Second Language Writing and Learning Contexts : A Descriptive Study of Japanese College English Learners in the Study Abroad and At-home Contexts : Theoretical and Methodological Considerations

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INTRODUCTION

There have been active debates over the essence of SLA for recent years. Some researchers contend that its essence is learner's cognitive ability to observe the world and things objectively, and others argue that SLA is under the strong influence of socio-cultural factors. Results from such active debates are influential not only in building robust SLA theories but also in generating productive second language pedagogy. Thus, an increasing number of studies have been implemented recently on the relationship between second language acquisition and learning contexts, if not sufficient in number. Researchers attempting to explore the effect of socio-cultural factors on L 2 acquisition have focused upon 'communicative contexts' (Batstone, 2002) where learners can use the L 2 in participating in social and interpersonal activities. In recent years they have investigated the role of different learning contexts on second language acquisition such as intensive immersion (hereafter IM), study abroad (hereafter SA), and at-home (hereafter AH).

This gradual change in the research trend has been necessitated partly by an increasing number of international college students studying abroad who intend to learn their academic subjects and languages in their target cultures. According to *Open*

Doors 2012, an on-line report on international educational exchange released by the Institute of International Education, the total number of international students enrolled in U.S. higher educational institutions alone amounted to 764,495 in the 2011-2012 period. Take Japanese students studying in the USA alone, the subjects of the proposed study, for example. 19,960 Japanese students stayed in the U.S. for the purpose of studying as undergraduate or graduate students in the same period, although this figure shows a drastic decrease from 40,835 in 20004 and it is much lower in number, compared to that of Chinese counterparts, 194,029, and that of Korean counterparts, 72,295.The recession in the recent Japanese economy seems to be related to the decrease in number. However, it is mandatory that much more Japanese students will experience study abroad and strengthen ties with local people or those from other countries so that they can contribute to the globalized community. Such study abroad experience not only enhances students' communicative ability in the target language but also provides a wider perspective about diverse cultures and people consisting of the world, as previous studies in this field have suggested.

Under these circumstances, research on language learning and learning contexts has concentrated on the relationship between the study abroad context (SA) and the development of different aspects of second language. However, sufficient attention has not been paid to documenting changes in the communicative language proficiency of the learners in the SA context and their actual experiences in the SA context (Freed, 1995, 1998). Especially, the effect of study abroad on the acquisition of reading and writing in the target language is one aspect that leaves much to be explored (Freed, 1995, 1998; Dewey, 2002, 2004). Thus, the present study attempts to shed a new light on the relationship between learning contexts and second language writing by comparing L 2 learners in two different contexts, i.e., the study abroad (SA) context and the at-home (AH) context. The study intends to examine how differences in learning contexts influence the development in second language writing.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In order to create a framework for the present study, this section will review the literature dealing with studies on different aspects of second language acquisition and learning contexts such as SA and AH, those on SLA and contexts, and those on L 2 writing and contexts.

SLA and Learning Contexts

Most studies on the learning of second languages by adults have delved into traditional formal classroom (AH) learning where students spend only a few hours on learning a target language as part of their college curriculum. However, for the last two decades, studies on the effects of the SA context on language learning have emerged, together with a limited number of studies on the immersion (IM) context. In the following section, major studies focusing on language learning in different learning contexts will be reviewed so that the effects of different learning contexts on features of second language acquisition will be examined.

Grammar

Guntermann (1992 a, b) investigated the development of prepositions, *por* and *para*, and of copula, *ser* and *ester*, which were taken from the interviews obtained from members in the Peace Corps living in Latin America. He compared his results with those of traditional classrooms done by other researchers but found no difference between the two groups. In contrast, Ryan & Lafford (1992) reported that there was a difference between students in SA and those in traditional classrooms in the acquisition order of *ser* and *ester*. These three studies focused on the acquisition order of Spanish grammatical items, not on grammatical development.

However, the following studies compared the two groups in measuring grammar-related features or grammatical growth. DeKeyser (1986) investigated the monitoring

of grammatical patterns in a comparative perspective between SA and AH, with no specific difference between the two groups in terms of the grammatical patterns monitored. Regan's (1995) study on the acquisition of French negation in spoken French by those in SA and AH revealed that there was no difference between the two in terms of grammatical usage. However, she found a unique sociolinguistic use of *Ne* by the SA groups, suggesting that it could show learner's growing sensitivity to dialect issues in the second language. Furthermore, such writing studies as Kohro (2001) and Freed, So, and Lazer (2003) examined learners' grammatical development in compositions written by SA and AH over time, with no significant differences between the two groups in terms of grammatical accuracy and syntactic complexity.

The study by Collentine (2004) investigated gains in grammatical and lexical abilities of AH and SA in Spain. The results indicated that the AH context contributed more to developing discrete grammatical features. He analyzed the corpus data obtained from the OPI interview conducted on 20 SA students in Spain and 26 AH students in America. In his analysis of the development of grammatical abilities, he focused upon such items as gender, number, person, mood, and tense accuracy. He states that, in general, the SA experience did not produce overall grammatical ability, and that it is the AH group that improved significantly on the five grammatical variables investigated. He also suggests that the interaction between lexical and grammatical knowledge should be taken into account in considering grammatical issues.

Vocabulary

DeKeyser's (1986) study mentioned above found greater development in vocabulary in the SA group than the AH in spite of no significant development in other features investigated. This finding is compatible with Milton & Meara (1995) who reported that 53 European students studying in UK for six months attained dramatic increase in their vocabulary.

However, Collentine's (2004) recent study suggests that the SA context did not re-

sult in SA students' more lexical growth. In this study, he investigated the effects of learning context on lexical abilities in oral conversational discourse obtained from26 SA students in Spain and 20 AH students in the U.S.A.. Against our expectation, the AH groups produced more adjectives and nouns after the treatment period than the SA, suggesting that they appeared to have acquired more unique lexical items and this might have resulted in more semantically dense discourse. Also, he found that the SA learners were able to tell a story and get their point across better than their counterparts as a result of study abroad.

Oral skills

Studies exploring oral skills gained in the SA context have utilized the Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) in measuring students' oral abilities (Brecht, Davidson, and Ginsberg, 1995;Milleret, 1990;O'Connor, 1988;Veguez, 1984), reporting that those in the SA context achieved gains in their oral skills. However, except for Foltz (1991) and Huebner (1995), no comparison was made between those in the SA and AH.

In Huebner's study, SA's oral proficiency, which was measured with the OPI, is slightly higher than AH, although the difference is not significant because of the small number of subjects. Freed (1995 b), with two separate groups studying French in AH and SA contexts, investigated whether they could enhance their oral fluency during a semester, suggesting that the SA students rated as being less fluent were perceived as being more fluent at the end of the semester. Her results showed that students who studied abroad spoke more and faster than those in the AH. She also detected some qualities in SA's utterances which could result in their claimed fluency.

