L1 Use in L2 Writing Process of Korean EFL Students

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This study aims at investigating Korean university EFL students' use of L1 in L2 writing process to see the impact of L2 writing proficiency and writing task difficulty on their L1 use. Using think-aloud protocols of nine students of two proficiency levels performing two tasks (letter and argumentative writing), the study examined the amount and the frequency of their L1 use for different purposes. The results reveal that the lower-level (LP) group relied on L1 more than the higher-level (HP) group in both tasks. The HP students, however, used L1 more in the argument task than in the letter task. Secondly, the LP group resorted to L1 for lexical searching, language use, and idea generation in both tasks. They often translated L2 into L1 or vice versa. The HP group, however, used L1 mainly for idea generation and metacomments in both tasks and a high percentage of their L1 use for discourse organization was noted in the argumentative task. These findings provide insight into Korean students' use of L1 as a compensatory strategy, especially for their limited L2 linguistic resources or for high-demanding tasks.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the 1960s and the 1970s L1 use was strictly prohibited in all the fields of learning English as a second or foreign language including ESL/EFL writing due to the strong impact of behaviorism. The language learning theories and methods based on it viewed L1 use in learning another language as an interference factor. One of the exemplary teaching methods of writing based on this trend is the Controlled-to-Free Approaches, which is still dominantly used in L2 writing class in EFL context including Korea. In the 1980s, however, the teaching of writing began "to move away from a concentration on the written product to an emphasis on the process of writing" (Raimes, 1983, p. 10). Since then, writing process has been the key research area in L2 writing (Bosher, 1998; Chelala, 1981; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982; Zamel, 1982, 1983) on the basis of psycholinguistically

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oriented L1 writing process research (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Emig, 1971; Flower & Hayes, 1977, 1981). In these studies, a variety of features of L2 writing process were identified. One of them was L1 use. The use of L1 was not identified as a debilitating factor (Friedlander, 1990; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982). L1 use of the L2 writers is viewed as a type of compensatory strategy for difficulties they face in their L2 writing (Cumming, 1990; Qi, 1998). In the case that L2 writers' language ability is limited, L1 can be used to sustain their writing (Wolfersberger, 2003).

L2 writing is a complex process and a bilingual event, which is operated in both L1 and L2, unlike L1 writing.[1] As mentioned above, thus, L1 use has been investigated in L2 writing process (Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000; Roca de Larios, Murphy, & Manchón, 1999; Wang, 2003; Wang & Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002). These studies have shown that L2 writers use their L1 as they write (Cumming, 1989, 1990; Friedlander, 1990; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000; Qi, 1998; Raimes, 1985; Whalen & Manchón, 1995; Wolfersberger, 2003; Zimmermann, 2000). Some of the studies have revealed that L1 use was helpful to L2 writers when they composed about the topic closely identified with their native language experience (Friedlander, 1990) or when the writer's L2 proficiency was low (Silva, 1989; Wang & Wen, 2002) and task difficulty was high (Lay, 1982; Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002). However, Cumming (1990) revealed that L1 use or language switching was related to the writers' L1 expertise rather than to their L2 proficiency or to task type or difficulty. Wang and Wen (2002) also did not find the impact of task type or difficulty on L1 use in L2 writing. Thus, the studies on L1 use have not reached a concensus regarding the role of L1 use and the factors affecting it. Moreover, there is no specific study on how Korean EFL students use their L1 in writing in English for what purpose, except for a few studies on translation strategies (Myung-Hye Huh, 2001). Therefore this study aims at investigating Korean university students' use of L1 in L2 writing process. Using think-aloud protocols of and retrospective interviews with nine Korean college students at two different levels of English writing proficiency performing two tasks (argumentative writing and letter writing), the study will examine how the use of L1 during L2 writing process is related to L2 writing proficiency and writing task difficulty, and for what functions Korean EFL students use L1 in their English writing.

The research questions for the study are as follows:

1. To what extent do Korean university students verbalize in L1 while they compose-aloud for L2 (English) writing tasks?

2. Does the amount of L1 use in the L2 composing process vary with writing task types

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[1] Woodall (2002) states that a unique behavior to L2 writing is language switching between L1 and L2. L2 writers "switch to their native language during the writing process, something the monolingual writer does not do" (p. 8).

(difficulty) and L2 writing proficiency? To what extent do Korean EFL students of two different writing proficiency levels use L1 for different purposes in two different writing tasks?

3. Does the frequency of L1 use in the L2 composing process vary with writing task types (difficulty) and L2 writing proficiency? How frequently do Korean EFL students of two different writing proficiency levels use L1 for different purposes in two different writing tasks?

II.   PREVIOUS STUDIES

L1 use in L2 composing process has been studied since the 1980s (Cumming, 1987, 1989, 1990; Friedlander, 1990; Lay, 1982; Qi, 1998; Raimes, 1985; Roca de Larios, Murphy, & Manchón, 1999; Whalen & Ménard, 1995; Wolfersberger, 2003; Zamel, 1982; Zimmermann, 2000). These studies have revealed the functions of L1 in L2 writing (Cumming, 1989, 1990; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Lay, 1982) and explored the impact of L2 proficiency or task difficulty on L1 use (Cumming, 1990; Jones & Tetroe, 1987; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000; Qi, 1998; Wang & Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002; Wang, 2003).

