Modes of Paraphrasing Attempted by Korean L2 Writers

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This paper aims to investigate what types of paraphrasing are the most and the least frequently attempted by Korean L2 writers and to examine whether the tendency is affected by L2 writers’ English proficiency. A total of 50 summary protocols were collected from 50 college students and analyzed through the discourse analysis program, CLAN. It has been found that when attempting to paraphrase, Korean L2 summary writers tend to resort to minimal modification such as deleting, adding, or replacing vocabulary using synonyms; they are reluctant to modify substantially by combining or transforming sentence structures. The frequency of using more substantial syntactic modification increases as their proficiency improves. However, the overall tendency still remains that syntactic modification is much less used than lexical modification across the differing proficiency groups. Thus, instruction of paraphrasing skills is recommended particularly for less proficient L2 writers since it encourages them to use syntactic and lexical knowledge for communicative purposes. It is also suggested that paraphrasing tasks will be valid writing tasks for assessing syntactic and lexical knowledge in use.

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, summary tasks or integrated reading/writing tasks have rigorously been incorporated into the writing tasks of high-stakes proficiency tests, i.e., the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC), and the Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University (TEPS). The summary tasks benefit students as their linguistic resources (Ray, 1999; Smith, 1988). They will improve composition skills as well as reading skills in a reciprocal way whereby they learn how to write from reading and how to read from writing. Nonetheless, appropriate use of the source text in summarization seems challenging for second language (L2) writers due to a lack of L2 proficiency and insufficient practice.
In the literature, it has been reported that L2 writers adopt inadequate summary skills. Johns and Mayes (1990) contended that L2 writers struggle to modify sentences syntactically and thus tend to replicate the original sentences. Bashman and Rounds (1981) stated that L2 writers, for lack of L2 proficiency, are likely to alter the tone or intent of the original sentences when they attempt to modify the source text. In other words, L2 writers’ inadequate summary skills can be accounted for by their insufficient proficiency—more specifically, paraphrasing skills as well as text comprehension skills. Moreover, Kim (2001) emphasized the need of direct and explicit instruction of summarization skills in her study of characteristics of summaries written by Korean EFL college students by proving that they still resort to strategies of deleting and selecting surface-level information from the original text even though they were provided with comprehensible text.

The two major components of summary skills are said to be selecting key concepts from the source text and paraphrasing them (Brown & Day, 1983; Johns, 1985; Tylor, 1984; Winograd, 1984). While selecting important ideas involves reading comprehension ability, paraphrasing them requires writing competence. Paraphrasing skill is defined as the ability to transform a sentence in such a way that both sentences are semantically equal but lexically and syntactically different (McCarthy et al., 2009). Accordingly, paraphrasing skill may be indicative of L2 writers’ grammatical knowledge involving vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and graphology and their ability to apply it in performance of writing.

In summary, the degree of replication of original texts and the mode of paraphrasing them will be a function of how L2 writers manipulate vocabulary and sentence structures to convey what they select as important concepts. Furthermore, if paraphrasing strategies are correlated with proficiency levels, it would be able to serve as a good measure of L2 writers’ grammatical knowledge that they can implement in response to a summary task.

In an attempt to create a writing task valid for Korean L2 writers with low proficiency, the present study will investigate the types of paraphrasing attempted by Korean L2 writers. Attempted paraphrasing in this study refers to any type of restatement attempted by an L2 writer and it even includes a string of words nearly completely copied from the source text. The purpose of the study is to investigate what types of paraphrasing are the most and least frequently attempted by Korean L2 writers and whether the tendency is affected by L2 writers’ English proficiency. Accordingly, the present study will address the following research questions: (1) How do Korean L2 writers use the source text in their summary writing? What is the tendency in terms of attempted paraphrasing?; and (2) Is there any discrepancy in modes of attempted paraphrasing between the two groups: the more proficient group and the less proficient group? If so, how different is it? The findings from this study will provide pedagogical implications for classroom teachers and curriculum developers concerning less proficient student writers.
II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Studies have been conducted to illustrate characteristics of summary and recall protocols created by L2 writers and to compare them with those done by L1 writers. Connor and McCagg (1983) illustrated a tendency of L2 writers to be reluctant to modify the structure of the original text compared to native English speakers. They conducted a study with two aims: to examine whether L2 writers’ cultural background and their native language affect the argumentation structure of their L2 writing when they are asked to write what they recall after reading an expository prose and to investigate what characteristics of paraphrasing are considered positive or negative by experienced ESL writing teachers. It revealed that the influence of L1 on L2 writing is not apparent and that L2 writers have difficulty transforming the original text to deliver equivalent meaning in a recall paraphrasing task.

