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Linguistic Differences in EFL Learners' Direct and Translated Writing in Two Genres

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ABSTRACT

The Journal of Studies in Language **37.1, 049-061**. The current study investigated the effects of two writing genres (narrative and argumentative) and two writing task types (direct and translated) on L2 learners' writing performance in terms of lexical and syntactic complexity. A total of 46 college freshmen were asked to write four articles, one in each genre and one in each writing task type in a counterbalanced way. The findings are as follows: 1) the genre effect was found significant both in lexical and syntactic complexity measures, irrespective of writing task type, that argumentative texts displayed greater lexical and syntactic complexity than narratives; and 2) the role of L1 use in L2 writing (writing task type) was significantly evident in syntactic complexity measures, especially in narratives, but not in lexical complexity measures except for one measure of lexical diversity. The theoretical and pedagogical significance of the findings is discussed. **(Chungnam National University)**

Keywords: syntactic complexity, lexical complexity, genre, direct writing, translated writing

1. Introduction

There have been constant efforts to disclose the factors that affect L2/EFL learners' writing performance positively or negatively and that are ultimately conducive to help the learners become effective writers (Hinkel, 2011). One of the crucial factors researchers have paid close attention to since the 1980s is the effect of genre in L2 writing because an L2 writer's product could differ substantially in its quality and/or quantity depending upon genre (Manchón, Roca de Larios, and Murphy, 2000; Staples and Reppen, 2016; Wang, 2003).

In particular, genre has been believed to have strong association with L2 writers' different use of linguistic features because of the distinct pattern of deploying discourse in each genre (Beers and Nagy, 2011; Ravid, 2005) as well as to exert positive influence on enhancing writing skills (Badger and White, 2000; Hyland, 2003, Yoon and Lee, 2016). Unfortunately, however, researchers have not fully taken into consideration the role genre plays in L2 writing, EFL writing in particular (Yoon and Polio, 2017).

Another crucial factor closely related to L2 writing is the issue of L1 use since it has been widely acknowledged that L2 writers use their L1 during L2 writing process though the degree and purpose clearly varies (Uzawa, 1996; Van Weijen, Van den Bergh, Rijlaarsdam, and Sanders, 2009; Woodall, 2002). The studies concerning the role and effectiveness of L1 use in L2 writing have yielded conflicting findings in that some claim a negative role of L1 use based on negative transfer (Chelala, 1981; Zamel, 1982; Hwang and Lee, 2012), while many others argue an effective role as a problem-solving strategy, lessening cognitive load while L2 learners write in L2 (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Knutson, 2006; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Scott, 1995; Uzawa, 1996; Woodall, 2002).

Among the issues using L1 in L2 writing, a few studies investigated the language switching issue to examine ways to encourage L2 writers' judicious use of L1 in L2 writing process. In the studies L2 writers were asked to deal with different writing task types such as direct writing (writing directly in L2) and translated writing (first writing in L1, and then translating it in L2) (e.g., Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Lee and Yoon, 2017). The results failed to show a significant consensus in that some studies asserted the effective role of language switching in L2 writing (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Qi, 1998; Uzawa, 1996; Wang and Wen, 2002), whereas some others reported that L2 learners confessed difficulties in translating L1 writing into L2 because they thought the translating process increased their cognitive burden (Chelala, 1981; Hwang and Lee, 2012; Lee and Yoon, 2017). The general finding seems to be in favor of the beneficial influence of L1 use on L2 writing, but not in all contexts and not for all writers (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001).