Segalowitz & Freed (2004) also explored oral performance gains by learners studying Spanish in SA and AH contexts, focusing on gains in oral fluency as measured by temporal and hesitation phenomena and on gains in oral proficiency assessed with a speech corpus extracted for segments of the OPI. The following findings were obtained from the research: 1) those in the SA made significant gains in oral perform-

ance and fluency; 2) the amount of in-class and out-of-class contact may have a weak, totally non-significant and indirect impact on oral gains; and 3) speed and efficiency of L 2-specific cognitive processing may be related to oral performance, and 4) learners' initial oral abilities may determine the amount of L 2 contact activities. This study is significant in that it depicted a complex picture of language learning in different contexts. That is, 'contexts differ in terms of what learning opportunities they present.' (p.196) The authors argue that learner' readiness to utilize opportunities plays a crucial role.

Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey (2004) compared the acquisition of fluency by students in three different contexts such as AH, SA, and the intensive summer immersion (IM) on the assumption that gain score is a function of the learning context and the time spent on using French outside of class. The results showed that the IM students outperformed the other groups in oral performance and fluency including the total number of words spoken, length of the longest turn, rate of speech, and speech fluidity. It was also reported that the IM spent more hours on speaking and writing French than the other two groups.

Although not in a comparative perspective between the SA and AH, Isabelli-Garcia (2004) provides a unique approach to elucidating the relationship between gains in linguistic accuracy and oral communication skills, motivation, and target language interaction. This study probed five SA students' Spanish learning in Argentina during a semester, measuring development of linguistics accuracy, skills in performing the function of narration, description, and opinion, and relating patterns of social contact depicted through analysis of social network logs to these measured aspects. She concludes that learners who utilize opportunities to build social networks and interact with native speakers can make the most progress in study abroad, and that learners' motivation is closely related to extended networks and, accordingly, gains in linguistic accuracy and fluency.

Phonology

The only study which the researcher knows focusing on the relationship between contexts of learning and acquisition of L 2 phonology is Diaz-Campos (2004). He investigated whether or not study abroad facilitates the acquisition of Spanish phonology, involving 26 students in the SA (Spain) and 20 students in the AH (regular classroom environment in America). His results revealed that both groups followed the same pattern in the acquisition of L 2 phonological variants investigated. He also argues that such factors as years of formal language instruction, reported use of Spanish before the semester, and reported use of Spanish outside the classroom predicted phonological gain of students in both groups.

Sociolinguistic skills

Marriot (1995) qualitatively analyzed oral interview data obtained from SA students who experienced studying in Japan in order to elucidate their acquisition of politeness patterns in Japanese. Her results show that the students became competent in handling polite formulaic expressions and making a request in spite of grammatical deviations from the native norm. Siegal's (1995) qualitative study on two women's acquisition of sociolinguistic skills during SA in Japan disclosed their conflicts in viewing themselves, as Japanese women and their language, and the language to be appropriately used for various situations. Regan (1995) also inquired into the acquisition of sociolinguistics rules and a related variation, *Ne* deletion in French, using interview data obtained from six SA students in France. She suggested that the stay in the target community made a significant change in the rate of this sociolinguistic variable. She maintains that the effect of studying abroad is significant in the acquisition of the vernacular grammar and sociolinguistic competence. The first two studies are qualitative in nature, and all three investigated a small number of students only in the AH.

However, Lafford (1995) compared students leaning Spanish in three different contexts such as SA in Mexico, in Spain and AH. She analyzed students' oral data ob-

tained through the role-play situations in the OPI. She found that those in the target culture were able to develop more conversational strategies than those in the AH context, as represented by their more effective strategies of initiating, terminating, and expanding communicative situations. However, as she admits, this study lacked, for a logistic reason, baseline data to be compared with the final outcome.

Lafford's (2004) recent work investigated the effect of learning contexts, SA and AH, on learners' use of communication strategies observed in oral data obtained from 46 learners of Spanish in the two contexts. Her results indicated that those in the SA used fewer communicative strategies, at the end of the semester, than those in the AH because of their more frequent use of Spanish outside classroom. She implies that those in the SA were able to have dialogic interaction with a native speaker in an academic interview involving fewer communication gaps. She further argues that this might be the result of SA's increased narrative and discursive abilities, increased fluency, and less focus on form.

Immersion studies

As Dewey (2002) indicates, the term "immersion" is used in different ways in SLA literature, but the "immersion" dealt with in this particular research field refers to settings where students are learning in their own countries and the goal of instruction is teaching the target language, as in the case of intensive language training programs. It is not the same as "immersion" designated for young students or armed forces in the U.S.A.

Only a few studies have been conducted on the effect of immersion (IM) on language learning in comparison with other contexts. MCKee (1983) compared improvements in French by students in the IM (intensive summer immersion) and by students in a traditional language classroom. The results showed that the former group outperformed the latter in listening, reading, and writing, although differences in improvements were not significant.

Dewey (2002, 2004) compared two groups of American students studying Japanese,15 students in the IM (intensive domestic immersion) and 15 students in the SA in Japan, for the purpose of investigating the role of context in reading development. He reported that a significant difference was found in one measure of reading comprehension gain, a self-assessment, between the two contexts, indicating the SA learners were more confident in reading in L 2 than their counterparts.

In their subsequent study, which has been reviewed above, Freed, Segalowitz, & Dewey (2004) compared the acquisition of fluency by three groups of students in different contexts including AH, SA, and IM. The results revealed that IM students' oral performance was better than the other groups in several points. It is also noted that the IM spent more hours on speaking and writing French than the other two groups.

Unlike the above studies done in a quantitative orientation comparing two contexts, Liskin-Gasparro's (1998) qualitative study on IM's linguistic development in an immersion context provides unique findings. She reported, on the participants' introspections, that participants' perceptions of their performance as well as their linguistic performance, were characterized by their insecurity and uncertainty which they felt while they were learning the target language in their IM context.

Student views of learning abroad

In her ethnographic study involving two participants studying French in during a summer abroad in France, Wilkinson (1997) pointed out the fact that, contrary to our "language myth," learners tended to use English, not French, as the primary tool for communication and they were likely to cluster together because of their difficulties meeting native speakers. Wilkinson's (1998) also portrayed complexity and individuality of the immersion experience which might be overlooked in statistical representations of the studies in this field. For example, she illustrated that SA environments where the two participants spent their lives separately in France were totally different from each other and highly personal and individual, which could differ from the com-

monly shared belief about study abroad that the host country is homogeneous and it mass-produces fluent speakers of the target language.

Pellegrino (1998) also maintains, on the basis of her critical review of previous studies, that introspective research is quite effective in deliberating the qualitative communicative changes in students' L 2 language and the personal growth resulting from their study abroad. Based on the literature review concerning the issue, she concludes that students' perceptions of language learning while abroad could influence their learning inside and outside of the classroom.

