

Task Response and Text Construction across L1 and L2 Writing: Japanese Overseas High School Returnees

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1. Introduction

Ways that writers approach writing tasks and construct texts can be affected by a variety of factors such as social, cultural, and contextual factors, including previous writing experience and instruction. In responses to a picture elicitation task, for example, Watanabe (2004) found that Japanese children writing in their first language tended to organize information in a real time sequence of events, whereas North American children frequently reorganized the given information in a cause/effect relationship in their English writing. While this finding suggests that students with different social and cultural backgrounds tend to respond to given writing tasks differently, Watanabe maintains that this difference in discourse types, one for narrative and the other for expository, reflects the kinds of first language (L1) literacy training that these children have received in their home countries.

As observed in Watanabe (2004), writers' task response and text construction can be closely related to past writing experience, which students usually obtain through instruction and training. The influence of such factors, particularly L1 writing experience, on L2 writing has been observed in a number of studies (Cumming, 1989; Hirose, 2003; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004, 2008; Kubota, 1998; Sasaki & Hirose, 1996). Among them, Cumming (1989), for example, investigated the L2 (English)

writing by French-speaking college students and found that writing expertise was a strong factor affecting the quality of their written texts and their use of composing strategies. In particular, those with professional L1 writing experience produced L2 essays with effective discourse organization and highly developed content, using problem-solving strategies and attending to complex aspects of writing. Similarly, Kobayashi and Rinnert (2004, 2008) found that L1 high school writing training/experience affected Japanese novice writers' choice of discourse types and text construction (see Previous Study in section 1.2 below). In particular, those who had received intensive L1 training tended to use a clear 3-part (introduction - body - conclusion) structure and include frequent use of discourse markers such as *first*, *secondly*, and *on the other hand*, in their L2 essays.

In contrast, there have been a few studies that have examined the reverse effect of L2 writing experience on L1 (Berman, 1994; Shi, 2003). Berman (1994), for example, found that high school students (N = 126) who were taught rhetorical features of persuasive writing in either their L1 (Icelandic) or L2 (English) applied that knowledge across languages. The transfer of the knowledge was found to occur more frequently from their L2 to their L1 than the reverse,¹ because they did not have any language limitation when writing in their first language. On the other hand, L2 language

proficiency was found to be a factor affecting the students' transfer of the knowledge from L1 to L2 writing. Similarly, after giving writing instruction to Japanese students ($N = 23$) in a study abroad program in Canada, Shi and Beckett (2002) found that many of these students had adopted ways of organizing their L2 essays, for example, stating an opinion at the beginning of an essay. They also found that over half of the students reported that they would like to apply the English rhetorical features to their L1 writing after they returned to Japan. However, it remained an open question whether their actual Japanese writing would follow the ways they learned to organize in English once they returned to their L1 academic context.

The present study aimed to examine the effects of writing instruction/experience Japanese students received in overseas high schools on their L1 and L2 writing. More specifically, the study took a close look at how Japanese first year university students with such experience would approach given writing tasks and construct texts in Japanese (L1) and English (L2). One main reason for undertaking this research is the recent trend of an increasing number of high school students going overseas to study in institutions where English is the medium of instruction (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Sciences and Technology, 2006). This phenomenon led us to the consideration of possible effects of overseas L2 writing experience on the development of L2 writing as well as L1 writing in this study.

Since the study builds on an earlier study (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004, 2008; Rinnert & Kobayashi, 2007), the main findings of the previous studies are shown below.

1.1 Previous Study

Preceding this study, the current author

and her research partner investigated the transfer of knowledge from L1 to L2 in the previous study (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004). Specifically, we looked at the effects of intensive training for university entrance exams, which had been identified in Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002), on the writing of novice university writers. This specialized intensive writing training, according to the students interviewed, was given on a short-term basis ranging from 1 to 4 months through individualized instruction prior to the entrance exams. We compared four groups of first-year Japanese EFL students ($N = 27$), all at an intermediate English proficiency level: (1) those with both L1 and L2 intensive training; (2) those with only L1 training; (3) those with only L2 training; and (4) those with no intensive training in either L1 or L2. Text analysis of their Japanese and English essays, supplemented by interview data, showed that the intensive instruction affected text construction in both L1 and L2. Moreover, transfer was found from L1 to L2, and to some extent from L2 to L1. The major findings of the study are summarized below.

- (1) Major differences in the frequencies of discourse types across languages were found. Overall, argumentation (taking a position, placed at the beginning of the essay, and supporting it) was the most frequent discourse type in the English essays, whereas there were more expository (analyzing or comparing items, not taking a position) and mixed (for example, combined exposition and argumentation) essays in Japanese. In terms of transfer, students with only L1 training tended to transfer an exposition discourse type from their L1 to L2 writing.
- (2) Students who had no intensive L1 training tended to rely heavily on this earlier L1 writing experience, using personal reflection

and evidence in their L1 and L2 essays.

