speakers.

Second, learners exhibited transfer of this analytical lens to their L1 discourse. Specifically, conceptual understanding of L2 sarcasm strengthened the abilities of some
learners to comprehend the concept and use of L1 sarcasm. One of the learners in particular stated that analyzing numerous examples of sarcasm during CBI enabled her to more readily analyze her L1 verbal discourse and led her to better detect Korean sarcasm used by her Korean counterparts. Additionally, this transfer influenced the frequency of her L1 sarcasm production.

Third, some learners showed a change in attitude and approach to their objectives of English language learning and human communication in general. Learners indicated that their focus had shifted from finding literal translations of expressions to figuring out the possible intended meanings and functional goals of utterances by drawing on all possible contextual sources available.

Lastly, but significantly, learners gained a sense of empowerment as an L2 learner by finally understanding the subtle features of sarcasm that they had not recognized before participating in the project.

5.2.1 Increased awareness in functional understanding of the concept

The majority of learners, while defining sarcasm during their post-CBI interviews, commonly mentioned a wider range of speaker intent, attitudes, and communicative goals—from negative to positive—of which they had become aware. Many learners also came to recognize the necessity of considering multiple cues when detecting and understanding sarcasm. Due to this increased awareness of both diverse speaker intentions and various kinds of sarcasm-related cues, many learners stated that their perception of sarcasm had become broader during CBI. With some learners, this
expanded scope was manifested through the increased difficulty they faced when re-defining the concept of sarcasm. The numerous cues and possible communicative goals occurring in diverse contexts made it difficult for some learners to narrow down the most prominent characteristics of sarcasm and to provide definitions of their own.

Consideration of diverse speaker intent and communicative goals while defining the term

Wang (Excerpt 5.1), when asked to define sarcasm during his post-CBI interview, starts out by expressing the complexity of defining the term. He demonstrated the necessity of considering various factors to discuss sarcasm: multiple numbers of cues for detection and comprehension of sarcasm, various communicative goals and speaker intent, and different levels of harshness. In line 14, Wang states how before CBI interaction he simply used to focus on words or expressions that contain the opposite meaning of the actual situation or speaker’s intent to detect sarcasm. He demonstrates his functional understanding of sarcasm by acknowledging the existence of diverse speaker intent and communicative goals for using sarcasm. Additionally, he shows awareness of different ranges of rudeness that interlocutors need to consider in order to identify speakers’ intentions (lines 15 to 18). He reported that the concept of sarcasm had become broader due to his increased awareness of both diverse speaker intentions and various kinds of sarcasm-related cues (lines 40 to 43).

Excerpt 5.1

1 Tutor: so how would you define English sarcasm now
2 Wang: I’m not even sure if I can define it (laughs)
Tutor: ah is that so?

Wang: yes since there are too many things to think about

Tutor: I see + but would you try

Wang: ((frowning)) ++ this is very difficult=

=we’ve done so many things

Tutor: mm

Wang: it’s hard to define

Tutor: is it because you now have a lot more components to consider than

before?

Wang: yes that is why

Tutor: so before

Wang: [it is because before I simply thought of meanings that are opposite,

and meanings to attack someone but now I have to think about the

level of severity if it’s to attack someone and also even though it’s not

to attack someone there seem to be cases in which you use it just to

release your stress and so forth

Tutor: I see

Wang: so I’m not sure how I should define this again + using what words.

Tutor: so you were saying some of the purposes of using sarcasm would be to

attack someone and to release your stress=

Wang: =and to teach something,

Tutor: ah so I guess it got more complicated for you to define it

Wang: but I guess there is one common thing which is to move beyond the
Tutor: ahh: so you think there is always some kind of underlying meaning for sure (in sarcastic utterances).

Wang: ((nods)) yes. so the common thing is that it always moves beyond the surface meaning and there is always some real intent behind it=

=and if you want to understand what that intent is you have to consider the situation, you have to see the speaker’s face and listen to his/her voice, and so on

Tutor: mm

Wang: ((nods)) that’s how I understand it

Tutor: so then if I summarize what you’ve just told me

[Wang, post-CBI interview]
Similarly, Lee (Excerpt 5.2) also indicates how he now focuses on what speakers intend to accomplish by stating that his attention has shifted to figuring out the goals of certain utterances (lines 6 to 7) rather than the literal meaning of expressions (line 3).

*Excerpt 5.2*

1  Lee: I think I learned a lot from the last session
2  Tutor: in what ways
3  Lee: rather than simply focusing on generally understood meanings of
4    expressions + I now focus more on goals?=
5    =well during the first week I thought of things through the notion of
6    irony or ironic expressions? but now I think about goals, the
7    (communicative) goals that sit at the bottom (of utterances). I see
8    things based on that now

   (Lee, post-CBI interview)

Boa (Excerpt 5.3) also explains how the scope of her concept of sarcasm has become broader due to the knowledge she gained with regard to the diverse communicative goals and speak intent that sarcasm can express and which range from negative to positive.

*Excerpt 5.3*

1  Boa: I think my understanding of the concept has changed.
Tutor: mm: how?
Boa: I began to try to understand things from (considering) the context and I also learned that there are (sarcastic) expressions that are used more typically.
Tutor: you mean the formulaic ones that are frequently used?
Boa: yes=
=and I think the scope of sarcasm (I understand) had become a lot broader than before. in the past I only thought of negative or bad emotions but it turns out that’s not always the case, there are everyday usages type of (sarcastic) expressions that aren’t necessarily all negative, and among those there are a bit humorous ones also. and so I think the scope of the concept has become a little broader?

(Boa, post-CBI interview)

*Increased awareness in the necessity of considering diverse contextual sources*

Many learners indicated that they had begun to recognize the necessity of considering multiple cues when detecting and understanding sarcasm. Through lines 31 to 33 in Excerpt 5.1, Wang explains how it is necessary to consider various cues (i.e., contextual, prosodic, and visual cues) in order for an interlocutor to understand the intended meanings of sarcastic utterances. It is noteworthy that Wang provides this knowledge even before the tutor asks him to discuss the types of cues he would consider for sarcasm comprehension. His apparent intention to want to include comments on
sarcasm-relevant cues while defining the term (i.e., latching in line 31) contrasts with his initial attitude observed during the pre-CBI interview in which he defined sarcasm as ‘utterances you would feel bad about after thinking about them (see Excerpt 4.6 in chapter 4)’ without providing any particular types of cues before being asked.

Consideration of actual use and examples of sarcasm while defining the term

Soon (Excerpt 5.4) also mentioned that his perception of sarcasm had become broader. For him, the expansion originated in the shift from using the narrow definition (i.e., saying the opposite of the actual situation or thoughts) to the broader definition (i.e., saying something different from how things actually are). The tutor showed numerous instances of sarcasm, which exemplified the impossibility of applying the narrow definition of sarcasm primarily for two reasons: first, many examples of sarcasm do not always contain ‘the reversed-meaning’ of the actual situation or the speaker’s intended meaning; second, it is oftentimes difficult to define what it means to be opposite of something. As indicated from lines 6 to 11, Soon defines sarcasm by applying this functional understanding of the concept (i.e., the content of sarcastic utterances and how they are actually used to accomplish different goals).

Excerpt 5.4

1  Tutor: how would you define sarcasm now?
2  Soon: I think the scope has become broader a bit= because in the past, from what I remember during the initial interview
3  I thought of it more through the lens of ban-eo (반어; irony)?
(Soon, post-CBI interview)

Some learners exhibited their increased functional understanding of sarcasm when they added new components associated with English sarcasm, which they had not considered during their pre-CBI interviews. Hong and Mia conceptualized English sarcasm by mentioning the notions of humor and wit. In Excerpt 5.5, Hong still defines English sarcasm through the lens of ‘indirectness,’ which is one of the most prominent characteristics of Korean sarcasm. However, he adds the component of ‘humor’ after reflecting on the examples of sarcasm discussed during CBI.

*Excerpt 5.5*

Tutor: how would you define sarcasm?

Hong: hmm + how should I describe this. well + you speak with the purpose of making fun of or devaluing the listener,

Tutor: ((nods))
Hong: mm + but it is indirect or contains humor

Tutor: hmm humor. how did you + what made you think of humor?

Hong: well the examples you showed, they are all like that + it looks like they

(English L1 users) actually speak like that

Tutor: you mean with the purpose of being humorous?

Hong: yes

(Hong, post-CBI interviews)

Similarly, Mia now perceives English sarcasm as something that is frequently used in people’s everyday lives in U.S. culture. Through analyzing examples of sarcasm during and after class, Mia seemed to have learned some of the central tenets of sarcasm use, which include its ubiquity and speakers’ intent to be witty.

Excerpt 5.6

Tutor: hmm okay. then why would they use sarcasm?=

Mia: =well first of all it looks like it’s their characteristic to use sarcasm in their everyday life,

Tutor: ((nods))

Mia: and secondly they seem to want to pursue the quality of wittiness by using it

Tutor: mhm what made you think about that intent, being witty?

Mia: I sort of realized that while doing homework and during class. you know those examples we saw?
5.2.2 Transfer of analytical ability from L2 to L1 in the comprehension of sarcasm

One of the important findings during the post-CBI interviews was that the CBI interaction in learning about L2 sarcasm promoted learners’ abilities to better understand the concept of sarcasm in their L1. Vygotsky also suggested this idea by writing the following:

“[…] a foreign language facilitates mastering the higher forms of the native tongue. The child learns to see his language as one particular system among many, to view its phenomena under more general categories and this leads to awareness of his linguistic operations (1962: 110).”

Cho indicated that the CBI interaction not only made her think about the concept of sarcasm more frequently but also rendered her more likely to produce sarcasm in L1. In lines 39 to 42 of Excerpt 5.7, Cho states that CBI on L2 sarcasm made her frequently analyze conversations held with her L1 speaking interlocutors, which ultimately led her to produce Korean sarcasm more frequently than before (lines 6-8 and lines 44-45).

*Excerpt 5.7*
Tutor: so: we’ve talked about sarcasm for twelve weeks now. do you have
any comments or + maybe overall feelings about the instruction or
anything related to your learning experience during those weeks? +
feel free to talk about anything

Cho: well + ((laughing)) this is just my feeling but, I think there have been
some changes ever since I took lessons from you. the first change is
that I think the frequency of my sarcasm use in everyday life has
increased a little ((smile))

Tutor: oh: yes? hmm:

Cho: yes I mean

Tutor: [you mean in English? or Korean]

Cho: no in Korean.

[lines omitted in which Cho explains how her English proficiency is not yet good enough
to produce sarcasm in English]

Cho: in fact from years ago, from when I was working in an office I used to
talk a lot about this issue with my friends who have the same type of
personality that I have. when other people use sarcasm, we would go
like ah ((pounding on a table)) I should have responded to that in this
way (skillfully or by using sarcasm back)

Tutor: ah:

Cho: we would go like let’s practice ((pounding on a table)) or,

Tutor: ((laughing))

Cho: we should respond to sarcasm in this way ((hitting a table with a pen))
we would share a story like ((in an acting tone)) hey you know what
my boss said last night during a company dinner? gosh he was talking
to me in that way but I wasn’t saying anything but listening to those
words, why can’t I engage in this repartee and come back to these
people? we would talk about those things. but then • hhh recently, well
from some weeks ago I started realizing that well I keep analyzing the
conversations that I’m participating in, thinking oh yes I guess this is
sarcasm

Tutor: ah:

Cho: yes I think about that during conversations, and that also made me use
sarcasm more frequently than before

Tutor: hmm

Cho: ((nods))

(Cho, post-CBI interview)

The increased frequency of thinking about the concept and analyzing
conversations led Cho to gain increased an understanding of verbal communication in L1
and a better grasp speakers’ intent. In lines 1 to 7 of Excerpt 5.8, Cho explains how she
used to be clueless and would become speechless when her L1 interlocutors directed
sarcasm at her in the past. However, she now uses a more analytical lens to comprehend
the overall context of L1 verbal (and possibly sarcastic) communication (see Excerpt 5.9),
thus catching the speaker intent more readily and better detecting sarcasm.
Excerpt 5.8

1 Cho: but even though I don’t say those words the big difference is, before
2 when somebody used sarcasm with me I would be like what the heck?
3 becoming very puzzled not knowing what to do or think,
4 Tutor: mhm
5 Cho: and then I would end up being speechless or going blank like this
6 ((staring out the window with a blank face)) but just listen to the
7 person say it, but now I would catch this person’s intent although it
8 may not be a hundred percent correct but roughly, and I would realize
9 this person is being sarcastic
10 Tutor: you mean with your Korean-speaking conversation partners right?
11 Cho: yes. and so I would debate should I use sarcasm back or not?
12 Tutor: ah:
13 Cho: and I would consider the context and decide I could probably be
14 sarcastic since I’m pretty close with this person
15 Tutor: hmm
16 Cho: or I would think over and go ah this person will probably get hurt if I
17 say this because I ((shaking her head)) don’t want to use sarcasm with
18 the intent to hurt the person’s feelings
19 Tutor: I see. so then did this instruction enable you to think more about the
20 topic from multiple perspectives? let’s say from figuring out if this
21 person is using sarcasm to
before my interest originated primarily in the frustrated feeling from getting picked on, but now it’s at a different level where I can quite accurately figure out what is going on in the situation and further think about whether I should use sarcasm back or not. it’s moved up one more step + yes I think so, I sort of realized that all of a sudden like last week? the week before?

Tutor: ah:

Cho: yes. ((nods)) and also I realized how frequently I think about it

Tutor: hmm: I see. then do you think you gained sort of a habit that you tend to consider contexts more deeply and in a more analytic manner? or

Cho: definitely think my analytic ability was strengthened, [I

Tutor: [oh is that right?

how

Cho: [because when I first started having this instruction unless it’s clearly absolute sarcasm, I never really questioned the speaker’s intended meaning.

(Cho, post-CBI interview)

Significantly, this increased analytic ability (lines 33-38) allowed her to have a choice in responding, which she did not previously have—either to respond to sarcasm users with sarcasm or not (lines 23 to 27).
Excerpt 5.9

Cho: before this instruction, you know how there are various cues, visual
cues these cues and those cues so many of them, + back then all those
things were thought as a one thing by having them wrapped altogether
as one thing. so simply the situation, the utterance, the expression, the
body movements, they were just one big thing and I would try to
decide if it’s sarcasm or not based on the overall sense, but then
now it’s definitely different in that + if I’m not sure if this person is
being sarcastic or not I would start asking myself how was his facial
expression?

Tutor: ah:

Cho: I would think about that a little, and then consider those other things
next

Tutor: ah: it sounds like you now have more tools you could use to determine
if the utterance is sarcasm or not.

Cho: ((nods))

(Cho, post-CBI interview)

5.2.3 Change in objective and approach to English learning
For some learners, CBI helped them to have new approaches and objectives in learning English. That is, their focus has shifted from finding literal translations of expressions to figuring out the possible intended meanings and functional goals of utterances. This shift in orientation also influenced how they participate in L2 human communication in general. In lines 19 to 21 and 36 to 40, Mia (Excerpt 5.10) reports that she now uses new types of tools for studying English—the same tools that the tutor used during CBI (e.g., product reviews from Amazon.com, U.S. TV shows played on Hulu.com). Using these new tools enabled her to explore new ways of studying English (lines 39-40). In addition, as shown in lines 44 to 45, Mia now sees the importance of comprehending speakers’ intentions and prioritizes it not only while she studies English but also while she participates in L2 communication. Her objectives of English learning had shifted from possibly focusing on forms to putting more emphasis on uncovering meanings.

Excerpt 5.10

1 Tutor: could you tell me your overall feelings about the instruction?
2 Mia: well when I first began the instruction I never expected that it would be
3 this type of instruction,
4 Tutor: hmm yes?
5 Mia: I just simply thought that I would improve my English proficiency
6 since I’m poor at English and that was the reason why I applied for this
7 instruction, but as a matter of fact I learned a lot more than what I was
8 aiming for + more than the expectation that I initially had.
Tutor: mhm can you elaborate more on that?

Mia: [well before, I only heard things in a one-dimensional way (translation. in the simplest way; on the surface level) but I realized how there exist actual underlying meanings. and this made me listen and try to understand them more carefully when foreigners (English speakers) say something]

Tutor: hmm

Mia: it may not be a good thing but I find myself frequently suspecting their real motives or intent more and more ((laughs))

Mia: and so I picked this book on amazon and intentionally read reviews with one star only. I found that almost a hundred percent of them use sarcasm you know?

Tutor: hmm

Mia: I realized how much more I learned from what we did than from simply learning English from typical English class + if I didn’t know about all that we did, I would have understood only fifty percent of the message (Amazon reviews with one star I read) or even less than that but while I was looking at those words and sentences and how they were actually used I was a hundred percent sure that the person was using sarcasm

Tutor: hmm

Mia: I don’t think I can catch sarcasm well when it’s used in verbal
conversations but I feel that I can catch sarcasm pretty well when it’s written.

Tutor: yes?

Mia: yes and so I have extremely positive feelings about the instruction and it also influenced me to want to use websites like hulu + I would think about certain utterances from some shows over and over to figure out what they actually mean, and when speakers talk too fast I would go back and replay videos and along the way I would find some new ways to study English that I never tried and experienced before

Tutor: hmm wow

Mia: yes and the biggest thing is I became better at comprehending speakers’ intentions what they really want to say and I’m very happy about that + and so I focus on that (intended meaning) first now when I hear things when I communicate with other people

Tutor: you mean with English speakers?

Mia: yes.

Tutor: you’re happy that you now can better understand speaker’s intent.

Mia: yes

Tutor: and did you say you now mainly focus on finding out what their real intentions are?

Mia: yes. without those things that we did during class I think I must have lost a lot of those parts that are real important in learning English + I think
Similarly, Wang (Excerpt 5.11) reported that his attitude toward English learning had changed after receiving CBI. His increased sensitivity (lines 9-15) and ability to analyze communication (lines 19-27) enabled him to more readily understand the actual meanings that speakers convey. This ultimately made him perceive English learning as a fun activity (line 29).

Excerpt 5.11

1 Tutor: so + tell me about your overall feelings about the instruction.=

2 Wang =it was very fun.

3 Tutor: yes?

4 Wang: yes and I learned A LOT like really I learned so much.

5 Tutor: mhm

6 Wang: there were things that I didn’t understand easily but overall, I learned a lot.

7 Tutor: okay, then do you see any changes before and after,=

8 Wang: =sensitivity

9 Tutor: oh yes?

10 Wang: yes definitely ((nods)) I became a lot more sensitive to situations

11 Tutor: you mean the conversations that you participate in? or

12 Wang: [not only that but
also the situations that I happen to hear and watch when other people
talk to each other.

Tutor: I see you mean in English?

Wang: yes

Tutor: mhm + in what ways do you think you became more sensitive?

Wang: maybe more analytic? it’s fun to analyze people’s talk like that

Tutor: hmm

Wang: and so I get to think like oh: they say these things to mean those things

Tutor: mhm:

Wang: if it was like before I wouldn’t have cared much=

=I would let them all pass. they would just pass by. but now I hear

those things that I didn’t used to hear and that makes me pay more

attention to what people say and go wow they use these expressions to

say this?

Tutor: I see

Wang: and so English became more fun to me now. it’s fun.

Tutor: it’s great to hear that you find English learning fun

Wang: yeah ((smile))

(Wang, post-CBI interview)

5.2.4 Gained sense of empowerment
Participants showed evidence that they gained a sense of empowerment not only as a sophisticated L1 speaker but also as an L2 learner by finally being capable of understanding subtle features of sarcasm both in L1 and L2. As indicated in Cho’s case (Excerpt 5.8), she exercised more control and choice while participating in L1 sarcastic communication. This led her to perceive herself as a more confident and eloquent L1 speaker, who is able to readily deconstruct communication by applying various categorical tools she internalized.

In lines 42 to 44 of Excerpt 5.10, Mia expressed happiness about her increased ability to comprehend speaker intent in L2 communication, which may indicate that she had become a more confident L2 learner. In a similar sense, as shown in Excerpt 5.12, Yoh uses the word ‘power’ (line 12) while denoting the importance of instruction on sarcasm in L2.

*Excerpt 5.12*

1 Yoh: especially for those who have instincts that help you better sense things like sarcasm, they’ll find this process of categorizing cues and finding out details about them more interesting I think
2 Tutor: mm
3 Yoh: but then there are people who don’t sense it at all and get picked on helplessly? you know those outcasts who don’t even perceive that they are being made fun of,
4 Tutor: ((nods))
5 Yoh: if those people learn about these things, they will be provided with
tools that will make them realize that somebody or some group of people is mocking them and through training they’ll be able to say sarcasm back and I believe those things will become power for them

(Yoh, post-CBI interview)

5.3 Conclusion

Overall, learners’ post-CBI interviews showed that the tutor’s attempt to apply the principle of addition and inhibition between the L1 and L2 concept of sarcasm during CBI (see chapter 3) promoted learners’ functional understanding of L2 sarcasm. As discussed in chapter 4, learners’ initial understanding of sarcasm was primarily grounded in their L1 understanding of sarcasm (i.e., as an indirect speech act used to mitigate the level of harshness in sarcasm). However, during their post-CBI interviews, many learners re-conceptualized sarcasm by considering actual use and examples of it, which they analyzed and contemplated during CBI. Soon pointed out the need for a broader definition of sarcasm (i.e., treating ‘the reverse-meaning’ as one of the aspects of sarcasm) by considering the content of sarcastic expressions and utterances. Some learners added new components that are closely related to English sarcasm while they re-defined the concept. Mia and Hong perceived one of the common goals that sarcasm users attempt to accomplish: being humorous and/or witty. Boa acknowledged the broad spectrum of speaker attitudes, which ranges from positive to negative and began to perceive positive communicative goals, which were not salient to her before CBI. Wang expressed the
need to include various kinds of sarcasm-related cues in discussing the concept and use of sarcasm, which contrasts with the definition he provided during the pre-CBI interview. By adding L2 sarcasm-related components and inhibiting unrelated components, CBI provided learners with a useful analytical lens and strengthened the quality of their understanding of English sarcasm.

