

Degrees of Preference for Writing and L1 Use Behaviors of L2 Writers

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This study examined the two aspects of Korean university students' English writing by proficiency. One is the relationship between the students' degrees of preference for L1 and L2 writing and their L2 writing proficiency; the other one is the different L1 use strategies including written and mental translation. Data were collected through questionnaires from 72 subjects and subsequent interviews were administered. The results revealed that the degree of the students' preference for L1 writing has a strong correlation with their preference for L2 writing. Furthermore, the correlation between the preference for L1 writing and their L2 writing proficiency was very high. In the mean time, the students' L1 was found to play an important role during their L2 writing process, and the ways of employing translation strategies varied by proficiency.

Keywords: [L1 use in L2 writing/L2 writing process/L2 writing strategy/preference for L2 writing/translation strategy in L2 writing/제2언어 쓰기에서의 모국어 사용/제2언어 쓰기 과정/제2언어 쓰기 전략/제2언어 쓰기에 대한 선호도/제2언어 쓰기에서의 번역 전략]

1. Introduction

A distinct feature of second or foreign language (L2) writing process different from first language (L1) writing is the use of both L1 and L2 for cognitive operations. In line with this, L1 use in L2 writing process has gradually received more attention from

second language researchers (e.g., Yeon Hee Choi & Jieun Lee, 2006; Cohen & Brooks-Carson, 2001; Cumming, 1989, 1990; Friendlander, 1990; Myung-Hye Huh, 2001; Qi, 1998; Raimes, 1985; Wang & Wen, 2002; Wolfersberger, 2003; Zamel, 1982, 1983; Zimmermann, 2000). This growing body of literature has focused on why the L2 writers use L1, how much and when they use it, and whether L1 use has a positive or negative effect. Those studies evidenced that writing behaviors and strategies successfully acquired in the first language seem to be applied to and working in L2 writing process (Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Cumming, 1989). Thus, it is very likely that L1 writing expertise has positive effects on the quality of L2 composition (Cumming, 1989, 1990; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996).

The previous studies on L1 transfer in writing mostly investigated the transfer effects in the cognitive domain and found the positive effects of the transfer. However, students' attitude toward L1 writing in the affective domain has not yet been the interests of the researchers, and in this context, it might be meaningful to include this issue in the discourse regarding L1 transfer to better serve the L2 teachers and learners. The affective domain is explained as the emotional side of human behavior, and it may be compared to the cognitive side, and it includes many factors, such as anxiety, attitudes, empathy, self-esteem, etc. (Brown, 2000). Therefore, one of the aims of this study is to see the L1 transfer effect in the affective domain, by examining the relationship of the degrees of preference for L1 and L2 writing and the L2 writing proficiency. In a similar vein, how much the students' confidence level on their own L1 and L2 writing ability is related to their actual writing proficiency is worthwhile to be included in the study to see the L1 transfer effect in the affective domain.

In terms of the L1 use by L2 writers, little attention has been paid to the L1 use behavior of a relatively large number of

students with different writing proficiency during their L2 writing process. In this context, the second aim of the present study is to add to this literature by exploring the characteristics of Korean university students' L2 writing process focusing on their use of L1. Therefore, it is consequential to carry out a quantitative study to get a more generalized consensus on describing the nature of L1 use by Korean EFL writers. Based on the findings of the studies on L1 transfer and L1 use in L2 writing and with the above mentioned background, the following research questions were formulated and they guided this study:

- (1) To investigate the transfer effects of affective factors, such as students' attitude:

Is there a relationship between the students' degrees of preference for L1 writing and L2 writing? What is the relationship between the degrees of preference for L1/L2 writing and the proficiency of L2 writing? And does the students' self-confidence level on their L1/L2 writing ability have a relationship with their actual L2 writing proficiency?

- (2) To explore the L1 use behavior during the L2 writing process:

Does the writing process of the students vary in accordance with their L2 writing proficiency? How and when do the students use L1 in their L2 writing process? How and why do they use the translation strategy?

2. Literature Review

The review of the literature was carried out on two subjects in relation to the research questions in two different aspects regarding L2 writing: L1 transfer effects to L2 writing and L1 use behavior during the L2 writing process.

