



Korean EFL Learners' Strategy Use During Writing With Dictionary Aid*

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ABSTRACT

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The present study explores L2 writers' strategy use during writing with a smartphone dictionary app based on the think-aloud method. Two groups of Korean EFL students carried out four writing tasks: one group performed writing with the help of a dictionary app and the other did not. Results revealed that the students with dictionary aid processed writing quite differently from the ones without it. Less L2 writing anxiety, more attention to the content of writing and more active idea materialization was detected in the former group. The analysis of think-aloud data indicated that these results were mainly caused by the extension of the students' vocabulary knowledge capacity with dictionary aid, which contributed to enhancing the confidence in their writing ability. The findings suggest that using a dictionary app in a language class could enable L2 students to perform writing more intensively by reducing anxiety.

I. INTRODUCTION

Language learners today live in a highly digitized society. By just clicking an app in the smartphone screen, they can directly access a dictionary in the web, or in the smartphone memory, and get linguistic information they need without time and space restriction. Learners can also refer to thousand of living examples of word usage when they try to use a word in their language performance, such as writing, since there are dictionary apps providing wide range of linguistic data collected in the web (e.g., Naver dictionary app and Daum dictionary app). Those features of a dictionary app, i.e., high accessibility and huge linguistic content, indicate it has the potential to be used as an effective educational material in a language classroom.

However, the problem is that the use of a dictionary has been a controversial issue in the field of language education. Some consider that using a dictionary in a classroom would not be beneficial for learners because there is a possibility that they would be over-dependant on the dictionary use (Grains & Redman, 1986). They say a dictionary might cause learners to be lazy in learning because it is too easy for them to get a solution through it (Summer, 1988). In addition, they point out that dictionary use might make learners distracted from their reading or writing since they have to spend their additional time when they search for words (Scholfield, 1997).

On the contrary, others insist that dictionary use would be beneficial because of the following reasons: 1) a dictionary is an authentic referencing tool generally used

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outside the classroom and therefore using a dictionary is a part of authentic language use activities that learners have to be accustomed to (Asher, 1999), 2) dictionary use gives learners opportunities to increase their vocabulary knowledge capacity by having them exposed to the words that they do not know or partially know through the searching process (Summer, 1988), and 3) dictionary use enables learners to learn autonomously, especially in the situation where direct help from a teacher is impossible (Barnes, Hunt, & Powell, 1999).

To identify the actual impact of dictionary use on language learning, that is, whether beneficial or not, lots of research has been conducted: 1) research on the types of a dictionary such as monolingual, bilingual, or bilingualized dictionaries (Chen, 2011; Laufer & Hadar, 1997); 2) research on the form of a dictionary such as paper, pocket electronic, or web dictionaries (Chen, 2010; Koyama & Takeuchi, 2003); and 3) research on the impact of dictionary use on vocabulary learning (Laufer & Hill, 2001; Lew & Doroszewska, 2009) and reading comprehension (J. H. Ma & H. J. Cheon, 2016; Wingate, 2004).

However, there are two research gaps. First, despite the interest on the role of a dictionary and language learning, studies on the dictionary use in classroom writing and changes on learners' strategy use have been rarely carried out. Second, few studies have examined the issue of a dictionary from the perspective of a dictionary app, which is widely used today with the prevalence of a smartphone (Holmer, von Martens, & Sköldbberg, 2015).

Basically, a dictionary app has the features of an on line dictionary. Unlike the traditional type of a dictionary such as a paper or an electronic pocket dictionary, the content of a dictionary app is not confined by the limitation of scope (Gao, 2013). Moreover, the linguistic data in a dictionary app can be easily updated, which enables dictionary users to keep up with the latest changes of lexical items (Gao, 2013). All these features of a dictionary app indicate that the linguistic resources which can be used and acquired by language learners during writing would be greater than those of a paper or an electronic pocket dictionary.

Motivated by these ideas, this study explores the answers of the following research questions targeting L2 beginners:

- 1) What language learning strategies do EFL learners use when they perform writing in two different writing conditions: writing with a dictionary app and writing without a dictionary app?
- 2) To what extent does the frequency of language learning strategy use differ in two writing conditions: writing with a dictionary app and writing without a dictionary app?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. L2 Writing and Dictionary Use

In order to overcome difficulties derived from their linguistic limitation and thus, to achieve communicative goals, L2 learners generally turn to aid from a dictionary (Augustyn, 2013; Nesi & Meara, 1994; J. S. Ryu, 2005). With this aid, they identify the proper L2 lexical item in the given context of their writing and assess whether the word to be used in their text is appropriate or not in terms of meaning, orthography or grammar (Y. V. Chon, 2008; Nesi, 1999). In addition, learners can perform various language tasks by themselves with the help of a dictionary in the situation where no external help (e.g., help from a teacher) is available (Asher, 1999; East, 2008).

Acknowledging the significance that a dictionary has in L2 writing, Harvey and Yuill (1997) clarified the reasons of L2 learners' using a dictionary. The result of their study showed that checking spelling and meaning were the prior reasons of dictionary use which was followed by searching for information related to synonym, grammar, collocation, and inflection. Later, Tall and Hurman (2002) investigated the issue by examining to what extent the use of a dictionary affected learners' writing from the perspective of errors and essay scores. They had the learners perform two writing tasks. In the first task, learners wrote an essay without a dictionary and in the second task they wrote an essay with a dictionary. In the second writing task, the findings revealed that lots of errors were made when learners employed words searched from a dictionary. Yet, regardless of these errors, it also appeared that scores of writing outcomes produced with dictionary aid were significantly higher than those without it.

However, contradictory results were reported in the study carried out by East (2006). Criticizing the design of Tall and Hurman's study, East reexamined the issue. According to East, the order of task alignment used in Tall and Hurman's (2002) study was somewhat problematic since learners were led to perform writing without a dictionary at first and then with it second, which could have had a potential learning impact on the second writing task. In the study of East, thus, counter balanced task design was adopted targeting two groups of learners: the upper language proficiency group and the lower language proficiency group.