In a Korean EFL setting, a study was conducted to identify the characteristics of summaries written by L2 writers. Kim (2001), in her investigation of the effect of the difficulty levels of reading passages on Korean L2 learners’ summarization strategies, revealed that reading text difficulty affected the quality of summaries in a certain way; however, it did not influence the pattern of summary rule usage—i.e., selection, deletion, and transformation. Regardless of text difficulty, Korean L2 writers tended to resort to selecting and deleting strategies—parts of the source text considered as important are selected and those regarded as trivial are deleted—and rarely did they transform the text, but simply combined the important elements across the text. Thus, she suggests instructing summarization skills.

Apart from summarization skill, paraphrasing strategies have been scrutinized. Attempts have been made to better understand the manner in which L2 writers use a source text and to elaborate the textual borrowing or paraphrasing strategies they adopt (Keck, 2006; McCarthy et al., 2009; Shi, 2004). Shi (2004) examined the effect of both L1 and task types—summarization versus opinion essays—on ESL college students’ word usage from source readings in their English writing. It was found that a summarization task elicits more textual borrowing than an essay task, and that Chinese students use source texts mostly without citing references for either task. This study contributed to the establishment of a systematic and simplified method of analyzing paraphrasing strategies. Shi (2004) introduced how to identify a unit of textual borrowing and code it into categories: exactly copied, slightly modified, and closely paraphrased.

In response to the Shi’s simplified categorization of paraphrasing strategies, Keck (2006) further elaborated classification of the paraphrasing strategies in order to compare L1 and L2 writers’ use of paraphrasing strategies in summarization task. She introduced the concept of unique links—borrowed strings of words occurring only in a specific excerpt of
the source text—and general links—borrowed strings of words occurring in multiple places—to paraphrase coding. By distinguishing lexical words used in paraphrase that occurred uniquely or generally in the original text, she hoped to compare how the different links were used within different paraphrasing types. It was revealed that there was no substantial interaction of the two different links—unique or general; more importantly, however, L2 writers were shown to depend on direct copying or minimal modification of words or sentence structures, which was not the case with L1 writers. Her suggestion is also noteworthy that students’ linguistic competence may influence their paraphrasing strategies.

In the domain of language testing, how to efficiently evaluate the quality of paraphrasing has been recent focus. In order to examine whether computer-based automated paraphrase assessment can simulate human raters’ paraphrase evaluation, McCarthy, Guess, and McNamara (2009) conducted a study to determine what components constitute paraphrase quality, and they compared the human evaluation with computational assessment with respect to the same components. The findings showed that the syntactic difference index representing the degree of variety in sentence structure and semantic completeness closely interacting with lexical dissimilarity are the two major components affecting the quality of paraphrasing. This study implies substantial potential for automated assessment of the quality of paraphrasing. It is also suggested that the ability to implement a variety of syntactic and lexical knowledge is a fundamental quality of paraphrasing.