2.1 L1 Transfer to L2 Writing

The evidence of the positive transfer effects of L1 writing behaviors and strategies to L2 writing was reported by many researchers (e.g., Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Cumming, 1989, 1990; Mi-Jeong Kang, 2007; Lee & Krashen, 2003; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). Among them, the relationship between the development of writing skills in L1 and L2 was examined by Carson and Kuehn (1992). In their study, the Chinese students' L2 writing proficiency was found to be strongly related to their L1 experience. Thus, it was found that proficient L1 writers had a tendency to keep their advantages in their L2 writing, while poor L1 writers tended to become poor writers in L2 as well. The students' L1 cognitive, rhetorical, and linguistic factors were manifested on the quality of their L2 writing, confirming strong transfer effect from L1 to L2. Mi-Jeong Kang's (2007) study also verified this fact: She compared 37 intermediate Korean EFL students' L1 and L2 writing samples, and investigated their writing behaviors through analyzing their self-reports on questionnaires. The comparison of the qualities between L1 and L2 composition was conducted by Hwa-Ja Lee (1993), too. She explored the relationship between L2 writing quality and other variables, and the quality of L1 writing by means of L1 and L2 writing samples of two Korean children. Among her findings, it was reported that quality of writing was most affected by the degree of coherence and that L2 coherence index was the second most important factor in predicting L1 writing quality of a young child.

Among the studies I have reviewed, no study was found which explored the relationship between the degrees of students' preference for L1 writing and L2 writing. As L1 writers' cognitive factors were proved to be manifested on the quality of their L2 writing, it is reasoned that the degree of preference for L1 writing

might have some transfer effect or be related to the degree of preference for L2 writing. Furthermore, it can be hypothesized that the degree of preference for writing could be related to the quality of writing. Therefore, the questions regarding this affective factor were included in the questionnaire to examine the correlation between the preference degrees for L1 and L2 writing and between the preference degree and quality of L2 writing. In addition, students' confidence level was explored by including questions on self-rating about their own L1/L2 writing ability to examine the relationship between this affective factor and their actual L2 writing proficiency.

2.2 L1 Use during L2 Writing Process

Many of the writing process research, employing different research methods, explored the L1 use during L2 writing process and reported the crucial role of L1 in the L2 writing across different proficiency levels (e.g., Yeon Hee Choi & Jieun Lee, 2006; Cumming, 1990; Kobayashi & Rinneert, 1992; Myung-Hye Huh, 2001, 2002; Manchón, Roca de Larios, & Murphy, 2000, Roca, Murphy, & Manchón, 1999; Wang & Wen, 2002). Roca, Murphy and Manchón (1999) revealed five intermediate Spanish EFL writers' extensive use of L1 when composing in L2 in their study by means of think-aloud data. They found that the L2 writers "expand, elaborate, and rehearse ideas through their L1" (p. 25) and "produce the pretext in L1" (p. 27). In Cumming's study (1990) on 23 French ESL students, the subjects showed frequent code switching between French and English during their composing-aloud session. The purpose of using their L1 was found to search out and assess appropriate wording, to compare cross-linguistic equivalents, and, sometimes, to reason about linguistic choices in L2.

Some of the recent studies attempted to measure the amount of

L1 during the L2 writing process. Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) asked 48 Japanese university students to report how much L1 they thought they were using in their mind while they were writing directly in L2, and as a result, about half of the students reported they used 50-75% of Japanese in their thinking when composing in English. To get more detailed data on the amount of L1 use, the method of analysing the writers' think-aloud protocol data was preferred by the researchers. Manchón, Roca de Larios and Murphy (2000) measured the amount of L1 using think-aloud data produced by 3 intermediate Spanish learners of English. They calculated the percentage of Spanish words in the think-aloud data, and found all of the three subjects used considerable amount of L1 in thinking during the L2 composing process. The similar result was reported in the study of Wang and Wen (2002): The 16 Chinese EFL students used L1 extensively, in all the various L2 writing steps (text-examining, idea-generating, idea-organizing, text-generating, and process-controlling). However, the higher-level students showed a tendency to use L1 for idea-generating, monitoring, and lexical-searching steps while the lower-level students tended to translate from L1 into L2 during their L2 writing. Yeon Hee Choi and Jieun Lee (2006) also used think-aloud protocols of 9 students of two proficiency levels, and examined the amount and the frequency of the students' L1 use for different purposes. The proportions of L1 use were fairly high in both groups, but the proportion was even bigger in the lower proficiency group.

Myung-Hye Huh (2001) investigated L1 use in L2 writing by adopting a retrospective verbal report of two intermediate level university students in Korea, and found that they used the translation strategy as a problem-solving strategy in the process of meaning discovery. Myung-Hye Huh (2002) also examined the L1 inner speech of two advanced Korean EFL writers using stimulated recall reports which took place immediately after their English

writing. She argued that the L2 writers used the L1 inner speech to efficiently encode their thoughts into L2 words while writing in L2. That is, they used L1 as an efficient tool to construct meanings and convey meanings to the readers. The think-aloud procedure with retrospective interviews was employed by Jeongwan Lim (2006) to examine the differences in composing processes of nine Korean EFL students in three different proficiency levels. In this study the effect of the proficiency on the composing processes was reported: it was found that the advanced students spent longer time on planning and produced better organized and more logical composition.