- (3) Both L1 and L2 essays, particularly argumentation, were found to share the same structural frame, consisting of a statement of an opinion at the beginning of writing, supporting reasons in the body and a restatement of the opinion at the end. As for internal structure, that of the English essays was rather simple, while the structure of the Japanese essays by the students with L1 training tended to be more complex, with a substantial number containing an original extended perspective or analysis component. Perhaps due to language limitation or to students' perceptions of English writing as being more direct, this feature was rarely observed in the L2 essays of any of the students.
- (4) There was a positive interaction between L1 and L2 specialized training. Students who had a combination of both tended to produce coherently structured L2 essays with extensive use of discourse markers and rich elaboration of content.

2. This Study

In order to investigate the effects of L2 writing instruction/practice Japanese students experienced overseas on their L1 and L2 writing, the study actually conducted two kinds of analysis: text analysis and essay evaluation. The report here will focus on the first part of the analysis.

To examine how overseas L2 writing experience affects returnee students' L1 and L2 writing, two groups of Japanese first year university students, one with overseas high school study experience and the other without such experience, were compared. For this comparison, the group of students who had received writing instruction/practice in both L1

and L2 specialized writing summarized above was chosen to constitute the group without overseas experience. Although the two groups differed in terms of amount of L1 and L2 writing experience, they were assumed to represent kinds of L2 writing instruction/training they had received in an EFL (English as a foreign language) and an international context where English is used as a medium of instruction, respectively. The following two research questions were addressed:

- (1) Are there any differences between L1 and L2 essays by the two groups in terms of task response?
- (2) Are there any differences in the L1 and L2 writing by the two groups in terms of text features including overall and internal essay structure, paragraphing, counterargument, and extended/original perspectives?

Although the two groups were compared to answer the research questions, the present study directed more attention to returnee students to elucidate how they differ in their writing from students in an EFL situation. Furthermore, since the sample size was rather small, the study should be considered exploratory.

2.1 Method

2.1.1 Participants

The participants were all Japanese first-year university students except one student who was a sophomore ($N = 19$). They formed two groups: Group 1, without overseas high school study experience ($N = 9$), and Group 2, with such overseas experience ($N = 10$). In this study, Group 2 students are called "returnees," and those of Group 1 are "EFL students."

Group 1 consisted of students who had all received L1 and L2 intensive short-essay writing training geared toward university entrance exams in Japan, as explained above, in

addition to 9 years' *kokugo* (Japanese language) instructions from elementary to senior high school. Emphasis placed on such specialized writing training was varied in terms of content and practice according to the school they attended and instructors they had (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004). They reportedly had experience writing at least 8 to 10 or more L1 essays, but they had mostly paragraph-level writing practice for L2 during the training period.

Group 2 was constituted of students who had stayed overseas and studied in high school there for at least 2 to 3 years (27 months on average). Profiles for Group 2 students are varied in many aspects, including country of stay, type of school they attended, L1 instruction received overseas, and years of L1 education in Japan.

Of the 10 students, four chose to study abroad in English-speaking countries on their own without their families, Australia (N = 2), New Zealand (N = 1), and Ireland (N = 1), and completed their high school education there in about three years. They did not attend any Japanese schools while staying overseas. The remaining 6 students went abroad together with their family members because their fathers were transferred to overseas jobs; three stayed in the United States, attending a local high school while three were in non-English speaking countries, attending international schools in Germany (N = 2) or Thailand (N = 1). These six students received L1 education once a week in a local Japanese school called "Saturday Japanese school", and two of the those who stayed in the non-English speaking countries went to either a local Japanese junior high school or an elementary school before attending an international school. The average length of Japanese education received by all returnees in Japan was 8.4 years, ranging from 5 to 10.5 years. However, in order to prepare for college

entrance exams, particularly for the L1 essay writing exam, seven returnees received Japanese writing instruction in *juku* (cram school) they attended in Japan for a short period of time just before the exam took place. The remaining three reportedly studied how to write L1 essays on their own while studying overseas, following short-essay writing guidance books they obtained from Japan.

2.2.2 Data Collection

The sources of data for this study included background questionnaires asking about individual students' past L1 and L2 writing instruction/experience in Japan and overseas, two pieces of writing (one in Japanese and one in English), and in-depth follow-up interviews.

For comparability, the same two open-ended opinion eliciting prompts ("Place to live" for Topic 1 and "Travel" for Topic 2) used in the previous study described above (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004) were employed. Both prompts were formulated in the same way. The prompt for Topic 1 was the following:

Students at universities often have a chance to choose where to live. They may choose to live in an apartment alone near their school, or they may choose to live with their family and commute to their university. What do you think of this topic? Write an essay in English, explaining your opinion about it. Your written essay will be included in a compilation of class essays and your classmates will read it.

To control for any topic effect, the topics were alternated, with half of the students in each group writing on Topic 1 in Japanese and Topic 2 in English, and the other half doing the opposite. Both returnees and EFL students wrote in Japanese first. No time limit was given, and they were allowed to use electronic dictionaries for their L2 writing. This is because we wanted to create a non-testing situation for students so that they would be able to demonstrate their highest level of composing

competence, not feeling constrained by time limits or any feelings of insecurity about their vocabulary limitations. For Group 1 and Group 2, the mean average of writing time was 32.46 and 46.61 minutes, respectively, for English essays, and 32.32 and 43.56 minutes for Japanese essays. Thus, overall, the returnees spent more time writing both L1 and L2 essays than the EFL students.