For learners like Cho, this increased analytic ability transferred to her L1 and enabled her to more readily analyze her L1 verbal discourse and better detect Korean sarcasm. Additionally, this transfer further influenced the frequency of her L1 sarcasm production. Cho’s CBI interaction provided her with a framework that she extrapolated to her L1 discourse and that allowed her to better analyze the ambiguous concept in her L1.

This framework enabled some learners to re-conceptualize their overall objectives of English learning and to have a new approach to L2 communication. The focus in their language learning shifted from finding literal translations of expressions to figuring out speakers’ intents and the functional goal of their utterances. Additionally, by latching on to this system that they internalized, some learners were able to exercise more control over and avail themselves of more choices when communicating. This ultimately allowed learners to gain a sense of empowerment not only as an eloquent L1 speaker but also as a proficient L2 learner.
Chapter 6

Descriptions of Tests and Areas of Confusion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyzes test questions and student answers in order to identify the following areas: (1) types of sarcasm included in the test questions, (2) sources of learner confusion, and (3) possible areas for applying the principle of inhibition and addition during CBI. The first section provides concrete examples of test questions in order to illustrate particular characteristics of sarcasm addressed during the three tests and the CBI interactions. The following section identifies sources of confusion based on the analysis of test questions frequently missed by learners. The third section introduces select areas in which the principle of inhibition and addition (see chapter 3) can be applied during CBI.

6.2 Descriptions of test questions

Three tests were administered to learners over the course of the study with ten questions each. For each question, learners were asked to complete three tasks: identify a sarcastic utterance; select three sarcasm-related cues you attended to; and assess possible speaker intent and communication goals. Participants were asked to write answers for the third question either in Korean or English—whichever one better expressed their ideas.
All participants felt more comfortable providing answers in Korean, since the third question was about speakers’ intentions, motives, and feelings. Participants were concerned that their lexical choices in L2 might not fully represent the nature and quality of the emotions they intended to describe. After each test, the tutor asked the participants to clarify or/and elaborate on the answer they provided for the third question in every test item.

6.2.1 Types of sarcasm included in tests and CBI

Test items used in the three tests commonly included prototypical types of sarcasm used in the L2 setting. English speakers frequently use formulaic sarcastic utterances such as ‘oh great’ and ‘yeah right.’ At least one instance of this formulaic kind was included in the tests. Excerpt 6.1 presents a scene from the U.S. television show Friends. The tutor used this clip as an example of a formulaic sarcastic expression. In line 2, the character Chandler utters ‘oh great’ with stress on the word ‘great’ and falling intonation at the end of the expression. The utterance conveys his frustration and a sarcastic attitude towards his situation. During CBI, the tutor compared the difference in meaning between the two expressions—one sarcastic (‘oh great’ in line 2) and the other non-sarcastic (‘great’ in line 7).

*Excerpt 6.1*

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5 Ratner (2000) supports this idea and claims that “understanding the concrete cultural character of emotions requires elucidating their correspondence with the manner in which people act, think and are treated in cultural activities (p. 9).”
[Chandler is in an ATM vestibule. He starts to walk towards the door to leave, and the power goes off, the lights go out, then flicker back on.]

1 Chandler: what? ((grabs the door handle and shakes it, the doors are locked)) + oh great. this is just- ((turns and sees that he is locked in the ATM vestibule with a beautiful woman, the famed Victoria’s Secret model Jill Goodacre)) ++
2 ((turns back and makes a gesture with his fists tightened and raised upward.)) ++
3 °great° ((mouths to himself quietly with an excited smile))

(CBI interaction in week 2, Friends)

Another common test item involved negative speaker intent, which aims to criticize, insult, and/or make fun of an interlocutor. Excerpt 6.2 features one of the test scripts provided to learners during the delayed post-test. The video clip presents an excerpt from The View, ABC Daytime’s morning chat show, which features a team of five female co-anchors debating topics in the news and discussing the most exciting events of the day. In the episode transcribed in Excerpt 6.2, a CEO of AshleyMadison.com⁶, Noel Biderman, was invited as a guest to discuss the controversial

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⁶ Biderman explained the role of the website by stating the following on Larry King Live: “[…] our role is to kind of facilitate the introduction. We built the service because I came across some great data that suggested that thirty to thirty-five percent of people who are going to singles dating sites are actually already in relationships and so I thought maybe they prefer community of their own. But, you know, I don’t know what happens offline. For the most part, I’m assuming they’re meeting. But you know we’re the introductory platform.” (excerpted from the interview conducted on Larry King Live, see http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1iZrLrlXib8&feature=relmfu for the entire interview)
nature of his business, which was designed to promote infidelity among married people. Before the anchors welcomed him to the stage, they played an advertisement for AshleyMadison.com. Barbara Walters, one of the co-anchors, uses sarcasm primarily to criticize (and to show her criticism to viewers of) Biderman for running the business (line 18).

Excerpt 6.2

1   Hasselbeck: so + imagine you’re a married man or woman sitting at home
2       watching TV when the following commercial comes on and
3       you may want to get the kids out of the room right now before
4       we show it to you. take a look.
5   Ad Narrator: isn’t it time for AshleyMadison.com? ((the ad features a man
6       and a woman kissing in a bedroom))
7   Audience: no:: ((booing))
8   Hasselbeck: wow ((her eyebrows go up and down and she smiles)) + okay,
9       are you as outraged as our audience is, or curious and racing to
10      your computer. please welcome one of the most hated men on
11      the internet, ((smiles)) founder and CEO of
12      AshleyMadison.com, Noel Biderman. welcome Noel + okay,
13      you're obviously hearing a reaction from our audience that
14      doesn't sound too positive. [...] your website essentially caters
15      to those in committed married relationships who are looking to
16      have an affair. now, you are married. you have two young
Excerpt 6.3 displays another example that demonstrates the same kind of speaker intent to criticize and make fun of the interlocutor. The tutor used this video clip to illustrate another way of expressing criticism towards the same interlocutor, Noel Biderman, on another U.S. TV show, *Larry King Live*. Mary-Jo, another guest on the show, produces sarcasm to convey her criticism by using verbal irony and multiple visual cues that clearly convey her attitude (lines 13, 17-20).

*Excerpt 6.3*

1 Jeff (Host): (…) and are you able to monitor? clearly with five million
2 users, there’s interest. but are you able to monitor? how much
3 activity + how many people are actually meeting?

[Lines omitted in which Biderman explains the role of the website *AshleyMadison.com* is not to monitor users’ offline activities but to facilitate the introduction]

11 ((the camera features faces of each one of the panel members while Biderman
Many instances of sarcasm displayed in the tests contained some common strategies English speakers use to formulate sarcastic expressions: verbal irony (i.e., saying the opposite or something drastically different from the reality), hyperbole (e.g., lexical choices that drastically contrast the reality, exaggerated visual and prosodic cues), and hypothetical situations (e.g., creating/acting made-up situations by using theatrical/exaggerated tone of voice and body movements). As shown in the examples above, verbal irony is one of the common strategies speakers use to produce sarcasm. Chandler (Excerpt 6.1) is clearly saying the opposite of how he actually feels about the situation. Apparently, Barbara Walters (Excerpt 6.2) thinks that Biderman’s children are
not likely to be proud of their father engaging in what she perceives as an unethical and shameful business. Mary-Jo (Excerpt 6.3) also says the opposite of what she actually thinks—she does not believe Biderman’s business is ‘romantic’ or ‘lovely’ (line 10). In the same vein, she does not think playing with people’s misery is a ‘fantastic’ idea (line 12). However, she chooses to use these hyperbolic words to maximize the contrast already established by her use of verbal irony and to express her extremely negative evaluation of Biderman’s idea.

Sarcasm users commonly create hypothetical situations and exaggerate in order to represent the interlocutor’s characteristic(s) that they want to ridicule or criticize. Peter (Excerpt 6.4) creates a hypothetical situation in which he plays the role of his wife, Lois. He is criticizing Lois for whining at him even though he has a more serious problem to deal with (i.e., handling lawsuits). Peter is conveying his displeasure and criticism towards her demeanor, which he interprets as selfish. The possible intended meaning of his sarcasm in lines 5 to 6 is ‘you are not the center of the universe thus do not act like a selfish person.’

Excerpt 6.4

[Peter and Lois are in their bedroom.]

1 Lois: ((walks in)) Peter, I don’t know how much more I can take. Stewie used to be so independent, but now he just clings to me night and day.

2 + I’m exhausted. ((joins Peter in bed))

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7 This aligns with what Claridge (2011) identified as the role of hyperbole, which is “to ‘inflate’ the contrast between the normal provided by whatever criteria are applied and what actually is the case (p. 82).”

8 Despite the fact that many instances of sarcastic utterances entail verbal irony, not all sarcasm involves this reverse-meaning component (see chapter 2 for details). The tutor demonstrated this idea by discussing some authentic examples of sarcasm taken from Amazon.com and Twitter. Some of the examples taken from Amazon book reviews include the following: “Great for insomniacs!” “Trees died for this book?”
Peter: ((raises arms with hands open and twists them back and forth and makes a high-pitched female voice)) *oh, look at me, I’m Lois, the sun revolves around me.* ((comes back to his usual voice)) I’m the one who’s gotta go to court tomorrow.

Lois: Peter + is there anything I can do to talk you out of this lawsuit?

(CBI interaction in week 7, *Family Guy*)

Similarly, Dwight (Excerpt 6.5) is using the same strategy to make fun of Jim, who Dwight thinks acts immaturely (i.e., easily getting excited about snow) as a male office employee.

*Excerpt 6.5*

Jim: ((looks out window)) hey look, it’s snowing

Dwight: ((talks in a little girl’s voice)) *oh my god* it’s the first snowfall of Christmas. isn’t that just so magical for you, little girl? can you not wait to have a hot chocolate and cuddle up with papa and tell him all of your Christmas dreams? hmm? ((looks at Jim while making a big smile with his head tilted and holding hands below his chin)) + ((turns to his normal voice with no facial expression)) it’s not even real snow. look, it’s a dusting. pitiful.

(CBI interaction in week 7, *The Office*)
In contrast, speakers oftentimes use sarcasm with positive intent. The tutor included instances of positive sarcasm in the three tests. As SCOBA 1 (see chapter 3) illustrates, positive sarcasm entails communicative goals such as: to be humorous, to show affection, to be friendly, to break the ice, to bond, and to promote group solidarity. Many instances of positive sarcasm include criticism directed at the speaker herself or her situation. Nick’s wife (Excerpt 6.6) is being sarcastic about her situation, which she finds boring.

*Excerpt 6.6*

[Nick and his wife are on the phone.]

Nick: hey, what’s up?

Wife: *some very exciting laundry.* ((smiling))

Nick: ah, no wonder you called.

Wife: actually I’m going to the grocery store. so I wanted to check in with you about our anniversary dinner. + you do remember that, right?

(Delayed post-test, *Grimm*)

Similarly, the father’s sarcasm directed at his son (Excerpt 6.8) exemplifies how sarcasm can sometimes promote bonding between the speaker and interlocutor due to its humorous effect.
Excerpt 6.7

Wife: hi babe.
Husband: let me guess. finishing your run?
Wife: you know I like my routine. cross running gives me time to think.
Husband: about what. how much you’re missing us?
Wife: well there’s always that. and I was also thinking about uh + maybe adding one more to us.
Husband: are you saying this just for me?
Wife: nope. I’m ready. I’m ready to start trying.
Husband: okay. great.
Wife: so hurry home. we got some work to do.
Husband: I’ll be there as soon as I can.
Son: da::d, my turn.
Husband: I’m sensing that your son wants to talk to you. although he’s being awfully subtle about it. ((looking at his son with a smile))
Son: just get to the mushy part already. ((smiles))
Husband: I love you, Becca.
Wife: I love you too sweetheart. safe flight.
Father: ((hands over the cellphone to his son))
Son: hi mom.

(Post-test, Missing)
Other examples of positive sarcasm involve the speaker’s sarcastic attitude towards the interlocutor’s unfortunate experience to show sympathy, as illustrated in excerpt 6.8.

Excerpt 6.8

[Your friend Bob has observed you experiencing a series of unfortunate events in one day: getting splashed by mud water on the way to work in the morning, losing a wallet at a restaurant in the afternoon, and getting a vehicle towed in the evening.]

Bob: this must the luckiest day of your life.

6.3 Sources of confusion in learners

Analysis of frequently missed test items enabled the tutor to identify sources of confusion in individual learners. Among thirty test questions administered during the pre-, post-, and delayed post-tests, the tutor identified the questions that were commonly missed by participants. Based on this data, the tutor categorized learners’ answer selection criteria and interpretation patterns. Possible explanations are offered regarding several sources of confusion identified.

6.3.1 Asking obvious questions vs. being sarcastic

One of the issues emerged from CBI interactions concerned whether asking obvious questions should be considered as sarcasm or not. Excerpt 6.9 features a scene
from a U.S. television soap opera *Desperate Housewives*. Gabi’s teenage niece Anna is being sarcastic about Gabi’s lack of etiquette when she abruptly walks into Anna’s room without knocking (line 15). Anna contrasts the reality by uttering ‘nice knock’ ended with a particular tone of voice (i.e., elongation of the vowel sound in the word ‘knock’). Seven monolingual English L1 speaking raters unanimously identified the utterance as the most sarcastic utterance in the scene.

However, instead of selecting Anna’s remark, (1), in line 15, some learners selected Gabbi’s utterance (2) ‘what are these?’ (line 16) as sarcasm. They reported that Gabbi’s intent was to criticize Anna for possessing condoms. For example, during the pre-test, Lee stated that it was obvious that the object Gabbi was holding was a condom. According to Lee, the very fact that she was asking what those were to Anna indicates that Gabbi was being sarcastic. The underlying meaning of Gabbi’s utterance addressed to Lee was ‘why do you have these?’ and the communicative goal was ‘to scold’ Anna for possessing condoms. However, (1) sounds more sarcastic than (2) because more interlocutors will feel mocked after hearing (1) than hearing (2).

Lee’s rationale for this answer selection was further discussed when Lee voluntarily brought up this issue as one of his main confusions during the focus group discussion held in week 10. More analysis on his thinking process is provided in chapter 7 where individual developmental processes are discussed.
[Gabbi is Anna’s aunt and has two young daughters. Anna is a 17-year-old teenage girl who is temporarily staying at Gabbi’s place. Gabbi’s children are playing with condoms in the dining room. OD=older daughter, YD=younger daughter]

1 Gabbi: what’s you got there?
2 OD: mints.
3 Gabbi: mints? ((picks up one of packets and reads)) mints that are + ribbed for her pleasure?
4 OD: yeah, we found a whole box from under Anna’s bed
5 Gabbi: ((shouts to upstairs in a loud voice)) ANNA
6 OD: can I have one before dinner?
7 Gabbi: no, no you can’t eat these. these aren’t mints. they’re + balloons.
8 YD: ya::y ((repeatedly shakes the string of condoms with excitement))
9 Gabbi: grown up, balloons.
10 OD: do you and Daddy play with them?
11 Gabbi: if we did, you and I wouldn’t be having this conversation.
12 ((hurriedly goes upstairs to Anna’s room and abruptly opens the door without knocking))
13 Anna: ((playing with her cell phone and looks to Gabbi)) (1) nice kno::ck
14 Gabbi: ((puts up her hand and shows a condom)) (2) what are these?

(Pre-test, Desperate Housewives)
Similarly, in the scene (Excerpt 6.10) where a mom (Lois) and a daughter (Meg) argue, the daughter utters ‘are you? are you a better person? (line 8)’ While no NS raters selected it as an answer, three learners (Cho, Wang, and Hong) identified it as sarcasm. All three learners reported that the intended meaning of the utterance was ‘you are not a better person’ and the communicative goal was to convey disbelief and disapproval in a sarcastic manner.

Excerpt 6.10

1 Lois: look, the bottom line here, Meg, is that you are just taking your own
2 problems out on everyone else.
3 Meg: oh, my problems? oh I see. **is this coming from my role model**
4   **mother?** the shoplifter, the drug addict, the porn star, the whore who
5   let Gene Simmons and Bill Clinton go to town on her?
6 Lois: oh, so what? all those things are behind me now. I’m a better person
7 now because of those experiences.
8 Meg: are you? are you a better person?
9 Lois: what’s your point, Meg?

(Pre-test, *Family Guy*)

The argument between sisters in a courtroom (Excerpt 6.11) features another example of ‘asking obvious questions.’ The defendant asks the two plaintiffs if they can pass the drug test in order to claim that they should not own the gun inherited from their
father (lines 10, 12). The defendant’s strong disbelief in Tracy’s remark (line 8) is
signaled by the formulaic sarcastic expression ‘yeah right’ (line 10). While some learners
chose this formulaic sarcasm as an answer, others selected the question ‘can you pass the
drug test right now, Tracy?’ in the same line.

Excerpt 6.11

1  Judy:      hey, hey.
2  Defendant: you’re not letting me finish what I want to say.
3  Judy:      [(xxx)
4  Defendant: [no, let me finish what I
5          want to say.
6  Judy:      [no, listen to me,
7  Defendant: [drug addict, felon, ((points to plaintiffs))=
8  Tracy:   =ex.
9  Judy:      [listen to me.
10 Defendant: ex? yeah right. can you pass the drug test right now Tracy?
11  Judy:    Listen to me.
12 Defendant: can you pass a drug test Tammy?
13  Tracy:    that has nothing to do with it.
14  Tammy:    it has nothing to do with this.
15 Defendant: oh, what about Chris? I don’t think you should have guns.

(CBI interaction in week 6, Judge Judy)
A possible explanation for selecting these questions is that, in Korean, a question form is frequently used to convey criticism and negative attitudes. For example, speakers use questions like ‘why are you like that?’ or ‘why did you do that?’ in contexts where they want to criticize, blame, and/or scold the interlocutor. The goals of the questions are not to uncover the reason why the interlocutor acted in a certain manner but to criticize the very fact that the interlocutor acted in that manner. These utterances can sound more or less sarcastic depending on the type of prosody the speaker chooses to use. Therefore, presumably, learners’ tendency to select sarcasm through identifying the form of ‘asking obvious questions’ may have originated in their L1 pragmalinguistic knowledge. However, research needs to be conducted to support this assumption.

6.3.2 Saying something rude straightforwardly vs. being sarcastic

Negative evaluation does not necessarily involve sarcasm in all cases. One can be direct in conveying their negative messages by simply directing swear words or profane language at the interlocutor. Brian (Excerpt 6.12) is overtly expressing his discomfort and disgust toward the smell of Stewies’s poop (line 3). Stewie, feeling insulted, is retaliating by being sarcastic (line 4). Apparently, Stewie does not appreciate Brian’s honesty because it is making him feel even more self-conscious about the unpleasant situation he has created.

Excerpt 6.12
[Stewie (the baby) and Brian (the dog) are locked in the vault at a bank. Stewie pooped in his diaper and there is no clean diaper available.]

1  Stewie:  I’m uncomfortable. you have to change me.
2  Brian:   I’m not changing you, we don’t even have any diapers.
3                   (1) oh my god, that smell is making me SICK. ((groans))
4  Stewie:   (2) oh, thank you for making me even more self-conscious.
5  I’m not gonna be able to stay like this until tomorrow you know.
6  Brian:   I don’t know what you expect me to do about it.

(Pre-test, Family Guy)

When the tutor asked Cho why she selected (1) over (2), she reported that she focused heavily on the negativity of the message to the point where she could not distinguish the difference between being directly offending and being sarcastic. This tendency was observed with other learners and on other test items as well. Cho, Mia, Lee, and Wang selected Peter’s remark (1) (lines 12-13 of Excerpt 6.13) as sarcasm. While discussing the rationale for their answer, many of the learners expressed confusion disambiguating between direct criticism and sarcasm directed at interlocutors with negative intent.

Excerpt 6.13
Lois: well, it was very nice meeting you, Anthony.

Anthony: you too, Mrs. Griffin. thanks for having me over for dinner.

Lois: oh, come one, Peter. I think Anthony wants some time alone with Meg.

Peter: who doesn’t want some time alone with Meg these days? right, Meg?

Anthony: has anybody ever told you you’re pretty enough to be a movie star Mrs. Griffin?

Lois: oh, my goodness. well, I don’t know about that. Penelope Ann Miller, Nancy Travis, now those are movie stars.

Peter: look, Anthony, trust me. she ain’t what she used to be alright?

(1) once you get those pants off, it’s like two sagging pressed hams and a slice of pizza.

Lois: **oh, thank you Peter. that makes me feel terrific.**

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6.3.3 Metaphor vs. sarcasm

As discussed in chapter 2, one of the crucial differences between metaphor and sarcasm involves verbal irony. The majority of sarcastic expressions feature the reversed-meaning component between the literal meaning of the utterance and intended meaning. However, some learners like Mia heavily focused on the figurative aspect and understood
sarcasm as an equivalent of metaphor. Consequently, many incorrect answers selected by Mia entailed metaphors. For example, in the conversation held between wife and husband (Excerpt 6.13), Mia selected (1) in line 12 as sarcasm. The speaker is using metaphors to refer to his wife’s appearance in a derogatory manner. Similarly, in the dialogue held between a boss and an employee (Excerpt 6.14), Mia identified (1) as sarcasm (lines 3-4) instead of Lynette’s ironic sarcasm in lines 12-13.