Research into summarizing and paraphrasing strategies has been consistently, although not rigorously, conducted. It has revealed significant evidence that L2 writers are reluctant to transform an original text for lack of L2 linguistic competence, mainly in the domain of syntactic and lexical knowledge. However, these findings were incidental byproducts gleaned from studies focusing on comparisons between L1 and L2 writers, the effect of L1 or task types on writing, and the development of computer-based paraphrasing assessment. Little research describes what types of paraphrasing strategies are prevalent in L2 writers and how they differ depending on their proficiency level. Moreover, few studies of the sort targeting Korean EFL writers have been done. Korean EFL writers invariably face task performing written communications in school, and in the society. Given the previous research findings that writing quality was influenced by paraphrasing quality, it would be of significance to trace a particular linguistic impediment to Korean L2 writers by identifying types of paraphrasing that rarely occur in their attempts.
III. METHOD

1. Participants

The participants of this study are a total of 50 college students who enrolled in an English grammar course as majors of English Education at a university located in Seoul, South Korea and whose academic years range from freshmen to seniors. A mock test of TEPS was administered for the purpose of segmenting them into two groups with different proficiency levels: the less proficient group and the more proficient group. The 50 participants showed a wide range of proficiency as indicated by their raw scores that ranged from a minimum of 60 to a maximum scores of 198 out of a possible 216. A half of the total participants above the mean score ($M = 130.92$) were assigned to the more proficient group and the remaining 25 students below the mean, to the less proficient group. A t-test confirmed that the mean score difference between two groups are statistically significant ($t(24) = 15.85, p < .01$).

2. Instrument

A mock test of TEPS administered for the purpose of grouping the participants into two different proficiency levels was partially used for administrative convenience. Only a half of the total questions in its full version were selected, thus fitting the total testing period into 40 minutes. Specifically, even numbered questions were selected based on the split-half measure reliability, a useful measure when it is impractical to administer the full test because of limited time or money (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2001). Also, only written sections of vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension were used as it is presumed that the spoken domain is not necessary to assess in a study involving a summary task which assesses the participants’ ability in the written domain. In summary, the test was composed of 60 multiple-choice question items: 24 grammar, 24 vocabulary, and 12 reading comprehension questions.

Another task given to examine modes of attempted paraphrasing by the participants was to summarize a four-paragraph-long expository writing sample within a time constraint of 15 minutes. The source text, an excerpt from *Those Who Can Teach* by Ryan and Cooper, explains the controversy of whether recommendation letters should be open to students or kept confidential (see Appendix A). The source text was chosen by the researcher with the assumption that the topic would be familiar and interesting to participants who were pursuing a degree in education. Detailed instructions on how to write a summary were given as follows: *Summarize the passage in about 50 words. Make sure you include the main idea and the necessary details. Remember to paraphrase.* Additional explanation
was provided in their native language to ensure that all the participants accurately understand the convention of summary writing and the meaning of paraphrasing, and ultimately to eliminate the potential effects of other extraneous factors such as ignorance of the convention of paraphrasing and summarizing for lack of exposure to them.

3. Procedure

The TEPS proficiency test was followed by the summarization task given after a ten-minute interval. A total of 50 summary protocols were collected from the 50 participants. The coding of the protocols was conducted in two steps: identifying a string of borrowed words and categorizing sentences with strings of borrowed words into modes of attempted paraphrasing. The method by which attempted paraphrasing was identified and classified was based on previous research (Shi, 2004), but the categorizing method was slightly adjusted to fit the purpose of the present study. For instance, Shi’s study (2004) employed binary dimensional categories: the low level categories distinguishing the modes of attempted paraphrasing, and the high level categories determining whether a quotation was direct or not and whether the quotation was referenced to the author or the source text. However, in this study investigating what type of linguistic barrier—lexical or syntactic—is involved in their attempts, only the low level categories were considered.

The detailed coding processes were as follows: First, a string of borrowed words in a summary protocol were identified and underlined. A basic unit of borrowed words was determined based on three criteria: 1) a combination of two content words (noun, verb, adjectives, adverbs) which were borrowed from one sentence of the source text, i.e., “discriminating judgments,” including its morphological modification such as “discriminated judgment(s),” 2) three consecutive words under the condition that they are a syntactic constituent (meaningful chunk), i.e., “a few problems,” 3) more than four consecutive words. Although meeting one of the three criteria, a string of proper nouns, pronouns, or other function words such as prepositions and conjunctions were not considered.