The writing sessions were individually videotaped, and the interviews were audiotaped. When one writing session was finished, the second one was conducted within a two-week interval. After writers finished their writing, they were interviewed in Japanese about their composing process and their experience with L1 and L2 writing instruction/training in Japan and overseas, including their perceptions of L1 and L2 writing. The semi-structured interviews lasted 90 minutes to 120 minutes. These interview data were used primarily as a secondary source of information to confirm and supplement the textual analysis.

2.2.3 Data Analysis

For discourse types and essay structure, the present study employed the same analysis used in the previous study described above (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004). The previous study identified four basic discourse types: Argumentation, Exposition, Self-reflection, and Mixed. In Argumentation, students stated their opinion in favor of one or the other of the two choices, while in Exposition, they did not take a side, but analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of each or created an original thesis related to the topic. In Self-reflection, students approached the writing as a “*sakubun*” (self-reflective writing, widely practiced in Japanese L1 classrooms from elementary school on). In Mixed type, students combined two discourse types: Argumentation combined with

Exposition, Argumentation combined with Self-reflection, and Exposition combined with Self-reflection.

The text structures identified in the essays were closely related to the discourse types. Key components identified in the analysis of the overall structure of the essays included position statements (e.g., “I think it’s better for an undergraduate to live alone”), general statements (e.g., “Each side has merits and demerits”), and thesis statements (e.g., “Choosing a place to live is a step to independence”), and other major components included reasons, explanation, and illustration. The analysis of the internal structure examined the body of the essays in terms of the specific components such as counterargument, original perspectives, and extended perspectives.

3. Descriptive Statistics

3.1 English Proficiency

Table 1 shows the English proficiency levels of the two groups, according to a computerized language proficiency test (CASEC: Computerized Assessment Systems for Communication, comprising vocabulary, idioms, listening and dictation sections). Group 2 significantly outperformed Group 1 according to a multivariate test ($p < .01$); however, there were

Table 1: English Proficiency Scores by Group and Subgroup

	CASEC* Mean (SD)	TOEFL equiv Mean (SD)
G1	615.11 (47.02)	470.44 (18.74)
G2	735.90 (112.55)	517.80 (44.53)
G2H	831.80 (54.95)	555.80 (21.66)
G2L	640.00 (49.91)	479.80 (19.56)

G1: EFL students (n =9); G2: Returnees (n =10, 5 each for H and L)

G1 vs. G2 ($p < .01$), G2H vs. G2L ($p < .01$) for both test scores.

some marked differences in the scores among the Group 2 students. When the mean average, 739.90 points, was used as a cut-off, five students averaged 831.80 out of 1,000 maximum possible scores, whereas the other five averaged 640.00. That is, Group 2 actually consisted of two sub-groups (G2H and G2L), and the one with significantly lower scores was found to be at the same English proficiency level as Group 1.

3.2 Total English words and Total Japanese Characters

Regarding total English words and total Japanese characters (including both *kanji* and *hiragana / katakana*), there was a significant difference between Group 1 and Group 2 for the number of English words (G1, 190; G2, 353, $F = 20.56$, $p = .000$, MANOVA), but not for the number of Japanese characters (G1, 790; G2, 814). This finding suggests that while the returnee students demonstrated their ability to write longer essays in English, they showed their ability to write a similar length of Japanese essays as the EFL students.

4. Results

4.1 Task Response

Table 2 shows the frequencies (in percentages) of L1 and L2 essays identified for each discourse type by language (see also Table 3 in Appendix 1 for comparison of individual's discourse types across languages). The breakdown of discourse type by group shows several noteworthy tendencies. While both Group 1 and Group 2 used Argumentation most frequently among the other discourse types across L1 and L2 essays, the returnees employed this discourse type more often than EFL students (G2: 70%, 60% ; G1: 56%, 44%, for L1 and L2, respectively). The use of Exposition

Table 2: Frequency of Discourse Type by Language and Group

Discourse type	English		Japanese	
	G1	G2	G1	G2
Argumentation	56%	70%	44%	60%
Exposition	0%	30%	22%	30%
Self-reflection	0%	0%	0%	0%
Mixed	44%	0%	33%	10%

G1: EFL students (n =9); G2: Returnees (n =10)

was also more frequent for the returnees in both L1 and L2 essays than for the latter group (G2: 30%, 30%; G1, 22%, 0% for L1 and L2, respectively). On the other hand, the use of Mixed pattern such as combined Exposition and Argumentation (Exp -> Arg) and combined Self-reflection and Argumentation (Self -> Arg) was frequent among the EFL students across the two languages (44% and 33% for L2 and L1, respectively), while a Mixed pattern (Self -> Arg) was employed by only one returnee in his Japanese essay. The difference between the two groups in the use of Mixed pattern was found to be significant at the level of $p < .05$, according to a McNemar test.

4.2 Text Features

The ways the students responded to the two open-ended topics tended to influence their ways of organizing the text in L1 and L2. That is, the choice of discourse types affected the overall and internal structure they created to a great extent. The findings of text analysis highlight similarities and differences across the two groups.