Unlike these two qualitative studies, O'Donnell (2004) quantified student perception obtained from diary analysis. Using this data, she explored, in a comparative perspective between SA students in Spain and AH students in the U.S., the relationship between students' self-reported perceptions of their learning experiences in the classroom, in the social realms, and in the home environment, and outcomes on measures of oral fluency, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, communicative ability and cognitive ability. Her results revealed that, for the SA group, fluency, grammatical ability, and vocabulary acquisition were related to the home and social environment, while these measures were concerned with the classroom environment in the case of the AH group.

Learning Strategies

Paige, Cohen, & Shively's (2004) survey study involving 86 students studying in Spanish or French speaking countries uncovered how these students' intercultural sensitivity, culture strategy use, and language strategy use changed over time. Although the study was not conduced in a comparative perspective between the SA and AH, the following findings were obtained: 1) the participants came to use strategies more frequently both in terms of culture and language; 2) study abroad had a positive impact on intercultural development; and 3) the effects of the curriculum intervention, provided in the form of the 'Guide' for study abroad before the study abroad, seemed to be pre-

sent in the different use of language strategies.

Reading

Compared to studies on the other aspects of second language acquisition and language learning contexts, those on reading and writing are quite limited in number (Freed, 1995 a, 1998; Dewey, 2002, 2004). It is only in recent years that due attention has been paid to the acquisition of reading in contexts other than the formal classroom context.

Meara (1994) reported gains in reading and writing during study abroad on the basis of the self-perceived gains, but these were not greater than gains in oral skills. Lapkin, Hart, & Swain's (1995) multidimensional study, which investigated students learning French through a Canadian interprovincial exchange for three months, involved reading tests including a standardized reading test and self-assessment measure. Increases on reading scores were observed during the period, although not to a significant degree.

Huebner (1995) investigated linguistic improvement by students learning beginning-level Japanese in two summer intensive sessions, the SA in Japan and the IM in an intensive program in America, using a proficiency test, the OPI interview, and narrative retelling. According to his results, those in the SA achieved higher scores in reading comprehension, although significant difference was not found in character recognition between the two groups. His qualitative data also revealed that there were some attitudinal differences toward learning to read Japanese between the two groups after the sessions.

In her qualitative research on the reading habits observed in students learning French in France for ten months, Kline (1998) documented how her eight participants experienced reading in their SA context, using ethnographic interviews, participants observation and artifact inventory, surveys and questionnaire. Her approach was different from the previous ones in that she took a qualitative research orientation, defining

literacy as social practice which is context-and culture-specific, multifarious, and ideo-logically bound. Her major findings were that there was some difference between the reading recommended by the learner's academic program and the reading preferred by the environments where the participants were placed, and that their reading habits were different across gender and peer groups. However, no connection was made be-tween reading habits and the development of reading comprehension.

The most recent studies on reading acquisition and contexts by Dewey (2002, 2004) compared two groups of American students learning Japanese in the IM (inten-sive domestic immersion) and in the SA in Japan in order to investigate the role of con-text in reading development. A significant difference was found in one measure of reading comprehension gain, a self-assessment, between the two contexts, but not in other measures such as free-recall and vocabulary knowledge. He also reported that variability regarding gains on reading measures and contact with language and culture outside of classroom was greater for those in the SA than in the IM.

Writing

As far as studies on L 2 writing and learning contexts are concerned, only a lim-ited number of empirical studies have been attempted so far, such as Kohro (2001), Freed, So, & Lazar (2003), and Sasaki (2004).

Kohro (2001) compared the development in EFL/ESL learners' compositions written by two groups of Japanese students for six months, i.e., five students in the SA (American universities) and five in the AH (a college in Japan). The results indicated that there was no major difference between the two groups in a variety of measures in text analysis except for SA's longer T-unit including grammatical errors, although there were wide differences between the two groups in the input they received through reading and the output they produced. Based on this result, he hypothesized that those in the SA started to write longer and complicated sentences during the study abroad even though they were still making grammatical errors, comparing it to a stage of

'leap' on which learners take the courage to write more freely. Also, he indicated that the students in the SA gained greater confidence in the improvement of their writing abilities, although there was not any substantial improvement, suggesting that this discrepancy could be problematic in their future. SA's strong confidence in their reading was also reported by Dewey (2002) who compared reading by students in the SA and by IM, when there was no significant difference in measures between the two groups except for a self-assessment.

Taking similar text analytic procedures, Freed, So, & Lazar (2003) explored the development in writing made during one semester by two groups of 30 American students learning French in the SA (15 students) and in the AH (15 students) as part of research investigating gains in written fluency compared with those in oral fluency. Their text analysis concerning writing included measures for text length, grammatical accuracy, syntactic complexity, and lexical density. On the basis of their results, they concluded that the students in the SA were not perceived to be more fluent in writing, and that SA experience did not necessarily enhance learners' written fluency.

The longitudinal study by Sasaki (2004) revealed the changes in 11 Japanese EFL /ESL learners' writing behaviors over a 3.5-year period, using multiple data sources such as written texts, video-taped writing behaviors, stimulated-recall protocols, and interviews with the participants. Her study involved comparison of six SA (ESL) students who experienced study abroad for 2-8 months and five AH (EFL) students with respect to development in L 2 writing ability. Thus, unlike other studies on learning contexts reviewed above, her study did not particularly focus on the comparison of SA and AH, but she compared those in the AH and six SA students who happened to experience study abroad in her longitudinal study. The study investigated the developments of writing by her participants, analyzing multiple data sources including L 2 composition scores, writing fluency, L 2 proficiency test scores, writing-process strategies and writing styles. Although SA students' length of stay varied from 2 to 8 months, she

suggested that study abroad experiences contribute to improving their writing strategy use and motivation to write better compositions.

These studies on L 2 writing and learning contexts could be supplemented with further studies in order to portray a clearer picture of what is taking place in the process of developing writing ability in the two contexts. These studies compared L 2 writing in different learning contexts, i.e., the SA and the AH, but little attention was paid to contextual variables related to L 2 writing where L 2 learners actually write. For example, these studies can be supplemented with careful investigations of variables in environment that might affect L 2 writing in different learning contexts. Investigating more about learners' behaviors in each learning context for a certain period, along with their learners' development in writing, might add something meaningful. Also, except for Freed, So, & Lazar (2003), the population was small. Future studies with more participants are desired so that the results can be generalized more easily.

As in the literature review of studies on learning contexts and second language acquisition, there have been a growing number of studies in this area for two decades or so, although not sufficient in number. The present researcher is interested especially in studies done in a comparative perspective between the AS and AH, but not all studies reviewed have comparable pairs, an appropriate population size, a research design or an analysis method legitimate in declaring whether learner have improved or not. It is true that features investigated, research designs, and methods employed are not the same for all studies, but it can be safely said that results are mixed. Some studies report students in the SA have improved more than those in the AH, but others indicated the opposite results. Yet, others reported that there was no difference between the two. However, it is only recently that well-designed studies with plausible instruments and sufficient population have appeared, as in the studies present in the special issue on learning context and its effects on SLA in *Studies in Second Language Acquisition, Vol.26,2*. Therefore, it is expected that a clue to understanding different effects of con-

texts on language learning can be detected in some way or other in each aspect of second language acquisition investigated so far. This must be true of L 2 writing which has not been addressed sufficiently in conjunction with different learning contexts.