Through the review of the literature, it was found that the previous studies on L1 use during L2 writing process were mostly conducted by examining processes of a small number of students as their subjects. In this regard, the present study attempted to explore the L1 use behaviour of a relatively large number of students to attain more generalized consensus with the data obtained through questionnaires and interviews.

3. Method

3.1 Subjects

Fifty two students enrolling in two different classes at K University and twenty students enrolling in a class at N University both in Chungbuk area participated in this study. The 72 subjects were mostly in the second or third year and among them, 10 students were males and 62 were females. One class at N University consisted of 20 students of various education majors, another one at K University consisted of 25 of nursing majors, and the other one at K University 27 students of social welfare majors.

They were assigned to write a journal and asked to complete the questionnaire on their writing process immediately after their journal writing. All the students had not been in any English-speaking countries except one student who was in Hong Kong for 3 years at the age of 8 to 10.

All the questionnaire data from 72 students were analyzed for the research question No. 1. However, out of the data obtained from the 72 students, data from 60 students only were judged as valid to use for the analysis for the research question No. 2 of this study after excluding incomplete submission of the answers. Among the sixty participants whose journals and questionnaires were analyzed for the question No. 2 of this study, 20 students are education majors, 25 are nursing majors, and 15 are social welfare majors. The students were divided into three groups by writing proficiency.

3.2 Data Collection

For carrying out this study, three different kinds of materials were used and analyzed: students' journal samples, questionnaires and interview data. The journals students wrote at home were used to determine the students' writing proficiency, and the questionnaire responses were analyzed in accordance with their writing proficiency. In addition, information from subsequent oral interviews with some of the participants were utilized as well which were conducted individually to complement the questionnaire data.

3.2.1 Writing Samples

The students at N University wrote retrospective journals on the topics they chose among the ones they studied in a course with regard to the theories of language learning and teaching. The students were asked to relate the topic with their actual

experience of language learning and teaching in their journal writing. The retrospective journals were dialogic in its nature since the teacher returned the journal to the students with a written comment on the content of the students' writing. Out of the four journals they wrote during the semester, the second journal only was used for deciding their writing proficiency. On the other hand, the students at K University wrote an evaluative, retrospective journal about the learning activities they had experienced in a semester-long English class. They were asked to write this journal to give the teacher feedback on her course activities. This was their third writing assignment in the semester, and their writing samples were utilized to decide their writing proficiency. The students both of N and K University wrote a one to two page-long journal (approximately 200 to 300 words) freely at home without any time limit not to constrain their writing process. They were also allowed to use any kind of reference materials, such as textbooks or dictionaries. Those writing assignments for meaningful communication with a reader (the teacher) was adopted to provide the students with a meaningful communication chance during the courses.

3.2.2 Questionnaire

The students were asked to fill out the questionnaire immediately after they wrote their journal at home. The questionnaire was composed of four parts: Personal information in Part 1, general questions on Korean writing in Part 2, general questions on English writing in Part 3, and English writing process in Part 4. In Part 2 and 3, they were questioned about their learning experience of English/Korean writing, and degrees of preference for English/Korean writing, and their self-rating on their Korean and English writing ability. The major questions of Part 4 are on their writing process, and strategies of L1 use. The self-rating and preference questions in Part 2 and 3 were asked to

respond on a five-point Likert Scale, while the other background questions were in the form of multiple choice questions. On the other hand, the questions in Part 4, which asked the students' writing process and L1 use strategy were presented in the form of short answer writing in each blank of the given writing steps.

3.2.3 Oral Interview

Ten (5 from LP, and 5 from MP group) out of the 60 participants were interviewed individually after the coding procedure of the questionnaires was completed in order to complement their responses on the questions in Part 4 of the questionnaire. They were questioned to elicit more detailed explanation on the answers they wrote in case their answers needed some extra explanation, such as the reason why they had to write in L1 first. The interviewer took note of the students' answers during this semi-structured interview session.