One of the first studies on L1 use in L2 composing process is Zamel (1982), which investigated the writing process of proficient ESL writers who had no problems in performing the writing assignments in university-level content area courses. Zamel noted that the most proficient writer, a graduate student of English, sometimes used translation from her native language into English. However, the other students thought negatively about using L1 in L2 composing tasks though they employed L1 when being stuck in the writing process. Jones and Tetroe (1987) also noted that L2 writers used L1 in all of the verbal protocols analyzed, mainly for planning their writing for text generation, but their L1 use decreased for easier tasks when they did not have much trouble with searching relevant vocabulary in L2. Thus they pointed out the impact of task difficulty on L1 use in L2 writing, but not that of L2 proficiency. Similarly, Qi (1998) found the impact of task demands. His examination of the reasons for highly proficient Chinese-English bilinguals' language switching in L2 writing revealed several factors affecting it including levels of knowledge demands. They used L1 more for cognitively demanding tasks. Qi also identified four functions of language switching: initiation of thought or ideas, content generation, lexical meaning verification, and compensation of overload of working memory due to the task complexity. In contrast to the findings from these studies, Cumming (1990) found no clear relation of the amount of L1 use with task type as well as with L2 writers' proficiency. Rather, L1 use was related to the writers' L1 expertise. Francophone ESL writers used L1 not only for generating content but also for verifying

word choice.

The effect of L2 proficiency on L1 use has been noted, however, in some studies (Roca de Larios, Murphy, & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002). Roca de Larios, Murphy and Manchón (1999) found that lower-level learners used restructuring as a compensatory strategy to solve their lexical and morphosyntactic problems when expressing their ideas, suggesting the influences of L2 proficiency on L1 use in L2 composing process. These effects were also noted in Wang and Wen (2002), in which the Chinese students depended less on L1 use as they had higher levels of L2 proficiency. The Chinese L2 writers used L1 extensively, in all the various writing activities (task-examining, idea-generating, idea-organizing, text-generating, and process-controlling). The higher-level students used L1 for idea-generating, monitoring, and lexical-searching while the lower-level students tended to translate from L1 into L2 in their L2 composing process. The results of the study revealed, however, that the amount of L1 use was not related to the difficulty level of the composing activities. In line with Wang and Wen (2002), Wang (2003) also investigated how language-switching varies according to L2 proficiency and how switching to L1 is helpful to the writers with different L2 proficiency in their L2 composing process. Eight adult Chinese-speaking ESL learners were asked to think aloud in composing in L2 with two different tasks. Quantitative analyses and especially qualitative analyses of the think-aloud protocols illustrated that higher-level participants used their L1 more frequently than lower-level participants during the two writing tasks. The quality of their thought was, however, quite different, although both proficiency groups switched to their L1 mainly for idea generation, lexical searching, and metacomments. The higher-level participants used their L1 more effectively for organizing the whole text. Besides L2 proficiency and task difficulty, Woodall (2002) investigated the impact of the language family of L2 writers' native language on language switching. The results of the study revealed that intermediate writers switched to their L1 more frequently than advanced writers; task difficulty was closely related to the duration of language switching; L2 proficiency was more related to the frequency of language switching; and the three factors, L2 proficiency, task difficulty, and language family, affected language switching interactively. However, Woodall did not examine the purposes of language switching.

Compared to the studies on L1 use of speakers of English, French, Spanish, and Chinese, little research has been conducted on Korean speakers. The only study related to this issue is Myung-Hye Huh (2001), which explored L1 use as a translation strategy in the writing of Korean EFL writers. She examined in what way translation would be a beneficial strategy for two female Korean university students majoring in English Education, who were classified into intermediate level. The findings from their retrospective verbal reports suggested that Korean EFL writers use their L1 as a problem-solving strategy in L2 writing: translation as a cognitive strategy to deal with the problems they faced in their L2

writing including thinking of the writing topic, generating ideas, and organizing them. In this study L1 use was investigated only as a translation strategy using retrospective interviews; thus, it cannot shed light upon the amount and purposes of L1 use in Korean EFL students' composing process.

The studies of L1 use in L2 writing process illustrate its key roles in L2 writing; however, the studies on factors affecting its use have provided mixed results, and none of these studies have dealt with both the amount and frequency of L1 use for different purposes compared by writing task types and L2 writing proficiency. Furthermore, there is no specific study on how Korean EFL students use their L1 in L2 writing process using think-aloud protocols. Therefore this study investigates L1 use of two L2 writing proficiency groups of Korean students in L2 (English) writing process in two writing tasks. Using think-aloud protocols, the study analyzes its amount and frequency for different functions.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

1. Participants

Ten Korean-speaking university students were participated in this study. The data from nine students were analyzed in terms of the classification of writing proficiency levels.[2] They were 4 sophomores, 4 juniors, and a senior, as shown in Table 1. These students had learned English for at least 6 years before their university education. They were all female, except for one student, ranging in the age of 20 to 24. Three of them majored in English education; two, Chinese; and one, business, international business management, Korean music and history, respectively. By the pretest score of English writing (5-scale scoring),[3] they were divided into two groups: four higher-level proficiency (HP) students (higher than 3.0) and five lower-level proficiency (LP) students (lower than 1.0). All of them had learned Korean writing (in their required course: Freshmen Korean). Three of the higher group (in their major courses taught by native speakers) and four of the lower group had learned English writing (in their required course: Freshmen English). Most of them had been in English-speaking countries for a period of time shorter than six months.

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[2] One student was excluded from the data analysis because her English writing was rated between the two proficiency levels by the native English rater.

[3] The pretest writing was scored holistically focusing on four dimensions: content, organization, language use, and fluency. The highest scale 5 refers to native-like profiency level, superior; 4, advanced; 3, intermediate; 2, pre-intermeidate; and 1, novice.