To make the matter complicated, the L1 use in L2 writing process has been proved to be intertwined with the genre effect. Manchón et al. (2000) and Wang and Wen (2002), which examined L1 use in L2 writing in two genres of narration and argumentation, reported an interesting outcome that L2 learners used their L1 more when writing narratives than when writing argumentative essays. The outcome runs counter to general expectation that L2 learners use L1 more in argumentative writing than in narrative writing since narratives are considered to be least cognitively demanding, whereas argumentative texts are most demanding (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

Accordingly, the current study aims at investigating the effects of two different genres (narration and argumentation) and two writing task types (direct and translated writing) on L2 learners' writing performance using two major linguistic measures (lexical and syntactic complexity) in order to shed light on the issue regarding L2 writing still remained inconclusive thus far. The study addresses the following two research questions:

1) What is the effect of genre on linguistic complexity of EFL students' writing?
2) What is the effect of writing task type on linguistic complexity of EFL students' writing?

2. Literature Review

2.1 L2 Writing and Genre

According to Bruner (1986), genres of a text are categorized mainly into narratives and non-narratives (other discourse types) depending upon its communicative functions, sociocultural norms, and roles (Ravid and Tolchinsky, 2002). Narratives describes events or situations focusing on what people did or what happed to them in a specific time

slot, whereas non-narratives (e.g., argumentative, expository, compare-contrast, cause-effect, etc.) includes making an argument about an issue in question or discussion of ideas or beliefs in a logical mode (Berman and Slobin, 1994). Such crucial genre differences in idea development in writing are highly likely to affect distinct use of language features depending upon genre (Beers and Nagy, 2011; Ravid, 2005; Yoon and Polio, 2017).

Since genre may help L2 writers integrate a variety of discourse and contextual features based on distinct language structures while producing outcomes, it could possibly make a significant change in quality and quantity of L2 writing results (Wang, 2003). Accordingly, it is highly likely that genre fosters the development of L2 learners' writing ability and their goal-oriented writing performance (Yoon and Lee, 2016), and that it may exert a significant impact on L2 learners' writing performance and their production of authentic writing outcomes (Hudelson, 1989; Huot, 1990; Weigle, 2002).

A couple of studies with L2 learners writing narrative and non-narrative essays (e.g., expository and argumentative) found higher complexity in expository or argumentative writing than narrative writing (Lu, 2011; Way, Joiner, and Seaman, 2000; Yoon and Polio, 2017). That is, they used increased length-of-unit complexity and longer, less frequent words in argumentative essays. This strongly indicates that they use more complex language when writing non-narratives, argumentative essays in particular, than when writing narratives, and ultimately that genre plays a crucial role in L2 writers' language use.

When it comes to the role of genre in the issue of L1 use in L2 writing, however, the matter is complicated. Manchón et al. (2000) with three EFL writers, and Wang and Wen (2002) with Chinese students investigated the effect of L1 use on L2 writing process in two genres of narration and argumentation. They reported interesting results that the learners used their L1 more frequently in narratives than in argumentative essays. The outcome is clearly different from general expectation that L2 learners use L1 more when writing narratives than when writing argumentative texts because the narrative writing task has often been considered the least cognitively demanding work, while the argumentative writing task is the most demanding business (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996). Considering the widely acknowledged belief that L2 learners use L1 more frequently in L2 writing probably because they engage a strategic approach to take care of more cognitively difficult genre, further empirical research is called for to fully explain the conflicting findings related to the effects of genre and L1 use in L2 writing.

2.2 L1 use in L2 Writing

It is widely believed that L2 writers use their L1 in L2 writing in varying degrees (Uzawa, 1996; Woodall, 2002) and for a wide variety of purposes, such as developing ideas (Knutson, 2006; Qi, 1998; Uzawa and Cumming, 1989; Wang, 2003; Whalen and Ménard, 1995; Woodall, 2002), taking care of language problems (Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez, 2004; Cumming, 1989; Wang, 2003; Woodall, 2002), or lessening cognitive load (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Knutson, 2006; Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002). Furthermore, L2 writers usually employ L1 in their L2 writing as a compensatory strategy to deal with difficulties in producing appropriate language in L2 writing process, mostly in the manner of translating from L1 to L2 (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Manchón et al., 2000; Qi, 1998; Uzawa and Cumming, 1989; Van Weijen et al., 2009).

