

Linguistic Features of Korean EFL Learners' Writing: Based on Writing Quality and Genre*

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The present study examines the linguistic features of Korean college students' English writings in terms of their writing quality and genre. Forty-eight Korean college students took part in the study, and their writing samples, comprised of narrative and exposition compositions, were collected to analyze on the basis of fluency and syntactic complexity. A total of 95 writings were entered into the computer program L2 syntactic complexity analyzer (L2SCA), and then statistical analyses such as ANOVA and *t*-test were performed to investigate how the linguistic features of the participants' English writings are different depending on their writing quality and genre. The results showed that participants' writing quality had a statistically significant impact on the text length of their writings, while it did not have a statistically significant effect on 13 measures out of 14 syntactic complexity measures. However, the results of genre differences indicated that the genre of writing had a substantial impact on 15 measures including fluency and syntactic complexity in the participants' writing. Based on the results, some implications on how English writing instruction can better help Korean learners develop their English writing skills are discussed in the end.

Keywords: fluency, syntactic complexity, L2 writing, writing quality, writing genre

1 Introduction

Recently, English writing skills have become more important than ever as a means of communicating ideas and opinions in the 21st global age. Naturally, increased attention has been drawn to the process and development of L2 writing and L2 learners' language development in writing, so that more effective English writing instruction can be implemented in the classroom.

It has been generally assumed that if L2 learners become more capable of using the language with linguistic competence, fluency and syntactic complexity grow and so they can write their message with more elaborate

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syntactic forms in a longer text. In the same vein, previous studies have endeavored to study the linguistic features of L2 writing by using fluency and syntactic complexity as a developmental indicator of L2 learners' writing (Grant & Ginther, 2000; Hwang, 2012; Larsen-Freeman, 1978; Lu, 2011).

Research on linguistic features in L2 learners' writing performance has generally reported that there is a relationship between fluency/syntactic complexity of L2 texts and L2 learners' writing quality (Orgeta, 2003; Wolfe-Quintero et al., 1998). For instance, Larsen-Freedman's study (1978) showed that text length increased in the number of words as the student's proficiency improved, suggesting that the text length is strongly connected with the text quality, in particular, when students are at the beginning and intermediate proficiency level. On the other hand, some studies have been reported that genre has a pivotal impact on L2 writing performance, suggesting that syntactic complexity depends on the writing genre (Crowhurst & Piche, 1979; Hwang, 2013; Yau & Belanger, 1984).

However, in terms of details, previous studies have not yielded consistent results. In addition, a smaller number of studies on fluency and syntactic complexity of L2 writing based on writing quality and genre have been pursued in the Korean context (Bae & Min, 2020; Hwang, 2012, 2013; Hwang & Choe, 2016; Park, 2012; Park, 2013). Thus, to better understand Korean English learners' writing development and their language development, more research is needed about the linguistic features of their writing. With this in mind, the present study takes aims to examine the fluency and syntactic complexity of Korean learners' English (L2) writings in terms of their writing quality and genre.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Fluency and syntactic complexity in L2 writing quality

Research has attempted to demonstrate fluency or text length as a developmental indicator of language learners' writing. Previous studies have shown that more proficient writers produce longer texts, indicating that higher scored essays tend to be more words on average than lower scored counterparts (Ai & Lu, 2013; Espada-Gustilo, 2011; Ferris, 1994). For example, Grant and Ginther (2000) identified the linguistic features of L2 writers' essays at three different proficiency levels, showing that more proficient L2 writers produced longer essays and the frequency of many linguistic features increased according to the proficiency levels.

On the other hand, syntactic complexity also has been used as a pivotal index of language learners' writing proficiency and language complexity. Syntactic complexity has been characterized as the range of syntactic structures and the degree of elaboration of those structures such as length of

production unit, degree of subordination or coordination, and complex nominal. Research has revealed that measuring syntactic complexity displays children's and L2 learners' language development (Beers & Nagy, 2009; Hunt, 1970; Hwang, 2012; Lu, 2011). Some studies suggested that L2 learners' language development was associated with the degree of syntactic complexity of their writing (Casanave, 1994; Ishikawa, 1995; Ortega, 2003). For example, Hunt (1970) found that words per T-unit and word per clause tend to increase steadily with age¹. In addition, Hunt showed that students of lower achievement wrote texts with fewer words per clause and fewer words per T-unit than students of higher achievements.