TABLE 1
Participants' Profile

Student No.	Gender	University year	Major	Years of English edu- cation	Experien ce of learning English writing	Length of Residence in English- speaking Countries	Pretest scores/ English writing proficiency level	TWE (Test of Written English)
S1	F	3rd year	English education	10	Yes	6 months	3.5/HP	Not taken
S2	F	3rd year	English education	11	Yes	6 months	3.0/HP	5.0
S3	F	3rd year	English education	12	Yes	none	3.0/HP	Not taken
S4	M	3rd year	Business	10	No	none	3.0/HP	5.0
S5	F	2nd year	Chinese	8	Yes	none	1.0/LP	Not taken
S6	F	2nd year	International business management	8	Yes	6 months	1.0/LP	Not taken
S7	F	2nd year	Chinese	12	Yes	1 year	1.0/LP	Not taken
S8	F	4th year	Korean music	7	No	2 months	1.0/LP	Not taken
S9	F	2nd year	History	9	Yes	none	1.0/LP	Not taken

2. Writing Tasks

Two writing tasks were chosen for the study: writing a letter and an argumentative essay.

They were different not only in eliciting different types of writing (rhetorical styles and genre) but also in knowledge demands in terms of information sources, relation to personal experiences, and intended readers, as stated in Wang (2003). The letter task was considered less demanding than the argumentative task, as in Grabe and Kaplan (1996), and Wang and Wen (2002). The letter task was writing a one-page-long informal letter which would be sent to an activity director of a summer language program which the participants were supposed to pretend they wanted to join. It was a task used in Woodall (2002), but its difficulty level was increased by not providing the list of information types which the participants had to include in their letter.[4] The argument task was chosen from the topics of the Test of Written Examination (TWE). The topic (opinions on teenager students' part-time jobs) was selected since it could be relevant and familiar to the participants. No word or paragraph limits or no time limits were set for the tasks.

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[4] The pilot study was conducted with one university student who had similar educational background and English writing abilities to the participants of the study in order to see the validity or difficulty level of the two writing tasks. This student just listed the information given in the prompt without thinking of the organization and contents of the letter. Thus, the list of the information needed to be included in the letter was not given in the main experiment.

3. Data Collection Procedure

The writing ability of all the participants was individually measured first before performing the two writing tasks. They chose one of the two argumentative tasks: study alone or in a group, or travel alone or with companion. They were also questioned about their age, educational background of learning English, experiences of learning L1 and L2 writing, length of resident in English-speaking countries, and experiences of taking the TWE, as shown in Table 1. Then they had a 20-minute training of think-aloud method and did the two tasks. In order to reduce the effect of the order of the two writing tasks, half of the participants started the letter writing task first, while the other half began with the argumentative writing task. They were instructed to compose-aloud either in L1 or L2. For each main writing task, no time limitation was set, as mentioned before. Most of the participants finished each of their composing-aloud tasks in about 30 to 50 minutes.

Each participant met one of the researchers individually in a quiet place. During their composing-aloud, no interruption was made. If they paused longer than 8 seconds, the researcher encouraged them to continue composing-aloud. The whole process was audio-recorded. Immediately after completing each writing task, both the researcher and each participant listened to the tape and he/she was asked to explain details about his/her composing process and the reason for L1 use. The whole retrospective interview lasted about one hour and the researcher recorded his/her verbal reports.

4. Data Analysis

The think-aloud tapes were transcribed into think-aloud protocols, as shown in Appendix 2. They were transcribed by using the conventions illustrated in Table 2, which was adapted from Wang (2003). They were transcribed in the way the participants spoke. That means that spelling and spacing were coded in the way they said.

After all the think-aloud protocols were coded, the frequency of language used (L1 or L2) was counted and the amount of each language type was measured by the number of words in English and that of word clusters in Korean (free morphemes plus grammatical markers).[5] The think-aloud protocols were also coded into their functions, that is, for what purpose each language type was used. They were classified into eight functions: task- examination, discourse organization, idea generation, lexical searching, language use, translation, metacomments, and fillers (time-gaining)[6] (see Table 3). The first seven functions

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[5] The expression separated by a pause longer than one second was counted as one word cluster. It was a unit separated by space in the trascription of think-aloud.

[6] Fillers or a few words in L1 or L2 to gain some time for planning next units in L2 writing were coded as one type of fuction in the think-aloud protocols. The studies on L1 use have not analyzed

TABLE 2
Transcription Conventions

Convention	Definition
?	A question mark indicates a rising intonation at the end a phrase.
.	A period indicates a closing of idea unit, or an utterance with falling intonation.
...	Three dots indicate a few (2-3) seconds' pause.
......	Five dots indicate a pause longer than three seconds.
Written production	Underlined words or sentences refer to the verbalization made while the writer is writing the text.
" "	Quotation marks indicate that the writer is reading aloud the writing prompt or previously written production.
{ }	Curly brackets are used for the writer's comments which are not directly related to their composing process.
( )	Parentheses are used to provide the translation of L1 expressions.

were identical or similar to the five composing activities classified in L1 use of Chinese students in Wang and Wen (2002) and the six categories of coding language- switching in Wang (2003) based on Cumming (1989) and Swain and Lapkin (1995). One function was added in the study, as mentioned before: fillers for time-gaining. One of the researchers classified functions of each L1 and L2 use in the protocols and then the other researcher reviewed essays of each letter and argumentative writing from one higher- and lower-level student with the first coder for the validity and reliability of coding. When a unit performs more than one function, all the functions were counted. The two coders agreed about 90% in the coding of the four essays. The average proportion of each function was calculated in terms of language types, writing tasks, and L2 writing proficiency.