SLA and Context

Major studies focusing on SLA and context which are concerned with the present study will be reviewed here so that some problems regarding context in the proposed study can be delineated in the later section.

Firth & Wagner (1997) proposed the need for re-conceptualizing SLA research, suggesting that it require an awareness of the contextual and interactional language use and participant-relevant sensitivity in considering fundamental concepts in SLA. This paper caused a lot of discussion and debate in the field.

While many articles appeared taking a similar stance, Long (1997) contended that acquisition process should be explained in psycholinguistic terms regardless of external factors. Although he was consistently insisting on the appropriateness of psycholinguistic approach to SLA, he admitted the fact that 'a broader, context-sensitive, participant-sensitive, generally sociolinguistic orientation might prove beneficial' (p.322).

Furthermore, along with the shifting focus in SLA research, Liddicoat (1997) proposed necessity for qualitative approaches which render it possible to get to micro level social relations and linguistics.

From a socio-educational perspective, Crookes (1997) argues that results obtained from analytic and positivistic research in mainstream SLA are difficult to be applied to teaching contexts because phenomenon investigated is removed and isolated from social settings. He maintains, in contrast, that qualitative research report, for example, in a narrative format, can be more appealing to pedagogical settings. This is because SLA is also a set of social practice and can be regarded as a body of texts or a col-

lection of discourses.

Lantolf and his colleagues (Lantolf, 1994, 2000; Lantolf & Appel, 1994), referred to as Neo-Vygotskian socio-cultural theorists, maintain that learning takes place as a result of mentorship and socio-cultural activity. In their view, the form-meaning associations are situationally and culturally made depending on the context which is assumed to be determined by a set of situations and culture. Also, language is regarded as one of the most important semiotic tools to be used in internalizing external collaborative activities with other people into mental activities. Swain (2000), taking a similar stance, maintains that collaborative dialogue mediates joint problem solving and knowledge building, enhancing the potential for exploration of the products. She also suggests that more emphasis be placed on the function of collaborative dialogue than on that of comprehensive input and output alone in elucidating second language learning.

Atkinson (2002) proposed a socio-cognitive perspective on SLA, which is 'a view of language and language acquisition as simultaneously occurring and interactively constructed both "in the head" and "in the world" (p.525). This approach also takes the social aspects of language and its acquisition seriously, suggesting that learner's interaction with people around them plays a key role in language acquisition. In his view, "it (language) is always mutually, simultaneously, and co-constitutively in the head and in the world" (p.538) and it does not take on an internal, and truly mental function.

To summarize these arguments on environment and SLA, it is necessary, in the recent research trend, to take into serious account the contextual and socio-cultural aspects of language and its acquisition. Also, interactions with other people whom learners encounter in environment are considered to play a critical role in second language acquisition. Thus, it is implied that learning context where learners can be immersed in interactions with people around them in the target language could become useful sources for their successful L 2 acquisition, and that investigating L 2 learning in such

contexts could reveal something meaningful in elucidating the relationship between L 2 acquisition and contexts

L 2 Writing and Context

With respect to theoretical perspectives on second language writing, Cumming (1998) contends that there is a threefold distinction in second language writing research orientation: text analytic, composing process, and social constructionist views of writing. He also notes two other critical elements that should be taken into consideration when writing is viewed from the perspective of second language education; that is, a) a wide variety of biliterate situations such as the differences in individuals' personal histories and proficiency in L 1 and L 2, and b) SL writing's particular significance shaped in education.

As observed in this framework, L 2 writing is an elaborate combination of a number of complicated factors, and a complete description of these factors is beyond the scope of this study. Thus, I will focus on the issues which are of potential interest for the present study. That is, I will briefly address aspects of L 2 writing which can be influenced by the SA and AH experiences and those of the SA and AH experiences which could affect the improvement of writing.

Features of Composition to be Affected

There are many features of composition that can be influenced by the SA and AH experiences. Legitimate scoring schemes[1] that have been extensively used in measuring ESL compositions can provide such features. The composition evaluation criteria designed by Sasaki and Hirose (1999) are useful for this purpose. These criteria were created through careful and legitimate statistical analysis on the basis of a substantial

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1　For example, the ESL composition profile (Jacobs et. al.1981) and the Test of Written English Scoring Guide (Educational Testing Service, 1989) have been widely used as legitimate scoring schemes in previous ESL/EFL writing research.

amount of data gained from Japanese English instructors teaching composition, and thus, these criteria reflect the points that Japanese instructors think are important in evaluating persuasive compositions: 1) clarity of the theme; 2) appeal to the readers; 3) expression; 4) organization; 5) knowledge of language forms; and 6) social awareness. In other words, these are the features of compositions that are like to be affected by the SA and AH experiences.

These features could be further categorized into the following six categories that have been investigated in previous text analytic studies: 1) and 2) for content: 3) for cohesion and coherence; 4) for global text structure; 5) for lexicon and grammar, and 6) for consciousness of contextual resources.

Content

It seems impossible to measure content objectively. The only way to assess clarity of the theme and appeal to the readers may be rater's subjective evaluation.

Cohesion and coherence

Based on Halliday and Hasan (1976) and Halliday (1985), a number of studies involving cohesive device in L 2 writing have been attempted for a contrastive purpose between L 1 and L 2 or to explore the relationship between composition quality and use of cohesive device. (Hottel-Burkhart, 1981; Carrell, 1982; Norment, 1984;Oi,1984; Hinds, 1987; Scarcella, 1984; Indrasta 1988; Ng, 1991; Reid, 1992; Field & Oi, 1992; Johnson, 1992; Shakir & Obeidat, 1992; Lee, 1995). Results were mixed, but as Grabe and Kaplan (1996) note, 'cohesion does not provide a full account of the textual interpretation of a text but it is an important indicator' (p.56)

Topical structure, which can be used as an index showing coherence, is categorized as one of the notions for analyzing an informational structure of text, and there are many other overlapping notions in text analytic studies. However, the number of studies conducted on informational structure in L 2 text is limited, and the topical structure analysis has been utilized often (Connor, 1987 b; Connor & Farmer,1990;

Schneider & Connor, 1991; Cerniglia, Medsker, & Connor, 1990; and Simpson 2000).

Global text structure

As evidence in cognitive psychology suggests, it is also certain that the impact of text structuring is a contributing factor in the coherence of texts (van Diik and Kintsch, 1983; Anderson, 1990; Beck, et al.1991). Textual features appearing in the top-level logical relationships of semantic elements in compositions are referred to as global text structure and used to investigate how largest units of information are structured. This feature has frequently appeared in the contrastive rhetoric literature (Kaplan, 1966; Hinds, 1983, 1987, 1990; Norment 1984; Oi 1984; Kobayashi, 1984; Ostler 1987; Connor 1987 a; Indrasta, 1988; Cook 1988; Kamel 1989; Dunkelblau, 1990; Kubota, 1992, 1998; Kamimura, 1996; Hirose, 2001).