**Excerpt 6.14**

[Lynnette has recently had breast enhancement surgery. Her boss Carlos is persuading her to seduce their male business partners by wearing a provocative dress that highlights her breasts in order to win business deals.]

1 Carlos: what, you’re mad?
2 Lynnette: yeah, of *course* I’m mad. you can't *use* my breasts as *bait*.
3 Carlos: where do you get this attitude? come on, (1) you don’t buy Christmas ornaments unless you’re gonna hang them on a tree.
4 okay, bad metaphor. my point is, why would you get those things if you don’t want people looking at them?
5 Lynnette: I guess + I + I wouldn’t have. okay. when do we do this?
6 Carlos: tomorrow night. and if it makes you feel any better, buy yourself a new dress. on the company.
7 Lynnette: ((holding the credit card between her right index and middle fingers pointing upward)) a man just gave me a credit card because of my boobs. ((blank face)) *that makes me feel less*
**6.4 Identification of possible areas for applying the inhibition and addition principle**

This section explores at which specific areas the principle of inhibition and addition can be employed during CBI. Learners’ verbal explanations on their answer selection criteria revealed the types of schemas learners used during sarcasm processing. They also allowed the tutor to gain insights into which features should be inhibited and added in order to promote conceptual understanding in learners.

*Possible areas for inhibition—L1 encyclopedic knowledge*

As briefly illustrated in the previous section, learners tend to draw upon their L1 sarcasm-related encyclopedic knowledge (e.g., use of non-genuine questions generally indicate sarcastic intent in Korean) while processing English sarcasm. At times, this tendency led learners to comprehend speaker intent differently compared to how NS raters understood it. For example, in the phone conversation held between wife and husband (Excerpt 6.15), Wang and Lee identified (2) as sarcasm (line 5), instead of (1) in line 2. When asked to explain their rationales, both of them stated that even though the wife was asking Nick if he remembered it is their anniversary today, it is possible she knew Nick forgot about it. According to the learners, the very reason that she is asking him the question is to make Nick feel guilty and criticize him for forgetting it. It is
interesting that both Wang and Lee are married males and they made the same interpretation by drawing upon images of an angry wife and a guilty husband. This may or may not represent a typical mentality that exists in society where husbands are portrayed as too busy to remember anniversaries while wives resent the fact that their husbands are being indifferent and negligent. However, it is important to note that their L1 encyclopedic knowledge associated with the typical image of wife and husband regarding anniversaries was triggered during L2 sarcasm processing. The activation of the knowledge was sufficiently strong for the learners to perceive (2) as sarcasm, while all NS raters stated that (2) sounded more like a genuine question.

Excerpt 6.15 (Repeat of Excerpt 6.6)

[Nick and his wife are on the phone.]

1 Nick: hey, what’s up?
2 Wife: (1) some ve::ry exciting laundry. ((smiling))
3 Nick: ah, no wonder you called.
4 Wife: actually I’m going to the grocery store. so I wanted to check in with you about our anniversary dinner. + (2) you do remember that, right?

(Delayed post-test, Grimm)

Another example of L1-only-related encyclopedic knowledge triggered during L2 sarcasm processing involves Korean parents’ conceptualization of their children. Four learners (Excerpt 6.16), Boa, Soon, Wang, and Yoh, selected (1) in line 12 over (2) in
line 15. While a few NS raters identified (1) as sarcastic⁹, the interpretations of speaker intent were completely different from how learners understood its implied meaning.

*Excerpt 6.16 (Repeat of Excerpt 6.9)*

[Gabbi is Anna’s aunt and has two young daughters. Anna is a 17-year-old teenage girl who is temporarily staying at Gabbi’s place. Gabbi’s children are playing with condoms in the dining room. OD=older daughter, YD=younger daughter]

1 Gabbi: what’s you got there?
2 OD:  mints.
3 Gabbi: mints? ((picks up one of them and reads)) mints that are + ribbed for her pleasure?
4 OD:  yeah, we found a whole box from under Anna’s bed
5 Gabbi: ((shouts to upstairs in a loud voice)) ANNA
6 OD:  can I have one before dinner?
7 Gabbi: no, no you can’t eat these. these aren’t mints. they’re + balloons.
8 YD:  ya::y ((repeatedly shakes the string of condoms with excitement))
9 Gabbi: grown up, balloons.
10 OD:  do you and Daddy play with them?
11 Gabbi: (1) if we did, you and I wouldn’t be having this conversation.
12 (hurriedly goes upstairs to Anna’s room and abruptly opens the door without knocking))
13 Anna:  ((playing with her cell phone and looks to Gabbi)) (2) nice kno::ck

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⁹ However, when asked to choose only one instance of sarcasm, all NS raters selected (2) as their final answer.
The four learners interpreted the underlying meaning of (1) as a message that ranges from ‘we should have been more careful’ to ‘I regret that we didn’t use one.’ Boa specifically mentioned an old Korean saying ‘무자식이 상팔자다’ (mu-ja-sig-i sang-pal-ja-da; Life without children is the best/decent life). Korean parents tend to use this expression whenever they feel overwhelmed and/or stressed out about raising their children even in their presence. However, in most cases, it is not to say that the parents actually regret the fact that they gave birth to their children. In most cases, parents would choose to use this saying either to signal the message that raising children is difficult or simply to release their stress. Children who hear their parents uttering it would not normally feel hurt. Rather, they may look back on their mischief and try to behave better. When the tutor asked the three other learners if this saying ever occurred to them while processing the speaker intent, Wang and Yoh said yes and Soon said no but he said his reasoning was along the same line.

In the similar sense, Lee drew upon his L1 encyclopedic knowledge while gauging the level of rudeness in Judy’s sarcastic attitude (lines 5-6 of Excerpt 6.17). Judy is asking the defendant how much her monthly income is, which, in American culture, is a question rarely asked in public (line 1). The defendant is unwilling to provide the exact amount, but Judy forces her to disclose the information because of its relevance to the case (lines 2-3). The defendant tries several strategies to avoid revealing the
information (line 4), and this triggered Judy’s use sarcasm in order to insult the defendant (lines 5-6).

Lee felt that Judy’s sarcasm (lines 5-6) was extremely rude not so much because of the level of contrast between the obvious modern life reality of using dollars as currency and a made-up reality of using rice and beans as currency. While he was aware of the contrast Judy was creating, Lee was more concerned with the connotation he perceived from the characteristics of the items rice and beans. Lee reported that he saw a clear connection between these items and the notion of primitiveness. He felt like Judy was looking down on the defendant by insinuating that she is acting like a primitive who is not sophisticated and perhaps even stupid—although that was not overtly said. Whether Lee’s interpretation originated in his L1 encyclopedic knowledge or not, it is interesting to note that no NS rater mentioned anything similar to his perspective on the interaction. Rather, many of NSs found the utterance humorous. The laughter from the audience (line 7) also supports this general interpretation of the utterance. Lee said he would be greatly offended if he were the defendant even though he is aware that it is a television show where Judy has to play a certain character.

Excerpt 6.17

1  Judy: how much do you earn?
2  Defendant: a good amount.
3  Judy: I’m asking you a question, a good amount is not an answer.
4  Defendant: like + what do you want, dollar amount? figures?
5  Judy: yes, it’s usually in dollars unless they pay you in rice and
beans. ((opens mouth, rolls eyes, and makes a blank face))

((laughing))

I do well.

I asked a question. the question is, how much do you earn?

I don’t think I need to display how much I make.

(CBI interaction in week 8, Judge Judy)

Possible areas for addition—L2 encyclopedic knowledge

While learners’ L1 encyclopedic knowledge may lead them to interpret speaker intent differently than many NS raters’ understanding, learners’ lack of certain L2 encyclopedic knowledge also results in missing or misinterpreting a speaker’s sarcastic intent. Although learners had full control over the semantics of the words in the utterance (line 7 of Excerpt 6.18), all nine learners failed to grasp the underlying meaning operating in this case. The encyclopedic knowledge about the typical comparison between ‘the smart one’ and ‘the pretty one’ in female siblings\(^{10}\) had to be activated in order to understand Judy’s sarcasm (line 7). Judy did not use any prosodic or visual cues, and this may have led the plaintiff’s misinterpretation of Judy’s actual intent. If the plaintiff had correctly understood the underlying meaning (i.e., you are not smart; you are stupid), she would not have genuinely appreciated Judy’s remark (line 8) unless she planned to come back at Judy by being sarcastic as well (i.e., saying ‘thank you’ to mean the opposite).

However, the analysis of the overall situation (i.e., plaintiff’s sincere smile, the

\(^{10}\) This is also well represented in a book title, *The smart one and the pretty one*, written by Claire LaZebnik and published in 2008. The author describes complex relationships between two sisters who have completely opposing characteristics.
audience’s giggles after finding out that she did not understand Judy’s sarcasm) indicates that the plaintiff’s response was not sarcastic.

Excerpt 6.18

[Judge Judy has just finished talking to a male defendant who is an ex-convict. The young female plaintiff had previously offered him and his another convict friend a place to stay. She had also loaned a great amount of money to the defendant and his friend but had not received repayment of the loan. She is currently working for his father’s company, which she reported as a successful business. Judy thinks the plaintiff has been mingling with the wrong crowd.]

1 Judy: how many children are there in your family?
2 Plaintiff: I have one brother one sister.
3 Judy: is your sister younger or older?
4 Plaintiff: she’s older. she's thirty-two.
5 Judy: so you’re the baby daughter.
6 Plaintiff: yes.
7 Judy: pretty one.
8 Plaintiff: thank you. ((smiles sincerely))
9 Audience: ((camera features some audience members who giggle))

(CBI interaction in week 8, Judge Judy)
6.5 Conclusion

The central properties of English sarcasm entail verbal irony and hyperbole. Areas in which verbal irony is manifested can reside in multiple layers: literal meaning of the utterance (LMU) vs. what the speaker perceives as the reality; LMU and what the speaker thinks the interlocutor would perceive as the reality; actual situation vs. hypothetical situation. Speakers can also create contrast by using hyperbolic prosodic or/and visual cues that differ from what speakers would normally use in non-sarcastic communication. Hyperbole can also be manifested verbally when speakers intentionally make particular lexical choices. In this way, aspects of irony and hyperbole are finely intertwined and manifested differently in various contexts.

Analysis of frequently missed test questions enabled the researcher to identify several sources of learner confusion. First, the learners tended to focus on specific forms (i.e., obvious question vs. statement) in order to detect sarcasm. Lee (Excerpt 6.9) selected (1) ‘what are these?’ over (2) ‘nice knock,’ by primarily focusing on the form of the utterance, which possibly originated in his L1 pragmalinguistic knowledge (i.e., Korean users tend to ask obvious questions to convey negative intent). One of the roles of sarcasm is that it usually makes the interlocutor feel stupid (*Macmillan English dictionary*, 2007) and insulted. However, consideration of the interlocutor’s possible feelings and reactions is missing from Lee’s rationale. Accordingly, the tutor mediates Lee to promote a more complete and functional understanding of sarcasm during the CBI interaction, which will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 7.
Another source of confusion involves distinguishing between name-calling (or using derogatory language) versus being sarcastic. Many learners were able to consider negative speaker intent while processing sarcasm. However, they failed to apply the reversed-meaning component in determining the degree of sarcasm. Similarly, Mia’s confusion between metaphor and sarcasm originates in the same problem, which is lack of understanding of contrast—that entailment of literal and figurative meanings in one expression is not sufficient to accomplish (ironic) sarcasm. Consequently, the primary topic of CBI included explanations on where and how the contrast plays out in various instances of sarcasm.
Chapter 7

Analysis of individual developmental processes I

7.1 Introduction

Throughout chapters 7 and 8, I discuss the developmental processes of individual learners observed over the course of the study. While it is not possible to present analyses of everything each learner showed over the sixteen-week program (approximately 136 hours of video-recorded data), select examples from four particular learners illustrate several important developmental processes. The presentation of each learner’s developmental process is organized around the following: (a) source of confusion in the particular learner and (b) the specific qualities of CBI interactions (i.e., mediation, learner uptake and response) that reveal trajectories of learner development.

During CBI, the tutor introduced identical pedagogical materials and implemented them in a procedurally consistent manner for all participants. However, the nature of interaction held with each individual learner was interpreted differently. Learners’ reactions to the materials, activities, and interactions varied, which originated in individual learners’ different cultural-historical backgrounds.

7.2. Individual developmental processes

7.2.1 Mia’s case
7.2.1.1 Prior knowledge and elements of confusion

Mia’s initial understanding of the concept of sarcasm centered on three notions: metaphor, indirect speech, and negative speaker intent. Her understanding surfaced in her verbalization of the concept during the first interview, in which she defined sarcasm as “saying things metaphorically\(^{11}\) with bad intent.” The two examples of bi-kkom Mia provided, after a series of hints provided by the tutor, included ‘Are you a bear? (implied meaning. ‘You are too slow in doing things’) and ‘Is your head an accessory? (implied meaning. ‘You are not using your brain enough’ or ‘You are being stupid’). Both of these examples entail metaphors: in the former, the speaker is comparing the interlocutor with a bear (which is conceptualized as a slow animal); in the latter, the interlocutor’s head is treated as an unimportant subsidiary item, an accessory.

The definition and examples revealed Mia’s incorrect and incomplete understanding of bi-kkom (and English sarcasm), because metaphor and analogy are not necessarily the central tenets of either bi-kkom or English sarcasm. This incorrect understanding again became evident in her answer selection scheme during the pre-test. Unlike other learners, many of the incorrect answers Mia identified as sarcasm included metaphorical aspects. For example, during the pre-test (Excerpt 7.1), Mia selected the utterance ‘you don't buy Christmas ornaments unless you're gonna hang them on a tree (lines 4-5)’ over ‘that makes me feel less like a hooker (lines 12-13),’ which all NS raters identified as sarcasm.

\(^{11}\) Mia used the terms ‘은유 (metaphor)’ and ‘비유 (analogy)’ interchangeably throughout CBI.
Excerpt 7.1 (Repeated Excerpt 6.14)

[Lynnette has recently had breast enhancement surgery. Her boss Carlos is persuading her to seduce their male business partners by wearing a provocative dress that highlights her breasts in order to win business deals.]

[Carlos: what, you're mad?

[Lynnette: yeah, of course I'm mad. you can't use my breasts as bait.

[Carlos: where do you get this attitude? come on. you don't buy Christmas ornaments unless you're gonna hang them on a tree.

Lynnette: okay, bad metaphor. my point is, why would you get those things if you don't want people looking at them?

Carlos: I guess + I + I wouldn't have. Okay. when do we do this?

(Lynnette: tomorrow night. and if it makes you feel any better, buy yourself a new dress. on the company.

(Lynnette: ((holding the credit card between her right index and middle fingers pointing upward)) a man just gave me a credit card because of my boobs. ((blank face)) that makes me feel less like a hooker

(Pre-test, Desperate Housewives)

Similarly, in another pre-test question (Excerpt 6.2), Mia selected ‘I’m white trash and I’m in trouble’ (line 8) instead of Eric’s sarcastic remarks (lines 10-11).]
Excerpt 7.2

[Policemen are breaking into Kenny’s house to arrest his parents. A cameraman from a reality TV show is accompanying the police.]

1 Police: GET DOWN ON THE GROUND. GET DOWN NOW.
2 Kenny’s Mom: NO, my babies, don’t take my babies.
3 Kenny’s Dad: you’re hurting my ARM
4 Kenny’s Mom: MY BABIES
5 Kenny’s Dad: you’re HURTING ME
6 Police: you have the right to remain silent. now please look at
7 the camera and say I’m white trash and I’m in trouble.
8 Kenny’s Dad: I’m white trash and I’m in trouble.
9 Police: alright, good. now, get in the car.
10 Eric: oh wo::w poor people getting arreste::d what a rare
11 occurre::nce ((laughing))

(Pre-test, South Park)

The analysis of Mia’s definition of sarcasm and incorrectly identified answers during the pre-test revealed that her understanding of sarcasm was somewhat restricted to the notion of metaphor (see also Excerpt 6.13 for another test question Mia missed). The following section introduces several more sources of confusion that emerged during CBI and how the tutor mediated Mia to promote a more complete understanding of the concept.
7.2.1.2 Concept clarification through SCOBAs and in-depth discussion on concrete examples

The first element of ambiguity Mia had involved distinguishing between name-calling and sarcasm use. Excerpt 7.3 presents part of a political debate between a liberal and a conservative on a U.S. radio show. Learners were asked to identify visual cues that the sarcasm user displayed and write an interpretive essay as homework.

*Excerpt 7.3*

1. Redner: you called me a liar, I’m not a liar, I called you fat, you ARE
2. Katz: [and you’re very
3. aggressive,]
4. Redner: FAT. ((shaking his open left hand up and down at Katz))
5. Katz: [and you’re very aggressive, you’re very aggressive, and it’s
6. obvious that you wanna hit me, but you haven’t done it yet,
7. so we’re all waiting, ((raising eyebrows, opening hands, and
8. tilting head)) um my advice to you is that you need to work on
9. that control issue, and let’s keep talking about the issues=
10. Redner: =but am I a liar?

(Homework assigned in week 3, *YouTube*)
Focus on the central component of sarcasm—reversed meaning

During the CBI interaction held in week 4 (Excerpt 7.4), after Mia reported on several visual cues she had identified in the clip, the tutor asked Mia if there was any sarcasm. Mia responded to the question by asking about the difference between sarcasm and name-calling (lines 2-3). She was unsure whether the utterance ‘you are fat’ (lines 1-4 of Excerpt 7.3) is sarcasm or not. The tutor reminded her of the primary characteristic of sarcasm—irony or reversed-meaning—by showing her SCOBA 2 discussed in weeks 2 and 3. Mia signals her acknowledgement and/or understanding of the tutor’s explanations of the concept by nodding (lines 7 and 11). The tutor translates the transcript of the video into Korean by using particular word endings and prosodic cues to highlight the sarcastic nuance embedded in lines 5 to 8 of Excerpt 7.3.

However, Mia goes back to the original question she had asked and more explicitly indicates where her confusion resides—whether overtly calling the interlocutor fat with negative intent (e.g., to ridicule) should be considered sarcasm or not (lines 28-30). The tutor once again informs her that the reversed-meaning aspect is the core component of sarcasm and induces Mia to identify if irony occurs between the literal meaning of the speaker’s utterance, ‘you are fat,’ and the reality, fact, or how the speaker and the interlocutor would perceive them (lines 31-34).

Excerpt 7.4

1 Tutor: did you identify any sarcasm by any chance?
2 Mia: sarcasm + but should I consider this part as sarcasm or simply
3 ridiculing? ((pointing to the script of the video provided by the tutor))
Tutor: ((checking the sentence Mia is pointing to, pulls out SCOBA 2, and pointing to the figure on top)) remember one of the frequently used strategies to make sarcastic utterances was using verbal irony?

Mia: oh yes yes ((nodding))

Tutor: and so if it’s sarcasm it’s highly likely that there’s some actual intended meaning that seems different from the literal meaning of the utterance

Mia: mhm:: ((nodding))

[Lines omitted in which the tutor explains meanings of each utterance in the script. She uses Korean equivalent translations with particular prosodic cues that convey the similar nuanced meanings and attitudes that the L2 utterances do.]

Mia: the issue that I keep being confused about is that + if you call a skinny person fat, it could be considered as sarcasm but since he called a fat person fat, since it is the fact, maybe it is not sarcasm? I’m not so sure

Tutor: yes there are a lot more instances of sarcasm that contain the reversed-meaning aspect but do you see any meaning difference between the literal meaning of what he said and the reality? or like you said with the fact?

[Lines omitted in which the tutor further clarifies ‘the reality’ and ‘the fact’ after all are what is understood as real and factual in the culture of the community they belong to.]

(Mia, CBI interaction in week 4)
Concretization of the areas in which oppositeness occurs

Then the tutor further elaborated how the aspect of irony is manifested in different instances of sarcasm:

1. Chandler’s monologue (a) ‘great’ when he found out he was locked in an ATM vestibule (Excerpt 6.1)
2. A friend of yours, Bob, telling you (b) ‘this must be the luckiest day of your life’ when he saw you having a series of unfortunate incidents happening consecutively in one day

A contrast occurs between (a) and (how Chandler perceives) the reality, and (b) and how the friend understands the interlocutor would think as a lucky day. The tutor also explained possible underlying meanings of each utterance (a) and (b) using SCOBA 1. Chandler’s frustration (and possibly anger) might have triggered him to utter (a) in order to release his stress. Whether it was the speaker’s habitual speech act or not, it is understood that Chandler is being sarcastic about the helpless situation that he is stuck in. This interpretation derives primarily from the verbal irony he incorporated in (a)—saying the opposite of the reality, which is generally understood as NOT a great situation. The same principle of how to incorporate verbal irony in formulating sarcastic utterances applies to (b). Bob is describing possibly the worst day of your life as ‘the luckiest day of your life’ to show his empathy for you and to be sarcastic about the multiple unfortunate situations you had to experience that day.
After the discussion on irony as a strategy to produce sarcasm, the tutor (Excerpt 7.5) brings Mia’s attention to lines 4 to 6 of Excerpt 7.3 where Katz states ‘and it’s obvious that you wanna hit me, but you haven’t done it yet, so we’re all waiting’ with a particular facial expression, gesture, and body movement (i.e., raised eyebrows, open hands, and tilted head).