Second, the sentences including a unit of borrowed words were considered as attempted paraphrases and they were classified into six different modes in accordance with the coding schemes: 1) Exactly Copied (eco) in the case that a sentence is exactly copied from the source text, 2) Nearly Copied (nco) in the case that a sentence is nearly copied by adding or deleting words, 3) Lexically Modified (lmo) in the case that a sentence is lexically modified by using synonyms or other parallel expressions, 4) Syntactically Modified (smo) in the case that a sentence is syntactically modified with sentence structure reformulated, 5) Lexically & Syntactically Modified (lsm) in the case that a sentence is lexically and syntactically modified with sentence structure reformulated and parallel
expressions substituted, and 6) Summarized (sum) in the case that a sentence summarizes the multiple sentences in the source text.

How the coding schemes were applied to the summary protocols is illustrated in Table 1. Comparison between attempted paraphrases and their original text will reveal the degree to which attempted paraphrases are different from the original text. Investigation into how they differ will show the mode in which paraphrasing was attempted. For instance, in the first category “eco,” there exists no discrepancy between the original text and its attempted paraphrase. In the second category “nco,” however, a marginal difference is noticed between them and the difference was made by simply deleting kind of. In the third category “lmo,” the difference was made through lexical treatment where certainly and one another were replaced by it is true that and each other, respectively. In “smo,” however, the difference was made through syntactic treatment where the sentence structure the danger (that-clause) is great was transformed into it is dangerous (if-clause). Grammatical inaccuracy in attempted paraphrase was generously dealt with since it is not the focus of this study. That is, although the attempted paraphrase includes ungrammatical parts as in if [it is] misinterpreted or fall [falls] into the wrong hands, it was included in coding process as attempted paraphrase.

### TABLE 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coding Category</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Original Text</th>
<th>Attempted Paraphrase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>eco</td>
<td>the sentence is exactly copied from the source text</td>
<td><em>In this age of information most of us probably have a personal history tucked away somewhere on computer disks.</em></td>
<td><em>In this age of information most of us probably have a personal history tucked away somewhere on computer disks.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nco</td>
<td>the sentence is nearly copied by adding or deleting words</td>
<td>However, the kind of information in school records may be very imperfect.</td>
<td>However, the information in school records might be very imperfect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lmo</td>
<td>the sentence is lexically modified by using synonyms or other expressions for content words</td>
<td>Certainly we need some system of exchanging information about one another.</td>
<td>It is true that we need some kind of system to exchange information about each other.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1: Sentence Modification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>smo</th>
<th>the sentence is syntactically modified by reformulating sentence structure</th>
<th>However, the kind of information in school records may be very imperfect, and the danger that it will be misinterpreted or fall into the wrong hands is great.</th>
<th>Information in school records may be imperfect and it is dangerous if misinterpreted or fall into the wrong hands.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lsm</td>
<td>the sentence is lexically and syntactically modified by reformulating sentence structure and using synonyms or other expressions</td>
<td>In this age of information most of us probably have a personal history tucked away somewhere on computer disks.</td>
<td>In this age of information, all information about us is transmitted to other different numbers or terms and stored A to Z on computer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sum</td>
<td>the sentence tries to summarize the multiple sentences in the source text</td>
<td>Teachers and other staff members judge a student’s character and potential, and others use those judgments to decide whether the student should go to this school or get that job. Certainly we need some system of exchanging information about one another.</td>
<td>We do need some systems that can track students’ record for some occasions such as entering schools getting a job, and etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Italicized parts indicate a string of borrowed words identified.

In an attempt to increase the coding consistency of an individual coder across 50 summary protocols and to insure coding agreement between two coders (the author and a PhD candidate in the department of English Education), an approximately two-hour-long training session was conducted. Two summary protocols were used to illustrate how to code: how to identify a string of borrowed words and categorize the attempted paraphrase including the word string. Three summary protocols were used for practice. Following an independent practice session, a comparison of coding results done by two coders was made and followed by in-depth discussion to decrease the gap between the coders in interpreting the coding scheme. Ten summary responses, corresponding to 20 percent of the total protocols, were randomly selected and coded by both coders independently. Then, Cohen's kappa value was calculated at .74, which indicates a substantial level of reliability. As coding consistency and inter-coder agreement was established to a reliable degree, the remaining parts of the summary protocols were completed by the author.
4. Analysis

Fifty coded summary protocols were entered into a discourse analysis program, CLAN, by which the frequency of attempted paraphrases was calculated in six categories. The categorized frequency was analyzed first by descriptive statistics, revealing which type of paraphrasing is the most or the least frequently attempted by Korean L2 writers as a whole. Next, the categorized frequency obtained by the low proficiency group was compared to that of the high proficiency group. The comparison was made from a perspective of both descriptive and inferential statistics.