3.3 Data Analysis

The 72 students were divided into three proficiency groups—high proficiency, medium proficiency, and low proficiency—based on the assessment result of their writing samples. The journals were read and holistically assessed for their overall proficiency level by the researcher and another English teacher on a 10-point scale. The scores were assigned by considering five features—content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics. After the two instructors finished scoring the subjects' essays individually, the researcher added up each subject's two scores from both instructors and the mean was recorded as a final mark. The inter-rater reliability was .88. The students' scores ranged from 3 to a maximum of 9 out of 10 points. The students who attained a score of 7 points and above were distributed into a group of high proficiency writers (HP), those who attained 5 or 6 points were

distributed into a group of medium proficiency writers (MP), and those who received 3 or 4 points were distributed into a group of low proficiency writers (LP). The means of the scores of HP, MP, and LP were 8.2, 5.4, and 3.8 respectively, and the total mean was 5.6.

The responses on all questionnaire items among the HP, MP, and LP writers were separately tabulated and were compared to explore similarities and differences. Correlation tests and chi-square tests regarding some items were run afterwards using SPSS 12.0 to determine the statistical significance. The questions to find out some common features of using L1 and L2 in the writing process by proficiency were directed in Part 4 of the questionnaire. The students' answers to the questions in Part 4 were re-coded on a spreadsheet to capture the similar or different features among different groups more easily.

Despite some doubts on the validity of retrospective questionnaire, this method was adopted for its appropriateness in this kind of study which requires quantitative analysis for a relatively large number of students. Furthermore, to make up for the shortcoming of the written retrospective accounts, the students were asked to fill out the questionnaire immediately after their journal writing, and follow-up interviews with 10 students were conducted as well in case the questionnaire responses needed a supplementary explanation.

4. Findings & Discussion

4.1 Degree of Preference for Writing and L2 Writing Proficiency

Regarding the first research question, to examine the L1 transfer in the affective domain, the students were asked to answer the

question if they liked writing in L1. In general, it is known that those who enjoy writing have a higher chance of being successful writers acquiring efficient writing strategies easily. And the efficient composing strategies in L1 are supposed to be transferred to the process of writing in L2, and there are many studies which provided the evidence for the transfer effect of L1 strategies (e.g., Carson & Kuehn, 1992; Cumming, 1989, 1990; Mi-Jeong Kang, 2007; Lee & Krashen, 2002; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). According to those related studies, the successful writers in L1 are expected to have a better chance to become successful writers in L2 as well.

Among the HP group students 73.7 percent (14 out of 19 students) answered they enjoyed writing in Korean a little or very much, while just 20 percent out of the LP group students (5 among 25 students) liked writing in Korean as in Table 1. A similar relation was found between the degrees of L2 writing preference and L2 writing proficiency as in Table 2. However, it was interesting that the students' L2 writing proficiency was a little better predicted by their preference for L1 writing than preference for L2 writing. The result of the Pearson's Chi-square values of L1 writing preference and L2 writing preference among different proficiency groups were 23.897 and 15.561, and the differences among them were statistically significant ($p < .005$ and $p < .05$ respectively).

To measure the degrees of the correlation between the variables, Pearson's correlation coefficient was used. The students who liked L1 writing mostly answered they liked L2 writing too, and the correlation ($r = .665$) was high with the significance at the .01 level as seen in Table 3. The degrees of L1 and L2 writing preference of the students were also correlated with their L2 writing proficiency at the .01 ($r = .486$) and .05 level respectively ($r = .269$). That is, the high percentage of the students who expressed their strong preference for L1 writing enjoyed L2 writing

as well ($r = .665$), but the correlation between the degrees of

TABLE 1
Degrees of Preference for L1 Writing by L2 Writing Proficiency

"I like writing in Korean."						
L2 Writing Level	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much	Total
LP	2(8.0%)	14(56.0%)	4(16.0%)	4(16.0%)	1(4.0%)	25(100%)
MP	2(7.1%)	13(46.4%)	7(25.0%)	5(17.9%)	1(3.6%)	28(100%)
HP	0(0%)	0(0%)	5(26.3%)	10(52.6%)	4(21.1%)	19(100%)
Total	4(5.6%)	27(37.5%)	16(22.2%)	19(26.4%)	6(8.3%)	72(100%)

$\chi^2 = 23.897$, degree of freedom = 8, $p = .002$

TABLE 2
Degrees of Preference for L2 Writing by L2 Writing Proficiency

"I like writing in English."						
L2 Writing Level	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much	Total
LP	4(16.0%)	8(32.0%)	7(28.0%)	5(20.0%)	1(4.0%)	25(100%)
MP	4(14.3%)	13(46.4%)	6(21.4%)	5(17.9%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
HP	0(0%)	3(15.8%)	5(26.3%)	11(57.9%)	0(0%)	19(100%)
Total	8(11.1%)	24(33.3%)	18(25.0%)	21(29.2%)	1(1.4%)	72(100%)

$\chi^2 = 15.561$, degree of freedom = 8, $p = .049$

students' preference for L2 writing and their L2 writing proficiency was not high ($r = .269$). In sum, we can speculate from this evidence that the preference level for L1 can play an important role of a predictor of the students' L2 writing proficiency level as well as the degree of preference for L2 writing.