IV.   RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Amount of L1 Use in L2 Composing Process

All of the nine Korean EFL students used a considerable amount of L1 in their L2 process in both the letter task and the argumentative task,[7] as shown in Tables 4 and 5.[8]

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them; however, in this study they were identified as having a unique role, time-gaining.

[7] The results of the retrospective interviews that were used to triangulate those of think-aloud protocols revealed that think-aloud could have affected the participants' L2 writing process, as pointed out in Wang (2003). Three of them reported that they tended to use L1 more due to the think-aloud procedure.

[8] Since L2 use included what they actually wrote, its amount was larger than L1 use. It also reflected the length of L2 writing.

TABLE 3
Coding Scheme of Functions of Language Used in the Composing Process

Function	Definition	Examples
Task-examination (TE)	Analyzing the writing prompt or task	[Excerpt 1: LP-S6-letter] language program-i-nikka.....na-y jungbo- lul ssu-nun- ku-n-ka?.....In order to plan special activity for students...Ah.... kurunikka language....Kurun-kut-man ssu-myun doy-nun-kun- ka?... *(Do I have to write about myself since it is about a language program?.....In order to plan special activity for students... Ah... so language....Do I have to write about these kinds of things?...)*
Discourse organization (DO)	Verbalization made for planning and evaluating the organization of the text	[Excerpt 2: HP-S1-letter] Meonju…insa-mal-ul ss-ko ku-daum-ey na-y-ka chohaha-nun kut-ey taehay ss-oya-kess-ta. (*First of all, I'll write a greeting and then write what I like.*) [Excerpt 3: HP-S2-arument] kyullon-un kurayseo choh-ta…Irun-shik-uro ss-ko yoyak kat-un-ku ha-ko…ku-daum-ey seoron-ey-nun mue-l-ss-ji? *(The conclusion is that it is therefore good…I will write the conclusion this way and something like a summary…and then what shall I write in the introduction?)*
Idea-generation (IG)	Verbalization made for planning, writing and revising the content of the writing	[Excerpt 4: HP-S1-letter] kurayseo na-nun…chom teo…require fluency...chom teo na-un yongeo shilluk-ul hoykduk-ha-ki uyha-yseo…iron jangae-lul... difficulty...obstacle-ul overcome-ha-ku shipda… Kurayseo… iron- kut-dul-ul thongha-yseo…ne-y class- lul thongha-yseo…teo na-y second language acquisition-ul teo improve-shikyi-ku ship-ta… *(So I…a little more…require fluency…to acquire better English proficiency…this kind of obstacle…difficulty… want to overcome obstacle…So…through these kinds of things... through your class… more…want to improve my second language acquisition more…)*
Lexical searching (LS)	Verbalization for finding an appropriate lexical item	[Excerpt 5: LP-S5-letter] I need more nungryuk? Activity? Ani-myun achievement? Power? Mue-yji? *(I need more ability? Activity? Or achievement? Power? What is it?)*
Language use (LU)	Verbalization related to grammar or orthographic conventions	[Excerpt 6: LP-S5-letter] haven…Na-hantey chu-n ku-nikka shudongtay-ya? Given... Ah shudongtay hana-du moru-kess-e… are given... *(haven…Is it passive since it was given to me? Given…Ah I don't know passive structures at all…Are given…)*
Translation (T)	Direct translation from L2 into L1 or vice versa	[Excerpt 7: HP-S1-letter] If you guide me…..manyak ne-y-ka na-l chal indo-ha-y chu-ndamyun *(If you guide me…if you guide me well)*
Meta-comments (MC)	Metaconcerns and self- evaluation about the appropriateness of text production	[Excerpt 8: LP-S7-letter] I'm excited to see you....Isang-ha-y... Taru-n ku ehpt-na? *(I'm excited to see you…It sounds strange... Is there any other way to write?)* [Excerpt 9: HP-S3-argument] societies' development…Neomu kyullon-ul ppalli-nay-ssna? "First teenagers should … (societies' development…Did I say the conclusion too early? "First teenagers should…)*
Fillers (F)	Fillers or words for time gaining to plan next units	[Excerpt 10: HP-S4-argument] Cheoum-ey-nun people …..Um..... Cheoum-ey-nun….. *(First, people…Uhm..…First…)* [Excerpt 11: HP-S2-letter] …Kuriko *(then)*…na-y-ka mol wonha-ji *(what do I want?)*

The percentage of L1 use out of the total think-aloud protocols was calculated though the calculating system for Korean and English was not identical due to their linguistic differences. In the letter writing task, the HP group employed L1 about 29.9%, out of their total think-aloud protocols and the LP group used L1 about 40.0%. The HP group used L1 about 38.0% in the argumentative writing task, while the LP group employed L1 about 46.2%. These results illustrate that the HP group as well as the LP group used L1 in relatively large quantity, but the LP group inclined to use L1 more than the HP group (see Excerpts 12, 13 and 14 below), as noted in Wang and Wen (2002), and Woodall (2002).