The results showed that no statistically significant group differences appeared in scores between the dictionary use group and the non-dictionary use group in the lower level, indicating that dictionary use during L2 writing would not be so beneficial to the language learners who do not have higher language proficiency. East noted that the underlying reason of the result was that learners in lower language proficiency had the tendency to make more errors than the ones in higher group while they adopted words searched from a dictionary into their writing (i.e., 50% of errors). As these errors resulted in lowering the essay scores, the

beneficial impact of dictionary use was canceled out (East, 2006). The inconsistency of those two study findings indicates further investigation is needed to get deeper understanding on the actual way that learners use a dictionary. In other words, not only the surface features of text (e.g., essay scores or errors of texts) but the cognitive process of learners' dictionary use (e.g., dictionary use strategies) needs to be explored.

2. L2 Learners' Strategy Use While Writing With Dictionary Aid

Among the studies exploring L2 learners' cognitive process with dictionary aid, Y. V. Chon's (2008) and C. G. Yoon's (2016) are worth noting since they measured L2 learners' strategy use behaviors by directly observing and recording their writing process in a dictionary use situation. Targeting ten high-intermediate Korean EFL learners, Y. V. Chon (2008) investigated problems that occurred when learners used web dictionaries through a computer while performing two expository writing tasks. She also identified types of solutions that each learner took. Findings suggested that quite often searching a dictionary entailed successive problems, making learners employ particular strategies to attain their communication goals. For instance, dictionary consultation aiming to find an appropriate L1-L2 equivalent often entailed a problem of lexical selection which asked a learner to choose one specific item among several alternatives in a dictionary entry. The situation to choose one lexical item made him or her employ various strategies such as selecting a word based on preferred styles, meaning, or familiarity, or using an alternative word rather than the searched item by paraphrasing the text or adjusting the intended message. It also appeared that a learner used a strategy of successive consultation, which sometimes led him or her to experience another problem of lexical selection.

C. G. Yoon (2016) explored the way that two advanced L2 writers used web dictionaries, as well as other referencing materials (e.g., corpus tools and Google reference tools via computers) and specified the individual differences of their strategy use. Through the examination, it appeared that the patterns of dictionary consultation varied according to writers' writing styles as well as their perception of writing. This suggests individual writers need to be focused when dictionary use performance is examined.

The studies above provide useful information on how the use of a dictionary can impact L2 learners' cognitive process during writing. The limitation of these studies, however, is that they did not cover the lower level of L2 learners whose need of dictionary use could be extremely high because of their considerable limitation of L2 lexical knowledge. Further, they did not investigate the impact of dictionary use in the view of a dictionary app operated via smartphones.

Compared to a paper or a pocket electronic dictionary, the scope of linguistic content provided by a dictionary

app is much larger. More entries, more multimedia content, and more related words are presented (Gao, 2013). It also enables learners to get linguistic aid whenever they want. By touching the app on the smartphone screen, learners can refer to a target word in anywhere and at anytime. In addition, a dictionary app is highly helpful when learners are involved in online writing context such as sending emails or uploading information on the blog, facebook, or twitter. Based on the limitation shown in the previous studies, hence, this study explores the impact of a dictionary app on EFL learners' strategy use during writing targeting lower level language learners.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

Ten undergraduates participated in this study. They were all freshmen attending a university located nearby Seoul, Korea. All of them took the English writing course set up for the beginners aiming to improve general English writing ability. It was a mandatory course conducted for one semester. Among the ten participants, five took the morning class of this course and the other five the afternoon class.

For assessing participants' level of language proficiency, a pre-writing test was carried out in the beginning of the semester. The results showed that there were no noticeable differences between the participants in each group regarding the level of language proficiency (see Appendix 1). Based on the results, the five participants in the morning class were determined to be in the experimental group (i.e., the group that was allowed to use a dictionary app during writing) and the other five in the afternoon class were in the control group (i.e., the group that was not allowed to use a dictionary app during writing). The participants' demographic information is presented in Table 1. Pseudonyms were used for all the participants.

TABLE 1
Participants of Think-Aloud Protocols

Group	Name	Gender	Age
Experimental group	Bo-ra	Female	19
	Chan-min	Male	20
	Dong-hyun	Male	19
	Hae-il	Male	21
	Da-young	Female	20
Control group	Won-jun	Male	21
	Min-kyu	Male	20
	Sang-yoon	Male	23
	Woo-bin	Male	20
	Ju-hee	Female	20

2. Instruments

1) Writing Tasks

The writing tasks used in this study were developed based on First Certificate in English (FCE) writing test framework (Shaw & Weir, 2007). The test consists of two parts; the mandatory e-mail writing task first, and the discourse mode based (i.e., narrative, argumentative, descriptive, and expository) selective writing task as the second part.

In this study, the second part of FCE writing test was adopted and modified. Unlike the original framework of FCE test, the four discourse modes in the second writing task, that is, narrative, argumentative, descriptive and expository, were all given to the participants as mandatory writing tasks. This implementation was made based on two reasons. The first reason was to avoid the unexpected variable caused by the task difficulty. Murphy and Roca de Larios (2010) note that L2 learners' use of lexical items would differ based on the type of a discourse mode. A simple statement of personal and daily vocabulary, which might be familiar to learners, would be shown in narrative writing, whereas a considerably more abstract statement consisting of unfamiliar vocabulary would be shown in argumentative writing. This means that argumentative writing could be cognitively more demanding than the narrative (Murphy & Roca de Larios, 2010). Murphy and Roca de Larios argue that this difference of cognitive difficulty would make learners employ different types of writing strategies in different ranges while they are selecting and using lexical items in formulating text. That is, the type of discourse mode could impact on L2 learners' writing performance (S. K. Park, 2014). Therefore, to reduce any unwanted variables, the writing tasks composed of four different discourse modes were all carried out in this study. The second reason was that it would be hard to elicit valid data if the participants in two groups performed different writing tasks on the basis of their preference. Reliable comparison between the experimental and the control groups only can be possible when the writing conditions of the groups are same, except the variable factor. This indicates that common topics need to be given to the participants in both groups rather than the topics being selective.

Therefore, four mandatory writing tasks were developed based on the second section of FCE writing task framework (i.e., narrative, argumentative, descriptive, and expository) and given to the participants in both groups in a separate class session. The mandatory e-mail writing task was not adopted in this study since this writing was not covered in the writing class and students were not accustomed this mode of writing. All the writing tasks were processed in a pen-and paper setting and the duration of writing was twenty minutes, which was determined according to the results of a pilot study carried out in a prior semester targeting the students who had similar language proficiency in the same writing course.

