The Interface between Self-Efficacy, Life Satisfaction, and Emotional and Informational Support for Korean Learners Acquiring English as a Second Language

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the interface between self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and emotional and informational support for Korean learners acquiring English as a Second Language. More specifically, the aim of this study is to explore the interface among psychological variables (e.g., speaking, reading, writing, and listening self-efficacy), mediating variables (e.g., emotional and informational support received from parents, teachers, and friends) and behavioral outcomes (e.g., life satisfaction within the family, at school/work, and in personal relationships with friends) by examining the linear structural model developed by Kim and Park (1998) and revised by Choe (2000). Self-efficacy is typically defined as a judgment of one's ability to organize and execute a particular type of performance (cf.e.g. Bandura, 1986, 1997). Thus, self-efficacy is exercising control over one's life (Bandura, 1986, 1997).

ERIC Descriptors:
Self-Efficacy
English as a Second Language
Emotional and Informational Support
Life Satisfaction

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Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the interface between self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and emotional and informational support for Korean leaners in acquiring English as a Second Language. More specifically, the aim of this study is to explore the learners' interface between the psychological variable (e.g., speaking, writing, listening, and reading self-efficacy), mediating variables (e.g., emotional and informational support received from parents, teachers, and friends) and behavioral outcome (e.g., life satisfaction within the family, at school/work, and interpersonal relationships with friends) by examining the linear structural model developed by Kim and Park (1998) and revised by Choe (2000, see Figure 1).

Self-efficacy is typically defined as a judgment of one's ability to organize and execute a particular type of performance (cf.e.g**.** Bandura, 1986, 1997). More specifically, it is a belief about whether one can produce certain actions. In other words, self-efficacy is exercising control over one's life (Bandura, 1986, 1997). According to Bandura (1997), efficacy beliefs will vary depending on the following seven factors: (a) assessment of existing capabilities, (b) perceived difficulty of the task, (c) amount of effort required, (d) amount of external aid required, (e) circumstance in which the tasks are performed, (f) temporal pattern**s** of successes and failures, (g) the way experiences are organized and reconstructed (Bandura, 1997: 81). The characteristics of self-efficacy are (a) the ability to understand, (b) the ability to predict, and (c) the ability to manage the environment, oneself, and others.

The goal of the linear structural equation modeling is used to test the structural relations among the hypothetical latent variables that are estimated from manifest

variables. It refers to a family of statistical procedures to test whether obtained data are consistent with a theoretical model (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1982). It provides answers to several questions. First, it examines how well hypothesized latent variables fit with manifest or indicator variables used as actual measures. Second, it provides an understanding of a series of causal relationship in a path diagram. Third, it explains the difference between observable manifest variables and unobservable latent variables and their relationship in structural equation modeling. Finally, it evaluates the proposed relationships in a model and compares the model by imposing equality constraint (Joreskog & Sorbom, 1982). As diagramed in figure 1, the direct path from emotional and informational support indicates a causal relationship to life satisfaction through a mediating variable of self-effiacacy. The four latent variables in this model are self-efficacy (e.g., writing, reading, speaking, listening); life satisfaction (e.g., friends, school/work, family); emotional support (e.g., parents, teachers, friends); and informational support (e.g., parents, teachers, friends).

Theorefore, the goal of the structural relationship model in this study is to compare the direct effect of emotional and informational support on self-efficacy. Figure 1 depicts that emotional and informational social support have a direct effect on self-efficacy (e.g., psychological variables) and life-satisfaction (e.g., behavioral outcomes). This model assumes that self-efficacy and life satisfaction are explained in terms of correlation since the common cause is emotional and informational support as depicted in the figure. According to the American Heritage dictionary (2000), correlation is defined as a causal, complementary, parallel, or reciprocal relationship, especially a structural, functional, or qualitative correspondence between two comparable entities. The rationale

behind this assumption is that self-efficacy and life satisfaction have not been established as a casual relationship. Thus, this model indicates that self-efficacy and life satisfaction possess a caual factor through the common cause of emotional and informational social support.

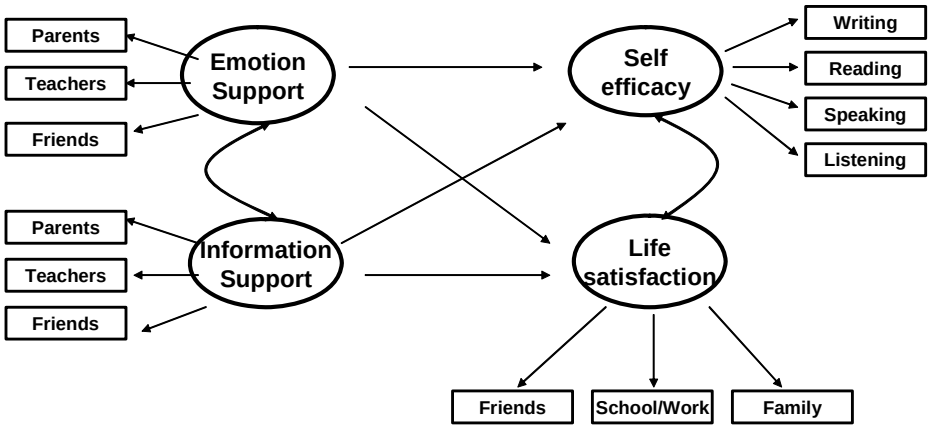

Figure 1: The relationship among self-efficacy, life satisfaction, emotional and informational support

For this present study, the hypotheses related to this model in acquiring English as a Second Language are as follows. First, learners who perceive themselves as receiving more emotional support than informational support from their parents, teachers, and friends will have a higher speaking self-efficacy. Second, learners who perceive themselves as receiving more emotional support than informational support from their parents, teachers, and friends will have higher life satisfaction. Lastly, learners who perceive themselves to have high speaking self-efficacy will have higher life satisfaction.

Characteristics of Self-Efficacy

The characteristics of self-efficacy are (a) the ability to understand, (b) the ability to predict, and (c) the ability to manage the environment, oneself, and others.

According to Bandura (1997), efficacy beliefs will vary depending on the following seven factors: (a) assessment of existing capabilities, (b) perceived difficulty of the task, (c) amount of effort required, (d) amount of external aid required, (e) circumstance which the task need to be performed, (f) temporal pattern**s** of successes and failures, (g) the way experiences are organized and reconstructed Bandura (1997: 81).

The key sources of efficacy beliefs are mastery experience, modeling, verbal persuasion, and physiological and affective states. Mastery experience is generally described as the most influential source of efficacy belief (Bandura, 1986). It provides the most authentic evidence of an individual's or a group's ability to succeed. The assessment of efficacy belief is an inferential process in which ability and non-ability must be weighed. For instance, successes build efficacy belief while failures undermine it.

Modeling is described in terms of social comparison (Bandura, 1986). In other words, when one sees others who are similar to you succeed; it boosts the observer's confidence. Modeling possesses three characteristics: (a) knowledge, (b) predictability, and (c) controllability. Knowledge is defined as the ability to transmit effective strategies to manage a task. Predictability increases preparedness and decreases uncertainty and stress. Controllability is defined as the ability to demonstrate effective strategies to handle difficult situations.

Third, verbal persuasion is the performance feedback that is positively framed rather than negatively framed, which elevates efficacy beliefs and subsequent performances. Knowledgeable and credible persuaders are much more effective, especially when the discrepancy between self-appraisal and the persuader is low (Bandura, 1986).