Analyzing the frequency of each paraphrasing mode and comparing it among six modes will allow us to verify what strategies Korean L2 writers rely on heavily or marginally in paraphrasing. In addition, comparison of frequency between the two groups will provide evidence as to whether and how the paraphrasing strategies they rely on may change as their proficiency improves. Furthermore, this will provide valuable pedagogic information.

Given that skillful summary writers are able to restate the source text in a variety of lexical and syntactic forms, L2 writers should develop a variety of paraphrasing strategies. When limited strategies are adopted by L2 writers, intervention needs to be implemented to help them acquire varied and advanced paraphrasing strategies. In the same vein, the paraphrasing strategies which are the least frequently used by L2 writers or which reveal the largest gap between two differing proficient groups will suggest which particular paraphrasing strategies should be taught to improve L2 writers’ summarization skills.

IV. RESULTS

Analysis of the 50 summary protocols using the discourse analysis software showed how many times each mode of attempted paraphrasing occurred in the total number of summary protocols. A statistical analysis of the data revealed an apparent tendency in types of paraphrasing attempted by the EFL students as shown in Table 2. Comparatively higher frequency was shown in Summarized (32% of the total frequency), Lexically Modified (26%), and Nearly Modified (23%). In contrast, lower frequency was detected in Exactly Copied (1%), Syntactically Modified (2%), and Lexically & Syntactically Modified (15%).
The fact that Summarized ranks the highest in frequency should be carefully interpreted since it entails a wide range of linguistic operations from selecting and deleting to modifying lexically and/or syntactically. The more proficient group of participants tended to employ sophisticated summarization strategies involving both lexical and syntactic modification while the less proficient group tended to employ the unsophisticated summarization strategy of selecting parts across the sentences and simply combining them without any linguistic transformation. Responding to the original text, a more proficient writer selected keywords and reconstructed them using a different sentence structure and vocabulary such as owing to, was constituted, and various complaints, as you see in the following example: (original text) In the early 1970s, a series of situations came to light in which information was poorly used or parents and students were denied access to records. In response, Congress passed the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in 1974. The act, also known as the Buckley amendment, outlines who may and who may not see a student’s record. (The participant’s summarized paraphrase) In the early 1970s, owing to various complaints about access to records or personal information the Buckley amendment was constituted. In contrast, a less proficient writer summarized it in this way: In the early 1970s, Congress passed the Buckley amendment, simply putting the borrowed strings of words together. Thus, it is dangerous to interpret the high frequency of Summarized as indicating that a large percentage of the participants are skillful at summarizing multiple sentences. The implications can be twofold: For the low group, many of the participants heavily resort to the selecting and deleting strategy; for the high group, a high proportion of participants employ a variety of more sophisticated