Excerpt 7.5 (Continued from Excerpt 7.4)

1 Tutor: then, what did you think about this utterance? ((pointing to the utterance we’re all waiting in line 5 of Excerpt 7.3))

2 Mia: well + not so much. not so sure.

[Tutor again provides the Korean equivalent translation.]

7 Mia: + does it mean we are waiting for you to verbally argue in a more aggressive manner?

8 Tutor: hmm:

9 Mia: uhm + ((tilting her head with wonder)) isn’t the situation about two politicians arguing regarding their political opinions?

10 Tutor: yes there was some of those in the beginning I suppose. but it got to the point where they call each other fat and a liar. talking about appearances and temper issues. which you can’t even imagine to happen on Korean mass media right?

11 Mia: yes ((laughing)) indeed. I can never understand what he’s trying to say. ((looking down to read the script)) + I thought it was a comed parody show or something. + then this part we’re all waiting, +
19 Tutor: yes what do you think about that part?

20 Mia: ((utters the meaning of the utterance in Korean silently)) does it mean the actual meaning of hitting? it doesn’t look like it

21 Tutor: is that so?

22 Mia: yes

23 Tutor: do you think the speaker and other people except for the interlocutor are actually waiting for the interlocutor to hit the speaker?

24 Mia: mhm + is he aiming to irritate the interlocutor continuously so that he finally gets exploded?

25 Tutor: that could be one of the possible goals

26 Mia: I think that’s his intent

27 Tutor: okay. well it’s not like he is really waiting for that moment where this guy hits him right? who would want to get punched by anyone?

28 Mia: yes. I don’t think so either.

29 Tutor: so this utterance could sound sarcastic to many people especially since the speaker is saying something different from his real intent and the goals he’s trying to achieve is not to wait the guy to hit him but to make fun of the fact that he has a bad temper and maybe to keep annoying him to see if he explodes like you pointed out

30 Mia: mhm ((nodding))

31 Tutor: ((pointing to the top continuum of SCOBA 1 using a pencil)) so his utterance obviously was triggered by his negative feelings toward this guy and where would you find the actual goal here?
Mia: ((looks at the SCOBA)) +
Tutor: ((pointing to the bottom continuum of SCOBA 1 using a pencil)) +
maybe to mock and make fun of? ((looking at Mia))=
Mia: =mhmm ((noding))
Tutor: or like you just pointed out in order to intentionally provoke him=
((writes/adds the intent on the SCOBA))
Mia: =yes
Tutor: so when you actually look at his facial expression and gesture,
((pulls in her laptop to play the clip again))
Mia: ((leans forward to move her face closer to the screen of the laptop))
Tutor: take a look
Video: [...] so we’re all waiting
Tutor: [that moment. ((stops the video))
Mia: his eyebrows are rising ((laughs)) and
Tutor: ((replays the video))
did you see?
Mia: so we’re all waiting ((mimics the prosody, raised eyebrows, raised lip corners, open arms and hands, and tilted head))
Tutor: the one that I told you about
Mia: ((uses her finger to raise her lip corner)) raising one lip corner?
Tutor: yes. so the lip corners get tightened, the head gets tilted like this,=
Mia: =(((tilts her head the same way)) yes yes
Tutor: and so did you see all those?
Mia: yes ((laughing))

Tutor: so the visual cue combinations are ((pulls out SCOBAs 3 to 7 and displays them in front of Mia)) + so starting with the face, what about the facial expression?

Mia: ((points to one of the face pictures presented on SCOBA 3))

(Mia, CBI interaction in week 4)

When asked what she thinks about the utterance, Mia is unsure if it is sarcasm or not (line 3). Then after hearing the translation again and contemplating a bit, she asks if the verb ‘hit’ is used in a figurative way with the meaning ‘to argue aggressively’ (lines 7-8). The tutor induces her to think more (line 9) and Mia then attempts to confirm her understanding of the context—whether it is a situation in which two politicians are arguing about political issues (line 10). The tutor then explains how the discussion escalated to the point where the two show intense animosity and attack each other by commenting on appearances and temper issues (lines 12-14). Mia’s response (lines 14-18) reveals how difficult it is for her to understand the nature of the interaction and the speakers’ utterances. Her confusion originated in her reasoning based on her L1 schema: (1) her expectations about the genre of ‘political debates aired on mass media’ and (2) incorrect understanding of sarcasm that focuses on metaphor and figurative language use. Mia’s interpretation of political debates centered on her corresponding L1 concept—the level of regulation in airing provocative language use and violent antagonistic behaviors on mass media is a lot more restricted in Korea than in the U.S.
Focus on speaker intent and communicative goals

Then the tutor (Excerpt 7.5) informs Mia of the cultural difference regarding the level of regulation in mass media between the two settings—promoting inhibition of her L1 knowledge and addition of L2 encyclopedic knowledge regarding a particular genre of discourse. Mia begins to focus more on figuring out the meaning of the utterance ‘we’re all waiting’ (line 18). However, her interpretation stays at the level of word usage and hinges on the possibility that the verb ‘hit’ (line 5 of Excerpt 7.3) might have been used figuratively (lines 20-23). The tutor now brings her focus to figuring out the possible goal of the utterance—why the speaker is uttering it—and explains the contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance ‘we’re all waiting’ and the actual reality (i.e., we—Katz and other people—are NOT actually waiting for Redner to hit Katz) (lines 24-25).

Mia then comes up with possible speaker intent, which is to keep aggravating the interlocutor until he loses control (lines 26-29). The tutor again discusses the issue of verbal irony but this time by highlighting the contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance and the encyclopedic knowledge that Katz assumes Redner has—Katz clearly is aware that Redner also knows no one wants to get punched by anyone, especially when they are being video-taped and aired on a media show. The tutor addresses this fact (i.e., she notes that Katz does not want to be punched by Redner12 but chooses to say it) by asking a question in line 31. Mia agrees with this view (line 32), and the tutor explains why general interlocutors would find the utterance sarcastic—primarily due to the reversed-meaning component that signals the speaker’s negative intent (i.e., to mock the

12 Katz actually might have wanted to be hit by Redner to achieve some other (possibly conniving) goals (e.g., to sue him) by intentionally inducing Redner to hit him, but this is highly unlikely considering the overall situation.
interlocutor in lines 33-36) along with combinations of other cues (i.e., visual, prosodic, and contextual) that are conventionally used to convey sarcastic attitudes.

Concretization of sarcasm production process and related cues

The tutor then shows SCOBA 1 and attempts to concretize the process of Katz’s sarcasm use by having Mia identify what kinds of emotions (from the top continuum of SCOBA 1) might have triggered his sarcasm and ultimately what goals he hoped to accomplish (from the bottom continuum of SCOBA 1) (lines 39-44) through its use.

The tutor then moves on to discuss the visual cues that Katz used while producing sarcasm (line 49). As shown in line 54, the tutor brings Mia’s focus to deconstructing multiple sarcasm-related visual cues that are occurring simultaneously. According to Mia’s interpretive essay homework assignment, Mia identified one visual cue that Katz used, raised eyebrows (lines 5 and 6 of Excerpt 7.3). Thus, the tutor is now encouraging her to identify other visual cues that Katz is displaying (lines 56-60). After the tutor replays the video and brings her attention to the moment when the cues occur, Mia is able to deconstruct the multiple cues into different categories. This is evidenced by her behavior of mimicking the same ironic tone of voice and the four sarcasm-related visual cues that Katz used (lines 58-59). Then the tutor asks Mia to identify the same visual cues from SCOBAs 3 to 7, which present multiple categories of sarcasm-related visual cues: face, eyes and eyebrows, mouth area, gestures, and body movements (lines 66-69).

Addition of meaning associated with visual cues
The tutor introduced various combinations of visual cues speakers adopt in order to convey sarcastic attitudes in week 3. As noted in chapter 2, similar facial expressions or body movements can carry different meanings in different cultural contexts. While discussing sarcasm-related facial expressions, Mia (Excerpt 7.6) expresses her unfamiliarity with the use of raised eyebrows. She points to the physical difficulty of raising eyebrows due to its low frequency of use in the Korean context.

Excerpt 7.6

Mia: this reminds me of this project that I- with other teachers we had to work on together as a group project
Tutor: yeah?
Mia: yes, we had to practice this play we’re supposed to perform for this event in front of other people, and + so we were acting out characters from the (Korean) drama mishil, you know that one right?
Tutor: yes.
Mia: and in the drama the actress ko-hyeon-jeong plays the queen and we were all impressed by how easily she can raise her eyebrows so often
Tutor: mhm ((smiles))
Mia: the person who was playing her role had to really practice a lot to be able to move- to raise eyebrows like her. we were saying what a great actress ko-hyeon-jeong was ((laughing))
Tutor: so you don’t raise your eyebrows so often?
Mia: I mean do you? I don’t think it’s something Koreans do often
Tutor: mhm + then how did you- what meanings did you catch from her raised
eyebrows?

Mia: I’m not so sure if it really has any meanings. maybe like when she is angry or
surprised? ((laughs))

(Mia, CBI interaction in week 3)

Similarly, Mia expresses her unfamiliarity with eyeball rolling. After discussing it
as one of the sarcasm-related facial expressions (SCOBA 3), the tutor shows a Judge
Judy episode in which a female witness makes a sarcastic face by rolling her eyeballs.
The tutor (Excerpt 7.7) provides an overall explanation of the context and asks Mia how
she interprets the speaker’s eyeball-rolling behavior. She tells the tutor the visual
expression does not carry any significant meaning other than a possible indication of
mental in stability (lines 8-11).

Excerpt 7.7

1 Tutor: so what do you think?
2 Mia: ((laughs)) ++
3 Tutor: why do you think the girl is rolling her eyeballs like that? ((rolls
eyeballs with her chin up))
4 Mia: ((mimics the tutor)) hmm + ((smiles)) ++
5 Tutor: if someone makes this facial expression in Korea, how would people
6 normally interpret it?
Mia: you look like a crazy person, they’ll think you’re crazy or have some mental issues.
Tutor: ((laughs)) is there any chance it could convey some negative intent?
Mia: I’m not so sure. it doesn’t really mean much to me.

(Mia, CBI interaction in week 3)

**Imitation**

In week 4, the tutor asked learners to identify all visual cues that the speaker uses in a video and to mimic them as homework. The video presents an interview between a news reporter and a guest on U.S. MSNBC TV (see Appendix B for the entire transcript). Throughout the interview, the guest John Ziegler conveys his sarcastic attitude not only verbally but also visually by displaying combinations of visual cues multiple times. The primary visual cues he uses include: sneer, raised eyebrows, downward mouth pull, unilateral and bilateral raised lip corner(s), tilted head, and nods.

Mia (Excerpt 7.8) expresses that she had great difficulty in mimicking the visual cues that Ziegler exhibited. Mia further indicates how she rarely uses visual cues that involve movement of eyebrow muscles and jaw area muscles (lines 1-3). The tutor points out that visual cues should be considered as part of the meaning the speaker intends to convey. She further explains how multiple different sarcasm-related cues—both verbal and non-verbal—can simultaneously operate in combination and in this way impart sarcastic meaning (lines 7-10).
Excerpt 7.8

1  Mia: he was like ((raising eyebrows)) I can’t even do what he does
2   ((laughing)) + how does he even move those muscles? ((making a
3   downward mouth pull))

[lines omitted in which both the tutor and Mia practice mimicking the visual cues]

7 Tutor: so the point is + people perceive sarcasm- they receive sarcastic
8   messages when they hear the sarcastic utterance and see these visual
9   cues at the same time. all these things, the combination of these cues
10  gets conveyed as a sarcastic message.
11 Mia: ((nodding)) mhm

(Mia, CBI interaction in week 6)

7.2.1.3 Learner development

Creative imitation

The group activity held in week 5 aimed to help learners conceptualize sarcasm
through combinations of signals discussed until that week; that is, verbal irony and
sarcasm-related visual cues. The tutor asked learners to rely on the following steps: create
a sarcastic utterance using verbal irony, apply the utterance in a particular context, think
of speaker intent and attitudes, select related visual cues\(^{13}\) from SCOBAs 3-7, create
combinations of the selected visual cues that best convey the sarcastic meaning, and act

\(^{13}\) The tutor video-recorded their acting. Later, as a homework assignment given out in week 10,
learners selected some of the combinations and used them for sarcastic characters in their cartoon
play-scripts.
them out while producing the utterance. The majority of learners struggled during the activity in two ways: creating visual-cue combinations as signs of meanings and acting them out for meaning-making purposes. For example, learners like Cho and Hong were not able to create more than two combinations, while others managed to produce up to six combinations. Hong’s combinations consisted of only two different cues that are not as expressive as other cues (i.e., deadpan and folded arms). Cho included multiple items within a combination but struggled to give meanings to the items and to use them as a way to convey emotions and attitudes.

Unlike these learners, Mia was capable of making a number of creative combinations using diverse constituents. She remembered several different visual cue combinations, in particular video clips discussed during CBI and used them as a guide to express intentions of her characters in her own combinations. Furthermore, Mia did not particularly have difficulty in acting out the characters. Learners who participated in the same group with Mia unanimously mentioned that Mia’s utterances sounded sarcastic and combinations of the visual cues clearly signaled her attitudes (lines 6-8).

*Excerpt 7.9*

1 Tutor: what do you think of your combinations and performance? ((smiling))
2 BMW: ((laughing))
3 Mia: I think I like mine. I’m pretty satisfied with what I did.
4 Wang: ((laughing))
5 Tutor: yes? I think so too. I think you did very well.
6 Wang: her performance should be presented in a textbook where they teach
you how to use those cues

Boa: yeah ((laughing))

Mia: ((laughing))

(Focus group discussion, week 5)

Appropriation of psychological tool—expansion to genre, registers, and culture

At the end of the focus group activity, the tutor encouraged learners to address any concerns or questions. Mia (Excerpt 7.10) first remarks that she does not find the content of CBI relevant to Korean speakers (line 15). The tutor informs learners that the primary goal of the instruction is to be able to understand sarcasm when it is used by native speakers of English (lines 16-17). Then Mia asks about the frequency of sarcasm use in the U.S (line 18). She recalls her homework (MSNBC News; Appendix B) and expresses surprise at the fact that speakers on television news programs are allowed to use sarcasm (lines 27-28). She indicates how the speaker’s sarcastic facial expressions could seriously offend Korean interlocutors if they were used in the same genre. The tutor explains that people often convey their sarcastic attitudes on TV shows in the U.S for various reasons.

Excerpt 7.10

Tutor: before we end, is there anything you want to comment on? or any questions?

Mia: I actually have a question,
Tutor: =yes.

[Lines omitted in which Mia asks what the purpose of the tutor’s research is. Mia is unsure if the materials are at all applicable to teaching the Korean language. The tutor explains the goal of the instruction is to understand how English sarcasm is used in the U.S. setting.]

Mia: I don’t think it has anything to do with Koreans

Tutor: so one of the goals would be being able to understand sarcasm when native speakers use it, by the time we are done with this program

Mia: but is sarcasm used that frequently here in the united states?

Tutor: yes I would say so. yes.=

Mia: =you know the homework assignment you gave yester- last time?

Tutor: yes yes

Mia: where the woman and the men

Tutor: yes

Mia: to my perspective throughout the entire time he was being sarcastic

Wang: ((laughs))

Boa: ((laughs))

Mia: I mean is sarcasm that commonly used to the point where it is aired on mass media like that?

[Lines omitted in which Boa describes what kinds of sarcastic facial expressions the speaker used in the video such as unilateral raised lip corner and fake smile.]

Mia: I mean, are people, viewers must not feel awkward at all while watching those things being aired on a television= 
if it were Korean people, they would say things like how dare do you make faces like that or +

Tutor: that’s right.

Mia: yes totally

[Lines omitted in which the tutor explains the ubiquity of sarcasm on other news programs by drawing on other news show examples taken from both radio and TV.]

(Focus group discussion, week 5)

The tutor (Excerpt 7.11) further informs learners of the possibility that they can choose to be sarcastic depending on the context (lines 2-3). Then, Mia indicates her change in perception about sarcasm use—from something taboo to just another communicative tool (lines 4-6, 13-16). However, at the same time, she is concerned about register and the level of rudeness (lines 7-11, 17-25). Then the tutor explains how to possibly gauge the degree of rudeness before the speaker produces any sarcasm. She additionally points out that the level of offensiveness that interlocutors feel can vary (lines 28-35). Mia then points out the necessity of considering the interlocutor perspective while the speaker determines the level of rudeness in sarcasm (lines 35-38). The tutor agrees but raises the possibility that some speakers may prioritize their emotions and choose to offend the interlocutor by using sarcasm (lines 40-43). Mia then interrupts (line 44) and strongly counter-argues that speakers may not need to consider the interlocutor perspective if speakers are going prioritize their emotions and if the
individual difference in perception occurs (lines 45-48). The tutor then addresses the public conception and social acceptability of sarcasm use (lines 49-52).

*Excerpt 7.11*

1  Tutor: yes so our primary goal would be to be able to understand sarcasm and
2     maybe in some cases you might want to be able to respond to
3     someone’s sarcasm by using another one but=
4  Mia: =well if you think about it that way, I guess I should look at it not as
5     something I shouldn’t use but as one of the expressional tools I can
6     choose to use
7  Tutor: yes of course. oh so then were you asking if you could use
8     sarcasm, if it’s something that’s socially acceptable, or what kind of
9  Mia:           [((nods))]
10  Tutor: person people would think of you? like how you would be portrayed?
11  Mia:               [yes yes ((nodding))]
12  Tutor: okay I see.
13  Mia: I guess I should understand sarcasm as one of the many ways of
14     expressing my ideas, and I should also try to understand what the
15     person is trying to say by considering the visual signals, and I can also
16     send those signals to make my meaning I guess
17  Tutor: yes that’s that’s a good point. were you concerned about how much
18     seriously um how much harsh your sarcastic utterance would sound?
19     like how much the interlocutor may find it offending?
Boa:       
Wang: ((nodding))
Mia:  yes yes yes ((nodding))
Tutor:  mhm so then in other words, do you want to know the gauge level if
        you sort of quantify the level of rudeness in each sarcastic utterance?
Mia:  yes.
Tutor: well ((smiling)) I guess it requires lots of input,
Wang: [(laughs)]
Tutor: interaction, and contemplation and all those things may eventually
        allow you to set your own gauge system I guess, and of course how
        they interpret sarcasm I mean the level of offensiveness varies among
        people in this culture- in any culture, I mean for some people this
        utterance can sound extremely rude whereas to some others it may not
        so + maybe you need to figure out how much sarcastic you want to
        sound if you intend to use it- I mean as long as you know what the
        consequences are I guess it should be
Mia:     [no but don’t you also need to consider
how your sarcasm would make your listeners feel? you can’t just
think like I’m going to use this expression because I accept to use it or
I choose to use it, you can’t do that, can you?
Tutor: right, you’re right. you should also consider your interlocutors’
feelings before you choose to use any sarcasm, but then there are
also people who tend to think of- care about their feelings first and
whatever negative feelings they have could trigger them to use sarcasm
maybe to vent or, because that’s how you express your feelings,

Mia: [yes that’s what I’m saying, if that’s the case, then you don’t even have to- I mean I don’t even have to recognize how much acceptable it would sound to other people because I operate around the acceptability level that I set up in my system in the first place, and my feelings come first, right?

Tutor: well, but you should still be aware of what the consequences are when you use- when you choose to use any type of sarcasm, I mean you should consider those boundaries that are set by general social consensus in the community I guess

(Focus group discussion, week 5)

7.2.2 Lee’s case

7.2.2.1 Prior knowledge and elements of confusion

Similar to Mia, Lee’s existing knowledge of L2 sarcasm was incomplete at the start of the CBI interaction. However, the areas that Lee was confused about differed from Mia’s. During the initial interview, Lee equated sarcasm with his L1 concept of *ban-eo*¹⁴ (irony), which is generally understood as ‘writing or uttering the opposite of what things actually are.’ While the term *bi-kkom* conveys speakers’ negative intentions

¹⁴ Literally translated, *ban-eo* means ‘opposite-language.’
and ridiculing behavior, *ban-eo* is generally understood more as a rhetorical move (primarily in literary work) through which the speaker or writer emphasizes the actual intended meaning by saying something opposite of (what the reader or interlocutor would perceive as) reality.

Lee’s focus on *ban-eo* in understanding English sarcasm was also manifested in the test-taking behavior he exhibited during the pre-test. While he was taking the test, he hardly looked at the monitor where video clips were played. He spent the majority of the time period reading and underlining text presented on the script for each clip. He focused more on the translations and interpretations of the written text, and possibly on finding the contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance and the speaker or interlocutor’s intended meaning through analyzing the text. Evidently, visual cues were not important factors for him to consider for detecting and understanding sarcasm.

