Exploring L2 writing Strategies from a Socio-cognitive Perspective in KFL Setting

Eun-Jo Lee
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Introduction

- Re-conceptualizing L2 writing strategies from a socio-cognitive perspective (Lei, 2008; Li, 2007; Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996)

- The socio-cognitive perspective on learning (Engestrom, 1999; van Lier, 2000; Vygotsky, 1978)
  - Social interaction as a source of learning
  - Mediation
  - Agency
Introduction

- L2 writing strategies

“Mediated actions which L2 learners consciously take to facilitate their learning to write and its use” (Lei, 2008)
Motivation for the study

- Limitations of cognitive approaches to L2 writing strategy research
  - Learning as acquisition vs. participation
  - Separation of cognition & context vs. mediated activity

- Lack of socio-cognitively-framed writing studies in foreign language contexts (languages other than English)
  (Englert et al, 2006; Manchon & de Hann, 2008)
Purpose of the study

- To identify and explore mediated L2 writing strategies of the KFL learners

Theoretical framework
- Engestrom’s *Activity Theory Model* (1999)
- Concepts of *Mediation* and *Agency*
- Lei’s study on EFL writers (2008)
Engestrom’s Activity Theory Model (1999)
Research Questions

1) What types of mediated writing strategies can be identified from the group of the KFL participants?

2) Are there any conflicts or tensions between the identified strategies?

3) How are the KFL participants’ goals for L2 learning and cultural backgrounds (e.g., heritage vs. non-heritage) interrelated to their mediated actions in writing?
Methodology

- A qualitative, multiple-case study
  - A rich description of the interrelationships among strategy use, learner, and context
  - More compelling and robust evidence compared to a single case study (Yin, 2003)

- Five KFL participants taking a third-year Korean course (advanced level) at a university in the Midwest of the U.S.
  - Purposeful sampling: ‘information rich cases’ (Patton, 1990)
  - Four writing assignments
Four Writing Assignments


(3) Writing #3: 현대 사람들의 일상 생활에 컴퓨터와 테크놀로지 사용이 점점 늘어나고 있습니다. 예를 들면, 사람들은 온라인 쇼핑을 하고 이메일이나 홈페이지 (예: Facebook, Cyworld, etc.)로 소식을 주고 받습니다. 핸드폰을 가지고 있으면 언제 어디서나 친구와 연락을 할 수 있습니다. 여러분은 이러한 컴퓨터나 테크놀로지 사용이 사람들에게 유익하다고 생각합니까? 아니면, 해롭다고 생각합니까? 여러분의 의견을 말하고 그 이유를 써 보세요.

(4) Final Project (Writing #4): 세계적으로 혹은 미국에 여러가지 사회적인 이슈가 있습니다. 예를 들면, 성형수술, 외모지상주의 (외모가 제일 중요하다고 생각하는 생각), 자살, 사형, 낙태, 환경 오염, 교통문제, 경기침체, 부익부 빈익빈 (잘 살수록 더 잘 살고 가난할수록 더 가난해지는 현상), 남녀차별, 인종차별, 등 사회문제가 많이 있습니다. 관심있는 이슈를 하나 선택하고 그 이슈에 대해서 리서치 해 보세요. 그 이슈에 대해 설명한 후에 그 문제를 해결하기 위해서 사람들이 무엇을 해야 하는지 자신의 의견을 써 보세요. 또는 한 이슈에 대해서 리서치를 하다 보면 그 이슈에 대해 여러가지 입장 또는 의견 (positions/opinions)이 있는 것을 알 수 있습니다. 자신은 어떤 의견/ 입장에 동의하는지, 왜 그렇게 생각하는지 그 이유를 써 보세요.
Methodology

- **Data sources:**
  - Interviews, process logs, stimulated recall protocols, literacy autobiographies, writing samples, e-mail exchanges, observations, & field notes (collected for 10 weeks)

- **Data analysis:**
  - Miles & Huberman’s (1994) procedure

- **Establishing validity & trustworthiness**
  - Triangulation, member checking, clarification of research bias (reflective journal)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Major/Minor</th>
<th>Ethnic backgrounds</th>
<th>Years of studying Korean</th>
<th>Purpose for studying Korean</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>International Studies &amp; *Korean</td>
<td>White American</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>To work for the Korean government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>International Studies &amp; *Korean</td>
<td>White American</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>To be more marketable by adding Korean proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Min-soo</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Business &amp; Psychology</td>
<td>Korean-American (Heritage)</td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>To maintain and develop heritage language proficiency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tao</td>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Actuarial Science &amp; *Korean (Minor)</td>
<td>Chinese-American</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>To appreciate Korean dramas and movies better</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mee</td>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Animal Science &amp; *Korean</td>
<td>Chinese-American</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>To work at a higher educational institution in Korea</td>
</tr>
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Findings and Discussion

1) The KFL participants used four types (thirteen sub-categories) of mediated strategies for L2 writing.