Lastly, the physiological and affective states are the knowledge about the bodily state; therefore, social labeling is important. The affective domain concerns the impact of perceived coping self-efficacy on biological systems that affect health functioning. Biological systems are highly interdependent. A weak sense of efficacy to exercise control over stressors activates autonomic reactions, catecholamine secretion, and release of endogenous opioids (Bandura, 1986). These biological systems are involved in the regulation of the immune system. Stress activated in the process of acquiring coping capabilities may have different effects than stress experienced in aversive situations with no prospect in sight of ever gaining any self-protective efficacy (Bandura, 1986).

The concept of self-efficacy is composed of three constructs: physical, academic, and social. Social self-efficacy is defined as an expectation of success in different social tasks that contribute to success in social relationships. Bandura (1977) recognized, explored, and defined the need to develop feelings of self-efficacy in order to produce and regulate life events. In terms of education, Bandura (1997) states that "the fundamental goal of education is to equip students with self-regulatory capabilities that enable them to educate themselves." For instance, he describes self-regulation as a tool that encompasses skills for planning, organizing, and managing instructional activities, and enlisting resources (Bandura, 1997). It also regulates one's own motivation.

Moreover, one is able to apply metacognitive skills to evaluate the adequacy of one's knowledge and strategies. This importance of the self-efficacy construct in formulations of human agency is supported by extensive empirical research (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy theory provides a useful framework that focuses on the perception of ability to produce effective behavior and to consider the internal standards by which attainments will initially be judged as successes or failures (Ehrenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Maszk, Smith, & Karbon, 1995).

The concept of self-efficacy, namely "the conviction that one can successfully execute a particular behavior required to produce a particular outcome" (Bandura, 1977: 193), was proposed as a fundamental mediator between knowledge and execution of behavior contributing to initiation of action and perseverance of effort (Hoeltje, Zubrick, Silburn, & Garton, 1996). Thus, "expectations of personal efficacy determine whether coping behavior will be initiated, how much effort will be expended, and how long it will be sustained in the face of obstacles and adversive experiences" (Bandura, 1977: 191).

Parental aspirations and perceived efficacy build children's sense of efficacy and academic aspirations. Parents who believe that they can exercise some influence over their children's development are more proactive and successful in cultivating their children's competencies than parents who doubt they can do much to affect their children's developmental course (Elder, 1995; Gross, Fogg, & Tucker, 1995; Schneewind, 1995; Teti & Gelfand, 1991). Academically efficacious parents are likely to promote not only educational activities but interpersonal and self-management skills conducive to learning, especially if they hold high academic aspirations for their children. This could raise children's beliefs in their social and self-regulatory efficacy.

Parents' positive involvement in the educational process can increase teachers' educational commitment to the children. By influencing what teachers expect of their children academically, parents can have a more pervasive educational impact than if their influence is solely mediated through its effects on their children. A high sense of social efficacy promotes satisfying and supportive social relationships (Holahan & Holahan, 1987a, 1987b; Leary & Atherton, 1986; Wheeler & Ladd, 1982).

Children who are considerate of their peers and are accepted by them will experience a school environment more conducive to learning than if they behave in socially alienating ways and are repeatedly rejected by their peers. A high sense of academic and social efficacy fosters prosocial behavior, which builds peer acceptance (Ladd & Price, 1987; Ladd, Price, & Hart, 1988). Perceived lack of social efficacy for the development of satisfying and supportive relationships increases vulnerability to depression through social isolation (Holahan & Holahan, 1987a, 1987b).

Cowen et al. (1991) argue that "a generalized measure of children's perceived self-efficacy can have fruitful applications" (p. 169). Generalized self-efficacy (GSE) is defined as the belief that one can deal effectively with everyday life problems and challenges at large (Cowen et al., 1991). The Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale (PSE; Cowen et al., 1991) appears to be the one measure of GSE most consistent with its theoretical underpinnings. The PSE has been demonstrated to correlate significantly with peer sociability, social skills, assertiveness, self-reliance, social support, scholastic competence, behavioral conduct, depression, anxiety, and wishful thinking (Cowen et al., 1991).

Social self-efficacy reflects an individual's expectation of personal mastery over specific social tasks that contribute to success in social relationships (Connolly, 1989). Low self-efficacy is associated most strongly with internalizing behaviors such as anxiety, withdrawal, and over control. Poor social self-efficacy is associated with general self-doubts and anxious attitudes, which collectively contribute to a lack of social competence (Bandura, 1997). More specifically, adolescents who are confident in their social efficacy are better at cultivating supportive friendships than those who are beset with self-doubt (Connolly, 1989; Wheeler & Ladd, 1982).

The Role of Self-Efficacy in Academic Domains

In academic domains, the research on self-efficacy is less extensive; however, we are now seeing it being applied to such diverse academic domains as mathematics, computer literacy, writing, in-service teacher training, choice of academic majors, and so on. Many of these studies are correlational and describe how self-efficacy relates to academic outcomes.

Self-Efficacy and Academic Performance

Dale Schunk (1987) is one of the more prolific researchers applying self-efficacy as an academic construct. He and his colleagues often use a research paradigm that goes

beyond correlational analysis to include instructional interventions designed to raise learners' percepts of efficacy and corresponding performance on criterial tasks (Schunk, 1987). Schunk's treatments to influence self-efficacy include variations on modeling, attributions of success or failure, and goal-setting. For example, modeling influences do more than provide a social standard against which to judge one's own capabilities. In general, people seek proficient models that possess the competencies to which they aspire. Through their behavior and expressed ways of thinking, competent models transmit knowledge and teach observers effective skills and strategies for managing environmental demands. Acquisition of better means raises perceived self-efficacy. Successful efficacy builders do more than convey positive appraisals. In addition to raising people's beliefs in their capabilities, they structure situations for them in ways that bring success and avoid placing people in situations prematurely where they are likely to fail often. They measure success in terms of self-improvement rather than by triumphs over others (Schunk, 1987, 1989). Some of his studies that focused on peer modeling as a source of efficacy information (Schunk, 1987). For instance, he believed that it is in peer relationships that they broaden self-knowledge of their capabilities. In other words, peers serve several important efficacy functions. Those who are most experienced and competent provide models of efficacious styles of thinking and behavior, which leads to a vast amount of social learning occurs among peers. In addition, age-mates provide highly informative comparisons for judging and verifying one's self-efficacy. Therefore, they are sensitive to their relative standing among the peers in activities that determine prestige and popularity (Schunk, 1987).

Self-efficacy is a domain-specific construct in academics. Many, including Bandura (1986), argue that it is also task-specific, and attempts to measure self-efficacy at the domain level often results in ambiguous or uninterpretable results (Bandura, 1986; Pajares & Miller, 1994c, 1995). Many of the studies that show self-efficacy to account for lesser variance than other personal determinants often stray from Bandura's prescriptions for a microanalytic strategy. Often these studies assess self-efficacy globally with just a few scale items. For example, they ask participants to report on their confidence or efficacy with regard to a specific academic domain and not a specific performance task. At this level of self-reporting, it is expected that self-efficacy cannot reliably be separated from other personal determinants such as self-concept, anxiety, self-confidence, and background. Thus, it raises the question of whether one is actually measuring self-efficacy, or more generally measuring attitudes and other common mechanisms toward a given academic domain. Therefore, the latter are important in some areas of educational research, but do not always give us sufficient evaluative information for performance on specific, criterial tasks. Past research suggests the one possible lens from which to view self-efficacy within the context of instructional technology is to consider one's judgments of personal capabilities to authentically accomplish a specific performance objective.