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Less Proficient</th>
<th>More Proficient</th>
<th>Sum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exactly Copied</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1 (1%)</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearly Copied</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21 (23%)</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.758</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexically Modified</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2 (2%)</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syntactically Modified</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24 (26%)</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.839</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lexically &amp; Syntactically Modified</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>29 (32%)</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.702</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>91 (100%)</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.380</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The fact that Summarized ranks the highest in frequency should be carefully interpreted since it entails a wide range of linguistic operations from selecting and deleting to modifying lexically and/or syntactically. The more proficient group of participants tended to employ sophisticated summarization strategies involving both lexical and syntactic modification while the less proficient group tended to employ the unsophisticated summarization strategy of selecting parts across the sentences and simply combining them without any linguistic transformation. Responding to the original text, a more proficient writer selected keywords and reconstructed them using a different sentence structure and vocabulary such as owing to, was constituted, and various complaints, as you see in the following example: (original text) In the early 1970s, a series of situations came to light in which information was poorly used or parents and students were denied access to records. In response, Congress passed the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act in 1974. The act, also known as the Buckley amendment, outlines who may and who may not see a student’s record. (The participant’s summarized paraphrase) In the early 1970s, owing to various complaints about access to records or personal information the Buckley amendment was constituted. In contrast, a less proficient writer summarized it in this way: In the early 1970s, Congress passed the Buckley amendment, simply putting the borrowed strings of words together. Thus, it is dangerous to interpret the high frequency of Summarized as indicating that a large percentage of the participants are skillful at summarizing multiple sentences. The implications can be twofold: For the low group, many of the participants heavily resort to the selecting and deleting strategy; for the high group, a high proportion of participants employ a variety of more sophisticated
In an attempt to examine overall tendencies toward types of paraphrasing strategies, whether they involved lexical or syntactic modification, or both, or neither of them, the four major strategies were analyzed excluding Summarized, in which the type of linguistic modification involved was too hard to define. Also, Exactly Copied was combined with Nearly Copied, since neither of them involved linguistic modification. The analysis of the four strategies yields that Korean L2 summary writers heavily rely on lexical operations—changing or deleting words. Nearly Copied and Lexically Modified account for more than half of the total occurrences of attempted paraphrases. On the other hand, they are reluctant to employ syntactic transformation. Syntactically Modified and Lexically/Syntactically Modified account for merely 17 percent of the total incidents of attempted paraphrases. This demonstrates that Korean L2 summary writers have trouble in transforming sentences globally, i.e., changing sentence structure from active to passive voice or combing two separate sentences using subordinate conjunctions.

Another interesting finding is shown by juxtaposing single strategies (i.e., Lexically Modified or Syntactically Modified) with a combined strategy (i.e., Lexically & Syntactically Modified). The comparison reveals that a single strategy, Lexically Modified (26%) is much more frequently used than a combined strategy, Lexically and Syntactically Modified (15%). On the other hand, another single strategy, Syntactically Modified (2%), is considerably less frequently used than the combined strategy. This observation could be explained by the inherent linguistic feature that lexical modification is possible without syntactic transformation, but it is almost impossible to transform sentence structure without lexical modification. The low frequency of this paraphrasing strategy additionally suggests that syntactic modification is inherently challenging, and in turn, that it is a more fundamental strategy for paraphrasing than any other strategy.

To address the second research question, which asks if there is any discrepancy in the types of attempted paraphrasing between the two groups, a comparison of each type of attempted paraphrasing between groups was conducted based on descriptive statistics. The result shows that a frequency difference exists in modes of attempted paraphrasing between the groups. The gap between the groups becomes greater with more sophisticated paraphrasing strategies. As shown in Figure 1, the frequency difference is only one in Exactly Copied and Nearly Copied. And it gets a bit larger in Lexically Modified (2) and Syntactically Modified (2). With more sophisticated paraphrasing strategies, Lexically & Syntactically Modified and Summarized, the difference becomes much wider (4 and 7, respectively). Moreover, the difference in Summarized will be much greater in consideration of the observation that the less proficient group showed a tendency to employ an unsophisticated summarization strategy with no linguistic transformation attempted.
In order to assess whether the gap between the groups was statistically significant, inferential statistics using ANOVA was conducted. It was revealed that the difference between the groups is not significant across the six types of attempted paraphrasing. This result might be due to limited frequency of attempted paraphrases. The total number of paraphrasing attempts identified in the 50 summary protocols ranges from 1 to 29 across the six modes (see Table 2). When divided into two groups, the figure gets much smaller. Insufficient data may have affected the ANOVA results. Although the inter-group mean difference proved to be statistically insignificant, it is evident that there is a correlation between L2 writers’ proficiency level and the paraphrasing strategies attempted by them. The degree of sophistication in an attempted paraphrase is a function of their proficiency level. That is, as their proficiency level increases, the paraphrasing strategies they employ get more sophisticated.