4.2.1 Overall Structure and Paragraphing

The overall structure of all L1 and L2 essays by returnees consisted of the distinctive organizational pattern of introduction, body and conclusion (L1: 100%, L2: 100%). In contrast, while the same three parts were observed in

the essays of EFL students, there was a tendency for the distinction between the introduction and the body to be blurred (L1: 33%, L2: 67%). In terms of paragraphing, there was also a clear difference between the two groups. Returnee essays consisted of balanced length paragraphs comprising 3 to 5 sentences, each paragraph often including a topic sentence at the beginning. On the other hand, EFL students' essays, particularly, in L2, had short paragraphs, or one long stretched paragraph with a thesis or a position and body combined. Moreover, there were few topic sentences in their L1 or L2 essays.

4.2.2 Argumentation

For both L1 and L2 argumentation essays, most of the students in both groups followed the basic argumentation structure consisting of a position at the beginning and end, with supporting reasons (pro-reasons) and an optional counterargument (contra) in the body. However, several students placed their opinion at the final position of their L1 or L2 essays (Japanese essay: 1 returnee; English essay: 2 returnees and 1 EFL student).

One significant difference in the internal structure between the two groups lies in the use of counterargument (positive aspects of the opposite side or negative points of the chosen side), often including a refutation. A substantial number of returnee students used this feature across the two languages; five out of six students (83%) who had written Argumentation essays in L1, and five out of seven (71%) in L2 essays. On the other hand, among EFL students who chose Argumentation, two out of four students (50%) and two out of five (40%) did so in their L1 and L2 essays, respectively. More importantly, the use of counterargument also differed in terms of amount of details; returnees devoted one or two paragraphs to this feature,

while EFL students used one or two sentences to develop the counterargument (a returnee's L2 essay with a counterargument is shown in Appendix 2).

Reported sources of knowledge about argumentation structure came from both L1 and L2 writing instruction/training for Group 1 and mostly from L2 for Group 2. In spite of different sources of knowledge, the actual use of the same argumentation text features by the two groups lends further support to the commonality of argumentation writing across Japanese and English language.

4.2.3 Exposition

In both L1 and L2 expository essays, most of the writers stated a general statement (e.g., a topic or a purpose) or raised a question (e.g., "Which one is more beneficial traveling alone or group travel?") in the introduction, explained the statement or answered the question in the body, and ended with a thesis statement (the writer's main idea). Due to this overall inductive movement of ideas, all eight writers' theses appeared at the end of the essay across the two languages (returnees: 6 essays, EFL students: 2 essays) in this study. For the development of the body, a comparison and contrast structure was more frequently used (6 out of 8 essays) than illustration/explanation (2 essays).

One difference in expository discourse between Japanese and English writing may be that the latter usually contains a thesis in the introduction (McElroy, 1997), while the Japanese students' essays tended to have it in the conclusion. According to some students interviewed in the earlier study (Kobayashi, 2005), the structure stated above was one type of Japanese organizational pattern taught in the specialized Japanese essay writing training they received.² Possible sources of this knowledge

for returnees included earlier L1 literacy training, Japanese short-essay writing guidance books, or *kokugo* (Japanese language) classes. (For specific reasons for the returnees' choice of these exposition discourses, see Discussion section.)

4.2.4 Mixed Pattern

In the current study, all of the three Mixed types described earlier appeared and the overall structure of the Mixed pattern was basically the same in both L1 and L2. In the essays of the combined pattern (Exp → Arg), for example, the writer had a purpose statement or a question in the beginning, stated two sides of an issue, and then chose one or two reasons for a position taken at the end. This overall structure resembles that of exposition in terms of an inductive movement of ideas in which the writer's opinion appears at the end. Shi and Beckett (2002) found this writing style frequently among many Japanese ESL students in a study abroad program in Canada.

One noticeable problem with the use of

such a Mixed pattern, particularly in L2 essays of EFL students, was a lack of smooth connection between the two discourse types used.³ No returnees employed this pattern in L2 essays, and there was only one in an L1 essay.

4.2.5 Extended/Original Perspective

Extended perspective is a structural element in which the writer adds relevant information related to a topic being discussed or deepens the discussion of a given topic. This feature appeared only in Japanese essays regardless of the different discourse types. On the other hand, original perspective which presents the writer's unique view or ideas does not necessarily constitute a structural element, but is often reflected in the content of L1 essays of both groups (a returnee's Japanese essay with extended perspective is shown in Appendix 3).

4.2.6 Discourse Type and Structural Consistency across L1 and L2

Table 4 shows consistency in discourse

Table 4: Discourse Type and Structure in L1 and L2 Essays by 12 Students

	Discourse type	Overall L1 and L2 structure (same in both)	Internal structure	
			L1	L2
1-2	Mix (Exp→Arg)	GS-explain-pro-position	Comparison + extended pers.	Comparison
1-5	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra	--
1-7	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Extended pers.	--
1-8	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Original pers.	--
1-9	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra + extended pers.	+Contra
2-1	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra	+Contra
2-2	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra	+Contra
2-3	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra	+Contra
2-5	Exp	GS-explain-thesis	+Extended pers.	Comparison
2-6	Exp	GS-explain-thesis	Illustration + Original pers.	Comparison & solution
2-9	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Contra	+Contra
2-10	Arg	Position-pro-position	+Original pers.	