Lexicon and grammar

Features in lexicon and grammar observed in L 2 composition can represent those influenced by the SA and AH experience. For example, lexical density[2] is one of the indexes of lexical sophistication of a composition. (See Engber 1995, for the recent discussion of the relationship between lexical proficiency and the quality of ESL composition.) High lexical density is claimed to represent one of the distinctive features of academic registers. (Hyland, 2004, p.142)

In investigating grammar in composition, T-unit analyses[3] (Hunt, 1965, 1970; Scott and Tucker, 1973; Larsen-Freeman and Storm, 1977; Gaies, 1980) have been employed in a variety of ways. For example, T-unit analyses have been used in measuring grammatical accuracy of the sentences in compositions or in assessing syntactic complexity of the sentences involved in compositions.

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2   Lexical density represents the proportion of lexical words or content words (i.e., words referring to a thing, quality, state, or action and have meaning when used alone) out of the total number of words in a composition.

3   T-unit is defined as the shortest unit that a sentence can be reduced to and consisting of the independent clause together with whatever dependent clauses are attached to it.

Consciousness of Contextual Variables

Recent L 2 writing research has placed a great deal of emphasis on the context where writing takes place, because it has been pointed out that L 2 learner's process of writing is likely to be influenced by the context, which is 'the dynamic environment that surrounds the meeting of the writer and the reader through the text in a particular situation.' (Matsuda,1997, p.249) As Linell (1998) puts it, 'a given piece of discourse is embedded within, or activates, a matrix of different kinds of contexts' (p.128), and that this complex matrix of contexts are assembled from an array of contextual resources such as co-textual (discursive) resources, situational resources, and background assumption resources (p.133). A writer is assumed to negotiate textual features and contextual resources in producing text, and textual features could reflect writer's consciousness of such contextual resources.

Matsuda, et al. (2003) also suggest that recent L 2 writing researchers attempt to situate discourse in the purposes, identities, and contexts within which it is constructed and which it helps construct. In this new perspective, L 2 writers are assumed to be writing for a purpose, co-constructing their texts in an interactive and collaborative way with a particular target audience. Thus, context sensitive discourse analysis can explore the actions for which these forms are used and reveal complex relations between texts and their contexts. Although it is quite difficult to depict features in composition which reflect writer's negotiation of text and contexts when we concentrate only on textual features, it is certain that writer's consciousness of contextual resources could be influenced by the experience in the SA and AH.

To sum up, textual features and points in the evaluation criteria mentioned above can indicate features that are likely to be influenced by the experiences in the SA and AH.

Experiences in Contexts Affecting the Improvement of Writing

Three features of the SA and AH experiences that could enhance the development of writing in the proposed study are: 1) input which L 2 learners receive in reading; 2) output that they produce through writing, and 3) interaction they have with others, especially, collaborative dialogue that L 2 learners have with peers and instructors in learning contexts. As Freed (1995 a) suggests, the roles of comprehensible input, comprehensible output, interaction, and negotiation in different learning contexts are important theoretical questions in the research field. Thus, problems concerning these three features are briefly discussed here.

In relation to acquisition of writing ability, Krashen (1984) argues that writing ability can be enhanced by comprehensible input gained through a sufficient amount of voluntary pleasure reading. His view was followed by Swain (1985). Swain maintains that comprehensible output, that is, 'pushing learners toward the delivery of message that is not only conveyed, but that is conveyed precisely, coherently, and appropriately' (Swain, 1985, p.249) also plays a critical role in second language acquisition. Subsequently, Gass (1998) emphasized the importance of interaction for acquisition which is assumed to be a conditioning effect on input. However, Atkinson (2002) argues that the prevalent notion of input as a stimulus activating, autonomous cognitive learning apparatus is problematic, suggesting that SLA is a socio-cognitive phenomena and language is learned in interaction with more capable social members, and that it is mutually, simultaneously, and co-constructively learned in the head and in the world.

This issue of interaction has also been extensively discussed by New-Vygotskian theorists in recent years, using the concept of 'collaborative dialogue,' a concept derived from Vygotsky's (1978, 1987) socio-cultural theory. Swain (2000), for example, suggests that collaborative dialogue mediates joint problem solving and knowledge building, which could enhance the potential for exploration of the products. She fur-

ther claims that more emphasis be placed on the concept of collaborative dialogue than on comprehensive input and output alone in considering second language learning.

Vygotsky's ideas have also provided a theoretical basis for genre-based writing instruction as well, especially for the approach based on the Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994, Halliday & Hasan, 1989), in such forms as 'collaboration,' peer interaction, and 'scaffolding,' teacher-supported learning. (Hyland, 2004, pp.121-123) That is, genre-based writing is supported by Vygotsky's theoretical concept, the Zone of Proximal Development, that learners can progress from one level to the other through social interaction and the assistance provided from more skilled and experienced others. For example, L 2 writing studies dealing with feedback from peers and instructors (Conrad & Goldstein, 1999; Bloch, 2002; Adam & Artemeva, 2002) including peer revision (Hedgcock & Lefkowitz, 1992; Zhang, 1995; Carson and Nelson, 1996; Villamil & De Guerrero, 1996; Nelson and Carson, 1998) seem to have been founded on similar theoretical premises. Thus, it is quite meaningful to consider L 2 writing in two different learning contexts within these theoretical frameworks, where interactions are regarded as crucial in L 2 acquisition.

More knowledge on the relationships between input/output, collaborative dialogues, and improvements in L 2 writing to be obtained from the two different learning contexts could be quite useful in exploring the issue of reading and writing connections (Grabe, 2001; Belcher & Hirvela, 2001) and in elaborating genre knowledge shared by readers and writers (Jones, 1997, Hyland, 2004). For example, referring to the Extensive Reading Hypothesis, Grabe (2001) argues that "connections between reading and writing may be variable, but they can be interconnected more efficiently through extensive reading in combination with consistent writing practice" (p.249). He also emphasizes the importance of future studies focusing on a stronger linkage of reading-writing relations with research on academic genre knowledge and its uses in academic writing. Such connections between reading and writing in environment

might also affect the development of writing.

As discussed above, the issues of input through reading, output through writing, and interaction through collaborative dialogue should be reconsidered from a viewpoint of experiences by learners in different contexts, because these factors can affect the improvement of L 2 compositions in the SA and AH.

Research Questions

The following research questions are addressed in the present study:

1 . Is there any difference in the development of writing between Japanese students learning English in the SA and AH study contexts?

    1 A. If differences in the development of writing exist between these two contexts, what is the nature of the differences?

    1 B. If differences exist in learner's input, output, and interaction between these two contexts, what is the nature of these differences?

    1 C. What differences in input, output, and interaction between the two learning contexts might contribute to differences in the development of writing between the SA and AH groups?