① Artifact mediated strategies: The Internet-, L1-, & L2-mediated

② Rule mediated strategies: Self-constructed rules-, good writing criteria-, plagiarism rule-, & time-mediated

③ Community mediated strategies: native speaker-, prior experience (foreign language learning, study abroad, & L1 writing education experiences)-, classroom community-, & imagined community-mediated

④ Role mediated strategies: writer role- & language learner role-mediated
Findings and Discussion

- Artifact mediated strategies
  - *The Internet mediated*:
    - Use of search engines & online dictionaries (e.g., example sentences/linguistic model)
  - *L1 mediated*:
    - Used for various purposes, but recognized as an indication of low L2 proficiency
  - *L2 mediated*:
    - L2 use as a mediator (Swain, 2000)
    - Positive relationship between L2 proficiency and L2 writing quality (Lei, 2008; Sasaki, 2000)
Findings and Discussion

- Rule mediated strategies
  - *Self-constructed rules mediated*
    - E.g., Use of L1 should be minimized to maximize the amount of L2 learning, etc.
    - Sense of agency helped regulate learning processes and motivation
  - *Good writing criteria mediated*
    - Conflict between the standards and beginning L2 writer identity
  - *Plagiarism rule mediated*
    - Very conscious of plagiarism, difficulty in paraphrasing
    - Patchwriting (Howard, 1995), L2 learning as a borrowing process (Pennycook, 1996)
  - *Time-mediated*
Tao: I always have to be careful with, even and especially with Yahoo, now they would.. their sentence so I just borrow some.. I don’t think I remember.. one time I was writing and then I found a website with a lot of good sentences, but I was afraid..

Researcher: You were able to understand? You were able to understand every sentence?

Tao: Yeah. And then.. but I didn’t use them. Because then Oh.. she [instructor] will find out.

Researcher: Yeah.. (Tao, SR3, p. 6)
Findings and Discussion

- Community mediated strategies
  - *Native speaker mediated*
    - ‘Collaborative dialogue’ as a mediator (Swain, 2000)
    - Scaffolding
  - *Prior experience mediated*
    - a. Foreign language learning mediated
    - b. Study abroad mediated
    - c. L1 writing education mediated
  - *Classroom community mediated*
    - Sensitivity to audience, instructor’s feedback, etc.
  - *Imagined community mediated*
    - Created imagined communities and interacted with them to enhance performance and achieve goals
Findings and Discussion

- Role mediated strategies
  - **Writer role mediated**
    - Consideration of classmates’ L2 proficiency level, interest and sensitivity while writing
  - **Language learner role mediated**
    - Used writing assignments to review and apply what they learned, and to enhance overall L2 proficiency, including speaking
2) The strategies interacted with each other to achieve the participants’ goals, but there were conflicts or contradictions between the strategies. For example:

- L1 mediated & language learner role mediated
- Plagiarism rule & language learner role mediated
- Good writing criteria & writer role mediated

→ Tensions/contradictions become a “motive force for a change and development” (Engestrom, 1999, p. 9)
Findings and Discussion

3) The participants’ different goals and cultural/historical backgrounds caused individual differences in terms of mediated actions.

- Imagined communities
- Heritage vs. non-heritage
  - Heritage learners’ special needs: A need for more specialized courses such as Advanced formal writing, Business Korean, etc.
- Haneda (2005)
1) L2 writing is a mediated activity, rather than occurring inside the mind through strictly internal cognitive processes. The interactions with various mediators themselves are an important component of L2 writing processes.

2) To the KFL learners, the mediators of imagined community and plagiarism seem to strongly impact on writing engagement.
3) L2 learners actively mediate their writing with a variety of resources to facilitate their writing processes and fulfill their goals. They even create mediators, called *externalization* (Engestrom, 1999), by exercising agency to satisfy their needs.

4) Engestrom’s *Activity Theory Model* (1999) is useful to explain dynamics of interactions, including conflicts between mediating forces, and creating processes of mediators.
Conclusion

5) L2 learners engage in the same L2 writing task with differing goals, histories, and L2 proficiency, which results in individual differences in terms of mediated actions.