Note. GS: general statement; explain, explanation; pro-supporting reasons; pers.: perspective; contra: counter-argument; +: additional component; [*italicized item*]: mode of explanation; --: no additional component

type and structure by the same writers across L1 and L2. Group 2 students showed more consistency than Group 1 across the two languages; seven out of the ten returnees (70%) chose the same discourse type (5 for Argumentation and 2 for Exposition, respectively), while five out of the nine EFL students (56%) did so (4 for Argumentation and 1 for Mixed pattern). The internal structure of the L1 essays was the same for both groups including features such as counterargument and extended/original perspective. However, a majority of the returnees who chose Argumentation included counterargument consistently in both L1 and L2 essays, whereas only one EFL student used the component in both essays. This finding suggests that the essays the returnees produced were stable in both overall and internal structure.

4.3 Summary of the Major Findings

In response to the research questions raised, the findings can be summarized as follows:

- (1) Argumentation was most frequently employed by both returnees and EFL students across the two languages. The use of Exposition was consistently observed in both L1 and L2 essays of some returnees while the use of Mixed pattern was frequently found in those of the EFL students.
- (2) The overall structure of Argumentation essay by both groups was the same in both L1 and L2 essays. However, a counterargument appeared more frequently in the essays of returnees than those of EFL students.
- (3) Both returnee and EFL students shared the same structural features when they employed either Exposition or Mixed pattern; that is, they stated a main idea/opinion at the end of the essay.

Extended perspective tended to appear in the Japanese essays of both groups, regardless of the different discourse types chosen.

- (4) Returnees demonstrated more consistency in the choice of discourse type and text construction across L1 and L2 essays than EFL students.

5. Discussion

5.1 Acquisition of English Writing Ability

The English essays of returnee students were coherently structured, consisting of introduction, body and conclusion, each component being substantiated with details. Many of these students appeared to be competent L2 writers as compared with EFL students, who were inexperienced writers with only paragraph-level L2 writing experience. This result was expected considering the high level of English proficiency and fluency the returnees were likely to have achieved due to their long overseas stay where English was a mean of communication in their daily life. What particularly contributed to their high level of writing ability was the writing instruction/training they experienced in their overseas school settings. A majority of returnee students received writing instruction on essay structure, and they experienced writing various kinds of papers, including summaries and reports, and wrote papers ranging from 2 to 5 pages long with great frequency. Even though several students did not receive formal writing instruction, they had to learn to write essays out of necessity because they were asked to turn in papers in content classes. One such student, for example, was placed in a regular high school class immediately after she entered the institution. Though she did not have a chance to receive any formal writing training,

she reportedly learned to write by following teachers' feedback on the papers she had written for content classes. As this case illustrates, the need to develop the ability to write for content classes they were taking motivated them to learn how to write papers and the repeated practice of writing long papers made it easier for them to write. This situated writing practice in overseas school contexts appeared to help returnee students to transform what Anderson termed "declarative knowledge (verbalizable data gathered from previous experience)" to "procedural knowledge (internalized knowledge about working within a specific domain" (cited in Carter, 1990: 273). That is, through "engaging in the target behavior" (DeKeyser, 1998:49) and extensive writing, many returnees were able to have their learned English writing knowledge internalized or even automatized, as widely discussed by DeKeyser (1998, 2007) in relation to skill learning theory in cognitive psychology. This may explain why even lower proficiency returnees demonstrated ability to write relatively long, coherently structured L2 essays compared with those of EFL students at the same proficiency level.

5.2 Transfer of L2 Text Features to L1 Writing

As reported earlier, a majority of returnees (seven out of ten students) showed consistency in discourse type and essay structure across L1 and L2 writing. That is, they approached the given tasks and constructed texts quite similarly regardless of the different language used. This finding suggests that the returnee students were most likely to transfer text features from English (L2) to Japanese (L1) essays. In response to the interview question, "Does the English writing instruction/training you received affect your Japanese writing?", virtually all of the ten returnee students

answered unequivocally with "Yes" as opposed to only one third of EFL students giving the same response. Furthermore, what the returnees reportedly applied to their Japanese essays from their learned English text features included opinion statements, counterarguments with refutation, support reasons/explanation, and paragraphs with topic sentences as well as construction of logical arguments. As a result of transferring these features, L1 and L2 essays of some returnees turned out to be nearly identical. The excerpt of a Japanese essay below illustrates the overall structure of an argumentation essay that one returnee (G2-1) reportedly transferred from her English writing [the underlined part indicates an opinion statement and the wavy lines show topic sentences]:

大学生になるということは、今まで以上に自由が与えられ、その一方で責任も取らなくてはならないことだと考える。その上で一人暮らしをするか自宅から通うかの二つの選択肢がある。今まで家族と一緒に暮らしていたのだから、一人暮らしをしてみた方がよいと考える。⁽¹⁾ その理由を述べていこうと思う。

まず第一に、時間の拘束がないという点である。⁽²⁾ 一人暮らしでは、大学までの道が近く、自分の判断で時間を決められるため、時間を有効に使うことが出来る。例えば、大学祭の準備で時間がかかりそうでも、自分の納得のいくまで取り組むことが可能である。