2 . Is there any relationship between context and the development of writing?

    2 A. If there is a relationship, what specific aspects of the context contribute to the development of writing?

    2 A-1. How is input learners receive through reading related to the development of writing in the two contexts?

    2 A-2. How is output learners produce through writing related to the development of writing in the two contexts?

    2 A-3. How is interaction learners have through collaborative dialogue with others related to the development of writing in the two contexts?

Statement of Purpose and Rationale

One major goal of this study is to build up a descriptive model of Japanese EFL/ESL students' development of L 2 writing ability in different learning contexts which has not been attempted yet. Through this process, it also intends to generate hypotheses regarding some key issues on L 2 writing in different learning contexts, such as the relationships between their writing improvement, input/output, interaction through collaborative dialogues in different contexts. Thus, it is expected to enrich the related research areas, providing unique results which previous studies have not explored.

In order to achieve these primary goals, the present study attempts to explain how differences in contexts such as the SA and AH relate to the improvement in L 2 writing, which has not been addressed in previous studies. This is the major purpose of the present study. For this major purpose, the study intends to determine whether or not differences between the two contexts exist in the development of compositions. Also, it attempts to predict writing improvement on the basis of contextual features, i.e., features such as input learners receive through reading, output they produce in writing, and interaction they have through collaborative dialogues.

The first rationale for conducting this study is the deficiency of studies addressing the issue of L 2 writing in different learning contexts. As discussed in the literature review, few studies have been conducted on L 2 writing in different learning contexts, and there has been a strong call for a study focusing on writing. Even a few studies attempted so far have not been able to address sufficiently the issue of the relationship between socio-cultural factors in environment and writing development. In fact, almost nothing has been clarified with respect to this point. This is another reason why a study with this particular focus is necessary. Thus, the present study is expected to make unique contributions to the research area of SLA and learning contexts through describing characteristics of both contexts in relation to compositions, input, output and interaction, which might generate further studies on these issues. It could also con-

tribute to second language writing through providing supplementary data for considering contexts of writing and reading-writing connections. Furthermore, results to be obtained in relation to collaborative dialogue and L 2 writing could provide useful examples for deliberating Neo-Vygotskian theory of second language acquisition. Finally, pedagogically speaking, this study could contribute to English education, especially L 2 writing practitioners and administrative people concerned with study abroad matters in Japanese universities which are sending a substantial number of students to English speaking countries ever year.

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

In order to explore how differences in learning contexts, particularly in environment, relate to Japanese EFL/ESL learners' improvement in writing during a semester abroad, the present study compares changes occurring in compositions written by the learners during a semester and differences in contexts between the SA and AH, while searching for contextual factors that might influence their improvement in compositions. It will use quantitative measures to assess the changes in their compositions during a semester and both quantitative and qualitative measures to delineate differences between the two groups in terms of compositions, input, output, and interaction with other people. This section will describe the subjects, instruments, and procedures to be used in the proposed study.

Participants

There will be two groups of participants, Japanese college EFL learners, for the present study. The experimental group, the study abroad group, the SA, for this study will involve at least 10 Japanese students at a university whose English proficiency is controlled using a standardized test such as the TOEIC test. Hopefully, the subjects

should spend one academic year at affiliated colleges and universities of their choice outside Japan in their sophomore or junior year. The control group, the AH, should involve the same number of students who have studied English in the same program at the same Japanese university before the SA group leaves to study abroad. The participants in both groups must be fairly comparable in the following points :1) English ability ; 2) background in English training ; 3) English composition training ; 4) L 1 ; 5) educational background other than English; and 6) previous study abroad experience.

Instruments

There are two major instruments to be used in the proposed study: 1) the Language Contact Profile for L 2 Writing Research, which is a detailed questionnaire designed to investigate the nature of learners' language contact in the target language; and 2) a pre-composition and a post-composition written by the two groups in the target language which are to be quantitatively assessed.

The LCP for L 2 writing research

The Language Contact Profile for L 2 Writing Research, which was made on the basis of The LCP by Freed, Segalowitz, Dewey, & Halter (2004), consists of two parts: the pre-test version (See Appendix 1 for the pre-test version in English). The pre-test version will be utilized to elicit background information about participants in both groups at the time they participate in the present study, asking questions regarding learners' experiences and backgrounds in English education, interactions they have had with teachers, friends, and seniors in learning English, together with questions about reading in English, and writing in Japanese and English. The questions concerning writing in L 1 and L 2 include those about relative ease and difficulty which they feel in composing L 1 and L 2 compositions separately and things they have learned in their previous education regarding L 1 and L 2 writing, such as translating a few sen-

tences into the target language or writing paragraphs / essays in accordance with tradi-tional ways of organization such as narrative, classification and comparison. It also asks questions about learner's exposure to the target language including courses they have taken before their study abroad.

Data to be obtained from the pretest version of the LCP will mainly be used as qualitative data in considering distinctive features or performance observed in an indi-vidual learner, but quantifiable data from the LCP will be used in comparing the two groups in term of input which learners receive through reading, output they produce in writing, and interaction they have through collaborative dialogues with peers and in-structors. Also, data obtained from the pre-test version will be utilized as baseline data concerning input/output and collaborative dialogue, which will be compared to those obtained from the post-test version.

In addition, the post-test version[4] of the LCP for writing research will ask ques-tions as to how much and in what way the participants have received input through reading during the semester and how much and in what way they have produced writ-ten output, together with how much and in what way they have had collaborative dia-logues with their peers and instructors, in relation to reading and writing, during the se-mester.

The questions also involve the names of courses taken, the kinds of papers and as-signments written, the number of papers written for each course, together with the number of pages for each paper. It also asks the number of pages, papers and books which they read for each course. That is, these data will be used in comparing the pre-and post conditions for each group and also between the two groups, in terms of input, output, and interaction.

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4   The post-test version is omitted because of the limitation of the pages to be spared.

Pre-composition and post-composition

In order to answer R-Q 1, that is, whether or not participants in the two groups make some improvement in their compositions during the semester, they will be asked to write a pre-composition when the semester starts, and a post-composition after the semester ends, with familiar and similar topics provided in both occasions. The participants will write the two versions of compositions at their colleges in the U.S. The participants will be asked to write a persuasive essay given the following prompt:[5]

Please write a persuasive composition conforming to the following situation. There are no right or wrong answers to this question. This is not a test. You have been asked to write your opinion to be contributed to a column called in "Opinion" in your campus newspaper.

There is a growing concern about children's free access to the Internet. Do you think that their free access to the Internet should be limited by parents? Please take a position 'for' or 'against' the limitation. Try to persuade your audience of your point of view. Please write the persuasive composition[6] in 250 to 300 words.

Procedures

This study will cover one year study abroad program for the SA and the AH. Ma-

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5   As Kroll and Reid (1994) suggest, writing prompts, the stimulus for the students to respond to in testing situations, must be prepared with caution so that the participants can demonstrate their levels of writing skills accurately while taking into account such critical variables as contextual variables, content variables, linguistic variables, task variables, rhetorical variables, and evaluation variables.