7.2.2.2 Concept-clarification through co-construction of conceptual knowledge

Lee’s orientation to *ban-eo* in understanding L2 sarcasm gets clearly manifested during the focus group discussion held in week 10. During this session, four participants, Cho, Lee, Soon, and Yoh, watched a video clip (Excerpt 7.12) and were asked to underline any sarcasm they identified. Additionally, the tutor asked them to think of implied meanings of sarcasm and identify all cues they attended to. While Cho and Yoh identified multiple sarcastic utterances, Lee and Soon selected only one instance of sarcasm, the last utterance in lines 32 to 33. In the video, Judge Judy is communicating with the defendant and his sister, the witness, before the proceeding begins.
Excerpt 7.12

1 Judy: who is this person?
2 Defendant: this is my sister.
3 Judy: is she a witness to these proceedings?
4 Defendant: [she is.
5 Judy: did she know she was coming to court today?
6 Defendant: she knows
7 Judy: where is the rest of her outfit?
8 Audience: ((laughs))
9 Defendant: ((smiles)) that was the most + professional clothing she could find I guess?
10 Judy: you don’t have a pair of long pants?
11 Witness: I do, but I + assumed this is ((opens her jacket with hands)) appropriate since it’s sold in stores,=
12 Defendant: sold in like business apparel stores.=
13 Witness: yes, business apparel.
14 Defendant: ((xxx)
15 Judy: ((turns to Byrd and looks at him))
16 Byrd: ((raises eyebrows)) different kind of business I guess.
17 Defendant: ((smiles))
18 Audience: ((laughs))
19 Judy: do you go to church?
20 Witness: I’m a Christian.
After Yoh commented on how particular grammar structures might convey different sarcastic contours, Lee (Excerpt 7.13) begins to explain how he understands the situation and provides rationales for selecting only one sarcastic utterance (lines 32-33 of Excerpt 7.12). Lee considers Judy’s biographical data (i.e., personal characteristic and tendency in using sarcasm frequently) (line 3) and understands (lines 5-11) why Judy is asking the questions (lines 5, 7, 11, 21, and 24 of Excerpt 7.12)—the primary goal is to criticize (line 18) the inappropriateness of the witness’s outfit (i.e., wearing a mini dress in court). However, Lee addresses the issue of oppositeness (lines 23-24)—Judy’s questions lack the notion of irony (i.e., reversed-meaning). That is, he did not perceive
sufficient contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance and the underlying meaning. Instead, Lee (lines 28-31, 43-44) recognized irony from Judy’s last utterance ‘I just wanted to know where your head was at’ (lines 32-33 of Excerpt 7.12).

Excerpt 7.13

1 Tutor: if you formulate it that way that it will sound non-sarcastic, hmm what
do you guys think about this idea? ((looking around other learners))

2 Lee: well since this Judy is always a little too cynical,

3 Tutor: yes that’s right

4 Lee: and so actually all of these,=

5 Tutor: =yes

6 Lee: all of these utterances basically aim to criticize the fact that she didn’t
wear her outfit appropriately,

7 Tutor: yes

8 Lee: so if you look at it from that perspective I guess you can see them all
as sarcasm.

9 Tutor: oh yes? but didn’t you select only one utterance?

10 Lee: yes (xxx)

11 Tutor: [is there any specific reason why you didn’t choose all those lines that
show up before the one that you chose?

12 Lee: well she just sar- just cynically blurts out those words and just +

13 Cho: ((looks up the tutor to says something)) (xxx)

14 Lee: [I think it’s to criticize
Tutor: in order to criticize.

Lee: sure. that’s the intent, and you can consider all the things like those
utterances as sarcasm but,

Tutor: =yes,

Lee: um: ++ ((stares downward for processing)) ++ well I don’t + I don’t think there was the feeling of oppositeness,

Tutor: [hmm:

Lee: it wasn’t included.

Tutor: hmm something that’s opposite of something,

Lee: [but then on the other hand,

the last one I just wanted to know where your head was at this one is to ask I was wondering if you had a clear mind ((trans. if you were thinking clearly)) and that’s the only reason why I was asking you these questions. right?

Tutor: yes

Lee: but the truth is that I wanted to criticize you,

Tutor: mhm: ((nods))

Lee: and that is why I have been saying all these things. + this is what actually happened.

Tutor: yes

Lee: and so there is a difference between the surface meaning and what the speaker actually wants to say.

Tutor: hmm
Lee: and that’s why I picked the last sentence as an answer.

Tutor: then the surface meaning of the last sentence is I was wondering if you were able to think clearly but,

Lee: [yes.

Tutor: the actual intent is,

Lee: [the actual intent is well you should wear appropriately

Tutor: mhm your outfit today is inappropriate.

Lee: that’s right

Tutor: and that’s what she actually wanted to say you think right? then what you’re saying is, there is some big meaning difference between the two ((literal vs. intended meanings)) in the utterance you chose. on the other hand, those questions uttered in the beginning part do not really have big meaning differences and that is why you did not pick them.=

Lee: =that’s right.

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

For Lee (Excerpt 7.14), the expression was more or less a punch line through which Judy finally reveals her actual intent sarcastically. He perceived contrast between the reality (i.e., Judy ridiculing the witness) and (what he perceived as) Judy’s pretentious manner (lines 10-19). Lee’s insufficient control over the meaning of the idiomatic expression led him to identify irony in a non-conventional way.
Excerpt 7.14

1 Tutor: right, you said something about mind
2 Lee: that’s right
3 Tutor: where is your mind
4 Lee: yes although she puts it as if she was wondering about it, in fact
5 Tutor: yes in fact,
6 Lee: it was to criticize.
7 Tutor: mhm
8 Lee: she has been saying all these things to criticize
9 Tutor: in order to say your outfit is inappropriate
10 Lee: [yes I mean after ridiculing her for quite a long time, she is acting like nothing serious really happened and let’s move on type of-
11 Tutor: hmm
12 Lee: she is putting it that way
13 Tutor: a:h like tha:t
14 Lee: after making the audience laugh like that, laugh at her like that, she is acting like hey I didn’t have any bad intent, I didn’t say it with bad intent, like this
15 Tutor: just like nothing serious really happened
16 Lee: yes

(Focus group discussion, week 10)
Inhibition—L1 encyclopedic knowledge triggered translation

During the discussion, learners established their understanding of the idiom, ‘I just wanted to know where your head was at,’ in a co-constructive manner (Excerpt 7.15). However, the tutor needed to inhibit learners’ L1 encyclopedic knowledge, triggered during processing. Learners considered some L1 sarcastic expressions to be correct translations of the English idiomatic expression. The direct application of L1 sarcasm to English non-sarcasm was triggered by their L1 encyclopedic knowledge. Soon first explains that he perceived the expression as sarcasm because of the meaning he obtained from the literal translation of the utterance (lines 2-18). Indeed, Lee, Soon, and Yoh laugh after hearing the literal translation of the utterance provided by the tutor (lines 25-29). This indicates that the expression does not sound as normal as how native L1 English speakers understand it (i.e., non-sarcastic idiomatic expression).

Then the tutor induces learners to think about the central quality of sarcasm (i.e., irony) by drawing on criteria that Mia used—sarcasm vs. name-calling (line 30). Interestingly, the quietest learner, Yoh, readily comments that it is sarcasm (line 32). He then provides a Korean sarcastic utterance (line 34), which he considers to be an equivalent translation of the idiomatic expression. Cho, Lee, and the tutor laugh loudly due to the harsh sarcastic connotation that Yoh’s example carries (lines 36). Then immediately after, Cho provides another Korean sarcastic equivalent that conveys a more bitter and more sarcastic attitude (line 37). The tutor understands why some Korean users may find the idiomatic expression sarcastic—the L1 pragmalinguistic knowledge (i.e., similar-sounding Korean sarcastic expressions) prompted by the literal translation of the
expression. However, the tutor points out the particular lexical choice made by Yoh (i.e., 
*dae-ga-ri*) that makes his example sound highly offensive\(^{15}\). The tutor then suggests a 
more appropriate Korean translation of the English idiom without inserting the 
derogatory word, *dae-ga-ri* (lines 44-45). Yoh responds to the hint by asking if they made 
literal translations of the expression without considering the actual intended meaning 
(lines 46-47). The tutor informs the learners that it is an idiom and carries no inherent 
sarcastic nuance by itself. Learners then realize their misunderstanding of the speaker’s 
intent (lines 49-55).

*Excerpt 7.15*

1 Tutor: what about you Soon?
2 Soon: well first of all I think this expression itself is very, +
3 Tutor: yes
4 Soon: it sounds very much like a typical sarcastic utterance ((looking at the 
tutor)) it actually sounds very sarcastic to me.
5 Tutor: okay
6 Soon: I mean you wouldn’t normally say things like this right? when you are 
talking to a person next to you
7 Lee: ((nods))
8 Tutor: mhm:
9 Soon: and so that’s basically what made me think it’s sarcasm,
10 Tutor: a::h

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\(^{15}\) In addition to the lexicon, the verb ending (i.e., \(-nya\)) learners chose to use also marks the 
sarcastic quality of their examples (lines 43-44).
Soon: yes

Tutor: so when you literally translate it, it’s like saying, I wanted to check physically where your head was located and this meaning itself,

Soon: [yes yes yes

Tutor: sounds sarcastic

Soon: yes yes

Tutor: but then what would be the underlying meaning if it’s sarcasm?

Soon: the underlying meaning is what kind of thoughts you had, what kinds of thinking made you show up to court in that kind of outfit

Tutor: okay

Soon: or if you are in sound of mind

Cho: ((nods))

Tutor: if you are in sound of mind + yes + if you put it in Korean it’s like I wanted to check where your head ((pointing to her head)) was at, then would it sound sarcastic? what do you think? ((looking at other learners))

LSY: ((laughs))

Tutor: is it simply name calling or sarcasm, what is it?

Lee: ((laughing))

Yoh: it’s sarcasm.

Tutor: is it?

Yoh: it means 대가리 어디다 두고 왔냐? (dae-ga-ri eo-di-da du-go wat-
nya; where did you leave your head?=

CLT: ((loud laughs))

Cho: 너 머리는 밥 먹으라고 닫고 다니냐? (neo meo-ri-neun bab meo-eu-ra-go dal-go da-ni-nya; are you walking around with your head hanging just for the purpose of eating?)

All: ((loud laughs))

Cho: something like that ((smiling))

Tutor: that’s right + now that I hear those expressions from you, it does sound sarcastic. but then um if you don’t use those particular words like head or 대가리, if you put it like I wanted to check your mind was placed in the right place, something like this, does it sound sarcastic in Korean?=

Yoh: =is that the literal meaning? the one you just said? I mean is that the literal meaning of this utterance?

Tutor: that’s right. this is just an idiom.

Yoh: oh is that right? ((laughing and nodding))

CLS: ((nods))

Tutor: the word head refers to mind here

Yoh: oh the head

Tutor: you could interpret it as something like the level of I wanted to check if your mind was working properly. yes

Soon: mhm::

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16 The word dae-ga-ri (trans. animal head) is used only to refer to a head as a body part of animals. However, it is frequently used to refer to a human head in derogatory way to insult the interlocutor.
205

56 Tutor: so if you literally translate this idiom into Korean, it is likely to sound

57 very bad, but in fact it’s just an idiom. so I’ll tell you more about it

58 when we discuss what native speakers perceived as sarcasm soon

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

7.2.2.3 Learner development

*Concept clarification through verbalization and communicative thinking*

One of the elements of ambiguity Lee had pondered was distinguishing differences between asking obvious questions and sarcasm. Lee explicitly brings out this issue while participating in the focus group discussion (Excerpt 7.16) with three other learners. Cho explains why she finds Judy’s utterance, ‘where is the rest of your outfit,’ sarcastic by drawing on multiple contextual cues (lines 5-35). First, she points out that commenting on the inappropriateness of the girl’s outfit through the form of a question (versus making a statement that directly conveys the message) makes the utterance sarcastic. She provides some examples of non-sarcastic statements and indicates that Judy had these alternatives but chose not to use them (lines 5-6, 29-31). Then she addresses the functional aspect of the utterance, which is to ridicule the girl, by pointing out the audience’s reaction to the utterance as evidence of her interpretation (lines 9-10). When the tutor prompts her to identify where irony emerges (lines 12-13), she is able to juxtapose the two contrasting situations—not wearing (enough) clothes in court and dressing conservatively in court (lines 14-22). She is also able to identify the contrast
between the literal meaning of the utterance (i.e., the rest of the girl’s outfit is missing) and the speaker’s encyclopedic knowledge (i.e., there is no missing wardrobe component in a dress and a jacket and the speaker knows that the interlocutor has the same understanding) (lines 34-35). In short, Cho’s sarcasm comprehension was based on three aspects in the speaker’s sarcasm use: intentionality in selecting the particular form of speech (i.e., questions), intentionality to mock the interlocutor (evidenced by the audience response), and verbal irony that resides at multiple different layers (i.e., literal meaning vs. reality, literal meaning vs. visual cue).

After hearing Cho’s rationales for identification of sarcasm, Lee shows slight disagreement (lines 39, 45-46) and provides supporting details. Lee attempts to recall one of the pre-test questions (see Excerpt 6.9 in chapter 6) that he had been contemplating (lines 40-42). In the video, the speaker (Gabbi) abruptly walks into her niece Anna’s room and asks ‘what are these?’ by showing Anna’s condoms to her. The underlying meaning of the utterance was to ask her teenage niece: ‘why do you have these?’ All NS raters selected (1) ’nice knock’ over (2) ’what are these,’ because of the apparent contrast between the literal meaning of the utterance ‘nice knock’ and the actual reality (i.e., Gabbi did not knock). Apparently, Anna’s intended meaning aligns with ‘you should have knocked.’ Furthermore, the sarcasm-related prosody (i.e., elongation of the last vowel), visual cues (i.e., blank/unhappy face), and the contrast created between the visual cue and the nature of the utterance (i.e., compliment form) also constituted sarcasm. Lee explains why he concluded during the pre-test that (2) might not be sarcasm—he had categorized it as a form of ‘asking obvious questions (line 51).’ He assumes that the form of asking obvious questions is more generally used in everyday life and thus should be
categorized differently from sarcasm (lines 53-59). However, he signals a possible change in his conceptual understanding after hearing Cho’s explanation (lines 59-64).

After hearing Lee’s counter-arguments, Cho attempts to clarify Lee’s confusion by explicitly indicating at which point she disagrees with Lee’s assumption. According to Cho, the very act of intentionally choosing to use questions marks the speaker’s message as sarcastic (lines 65-75). The tutor then attempts to remind the learners the core characteristic of sarcasm by asking them its definition (lines 79-82). When no learner answers, the tutor asks if they need the material (i.e., SCOBA 1 and handout) that presents the definition (line 95). Lee immediately responds that he needs to see them (line 96). The tutor then highlights central properties of sarcasm by showing the materials and reading selected portions of each. She specifically emphasizes the necessity of considering how the interlocutor might feel after hearing potential sarcasm (lines 101, 107-108). After the tutor’s instruction, Lee clearly indicates a change in his understanding by stating that he now thinks the questions are sarcastic (line 114).

Excerpt 7.16

1 Tutor: why did you choose that one?
2 Cho: well so here ((pointing to the script)) the girl is saying she knew she
3 was coming to court today right?
4 Tutor: yes
5 Cho: but then if you knew, you should have dressed properly, you should
6 have met the dress code, Judy could have said it that way, but she said
7 ((speaking in an acting tone)) where is the rest of your clothes?
Tutor: hmm

Cho: that’s a little + well did she really have to make fun of =
= you see people laughing hard here right?

Soon: ((nodding))

Tutor: [yes why would it be funny?]

why would they find it funny?

Cho: what? because it means something like why are you not wearing clothes right now ((laughs))

Soon: ((nods))

Cho: generally it’s a place where people need to be dressed conservatively but

Soon: ((nodding))

Cho: why did you not wear clothes?

Tutor: yes

Cho: it ultimately means something like that so

Tutor: even though the girl is fully dressed up, Judy is speaking as if her outfit is incomplete right,

Cho: ((nods))

Soon: ((nods))

Tutor: so in fact if she wanted to say it in a non-sarcastic way she could have put it like I think your outfit is inappropriate for court but,=

Cho: =hey you should have worn appropriate outfits, she could have said it like this in an admonishing way, especially since she is in the position
as a judge

Tutor: a:h she could have said it in an admonishing way, but she is asking the
question as if she didn’t know so it’s sarcasm. okay.

Cho: I mean she doesn’t actually think the girl had temporarily left part of
her outfit somewhere ((laughing)) right? I mean Judy

Tutor: yes yes um do you guys agree? ((looking at other learners))

Lee: well

Tutor: yes

Lee: I agree but whether questions like these would be sarcasm or not, um
what was the one that had the similar feeling last time? in one of the
sitcoms there was a scene where someone was holding condoms and
asks what these are

Tutor: ah what are these?

Lee: yes. about the problem whether it is sarcasm or not, the conclusion I
made at that time was, well it may be a little difficult to call something
like that sarcasm.

Tutor: mhm

Lee: well maybe it could be but, ((sniffs))

Tutor: mhm

Soon: ((nods))

Lee: so asking something obvious

Tutor: asking something obvious

Lee: yes you know the answer but you still ask the question. + maybe it’s
something more generally used

Tutor: mhm

Lee: yes I thought maybe it’s something like that

Tutor: mhm:: so asking something obvious even though you know the answer

may not be sarcasm because it’s more generally used

Lee: yes. that was my thought. but then while listening to what she was

saying, ((briefly looking at Cho)) now I’m thinking maybe it is

sarcasm

Tutor: I see

Lee: and also since the audience is laughing, it seems more like it

Tutor: okay

Cho: well I kind of disagree with what he pointed out. I think a little

differently about the issue, I think the very act of asking obvious

questions rather is sarcasm.

Tutor: ((nods))

Cho: ((laughs)) there is no reason to ask that question, ((turns to the tutor))

but the intent of asking is,

Tutor: why would that person ask the question although it’s apparent

Cho: that’s what I thought

Tutor: unless there is some other intention,

Cho: if someone does the same thing I would probably think like why would

she ask that question? ((laughs))

Tutor: okay ((nodding)) so you are showing some other intent of yours
through the very act of asking that question?

Soon: ((nods))

Tutor: would that be possible? ++ is it a little tricky? + so then should we probably think about the definition of sarcasm once again at this point?

what is sarcasm, what do they call sarcasm in this culture, if you recall your memory, how did you define it? ++

Cho: ((laughing)) I guess it was a little too long ago

Tutor: it was a little too long ago, since we discussed it on week 2? what was the definition? ++

CLS: ((smile shyly))

Soon: did we define it at that time?

Lee: ((laughs out loud))

Cho: ((laughs))

Tutor: ah if we had defined it. yes I showed you some dictionary meanings at that time along with SCOBAs to talk about how the term is generally understood in the US culture, and we used those definitions all along.

yes so, do you remember by any chance?

CLS: ((giggle))

Tutor: do you need that thing by any chance?= Lee: =yes

Tutor: yes so one of the things that I showed you was ((pulling out SCOBA 2 and a handout that presents the verbal definition of sarcasm taken from *Macmillan English dictionary* and reading it)) a way of talking in the
Tutor: or utterances to show that you are angry. yes. that was one of them right? so ((pointing to the top on SCOBA 2)) you say something opposite or different from your actual intent of reality or saying things in the way that makes the interlocutor feel stupid or that shows you are angry, and there was always this gap between the literal meaning of the utterance and the underlying meaning. yes those were the things we discussed as important components right?

Soon: ((nods))

Tutor: and so if you consider these- this definition and look at those utterances, how=

Lee: =I think it’s correct that it’s sarcasm.

Tutor: you think it’s correct? ((laughs))

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

Soon (Excerpt 7.17) then expresses his confusion that originates from his L1 understanding of sarcasm—bi-kkom is used mainly to mitigate the level of directness and harshness (lines 116-131). Since Judy’s questions are too direct and clearly offending (lines 126-136), Soon finds it difficult to situate them under the category of sarcasm. This
reasoning aligns more with the concept of bi-kkom; thus the tutor again induces learners to apply the definition of sarcasm she just provided (i.e., consideration of interlocutor perspective). Then Lee immediately shows this application in his thinking and expresses how he thinks the interlocutor would feel (line 148). Lee’s orientation has clearly shifted from form-focused (i.e., question form) to interlocutor-perspective-focused (i.e., assuming possible interlocutor emotion). Then the tutor makes sure learners also consider the speaker’s possible emotions that might have triggered her to use negative sarcasm (line 152). Learners are able to consider not only the speaker’s emotions but also the interlocutor’s emotions when determining sarcasm in other instances (lines 154-158). While discussing other instances of sarcasm produced by Judy, learners were able to consistently use the criteria: speaker emotions, interlocutor emotions, and irony manifested in different properties of an utterance.

Excerpt 7.17 (Continued from Excerpt 7.16)

116   Soon: well I also um this gentleman sitting next to me have said things that
117        were exactly the same as my thoughts, ((pointing to Lee))
118   Tutor: oh yes?
119   Soon: so I didn’t have much to say,
120   Tutor: okay
121   Soon: but in fact I also thought that these questions were somewhat abnormal,
122   Tutor: hmm ((nodding)) abnormal
123   Soon: yes but this Judy + the way she talks is a little idiosyncratic also,
124   Cho: ((nods))
Tutor: okay

Soon: well the intent emerges clearly

Tutor: yes

Soon: it seems like there is no intent to hide it, rather it’s a little,

Tutor: yes

Soon: since it’s a little too direct and the directness is so obvious, I wonder if

I should still see it as sarcasm.

Tutor: a::h

Cho: ((nods))

Soon: so I would think maybe she’s just saying those directly? maybe she’s

simply saying those in a strong straightforward manner? rather than

sarcastically

Cho: ((nods))

Tutor: mhm I see

Soon: because of those thoughts I didn’t choose them=

and there were a few of these things ((pointing to Cho)) the ones that

other people selected

Tutor: that’s right

Soon: but I didn’t choose them.