According to the results of the studies that investigated mental process of L2 writers when they use L1 in L2 writing, they used their L1 intentionally or unconsciously in L2 writing performance, which indicates the vital role of L1 use in L2

writing process as an essential mental behavior in cognitive process (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Manchón et al., 2000; Qi, 1998; Uzawa, 1996; Wang and Wen, 2002). In this vein the necessity and effectiveness of language switching, first coined by Qi (1998), in L2 writing has been raised in order to have L2 writers use L1 judiciously when writing essays in L2.

However, not surprisingly, the studies in the effects of L1 use in L2 writing have produced rather conflicting results. It has been traditionally believed that the use of L1 in L2 writing consolidates negative transfer, interfering L2 writing process (Zamel, 1982). Such belief was corroborated by Hwang and Lee's (2012) study that investigated the effects of direct writing in L2 and translated writing from L1 to L2. According to their results, L2 writers may have difficulties in translating L1 to L2 because translation might play a negative role, functioning as a barrier or cognitive load during the writing process (Lee and Yoon, 2017).

Notwithstanding, some studies argue the significant positive role of L1 use in L2 writing that L1 use could possibly help L2 writers engaged in effective writing process, lowering their affective and cognitive burden (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002). Uzawa (1996) added that the translation task might help L2 writers use more varied vocabulary and structure patterns than direct writing in L2, which will ultimately lead to better quality texts. That is, it can be safely said that language switching in L2 writing process, mainly performed by translation from L1 to L2, can have a beneficial effect on text quality (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Uzawa, 1996; Uzawa and Cumming, 1989).

3. Research Design

3.1 Writing Samples

For this study, writing samples were collected, as a part of writing tasks in a writing course, from 46 college freshmen in a university (42 males and 4 females). Their English proficiency was evaluated based on their TOEIC scores; the average score was 768 ranging from 430 to 980, which indicates an intermediate-high level of proficiency. They were asked to write four essays for two weeks, one argumentative text both in the direct task type and the translated task type each, and one narrative text again in the direct task type and in the translated task type each.

The participants were given a topic, "A Special Day I Have Had," for the narrative text and the following prompt for the argumentative text, "Nowadays smart phones are indispensable in our life. Some people think they bring us much convenience, while others argue they make more trouble. Which view do you agree on? Choose one view and support your argument in English." For each topic (genre), they were asked to write an essay directly in English and write another in Korean first and then translate it in English. They were informed to write in random order to prevent any possible order effects. They were given 30 minutes for each writing without permission of using resources such as dictionaries.

3.2 Linguistic Measures

To measure lexical complexity of writings sampled from 46 L2 learners, the Lexical Complexity Analyzer was used (Ai and Lu, 2010; Lu, 2010), which automatically analyzes lexical complexity of writing in terms of lexical density,

lexical sophistication, and lexical variation. Lexical density is computed as all lexical words in a text divided by total number of words; lexical sophistication is defined as the number of sophisticated words (anything beyond the British National Corpus 2,000 most frequently used words) over overall language use, which includes lexical sophistication 1, lexical sophistication 2, verb sophistication 1, verb sophistication 2, and corrected verb sophistication; and lexical variation is measured using number of different words, type-token ratio (TTR), mean segmental TTR, corrected TTR, root TTR, biologarithmic TTR, uber index, lexical word variation, verb variation 1, squared verb variation, corrected verb variation, and verb variation 2 (Eckstein and Ferris, 2017). The measures mentioned above were included in this study because lexical complexity is considered as a multidimensional feature of a leaner's language use and because L2 learners' writing performance quality needs to be measured from many different perspectives using valid and reliable indices (Lu, 2012).