次に、独自の空間作りが出来るという点である。⁽³⁾ 自分一人で住むため自分の好きな物を好きに配置し、居心地のよい自分だけの場所に出来る。例えば、暖色系の小物で統一して部屋全体を暖かく見せる工夫することも可能である。

最後に、家族が側にいることの素晴らしさを感じるという点である。⁽⁴⁾ 一人暮らしをする上で、家事は一番大変であり欠かすことが出来ないが、実際に自分でやってみることで、母親のありがたさを実感すると私は考える。また同様に、体調不良

の時や精神的に不安定になった時は、父親や兄弟姉妹の存在の大きさを気づき、人として少し成長することが出来ると考える。

確かに一人暮らしは、親の立場から見れば心配であり、金銭的な負担もある。しかし、社会人になる前の予行演習になり、自分自身のためになると考える。また、それが自立へと繋がると思うので、一人暮らしをした方がよいと考える。⁽⁵⁾

[The translation of the underlined and wavy lines are as follows: (1) I think it is better for college students to live alone. (2) First, students are not constrained by time limitations, (3) Next, students can create their own space in their favorite ways, (3) Lastly, students can feel reassured about the importance of having a family on their side. (5) And since it leads to self-independence, I think it is better for students to live alone.]

While the above Japanese essay does not have a counterargument, the writer's English essay includes this feature. Nevertheless, both essays represent the basic schema used in the argumentation essays, consisting of position -> pro -> (contra) -> position. In her case, in addition to the L2 writing training she received at an international school, the social context where she was living also appeared to strengthen the tendency to adopt an argumentation discourse. She said, "I recognized the importance of expressing one's opinion while I was staying in Germany. People there articulate their ideas clearly." Thus, contextual factors can also affect returnee students' perceptions/attitude toward their choice of discourse types and text construction.

5.3 Bi-directional Nature of Transfer across Languages

While English writing instruction/training was found to exert strong effects on the

returnees' construction of English texts, most of these students received *kokugo* (Japanese language) classes at least up to junior high school in Japan. Moreover, similar to the EFL students in this study, they practiced writing Japanese short essays to prepare for college entrance essay exams by either going to a *juku* (cram school) or studying on their own, as reported earlier. Due to such L1 writing instruction, half of the returnee students (50%) perceived that Japanese writing differs from English writing, while four thought that they were similar in terms of overall structure and one could not tell which. Regardless of such differing perceptions, these students identified a number of Japanese text features particularly related to their learned essay structure. These included raising a question or stating a purpose in the introduction, placing a thesis or a main idea in the conclusion, and constructing an internal structure of the body starting with "tashikani (It is true/sure that...)", and then shifting to "shikashi (but or however)", in which the writer first discusses the negative aspects of a position he/she has taken and then switches to the positive points. Most of these structural features correspond to what a number of EFL students in the previous study reportedly had learned in their specialized writing training (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004) and they also reflect what Japanese essay-writing guidance books say (for example, Kotou, 1999).

What is more interesting, however, is that there was interaction between L1 and L2 writing, as was also observed in the essays of some EFL students with L1 and L2 specialized writing training (Kobayashi, 2005). That is, the transfer of writing knowledge did not occur in only one direction, but took place in both directions. One student (G2-6), for example, wrote expository essays in both L1 and L2, following one type of Japanese organizational

pattern frequently used (Gs -> Illustration or Comparison -> Thesis, Table 4). While having received both English and Japanese writing instruction, she chose this way of writing because she felt she did not like to be constrained by taking a position in the beginning of the essay and she preferred to explore ideas somewhat more freely before she came to a conclusion. However, the paragraphs the writer wrote in both L1 and L2 were well-structured with rich content, consisting of a topic sentence at the beginning and elaborated supporting details. Her paragraphs certainly reflect what English paragraph characteristics are said to be like (Zemach & Rumisek, 2003). Similarly, the same combined L1 and L2 features (a Japanese overall structure and English paragraphs) were observed in the L1 and L2 essays of another student (G2-7). However, this writer constructed the texts for different reasons. According to his interview account, he was exposed to English writing knowledge (e.g., essay and paragraph) in the ESL classes, but had little chance to write reports for most of the content classes he chose (e.g., science and mathematics). On the other hand, toward the end of his overseas study, he gave himself intensive self-writing practice (i.e., writing three pieces of essays a day) because he felt a strong need to pass a college entrance exam especially geared for returnee students. He reportedly recognized the obvious influence of such Japanese writing training on both L1 and L2 essay; however, he also realized that his paragraphs (one idea per paragraph) were affected by paragraph writing practice in the ESL classes. This case suggests that affective factors such as motivation plays a role in the acquisition of writing skills, and at the same time, it gives further evidence that exposure to writing knowledge alone does not lead to the internalization of the knowledge.