In addition to examining the degree of preference for writing, students' confidence level on their writing ability was investigated

to supplement the students' attitude transfer effect in their affective

TABLE 3
Correlations between Writing Preference and Proficiency

		L1 Writing Preference	L2 Writing Proficiency	L2 Writing Preference
L1 Writing Preference	Correlation	1	.486(**)	.665(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	72	72	72
L2 Writing Proficiency	Correlation	.486(**)	1	.269(*)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.022
	N	72	72	72
L2 Writing Preference	Correlation	.665(**)	.269(*)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.022	
	N	72	72	72

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 4
Students' Confidence Level on Their L1 Proficiency and Their Actual L2 Writing Proficiency

"I am good at Korean writing."						
L2 Writing Level	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much	Total
LP	3(12.0%)	3(12.0%)	8(32.0%)	8(32.0%)	3(12.0%)	25(100%)
MP	0(0%)	4(14.3%)	15(53.6%)	5(17.9%)	4(14.3%)	28(100%)
HP	0(0%)	3(15.8%)	7(36.8%)	5(26.3%)	4(21.1%)	19(100%)
Total	3(4.2%)	10(13.9%)	30(41.7%)	18(25.0%)	11(15.3%)	72(100%)

$\chi^2 = 9.059$, degree of freedom = 8, $p = .337$

domain. The students' confidence level about their L1 writing ability by L2 writing proficiency did not show statistically significant difference as seen in Table 4 ($\chi^2 = 9.059$, $p > .1$). The percentage of the students who answered they were good or not bad at Korean writing was relatively high and similar over the

three groups: 76% of the LP group (19 out of 25 students), 85.8% of MP group (24 out of 28 students) and 84.2% of HP group students (16 out of 19 students) rated their Korean writing ability as "so so" or above. Even though there is no evidence if the students overrated their L1 writing ability, a speculation can be drawn: The students appeared to have expressed their confidence on their L1 writing ability comparing it with their L2 writing ability, especially in the case of LP and MP group. In any case, it could be a limitation of this study not to collect the students' actual L1 composition data to support my speculation.

On the contrary, the students' confidence level about their L2 writing ability in three different proficiency groups showed statistical significance as in Table 5 ($\chi^2 = 16.809$, $p < .05$). The percentages of the number of the students who answered they were a little good or so so ("so so" and "a little") at English writing were 24% in the LP group (6 out of 25 students), 21.5% in the MP group (6 out of 28 students) and 68.4% in the HP group (13 out of 19 students). It seems that the students assessed their L2 writing ability in a relatively proper manner, though the MP and LP group students did not show that much difference. However, the students' self-assessment on their L2 writing could not be trusted in general from such a fact that 31.6% of the HP group students (6 out of 19 students) assessed their L2 writing ability negatively as answering "never" or "hardly".

The Pearson's correlation was used to find out the degrees of correlation between the variables (students' confidence level on their writing and their actual proficiency), and the findings are seen in Table 6. No correlation was found between the students' confidence level on their L1 writing ability and their actual L2 writing proficiency ($r = .103$, $p = .392$), while a correlation was found between the students' confidence level about their L2 writing ability and their actual L2 writing proficiency ($r = .354$, $p = .002$).

TABLE 5
Students' Confidence Level on Their L2 Writing Ability and
Their Actual L2 Writing Proficiency

L2 Writing Level	"I am good at English writing."					Total
	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much	
LP	10(40.0%)	9(36.0%)	4(16.0%)	2(8.0%)	0(0%)	25(100%)
MP	13(46.4%)	9(32.1%)	5(17.9%)	1(3.6%)	0(0%)	28(100%)
HP	1(5.3%)	5(26.3%)	7(36.8%)	6(31.6%)	0(0%)	19(100%)
Total	24(33.3%)	23(31.9%)	16(22.2%)	9(12.0%)	0(0%)	72(100%)

$\chi^2 = 16.809$, degree of freedom = 8, $p = .010$

TABLE 6
Correlations between Confidence Level on Writing and Actual
Writing Proficiency