TABLE 4
Amount of L1 Use in the Composing Process of Letter Task

Proficiency level	Student No.	Language Used		
		L1 (number)	L2 (number)	L1 (%)
HP	S1	151	522	22.4
	S2	115	915	11.2
	S3	685	1774	38.6
	S4	334	372	47.3
	average	321.25	895.75	29.9
LP	S5	686	751	47.7
	S6	445	841	34.6
	S7	442	583	43.1
	S8	443	679	39.5
	S9	187	344	35.2
	average	440.6	639.6	40.0

TABLE 5
Amount of L1 Use in the Composing Process of Argument Task

Proficiency level	Student No.	Language used		
		L1 (number)	L2 (number)	L1 (%)
HP	S1	221	363	37.8
	S2	387	1055	27.0
	S3	389	954	31.3
	S4	661	526	55.7
	average	414.5	724.5	38.0
LP	S5	571	408	58.3
	S6	353	530	40.0
	S7	250	317	44.1
	S8	462	420	52.4
	S9	270	745	36.2
	average	381.2	484.0	46.2

The HP and LP group both employed L1 in a more difficult task, the argumentative writing,[9] as shown in Woodall (2002). Interestingly, the higher increase of the percentage of L1 use was found in the HP group than in the LP group, as shown in Excerpts 13 and 14. This suggests that task demands level out the writing behaviors of different proficiency groups: higher-level students write in a similar way to lower-level students when composing for a higher-demanding task. Finally, individual variations were noted. Some of the participants had the same pattern of L1 use regardless of the writing tasks. For example, a higher-level student, S2, did not verbalize in L1 much in the argument task as well as in the letter task, compared to the other participants; however, her L1 use increased in the argument task. Another higher-level student, S4, relied on L1 more in both tasks than any other participants including the LP group.

As shown in Excerpt 12, an LP student, S6, used L1 for a relatively long period of time to examine the letter task before starting writing.[10] She often translated the prompt given in L2 into L1, as found from the LP group in Wang (2003). An HP student, S2, also examined this task using L1, but she started writing a little after she read the prompt in L2, as shown in Excerpt 13. S2 did not spend much time for examining the task nor for planning content and organization of her writing. She did code-mixing of L1 and L2 more frequently than S6. She often read the ideas generated or her text production in L2 for further idea generation and discourse organization at the beginning of her compose-aloud process. This higher-level student, however, relied on L1 much more in the argument task, as shown in Excerpt 14, just like S6. She used L1 for a longer period of time to plan content and organization in this task, compared with the letter task, as illustrated by a lower-level student, S6. She often repeated what she verbalized in L1.

Excerpt 12: LP-S6-letter
[TE] "Mr. Smith?...student director over summer English program.....needs some information from you in order to plan special activities for students...Mr. Smith...needs some information..." [TE] phillyo-ro-ha-n-ta (*need it*)...myut- myut-jungbo-lul (*some pieces of information*) ——— [TE] Haksang-tul-ul yha-n thukpyul-ha-n hwaldong-ul… kyeheyk- ha-ki eyha-yseo…(*in order to plan special activities for students*) ——— [TE] kayin-jeok-i-n phyonji-lul sseorah? (*write a personal letter?*)..."about one page

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[9] In Wang and Wen (2002), Chinese students used L1 in their L2 composing more frequently in the narrative writing based on the pictures given than in the argumentative writing, which was assumed a more demanding task. This finding might be due to the fact that the students needed to understand pictures to write a story and this leaded to their verbalization in L1, unlike the argumentative task prompts which they just read several times in L2. It is illustrated in higher percentage of L1 use for task-examining in the narration task than in the argument task, as discussed by Wang and Wen .

[10] In excerpts the square brackets are used to specify the purpose of each verbalization and a series of three dashs refers to the part of the think-aloud protocols omitted.

long…one page...to Smith...in your second language...describing yourself"...[TE] na chashin-lul shokay-ha-nun…kut-lul sseora? (*write self-introduction*)…{teow-oyra~ (*feeling hot~*)}.. [TE] "summer language program..." [TE] "language program"- [TE]i-nikka....na-y jungbo-lul ssu-nun-ku-n-ka? (*Do I have to write about myself since it is about a language program?*).....[TE] "in order to plan special activity for students"...[F] Ah.... [TE] kurunikka (*so*) "language".... kurun-kut-man ssu-myun doy-nun-kun- ka (*Do I have to write about these kinds of things?*)….[DO/IG] ha-y jungkong-ul ssu-ko (*write about my major*)...[F] ku-daum-ey (*and then*)...na-y yongeo-kyungruk iron-ku ssu-ko (*write about my English ability*)… [TE] "to plan special".....[MC] makmak-ha-ney (*what shall I write?*)… [TE] na-y jungbo-lul… phillyo-ro-ha-nun-ku-ntey? (*do they need some information about me?*) na-y jungbo-lah (*some information about myself*)….na-y jungbo-ka muo iss-ji (*what kind of information about myself is there*)…

Excerpt 13: HP-S2-letter

[TE] "Mr. Smith activities director of a summer language program needs some information from you in order to plan special activities for students....Write a personal letter about one page long to Mr. Smith in your second language describing yourself".... [TE] kurayseo (*so*) i-ku-lul (*this*)... [TE] "activities".... "activities director"... "Mr. Smith"… "activities director"-ko (*and*)... "summer language program"-ul ha-ko (*they have a summer language program*)... na-ey kwanhan jungbo-lul eot-ko ship-eo ha-ko (*they want to have some information about myself*)….. kurayseo (*so*).... "students"- hantey (*for*) toum-ul chu-ki uyha-yseo…phyonji-lul ss-oya ha-nikka…(*since I have to write this letter to help Mr. Smith for his students*) [MC] shijak (*let's start*).... [W] Mr. Smith...My name is Young Ah Kim who is going....Youna Ah Kim..who is going to take the summer activities....I...am [R] "Young Ah Kim who is going to take the summer activities. summer activities".... ——— [IG/DO] "Mr. Smith"-eykey…na-y-ka…i….. "summer activities"-lul…shukang-ha-l-ku-ko (*I will take Mr. Smith's summer activities*)…[F] kuriko (*then*)… [MC] na-y-ka mol wonha-ji (*what do I want?*)…. ——— [MC] kureomyun meonjeo (*then, first*)... [R] "Hello Mr. Smith…I'm Youn Ah Kim who is going to take the summer language program program"..... [W] I'm very exciting....I'm very excited...I'm very excited...to... take...those...language courses... courses...in summer..in this...summer... ——— [MC] tashi tashi tashi (*restart, restart, restart*)… [W] Hello, Mr. Smith...I'm Youn Ah Kim who is going to take the summer language program.. Before I started....