Development and Exercise of Self-Efficacy

According to Bandura (1986), the initial efficacy experiences are centered in the family. Successful experiences in the exercise of personal control are central to the early development of social and cognitive competence. Parents who are responsive to their

infant's behavior, and who create opportunities for efficacious actions by providing an enriched physical environment and permitting freedom of movement for exploration, have infants who are accelerated in their social and cognitive development Parental responsiveness increases cognitive competence, and infant's expanded capabilities elicit greater parental responsiveness in a two-way influence. The development of language provides children with the symbolic means to reflect on their experiences and what others tell them about their capabilities and, thus, to expand their self-knowledge of what they can and cannot do.

Children tend to choose peers who share similar interests and values. Selective peer association will promote self-efficacy in directions of mutual interest, leaving other potentialities underdeveloped. Because peers serve as a major influence in the development and validation of self-efficacy, disrupted or impoverished peer relationships can adversely affect the growth of personal efficacy. A low sense of social efficacy can, in turn, create internal obstacles to favorable peer relationships. Thus, children who regard themselves as socially inefficacious withdraw socially, perceive low acceptance by their peers and have a low sense of self-worth. There are some forms of behavior where a high sense of efficacy may be socially alienating rather than socially affiliating. For example, children who readily resort to aggression perceive themselves as highly efficacious in getting things they want by aggressive means (Bandura, 1987).

Teachers operate collectively within an interactive social system rather than as isolates. The belief systems of staffs create school cultures that can have vitalizing or demoralizing effects on how well schools function as a social system. Schools in which

the staff collectively judges themselves as powerless to get students to achieve academic success convey a group sense of academic futility that can pervade the entire life of the school. Schools in which staff members collectively judge themselves capable of promoting academic success imbue their schools with a positive atmosphere for development that promotes academic attainments regardless of whether they serve predominantly advantaged or disadvantaged students (Bandura, 1987).

Social Support

The availability of social support on both personal and community levels has been linked to emotional well-being and may serve to mitigate negative life conditions (Chase-Lansdale, Wakschlag, & Brooks-Gunn, 1995). Social support constitutes a source of resilience, providing a buffer against the negative consequences of stressful events (Beest & Baerveldt, 1999). In a study by Burke and Weir (1978), students reporting greater satisfaction with parental and peer support show less stress with fewer psychosomatic complaints and demonstrate less negative moods. Thus, lack of support is found to decrease self-esteem, especially when under stress. More specifically, Schrameyer (1990) states that this leads to psychological maladjustment that is expressed in negative moods, depression, or deviant behavior. Allen et al., (1990) proposes that the protective processes are both connectedness and autonomy, which are the same key processes that families offered.

According to Hartup (1989), a young person's effectiveness in the social world is acquired largely from experiences in close relationships. This view proposes the importance of family in the formation of social self-efficacy, but allows for the notion that close peer relationships may also play a relevant role (McFarlane, Bellissimo, & Norman, 1995).

Furthermore, past researchers argue that children who are brought up in a nurturing family environment of mutual respect, little family conflict, and functioning parental relationships will develop stronger beliefs in their ability to deal effectively with everyday life challenges than those who are brought up in a climate of family turmoil (Hoeltje et al., 1996).

Emotional and Informational Support

Emotional support includes activities such as personally comforting others and listening sympathetically to their concerns. Informational social support includes advising adolescents about future plans, providing them with useful information, and helping them with their schoolwork. Emotionality generally has been considered a temperamental or personality variable, and has been examined in these bodies of literature (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Maszk, Smith, Karbon, 1995). Researchers conceptualize emotion in terms of regulation of emotional experience, the emotion-evoking situation, and emotionally driven behavior (Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, et al.).

Past researchers found that the ability to utilize emotional support from parents has an important and positive effect on the way adolescents conduct their lives and the decisions they make. However, recent researchers argue that this is due to adolescents' well-being, rather than the actual utilization of parental support (Bretherton, 1985; Weiss, 1982).

Parental Support

Parent's social networks are found to reduce emotional strain, decrease the tendency toward punitive parenting, and foster positive socioemotional development in children (Kagitcibasi, 1996). Moreover, the positive role of mothers' social support networks and informational support in promoting more effective parenting is noted in family research (Coll, 1990; Garbarino, 1990; Harrison, Wilson, Pine, Chan, & Buriel, 1990).

According to Schrameyer (1990), lack of parental support has serious consequences. Adolescents in this situation generally have not experienced that asking

for support is often rewarded and that it is helpful to involve others in solving personal problems. Moreover, Meeus and Dekovic (1995) found that parental support has a greater influence in terms of personal relations and education with regard to occupational identity development, school performance, and social support in adolescence. In addition, they concluded that the influence of parental support on the well-being of adolescents is greater than that of peer support (Beest & Baerveldt, 1999).

Parental involvement, support for autonomy, and support for the development of competence have been shown to influence inner motivational resources that, in turn, are related to self-regulation and school achievement (Grolnick, Kurowski, & Gurland, 1999; Grolnick, Ryan, & Deci, 1991). Moreover, parental affective involvement, support of the child's exploration, and responsiveness to the child's needs arguably lay the groundwork for the child's self-beliefs and early understanding that problem solving can be a shared experience, and that other people may help when difficulty cannot be resolved independently (Newman, 2000). Through parental involvement, support for autonomy, and support for the development of competence, children potentially learn that difficulty and failure may require assistance, and that they can count on adults for such assistance (Newman, 2000).

Support Received From Teachers

Past studies have found that students' experiences of the interpersonal climate of the classroom may be important predictors of school-related functioning. For instance, Ryan and Grolnick (1996) have found that students who experience their teachers as autonomy supportive and warm were more likely to be intrinsically motivated, to feel more competent, and to have higher self-esteem than students with more negative views

of their teachers. More specifically, Goodenow (1992) has found that perceived teacher support was significantly associated with both perceived competence and intrinsic interest in early adolescent students. In addition, Midgley, Feldlaufer, and Eccles (1989) report evidence that students who moved from classrooms where they experienced high teacher support to contexts where perceived teacher support was lower showed associated decrements in interests and positive attitudes toward learning.

A caring relationship between teachers and students may mitigate the power differential and facilitate student-teacher communication (Goodenow, 1992). More specifically, feelings of respect influence emotional engagement (e.g., happiness and interest), behavioral engagement (e.g., effort, attention, goal-pursuit, and self expression), and achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1996; Wentzel, 1996, 1997).

Teacher involvement is conceptualized in relation to dimensions such as affection (e.g., liking, appreciation, and enjoyment of the student), dedication of resources (e.g., aid, time, and energy), dependability (e.g., availability when needed), and attunement (e.g., understanding of students' personal and academic needs; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). More specifically, studies have shown that the teachers' personal involvement with his or her students may serve as a buffer. For example, Ryan et al. (1998) have shown that sixth-graders with low self-efficacy tend to avoid academic help seeking. More importantly, this avoidance is ameliorated in certain classsrooms in which the teacher believes his or her responsibility is to attend to students' social, emotional, and academic needs. Thus, teachers influence academic help seeking by eliciting in students a feeling of trust. In addition, the quality of the personal relationship influences the degree to which students are confident that they can count on the teacher for assistance.