6   The persuasive mode to be used in the proposed study is claimed to be appropriate in observing writers' strategic ability in writing, because discourse tends to be designed for strategic purposes since writers know in advance that they have to persuade others to new beliefs or courses of action. (Johnstone, 2002, p.210)

jor data collection sessions will be held twice; at the beginning and end of the study year, that is, before the SA leaves to study abroad and after they have returned. The first data collection session involves the pre-composition and the LCP (pre-test version). In the second session, students will be asked to write the post-composition and fill out the LCP (post-test version) when the SA has come back to Japan. At the two sessions to be held both in Japan, interview sessions will also be held in order to ask participants about their compositions, backgrounds, and reading, and writing, collaborative inter-actions with people around them both in and outside Japan.

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis procedures to be employed for the present study will be described here, explaining procedures for each research question. First, the analysis procedure for the pre-and post-composition will be elaborated because it will play an important role in measuring students' improvement in writing and it is related to other analyses.

Quantitative Data Analysis

Analysis of Pre-and Post Compositions

The two compositions must be evaluated by two experienced English-speaking evaluators. The raters should be selected out of faculty members at participants' university in Japan in consideration of the authenticity of audience readers. In case there is a wide discrepancy in their evaluation, the present researcher will serve the third rator.

For the purpose of evaluating pre-and post-compositions written by the participants in both groups, the following analytic scale by Sasaki & Hirose (1999), which was discussed in the earlier section, will be adopted :1) clarity of the theme (10 points) ; 2) appeal to the readers (10 points) ; 3) expression (10 points); 4) organization (10 points) ; 5) knowledge of language forms (10 points); and 6) social awareness (10 points). (See Appendix 4 for its complete English version) Scores to be obtained from the pre-and post-compositions written by the two groups will used for ANCOVA

analysis to see if there is any significant difference between the mean scores of the SA and AH in both compositions, which is the first research question. One important thing to be taken into account in this procedure is to measure inter-rater reliability of the raters' evaluation scores. When there is a wide discrepancy in evaluation scores between the two raters, the researcher will be the third rater so that the discrepancy will be minimal.

Analysis of the LCP

The second research question and its sub-questions ask whether it is possible to predict writing development on the basis of contextual factors, such as input, output, and interaction. Data concerning such contextual features will be elicited, using quantifiable questions in the LCP. Regression analysis, which is used to determine predictive ability, will be conducted, with input, output, and interaction as independent predictor variables, and composition scores as dependent variables.

Correlation analysis

In addition, correlation analysis will be implemented between quantifiable data concerning compositions and contextual features in order to detect meaningful relations between variables.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Most qualitative data to be obtained are used to support and explain quantitative findings and to portray group tendencies and individual variation which are not present in the quantitative measures.

The LCP for Writing Research

This questionnaire involves questions for eliciting both quantifiable and unquantifiable data. For example, participants are frequently asked to provide descriptive accounts of phenomena occurring in their learning contexts and of their backgrounds. Such data are useful in supplementing quantitative data.

Interviews

At the beginning and at the end of the school year, interview sessions will be held so that supplementary information about their backgrounds, compositions, contextual factors will be collected. Such information will also be utilized to supplement quantitative results.

CONCLUSION

The present study seeks to investigate how learning contexts such as SA and AH relate to the development of compositions written by Japanese college ESL/EFL students. This study intends to see if there is any difference in the development of writing between the two contexts. Then, it attempts to explore the question of whether it is possible to predict writing improvement on the basis of contextual factors such as input through reading, output through writing, and interaction with other people. With its unique socio-cultural focus on learner's learning contexts and L 2 composition, this study is expected to contribute to the field of SLA and learning contexts and to second language writing.

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Appendix

Appendix 1

The LCP for SL Writing (English Pre-test version)

The Language Contact Profile for SL Writing Research (Pre—test Version)

Thank you for your cooperation for my research. The information to be obtained through the questionnaire will help me better understand the backgrounds of students who are studying English in different contexts.

Your responses in this questionnaire will be kept confidential. Your name on this cover sheet is used only to associate your responses with your name when needed. An identification number or a pseudonym will be used in place of your name when referring to your responses in publications and presentations. Every effort will be made to keep your responses confidential.

Your candid and detailed responses will be very much appreciated.

Name _____

For the multiple—choice items, please circle the numbers that correspond to your situations. Also,

when asked, please provide necessary information by describing your situations in detail for the blank spaces given.

Part 1 ： Background Information

1. Gender: Male / Female

2. Age: _____

3. Grade in college: _____

4. Major: _____

5. Country of birth: _____

6. Mother tongue: 1)Japanese   2)Others (   )

7. What language(s) do your parents speak?

8 a. Does anyone in your home usually speak (read or write) English?

   Yes / No

8 b. Who is that?

9 a. Did you usually use English in social contexts in Japan (except for classes in university) before or after you entered your university?

9 b. If 'Yes,' With whom? How often?

10. How long have you studied English in elementary school, junior high school, senior high school, and university in Japan?

   Elementary school (   ), Junior high school (   )

   Senior high school (   )

   University (   )

11 a. Had you ever been to English-speaking countries for the purpose of studying English before you entered your university?

   Yes / No

11 b. For those who have chosen 'Yes,' when did you go? _____

11 c. For those who have chosen 'Yes,' where did you go? _____

11 d. How long did you stay there?

   1) Less than 1 month   2) One semester or less   3) Two semesters   4) More than 2 semesters

12 a. Except for your stay mentioned above, had you lived in English-speaking countries ?

   Yes / No

12 b. For those who have chosen 'Yes,' please describe your experience in detail based on the following example. (e.g. I had lived in New York when I was a child because of my father's business.)

13. Please evaluate your English ability, using the following standard. (1. very poor, 2. poor, 3. fair, 4. good 5.very good) Please circle the appropriate one.

   Speaking (1. 2. 3. 4. 5.)

Listening (1. 2. 3. 4. 5.)
Reading (1. 2. 3. 4. 5.)
Writing (1. 2. 3. 4. 5.)

Part 2: Items related to English studies before the present study

Reading English

14 a. How many hours did you read English in class in a week at your university? Please choose the appropriate one.

(1.Less than three hours   2.Four to eight hours.   3.Nine to 12 hours.   4.13~16 hours.   5.More than 16 hours.)

14 b. How many hours did you read English outside class to prepare for and review class contents in a week at your university?

(1.Less than three hours   2.Four to eight hours.   3.Nine to 12 hours.   4.13~16 hours.   5.More than 16 hours.)

15 a. Except for in-class reading and reading for preparation and review, did you read English while you were studying at your university?

Yes / No

15 b. For those who have chosen 'Yes,' what and how many hours did you read in a week? Please choose the appropriate ones. Your rough estimations are fine.

(More than two choices are possible.)