Tutor: yes so in your rationale,

Soon: yes

Tutor: yes I think it’s plausible, but if we use the definition right? would

something like where is the rest of your outfit be sarcasm?
Lee: I think it can make you feel very much stupid.

Tutor: yes, you would probably feel for example ashamed right? and,

CLS: [((nodding and smiling))]

Tutor: you wouldn’t think Judy’s emotion is pleasant when she’s saying those

CLS: ((nods))

Tutor: and this one also did she know she was coming to court today,

Lee: ((nodding))

Cho: ((nodding))

Tutor: right?

CLS: ((nods))

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

Holistic approach in identification and comprehension

In addition to applying a more complete definition, Lee’s approach of sarcasm detection had become more holistic. While discussing the possibility of sarcastic meaning in Byrd’s remark, Lee (Excerpt 7.18) asks the tutor to replay the video to check the speaker’s facial expression (lines 4-6). He believes that he will be able to more readily grasp the speaker’s sarcastic intent by checking Byrd’s visual signals (line 8). This change in orientation was also manifested during the post- and delayed post-tests where he considered visual cues for all test items, unlike during the pre-test.
Excerpt 7.18

[Cho, Yoh, and Soon had collaboratively constructed their understanding about Byrd’s remark in the video.]

1 Tutor: yes okay. what about you Lee how +
2 Lee: I also agree.
3 Tutor: you mean with ((pointing to Cho)) this-
4 Lee: yes can I take a look at the facial expression for this?
5 Tutor: you mean the guy?
6 Lee: [different kind of business
7 Tutor: yes
8 Lee: it will make things clearer (xxx)
9 Tutor: in fact you will see his face from the side angle but,
10 Lee: oh yes?
11 Tutor: yes at the beginning part of his utterance it sort of passes by quickly.
12 take a look, at that moment something goes on with his eyebrows and
13 face. but take a look ((plays the video)) look
14 Lee: ((laughing))
15 Cho: ((nodding and laughing))
16 Byrd: different kind of business I guess
17 Tutor: ((imitating the visual cues)) he goes like this
18 CLSY: ((laughs))
19 Tutor: so that’s how he starts his utterance and in fact those could be some
20 crucial cues to figure out his intent
(Focus group discussion, week 10)

Internalization of SCOBA

When the tutor asked Lee to define sarcasm during the post-CBI interview, Lee immediately starts explaining the concept by considering possible interlocutors’ feelings (lines 2-5). At the same time, he makes sure to include the speaker’s perspective by acknowledging diverse communicative goals that are accomplished through various sarcastic utterances (lines 5-7). While doing so, he moves his right hand back and forth horizontally, placing it on the edge of a table (lines 6-7). This hand movement might be a sign that he is conceptualizing the bottom part of SCOBA 1 where a continuum of speaker intent, from negative to positive, is presented.

Excerpt 7.19

1 Tutor: so how would you define sarcasm?
2 Lee: =it’s about your emotional state ++ or about the counterpart ++ what was it? make stupid?
3 Tutor: making someone feel stupid?
4 Lee: feel stupid. making them feel stupid, mocking, well there are various purposes. those various purposes ((right hand is placed on the edge of the table and moving back and forth horizontally)) ++ you express them differently
Tutor: what do you mean by different
Lee: ++ well ++ you say things in a different way from the surface meaning in an indirect way or in a more straightforward way to express your emotions. you reveal your emotion.
Tutor: how would you translate it now?
Lee: I think it’s more like bi-kkom (sarcasm) than ban-eo (irony)

(Lee, post-CBI interview)

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the microanalysis of two learners’ developmental processes over the course of the instructional program. Focusing on select features of CBI and individual learners’ uptake, the chapter traced developmental trajectories in group activities, focus group discussions, in-class interactions, and interpretive essay data. The primary goal of the analyses was to illustrate how specific qualities of meditational support promoted particular learners’ conceptual development. In conjunction with the test results that will be presented in chapter 8, the findings suggest that learners developed a more complete understanding of the concept of English sarcasm.

The interactions with learners included a series of mediations to help them clarify ambiguities and better understand the concept of sarcasm. Mia initially struggled with distinguishing sarcasm from two other ideas: name-calling and metaphor. The tutor disabused Mia from relying heavily on her prior knowledge of sarcasm, which centered
on metaphor and figurative language. Instead, the tutor encouraged Mia to shift her orientation towards the central property of sarcasm—irony. Throughout this process of concept clarification, the tutor highlighted specific examples of reversed-meaning in multiple video clips of sarcasm.

Another crucial aspect of the meditational procedure entailed the implementation of SCOBAs that consisted of materializing, imitating, and verbalizing the concept. The principle of addition and inhibition prevailed at every stage of SCOBA-mediated interactions. For example, by introducing meanings of sarcasm-related cues in learners’ cognitive environments, the tutor helped learners to understand the meanings of particular visual cues and to perceive their instrumental functions. Without this mediation, the visual signals would have had no meaning for the learners. Mia, for instance, did not deduce any specific meaning from certain visual cues (i.e., raising eyebrows, rolling eyeballs) until the tutor connected each of them to a meaning and purpose. Consequently, Mia was able to link the meaning of those cues to other properties of sarcasm, which allowed her to understand how they manifest within the L2 cultural conventions. While internalizing these cues, Mia creatively combined multiple kinds of visual cues and imitated them in a way that conveyed her sarcastic intent and met her communicative goals.

During the focus group discussion, Mia explained her new understanding of sarcasm to other peers. She perceived sarcasm as one of her communicative tools through which she could express her emotions and attitudes. However, during this communicative thinking, she indicated a new struggle with the proper use of sarcasm by situating it in a broader context that entailed considerations of genre, register, and level of rudeness.
Refusing to focus solely on the speaker perspective, she took a holistic view instead by proposing to include the interlocutor perspective within her understanding of the concept. Although she recognized that the lesson was supposed to develop her ability to comprehend sarcasm, Mia attempted to think beyond that goal. Drawing on multiple parameters, she intended to create her own pragmatic system for using sarcasm. It is noteworthy that Mia deliberately attempted to add the interlocutor perspective to SCOBA 1, which in its original form included only the speaker perspective. This indicates Mia’s intention to appropriate the tool in a way that is useful for her, possibly by considering the context in which she produces sarcasm among English-speaking interlocutors.

Alternatively, Lee’s understanding of sarcasm at the outset of the program centered predominantly on two particular forms of speech: irony and obvious questions. Nevertheless, these elements of ambiguity proved to be the driving force for his further concept formation. During the focus group discussion held in week 10, four learners co-constructively clarified Lee’s confusion and established shared understandings of the concept of sarcasm. These collaborative dialogues with peers helped him to form a more complete concept. Verbalization (i.e., communicative thinking) provided by a more competent peer (i.e., Cho) helped him to recognize a crucial aspect of sarcasm he had neglected—interlocutors’ emotions after hearing sarcasm. With the help of SCOBA that presented the definition of sarcasm, Lee was finally able to develop a more mature concept and to determine sarcasm with increased confidence.

Lee’s development of a more mature concept was also demonstrated by his shift in orientation from focusing on text translation to considering multiple sarcasm-related cues. Upon realizing the importance of considering those cues, he started to place more
emphasis on them when detecting and understanding sarcasm (i.e., focus group discussion, post- and delayed post-tests). He also manifested his expanded concept during the post-CBI interview. When asked to define the concept of sarcasm, he immediately showed signs of considering interlocutors’ emotions. At the same time, he was aware of sarcasm users’ various communicative goals. His horizontal hand movement indicating the positive and negative dimensions of sarcasm depicted in SCOBA 1, for instance, may have indicated his developmental stage. In other words, this gesture may be a sign that he is in the process of internalizing those diverse speaker intentions, since he needed the physical support to be able to verbalize his understanding of the concept. This interpretation aligns with Lantolf’s (2010) study in which he examined an L2 learner’s use of gesture to mediate her own thinking and learning. In the study, an advanced learner of French, Donna, externalized her thinking through gesture as a means of resolving a problem with French past verbal aspect during an oral narrative task.

As noted previously, individual learners followed unique developmental trajectories over the course of the study. This chapter particularized specific qualities of teaching-learning dialectics that promoted learners’ conceptual development in a limited number of cases. By doing so, the chapter has provided a concise illustration of the principal developmental processes through which more complete concept formation and improved comprehension emerged.

The following chapter discusses the developmental processes of two additional learners along with pre- and post-test results.
Chapter 8

Analysis of individual developmental processes and test score results

8.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold. First, I explore two additional learners’ respective developmental processes. As pointed out in chapter 7, all individual learners showed different trajectories of developmental processes—elements of confusion, learner uptake and learning strategies observed during CBI varied. The discussion of the additional two learners’ cases in this chapter will detail the nature of variability in learning the concept of sarcasm. After the discussion of learners’ developmental trajectories, I present the results from the quantitative analysis of test scores for all participants.

8.2 Individual developmental processes

8.2.1 Yoh’s case

8.2.1.1 Prior knowledge and elements of confusion

At the outset of the program, Yoh’s understanding of sarcasm was predicated on the primary function of bi-kkom—which is to mitigate the level of directness in criticism.
While defining sarcasm, Yoh (Excerpt 8.1) explains that *bi-kkom* is a communicative tool that less powerful people primarily use when interacting with more powerful individuals. The central property of *bi-kkom* he perceived was ‘indirectness.’

*Excerpt 8.1*

[Yoh and the tutor are discussing the word collocations he wrote next to the word *bi-kkom* on a worksheet.]

1 Tutor: satire and powerless people. something that is used to powerless
2 people?
3 Yoh: no something that powerless people primarily use.
4 Tutor: something that powerless people primarily use. oh is that right?
5 Yoh: ((looks at the tutor)) yes
6 Tutor: mhm even though it is to attack the counterpart? ((pointing at what
7 Yoh wrote on the worksheet))
8 Yoh: yes of course. ((looking at the tutor)) for those people who have power,
9 there’s no need for them to attack anyone
10 Tutor: mhm::
11 Yoh: because they are already powerful
12 Tutor: mhm::
13 Yoh: [but people with no power, in order to show their existence
14 Tutor: in order to show that they are not that weak?
15 Yoh: yes. if they express their opinions directly, people with power will not
16 leave them alone.
Tutor: so they are securing a way out by saying things not too directly
Yoh: yes

(Yoh, CBI interaction in week 2)

The first homework assigned in week 1 was to bring to the next meeting an example of bi-kkom and English sarcasm respectively. As for the example of bi-kkom, Yoh showed a video excerpt from a Korean drama Alone in love. In the scene (Excerpt 8.2), Eun-ho, while talking to her ex-husband, overtly expresses her admiration for a muscular body of a man, whom she recently started dating. She uses sarcasm (lines 5-6) to belittle her ex-husband Dong-jin about the fact that his body is not at all masculine.

Excerpt 8.2

1 Eun-ho: well he came to my swimming pool today. […]
2 (looks at Dong-jin’s face)) his body was so great, such a piece
3 of art in that bathing suit
4 Dong-jin: yes?
5 Eun-ho: he was different from a man whose only muscle he knows
6 how to use is an anal sphincter muscle

(Example of bi-kkom brought by Yoh, CBI interaction in week 2)
It is highly unlikely that a person does not know how to use body muscles other than his anal sphincter muscle. Eun-ho’s sarcasm entails both irony and hyperbole in that she is contrasting the two situations where Dong-jin only knows how to use one specific muscle in a very private part of his body and the actual reality (i.e., of course he knows how to use other kinds of body muscles) in a hyperbolic manner by selecting a tiny muscle among many other muscles in his body.

Despite the contrast and hyperbole that constitute Eun-ho’s sarcasm, Yoh (Excerpt 8.3) is not able to articulate why he finds it sarcastic. The tutor induces him to identify where irony occurs in the example (lines 13-15), but Yoh does not provide any cues or even attempt to guess (lines 16-18). Then the tutor further encourages Yoh to identify the speaker’s possible intent (lines 19-21). After an extended effort, he is finally able to provide a possible explanation of the speaker’s intent, which is to belittle the interlocutor (lines 22-23).

Excerpt 8.3

[Yoh and the tutor finish watching the video example of bi-kkom.]

1   Tutor: so how is this sarcasm? the only muscle you can use is the=
2   Yoh: =the sphincter muscle? ((smiling))
3   Tutor: yes
4   Yoh: uhm ++ well ((laughs shortly)) ++ she is bi-kkom-ing the fact that he
5        does not have muscles
6   Tutor: ((laughs)) I guess that’s what it is
7   Yoh: ((smiles))
Tutor: *bi-kkom* + hmm that’s right + but then although it is the fact, the
utterance still is *bi-kkom*?

Yoh: ++ ((rolls eyes upward to think and smiles)) ++ yes I think so=

Tutor: =or is it the fact or not?

Yoh: ((laughs)) I don’t know if it is the fact or not=

Tutor: =so when the speaker- when the woman says this, does she believe
what she says is the fact? or does she say it even though she is aware
that that is not the actual reality?

Yoh: uhm + I don’t have any idea about that to that level

Tutor: mhm

Yoh: well it’s just- just no reason

Tutor: mhm no reason. then what would be her intent?

Yoh: the intent?

Tutor: yes. she is using *bi-kkom*, but why is she using it?

Yoh: mhm + why use *bi-kkom* + ((shaking his leg)) why use it ++ well I

guess it’s just to belittle the counterpart?

(Yoh, CBI interaction in week 2)

*Deconstruction of context and concretization of cues*

The analysis of Yoh’s pre-test results also implicated the strong need to build a
conceptual framework for him to extrapolate on in order to identify sarcasm. Out of ten
questions, he was able to select one correct instance of sarcasm. Furthermore, he left
many sections of test sheets blank by selecting few appropriate cues and failing to indicate speakers’ intended meaning.

In order to promote Yoh’s conceptual development in understanding sarcasm, the tutor ensured to hold in-depth discussions on every instance of sarcasm introduced during CBI. The tutor specifically focused on deconstructing contexts where sarcasm occurred by using SCOBA 8 to help him to perceive possible steps that interlocutors have to go through. By continuously having Yoh engage in SCOBAs 1 through 8 (see chapter 3), the tutor helped him concretize multiple sarcasm-related cues that occurred simultaneously. Although the tutor procedurally implemented the same pedagogical materials with all learners, their responsiveness differed in terms of amount and content.
Figure 8.1. SCOBA 8: Process of sarcasm detection and comprehension (Repeated from Figure 3.8 in chapter 3)
8.2.1.2 Process of internalizing the concept

*Greater responsiveness*

Despite the great emphasis on deconstructing diverse contexts of sarcastic communication, the CBI interaction that resulted in most of Yoh’s response was when the tutor provided a list of conventional sarcasm-related lexical cues. In week 6, the tutor discussed formulaic sarcastic expressions by using a list of lexical cues that included (hyperbolic) adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and phrases:

Table 8.1. Conventionally used lexical and phrasal cues for detecting sarcasm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative intent</th>
<th>Positive intent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great</td>
<td>Sick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Real) Nice</td>
<td>Ridiculous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very</td>
<td>Hysterical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fantastic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabulous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorgeous</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolutely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitely</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outstanding</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wow…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What a…</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genius</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einstein</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Unlike his usual taciturn behavior, Yoh exhibited great responsiveness during the discussion of the list. Considering the fact that he had just came back from a week-long visit to Korea for his mother’s funeral the day before the session, his interest and
willingness to participate in the discussion until the conclusion of the session were noteworthy\textsuperscript{17}.

Excerpt 8.4

[The tutor shares an anecdote from another learner regarding the use of the word ‘genius,’ which created miscommunication in the English-speaking context.]

1 Yoh: so you are saying the word \textit{genius} itself carries sarcastic meaning?
2 Tutor: yes especially when it is used in the phrase like \textit{what a genius}, with
3 that exclamation phrase
4 Yoh: hmm + come to think of it, I don’t think I have heard my advisor
5 using that expression when he compliments his students. I think he
6 uses \textit{perfect}- oh I don’t see \textit{perfect} here ((pointing to the list on the
7 handout))

[The tutor explains how the adjective \textit{perfect} can also be used in both sarcastic and non-sarcastic ways.]

11 Yoh: I realize my advisor does not use \textit{nice} either when complimenting, for
12 me there have been many cases where he could have used that word,
13 you know ((clapping)) \textit{nice} like this?
14 Tutor: mhm I guess there are individual differences in terms of word choices
15 also

[The tutor discusses the two formulaic sarcastic nouns \textit{genius} and \textit{Einstein} and situates them in possible contexts.]

\textsuperscript{17} Later, during the post-CBI interview, Yoh recalled that week 6 was the toughest session for him physically and emotionally.
20 Yoh: ((laughs)) I see *gorgeous* too ((points to the list))

21 Tutor: yes there is

[Yoh talks about how he uses the same word *gorgeous* in his everyday life to mean *꼬졌어* (*kko-jyeoss-eo*) which has a similar sound but means the opposite in Korean (i.e., *it sucks*).]

27 Both: ((laugh))

28 Yoh: yeah I use it that way ((laughing))

29 Tutor: yeah?

30 Yoh: yes as *bi-kkom, kko-jyeoss-eo* ((smiling))

31 Tutor: you are strategic. okay so this is the last thing we are going to discuss

32 before you go home ((pointing to the list)) so if you look at these

33 words, they carry negative meaning

33 Yoh: mhm::

34 Tutor: but there are times when they are used to mean something positive

35 Yoh: there is a song too. *so sick*

36 Tutor: oh yes? yeah it means *cool* in some cases

37 Yoh: yes *cool*

38 Tutor: and this one too. ((points to the list)) *that was a sick movie* which

39 means the movie was *great*=

40 Yoh: =oh what is this *hysterical*?

41 Tutor: it could mean something like that was *really fun*

42 Yoh: a::h I only know about *sick*

43 Tutor: yes. oh so you’ve heard of this positive use of *sick* before?
Yoh talks about how he came to know the positive use of the word ‘sick’ while watching a *YouTube* clip created to teach English curse words. He also gives equivalent Korean words for the positive meaning of ‘sick.’

49 Tutor: yes. and so today, we

50 Yoh: [ridiculous? when do you use this one? ((pointing to the list on the handout))]

[The tutor provides possible contexts where *ridiculous* can be used and provides equivalent Korean expressions.]

52 Tutor: so basically it means it was good

53 Yoh: ((laughs))

54 Tutor: ((points to *hysterical* on the list)) and this one also, when something is unbearably fun or funny

56 Yoh: ((looking up)) hmm could there be any Korean equivalent words for that? + ((looking at the tutor)) words that mean something negative on the surface but have positive underlying meaning?

59 Tutor: mhm

60 Yoh: there should be some probably

61 Tutor: I believe so

62 Yoh: I can only remember 쯤다 (*jjeon-da; that’s sick*)

63 Tutor: well yes. but in fact

64 Yoh: [but the point is it means the opposite of this right? ((pointing to words on the list))]

66 Tutor: yes that’s right
(Yoh, CBI interaction in week 6)

Lower responsiveness

Throughout the CBI program, Yoh exhibited low responsiveness when the discussion required rigorous analysis. Yoh’s active participation, observed in week 6 (Excerpt 8.4), may be due to the fact that the tutor did not ask for sophisticated analysis of sarcastic communication where multiple layers of irony occurred and diverse sarcasm-related cues played out. Yoh seemed to prefer to rely on somewhat simple principles that do not require effortful analysis of sarcasm. This tendency was also observed during the focus group discussion held with Cho, Lee, and Soon.

In the focus group discussion with the three other learners, Yoh was the quietest participant. Throughout an hour-long discussion, he spent less than ten minutes speaking and interacting with the tutor and other participants. The only time he voluntarily spoke was when participants were co-constructively providing Korean equivalent expressions of Judy’s remark *I just want to know where your head was at* (Excerpt 7.15).

Reliance on forms

When the tutor (Excerpt 8.5) asks Yoh how many instances of sarcasm he selected in the video (Excerpt 7.12), Yoh answers with low confidence (in a low volume, line 2). After Cho discusses the rationale behind her selection, the tutor asks Yoh how he understands the intended meaning of one of the sarcastic utterances he selected (lines 39-41). He rephrases Judy’s remark without using any particular prosody to convey its
sarcastic meaning in Korean (lines 42-44). Thus, the tutor attempts to clarify why he finds it sarcastic (line 52). Yoh then provides a possible example of non-sarcastic utterance that conveys the same message in English (line 54). Without understanding Yoh’s rationale for distinguishing sarcasm and non-sarcasm (i.e., questions vs. statement), the tutor rephrases Yoh’s example into a question (lines 55-56). Then, Yoh provides another possible non-sarcastic expression without confidence (line 57). However, this time he uses the past tense and maintains the statement form. The tutor still does not understand Yoh’s logic in creating non-sarcasm and converts his example into a question by using a rising intonation (line 58). Consequently, Yoh explicitly indicates that the utterance has to be in a non-question form and goes back to his original example where he used a present tense (line 59). The tutor finally understands Yoh’s rationale and repeats the utterance he formulated and attempts to situate it in a context where it can possibly be used (lines 60-62). The tutor then asks other learners how they understand Yoh’s explanations (lines 64-65). Lee starts speaking but exhibits a somewhat dismissive attitude towards Yoh’s rationale by not addressing anything related to Yoh’s comments. After that, Yoh remains silent during the entire time when Cho and Lee express their agreements and disagreements with each other’s perceptions of sarcasm (Excerpt 7.13).

Excerpt 8.5

1 Tutor: okay then what about you Yoh?
2 Yoh: °I chose two questions°
3 Tutor: okay?
4 Yoh: did she know she was coming to court today this one and did you ever
go do church.