Excerpt 14: HP-S2-argument

[TE] "Teenagers have jobs while they are still students. Do you think that this is a good

idea? Support your opinion by using specific reasons and details. Teenagers having a job"...[IG] chongsonyun-tul-I chipeop-ul chat-nun-kus-I choh-ta-ko sangkak-ha-n-ta. (*I think it is good for teenagers to have a job.*) Iyu-nun…iyu-nun [MC] muos-i-lkka… [DO/IG] chotpeonjjae…mirae-ey taeha-n junbi (*First, preparing for their future*)… kutam-ey (*then*) be independent…shilryey-ro (*as an example*)…example...American teenagers mirae-ey taeha-n junbi (*preparing for their future*)...to be independent...[MC] tto muo-rako ssu-ji (*then what else should I write?*)…ku tam-ey (*then*) tto muo-rako ssu-kkaing…(*then what else should I write?*) mirae-ey taeha-n junbi-lang (*preparing for their future and*)...to be independent...american teenager-ro example-kkaji tu-nun-ku-llo ha-y-ss-ko…(*I have thought about writing American teenagers as an example so far*) tto…wonin…(*then the reason*) ton-ttaymun-ey ha-ki-to ha-ji (*they also work for money*) …kuraeseo (*so*)…[F] ah…ku daum-ey [DO/IG] ton-ul (*money*)…ton ttaemun-ey ha-ki-to ha-ko (*they also work for money*)…nodong-uy shojung-ha-m-ul al-key toy-n-ta (*come to realize the value of labor work*)…nodong-uy shojung-ha-m-ul al-key toy-seo ton-ul hamburo ssu-ji anh-key-toy (*don't spend money unwisely because they come to realize the value of labor work*)…―――[MC] kureomyun neomyu kil-eo-ji-ltheynikka wonin-ul mirae-ey taeha-n junbi-ro nu-llyeomyun (*then it could get too long, so in order to include preparing for their future as a reason*)... [IG/DO] ton-ul miri mo-ahseo mirae-ey taeha-n junbi-lul ha-l-su iss-ta (*they can prepare for their future by saving money in advance*)...

As discussed before, these excerpts suggest that higher-level students can employ the strategies of lower-level students when they encounter a writing task with higher demanding.

2. Percentages of L1 Use for Different Purposes

The proportions of the Korean EFL writers' use of L1 and L2 were calculated for different purposes of their use in terms of L2 writing proficiency and writing tasks, as shown in Table 6.[11] The percentage of L1 use for different purposes was calculated out of the total amount of L1 use, and the same method was used for L2 use. Reading of what was already written (R) and verbalization of actual writing (W) were included in the calculation of L2 use. Fillers are a little different from the other functions since they are fillers and a few words used for time gaining. Thus they were not included in the total.

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[11] The analysis of L2 use is not the main goal of the study; however, it was done to compare the purposes of L1 use with that of L2 use, assuming that higher-level L2 writers may often verbalize their writing in L2.

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TABLE 6
Mean Percentages of L1 and L2 Use in the Composing Process by L2 Writing Proficiency and Writing Tasks

Function	HP Group (n = 4)				LP Group (n = 5)			
	Letter Task		Argument Task		Letter Task		Argument Task	
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2
TE	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.6	10.0	13.3	5.2	5.6
DO	8.1	0.5	25.0	0.8	2.9	0.0	5.7	0.1
IG	36.8	8.7	38.6	3.4	22.1	7.2	33.6	7.8
LS	5.5	1.6	7.7	1.9	16.0	4.1	16.3	5.9
LU	1.2	0.2	1.5	0.0	15.6	6.8	15.1	3.6
T	9.7	0.2	7.8	0.2	7.8	1.0	7.9	1.7
MC	29.0	1.0	13.5	0.2	18.6	0.0	12.5	1.0
R	0.0	32.9	0.0	49.3	0.0	36.2	0.0	53.0
W	0.0	51.2	0.0	40.4	0.0	30.8	0.0	21.0
Total	93.4	99.7	97.2	99.8	93.4	99.5	96.7	99.5
F	6.3	0.4	2.5	0.1	6.6	0.5	3.3	0.5

   Both proficiency groups used L1 mainly for idea generation, as shown in Wang and Wen (2002) (see Excerpts 12, 13 and 14). They also often employed L1 for metacomments in both writing tasks, like the Chinese students' process controlling of their L2 writing in Wang and Wen (2002) and in Wang (2003). However, variations were also noted between the two proficiency groups and between the two writing tasks. The HP group used L1 mainly for idea generation, metacomments, translation, and discourse organization in both writing tasks, while the LP group relied on L1 for searching appropriate lexical expressions and checking language use frequently in both tasks as well as for idea generation (see Table 3, and Excerpts 15 and 16 below) (see Table 6).[12] The LP group also tended to use L1 more for task examination than the HP group, as shown in Excerpts 12 and 13. These findings suggest the impact of L2 writing proficiency. Another difference identified between the proficiency groups was the HP group's high percentage of L1 use for discourse organization, especially in the argumentative task, which was similar to the findings from Wang (2003) (see Table 3, and Excerpts 13 and 14). This might be due to the fact that Korean writers of higher L2 writing proficiency are aware of the importance of organizing argumentative text to make it logical and persuasive. Such awareness was not noted in the lower-level writers, as illustrated in the following retrospective interviews of an HP and an LP student (translated from Korean into English).