Furthermore, the research in psycholinguistics has shown that the language is the prime symbolic mediating tool for the development of students' consciousness (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). Lantolf (1994a) stresses that "Vygotsky's fundamental theoretical insight is that higher forms of human mental activity are always, and everywhere, mediated by symbolic means" (p. 418). Mediation, whether physical or symbolic is understood to be the introduction of an auxiliary device into an activity that then links humans to the world of objects or to the world of mental behavior (Vygotsky, 1962). Therefore, Vygotsky (1962) reasoned that symbolic tools empower humans to organize and control such mental processes as voluntary attention, logical problem-solving, planning and evaluation, voluntary memory, and voluntary learning. The symbolic tools are the means through which humans are able to organize and maintain control over the self and its mental and even physical activity (Lantolf, 1994a, p. 418). Thus, these are the key ideas that the above model (figure 1) has depicted through the relationship between self-efficacy, emotional and informational support, and life satisfaction. As mentioned above, learners who perceive themselves to have high self-efficacy will be able to attain higher mental process than learners who perceive themselves to have low self-efficacy.

According to Vygotsky (1978), the Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) is defined as "the difference between the child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development through problem solving under teacher (adult) guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (p. 85). More specifically, the ZDP is the domain of knowledge or skill where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning, but can achieve the desired

outcome given relevant scaffolded help (Mitchell & Myles, 1998). In addition, scaffolding is the process of supportive dialogue that directs the attention of the learner to key features of the environemnt and that prompts them through successive steps of a problem (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). According to Wood et al., scaffolding has the following functions: (a) recruiting interest in the task, (b) simplifying the task, but increase the scaffolding (c) maintaining pursuit of the goal, (d) marking critical features and discrepancies between what has been produced and the ideal solution, (e) controlling frustration during problem solving, and (f) demonstrating an idealized version of the act to be performed (Wood et al., 1976).

The fundamental tenet of Vygotsky's theory holds that there is a crucial distinction between a learner's actual and potential level of development. This is probably best illustrated by Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development described above. In other words, Vygotsky (1978) defined the ZPD as the distance between the learner's actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined by problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. In Vygotsky's view, the expert (e.g., a teacher or another peer) offers assistance to the learner, providing a framework to solve the problem until the learner becomes independent. In considering the ZPD, Vygotsky underscores the potential for development that is realized through social interaction.

In accordance with Vygotsky's ZPD, the metaphor of scaffolding seems to be of particular interest to SLA researchers. The concept of scaffolding originates with the work of Wood et al. (1976) and serves as a metaphor for the interaction between an

expert and a novice. Scaffolding involves a process that enables a child or novice to solve a problem, carry out a task, or achieve a goal, which would be beyond his unassisted efforts. Scaffolding is also provided by the resources that learners have access to, such as books. Thus, cultivating autonomy takes nurturing, in a spiritual and a material sense. Although the concept of ZPD and the metaphor of scaffolding were originally constructed to describe child development in interaction with adults in first language situations, both are useful in analyzing L2 learning situations (Anton, 1999). Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) propose that in an L2 classroom, the expert should be sensitive to and constantly probe the learner's level of ability for a slightly higher challenge in working in the ZPD. Past studies have examined the notion of the ZPD concretely by discussing two studies of SLA in terms of how teachers can provide assistance within the learner's ZPD through dialogic interaction (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994).

Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) report on a small-scale study of the communicative dialogue between a teacher and a student in the ZPD. The study investigates an hour-long storytelling tutorial session between an expert and a novice speaker of French as they engaged in the activity of understanding a simple fairytale in French. The authors examine how an expert negotiates and mediates an L2 grammar explanation with a novice speaker within the ZPD. They found that learning is co-constructed through social interaction. The learner is given the opportunity to hypothesize, take risks, make errors, and self-correct while the teacher is also actively thinking, reflecting, hypothesizing, and reacting to what the student can do alone, and what he or she can do with assistance. Traditional educators will argue that this view of learning as co-construction clearly contrasts with the traditional approach to L2 teaching

and learning. However, it validates the learner's active process of construction of meaning. Second, it equally emphasizes the teacher's role as a co-constructor of meaning in working with the learner (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994). In addition, Anton (1999) compared learner-centered and teacher-centered discourse in interactive exchanges between teachers and learners in the L2 classroom. Throughout one semester, Anton observed first-year university French and Italian classes, which would fit the characteristics of a teacher-centered approach and a learner-centered one, respectively. Anton (1999) showed that teacher-centered discourse provides rare negotiation opportunities drawing on the data from the French class. On the other hand, the teacher in a learner-centered Italian class, through her interaction with the learners, constructed an effective scaffold for the learners to use to find the solution to the problem presented to them. In other words, when the teacher engages in negotiation with the learners, the functions of scaffold assistance (Wood et al., 1976) are achieved by such communicative moves as directives, assisting questions, repetition, and nonverbal devices such as pauses and gestures. In parallel with Adair-Hauck and Donatos' findings (1994), this study also highlights the importance of mutual assistance between expert and novice.

In these two studies, the social interaction between expert and novice has been shown to be the core of L2 learning in the ZPD. For instance, both teachers and learners are empowered by giving mutual assistance to each other while working in the ZPD. In addition, teachers are not reduced to powerless knowledge transmitters administering skill drills to powerless pupils. Rather, teachers empower learners by valuing what they know and how they think, and in return, learners empower teachers by mediating the teacher's initial instructional information and creating restructured understandings

(Goodman, 1996). In this way, both parties come to acquire relevant and reciprocal knowledge of the others understanding of the problem and solution in performing tasks.

Another important finding the two studies bring attention to is that an authentic context serves as a crucial condition for mutual scaffolding to be activated. Adair-Hauck and Donato (1994) suggested that in order for mutual scaffolding to be possible, learning tasks should be contextualized (Adair-Hauck & Donato, 1994). They found that learners are involved and committed to ongoing interaction with teachers because they feel learning is meaningful. This indicates that all the activities, even the grammar exercises, should be integrated and meaning-centered in a second language classroom.

The Zone of Proximal Development: Semiotic Mediation

A third conceptual framework within which SLA is explained as a social process of meaning construction is semiotic mediation. In terms of the ZPD, Vygotsky emphasized language as an important mediator in the social interaction of human beings. Vygotsky (1978) stated that thought development is determined by language. In other words, the child's intellectual growth is contingent on his mastering the social means of thought, that is, language. Wersch (1979) further clarified Vygotsky's ideas on language by noting that transfer of responsibility from the expert to novice is regulated by a semiotic system, including both verbal and nonverbal directives.

From these observations, it might be argued that language gives children a powerful tool that helps them work with others to solve difficult tasks, plan solutions to problems before executing them, and ultimately, control their behavior. In a classroom, therefore, semiotic mediation is the mechanism that makes communication possible and facilitates independent problem-solving (Ashton, 1996).

Semiotic mediation in SLA is particularly intriguing since L2 learners not only use their first language as a psychological tool to facilitate L2 production or to sustain verbal interaction with one another (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; Brooks & Donato, 1994). More specially, they also use the target language as a mechanism for supporting and carrying out the task (McCafferty, 1994; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1998). Traditionally, L2 teaching has forced students to be object-regulated by the language through texts, drills, exercises, and at best be other-regulated by the teacher (Foley, 1991). Therefore, the language is presented to the learner not as an activity for achieving self-regulation in the presence of others, but as some object directly transmitted from the teacher. The traditional approach to second language learning has provided little opportunity for learners to construct meaning for themselves or an identity.