2) Dictionary App

In the beginning of the study, a survey was conducted to find out the most preferred smartphone dictionary app used by the participants. The results showed Naver bilingual smartphone dictionary app was the main referencing tool used by the participants in their everyday lives. That is, every participant responded they referred to this dictionary app via a smartphone when the need of linguistic information arose. Therefore, Naver bilingual smartphone dictionary app was determined to be used in this study.

3. Procedures

The writing tasks were carried out in a specially prepared classroom for the think-aloud protocol from week twelve to thirteen of the semester, two times in each week. The participants in each group, the experimental group and the control group, performed the tasks separately. The process of all the think-aloud protocol tasks followed three steps presented by Brice (2005) and Green (1998); the workshop session, the main think-aloud protocol session, and the post interview session.

First, the workshop session was given to the participants on three separate days. The purpose of the study was explained on the first day, which was followed by the introduction of the basic concept of think-aloud protocols and its techniques. Then each participant was given a voice recorder and a microphone that were prepared to record his or her think-aloud. The time to become familiar with this equipment was presented. After that, mock-compositions with think-aloud were carried out on the following two separate days. During the two days, the detailed feedback on the results was given to each participant so as to encourage him or her to clearly understand the think-aloud technique.

Second, following the three-day workshop, the main four writing tasks were implemented with think-aloud on four different days from week twelve to thirteen. The participants' think-aloud were recorded using voice recorders and microphones. Finally, the post interviews were carried out to gather further information on participants' strategy use behaviors. The participants mainly used their L1, Korean, during think-aloud.

4. Analysis

The recorded think-aloud protocol data were transcribed using a word processor and segmented into units of strategies based on the framework of Oxford's Strategy Inventory for Language Learning (SILL) (Oxford, 1990), one of the most comprehensive measuring tools that covers various aspects of learners' strategy use performance (Lai, 2003; Nikolov, 2006). For the analysis, two coders participated in the study. They were Ph.D. candidates in English language education who had more than four years of teaching experience at universities. Their research inter-

est were EFL writing and language learning strategies.

For the analysis, two sets of identical copies of forty transcribed think-aloud protocol data were prepared and given to each coder. Before starting the coding, it was determined that four among the six major categories of strategies of SILL were related with the dictionary use behaviour. They were metacognitive strategies, cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies, which consist of a number of sub-strategies. To identify participants' specific sub-strategy used in each major category, hence, every transcribed think-aloud data was examined four times. That is, several units of sub-strategies under the category of metacognitive strategies were segmented at first, and then units of sub-strategies under the category of cognitive strategies, compensation strategies, and affective strategies were analyzed respectively. The coders, at first, individually carried out the encoding tasks using six transcribed data (i.e., three TAP data from the participants of the experimental group and another three from the participants of the control group). Drawing on prior research that identified the types of strategies (e.g., Y. V. Chon, 2008; Murphy & Roca de Larios, 2010; Xu & Wu, 2012), the coders segmented participants' utterances into units of strategies. After the analysis of six transcribe think-aloud data, the results were compared. While the coders compared the outcomes, any disagreement or discrepancies detected between them were resolved through discussion using the categories of strategies of SILL as a reference.

As the process of encoding was quite time consuming, each coder conducted the remainder of their works individually. They met again ten days later and the results were examined and compared. Any discrepancies were also cleared up through discussion. Inter-rater reliability between the coders was assessed by making use of Pearson's r and the elicited value appeared to be 0.92, which indicates that the reliability of the coders could be supported. All the encoded items were counted and recorded into an Excel software programme, and then their frequency was measured and calculated through SPSS. The participants' recorded interviews were also transcribed and examined to get more substantial information of their strategy use.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Language Learning Strategies Used by EFL Learners While Writing With a Dictionary App

The first research question was "What language learning strategies do EFL learners use when they perform writing in two different writing conditions: writing with a dictionary app and writing without a dictionary app?" It was reported from the results of the classification that twenty sub strategies in four main categories of language learning strategies were employed by the participants

in both groups. They were planning, monitoring, and self-evaluating in the category of metacognitive strategy, summarizing, generating ideas, repeating, using patterns, translating, editing, reading, and reasoning in the category of cognitive strategy, making positive statements in the category of affective strategy, and code switching, avoidance, synonym, blank-leaving, superordinate, word coinage, circumlocution, and adjusting in the category of compensation strategy.

In the case of monitoring strategy, it turned out that the participants' monitoring strategy use could be further divided into two types: error-related monitoring and content-related monitoring. For this study, hence, monitoring strategy was additionally divided into error-related monitoring strategy and content-related monitoring strategy. Also, a number of reoccurring patterns of the additional sub-strategy use, that is, decision making strategy (Xu & Wu, 2012), were identified while scrutinizing the transcribed think-aloud data. Through the analysis, these patterns of decision making strategy were determined to be involved into the category of cognitive strategy. In the process of examining the participants' think-aloud protocols, repeated patterns of negative statements were also detected. In order to investigate any aspects of negative affective condition of the participants, therefore, this pattern of statements was grouped and named as making negative statements. This was categorized into affective strategy. As a result, a total of four main language learning strategies as well as twenty three sub-strategies were found to be used. Among them, it was reported that content-related monitoring and making positive statements were solely used in the experimental group and synonym, blank-leaving, superordinate, word coinage, circumlocution, and adjusting were used by the participants in the control group.

2. Features of Language Learning Strategies Used by EFL Learners While Writing With a Dictionary App

The second research question was "To what extent does the frequency of language learning strategy use differ in two writing conditions: writing with a dictionary app and writing without a dictionary app?" The results found that in the dictionary use condition, the participants employed strategies related to content development of their writing more, whereas when they did not use a dictionary app, strategies related to any possible error prevention were used more frequently. For instance, strategies such as planning or content-related monitoring were reported to be mainly used when the participants wrote with the help of a dictionary app; however, strategies such as error-related monitoring or editing appeared to be highly used in the no dictionary use condition. In the following sections, the results of the analysis on the frequency differences between the groups will be described and discussed according to four main categories of language learning strategies: metacognitive strategy, cognitive strategy, affective strategy,

and compensation strategy.

1) Metacognitive Strategy

Among the four sub-strategies of metacognitive strategy, the noticeable group differences were detected in planning and content-related monitoring strategies. The frequency of strategy use is illustrated in Table 2.