For syntactic complexity, the Syntactic Complexity Analyzer was used (Ai and Lu, 2013; Lu, 2010, 2011; Lu and Ai, 2015), which automatically analyzes syntactic complexity of writing texts in terms of length of unit (mean length of sentence, mean length of T-unit, and mean length of clause), subordination (clauses per sentence, clauses per T-unit, complex T units per T-unit, dependent clauses per clause, and dependent clauses per T-unit), coordination (coordinate phrases per clause, coordinate phrases per T-unit, and T-units per sentence), and particular structures (complex nominals per clause, complex nominals per T-unit, and verb phrases per T-unit) (Eckstein and Ferris, 2017). The current study incorporated the full set of 14 measures for syntactic complexity because the relationships between different syntactic complexity measures and L2 writing proficiency vary substantially and because syntactic complexity needs to be measured as a multidimensional construct (Lu and Ai, 2015).

3.3 Data Analyses

The test results were submitted for statistical analysis, using the SPSS statistical package, version 24. First, descriptive statistics were calculated, and then t-tests were carried out to investigate any significant differences in the writing samples in terms of two different genres (argumentation and narratives) and two different writing task types (direct writing and translated writing). The significance level was set at $p < .05$. The results that were statistically significant were shown in tables.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Differences in the Two Genres

First, t-tests were performed to ascertain if there are differences in lexical complexity (lexical density, lexical sophistication, and lexical variation) depending upon genre—argumentative and narrative—in the two task types of writing—direct and translated writing—as in Tables 1 and 2. The lexical complexity measures revealed that the texts from direct writing and those from translated writing were similar in the three measures of lexical density, lexical sophistication, and lexical variation. That is, irrespective of writing task type, lexical complexity showed a significant genre effect with very large effect sizes in lexical density and moderate effect sizes in lexical variation.

The argumentative essays had greater lexical density (i.e., more lexical word use) and lexical diversity (i.e., more varied word use) than the narratives. In particular, the significant results from several measures of lexical variation indicate that L2 writers use a larger lexical repertoire in argumentative writing than in narrative writing no matter which task type of writing they are engaged in. This finding is contrary to Yoon and Polio (2017) that reported greater lexical sophistication in argumentative essays, but greater lexical diversity in narratives.

Table 1. Differences in Lexical Complexity According to Genre in Direct Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Lexical density						
Lexical density (LD)	A	.57	.05	8.165	.000	1.72
	N	.50	.04			
Lexical sophistication						
Lexical sophistication 1 (LS1)	A	.23	.04	2.306	.024	0.49
	N	.20	.07			
Lexical variation						
Type-token ratio (TTR)	A	.54	.08	2.473	.015	0.52
	N	.51	.06			
Mean segmental TTR (MSTTR)	A	.76	.05	3.438	.001	0.71
	N	.73	.04			
Biologarithmic TTR (BTTR)	A	.88	.02	2.964	.004	0.63
	N	.87	.02			
Uber index (UI)	A	19.50	4.36	2.643	.010	0.56
	N	17.60	2.19			
Lexical word variation (LWV)	A	.65	.89	-2.262	.026	-0.48
	N	.68	.07			

Note: A - Argumentative, N - Narrative

Lower lexical variety in narrative texts found in the current study might plausibly result from the topic they chose for the writing task because the topic mostly described their experiences of the first training in the institute (university) they enrolled. Almost half the narratives both in direct and translated writing (22 essays out of 46 each) were written about the experiences the learners went through as part of their curriculum in the institute. Another possible reason may come from the learners' heavy dependence on some formulaic expressions commonly related to the topic. For example, they used the expressions quite often, such as "I was proud," "after the ceremony," "in my life," "with my family," etc. Still another possibility can be their repeated use of the expression shown in the prompt. For example, they wrote "special day" at least two times in an essay.