The Vygotskian perspective of semiotic mediation, in contrast, enables richer understanding by second language learners in a classroom setting. It sees L2 as a unified system where there are communication tasks which focus upon the actual sharing of meaning through spoken or written communication (Foley, 1991). Language serves not only to establish relationships with others, but also mediates relationships with ourselves (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 1995). In the second language classroom, learning within the Vygotskian framework is mediated by language, either the first language or the target language, until L2 learners become independent in problem-solving activities. The three studies that follow represent recent vigorous discussion in L2 research emerging from the Vygotskian concept of semiotic mediation.

In the first study, DiCamilla and Anton (1997) underscore how important semiotic mediation is in creating and maintaining a shared perspective of the task

between individuals in a study that investigated the role of repetition in the collaborative discourse of L2 learners. They also worked with five dyads of adult learners of Spanish. The authors found that *repetition*, a fairly simple and obvious feature of the semiotic mediation of language, plays a strategic cognitive role in providing each other scaffold help as they attempt to perform their assigned tasks by observing the students working on a writing assignment in collaborative dyads (DiCamilla and Anton, 1997). In other words, repetition in L2 learning is one of many semiotic mechanisms, which enable learners to form a shared perspective of the task at hand in their collaborative learning. Thus, it was found that establishing a cooperative relationship between individuals through the use of semiotic mechanisms seems to be crucial to successful interaction in the ZPD (DiCamilla & Anton, 1997).

A very recent study influenced by the semiotic mediation theory concerns the use of L1 in the collaborative interaction among learners in an L2 classroom. Anton and DiCamilla (1999) further illustrate how the use of L1 mediates the activity of learners when they are engaged in evaluating a text in L2 based on previous findings about the role of semiotic mediation in collaborative learning. They show that learners engaged in *collaborative dialogue* use L1 as a tool to direct their own thinking in the face of a cognitively difficult task. From a pedagogical standpoint, this study appears to provide evidence for the important role of L1 in-group activities in the L2 language classroom. The authors caution against completely avoiding L1 use in student interaction while it is generally assumed that the oral use of L2 should be encouraged in the classroom. They suggest that teachers might need to modify current tendencies to keep learners from using L1 as their mediating tool in L2 problem-solving. This effective collaboration depends

on students' freedom to deploy this critical psychological tool to meet the demands of the task of learning a second language.

In the above studies, learners apply various semiotic mediations as a psychological tool for L2 learning portrayed as an important concept. In other words, these studies illustrate that rather than separating learners from the semiotic systems mediating their activity, both the learner and the linguistic tools must be understood as a whole. They all propose that teachers should appreciate learner's efforts to incorporate their own semiotic mediational tools, even the simplest form of the target language such as repetition, meta-talk, or their first language in constructing scaffold help and regulating their own thinking.

Support Received From Peers

According to Grotevant and Cooper (1986), when children reach the adolescent stage, they begin to spend more time with friends without adult supervision. Early adolescents attach more importance to acceptance by peers and increasingly turn to them for advice and comfort. Friendships often fulfill the child's developmental needs at this stage. Experience derived from friendship interactions provides an important foundation for children's social and cognitive development (Hartup, 1996) and prepare them for different roles in their adult lives (Krappmann, 1996). Thus, adolescents distance themselves from parents and focus more on their peers (Beest & Baerveldt, 1999). Peers potentially provide one another an invaluable source of information and encouragement for one another (Newman, 2000).

Peer support has similarities with the concept of "the enhancement of psychological wellness' (Cowen, 1994). It offers psychological support to well

individuals with the advantage of enhancing wellness before severe, visible, and change-resistant problems arise. In general, peer initiatives and reciprocal peer support in particular have a beneficial effect on young peoples' skills, confidence, and sense of self-efficacy (Turner, 1999).

Moreover, peer relationships are seen as "essential for expanding the child's construction of reality that includes cooperation and the understanding that social contracts are obligations, which are mutually regulated" (Hartup & Moore, 1990, p.3). More importantly, peers serve as a major agency for the development and validation of self-efficacy. The disruption or impoverishment of peer relationships is perceived to adversely affect the growth of personal efficacy (Bandura, 1997). For instance, children who regard themselves as socially inefficacious exhibit social withdrawal. They are also perceived to have low acceptance by their peers, which leads them to possess a low sense of self-worth (Bandura, 1997).

According to Youniss (1980), intimate friendships have positive effects on adolescents' psychological development. For instance, adolescents who describe their friendships more positively have higher self-esteem and less often suffer from emotional disorders (Barrera, Chassin, & Rogosch, 1993; Buhrmester, 1990). These adolescents also behave better in school and attain higher academic achievement than adolescents who have poorer friendships (Cauce, 1986; Dubow & Tisak, 1989).

The availability of social support on both personal and community levels has been linked to emotional well-being and may serve to mitigate negative life conditions. The protective factors here include a close relationship with someone within and outside the family realm (Chase et al., 1995). For instance, Werner (1989, p. 74) emphasized the

importance of "external support systems, whether at school, at work, or at church, which reward the individual's competencies and determination." As a result, it produces a belief system that enriches the psychological and emotional well-being of adolescents (Werner, 1989).

The Zone of Proximal Development: Peer Collaboration

Vygotsky's concept of peer collaboration has been richly explored in SLA research for the last decade. As the recent research trend in SLA shifts from focusing on the final output to the interaction and its process, the concept of collaboration has come to the fore in an on-going discussion among L2 researchers (De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Donato, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Takahashi, 1998). Donato (1994), for example, proposes that in order to understand L2 learning, researchers should observe the meaning-making process of learners as it unfolds in their interaction with each other. He appeals for a need to reassess beliefs concerning the role of social interactions between learners in L2 development.

A conceptual framework for explaining the second language learner's language development that stems from the Vygotskian perspective is peer collaboration. Vygotsky's theory of collaboration can probably be best explained by examining the ZPD from another angle of the same sociocultural perspective. In laying the explanatory framework for understanding this crucial area, Vygotsky (1978) noted that the level of potential development is determined not only under adult scaffolding, but also in collaboration with more capable peers.

Here, peer collaboration seems to emerge as another important tool that can be used to reach this level of potential development. Vygotsky's theory of collaboration

appears and implies to educators to be very important skills that considered the benefits of children's self-efficacy when they collaborate with their peers. Children's cognition can benefit from interaction with peers. That is, children gradually come to know and understand the knowledge that others in their environment know and understand through collaborative learning. Jennings and Di (1996) noted that collaborative learning and teaching may be considered as a way to encourage children to help and support their peers in the group rather than compete against them.

It may be claimed that the classroom should be a community of learners in which children are engaged in activities that facilitate social interaction among themselves based on the Vygotskian perspective of collaboration. They can acquire social and cognitive skills by working with a wide range of children. These social and cognitive skills in turn help them to perform independent problem-solving tasks.

The basic assumption behind collaborative learning in the L2 classroom is that L2 learners can provide the same kind of support and guidance for each other that adults provide for children. In the view of many L2 researchers (Anton & DiCamilla, 1999; De Guerrero & Villamil, 1994; Swain & Lapkin, 1998; Takahashi, 1998; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1998), L2 learners are at the same time individually novices and collaboratively experts (Donato, 1994). As revealed in the on-going discussion among L2 researchers, it seems useful to consider the learners themselves as a source of knowledge in the social context of L2 learning. Therefore, the three studies that will be reviewed next are based on the assumption that the ZPD is constructed among L2 learners who come together in a collaborative dialogue and contribute to each others' development.