TABLE 2
Frequency of Metacognitive Strategy Use

Metacognitive strategy	Experimental group		Control group		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Planning	20	60.6	13	39.4	33	100
Monitoring						
Error-related monitoring	95	44.8	117	55.2	212	100
Content-related monitoring	9	100	0	0	9	100
Self-evaluating	4	50	4	50	8	100

The participants in the experimental group employed twenty (60.6%) planning strategies and nine (100%) content-related monitoring strategies, whereas the participants in the control group used thirteen (39.4%) planning strategies and none of the content-related monitoring strategy. These results suggest that students tend to give more attention to the way to develop the content of their writing when using a dictionary app. This tendency is clearly described in protocol (1) derived from the transcribed think-aloud protocol data in the experimental group (see Appendix 2 for the think-aloud protocol convention).

Protocol (1)

Hae-il (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of narrative writing

let's check my brainstormed ideas... the story of politics that ordinary people don't know... I already wrote it... um... I have already included all of my brainstormed ideas in my writing... should I brainstorm more?... oh... in this way... (he rewrites one sentence of his essay)... O.K., let's change the sentence in this way... the book... make her... surprise... well... and then... oh... the sentence becomes better... simpler... it was a good idea to change the subject of the sentence... changing the subject was effective... and then... um... then... she... oh... how can I develop the story more... she get awake... wake... wake... having surprised face... um... well... O.K.... I don't have to restrict my essay only about a book... it will be better to insert a story of Jane (Jane is a main character of the given topic.) along with the story of a book... and then there will be a lot more things that I can add into my essay... O.K....

As shown in protocol (1), Hae-il, the participant in the experimental group, tried to check whether his ideas were fully developed in his essay by making use of content-related monitoring strategy. The given writing prompt was 'Your professor has asked you to write a story for an international magazine. The story must begin with the following words. Jane opened a book on the table and saw something in it. Write your story' (see Appendix 3). Therefore, he first-

ly decided to write about a story of a "book". However, while monitoring his writing, he felt the need to develop his story further and finally decided to insert an additional story about "Jane", the main character in the given writing prompt. As a result, his decision based on the content-related monitoring strategy enabled him to expand the content of his story further.

Among the participants in the control group, the use of content-related monitoring strategy was not reported, let alone the trial to insert any additional stories into the writing. Rather, the participants appeared to carefully weigh the difficulty of the generated ideas to be written and tried to choose the one that was comparatively easy to write using planning strategy. This is illustrated in protocol (2).

Protocol (2)

Won-jun (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

(This is the beginning of Won-jun's think-aloud protocol.) environmental issue... nuclear... nuclear issue... nuclear issue... a nuclear power plant... well... No... let me check it... will it be an issue for me too difficult to write?... um... radioactive... radioactive waste... trash... of... radioactive... radioactive... nuclear?... in... (he starts to read the writing task prompt) write an article for the magazine... nuclear... no... the problem is that there is no place to put radioactive waste... there is no place to put radioactive waste... um... oh... I don't have a good idea... air pollution... the issue of air pollution?... air pollution... oil... oil... spilled oil into the sea... sea... pollution... contamination... contamination... of sea... sea?... um... the recent hot environmental issue is... radioactive... the start of my writing will be ... today... today... O.K., let's start my writing in this way... 'oneullal urineun jeongi eneojireul wonjaryeok gisure uihaeseo... sseugo itda'... [today we get electricity power by making use of the nuclear technology]...

This protocol shows the way that a participant in the control group narrated a list of ideas about the environment for a writing task. Won-jun first considered the issue of a nuclear power plant. However, he soon commented "will it be an issue for me too difficult to write?" These words infer that he recognized his L2 writing ability was somewhat limited. Therefore, to accomplish the given task, he needed to generate ideas that were not so demanding since he probably wanted to avoid difficulties that would be caused from his limited writing ability. The alternative idea that he generated was the issue of air pollution, which was changed into sea pollution. Finally, he decided to write about the problems related to nuclear technology. This process of idea change combined with the comment of difficulty assessment designates that he was worried whether he could accomplish the writing task or not.

The fact that the tendency to assess the difficulty of the topic was not shown in the experimental group specifically suggests Won-jun's concern might be due to his lack of L2 lexical knowledge. In other words, if he had gotten the chance to use lexical resources from an app dictionary, he

would have chosen the topic that he wanted to write about more freely, and this might have given him the opportunities to perform writing on diverse issues in diverse ways instead of being restricted by his linguistic limitation. This assumption is supported by East (2008) who notes that getting lexical aid from a dictionary enables L2 writers not to avoid inserting the generated idea in their writing.

2) Cognitive Strategy

Like the results of the analysis on metacognitive strategy, the results of cognitive strategy analysis revealed that without a dictionary app, the participants tend to give noticeably higher attention to the errors of their writing. However, with an app, it proved that less attention was given. Among the nine sub-strategies in cognitive strategy, apparent group differences appeared in using patterns and editing. The control group reported higher frequencies in those two sub-strategies. These results are presented in Table 3.

TABLE 3
Frequency of Cognitive Strategy Use

Cognitive strategy	Experimental group		Control group		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Summarizing	4	40	6	60	10	100
Generating ideas	15	48.4	16	51.6	31	100
Repeating	893	53.4	779	46.6	1672	100
Using patterns	2	22.2	7	77.8	9	100
Translating	241	42.5	326	57.5	567	100
Editing	3	15.8	16	84.2	19	100
Reading	21	47.7	23	52.3	44	100
Decision making	157	45.4	189	54.6	346	100
Reasoning	1	50	1	50	2	100

(1) Using patterns

Using patterns refers to the strategy used to acknowledge or try out routine patterns of the second language structure (Oxford, 1990). The way that the strategy was used by the participants in both groups are described in the transcribed think-aloud protocol data. The excerpt of the think-aloud protocol from the experimental group is given in protocol (3).

Protocol (3)

Hae-il (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

practice... um... practice to... to protect... do I have to put -ing behind the word protect?... practice... 'silcheonhaeya doeneun' [the thing that has to be practiced]... to protect... what is the pattern of this word?... protecting?... does the word practice go along with -ing form or not?... protect... oh, yes, this word would go along with -ing form... protecting...

Hae-il, the participant in protocol (3), used this strategy to recall the proper grammar form of a word that goes along with the verb, 'practice'. When he tried to write a verb

'practice', he was confused for a while because he was not sure what form of the word should be written behind this verb. However, by remembering that the pattern that the verb 'practice' is combined with a gerund, he could write the proper form of the word following it. Another excerpt from the control group that shows the employment of using pattern strategy is presented in protocol (4).