Table 2. Differences in Lexical Complexity According to Genre in Translated Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Lexical density						
Lexical density (LD)	A	.55	.05	6.549	.000	1.37
	N	.49	.04			
Lexical variation						
Type-token ratio (TTR)	A	.56	.06	3.302	.001	0.70
	N	.51	.07			
Mean segmental TTR (MSTTR)	A	.77	.04	4.133	.000	0.87
	N	.73	.05			
Corrected TTR (CTTR)	A	5.06	.59	2.220	.029	0.47
	N	4.79	.59			
Root TTR (RTTR)	A	7.16	.83	2.217	.029	0.47
	N	6.77	.83			
Biologarithmic TTR (BTTR)	A	.89	.02	3.182	.002	0.67
	N	.87	.02			
Uber index (UI)	A	19.53	2.68	3.672	.000	0.77
	N	17.64	2.23			
Verb variation 1 (VV1)	A	.70	.10	-2.432	.017	-0.51
	N	.76	.13			

Note: A - Argumentative, N - Narrative

As in lexical complexity, the two task types of writing failed to show any significant differences in syntactic complexity (length of unit, subordination, coordination, and particular structures), suggesting that the participants used similar complex syntactic structures in direct and translated writing (Eckstein and Ferris, 2017). Tables 3 and 4 show that, irrespective of writing task type, there was a significant effect of genre on syntactic complexity with more complexity in argumentation than in narratives (Lu, 2011; Yoon and Polio, 2017).

Table 3. Differences in Syntactic Complexity According to Genre in Direct Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Length of unit						
Mean length of T-unit (MLT)	A	12.17	2.28	3.055	.003	0.64
	N	10.67	2.44			
Mean length of clause (MLC)	A	8.12	1.39	2.724	.008	0.57
	N	7.38	1.23			
Particular structures						
Complex nominal per clause (CNC)	A	.95	.28	5.768	.000	1.34
	N	.63	.20			
Complex nominal per T-unit (CNT)	A	1.43	.48	6.336	.000	1.22
	N	.92	.36			
Verb phrase per T-unit (VPT)	A	1.95	.29	3.477	.001	0.73
	N	1.72	.37			

Note: A - Argumentative, N - Narrative

Table 4. Differences in Syntactic Complexity According to Genre in Translated Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Length of unit						
Mean length of T-unit (MLT)	A	12.43	2.42	2.045	.044	0.43
	N	11.49	1.98			
Particular structures						
Complex nominal per clause (CNC)	A	.89	.28	3.837	.000	0.81
	N	.70	.19			
Complex nominal per T-unit (CNT)	A	1.44	.48	3.629	.000	0.77
	N	1.12	.36			
Verb phrase per T-unit (VPT)	A	2.03	.45	1.994	.049	0.42
	N	1.86	.35			

Note: A - Argumentative, N - Narrative

The results show a significant genre effect on the length of production units (MLT and MLC in direct writing and MLT in translated writing) with moderate effect sizes. The L2 writers in this study produced longer unit lengths when writing argumentative essays. Moreover, another significant genre effect was found on the phrase-level complexity measures (CNC, CNT, and VPT), suggesting that L2 learners use more complex language in argumentation than in narratives at the phrase level. However, not any significant effect of genre was found on the measures of subordination and coordination which represent clause-level complexity (Yoon and Polio, 2017). Considering that argumentation include the most common characteristics of academic writing, the frequent use of complex phrases and the less use of clause complexity－one of the distinctive features of academic essays－could be normally included in argumentative texts (Biber, Gray, and Poonpon, 2011; Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris, 2010).

4.2 Differences in the Two Writing Task Types

First, t-tests were performed to confirm if there are differences in lexical complexity (lexical density, lexical sophistication, and lexical variation) depending upon writing task type－direct and translated writing－in the two writing genres－argumentation and narratives. The lexical complexity measures failed to exhibit any significant differences between the two writing task types in both genres with exception of one measure of lexical variation (verb variation 1) in narrative writing as in Tables 5.

Table 5. Differences in Lexical Complexity According to Writing Task Type in Narrative Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Lexical variation						
Verb variation 1 (VV1)	DW	.71	.11	-2.136	.035	-0.45
	TW	.76	.13			

Note: DW － direct writing, TW － translated writing

The L2 learners used more varied verbs expressing their personal experiences in translated writing than in direct writing when producing narrative texts. Considering that a variety of verbs or verb phrases are required to express

effectively what they did when writing narratives, it would be easier for them to come up with varied verbs in their L1 and then translate them in L2, which might render reducing cognitive burden while writing in L2 (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Scott, 1995).