In a descriptive study that analyzes a collaborative dialog of two eighth-grades French immersion students named Kim and Rick. Swain and Lapkin (1998) set out to answer an important question: Why might collaborative tasks promote L2 learning? They showed that Kim and Rick in their effective collaboration continually generate alternatives, assess alternatives, and apply the resulting knowledge to solve a linguistic problem. The authors argue that L2 learners can help to orient each other and serve as guides for each other through a problem-solving activity by analyzing the interaction of the dyad. The key to completing collaborative tasks successfully in the L2 classroom may be in the mutual help that can emerge in novice-novice interactions (Swain & Lapkin, 1998).

In a similar vein, Takahashi (1998) worked with students from kindergarten through grade 5 in a three-year-long qualitative study. The study was conducted in the Japanese Foreign Language in Elementary School (FLES) program to reveal the details of the learner's interaction in problem-solving activities. Takahashi found that the students at any proficiency level were capable of providing one another with assistance during classroom activities and that their ability to engage in an effective social interaction became more powerful as their language proficiency progressed. More importantly, the students provided mutual assistance keenly reflecting the way the teacher offered them scaffolding. Therefore, the L2 learners of any proficiency level can provide mutual assistance and the guidance of teachers is crucial in facilitating successful peer collaboration.

Lastly, Villamil and De Guerrero (1998), who investigated the impact of peer revision on writer's final drafts in two rhetorical modes, narration and persuasion,

provide further clarification for how peer collaboration promotes L2 learning. They found that peer assistance had a substantial effect on revising, since the majority of the trouble-sources revised during interaction were incorporated into final versions while working with 14 Spanish-speaking ESL college students (Villamil and De Guerrero, 1998). In other words, readers and writers in collaborative learning become active partners in the revision task as they reconstruct the original writing reciprocally. They also reported that after collaboration with peers, writers worked alone to solve additional linguistic problems, indicating the effect of peer-assistance on further independent performance. Their findings seem to confirm Vygotsky's (1978) claims that learning is mediated first through social interaction and then internalized by individuals.

In all three studies, collaborative dialogue provides the occasion for L2 learning. What occurs in collaborative dialogues represents the learning process itself. These studies illustrate the details of the everyday development of the learner's language proficiency by observing the dialogic collaboration between learners (Takahashi, 1998). Therefore, the teachers need to observe the evolving process of collaborative dialogue between learners in order to understand L2 learning. Moreover, the teacher's role should not be reduced to a mere environment provider, even though the students are the center of the learning. In other words, peer collaboration is not a substitute for teacher scaffolding. Peer collaboration and teacher scaffolding should not be seen as being in competition; rather, they should be considered complementary forms of assistance in the L2 classroom (Villamil & De Guerrero, 1998). Thus, the students best benefited in a situation where their collaboration is facilitated by teacher's cautious mediation.

Life Satisfaction

Past and current research asserts that the adolescent psychological well-being reflects parenting characteristics (Shek, 1999). According to the assertions of systems theories, functioning in the individual subsystem and the parent-child subsystem are mutually interdependent (Goldenberg & Goldenberg, 1980; Hinde & Stevenson-Hinde, 1988; Shek, 1999).

Adolescent psychological well-being has been predominately defined in terms of psychiatric morbidity or symptoms, which determined abnormalities, although some researchers have examined the impact of parenting styles on the development of adolescent self-esteem (Shek, 1989, 1993a). Conceptually, a passive definition of mental health can be criticized as too narrow. Because psychological well-being can be defined in terms of the absence of manifested psychiatric symptoms or the presence of positive mental health or existential attributes (Bradburn, 1969; Diener, 1984; Shek, 1999). According to the latter view, indicators such as life satisfaction, meaning in life, hope, or self-worth should also be used to measure the psychological well-being of the adolescents.

Researchers argue that in the literature on family stress and role strain, poor adolescent mental health results in stressful situations, which could limit their sensitivity and response to parents' demands and expectations (Margolin, 1981; Shek, 1999). More specifically, Rutter (1985) emphasizes the importance of the quality of attachments to family and peers that affect the individual’s well-being. Thus, peer support could be profoundly effective in promoting the health and well-being of young people and adults in the future (Turner, 1999).

According to Bandura (1997), adolescents' belief in their efficacy in social and academic realms affects their emotional well-being as their development. For example, close personal ties bring satisfaction and render stressors of everyday life more tolerable. Also, adolescents who are assured in their social efficacy are better at cultivating supportive friendships than those who are beset with self-doubt (Connolly, 1989; Bandura, 1997; Wheeler & Ladd, 1982).

One limitation of the current literature is that the majority of studies have examined the relationship between the family environment and adjustment, and have relied on traditional descriptive measures of the family environment (e.g., levels of family adaptability, cohesion, independence, organization, and expressiveness (Lerner, Lerner, & Eye, 1994). Another limitation of past research regarding the relation between the family and adolescent adjustment is that most of the studies have neglected to explore the variations in individuals' responses to the family environment and the manner in which these variations are related to adjustment.

The most compelling finding from the resiliency literature is that the provision of experiences, which form the foundation of caring, nurturing, empathic responsiveness, and opportunities for mastery, can make an enormous difference in the adaptive outcomes of children. The relationships outside the family and the opportunities for efficacy within supportive systems powerfully affect the develop mental trajectories of children who are deprived of such opportunities within a family context. Conceptually, psychological well-being can be defined in terms of the absence of manifest psychiatric symptoms or the presence of positive mental health and existential attributes (Bradburn, 1969; Diener, 1984). The focus on measures of positive mental health is important

because the familial environment might influence adolescent adjustment via the members' perceived purpose in life (Shek, 1995a). Thus, meaning (Frankl, 1963) and hope (Scotland, 1969), as basic motivational forces within the family, may influence different aspects of adolescent adjustment (Shek, 1997).

English Education in Korea

According to Ham (2002), in many Korean colleges and universities, English is taught as a compulsory subject. For instance, students in these classrooms have had at least six years of English instruction. Some were successful, and others were not very successful. Moreover, they had formed self-efficacy beliefs about English use and learning by the time they entered university classrooms. Unfortunately, many students do not believe that they have a high self-efficacy in listening, speaking, reading, or writing (Ham, 2002). Therefore, they think and believe that they do not have the ability to perform real tasks, nor do they believe their English level can be improved drastically. This low self-efficacy is certainly a challenge for all EFL professionals in Korea, especially because the low English self-efficacy seems to be a national phenomenon. Thus, it is critical for all English instructors and researcher to implant high self-efficacy in their students (Ham, 2002).

As mentioned above, past studies have shown that informational and emotional support received from parents, teachers, and friends have a direct effect on self-efficacy (e.g., reading, speaking, writing, and listening. In other words, Korean learners who perceive themselves to be receiving more informational and emotional support from their parents, teachers, and friends had higher self-efficacy (Choe, 2000). They performed better than learners who had low self-efficacy. This strong belief in themselves led to better academic performance since they were motivated to excel in academics, because their parents, teachers, and peers had faith in them. In addition, learners who had high self-efficacy tended to have higher life satisfaction than learners who perceived themselves to have low self-efficacy. According to this finding, learners seek out to their

parents, teachers, and friends for informational and emotional support that will guide them to become academically successful as well as to become socially accepted by Korean society, thereby increasing their life satisfaction.