Tutor: yes that one appears twice, did you choose the first one or the second

Yoh: well it’s the second one=

it seems like both of them are sarcasm but the second one sounds more like sarcasm

Tutor: yeah? okay + those two only?

Yoh: those two only

Tutor: [those two and what did you pick Cho?]

Cho: well I ((laughing)) sort of have a lot

Lee: ((laughing))

Tutor: well then shall we talk about this now, uhm then I’ll ask things about utterances primarily to those people who picked those utterances, so first of all Yoh, you picked the one on the fifth line did she know she was coming to court today? that one right? + so what do you think the intent is? the speaker’s=

Yoh: =well looking at your outfit, you must have not known you were coming to court today, since it’s not the type of outfit that matches the dress code for church

Tutor: ah: looking at your outfit it does not seem to be the appropriate one. + she wanted to convey this message you think?

Soon: ((nodding))
Cho: ((nodding))

Yoh: yes yes

Tutor: and so that’s why she asked this way

Yoh: yes

Tutor: so then you are saying that this utterance sounds sarcastic to you right?

Yoh: yes. if she said it like *she doesn’t know she was coming to church* using these words

Tutor: ah if you want to put it in a non-sarcastic way, then you would make it as *does she know she was coming to court today* like this?

Yoh: °*she didn’t know* or (xxx)°

Tutor: ah *she didn’t know*? like this?

Yoh: no you shouldn’t use question sentences, *she doesn’t know*

Tutor: ah *she doesn’t know she was coming to court today*. hmm she must have not known she was coming to court today, like in the way that you talk to yourself?

Yoh: yes

Tutor: if you formulate it that way that it will sound non-sarcastic, hmm what do you guys think about this idea? ((looking around other learners))

Lee: well since this Judy is always a little too cynical,

Tutor: yes that’s right

Lee: and so actually all of these,=

Tutor: =yes

Lee: all of these utterances basically aim to criticize the fact that she didn’t
wear her outfit appropriately,

Tutor: yes

Lee: so if you look at it from that perspective I guess you can see them all as sarcasm.

Tutor: oh yes? but didn’t you select only one utterance?

Lee: yes (xxx)

Soon and Cho (Excerpt 8.6) share their ideas on another sarcastic utterance different kind of business I guess in the video (Excerpt 7.12). After the discussion, the tutor turns to Yoh and asks for his opinion on their understandings. Yoh (Excerpt 8.7) shares his moment of realization after hearing explanations from Cho, who provides more in-depth analysis of sarcasm (lines 2-4). Then in lines 6 to 7 of Excerpt 8.7, he opposes Soon’s interpretation of the utterance (lines 7-25 of Excerpt 8.5). Yoh explains that if the speaker were not to believe what the girl was saying, he would have asked her directly to clarify her meaning (lines 7-8). However, according to Yoh, since the speaker did not ask her but instead made a statement (i.e., different kind of business I guess), he finds it sarcastic (lines 10-14). As he had shown in his rationale for determining sarcastic attitude in other utterances (Excerpt 8.5), Yoh again used the same criteria (i.e., whether the utterance is in a question or statement form) in his analysis.

Excerpt 8.6
[Cho has just finished providing rationales for understanding different kind of business I guess in the video.]

1 Tutor: so you think he was implicating that

2 Cho: the business that you are talking about is that, but the business we are talking about is not that

3 Tutor: ah: like that,

4 Cho: yes

5 Tutor: did you all understand it that way? or ((looks around other learners))

6 Soon: my understanding is a little different,

7 Tutor: okay

8 Soon: the girl is saying business apparel but that’s bullshit like 웃기고 있어네

9 ((implied meaning. ‘yeah right’) I don’t buy your type of feeling

10 Cho: ((nods))

11 Tutor: ah:

12 Soon: that how I understood it

13 Tutor: ah: 웃기고 있어네, is that right? mhm 웃기고 있어네

14 Soon: [in other words she is insisting that it’s business apparel, but to anyone it doesn’t look like

15 what we normally consider as business apparel

16 Cho: ((nods))

17 Tutor: I see

18 Soon: so you are saying something that doesn’t make sense

19 Tutor: something that doesn’t make sense. then there isn’t necessarily the
implication of prostitution, but the business that the girl is referring to
doesn’t involve any seriousness

Soon: yes yes yes

Tutor: so the light meaning of business

Cho: ((nods))

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

Excerpt 8.7 (Continued from Excerpt 8.6)

1 Tutor: well do you think you agree? ((looks at Yoh))

2 Yoh: ((looking at Cho)) I think what she says is +

3 Tutor: oh the implication of prostitution she mentioned?

4 Yoh: while listening to what she was saying about sarcasm, I went a::h

5 Tutor: a::h

6 Yoh: if it was to mean what this gentleman said ((slightly grabbing Soon on

his arm)) it would have been something like what kind of business

7 Tutor: ah she would have asked directly like that

8 Yoh: (xxx)

9 Tutor: what kind of business do you mean?

10 Yoh: that’s right he would have asked like that

11 Tutor: yes but since he said it this way, that makes you think maybe it’s

12 sarcasm. the fact that he phrased it as different kind of business right?

13 Yoh: yes
Yoh’s preference for using simple rules is supported by his post-CBI interview. When the tutor asks him which part of the instruction was most helpful, Yoh immediately answers that he finds the list of lexical cues most helpful (Excerpt 8.8).

_Excerpt 8.8_

1 Tutor: has there been any difference between before and after CBI?=
2 Yoh: =great and genius for me ((smiling)) those lexical cues were most +
3 and those categories that I’ve mentioned but not to a great detail. just
4 the negative and positive part I remember
5 Tutor: I see.
6 Yoh: yes those lexical cues were most helpful.

(Yoh, post-CBI interview)

The analysis of the SCOBA-creating activity also implied that Yoh was still in the process of internalizing the concept of sarcasm. In week 9, the tutor asked him to create a model that presents the process of sarcasm detection and comprehension. Despite a number of trials, Yoh could not produce a complete model during the session. Consequently, the tutor provided some possible ways of processing sarcasm at the end of the session and asked him to bring a finalized version in the following week.
Compared to other learners, Yoh’s SCOBA (left of Figure 8.1) did not entail specific types of cues that should be considered for sarcasm detection. While Mia’s SCOBA contained detailed cues such as ‘flow of the conversation,’ ‘facial expression,’ ‘gesture,’ body movement,’ ‘tone of voice,’ ‘lexical cues,’ etc., Yoh’s included only three overarching cues (i.e., contextual, visual, and vocal) without necessary micro-level specifications. When asked for clarification, he explains possible steps that interlocutors might go through. However, he is not able to provide a sufficient number of the types of contextual cues discussed during CBI. Furthermore, he is not able to elaborate on how the cues are used to process sarcasm in greater detail.

Excerpt 8.9
1 Tutor: like what kinds?
2 Yoh: you know those we covered.
3 Tutor: yes
4 Yoh: like + particular places, and +
5 Tutor: yes
6 Yoh: I can’t remember them all of a sudden
7 Tutor: okay

[Lines omitted in which the tutor provides different types of contextual cues discussed during class.]

11 Tutor: but then how were they related to detecting sarcasm? like how did we use them to determine if someone’s using sarcasm or not?
12 Yoh: yes what was it? about the person who tends to use sarcasm frequently?
13 Tutor: mhm
14 Yoh: I mean if you know that the person uses it all the time, and when you hear something that you suspect as sarcasm, then it’s likely that it’s sarcasm.
15 Tutor: yes the speaker’s characteristics, his biographical data +
16 Yoh: ((nods))
17 Tutor: do you remember some other examples with other contextual cues?
18 Yoh: I know we did a lot but ++ ((smiles))
19 Tutor: okay

(Yoh, CBI in week 11)
Despite a lack of the strong analytical ability, Yoh’s test score markedly improved from 1 on the pre-test to 15 on the post-test and to 17 on the delayed post-test. The analysis showed that he clearly depended on the formulaic sarcastic phrases and lexical cues when identifying sarcasm during post- and delayed post-tests. During the tests, he would underline every word and exclamation phrases that sounded hyperbolic and positive (e.g., gorgeous, great, wow, what a…, thank you). Then he would narrow down his choices from those initial selections by considering other cues occurring in the context. For example, while reading a test script in the post-test (Excerpt 8.9), Yoh initially underlined ‘gorgeous (line 2)’ and ‘thank you (line 9)’ and later selected the latter as his final choice. He followed the same principle while solving the majority of other questions in the two tests, which led him to identify a greater number of sarcastic utterances.

Excerpt 8.9

1 Peter: ((smoking and looking out over New York City from an outside balcony on the roof of a 45-story building)) wow + it’s gorgeous.
2 Seth: ((looking over)) it’s a long way down
3 Will: yes it is ((jumps up and sits on the edge of the balcony))
4 Peter: whoa whoa
5 Seth: wait don’t do that, come on
6 Will: you know the feeling that people experience when they stand on the edge like this isn’t a fear of falling. it’s a fear that they might jump.
9 Seth: **well that’s very deep and depressing, thank you.**

10 Will: yeah well, I’m a little dark sometimes.

11 Seth: alright Will. come down please. Will please, come on.

(Post-test, *Margin Call*)

In addition to selecting a greater number of correct instances of sarcasm, the increased quality in explaining possible speakers’ intent contributed to Yoh’s improved test scores. While Yoh provided either simple, ambiguous, or no explanation for speaker intent in the pre-test, his answers in the two post-tests were qualitatively different. They contained greater detail with regard to possible communicative intent. For instance, Yoh assigned numerical percentages of possible speakers’ emotions and intent that might play out in the contexts (e.g., ‘to be humorous (60%) + to make fun of the interlocutor (40%)’).

8.2.2 Jin’s case

During the pre-test interview, Jin revealed that he enjoys watching U.S. TV sitcoms such as *The Big Bang Theory* during his spare time. Possibly due to this relatively greater exposure to sarcasm, the example of sarcasm he brought as homework effectively represented one of the core characteristics of English sarcasm—its association with humor. Moreover, Jin was able to identify sarcasm and its related cues more readily, compared to other participants in the pre-test. As shown in Table 8.2, he received the highest score among the nine participants in the pre-test.
Table 8.2. Test score comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Delayed post-test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boa</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cho</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jin</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lee</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mia</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soon</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wang</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yoh</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the program, Jin was able to conduct in-depth analyses of different examples of sarcastic contexts. The types of questions he asked always related to the appropriate cues for detecting the sarcastic utterance within that particular context.

During the focus group discussion in week 10, Jin showed great confidence in discussing the concept of sarcasm. He led the entire 60-minute discussion, leaving the other participant, Hong, relatively quiet. In the discussion, Jin selected almost all remarks by Judy in the Judge Judy episode (Excerpt 7.12), while Hong identified two instances of sarcasm. Jin’s criteria for selection primarily included: his definition of sarcasm and the contrast created by encyclopedic knowledge of the speaker and interlocutor (Excerpt 8.10). In lines 1 through 3, Jin expresses how his concept of sarcasm has become broader after considering definitions used during CBI (e.g., the activity of saying or writing the opposite of what you mean, or of speaking in a way intended to make someone else feel stupid or show them that you are angry). When asked to provide rationales for his selection, he first focuses on the importance of considering interlocutors’ feelings to determine sarcasm from the definition (lines 10-11). Then he considers the situation
where Judy asks if the person sitting in the witness stand is a witness to the proceedings—which seemed obvious to everyone in the courtroom and which Jin perceives as ironic (lines 16-19). To support his argument, he draws on another example of sarcasm that occurs in a similar ironic situation (lines 19-20). He then identifies the speaker’s negative emotion (i.e., dislike) that might have triggered her sarcasm while comprehending its underlying meaning (lines 23-25).

Excerpt 8.10

1 Jin: yes I used to think about oppositeness all the time, but if you really
2 think about those definitions we used, I think the scope of my
3 definition has become broader
4 Tutor: I see
5 Jin: and I think that is why all these sounded sarcastic to me ((pointing to
6 the script with a pen))
7 Tutor: mhm
8 Jin: at first, I think I only selected this one ((pointing to the script))
9 Hong: ((looks at where Jin is pointing to on the script))
10 Jin: but if you think about the latter part of the definition you just showed, I
11 think all these are sarcasm
12 Tutor: you also selected did she know she was coming to court today as
13 sarcasm=
14 Jin: =yes these are all apparent questions
15 Tutor: what are- what cues did you attend do?
Jin: I considered the situation. I mean not the utterances themselves, but I mean look, you are asking this person who is already sitting on the witness stand, did you know you were coming here? It's very ironic, isn’t it? Like for example, you ask students who are sitting in a classroom, did you know you were coming to class? It’s the same.

Tutor: So then the reason for asking that question is to convey some underlying meaning and that would be=

Jin: =It indicates that she is not liking something. And what exactly she dislikes gets more clearly revealed from here ((pointing to the script with his pen))

Hong: ((looks at where Jin is pointing to and nods))

Tutor: ((looking at Hong)) What do you think? Do you agree?

Hong: Yes yes.

(Focus group discussion, week 10)

Despite his mature understanding about the concept of sarcasm, Jin received a 13 (5 points lower than his pre-test) on his post-test and a 19 (1 point higher than his pre-test) on the delayed post-test (Table 8.1). His clarification interview data revealed that the decline in score was inversely proportional to the level of his confidence. Unlike other learners, Jin was the only one who successfully identified correct sarcasm for all test questions in both post- and delayed post-tests. However, Jin’s test sheets showed that he did not select all three cues for Section 2 of many test questions. When asked to provide
reasons, Jin (Excerpt 8.11) explains that some of the instances of sarcasm in the tests were sufficiently sarcastic to the level that he did not feel the need to check and select all three cues. According to Jin, for many test items, selecting one cue was already sufficient because of the apparent contrast created by the cue. In a sense, Jin’s approach aligns with how native speakers of English detect sarcasm, because in everyday communication they often need only a single cue. However, this seemingly advanced competency in detecting sarcasm does not guarantee the analytical ability through which one can identify all possible sarcasm-related cues that simultaneously play out in various contexts.

Excerpt 8.11

1 Jin: why did I not choose all three?
2 Tutor: yes- you knew you were supposed to pick three right? it says it here
3 ((pointing to the test sheet))
4 Jin: yes yes I wasn’t worrying about it too much because + I mean some of them are too obvious so=
5 Tutor: =what is obvious?
6 Jin: I mean the level of sarcastic feeling. almost all of them were ((looking at test scripts)) they are all saying the opposite of the situation or what they actually think. and so I didn’t look for other cues when things were clearly sarcastic
7 Tutor: so are you saying that you cared to check other cues only when the sarcastic feeling wasn’t enough?
8 Jin: I think so
Especially with the test items that contained more conventionalized sarcasm (e.g., ‘yeah right,’ ‘just what I need,’ ‘great’), Jin selected only one or two cues. For example, for Question 4 of the post-test (Excerpt 8.12), Jin selected ‘lexical cue’ from the test sheet and did not bother to select other cues such as ‘speaker’s encyclopedic knowledge about the culture’ or ‘prosodic cues.’ Even though the expression was not included in the list of formulaic sarcastic words and phrases, he treated ‘just what I need (line 5)’ as one of the categories.

Excerpt 8.12

1   Friend: I don't know, Peter, we've been out here all day and we haven't managed to interest a single woman in our massage parlor.
2   Peter: wait a minute. here comes somebody. excuse me, stressed-out lady, may I interest you in a full-release, relaxation massage?
3   Lady: oh, yeah. **just what I need**. fatty, an old black guy, a cripple and a pervert.
4   Cleveland: now we don't have any money and our feelings are hurt.

(Post-test, *Family Guy*)
Jin continued to stick to this test-taking behavior during the delayed post-test that was administered five weeks after the post-test.

8.3 Analysis of test scores

As Table 8.1 shows, eight out of nine participants scored higher on post-tests than on pre-tests—only Jin had a lower score on his post-test. Three participants, Yoh, Cho, and Lee, especially made great improvement in their scores. Yoh improved from 1 to 15, Cho from 3 to 16, and Lee from 4 to 20. In the delayed post-test, seven participants had even higher scores than on the initial post-test.

The analysis of test scores (Tables 8.3) revealed that learners improved their test scores. Also, it should be noted that Standard Deviation declined from the pre- to the post-tests, indicating that the participants became more homogeneous in their ability to appropriately identify sarcasm. The statistical analysis of pre- and post-test scores, given in Table 8.4, revealed a significant difference across each pair of scores. It is particularly important to note the significant difference between the post-test and the delayed post-test, given the considerable time lag between the two tests.

Table 8.3. Mean scores and standard deviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre-test</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-test</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delayed Post-test</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19.7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8.4. Results from comparing pre-post, pre-delayed, and post-delayed on the Wilcoxon signed rank measure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Post – Pre</th>
<th>Delayed – Pre</th>
<th>Delayed – Post</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wilcoxon signed rank test</td>
<td>-2.432</td>
<td>-2.666</td>
<td>-2.319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z</td>
<td>.015</td>
<td>.008</td>
<td>.020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Z = standardized sum of ranks; Asymp. Sig = p-value

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the respective developmental processes of two learners along with the test score results of all nine learners. The analysis of the test scores showed that significant improvement occurred between the pre-test and the post-tests. Learners gained control not only over identifying relevant cues in detecting sarcasm but also over comprehending speaker intent more appropriately. In other words, they showed development in understanding the concept of sarcasm and detecting sarcastic utterances.

Although Jin’s post-test score was lower by five points (compared to his pre-test score) and the delayed post-test score was higher by one point (compared to his post-test score), the interview data allowed the researcher to interpret the score difference as a sign of increased confidence. Unlike other learners, Jin correctly identified all sarcasm in both the post- and delayed post-tests. However, because he did not feel the need to select all cues for every instance of sarcasm, most points were marked down from the second section. According to Jin, he prioritized the degree of contrast created by the particular cue (one or two) rather than the number of cues. For instance, perceiving a sufficient degree of contrast produced by one cue (e.g., formulaic sarcasm) compelled him to discontinue analyzing the context further. That is, the level of contrast he perceived was
sufficient to make him feel fully confident in his interpretation and selection of answers. In each case, his identification of sarcastic utterances was accurate.

While learners like Jin were capable of conducting rigorous analysis of sarcastic communication, Yoh struggled to deconstruct contexts in which multiple cues occurred, from the outset of the program. He was not able to articulate rationales for his sarcasm selection in the Korean drama video that he selected as an example of sarcasm. Consequently, the tutor made sure to focus on deconstructing contexts and concretizing multiple cues that occurred in the contexts during CBI. Despite his continued engagement with the SCOBA-mediated tasks, Yoh adhered to his own form-focused framework, which entailed criteria such as question, statement, tense, and lexical choice for detecting sarcasm. These components differ from the categorical items that the tutor used in most analyses, such as irony, hyperbole, and various visual, prosodic, and contextual cues. Although he attempted to identify sarcasm by changing the tense of utterances (Excerpt 8.5), he did not consider the central components and criteria (e.g., the difference between the literal meaning of the utterance and actual reality, the speaker or interlocutor’s commonsense knowledge). Lack of detailed items in Yoh’s SCOBA and in his explanations (Excerpt 8.9) also indicated that Yoh did not fully internalize a sufficient number of cues. His preference for using the simple rules may be co-related to the level of responsiveness—he showed relatively greater responsiveness during the discussion of lexical cues, while he remained silent when in-depth analysis was required for deconstructing complicated contexts.

Yoh exhibited a test-taking strategy that centered heavily on the principle he had established, which operated around the list of lexical cues discussed during CBI. Despite
this somewhat unconventional approach compared to other learners, Yoh was able to select a greater number of appropriate cues and instances of sarcasm in the two post-tests. Furthermore, he was able to provide qualitatively improved explanations of speakers’ intent. These changes allowed Yoh to earn higher scores in the post- and delayed post-tests.

As described throughout chapters 7 and 8, learners demonstrated different levels of responsiveness and confidence towards the learning content and meditational methods implemented in CBI. Additionally, the types of conceptual framework they extrapolated on varied according to their developmental stages. Despite these variances in learning, comparisons of test scores revealed that learners developed a more complete conceptual understanding of sarcasm. They gained control not only over identifying relevant cues in detecting sarcasm but also over comprehending speaker intent more appropriately.
Chapter 9

Conclusion

This study aimed to develop L2 conceptual knowledge of the pragmalinguistic concept of sarcasm through concept-based instruction, derived from Vygotsky’s theory of consciousness and Gal’perin’s associated theory of educational development. The project sought to answer three principal questions:

1. In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote theoretical understanding of the concept of sarcasm among L2 learners of English?
2. In what ways, if any, does concept-based instruction promote L2 learners’ improved comprehension of sarcasm as produced by native speakers of English?
3. Were learners able to use appropriate cues in detecting sarcasm in natural speech?

In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study by first summarizing the nature of the learner-teacher dialectics as proposed in CBI. Then I detail how particular features of the CBI interactions led to learner development by addressing each of the research questions and synthesizing the findings reported in the data analyses chapters. The data to be summarized includes the following: learner verbalizations of their understanding of sarcasm prior to, and following, instruction (chapters 4-5), microanalysis of individual developmental processes (chapters 6-8), and results from a pre-test and two post-tests (chapter 8). In general, the results demonstrated that the learners’ conceptual knowledge
and comprehension abilities improved as a consequent of systematic instruction. Finally, I discuss the implications for future research and the limitations of the study.