Protocol (4)

Ju-hee (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of descriptive writing

um... she... says... uh... 'mwomwo hal ttae' [when I do something] (she considers the correct pattern in her writing is a when clause)... so... I... I... 'naega eorin sijeoril ttae' [when I was young]... when... I... was... child... child... a... child...

Ju-hee in protocol (4) used the pattern of 'when-clause' based on her L1. In the beginning, she commented 'mwomwo hal ttae', which means 'when one does something' in Korean, to recollect the proper pattern of English 'when-clause'. Then this basic pattern of words was filled with more specific Korean expressions such as 'naega eorin sijeoril ttae', that is, 'when I was young', and finally developed the English expression that she intended to write, 'when I was a child'.

Both of the excerpts reveal that the reason of employing using pattern strategy while writing is to produce an appropriate structure of L2 expression or to avoid errors. The fact this strategy was used seven times (77.8%) in the no dictionary use condition suggests that when students do not use a dictionary app, they become highly cautious of the forms of their writing. On the contrary, in the dictionary use condition, using the strategy two times (22.2%) indicates students' attention on their errors is radically reduced when they write with a dictionary app. The following results of the editing strategy analysis also support this assumption.

(2) Editing

Editing indicates rewriting some parts of an essay after finishing the draft (Oxford, 1990). The examples of the editing strategy use in both groups are illustrated in protocol (5) and (6).

Protocol (5)

Chan-min (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of narrative writing

(he is reading his essay after writing)... about relativism but it is not fun for her... so she is very tired... few seconds late... uh... a world in the book... go into the world in the book... meet a scientist... um... worry about that because of... her dream... um... I think I have to change the tense of every verb as a past form... (he changes the tense of every verb in his essay into a past form)... met... it was... um... let's change the present tense of every verb into the past tense... uh... past tense...

Chan-min in protocol (5) started reading his essay after

completing writing. While reading, he realized that the verbs of his essay needed to be written in the forms of the past tense and hence, he began to edit saying “I think I have to change the tense of every verb as a past form.” The similar situation is also described in protocol (6), an excerpt from the control group.

Protocol (6)

Ju-hee (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of descriptive writing

(she is reading her essay after writing) She is more important person about me than anyone... um... uh... the present tense... loves... respects... a third person singular... is there anything else that I didn't check?... past tense... hate... hated... hated... um...

In protocol (6), Ju-hee, the participant in the control group, checked her essay after writing and started to edit the detected errors such as a third person singular or tense of a verb. Both protocol (5) and (6) showing the use of editing strategy in this study means that a writer is focusing on grammatical or lexical rules of writing and putting effort to prevent any errors. This strategy turned out to be employed sixteen times (84.2%) in the control group compared to three times (15.8%) in the experimental group. This apparent difference between the groups infers, again, without a dictionary app, students' attention on errors of writing highly increases; however, when they can use a dictionary app, their attention on errors decreases noticeably.

3) Affective Strategy

Along with metacognitive and cognitive strategies, participants' use of affective strategy was investigated in this study and the findings reported noticeable group differences in two sub-affective strategies, making positive statements and making negative statements. Making positive statements refers to saying positive words to oneself so as to enhance his or her confidence of processing the target language (Oxford, 1990), whereas making negative statements indicates uttering negative words to oneself to express a negative affective condition that occurs while writing in the target language. The results showed that making positive statements only appeared in the experimental group and making negative statements mainly in the control group. The frequencies of these two sub-affective strategy use are illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4
Frequency of Affective Strategy Use

Affective strategy	Experimental group		Control group		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Making positive statements	4	100	0	0	4	100
Making negative statements	4	19	17	81	21	100

(1) Making positive statements

The results of the analysis show that making positive statements was employed only by the participants in the experimental group four times (100%). Further investigation revealed three of the five participants in this group, that is more than half, were involved in this strategy use. The following two excerpts of the think-aloud protocol data from the experimental group describe the moments that the participants used making positive statements strategy.

Protocol (7)

Bo-ra (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

(she is considering the organization of the essay) I think I have to write an essay in this way... But people... do not know...that's right... that's right... people don't know... the importance of the environment... these environments... wait! Wait... these... these... importance... O.K!... let's keep on saying that they don't know the importance of the environment... and then... and then... after saying that, let's present the solutions of it... well... I think that's good!

Protocol (8)

Chan-min (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

(After reading his own writing, Chan-min makes a comment.) the results of my writing?... is good!

By commenting positive words while writing, the participants in these protocols expressed the confidence on the works they had done so far. Bo-ra in protocol (7) tried to organize the content of her essay before starting to write. After setting up the story, she stated “I think that's good”, which showed her possible confidence in her idea organization. In the case of Chan-min, he showed confidence in the quality of his writing by saying “the results of my writing?... is good!”

To find out whether dictionary use gave any impact on participants' affective factors that could have contributed to increasing their self-confidence, follow-up interviews were conducted. The excerpts from the interviews are presented in interview (1) and (2).

Interview (1)

Chan-min (in the experimental group): from the interview

During writing, there was a moment that I couldn't recollect the intended words directly... and this made me perplexed. However, with a dictionary, I could get over this difficulty... so I think using dictionaries in classroom writing is quite helpful... Also, sometimes it was not easy for me to clearly recollect spelling of some words during writing, although that was the one I already knew. To avoid this ambiguity, and recheck my lexical knowledge, I used a dictionary.

The relationship between the degree of participants' L2 writing anxiety and the use of a dictionary app is reported, at first, in interview (1). According to Chan-min in the

interview, there was a moment that he could not recollect the target word that he intended to write in his essay which made him nervous as he expressed “this made me perplexed”. When he got dictionary aid in this situation, however, this lexical problem was resolved and his anxiety could be reduced. This suggests using a dictionary app might take an important role to control students’ affective factor when they perform a writing task. The second excerpt derived from the interview with Bo-ra presents another interesting finding.

Interview (2)

Bo-ra (in the experimental group): from the interview

I think using dictionaries in writing is good because with them I can immediately find the words that I do not know. This enables me to keep writing without any distraction...