In addition, second language learners need to be seen as having a personal relationship in meaningful contexts that enhances student ability to encompass learning in their Zone of Proximal Development (ZDP) as they move toward greater proficiency in the target language. Therefore, the learners acquire, learn, and internalize a second language in proportion to the security and appropriate challenges they feel within themselves as learners engaging their peers, their teacher, and the tasks of the classroom.

Professionals in EFL and ESL need to provide guidance for learners, especially for Korean learners. Their goal is to become a mentor who can assist these learners in fully utilizing their inner potential in learning a second language. They should apply the concept of self-efficacy so that the learners will be able to play a more active role in their learning. In other words, the process of learning is for the learners to become an active learner in order to expand their knowledge by receiving emotional and information support from their parents, teachers, and peers. Therefore, learners are aware of their inner will when they have high self-efficacy. This is a vital component in the learning process in acquiring a second language. More specifically, the process of learning becomes most fruitful when the self is aware of his or her learning process. When the self is aware of his or her learning then the self is striving to become a more active learner, which means they perceive themselves to have high self-efficacy. This power and energy of becoming aware of one's inner potential triggers the energy and curiosity to learn. This realization is important to EFL/ESL professionals in Korea, because they

goal in teaching English is for their learners to become autonomous learners. Thus, learners will be able to realize that learning is nourishment for self-development in order to understand the perception of humans-as-energy.

In Korea, the national curriculum controls the instructional procedure and the contents of general education in elementary and secondary schools. For instance, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development first publishes the national curriculum for a certain period of school education, and private companies thereupon create textbooks. In addition, they authorize which textbooks are to be published and used in the school settings. English education is conducted through the same procedure and thus proper decisions on theories, approaches, and contents in the curriculum are critical to effective ELT in Korea (Yoon, 1999).

The developers of the national English curriculum in Korea first paid significant attention to Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which was developed in 1992 and put into effect in 1995 (Yoon, 1999). However, "CLT" was not a term for one particular type of teaching theory or methodology, but rather dealt with various types of teaching procedures, which evolved several decades ago when communication came to be generally recognized as the ultimate goal of language teaching.

The elementary English curriculum adopted a functional syllabus following the framework of the secondary school English curriculum of the Sixth National Curriculum developed in 1992 and 1993. The curriculum provided a list of nine broad categories of communicative functions and 128 exemplary sentences that were to be taught in the elementary school curriculum (Kwon, 2000). The first category was *personal feelings*: expressing or inquiring about emotional feelings, expressing or inquiring about physical

feelings, expressing or inquiring about likes/dislikes. The second category was *personal thoughts*: expressing or inquiring about capability/incapability, expressing or inquiring about want. The third category was *socializing*: greeting, introducing, asking about health, making invitations and accepting or declining them, making appointments for meetings, receiving visitors. The fourth category was *formulaic communication*: expressing and acknowledging gratitude, apologizing and accepting apologies, wishing, complimenting/exclaiming, telephone conversation, offering food or drinks, and accepting or declining them. The fifth category was *requests*: making requests, making suggestions and refusing or accepting them. The sixth category was *directions and commands*: giving directions, issuing commands, forbidding somebody from doing something. The seventh category was *information exchanges*: asking about people or facts, describing people or facts, stating facts, stating customary acts, describing experience. The eighth category was *opinion exchanges*: expressing agreement or disagreement. The last category was *problem solving*: giving or inquiring directions to places, comparing, asking for clarification, reporting other's utterances.

Korean Students, Teachers, and Context

The problems one witnesses in English language education in Korea stem from three distinct sources: students, teachers, and contexts. First, Korean students' motivation to learn English is dominantly instrumental (Choe, 1995). In general, people may have instrumental motivation as opposed to integrative motivation. The common student belief is that if it is not tested, it is not worth paying attention to. Students simply do not have enough time to do extra work that does not offer them higher marks. The testing system does not complement communicative competence even though the educational

goal for teaching English specifically states that one should acquire communicative proficiency (Choe, 1995).

Second, Korean English teachers are over-worked and stressed. Many of them lack communicative English language competence and confidence in their teaching ability (Park, 1995). This is mainly because the education and training that they received were not communicative competence-oriented. As they were taught English mainly in Korean throughout their education, it is only natural for them to copy their teachers' or trainers' teaching methods and teach English in Korean (Lee, 1994). As a result, many teachers feel that they should start from the beginning in order to meet the needs and expectations of society. Furthermore, some instructors take this as challenging, but others as frustrating, and they feel helpless (Lee, 1994).

Third, the English teaching and learning context is not particularly productive. English is not spoken in one's daily life in Korea. Exposure to English is so limited that the knowledge and skills the students acquire in their classrooms cannot be easily reinforced nor retained. A considerable amount of knowledge of English and skills are neither authentic nor functional. The type of English language used by Koreans is often called "Konglish," which contributes to problems in communication between Koreans and native speakers of English. According to Strickland (1995) Konglish appears to be a form of interlanguage, which bridges the gap between students' incomplete knowledge of English and the native-speaker standard. However, some Konglish is so formulaic and deeply ingrained that it proves to be especially resistant to correction. Strickland claims that the second appears to be more than just a transitional form (Strickland, 1995). It seems to be the result of systematic mislearning of the English language, which students

have acquired. The sources of this mislearning include student texts, dictionaries, study guides, and a misguided set of beliefs about how to go about learning a foreign language (Kwon, 2000).

Thus, the linguistic and cultural gap between Korean and English is extraordinary. The phonological sounds and structure of the two languages, and the way each language is spoken, are extremely different. Compared to these unchangeable learning conditions set by the nature of the two languages, however, the other set of problems look quite insignificant. These are large classes of students of mixed ability, and lack of facilities, equipment, textbooks, and additional materials developed specifically for the Korean learners of English. Nevertheless, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Developments (MOE) are committed to quality education due to the nation's economic growth.

Language and Culture

Tylor (1871) defined culture as “that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society” (p. 22). Linton (1936) suggested that culture means “the total social heredity of mankind” (p. 78). Herskovits (1948) stated that “culture is the man-made part of the environment” (p. 17). Krober and Kluckhohn (1952) proposed the following:

> *"Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicity, of and for behavior acquired and transmitted by symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts; the essential core of culture consists of traditional (i.e., historically derived and selected) ideas and especially their attached values; cultural systems may on the one hand be considered as products of action, on the other as conditioning elements of further action." (p. 181).*

According to Freeman (2003) “language is a means of cultural transmission (p.1).” Moreover, cultural transmission is defined as "works of literature, poetry, history, and the vocabulary words and grammar structures that constitute them” (p. 2).

Researchers in the language socialization tradition believe that languages and culture are not separable, but are acquired together, with each providing support for the development of the other. Below is a statement from Oches (1988, p. 14):

> It is evident that acquition of linguistic knowledge and acquisition of sociocultural knowledge are interdependent. A basic task of the language acquirer is to acquire tacit knowledge of principles relating linguistic forms not only to each other but also to referential and nonreferential meanings and

> functions. Given that meanings and functions are to a large extent socioculturally organized, linguistic knowledge is embedded in socio-cultural knowledge. On the other hand, understandings of the social organization of everyday life, cultural ideologies, moral values, beliefs, and structures of knowledge and interpretation are to a large extent acquired through the medium of language. Children develop concepts of a socio-culturally structured universe through their participation in language activities.