V. DISCUSSION

The first finding of the present study is that L2 summary writers, in attempting to
paraphrase, tend to resort to unsophisticated modification such as deleting or replacing vocabulary. On the other hand, they are hesitant to employ sophisticated paraphrasing strategies involving combined transformations of sentence structure and vocabulary. This finding is consistent with the previous studies that reveal ESL/EFL learners’ struggle to alter the structure of an original text, resulting in minimal modification (Connor & McCagg, 1983; Johns & Mayes, 1990; Keck, 2006; Kim, 2004).

This suggests the need for explicit teaching of paraphrasing strategies to Korean L2 learners. As Connor and McCagg (1983) contend, paraphrasing exercises will facilitate instruction of sentence structures and rhetorical devices. In the Korean EFL setting, in particular, paraphrasing tasks will be a useful instructional method since it will encourage Korean L2 learners to actively use varied sentence structures and vocabulary knowledge they’ve acquired in a passive way. They typically have spent a substantial amount of time on building blocks of language—grammar, structure, and vocabulary. Although they can detect errors in a variety of sentence structures, they are hardly able to decide on a sentence structure fit for a certain context or think of other structures semantically parallel to the given structure. Even if they can match words with their derivatives or synonyms, they readily give up writing different word forms or synonyms appropriate for the transformed sentence structure. In brief, instruction of paraphrasing strategies will help improve Korean L2 learners’ performance in using varied sentence structures and a wide range of vocabulary knowledge.

Another interesting trend is that syntactic modification is adopted much less often than lexical modification or the combined mode, lexical and syntactic modification. This might be due to the inherent linguistic quality that transformation of sentence structure is often accompanied by transformation of vocabulary and morphology, while transformation of vocabulary can occur without altering sentence structure. This result points to the pedagogical implication that different paraphrasing strategies should be taught in a sequence made according to their level of difficulty. L2 writers would not attempt paraphrasing strategies requiring fundamental reconstruction of sentence structure until they are proficient at using different types and forms of vocabulary. Thus, less challenging paraphrasing skills (i.e., lexical modification) should be a prerequisite of learning more challenging strategies (i.e., syntactic modification).

It is also revealed by inter-group comparison that the more proficient summary writers attempt paraphrasing more frequently compared to the less proficient group. The difference gets more considerable with the use of more sophisticated paraphrasing strategies involving syntactic reconstruction. Hence, it is concluded that the degree of sophistication in an attempted paraphrase is a function of the proficiency level. This conclusion would not be surprising when considering that insufficient syntactic and lexical knowledge would hinder substantial transformation of the original text as Keck (2006)
In addition, the correlation takes on significance from the viewpoint of language assessment. Observing the degree of sophistication in paraphrasing strategies can serve as a window through which the language proficiency level may be estimated. L2 writers’ ability to use lexical and syntactic knowledge in writing can be estimated by the quality of a paraphrase as indicated by the mode of the attempted paraphrasing. Therefore, written paraphrasing task will be a legitimate method of assessing L2 writers’ grammatical knowledge in written communication—i.e., how skillful they are at adopting a variety of sentence patterns and vocabulary.

Similarly, paraphrasing task would be a valid writing task particularly for L2 learners whose learning level is between sentence composition and paragraph composition. Measuring grammatical knowledge would be appropriate for those who are still at sentence-level composition while assessing rhetorical and sociolinguistic knowledge would be excessively demanding for them. The development of valid writing tasks is an on-going challenge of test developers. In an effort to develop varied and valid writing tasks, it would be worthwhile considering not only a variety of genres—i.e., descriptive writing, expository writing, narrative writing, argumentative writing, and practical writing—but also varied writing skills—i.e., composing & combining sentences, paraphrasing, summarizing, and paragraph/essay composition. A first priority, however, should be concern for the validity of a task for the target examinees of various proficiency levels. A paraphrasing task will definitely be a good addition to the repertoire of test developers who seek valid tasks for less proficient student writers.