1. English novels including children's stories.

(1. Less than 30 minutes,   2. Less than one hour.   3. One to two hours.   4. Three to four hours.

5. More than four hours.)

2. English newspaper.

(1. Less than 30 minutes,   2. Less than one hour.   3. One to two hours.   4. Three to four hours.

5. More than four hours.)

3. English magazines.

(1. Less than 30 minutes,   2. Less than one hour.   3. One to two hours.   4. Three to four hours.

5. More than four hours.)

4. English e-mail messages.

(1. Less than 30 minutes,   2. Less than one hour.   3. One to two hours.   4. Three to four hours.

5. More than four hours.)

5. English contents on the Internet.

(1. Less than 30 minutes,   2. Less than one hour.   3. One to two hours.   4. Three to four hours.

5. More than four hours.)

6. Others. (   )

(1. Less than 30 minutes, 2. Less than one hour. 3. One to two hours. 4. Three to four hours. 5. More than four hours.)

16 a. At your university, did you ask your teachers in class about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did you discuss these points with your teachers in class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never. 2. Once or twice in a semester. 3. Once or twice in a month. 4. Once or twice in a week. 5. Almost every day.)

16 b. At your university, did you ask your teachers outside class (e.g. in their offices) about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did you discuss these points with your teachers outside class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never. 2. Once or twice in a semester. 3. Once or twice in a month. 4. Once or twice in a week. 5. Almost every day.)

16 c. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask the teachers outside class or discuss with them based on the following example.

(e.g. Each time I came across difficult grammatical points in the textbook used in class, I asked my teacher in his office.)

16 d. At your university, did you ask your teachers through e-mail about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did you discuss these points with your teachers through e-mail? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never. 2. Once or twice in a semester. 3. Once or twice in a month. 4. Once or twice in a week. 5. Almost every day.)

16 e. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask the teachers or discuss with them through e-mail based on the following example.

(e.g. When I had great difficulty understanding the class contents, I asked my teacher through e-mail.)

17 a. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors in class about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did you discuss these points with your friends and seniors in class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never. 2. Once or twice in a semester. 3. Once or twice in a month. 4. Once or twice in a week. 5. Almost every day.)

17 b. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask your friends and seniors or discuss with them in class based on the following example.

(e.g. When we were asked to discuss something in groups, I discussed with my friends in class.)

17 c. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors outside class (e.g. after school) about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did

you discuss these points with your friends and seniors outside class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

17 d. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask your friends and seniors or discuss with them outside class based on the following example.

(e.g. When I have difficulty understanding classroom assignments, groups, I discussed with my friends.)

17 e. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors through e-mail about how to read in English, contents of your reading materials, or how to improve your reading ability? Did you discuss these points with your friends and seniors through e-mail? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

17 f. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask your friends and seniors or discuss with them through e-mail based on the following example.

(e.g. When I had interesting contents in classroom reading assignments, I discussed with my friends through e-mail.)

Writing in Japanese

18. Please indicate the difficulty you feel in writing compositions and term papers in Japanese for your classes. Please circle the appropriate one.

(1. Very difficult   2. Difficult   3. Fair   4. Easy   5. Very easy)

19. Please indicate the difficulty you feel in writing for personal purposes (e.g. writing a letter, keeping a diary, and writing e-mail messages) in Japanese. Please circle the appropriate one.

(1. Very difficult   2. Difficult   3. Fair   4. Easy   5. Very easy)

20. Which of the following items have you learned in your 'Japanese' and 'Japanese composition' classes which you have had in high school and university so far?

Please circle all the choices covered in your classes.

1) How to summarize a passage read.

2) How to develop a passage longer than a single paragraph.

3) To detect a sentence including the topic of the passage.

4) To write freely on the topic provided.

5) To consider, before writing, who will be audience readers.

6) To consider the structure (the overall organization) of the composition before writing.

7) To consider, before writing, how I can communicate effectively what I want to express.

8) To write while paying attention to the overall organization in the process of writing.

9) To write so that audience readers can understand my composition easily.

10) To revise composition after reading it a few times.

11) How to write an essay (for an entrance exam).

12) None of the above items.

Writing in English

21.Please indicate the difficulty you feel in writing compositions and term papers in English for your class. Please circle the appropriate one.

(1. Very difficult   2. Difficult   3. Fair   4. Easy   5. Very easy)

22.Please indicate the difficulty you feel in writing for personal purposes (e.g. writing a letter, keeping a diary, and writing e-mail messages) in English. Please circle the appropriate one.

(1. Very difficult   2. Difficult   3. Fair   4. Easy   5. Very easy)

23.Which of the following choices have you learned in your 'English' and 'English composition' classes which you have had in high school and university so far?

Please circle all the choices covered in your classes.

1) To translate Japanese sentences into English.

2) Structural exercise converting one sentence pattern into another.

3) How to develop a passage longer than a paragraph.

4) To summarize an English passage in English.

5) To write freely on the topic provided.

6) To detect a sentence including the topic of the passage.

7) To consider, before writing, who will be audience readers.

8) To consider the structure (the overall organization) of the composition before writing.

9) To consider, before writing, how I can communicate effectively what I want to express.

10) To revise composition after reading it a few times.

11) To express somehow what I want to say using words and phrases I know.

12) To write an English passage longer than a single paragraph.

13) None of the above items.

24 a. At your university did you ask your teachers in class about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English? Did you discuss these points with your teachers in class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

24 b. At your university did you ask your teachers outside class (e.g. in their offices) about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English? Did you discuss these points with your

teachers outside class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

24 c. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask your teachers or discuss with them outside class based on the following example.

(e.g. Each time I was provided with a difficult topic for composition, I asked my teacher how to organize the composition in his/her office.)

24 d. At your university did you ask your teachers through e-mail about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English? Did you discuss these points with your teachers through e-mail? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

24 e. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics did you ask your teachers or discuss with them through e-mail based on the following example.

(e.g. Each time I was provided with a difficult topic for composition, I asked my teacher how to organize the composition in his / her office.)

25 a. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors in class about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English? Did you discuss these points with your friends and seniors in class? Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

25 b. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors outside class (e.g. after school) about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English? Did you discuss these points with them outside class?   Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

25 c. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics you asked your friends and seniors and discussed with them outside class, based on the following example.

(e.g. Each time I was provided with a difficult topic for composition, I asked my friends how to organize the composition after school.)

25 d. At your university, did you ask your friends and seniors through e-mail about how to write English compositions, how to develop an English passage, expressions to be used in composition, and how to improve your ability in composing in English?

Did you discuss these points with them through e-mail?

Please circle the frequency closest to your situation.

(1. Never.   2. Once or twice in a semester.   3. Once or twice in a month.   4. Once or twice in a week.   5. Almost every day.)

25 e. For those who have chosen 2, 3, 4, and 5, please describe on what topics you asked your friends and seniors and discussed with them through e-mail, based on the following example.

(e.g. Each time I was provided with a difficult topic for composition, I asked my friends how to organize the composition through e-mail.)