Willett (1995) stresses that language socialization, however, is not a one-way process by which learners blindly appropriate static knowledge and skills. It occurs throughout the micropolitics of social interaction. People not only construct shared understanding in the process of interaction, they also evaluate and contest those understandings as they struggle to further their individual agendas. In the process of constructing shared understandings through negotiation, the social practices in which the interaction is embedded are altered and the relations, ideologies, and identities are reshaped.

The accepted view in the social science is that language and culture are inseparable. Currently, English language and culture instruction in Korea seems to still be at an initial stage if the definition of language teaching is to make a difference in the learners' values and attitudes toward the target subject. Numerous stereotypical ideas and prejudices against particular ethno-cultural groups of English speakers are still prevalent among Korean learners and teachers of English. For instance, Koreans still show a cultural insensitivity, using derogatory terms to refer to some particular ethno-cultural groups, on one hand, while offering extraneous hospitality to other ethno-cultural groups, on the other (Park, 1997c).

In past studies, several factors were found to be problematic in teaching English-speaking culture in the Korean EFL classroom. First, several studies suggest that the teachers lack of understanding about the importance of teaching culture, or lack of competence or confidence in teaching culture, hampers effective culture teaching (Kim, 1996; Lee & Cha, 1999; Park, 1997c). Second, textbooks play a significant role in shaping certain ideas among the learners. In this regard, Ihm (1998) stated that EFL textbooks, especially those published in Korea, show more biases than ESL textbooks. EFL textbooks lacked authentic cultural information about American society. Past researchers suggested that in comparison of cultural groups by race, age, and gender with demographic sources, the Afro-Americans, females, and the elderly were under-represented in textbooks. The biased and misrepresented materials reinforce the incorrect ideas that students have rather than eliminate them. Third, it has been pointed out that mixed classes of students in language proficiency and cultural experience make culture teaching difficult. According to Soh (1997), one of the difficulties in conducting a culture course lies in the heterogeneous student population in their English proficiency and the varying amount of exposure to the target culture. Lastly, the EFL environment with rare accessibility to authentic materials was suggested to be another difficulty of the culture course (Soh, 1997). Researchers have suggested that collaborative works should be incorporated in developing English curricula with textbook researchers, textbook writers, publishers, and teachers in order to decrease the obstacles instructors face in teaching culture in the ESL classroom. In particular, those who deal with learners in a similar educational culture and context, as in many Asian countries, can greatly benefit from cooperative work with one another.

The goal of teaching culture is to help students learn about the differences and similarities between the cultures involved, to understand them, and to adopt the appropriate norms and values in intercultural communicative settings (Lee & Cha, 1999; Park, 1997c). More specifically, education in culture can show how foreign language teaching can lead to peace education, aiming for world peace (Park, 1997c; Soh, 1997). However, in order to achieve these goals, the role of a teacher in foreign language classes is crucial in the sense that teachers transfer not only their knowledge and skills to their students, but their attitudes, beliefs, and points of view towards the target subject. More specifically, Damen (1987) points out that the roles for the modern language teacher to teach culture range from counselor to participant observer to resident pragmatic anthropologist to mediator to fellow learner. He also suggests that teachers must develop special competencies as cross-cultural guides and intercultural communicators, including personal commitment to the development of expertise in the processes of culture learning, understanding and knowledge of the cultural patterns of the cultures they teach, and understanding of their own cultural givens (Damen, 1987).

Discussion

The purpose of this literature review has been to examine the interface between speaking, self-efficacy, life satisfaction, and emotional and informational support in the process of language learning and acquistion. Furthermore, it has been one of the aims of this thesis to see how this survey can better inform the practices of teaching and learning English in the Korean context for Korean learners acquiring English as a second language. More specifically, the aim of this review has been to explore the learners interface among the psychological variables (e.g., self-efficacy), mediating variables (e.g., emotional and informational support received from parents, teachers, and friends), and behavioral outcomes (e.g., life satisfaction within the family, at school/work, and interpersonal relationship with friends) by examining the linear structural model developed by Kim and Park (1998) and revised by Choe (2000; see Figure 1).

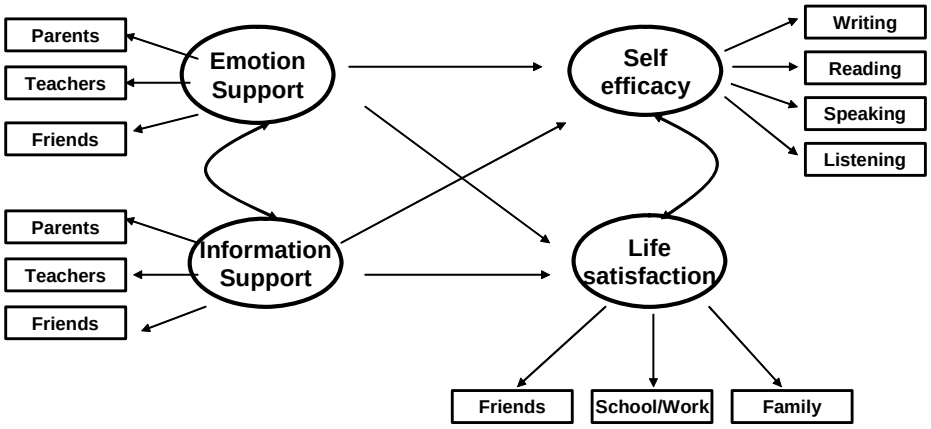

Figure 1: The relationship among self-efficacy, life satisfaction, emotional and informational support

According to past studies, learners who receive emotional and informational

support from their parents, teachers, and peers tend to possess higher self-efficacy in acquiring a second language. Second, learners who perceive themselves to have high self-efficacy tend to have higher life satisfaction. Lastly, learners who are satisfied with their life tend to have high self-efficacy.

In academic domains, the research on self-efficacy is less extensive; however, we are now seeing it being applied to such diverse academic domains as mathematics, computer literacy, writing, in-service teacher training, choice of academic majors, and second language acquisition. Language instructors and linguistics are collecting data and doing research in order to examine the process of second language acquisition. As shown in the model above, further studies should focus on the holistic view of the language learners. In other words, studies should examine the interface between the learners' relationships with teachers and peers.

Furthermore, studies have shown that the learner's psychological and emotional health is greatly affected by their teachers, parents, and peers. In addition, those learners who possessed high self-efficacy in speaking, listening, reading, and writing English tend to have higher life satisfaction. More importantly, studies have found that the ability to utilize emotional support from

parents, teachers, and peers has an important and positive effect on the way learners conduct their lives and the decisions they make. More specially, researchers propose that teachers should appreciate learners efforts to incorporate their own semiotic mediational tools, even the simplest form of the target language such as repetition, meta-talk, or their first language in constructing scaffold help and regulating their own thinking.

Thus, studies have claimed that the classroom should be a community of learners in which the learners are engaged in activities that facilitate social interaction among themselves based on the Vygotskian perspective of collaboration. They can acquire social and cognitive skills by working with a wide range of children. These social and cognitive skills in turn help them to perform independent problem-solving tasks. In addition, learners are able to apply the concept of negotiation with their peers rather than only with their teachers. Thus, the proposed model in this literature review (Figure 1) should be applied in future studies in order to create a holistic environment in the classroom for second language acquisition.

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