		L2 Writing Proficiency	Self Rating on L1 Writing	Self Rating on L2 Writing
L2 Writing Proficiency	Correlation	1	.103	.354(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.392	.002
	N	72	72	72
Self Rating on L1 Writing	Correlation	.103	1	.367(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.392		.001
	N	72	72	72
Self Rating on L2 Writing	Correlation	.354(**)	.367(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.001	
	N	72	72	72

** . Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

So, from this analysis, it was observed that transfer effects from L1 to L2 in the affective domain were powerful: The existence of correlation between the degree of preference for L1 writing and L2 writing could allow us to predict the transfer of the attitude factor from L1 to L2 writing. It is also proved to be a possible predictor of the students' L2 writing quality, since the students' L2 writing

quality had a strong correlation with their degree of preference for L1/L2 writing. However, students' confidence level about their L1 writing did not provide any evidence of transfer effect from L1 to L2 unlike the degree of preference.

4.2 L1 Use in L2 Writing Process

To explore and compare the overall writing process of the students by proficiency in regards to the second research question, they were asked to record the steps they took when they wrote the journal. On the questionnaire sheet, I gave them an example of four steps when writing with some examples in each step: task examining, idea generation, writing, and checking or revising. They were also informed that the idea generation step might include brainstorming, jotting down ideas, key words writing, outlining, meaning map drawing, or chart drawing. In addition, they were instructed that the checking and revising step could include correcting overall organization, grammar, word choice, the length of the writing, etc.

Most of the students recorded the similar writing process which includes task examination, idea generation and organization, text generation, and text revising regardless their proficiency levels. The students' records showed that they went through various idea generation or organization methods before text generation without regard to their writing proficiency. All of them said they took the final revising step except for one student in MP group and two students in LP group. The amount of time they spent on each step was not asked or measured in this survey.

The students were also requested to record if they used Korean and/or English in each step of their writing process. Most of the students in the HP group stated they used L1 and L2 together and went through frequent code switching in the beginning stages, such as task examining and idea generation (brainstorming, key

words or expressions writing, or outlining), while the students in the MP and LP group showed very limited reliance on L2 in the beginning stages as seen in Table 7.

TABLE 7
The Use of L1 and L2 in Idea Generation Step

In idea generation step	LP (n=18)	MP (n=23)	HP (n=19)	Total (n=60)
"I used Korean"*	18 (100%)	23 (100%)	17 (89.5%)	58 (96.7%)
"I used English"***	0 (0%)	8 (34.8%)	12 (63.2%)	20 (33.3%)

*. $\chi^2 = 4.465$, $p = .107$, **. $\chi^2 = 16.487$, $p = .000$

As for the L1 use in the idea generation step, all of the students in MP and LP group and 17 out of the 19 HP group students (89.5%) answered they used Korean as in Table 7. On the other hand, as for the use of L2 in the idea generation step, 12 out of the 19 HP group students (63.2%) stated they used English, 8 out of the 23 MP group students (34.8%) answered they sometimes used English, too, while no one out of the 18 LP group students (0%) said they used English. So, the students' L1 and L2 use behaviors during the idea generation stage can be summarized that as the students' proficiency level goes up, the ratio of the students who used L1 shows a very slight decrease, while those who used L2 shows a statistically significant increase.

Moving on to the text generation step, the difference among three different proficiency groups was obvious with regard to the behaviors of Korean writing first before English writing. Although most of the HP group students used L1 in their idea generation steps (17 out of 19 students), it is interesting to find that most of them did not enjoy a written translation strategy when they had to write an English text.

Only 4 out of the 19 HP group students answered they had generated the English text after they wrote it in Korean first in the text generation step as in Table 8. And one student said that

he used a translation strategy when he had to write rather complicated sentences only, with writing them in Korean first. In case of the 2 students in the HP group, they answered that they generated an English text by switching some of the sentences which at first occurred in their mind in Korean into English. That is, they thought sentences in Korean a lot and frequently switched them while writing in English. Although these students did not go through a step of writing a Korean text before their English text generation, they used a translation strategy in order to conceptualize their ideas in L2 in their mind as a problem-solving strategy just as the students had done in Myung-Hye Huh's (2001, 2002) studies. The students stated in the interview that it was easier for them to conceptualize, express and develop their ideas in L1.