5.4 Factors Affecting Transferability of Writing Features

The present study provided insight into the process of acquiring L2 writing features in overseas settings by shedding light on the importance of repeated writing practice and the social context where students were situated, including both inside and outside school. The study also provided evidence that L2 writing training/practice that returnee students have experienced overseas can impact the transfer of writing features acquired through such practice to L1 writing. However, the extent to which they transfer such features appears to depend upon the degree of acquisition of writing features and individual factors such as perceptions, preferences, motivation and language proficiency. As shown earlier in the case of G2-7, the writer had not yet acquire the overall argumentation structure, so he depended upon the structural schema that he had obtained through Japanese essay writing practice and transferred this to L2 writing. On the other hand, even when both L1 and L2 writing features are available through past writing instruction/experience that students received, individual writers can choose which features to uptake or transfer according to their perceptions and preferences. One such example is the case of G2-4, who purposely chose expository discourse for her Japanese essay, due to her perceptions of L1 writing being distinctly different from L2.

Based on the findings of the present study and also of the previous study (Kobayashi, 2005), a tentative schematic representation of the salient factors that are likely to affect the transfer of text features across languages is proposed. In Figure 1, the left-boxes represent the writers' literacy background, including writing instruction/ training received in L1 and L2. This background knowledge accumulated

through experience builds a basis for the writers to approach given writing tasks and construct texts. The notations above and besides the boxes indicates that it is necessary to receive sufficient writing practice for the knowledge to become internalized, leading to acquisition. The small circle represents individual factors including perceptions, preferences, motivations and language proficiency. Based on these factors, the writers can choose which features to uptake or transfer according to the social setting, given tasks, audience, and topic, which are all shown in the large circle. Output from the writers represents L1 and L2 text, and the overlap between the two circles indicates the shared features of the L1 and L2 texts, which could vary from nearly entire overlap to little or none, depending upon how individual factors interact with L1 and L2 writing instruction/experience. In short, this proposed schema shows factors affecting transferability of writing features across languages, and at the same time it suggests a dynamic nature of text construction which is affected by interaction between a

variety of factors and L1/L2 writing instruction and experience.

6. Conclusion

The study confirmed that English and Japanese writing, particularly Argumentation, essays share the same text features including overall structure and the use of counterargument. On the other hand, some differences were found to exist between the two languages as observed in the Japanese students' use of Exposition and Mixed pattern. At the same time, the study clarified what specific features tend to transfer across languages and what factors were likely to affect such transfer. Future research should aim to identify what features are more language specific or more common to different languages by including a variety of participants, such as more advanced Japanese writers or native English-speaking learners of Japanese as a foreign language. Furthermore, through such research, it would be possible to confirm or refine the schema representing factors that

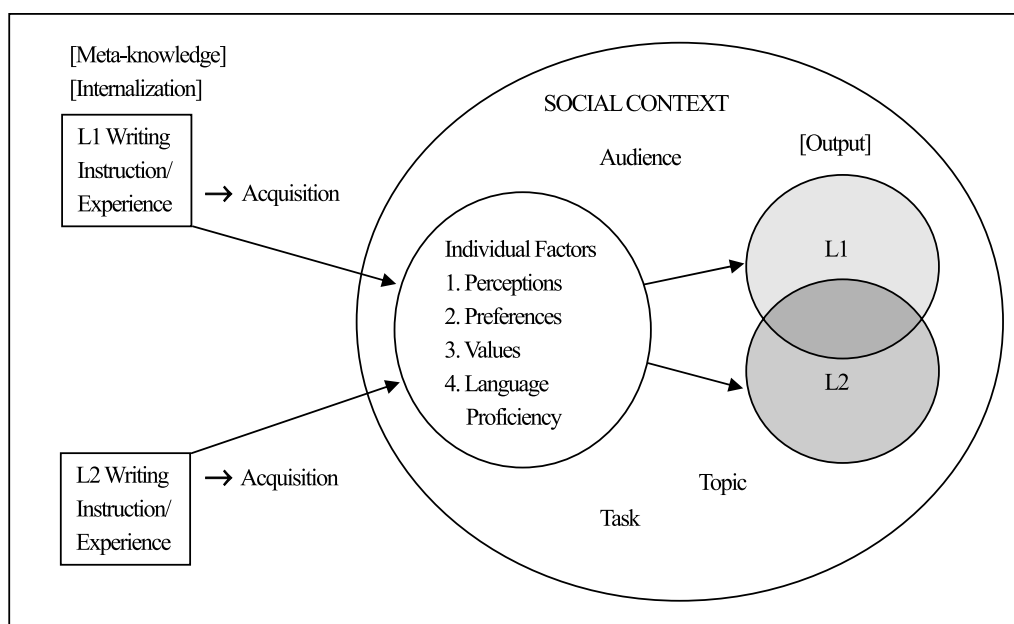


Figure 1: Factors affecting transferability of writing features across languages

affect transferability of writing features presented in this study.

Acknowledgement

This research was supported by Research Grant No. 16520343. I wish to express my

special gratitude to Carol Rinnert for her statistical assistance and stylistic suggestions as well as for her generosity in allowing me to use a part of the data we collected together. I would also like to thank the two anonymous reviewers for their comments on an earlier version of this paper.