Bo-ra in this excerpt showed that she could concentrate on writing when she used a dictionary app without serious distractions caused from her limited lexical knowledge. In other words, without a dictionary app, she would have had to put effort to retrieve her mental lexicon to find out the appropriate target words in her writing, which would have increased her L2 writing anxiety because as Weigle (2002) noted, this process generally takes time and imposes considerable amount of cognitive load on a writer’s brain. With a dictionary app, however, she did not need to struggle to recollect the words that she wanted to write and as a result, it was possible for her to maintain the flow of writing, allowing her to pay attention to the content of the essay. It can be identified from this result that dictionary use could reduce students’ cognitive burden caused from their limited L2 lexical capacity and enable them to concentrate more on the content of their writing.

(2) Making negative statements

The results of analysis on making negative statements showed that fewer frequencies of this strategy use were reported in the experimental group, four times (19%) compared to seventeen times (81%) in the control group. Among them, two were revealed to be related to the concerns on content development, one was difficulty of grammar rules, and the last one was a problem of dictionary app operation. Some negative feelings expressed through words in the process of using a dictionary is illustrated in protocol (9).

Protocol (9)

Hae-il (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of argumentative writing

oh... entertainer... this spelling is really confusing... I think I have to find the correct spelling in a dictionary... uh...? oh my god, the dictionary does not function well... what’s the problem?... what’s the reason of it?... oh... finally... yes... I can operate it... yes... enter... tain... er... oh... the one that I thought at first was correct!

This protocol shows the moment that Hae-il became

nervous when he could not operate his dictionary app for a while because of an unknown reason. As he was performing the timed writing task, his anxiety appeared to be heightened when he had to spend additional time to resolve the functional problem of his dictionary. This is clearly described in his comment “oh my god, the dictionary does not function well... what’s the problem?” The example of Hae-il infers there is a possibility that dictionary app operation via a smartphone would sometimes cause functional problems which prevent EFL writers from focusing on their writing.

Along with the case of protocol (9), additional dictionary use problem was detected in another participant’s think-aloud protocol. Even though this additional dictionary use problem would be hard to be included in the category of making negative statements strategy as no clear negative words were commented in this data, it deserves to be discussed in this section because this dictionary based problem appeared to make the participant spend considerable amount of time, which might negatively affect her affective factor by increasing her anxiety. This is shown in protocol (10).

Protocol (10)

Bo-ra (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols in expository writing

‘ilhoeyong’ [disposable product]... ‘ilhoeyong’... I think I have to look up the word in dictionary... well... but the last time when I tried to find it in the dictionary I couldn’t... (she is searching for the word from a dictionary)... ‘ilhoeyong’... ‘ilhoe’... ‘ilhoe’?... um... of... then... let’s change the searching word as ‘mulgeon’ [product]!... ‘mulgeon’ that we use just one time.... let’s search ‘mulgeon’... well... ‘mulgeon’... of... stuff... uh... uh... media?... media?... no! not this one...

In this excerpt, Bo-ra failed to find the proper L1-L2 equivalent of an intended word in a dictionary on her first trial. She started to change the L1 searching word from “ilhoeyong (disposable product)” to “mulgeon (product)”. However, in this process it turned out that searching the appropriate target word among the several choices in the dictionary was not easy and time consuming. This type of dictionary based problem has also been reported by Y. V. Chon (2008). she notes that while referring to a dictionary, EFL writers would undergo problems of lexical choices because they are not sure if the L1-L2 equivalent found in a dictionary will be a proper word conveying their intended message or not.

In the case of the control group, seventeen frequencies (81%) were reported in making negative statements. Among them, more than half of negative statements, that is, ten frequencies, proved to be related to lexical problems. In the other seven frequencies of negative statements, five were related to the problems of content development and two were difficulty of grammatical rules. The higher frequencies of negative statements in lexical problems indicate that EFL writers’ difficulty in L2 writing is mainly based on their L2 lexical limitation, rather than

writing content or grammar.

4) Compensation Strategy

Among the four main language learning strategies used by the participants in this study, the highest group differences appeared in compensation strategy. In total of thirty-two frequencies of compensation strategy use, only three was reported in the experimental group, and twenty-nine in the control group. Whereas the participants in the experimental group were involved in two sub-compensation strategy use, code switching ($n = 2$, 20%) and avoidance ($n = 1$, 8.4%), the participants in the control group used various types of compensation strategies. The results are shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5
Frequency of Compensation Strategy Use

Compensation strategy	Experimental group		Control group		Total	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Code-switching	2	20	8	80	10	100
Avoidance	1	8.4	11	91.6	12	100
Synonym			2	100	2	100
Blank-leaving			1	100	1	100
Superordinate			1	100	1	100
Word coinage			4	100	4	100
Circumlocution			1	100	1	100
Adjusting			1	100	1	100

The noticeable frequency gap between the groups for compensation strategy use is quite predictable since using a dictionary app would enable the participants in the experimental group to get linguistic aid during writing, reducing the need to employ this strategy. In this situation, questions were raised about the reasons of the strategy use reported in this group was up to three times (i.e., two times in code-switching and one time in avoidance). Findings of the study showed that the underlying reasons of compensation strategy use between the groups were quite different. In the following, these differences will be discussed in both code switching and avoidance where the frequency of the strategy use was reported to be high among the eight sub-compensation strategies.

(1) Code switching

Code switching indicates using L1 without any transliteration when students process the target language because they do not know or they cannot recollect the proper target words or expressions (Dörnyei, 1995; Oxford, 1990). This strategy was employed two times (20%) in the experimental group and eight times (80%) in the control group. The results of think-aloud protocol analysis show, however, that not alone the frequency of the strategy use but the context of using it was quite different in the two groups. That is, it appeared that the participants in the experimental group employed this strategy mainly because of their

carelessness rather than their lexical limitation. Protocol (11) illustrates the way that L1 was used in this group.

Protocol (11)

Hae-il (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of descriptive writing

Genga... and... bang... game... this might be the right explanation... and then... um...so... she... and I Joined... another... club... called Habitech (He is writing the word Habitech in Korean)...um... Habitech is... cheer up... no... not this one... is not board game club... just... a... have... various... activity...

Hae-il in protocol (11) wrote in Korean, his L1, when he composed an English essay without any hesitation. That is, considerable length of pause, which might signal writer's concerns on using L1 while performing L2, was not recorded in this think-aloud recording data. The fact that he wrote Korean without any hesitation or contemplation infers that he did not consider it problematic to use Korean in an English essay. He would ensure that the Korean alphabet written in his essay could be easily interpreted by the instructor, who was Korean, and hence his communicative goals could be achieved successfully. This suggests the reason of his code switching was based on his carelessness or lack of awareness of using a transliteration skill.