Speaking broadly, however, it stands to reason that the outcome failed to show effectiveness of L1 use in L2 writing in terms of lexical complexity, irrespective of genre. This appears to support the traditional belief of the role of L1 use in L2 writing that L1 use might be detrimental to L2 writing rather than beneficial (Hwang and Lee, 2012; Lee and Yoon, 2017; Zamel, 1982), revealing a stark contrast with a substantial number of studies that advocate the crucial role of L1 use as a beneficial strategy L2 learners may engage in L2 writing in order to enhance cognitive process during writing (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Manchón et al., 2000; Qi, 1998; Uzawa, 1996; Wang and Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002). Given that comparatively few research related to this topic has performed, it would be impetuous to draw a conclusion without further evidence in order to validate the issue in question.

Unlike the outcome related to lexical complexity, the results of syntactic complexity measures indicate a significant effect of writing task type, in favor of translated writing, on the measures of subordination in both genres and particular structures in narratives as in Tables 6 and 7 (Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992). Among the clause-level complexity measures, subordination structures are undoubtedly believed to take more time and effort for L2 writers to produce than coordination ones. They would adopt L1 use effectively as a problem-solving strategy, which could enable them to avoid cognitive overload during L2 writing process, regardless of writing genre (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Kobayashi and Rinnert, 1992; Scott, 1995).

Interestingly, a substantial difference was found only in narratives between the two task types of writing at the phrase-level complexity measures (CNT and VPT). That is, L2 writers used more complex language in translated writing than in direct writing at the phrase level in narratives, which partially support Wang and Wen (2002) and Manchón et al. (2000) that L2 learners used L1 as a compensatory strategy more in narrative writing than in argumentative one in order to release cognitive burden (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Qi, 1998; Woodall, 2002). However, this results are different from Uzawa's (1996) results that the translation task showed a substantial positive effect both on vocabulary and syntax. More evidence is required to understand the role of L1 use in L2 writing using the two linguistic measures. Given that narrative writing has been considered the least cognitively demanding, whereas argumentative writing is seen as the most demanding (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996), the issue of different L1 use in L2 writing at the phrase level in the two genres still remains inconclusive.

Table 6. Differences in Syntactic Complexity According to Writing Task Type in Argumentative Writing

Measures	Genre	M	SD	t	p	Cohen's d
Subordination						
Clause per sentence (CS)	DW	1.84	.36	2.704	.008	0.57
	TW	1.66	.29			
Clause per T-unit (CT)	DW	1.64	.31	2.326	.022	0.49
	TW	1.51	.23			
Dependent clause per T-unit (DCT)	DW	.61	.27	2.096	.039	0.44
	TW	.50	.22			

Note: DW − direct writing, TW − translated writing

Table 7. Differences in Syntactic Complexity According to Writing Task Type in Narrative Writing

Measures	Genre	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*p*	Cohen's *d*
Subordination						
Clause per sentence (CS)	DW	1.83	.31	3.423	.001	0.72
	TW	1.62	.30			
Clause per T-unit (CT)	DW	1.59	.24	2.822	.006	0.59
	TW	1.45	.25			
Dependent clause per clause (DCC)	DW	.34	.09	2.520	.014	0.53
	TW	.29	.10			
Particular structures						
Complex nominal per T-unit (CNT)	DW	1.12	.36	2.666	.009	0.56
	TW	.92	.36			
Verb phrase per T-unit (VPT)	DW	1.86	.35	2.000	.048	0.42
	TW	1.72	.37			

Note: DW − direct writing, TW − translated writing

5. Conclusion

The present study investigated the effects of two genres (argumentation and narratives) and two writing task types (direct and translated writing) on L2 learners' writing performance using two major linguistic measures (lexical and syntactic complexity). The research outcome is summarized as below.