9.1 Cultural understanding of emotions

People of different cultures differ in the way they conceptualize emotions (Briggs, 1970). Wierzbicka (1995; 1999) also emphasizes this point by claiming that it is inappropriate to assume one universal concept of emotion (e.g., shame, fear, embarrassment). For example, in the case of shame, it is necessary to distinguish culture-specific qualities of shame in order to fully understand the concept. This is because these concepts differ in their social ubiquity, their expression, and their societal evaluation. Ratner (2000) concludes that in order for one to understand the concrete cultural character of emotions it is necessary to elucidate “their correspondence with the manner in which people act, think and are treated in cultural activities (p. 9).”

Sarcasm entails the expression of emotions such as feelings, thoughts, attitudes, and intent. Different segments of culture possess different ways of conveying sarcastic messages. People of different languacultures (Agar, 1994) consider particular types of linguistic signals (e.g., visual, prosodic, contextual, lexical) for both comprehending and producing sarcasm. These cultural activities are motivated by certain emotions, which exist within the conventions of the society. Thus, conceptual understanding of sarcasm in another culture requires examination of its motivation, intensity, means of expression, and goals.
Consequently, the curriculum of CBI for teaching the concept of sarcasm in English entailed the following thematic components: (a) social ubiquity of sarcasm, (b) definition of sarcasm, (c) examples and manifestations of sarcasm, (d) schematic processes of sarcasm production and (e) comprehension. Additionally, the tutor compared properties of sarcasm in English with sarcasm in Korean, the L1 of the participants.

Discussion of the first theme covered a number of examples of sarcasm that speakers use to achieve diverse communicative goals (i.e., SCOBA 1, see chapter 3, p. 54). While defining the term, learners attempted to concretize the ambiguous concept by focusing on the central property of sarcasm—verbal irony (i.e., SCOBA 2, see chapter 3, p. 55). For discussing the manifestations of sarcasm, learners engaged in activities where they concretized the visual, prosodic, contextual, and lexical cues that constitute sarcasm (i.e., SCOBA 3-7, see chapter 3, pp. 56-59). In addition to discussing various intentions underlying the use of sarcasm, SCOBA 1 allowed learners to identify two parameters to understand emotions: (a) the spectrum of emotions (i.e., negative—positive) and the range of force in utterances (i.e., bitter—lighthearted) and (b) the process of sarcasm production that speakers might undergo. Finally, adopting an interlocutor perspective, learners concretized the process of sarcasm comprehension in which they synthesized all properties of it and related cues (i.e., SCOBA 8, see chapter 3, p. 60).

9.2 Discussion of findings

Pre-understanding
Regardless of the correctness or incorrectness of knowledge, we are constrained by our prior understanding of the world. Even if our prior understanding is incorrect, we will be constrained by this knowledge until it is replaced by new knowledge. Miller (2011) pointed this out and emphasized that understanding demands a negation of pre-understanding whenever it is inaccurate and not an elaboration or refinement of previous understanding. In order for new knowledge to emerge, according to Miller, the incorrect pre-understanding needs to be dislodged. This account is rooted in Vygotsky’s (1987) idea of the dialectic between spontaneous knowledge—pre-understanding with which children enter school—and scientific/academic knowledge they are exposed to in school. Prior to beginning school, children have their own experiences, which lead them to develop spontaneous knowledge of their social and natural environment. While the construction of new knowledge will build on this pre-existing knowledge, the knowledge taught in schools is frequently incompatible with their prior understandings, which can impede comprehension. Therefore, a dislodgement and reorganization of existing knowledge is necessary, and this process should be considered as conceptual change.

At the outset of the program, learners’ understanding of sarcasm was predicated on their L1 concepts—*ban-eo* (irony) and *bi-kkom* (sarcasm). The participants who translated sarcasm into *ban-eo* heavily focused on the aspect of ‘opposite meaning’ between the literal and underlying meanings of the utterance. Alternatively, learners who treated sarcasm as *bi-kkom* conceptualized sarcasm as a severely negative speech act. The majority of learners understood the core function of sarcasm as mitigating the harshness of criticism. Moreover, they assumed that the cues used to signal and detect sarcasm were

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18 According to Vygotsky, “scientific concepts” refer to the concepts explicitly introduced by formal schooling. Such concepts should cover the essential aspects of an area of knowledge and presented as a system of interrelated ideas. (van der Veer & Vlasiner, 1991)
the same in Korean and in English. Although they vary somewhat with regard to the specifics of the cues, no learner was able to provide more than three cues.

The analysis of pre-CBI interviews and the pre-test results enabled the tutor to identify areas where the principle of inhibition and addition could apply (see chapter 3). In addition to overcoming the pre-understanding that was irrelevant for detecting L2 sarcasm, it was also necessary to help learners develop an understanding of the meanings of sarcasm that do not hold in their L1. Thus, instruction confronted the complex task of inhibiting L1 cues and meanings from interfering with detection and interpretation of sarcasm in L2 English, while at the same time helping learners develop a new set of cues and interpretations for sarcasm relative to this language. Using a genetic analysis, this study examined the origins of prior knowledge, the processes of concept formation and the transitions that ultimately resulted in the learners’ new understanding of the concept.

Mediation

Mediation in the CBI program entailed two central categories of mediating agents: symbolic psychological tools and the human mediator. The psychological tools in the form of SCOBAs and video clips illustrating authentic uses of sarcasm were integrated into the instructional process to promote learning, where the tools provided cognitive components of content essential for the comprehension of the concept itself (e.g., definitions, sarcasm-related cues, communicative goals). In addition, the human mediator, the tutor, taught learners how to use the psychological materials as their orienting basis for internalizing the content.
As mentioned in chapter 3, the acquisition of psychological tools must have the character of a deliberate action. Without the mediator’s intentionality to teach learners how to use them, psychological tools will not be appropriated by the students or will be perceived as another content item, rather than as a tool. Thus, during the first few weeks of the CBI program, the tutor compelled learners to rely on the SCOBAs for every analysis and discussion of sarcasm. It was clear that without referencing the SCOBAs, the learners fell back on their L1 understandings of the concept. The tutor therefore made sure that the learners understood the relevance of the SCOBAs as psychological tools for thinking. Without this mediation, those tools would in all likelihood have remained inert.

With mediation as the focal component of the program, the CBI interactions were predicated on Galperin’s (1989; 1992) notion of the orientation function of mental activity. He placed significant emphasis on the central phases of concept-based pedagogy—materialization, verbalization, and internalization of a particular concept. In this study, the eight SCOBAs materialized the abstract concept, sarcasm, by depicting its fundamental features. The learners recognized these features as essential through their manifestations in various contexts. During the recognition process, the learners modified the tools (i.e., SCOBAs 1-8) by adding and re-categorizing new features that they identified from the concrete instances of sarcasm to which they were exposed in the array of video clips utilized in the instructional program. The SCOBAs served as a means of orientation and allowed learners to analyze multiple instances of sarcasm and to internalize the concept. The key principles of an effective SCOBA include coherence and systematicity in presenting the gist of the concept. Following this rule, the eight SCOBAs consisted of easily manageable imagistic, graphical, and symbolic models that depicted
the core components of sarcasm. These features enabled the orientation function to occur more readily.

In addition to the visualization of the concept, orienting activity includes verbalization of an external action that contributes to its internalization. In this study, learner verbalization occurred mainly through communicative thinking (i.e., conversations) with the tutor and other peers. During each session, the learners analyzed and verbalized how they interpreted the context in relation to multiple sarcasm-related cues. For every analysis conducted and sarcasm selection made during the three tests, the learners verbalized their thinking processes and the rationales on which they based their interpretations. The ultimate goal of this orienting activity was to enable learners to use a “field of possible action” (Galperin, 1992, p. 55) where the orienting basis (i.e., SCOBA) can be systematically considered, rather than haphazardly reaching decisions through trial and error (Galperin, 1989).

In this way, the SCOBAs functioned as conceptual macrostructures that created a general orientation framework for learners to analyze concrete instances of sarcasm. The SCOBAs promoted the penetration of the concrete through reduction to the fundamentals of the concept. Despite the incompleteness of their frameworks at the outset of the program, participants found their own ways to appropriate the concept by showing unique developmental trajectories. By creating the links between theoretical essence (i.e., SCOBA) and concrete phenomenon (i.e., actual manifestations of sarcasm in videos), the individual learners enriched and reorganized their initial cognitive frameworks.

*Concept development*
Learners showed evidence of development through (1) the verbalization of the mature understanding of the concept of sarcasm (in both L1 and L2) and (2) improved performance (i.e., comprehension ability) on the post-tests. Under these two overarching performance criteria, the researcher used five sub-criteria to assess development by focusing on the microgenetic processes involved in the formation and execution of a psychological process: (a) differentiated perception and response, (b) increased voluntary control over one’s performance, (c) new knowledge and skills acquired, (d) emergence of conscious realization of mental processes, and (e) the ability to modify and construct one’s social and symbolic environment.

**Conscious understanding of the theoretical knowledge**

Contrary to the incomplete knowledge they exhibited at the beginning of CBI, the learners provided more complete definitions and explanations of the concept during the final stage of the program. The development of scientific knowledge enabled the learners to establish a solid cognitive framework for understanding the L2 concept more readily. Additionally, the framework made their L1 knowledge of the equivalent concept more visible and helped them become not only more competent L2 users but also more eloquent L1 communicators. This change is noteworthy because it allowed learners to reconstruct their psyche by recognizing how both languages are manipulated to convey nuanced meanings in daily communicative interactions, which consequently imbued them with enhanced understanding of how sarcasm functioned in their own language. While the focus of the study was not on the learners’ L1, it seems clear that their new conscious
understanding of how sarcasm operates in their own language would likely empower them to be more effective communicators.

*Improved performance*

The findings indicated a dialectical relationship between scientific knowledge and performance in which each influences the other (Vygotsky, 1978). The learners’ mature conceptual understandings of sarcasm transformed their performances (i.e., greater analytical ability in comprehension), which in turn recursively impacted their knowledge (i.e., more complete theoretical knowledge). The learners’ improved performance on the two post-tests is especially noteworthy in this regard. Considering the relatively long interval five-week time lag between the post-test and the delayed post-test, learners showed evidence of significant development.

*Different orientation toward L2 learning*

The CBI interactions encouraged learners to reconceptualize the meaning of L2 learning. They established the understanding that English learning is not simply a matter of translating texts or decoding utterances; rather, they realized the importance of focusing on speakers’ intentions. Recognizing this aspect of communication, the learners were able to perceive things outside the boundary of content learning and connect this understanding to a broader picture of communication. Mia, for example, initially treated sarcasm as an extremely negative, “taboo” speech act. However, in the course of internalizing the L2 concept, she began to consider it as “one of the many communicative tools speakers use to express emotions and thoughts.” She eventually attempted to
modify the psychological tool (i.e., SCOBA 1) on purpose in order to serve her specific needs (i.e., production of sarcasm) more effectively. Although the production of sarcasm was not the goal of CBI, learners like Mia expressed the need to reshape the SCOBA so that they could participate in the L2 society as a more active and informed interlocutor.

9.3 Implications and future directions

Understanding figurative language is crucial for L2 learners. Figurative language captures the nuances of emotion more adequately than literal language (Gibbs et al., 2002), because it conveys emotional content in a conceptually and experientially more accessible form. Despite the importance and usefulness of figurative language, by and large, and with a few notable exceptions (Boers 2004; 2011, Danesi, 1995, Littlemore, 2001), it has not been included in instructional curricula. In order for practitioners to teach figurative devices like sarcasm and irony more effectively, it is necessary to consider different conceptualizations and linguistic manifestations across cultures.

The phenomenon of sarcasm reveals many of these cultural and linguistic differences. At the outset of the study, not surprisingly, the participants used their L1 knowledge while processing L2 sarcasm. Because learners perceived L1 sarcasm primarily as a means of mitigating criticism (which differed from L2 sarcasm), the tutor provided mediation that focused on the differences between the two concepts. This suggests that the types of mediation should vary depending on L2 learners’ L1 backgrounds. For language educators to teach the concept of sarcasm, it is therefore necessary to consider learners’ L1-based prior understanding of the equivalent (or similar)
concept. Consequently, it would be beneficial to create pedagogical materials (e.g., corpus-based sarcasm dictionary entries), which can provide information on different manifestations of sarcasm across different cultures.

It is especially important to identify the actual linguistic manifestations of sarcasm in different cultures because, unlike grammatical constructions, there are no fixed sarcastic forms to teach.\(^{19}\) Recent work has begun to delve into this issue. Kim (under review), for example, identified several verbal strategies for creating sarcastic utterances in English and Korean, including verbal irony, hyperbole, hypothetical situation, obviously untrue alternative, and false framing. Kim provided linguistic examples of both English and Korean sarcasm, which showed that many of the five strategies overlapped with one another\(^{20}\). More research on how the same category of the strategy manifests through different linguistic expressions will be beneficial for teachers.

### 9.4 Limitations of the study

To my knowledge, this study was the first attempt to provide direct instruction on sarcasm in any L2 environment. Having said this, and even though the study produced generally positive results, there are some limitations in terms of its scope of applicability. The CBI interactions in this study occurred in one-on-one tutoring sessions. Practitioners may find it difficult to apply the same intensive approach to a number of students within

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\(^{19}\) There exist some conventional ways of expressing sarcasm that most people in the culture recognize: “Nice knock” or “I’m enjoying this course, NOT.” However, these may change quickly and vary most likely by age and perhaps social class.

\(^{20}\) Although English verbal irony can also be accomplished through a variety of linguistic forms, verbal irony in Korean is distinct in that there also are specific morphemes, words or phrases, and syntactic structures used in linguistically explicit irony, which lead interlocutors to readily decipher ironic meanings in an interlocutor’s speech.
a larger classroom context. Of course, this does not indicate that it is impossible to apply the same types of meditational support in language classrooms. As the findings showed, learner development occurred mostly through communicative thinking not only with the tutor but also with other peers. Nevertheless, a greater level of sensitivity may be required from the teacher in order to effectively mediate a group of learners while remaining aware of group ZPDs.

An ESL classroom comprised of students with mixed L1s may be even more challenging for practitioners who aim to implement the curriculum used in this study. As demonstrated above, it is important for the mediator to acknowledge students’ previous understandings of the concept of sarcasm. This initial knowledge is likely to be based on their L1 concept, which will be different according to their cultural backgrounds. Teachers might obtain understanding of learners’ L1 equivalent concepts of sarcasm from various types of homework assignments (e.g., bring video examples of L1 sarcasm and write an interpretive essay about them). However, the amount of the knowledge may vary depending on the degree of similarities and differences between the particular L1 and L2 concepts of sarcasm. Lack of knowledge in students’ particular L1s may not effectively promote their conceptual development. This is because the degree of knowledge about learners’ pre-understanding and their psychological processes matters—it determines the quality of the dialectics between the teacher and learners.

The medium of instruction in this study was participants’ L1. The tutor was able to interact with the students during communicative thinking in the L1, and the students were also able use their L1 in group communicative thinking. This allowed the students to express their thoughts and feelings freely and in great detail, which heavily influenced
the quality of the teacher-student dialectics. However, in an ESL classroom with linguistic diversity, the instruction would likely be held in English, which may be a great challenge both for the teacher and students when the circumstances demand rigor in analysis and sophistication in verbalization. It remains to be seen how instruction in a concept such as sarcasm unfolds in this type of environment.
Appendix A

Pre-CBI Interview Questions

The primary purpose of the initial interview is to find out the background knowledge of how the learners understand the concept of sarcasm both in their L1 (Korean) and L2 (English).

1. What is your understanding about the concept of sarcasm in Korean?
2. In what context would Korean users use it?
3. How would you define Korean sarcasm?
4. What are the examples of sarcastic utterances in Korean?
5. What are the cues that you attend to when detecting and understanding Korean sarcasm?
6. What is your understanding about the concept of sarcasm in English?
7. In what context do you think would English users use sarcasm?
8. How would you define English sarcasm?
9. What are the examples of sarcastic utterances in English? Please answer if you know any.
10. What are the cues that you would attend to when attempting to detect and understand sarcasm in English?
Appendix B

MSNBC TV News Script Excerpt

Brewer: Good day, everyone. I'm Contessa Brewer live at the News Desk. David Letterman takes a shot at the Governor of Alaska and in this case it sounds like, at least for Sarah Palin, Letterman missed the funny bone and struck a nerve instead. It began earlier this week when he made Sarah Palin the subject of his Top Ten list.

Letterman: At number two: Bought makeup at Bloomingdale's to update her slutty flight attendant look. And, the number one highlight of Sarah Palin's trip to New York: Especially enjoyed not appearing on Letterman. Well there you go.

Brewer: Palin was a guest on John Ziegler's radio show and she got a chance to respond to Letterman.

Palin: For him to pick up on such a thing, a distortion that, again, is based on a slow news day, evidently, not having anything else to talk about. That’s pretty pathetic, good old David Letterman.

Brewer: And John Ziegler joins me now, he's a radio host with KGIL 1260 am News Radio in Los Angeles and has previously interviewed Palin and others for his film, "Media Malpractice: How Obama got elected." John, good to see you.

Ziegler: Thanks for having me. Always interesting to go out with the people, with the people with Barack Obama's official network

Brewer: I know, you're very critical of the way that journalists in general have dealt with Governor Palin. I wanna ask you today about your interview with Sarah Palin.

Ziegler: Gee, I wonder why.

Brewer: So, so, let me begin with. Do you want to do the interview? Do you want to talk about this?

Ziegler: Yeah.

Brewer: Okay.

Ziegler: I'd be thrilled to. Let's go for it.

Brewer: Let me ask you what's Sarah Palin's problem with Letterman was, what it's about the Top Ten List that hurt her feelings?

Ziegler: Well, I don't know if her, her feelings were hurt, you'd have to ask her. If she
called David Letterman pathetic, which I think was an understatement because not only did he call her slutty, he left out the part where he also joked about her teenage daughter being knocked up by Alex Rodriguez in the middle of Yankee stadium while she was at the game.

By the way, I also happen to ask her about Keith Olbermann blatantly lying about her allegedly. Plagiarizing a speech which she didn't do I doubt that that'll come up on this particular network.

Brewer: It, well, is certainly not going to come up other than your mention in this particular interview because I wanna ask ask you about David Letterman and Sarah Palin. But again, if you'd like to talk about that, I'm willing to go forward with the conversation. Yes?

Ziegler: I'll talk about whatever you want. Hit me with your best shot.

Brewer: Okay. Perfect. Good. So in this case, it's comedy to talk about her real itinerary in New York. It's kind of serious. Not really funny. Why did she take such offense? She called him pathetic, so she obviously took offense. Why was she so offended by David Letterman?

Ziegler: Well, Contessa, since you're a female you might be a better expert on whether or not it's appropriate to call a public figure slutty with for no apparent reason and to joke about her daughter being knocked up in the middle of Yankees Stadium while she's at the game.

Brewer: Yeah. You know what, it actually happens.

Ziegler: How would you feel about that, Contessa?

Brewer: That actually happened to me and I'm Fine. I'm still here.

Ziegler: Really? David Letterman joked about you being slutty and your daughter being knocked up?

Brewer: Not David Letterman. Not David Letterman. But it happened to me publicly. Okay. Well, we'll change topics.

Ziegler: Okay.

Brewer: How about this? We just got a new poll out that shows that a majority of Americans don't know who speaks for the Republican party. In this case, Sarah Palin, we're showing the people who got some of the responses you got. Rush Limbaugh and Dick Cheney and John McCain. What about Sarah Palin? Does she feel at all concerned that she’s not seen as a voice for the Republican Party?
Ziegler: Let me get this straight. You find this surprising, shocking that because you in the media portray Republicans as old white men, that the public perceives Republicans as old white men, and you destroy in a blatant character assassination,

Brewer: John, in your interview,

Ziegler: Sarah Palin's character in your interview and the public thinks in your interview that she's not worthy of that, at least in some terms.

Brewer: John

Ziegler: Yes, go ahead.

Brewer: John, in your interview with Sarah Palin, did you ask her any tough questions, or are you functioning now as her spokesperson?

Ziegler: Yes, I did.

Brewer: OK, so you interviewed her. I'm curious,

Ziegler: Oh yeah. I asked,

Brewer: about the information you elicited from Sarah Palin.

Ziegler: This was a great interview. I urge anyone who’s interested in the real Sarah Palin that go to howobamagotelected.com. You can listen to the whole 16 minutes. One of the questions I asked her was whether or not she felt dissed by John McCain went on Jay Leno also on NBC back when he was the host of the Tonight Show and basically dissed her,

Brewer: Wow, alright.

Ziegler: and surprise surprise, surprise surprise she gave an incredibly classy answer, showing far more class than most people on this network have.

Brewer: I don't really know what to do with that. You know, I was honestly, I'm here to get you an opportunity. I consider myself a common sense thinker. I haven't attacked you.

Ziegler: Right.

Brewer: And for you to come on and use those sort of insults insults me. Thank you so much for your time, time. I do appreciate that.

Ziegler: Okay. Well, you guys are certainly,
Brewer: Much more news ahead on that. Cut the mic please. Much more news ahead on him as NBC.
Appendix C

Transcription Conventions

+ short pause
++ long pause
+++ very long pause

. full stop marks falling intonation
, slightly rising intonation
? raised intonation (not necessarily a question)

(xxx) unable to transcribe

((comment)) double parentheses contain transcriber’s comments or descriptions

- abrupt cutoff with level pitch

underline underlining indicates stress through pitch or amplitude

= latched utterances

[. . .] indicates that a section of the transcript has been omitted

[ onset of overlapping speech

] end of overlapping speech

CAPITALS capital letters indicate markedly loud speech
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