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[12] The higher-level and lower-level group often switched to L1 for lexical searching in the composing process of Chinese students in Wang (2003). This use was only noted from the LP group in this study; however, the HP group's L1 use for this function increased in the more demanding task, the argument task.

Retrospective interview: HP-S4

…As for argumentative writing I usually decide whether I will agree or disagree with the given statement and then plan the number of paragraphs and topics for each paragraph. I plan all of these or write down them, and then I start writing as planned.

Retrospective interview: LP-S5

… When writing an argument, I did not think of the overall organization such as introduction, body, and conclusion. If I decide to agree with or support the given statement, I usually write all the sentences I think appropriate and then write one last sentence for summarizing. That's it. I usually write down any ideas that come up in my mind.

The HP student stated that he usually plans the organization for argumentative writing. One the other hand, the LP student said that she does not think of organization that much when writing an argument because she just writes whatever comes up in her mind. The percentage of the LP group's verbalization for discourse organization was small in both the argumentative and the letter task.

The percentage of L1 use for different purposes was compared that of L2 use, as shown in Table 6. The HP and LP group used L2 mainly for actual writing and reading of the written production in both tasks. But they also illustrated variations due to their proficiency differences and writing task difficulty. The HP group often read their written production in L2 while composing-aloud to monitor their text production and generate next units in the letter task, as shown in Excerpt 13; however, this reading behavior decreased in their argumentative writing, just like the LP group in performing both tasks. This implies that task demands affect Korean EFL writers' reading behavior of their L2 production. Furthermore, the LP group used L2 for searching appropriate L2 lexicon and grammatical structures, as they used L1 for the same purposes, as shown in Excerpts 15 and 16. If Excerpt 15 from an LP student, S8, is compared with Excerpt 13 from an HP student, S2, for the same letter task, S8 verbalized in L1 to a larger extent in order to elicit appropriate grammatical forms. She searched accurate grammatical forms or expressions after almost every word verbalized in L1 or L2 or written in L2. As illustrated in Excerpt 16, an LP student, S9, often searched appropriate lexical items in both L1 and L2.

Excerpt 15: LP-S8-letter

… [W] I'm writing this letter [R] "this letter this letter" [IG] nuku-eykey (*to whom*) to you [MC] ani-ta (*no*) [IG] to give you na-y-ka muo-muo-ha-ki uyha-yseo (*for me to do something*) [W] to give you some advice... [LU] advices-ka toy-kess-ji (*must be advices*) "some"-un myot-myot-i-nikka (*some means more than a few*)…"advise advise"-nun

ssu-l su eop-unikka kunyang "advice" (*since I can't write advise, I will just write advice*)
——— [F] um-um um (*uhm uhm uhm*)… [W] I suggest [LU] "suggest" daum-ey tongmyeongsa ing (*gerund form, ing, after the verb suggest*) … tongsa-wonhyung (*infinitive form of the verb*) [MC] ani-ya (*no*)…tongmyeongsa ing (*gerund, ing*) [W] I suggest I suggest speaking only in English [IG] muo-muo-ha-nun tongahn (*while doing something*) [LU] during, while-to sseo-to toy-kess-jiman (*I can write during or while*) during the summer language program-toy-nikka (*since it is during the summer language program*)…while-un (*while*)…while…muo-ji? (*what is it?*) …

Excerpt 16: LP-S9-letter
…[LS] shincheong-ha-taka muoji? (*what is the English expression for 'apply'?*) apply to …apply…en…enroll [W] enroll your program [IG] I'm [W] I am a university student.. I'm a sophomore in Ewha Womans University... and My major is history…. [R] "my major is history" [F] and [W] I want to go abroad to study western history. So I need [F] uhm [W] the study focused on TOEFL and [IG/LS] hwoyhwa (*conversation*) [LS] dialogue? conversation?... [W] dialogue…..

The amount of the LP group's verbalization for searching appropriate grammatical forms and lexical items in both L1 and L2, compared with that of the HP group, illustrates their limited linguistic resources in L2.

3. Frequency of L1 Use for Different Purposes

The frequency of the Korean EFL writers' L1 use was calculated for different purposes in terms of L2 writing proficiency and writing tasks, as shown in Table 7. Fillers were not included in the total, as in the calculation of the percentage of L1 use. Both proficiency groups relied on L1 for idea generation and metacomments, but the frequency patterns were distinctive. The HP group used L1 dominantly for idea generation and metacomments and did not translate from L2 to L1 often in both tasks. The LP group depended on L1 mainly for searching appropriate structures or grammatical forms and for translating L2 into L1 in order to generate ideas, as found in Wang (2003). The HP group employed L1 to organize their argumentative writing frequently, as noted in the percentage of this function before (see Table 3, and Excerpts 13 and 14). Furthermore, they relied on L1 more frequently in the argument task (95.5) than in the letter task (81.1), which was not noted from the LP group. Their reliance on L1 increased for lexical searching and language use in their argumentative writing. These findings suggest the impact of L2 writing proficiency and writing task difficulty on L1 use in L2 writing process.