VI. CONCLUSION

It is found that when paraphrasing, Korean L2 writers use the source text in a particular pattern. Many of them tend to modify the source text minimally by adding, deleting, or substituting vocabulary. On the other hand, they are reluctant to modify it substantially by restructuring sentence. It is also apparent that although this pattern is consistent between the two proficiency groups, the occurrences of sophisticated modification increase as their proficiency levels improve.

The result of this study provides pedagogical implications for teachers and curriculum developers. Instruction of paraphrasing skills is necessary particularly for less proficient L2 writers since it encourages them to practice using syntactic and lexical knowledge for communicative purposes. It is recommended that teachers provide students with more opportunities to apply a variety of sentence structures and vocabulary through activities such as composing, combining, and transforming sentences. Specifically, as a paraphrasing
exercise, teachers could guide students to transform a given sentence in a series of steps: (1) to change words using synonyms or antonyms, (2) to change the sentence structure, (3) to combine a couple of sentences using conjunctions or relative clauses, and (4) to summarize several sentences as a round-up exercise. Paraphrasing will also be an effective and valid task to assess their syntactic and lexical knowledge in use. Thus, it is recommended that paraphrasing tasks be incorporated into the curriculum and assessment for less proficient L2 writers.

However, the research design of the present study has some limitations. The participants were homogeneous in that they were all English majors at a particular university located in Seoul. Although their academic years and proficiency test scores ranged widely, they still represent one specific demographic. The frequency patterns across the modes of attempted paraphrasing could possibly have been different if the participants had included a more diverse sampling of the population of Korean L2 English learners.

Another restriction was the small sample size of attempted paraphrases identified in each summary protocol. The low rate of occurrences of paraphrasing attempts might have been caused by the selection of difficult reading material for the summary task. Too much time was spent on reading text, so not enough writing time was given. An easy version of the text could have increased the frequency of paraphrasing attempts. As a result, an ANOVA analysis using a greater number of paraphrase samples might have yielded a significant level of difference between the groups. Further research could diversify participants and maximize the sample size of attempted paraphrases to verify the findings of the present study.

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**APPENDIX A**

The Source Text

1. In this age of information most of us probably have a personal history tucked away somewhere on computer disks.

2. For students, the history may consist of school records, test scores, and ratings by teachers on everything from citizenship to punctuality.

3. Teachers and other staff members judge a student’s character and potential, and others use those judgments to decide whether the student should go to this school or get that job.

4. Certainly we need some system of exchanging information about one another;
otherwise, we would hire only our friends or attend only those schools where enough people knew us to vouch for us.

5. However, the kind of information in school records may be very imperfect, and the danger that it will be misinterpreted or fall into the wrong hands is great.

6. In the early 1970s, a series of situations came to light in which information was poorly used or parents and students were denied access to records (for example, when a diagnosis was used to justify sending a child to a class for students with mental retardation).


8. The act, also known as the Buckley amendment, outlines who may and who may not see a student’s record and under what conditions.

9. A clear winner from this legislation is parents, who previously were kept from many of the officially recorded judgments that affected their children’s futures.

10. The amendment states that federal funds will be denied to a school if it prevents parents from exercising the right to inspect and review their children’s educational records.

11. Parents must receive an explanation or interpretation of the records if they so request.

12. However, the Buckley amendment does not give parents the right to see a teacher’s or an administrator’s unofficial records. For instance, a teacher’s private diary of a class’s progress or private notes about a particular child may not be inspected without the teacher’s consent.

13. Although the Buckley amendment has undoubtedly reduced the potential for abuse of information, it has had a somewhat chilling effect on teachers’ and others’ willingness to be candid in their judgments when writing student recommendations for jobs or colleges.

14. Because students may elect to see a teacher’s letter of recommendation, some teachers choose to play it safe and write a vague, general letter that lacks discriminating judgments, pro or con, about the student.

15. In effect, some faculty members and other recommenders have adopted the attitude “Well, if a student doesn’t trust me enough to let me write a confidential recommendation, I’ll simply write an adequate, safe recommendation.”

(An excerpt from *Those Who Can Teach* by Ryan & Cooper, p. 434)
Application levels: secondary education, tertiary education
Key words: writing education, writing assessment, paraphrasing, summarizing

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