As for the first research question, the effects of genre on L2 writing, lexical complexity showed a significant genre effect in terms of lexical density and lexical variation, regardless of writing task type. The argumentative texts had greater lexical density and lexical diversity than the narratives. Lower lexical variety in narratives found in the current study might come from the topic the participants chose, the use of some formulaic expressions, and their frequent use of the expression in the prompt.

As in lexical complexity, syntactic complexity showed a significant genre difference, irrespective of writing task type, with more complexity in argumentative texts than in narratives (Lu, 2011; Yoon and Polio, 2017). In particular, a significant genre effect was found on the phrase-level complexity measures that they used more complex language in argumentative writing to add the complexity of their argument than in narratives at the phrase level, whereas not any significant genre effect was found at the clause-level complexity (Yoon and Polio, 2017). It is probably because the frequent use of complex phrases and the less use of clause complexity is one of the distinctive features of academic essays in which argumentative essays are included (Biber, Gray, and Poonpon, 2011; Byrnes, Maxim, and Norris, 2010).

In sum, the texts from direct and translated writing did not differ both on lexical and syntactic complexity, while a clear difference between argumentative and narrative writing was found that the former displayed greater lexical and syntactic complexity than the latter. Considering genre might play a crucial role for the advancement of L2 learners' writing proficiency and their goal-oriented writing performance (Yoon and Lee, 2016), genre-oriented instruction that integrate discourse and contextual aspects with syntactic and lexical properties is required to be engaged in L2 writing class to make significant change in L2 learners' writing in quality and quantity (Wang, 2003).

When it comes to the second research question, the effects of writing task type on L2 writing, the lexical complexity measures failed to exhibit any significant differences between the two writing task types in both genres except for one measure of lexical variation. The participants used more varied verbs expressing their personal experiences in translated writing than in direct writing in narratives (Eckstein and Ferris, 2017) probably because it would be easier for them to come up with various verbs in their L1, which might reduce cognitive burden while writing in L2. Generally, however, the current study failed to show effectiveness of L1 use in L2 writing in terms of lexical complexity, regardless of genre. Considering a substantial number of studies that advocate the crucial role of L1 use in L2 writing, further evidence is needed to draw a valid conclusion of the issue in question.

Unlike the outcome of lexical complexity, syntactic complexity measures revealed a significant effect of writing task type, in favor of translated writing on the measures of subordination in both genres and particular structures in narratives. Given that subordination structures take time and effort for L2 writers to produce than coordination ones, the participants may adopt L1 use as a problem-solving strategy to avoid cognitive overload when writing in L2, irrespective of genre.

Another finding is that a significant difference was found only in narratives between the two writing task types at the phrase-level complexity measures. They used more complex language in translated writing than in direct writing at the phrase level in narratives probably because they used L1 as a compensatory strategy (Cohen and Brooks-Carson, 2001; Manchón et al., 2000; Qi, 1998; Wang and Wen, 2002; Woodall, 2002). Still, it is not certain why L2 writers include these structures more in translated writing than in direct writing while writing in narratives that are considered much less cognitively demanding comparing to argumentative texts (Grabe and Kaplan, 1996).

In sum, the role of L1 use in L2 writing was obvious in syntactic complexity, especially in narratives, but not in lexical complexity with the exception of one measure of lexical diversity. The current study indicates that L1 use in L2 writing as a problem-solving strategy exerts more influence on L2 learners' taking care of syntactic difficulties than of lexical choices. Accordingly, L2 writing teachers need to take it into account how L1 use in the conceptualization of syntactic complexity can be incorporated strategically into learners' writing and how they provide opportunities for learners to be exposed to a variety of lexical features in L2, in order ultimately to enhance their L2 writing proficiency (Scott, 1995).

It is true that the current study has some limitations, such as L2 writer population, writing samples, measurement tools, and factors not considered in the study. Nevertheless, it will suffice for the current study to bring attention to the issue of the effects of genre and L1 use in L2 writing on L2 learners' writing performance, the issue which surely needs more empirical evidence to achieve the reasonable consensus.

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