TABLE 8

L1 Writing First before L2 Writing in Text Generation Step

In text generation step	LP (n=18)	MP (n=23)	HP (n=19)	Total (n=60)
"I wrote in L1 first"	17 (94.4%)	21 (91.3%)	4 (21.1%)	42 (66.7%)

$$x^2 = 31.769, p = .000$$

On the contrary to the HP group students (just 4 out of the 19 HP group students (16.7%) wrote in Korean first), most of the MP and LP group students used a written translation strategy when they had to write an English text: 21 out of the 23 MP group students (91.3%) and 17 out of the 18 LP group students (94.4%) answered they had written in Korean first before they wrote an English text. Interestingly, some of the students in the MP and LP group answered that they wrote a text in Korean first and then rewrote it into easy Korean sentences in order to be able to translate them easily into English. They explained about this behavior in the interview that they wanted to translate all the

text they generated in Korean into English, but their deficiency of the English ability led them to use this strategy. They also stated that it was difficult or impossible to write their thoughts in L2 directly which had occurred in their mind in L1. In order to keep the conceptualized ideas until they finish their L2 composition, it was necessary for them to write a Korean text first which is the product of their idea conceptualization. It can be said that they employed the L1 writing and rewriting strategies as compensatory strategies mainly to solve out the problems from their limited L2 linguistic resources. The result indicated that the linguistic gap between the students' cognitive level and their L2 proficiency level for conceptualizing their ideas in L2 led them to write through L1-to-L2 translation strategy. In addition, it suggests that L2 writers' L1 background, such as the skills in idea generation, conceptualization or organization, plays a crucial role in L2 writing, as they go through these steps mostly in L1.

5. Conclusion

The present study examined the relationship between the degree of students' preference for L1/L2 writing and students' L2 writing proficiency. It was found that the correlation between the degrees of preference for L1 writing and L2 writing was strong. Moreover, the higher the degree of preference for L1 writing, the more proficient L2 writing ability the students demonstrated. Unlike the transfer effect of this preference degree for L1 writing to L2 writing, no transfer effect from L1 to L2 of the students' confidence level was found about their own writing ability, even though their confidence level about their L2 writing ability demonstrated some correlation with their actual L2 proficiency.

The current study also investigated the differences of L1 use behaviors in L2 writing of the students in three different L2

proficiency groups. The findings of this study indicate that the students with lower proficiency tended to more often rely on their L1. However, in the beginning steps of their writing process, such as task examination and idea organization, L1 was used by most students over the three different proficiency groups. The result is comparable to the findings of the previous researches on L1 use by L2 proficiency as shown in Wang and Wen (2002) and in Yeon Hee Choi and Jieun Lee (2006), even though measuring the amount of L1 used by the students in each step was beyond the scope of this study. The students' heavy reliance on the L1-to-L2 translation strategy was apparent among lower proficiency groups: Over 90% of the MP and LP group students employed the written translation strategy, which shows large disparity from the HP group students, only 21.5% of whom used the same written translation strategy. The results, therefore, suggest that as the students' L2 composition ability develops, their L2 writing behavior evolves from written L1-to-L2 translation pattern to mental L1-to-L2 translation pattern and finally to direct L2 writing pattern.

The findings of this study implies that the effort to make the L1 writing practice an enjoyable one is important for helping students to attain successful result in L2 writing as well. With the findings of this study and the previous studies on L1 transfer effect, it is evident that the affective factors, such as students' attitude, should be a serious concern of the language teachers, since it could directly affect the development of L2 writing skills. In addition, the result of this study suggests that L2 writing of EFL students can be benefited from their L1 writing strategies, as they adopt a similar writing process and use a lot of L1 during their L2 writing process for idea generation, organization, reasoning, etc. That is, students' ability to use world knowledge, reasoning skills, organization skills, etc. which were acquired from L1 writing practice could be applied to L2 writing process.

Moreover, a practical implication can be drawn from this study that L2 writing instructors do not need to inhibit the students' use of L1, especially for those who are cognitively matured but have limited L2 linguistic knowledge. The L1-to-L2 translation strategy should be understood as a compensatory and problem-solving strategy for the adult students in a lower L2 proficiency level. And efforts should be made to develop appropriate methods to help students with lower proficiency to use this strategy more efficiently to solve out the problems due to the great disparity between their cognitive and linguistic ability.

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Appendix

설문지

이 설문지의 내용은 한국 학생들의 영어 글쓰기 과정을 이해하고 이를 영어교육에 활용하기 위한 본인의 연구 목적을 위해서만 쓰이게 됩니다. 성실한 답변을 부탁드립니다.