In the control group, it proved that the main reason of compensation strategy use was based on the lexical difficulties caused from the participants' limited linguistic knowledge. The example of code switching strategy use is illustrated in protocol (12).

Protocol (12)

Woo-bin (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of argumentative writing

Smartphone 'Joongdock' [addiction]... (sigh)... Um... how can I translate it in English?... here... Smartphone 'Joongdock'... (sigh)... (after a long pause and sigh, he finally uses L1, 'Joongdock', instead of using the English word 'addiction')

Woo-bin, the participant in this protocol, tried to recall the appropriate L2 equivalent of the L1 "Joongdock". After contemplating the solution for a while with pauses and sighs, he decided to use the L1 word in his English essay without translation. The long pauses and sighs detected in his think-aloud protocol recording indicates the difficulty he had to retrieve his mental lexicon in order to recollect the proper target word. The fact that these long pauses and sighs were not found in the experimental group while they were employing code switching strategy infers using L1 was not an inevitable choice but the result of inadvertence in this group. That means, again, the context of this strategy use between the groups was quite different.

(2) Avoidance

Another example of compensation strategy use that

shows significant group differences is avoidance. Avoidance refers to the strategy employed to partially or totally avoid communication when severe difficulties occur (Oxford, 1990). This strategy includes avoiding certain topics or expressions as well as completely abandoning communication (Oxford, 1990).

The frequency of this strategy use appeared to be only one time (8.4%) in the experimental group, whereas it appeared eleven times (91.6%) in the control group which was the highest frequencies among the nine-sub compensation strategies. Like the case of code switching, it might not have been needed to use avoidance strategy for the participants in the experimental group when they could get the help of an app dictionary. If they employed this strategy, then, the underlying reason of the strategy use might not be in the lexical difficulties but in other things. To identify the reasons of the strategy use in the dictionary use condition, the transcribed think-aloud protocol data derived from the experimental group was examined. It is presented in protocol (13).

Protocol (13)

Chan-min (in the experimental group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

We indifferent about...re... cently... our... environment... environment... environment... is... ruined by people... so... environment... is getting... getting... worse... worse?... getting worse... worse... um... well... getting bad... O.K., let's take the easier expression...bad... O.K... (Instead of the word, worse, he uses another word, bad) that... is... the... reason... why... we... that is... the reason... we... must... protect... our environment for... for... us... and... our...

Chan-min in protocol (13) decided to avoid using the word “worse” and chose to employ the easier expression “bad”. As no serious hesitation was shown in his protocol, let alone lengthy pauses or sighs, it can be assumed that he was not so stressed in avoiding the word “worse”. Furthermore, he did not show any trials to get the help from a dictionary to resolve the lexical uncertainty caused from the word. All of his behaviors indicate that avoiding the word “worse” was just a simple decision and the main reason of using avoidance strategy might lie not on lexical difficulty but on another factor: the content of his writing. That is, Chan-min’s intent may have been to focus more on the flow of his idea deployment. This is shown in his protocol.

The first idea appearing in Chan-min’s protocol was “indifferent attitude of people toward the environment” which was followed by a “ruined environment”. Then the idea about “the environment that is getting worse” was generated along with short consideration on a lexical choice of the words “worse”. Chan-min did not search in a dictionary to find further information of the word to judge if the word was proper for his writing or not. He just avoided using it, as employing an “easier” expression, “bad”. After deciding to use the word “bad”, he directly moved on to the next idea about “the reason we protect our environment”. The rapid shift of idea development

combined with no significant contemplation on lexical choices supports the assumption that Chan-min used avoidance strategy to allocate his attention more on the content development rather than lexical issue. This finding is in line with Y. V. Chon’s (2008) and Hemmati’s (2001) studies which state that EFL writers with dictionary aid sometimes employ non-dictionary strategy (i.e., using their own knowledge instead of referring to a dictionary) so as to maintain the flow of writing.

This study found that the participants in the control group adopted avoidance strategy in a different way compared to the ones in the experimental group. This is illustrated in protocol (14), the excerpt from the think-aloud protocol in the control group.

Protocol (14)

Woo-bin (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of narrative writing

‘Geudeureun saenggakaetda’ [they thought]... ‘otteohge’ [how]... ‘geudeuli’ [they]... uh... how... uh... in the case of how... uh... um... (sigh)... ‘otteohge byeonhaesseulji’ [how they changed]... ‘geudeuli’ [they are]... how... how... ‘geudeuli’ how can I write this expression? ‘beone’ [this time]... she?... chan... how are they changed... oh my god! ... I will erase all of them! (when he feels difficulty in expressing his ideas in L2, he discontinues writing and changes the topic of his essay into a new one)

In protocol (14), Woo-bin tried to express his L1 ideas in L2. However, after struggling for a moment, he became frustrated and finally gave up writing his originally intended idea saying “I will erase all of them”. In another think-aloud protocol, more severe difficulty that Woo-bin underwent was detected. The excerpt of this think-aloud data is presented in protocol (15).

Protocol (15)

Woo-bin (in the control group): from the think-aloud protocols of expository writing

‘Ulineun’ [we]... how to... ‘ulineun algo isseul geosida’ [we might know]... ‘otteohge hae bwaya halji’ [the way that we have to]... so... ‘ulineun’ [we]... ‘al su issda’ [can know]... ha... um... ‘gonggi’? [air]... water and ‘gonggi’ [air]... uh... ‘muleul pohamhanikka’ [including water]... ‘ulineun’ [we]... ‘sayonghada’ [use]... uh... uh... uh... (finally he gives up on his writing)

Protocol (15) shows that Woo-bin could not recollect the L2 equivalent of the Korean “gonggi (air)” as well as other expressions such as “ulineun (we)” or “al su issda (can know)”. Attempting several times to write his L1 ideas in L2, he finally quit writing altogether. The follow-up interview revealed the reasons of his behaviour. The excerpt of the transcribed interview data is shown in interview (3).

Interview (3)

Woo-bin (in the control group): from the interview

Well... so... so... in the middle of writing, I... when I tried to write down a word... suddenly I could not recollect the

word correctly... I mean... I was absolutely perplexed. So... I quit writing.