TABLE 7
Mean Frequency of L1 and L2 Use in the Composing Process of by L2 Writing Proficiency Levels and Writing Tasks

Function	HP Group (n = 4)				LP Group (n = 5)			
	Letter Task		Argument Task		Letter Task		Argument Task	
	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2	L1	L2
TE	3.4	3.7	2.9	1.6	5.7	7.3	2.9	2.8
DO	6.7	1.7	16.6	4.5	1.0	0.0	3.6	0.2
IG	25.1	18.9	28.9	11.2	15.4	3.5	15.0	4.2
LS	8.2	1.3	12.0	1.6	7.3	8.5	24.0	9.9
LU	6.9	5.1	13.1	9.3	20.2	13.7	19.9	14.0
T	2.7	1.0	2.2	0.8	19.3	12.8	8.0	6.5
MC	28.1	3.7	19.8	2.8	14.4	1.0	15.4	1.7
W	0.0	31.2	0.0	45.6	0.0	27.7	0.0	39.7
R	0.0	32.2	0.0	25.6	0.0	23.4	0.0	19.3
Total	81.1	98.8	95.5	103.0	83.3	97.9	88.8	98.3
F	18.6	2.3	4.2	1.1	16.3	1.7	11.2	1.6

The frequency of L1 use for different purposes was compared to that of L2 use, as shown in Table 7. As found in the percentage of L2 use, the HP and LP group used L2 mainly for actual writing and reading of the written production in both tasks. But they also illustrated different frequency patterns due to their L2 writing proficiency and writing task difficulty, as noted in their percentage distribution. The high frequency of the HP group for reading their written production in L2 while composing-aloud in the letter task decreased in their argumentative writing, while the LP group mainly used L2 for writing, especially in their argumentative writing. The HP group also used L2 for generating content much more frequently in both tasks than the LP group; however their L2 use for this purpose decreased in the argument task. These findings suggest that task demands have significant impact on Korean EFL writers' L1 and L2 use in their L2 composing process. The higher-level students often relied on L2 for text construction; however, this reliance decreased in their argument task since it is a more demanding or difficult task than the letter task (see Excerpts 13 and 14). In the more difficult task their writing behavior became similar to that of the lower-level students. In addition, the LP group used L2 for searching appropriate L2 lexicon and grammatical structures (see Excerpts 15 and 16) and for translating L2 into L1 in order to monitor appropriateness of L2 expressions, as they used L1 for the same purposes. The relatively high frequency of their verbalization for these purposes compared with that of the HP group illustrates the influences of lack of L2 linguistic proficiency.

V. CONCLUSION

The two L2 writing proficiency groups used a large amount of L1 in their L2 composing process in both the letter and the argument task. The LP group, however, relied on L1 more than the HP group. The HP learners also resorted to L1 for the higher-demanding task, the argument task, which indicates that they struggled in the demanding task as much as the LP group. The analysis of the proportions of L1 use for different purposes revealed that both proficiency groups used L1 dominantly for idea generation and metacomments in the two tasks, in line with the results of Wang and Wen (2002), and Wang (2003). The LP group relied on L1 for lexical searching and language use in both tasks as well as for idea generation. They tended to employ L1 as their compensatory strategy mainly for their limited L2 linguistic resources. On the other hand, the HP group used L1 mainly for idea generation and metacomments in both tasks. The high percentage of their L1 use for discourse organization was noted in the argumentative task. This might be explained by the fact that they are aware of the important role of organization in L2 argumentative writing or the fact that higher demands of the task triggered their planning of organization as well as content more than in the letter task.

The analysis of the frequency of L1 use for different purposes illustrated that both proficiency groups used L1 mainly for idea generation and metacomments, as shown in that of the proportions. The LP group relied on L1 for searching appropriate words or grammatical structures and for translating L2 into L1, as shown in Wang (2003). They also used L2 for the same purposes. These results imply that lower-level students struggle in a local level of writing such as language forms in their L2 composing process. The HP group, however, employed L1 dominantly for idea generation and metacomments in both tasks. Additionally, the HP group noticeably resorted to L1 to organize their argumentative writing frequently, as noted in its high proportion; they also used L1 more frequently for lexical searching and language use in this task. These findings of the study illustrate the impact of task difficulty on even higher-level students.

The results from the analysis of the percentages and frequency of L1 use for different purposes in general shed light on the role of writing task difficulty and L2 writing proficiency in Korean students' L2 writing process. They also provide insight into Korean students' L2 writing process and their use of L1 as a compensatory strategy, as indicated in Qi (1998). However, it should be noted that a caution is needed to make a valid generalization from the results of think-aloud since it can affect writing process, that is, interfere with thinking process while composing. The present study compared two L2 writing proficiency groups. Higher demanding tasks leveled out their writing behaviors. Further studies are needed to investigate more advanced L2 writers in higher-demanding tasks than the HP group of the study to see whether their writing behaviors are influenced

by task demands.

The results of the study imply that L1 use in L2 writing process can operate as a helpful factor when they have limited L2 linguistic resources and when the tasks are demanding, as implied in Wolfersberger (2003). They do not, however, suggest frequent use of L1 nor the necessity of instructions on L1 use for L2 writing. Nevertheless they would advise L2 writers not to prohibit L1 use in L2 writing process. L2 writing instructors should be aware of its roles and help their students use it strategically. The HP group of the study often resorted to L1 for global level planning of their writing, but when they were stuck in the writing process due to the demands of the task they often used L1 for language search. Thus, the writing teacher should help them use L1 as a strategy depending on writing tasks. On the other hand, the LP group depended on L1 for local idea generation or language. The writing instructor should construct classroom activities that can help lower-level students use L1 as a more effective strategy.

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