Part 1: Personal Information

1. 이름: _____ 2. 나이: _____
 3. 전공: _____ 4. 학년: _____
 5. 핸드폰: _____ 6. e-mail: _____

7. 영어권 나라에서 살았던 경험이 있습니까? 예 _____ 아니오 _____
 있다면, 어느 나라입니까? _____
 언제였습니까? _____
 얼마동안 살았습니까? _____

8. TOEIC, TOEFL, 혹은 TEPS 시험을 친 적이 있습니까? 예 _____ 아니오 _____
 있다면, 점수는 어떻게 됩니까? TOEIC _____, TOEFL _____, TEPS _____

9. TWE를 친 적이 있습니까? 예 _____ 아니오 _____
 있다면, 점수는 어떻게 됩니까? _____

Part 2: General Questions on Korean Writing

(1-2) 본인의 생각을 나타내는 것을 골라 번호에 동그라미 치세요.

1. I like writing in English.
 never hardly so so a little very much
 | | | | |
 1 2 3 4 5
2. It is difficult to write in Korean.
 never hardly so so a little very much

	1	2	3	4	5
3. I think I am good at Korean writing.	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much
	1	2	3	4	5

4.1 학교가 아닌 곳에서 한국어 글쓰기를 배운 적이 있습니까?

- 1) 예 _____ 2) 아니오 _____

4.2 있다면, 한국어 글쓰기를 얼마나 오래 그리고 어떻게 배웠습니까?

- (1) 학습 기간: _____
(2) 학습 방법: _____

4.3 한국어 글쓰기 학습과 관련하여 소개할 특별한 사항이 있으면 이곳에 써 주십시오.

5. 한국어로 글을 쓸 때, 다음에 제시한 순서를 참고로 본인이 사용하는 순서를 적어 보십시오. 제시한 예에 들어 있지 않은 것이 있다면 그 단계도 순서에 넣어 주십시오.

- (1단계) _____ (2단계) _____
(3단계) _____ (4단계) _____
(5단계) _____ (6단계) _____
(7단계) _____ (8단계) _____

<예>

(1단계) 주제 선택하기

(2단계) 아이디어 떠올리기 (a. 브레이스토밍, b. 떠오르는대로 글 써보기, c. 중요단어 써보기, d. 개요작성, e. 의미지도 f. 차트 그려보기, g. 기타: _____)

(3단계) 작문하기

(4단계) 작문한 글 전반을 읽고 검토하기:

- a. 글의 구조, 맥락, 순서 등의 수정
b. 문법, 단어 선택 등의 수정
c. 글의 길이, 양 조절

Part 3: General Questions on English Writing

1. I like writing in English.

	never	hardly	so so	a little	very much
	1	2	3	4	5

2. It is difficult to write in English.

never hardly so so a little very much
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
1 2 3 4 5

3. I think I am good at English writing.

never hardly so so a little very much
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
1 2 3 4 5

4.1 학교 이외의 곳에서 영어 글쓰기를 배운 경험이 있습니까?

1) 예 _____ 2) 아니오 _____

4.2 있다면, 얼마나 오래 배웠으며, 어떻게 배웠습니까?

(1) 학습 기간: _____

(2) 학습 방법: _____

4.3 영어 글쓰기 학습과 관련하여 소개할 특별한 경험이 있으면 이곳에 써 주십시오.____

Part 4: English Writing Process

5. 이번 학기에 과제로 제출하였던 영어 저널을 쓸 때, 다음에 제시한 <예>를 참고로 본인이 사용한 순서를 적어 보십시오. 제시한 예에 들어 있지 않은 것이 있다면 그 단계도 순서에 넣어 주십시오.

(1단계) _____ (2단계) _____
(3단계) _____ (4단계) _____
(5단계) _____ (6단계) _____
(7단계) _____ (8단계) _____

<예>

(1단계) 주제 선택하기

(2단계) 아이디어 떠올리기 (a. 브레인스토밍, b. 떠오르는대로 글 써보기, c. 중요단어 써보기, d. 개요작성, e. 의미지도 f. 차트 그려보기, g. 기타: _____)

(3단계) 작문하기

(4단계) 작문한 글 전반을 읽고 검토하기

- a. 글의 구조, 맥락, 순서 등의 수정
- b. 문법, 단어 선택 등의 수정
- c. 글의 길이, 양 조절

6. 위의 글을 쓴 순서 중 언제, 어떻게 모국어(한국어)를 사용하였습니까? 자세히 기술하여 주십시오.

- (1단계) _____
 (2단계) _____
 (3단계) _____
 (4단계) _____
 (5단계) _____
 (6단계) _____
 (7단계) _____
 (8단계) _____

7. 글을 쓰는 과정에서 영어로 생각하는 경우가 있었습니까? 있었다면 언제 어떻게 사용하였습니까?

- (1단계) _____
 (2단계) _____
 (3단계) _____
 (4단계) _____
 (5단계) _____
 (6단계) _____
 (7단계) _____
 (8단계) _____

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