Note

1. Transfer was originally conceptualized as “the influence of a learner’s L1 knowledge and skills on L2 learning and performance” (James, 2007, p. 96). However, from a cognitive psychology perspective, this concept is broadly defined to include the application of what has been learned in one task to another, as when Singley and Anderson (1989) observed a high level of positive transfer between similar line text editing tasks. Applying what has been learned in L2 writing instruction to L1 writing could be taken as transfer of learning.
2. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2002) suggested that the specialized Japanese essay writing practice placed a major emphasis on opinion writing. However, a closer look at the later findings, particularly those of novice writers with only L1 writing training (Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2004), indicates that the discourse types of both exposition and argumentation were actually taught in the writing training. While four of those writers chose an expository frame for L1 essays, two of them placed a thesis at both the beginning and end, as opposed to the other two placing it only at the end. That implies that Japanese expository writing instruction can prescribe placing a thesis in the introduction.
3. Some Japanese essays framed in a Mixed pattern (Exp -> Arg) were highly evaluated later by Japanese raters because the essays succeeded in providing either a good structural extension or a rhetorical question to make a smooth connection between the two types of discourse.

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Appendix 1

Table 3: Comparison of Individuals' Discourse Types across Languages.

	Japanese Essay	English Essay	Comparison
Group 1			
1-1	Exp	Mix (Exp->Arg)	*
1-2	Mix (Exp->Arg)	Mix (Exp->Arg)	=
1-3	Mix (Exp->Arg)	Mix (Self<->Arg)	*
1-4	Exp	Mix (Arg<->Exp)	*
1-5	Arg	Arg	=
1-6	Mix (Exp->Arg)	Arg	*
1-7	Arg	Arg	=
1-8	Arg	Arg	=
1-9	Arg	Arg	=
Group 2			
2-1	Arg	Arg	=
2-2	Arg	Arg	=
2-3	Arg	Arg	=
2-4	Exp	Arg	x
2-5	Exp	Exp	=
2-6	Exp	Exp	=
2-7	Mix (Self->Arg)	Arg	*
2-8	Arg	Exp	x
2-9	Arg	Arg	=
2-10	Arg	Arg	=

Arg: Argumentation; Exp: Exposition; Self: Self-reflection; Mix: Mixed;
 ->: direction of overall movement; <->: movement back and forth;
 =: same; *: partial overlap; X: different

Appendix 2

English Essay in Argumentation with a Counterargument

[The underlined non-italics indicate a counterargument, and the underlined italics shows a refutation, which also serves to support the argument; the writer's errors remain intact]:

Today, the university students can choose where to live. They live with their families or they can live in each apartment by renting. I think that the university students should start to live by themselves in each apartment. It is really good experience that they need these days.

In fact, most of the students around me rent and live alone. They have to cook what they eat, clean their rooms, wash their clothes, and do everything that they need by

themselves. They would not do such a things if they live with their families because their families would give them supports what they have to do. So it is obvious that the supports make them negligent and might be impossible for them to be independent. I know the students around me are very independent because most of them don't depend on their families and live without any problems.

It might cost them seriously, however, *renting an apartment is a precious experience.* Some university students could not rent apartments due to money. Some might hate to move because they feel weary, *but money is not important than experience. The experience will lead them more money in the future.*

Therefore, I think it is better to live by

themselves in rent apartments than to live with their families. In my opinion, to experience the difficulties to live alone and to be independent

of their parents are the most important things during university student.

Appendix 3

Japanese Essay in Exposition with Extended Perspective

大学生の「住」

大学生という、大人の分類に入る年齢になると、多くの人が住む場所を自ら選ぶことになる。一人暮らしをするか、実家から通うか、その「住」の違いは大学生活の全体に大きく影響する。

私自身はアパートでの一人暮らしだが、自宅から通学している友人は口をそろえて「自由なのが羨ましい」と言う。また、家事を覚えることや、家族のありがたみが分かるなどのポジティブ面がある。しかし一方で、一人で生活する淋しさや、自由の度が過ぎて生活がルーズになる、金銭面で負担が大きといった難点もある。

私から見ると、自宅生は門限や通学にかかる時間によって制約があり大変そうだが、家に帰ったら食事が用意されている事が羨ましい。家事にかける時間と労力を勉強やアルバイトに費やすことができるのは、良いと思う。

また、日本ではまだ少ないが、ルームシェアをするという選択肢もある。実はこれが私が一番憧れている「住」のスタイルで、一人暮らしと実家(=誰かと共同)で生活することの両方の利点を兼ね合わせている。人間関係面での負担はあるだ

ろうが、そこから学ぶことも多いと思う。

一人暮らし、通い、その他のオプションともに、それぞれ一長一短だと思う。大切なのは、自分が大学生活において何に重点を置きたいのかを見極めて、それに合う「住」を選ぶことだ。例えば、勉強に専念したく家が通学できる範囲にあれば自宅から通い、時間をサークルや社交にあてたければ一人暮らしが良いのではないだろうか。

大人として社会に出ていくための第一歩として、自分の「住」について決断をするというのは、意義のあることだと思う。

English translation of extended perspective (the underlined part of the above essay)

Also, there is another choice of room sharing, which is still infrequent in Japan. However, this is my most favorite style of living, which I yearn for, and this style has the advantages of both living alone and living with family (living with someone). Although there might be some burden in working out relationships among people sharing the place, I think we could learn a lot from that.