As Woo-bin noted in the interview, the lexical difficulty that he had faced during writing made him “absolutely perplexed” and as a result, due to this negative affective condition combined with overloaded cognitive burden, the participant was unable to accomplish the given writing task. It has been reported in previous studies that as a writer’s working memory is limited in processing and storing the given information, the writing performance could be deteriorated or sometimes fail when the demands for writing surpass the capacity of the working memory (Butterfield, Hacker, & Albertson, 1996; Negro & Chanquoy, 2005). This suggests that numbers of L2 students whose lexical capacity is not big enough to support their fluent writing would experience similar negative effects (i.e., quitting writing or hesitating the further trials) when they write without any additional lexical aid. This may be detrimental to the development of their L2 writing ability since these negative effects could prevent them from being involved in active participation in L2 writing.

V. CONCLUDING REMARKS

1. Conclusion

Compared to L1 writers’, L2 writers’ writing performance is quite restricted mainly because of their limited lexical repertoire (Hall, 1990; Krings, 1994; Whalen & Ménard, 1995). The findings of the study reveal that this lexical limitation increases L2 writers’ level of anxiety when they perform writing and this leads to more attention to anxiety about any possible errors that they could make. Therefore, L2 writers tend to focus more on the surface features of the text such as spelling or grammatical accuracy rather than the content features such as generating or developing ideas. Topic or idea avoidance also occurs in a situation when L2 writers perceive the generated topics or ideas to be too complicated to be realized using their own lexical knowledge. When the tendency of avoidance gets serious, that is, when L2 writers’ cognitive burden and psychological anxiety caused from their lexical limitation is significantly heightened, they can discontinue and stop writing and do not carry on with the given writing task anymore. In other words, L2 writers’ lack of lexical knowledge could result in abandoning the whole writing process and leaving the task incomplete.

In the dictionary app use context, however, quite different results are found. L2 writers’ anxiety appears to be reduced and this enables them to give more attention to the idea generation or content development of writing, instead of paying more attention to the accuracy of the text. The topic or idea avoidance also rarely occurs, which infers that in the situation where a dictionary app use is allowed, L2 writers are not reluctant to directly write any generated topics or ideas.

Further, the results show that L2 writers do not easily give up their writing when dictionary aid is given, unlike the case detected in the non-dictionary use condition, even though there is a possibility that their intended ideas would be somewhat demanding to be expressed in L2. This designates that using a dictionary app enhances L2 writers’ level of confidence in their writing ability and therefore enables them to pursue their communicative goals without giving them up.

2. Pedagogical Implications

The findings of the study point out the need of dictionary use in a writing classroom. As students are not highly afraid of attempting to write any given topics when dictionary aid is provided, it would be possible for a teacher to encourage them to write about various issues, from social to academic, focusing more on the idea development rather than being restricted by lexical limitation. By writing about various issues, students could get the opportunities to widen their knowledge about writing in terms of the effective ways of content development, types of discourse, and rhetoric style.

A dictionary can also be used as a tool which enlarges students’ L2 lexical knowledge capacity. When students search for a word from a dictionary and adopt it in the processing text, they consider the relevance of the searched word both semantically and grammatically. As the information that cognitively processed in the production task can be attained in students’ long-term memory more easily (Craik & Lockhart, 1972), acquisition of lexical items looked up from a dictionary could be effectively facilitated. In this perspective, a dictionary can be used as an effective tool for vocabulary education in a writing class.

3. Further Studies

The present study investigated how using a dictionary app during writing influenced individual EFL writers’ writing behaviors and offered some pedagogical ideas of dictionary use in a writing classroom. However, some limitations exist. First, there was an unbalanced gender population with three males and two females in the experimental group and four males and one female in the control group. As this study was carried out targeting the students in the engineering college where males highly outnumbered females, it was impossible for the researcher to recruit additional female participants to balance the gender population between the groups. Therefore, it is believed that this unbalance gender ratio is unavoidable, but may have caused unexpected gender bias. In further studies, the balance of gender population needs to be considered to avoid any unexpected gender effects and to obtain more reliable data.

Also, examination of the words looked up from a dictionary was not conducted in this study. Even though students’ strategy use while using an app dictionary was ex-

plored through the study, to what extent the students made errors when they employed looked-up lexical items into the text and the types of lexical items (i.e., nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, etc.) mainly used were not identified. To get deeper understanding of L2 students' app dictionary use performance, hence, this issue has to be investigated in further studies.

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APPENDIX 1

Scores of Pre-writing Test

Experimental Group	Scores	Control Group	Scores
Bo-ra	17	Won-jun	18
Chan-min	13	Min-kyu	15
Dong-hyun	12	Sang-yoon	13
Hae-il	11	Woo-bin	12
Da-young	9	Ju-hee	10

*The lowest score: 0, the highest score: 20

**Scored based on FCE scoring rubric

APPENDIX 2

Think-aloud Protocol Conventions

- Text in *italics* indicates the participant’s L1 verbalization translated in English.
- Text in underlined type indicates the participant’s L2 (English) verbalization.
- Text in ‘single quotation marks’ indicates the participant’s L1 verbalization.
- Text in [square brackets] indicates English translation of the participant’s L1 verbalization expressed in ‘single quotation marks’.
- Bold text in *italics* indicates the participant’s reading of his/her essay.
- Bold text in **(brackets)** indicates researcher’s comments about the participant’s action.
- Series of dots ... indicates a pause of the participant’s verbalization.

APPENDIX 3

The Topics of Writing Tasks

- Task 1: Narrative writing
(Write your answer in 120-180 words (13-20 lines) in an appropriate style)
Your professor has asked you to write a story for an international magazine. The story must begin with the following words.

Jane opened a book on the table and saw something in it.

Write your story.

- Task 2: Argumentative writing
(Write your answer in 120-180 words (13-20 lines) in an appropriate style)
You have had a class discussion about smart phones. Now your professor has asked you to write a composition, giving your views on the following statement:

There are both advantages and disadvantages to having a smart phone.

Write your essay.

- Task 3: Descriptive writing
(Write your answer in 120-180 words (13-20 lines) in an appropriate style)
You have seen this announcement in an international magazine called *Word Issue*.

A person in your life

Tell us about the important person in your life. Whom do you love and respect the most? Why do you think the person is important in your life? Write an article and send it to us.

We will publish the most interesting article next month.

Write your article.

- Task 4: Expository writing
(Write your answer in 120-180 words (13-20 lines) in an appropriate style)
An international student magazine giving information on global issues is looking for articles on the importance of protecting our environment. You have been asked to write an article for the magazine. Explain the importance of our environment and how to protect it.

Write your article.

*Every task was adapted from FCE writing test (2012).