In the same vein, Norris and Ortega (2009) claimed "syntactic complexity must be measured multidimensionally" (p. 562). They observed that as learners become proficient in L2, their language moves from coordination to subordination, and then to phrasal-level complexification at the advanced level of the L2 development. Studies have shown that once they reach an advanced level, their coordination decreases greatly (Bardovi-Harlig, 1992; Casanave, 1994; Lu, 2011). Similarly, subordination, which is the typical indicator of complexification at the intermediate level of proficiency, seems to reach a highest limit or even declines as learners progress beyond this level (Bardovi-Harlig & Bofman, 1989; Biber, 2006).

Noun phrase complexity is regarded as a pivotal linguistic feature of syntactic complexity in academic writing (Biber & Gray, 2016). At the advanced level, Taguchi et al. (2013) demonstrated that writing at the advanced level displays more features of phrasal elaboration, reporting that noun phrase modification contributed to writing quality by analyzing argumentative essays written by non-native speakers of English. Kyle and Crossley (2018) also noted that phrasal complexity has a discriminative power among proficiency levels of academic L2 writing.

In recent years, studies have examined the extent to which different syntactic complexity measures reliably demonstrate L2 learners' writing proficiency or writing quality (Lu, 2011; Taguchi et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2015). Lu (2011) analyzed a large collection of essays written by Chinese learners of English from different college years using 14 syntactic complexity measures of L2SCA, finding that 10 measures were good candidates of proficiency indices in language development of L2 writing. In the Korean context, Park (2012) evaluated the 14 syntactic complexity measures of L2SCA as indices of language development in writings retrieved from the Yonsei English Learner Corpus. In her study, 9 measures of 14 syntactic complexity were found to be statistically significant between proficiency levels, which supports Lu's (2011) finding that syntactic complexity measures can be appropriate indices of L2 English learners' writing development.

¹ T-unit is "one main clause with all subordinate clauses attached to it" (Hunt, 1965, p. 20).

More recently, Bae and Min (2020) examined the syntactic complexity of Korean college students' writings by using syntactic complexity measures. In their study, syntactic complexity showed increasing trends across English levels of proficiency, but it did not show statistically significant difference across the three different levels, unlike prior research (Hwang, 2012; Kim, 2014; Lu, 2011; Park, 2012). Ha (2021) analyzed 145 English writings by Korean high school and college learners through the syntactic complexity measures. According to her results, the measures of length of production and coordination measures indicated statistically significant differences between high school learners and college learners. It means that college learners wrote significantly more complex texts with more coordinate phrases than high school learners did.

To sum up, previous studies generally suggest that more proficient L2 writers produce a longer text with more syntactic complexity. However, there are inconclusive findings on what linguistic features demonstrate differences in writing quality of L2 writing.

2.2 Genre in L2 writing

Studies have examined the effects of different genres in L1 and L2 writing (Bae & Min, 2020; Berman & Nir-Sagiv; 2004, 2007; Hwang, 2013; Park, 2012). For example, Berman and Nir-Sagiv (2004, 2007) compared personal-experience narratives and expository texts from middle school to college. They showed that exposition arranges more sophisticated lexis and grammar including relative clauses, complex noun phrases with more syntactic depth, and more elaborated modifiers. They assert, based on their findings, that expository genre plays a crucial role of platform for the expression of a variety of linguistic features. Beers and Nagy (2009) also explored the impact of genre on syntactic complexity with middle school students' writings. They found that narrative and expository writings displayed different syntactic complexity by measuring words per clause, words per T-unit, and clauses per T-unit. Mean length of clause (a measure of phrasal elaboration) was positively correlated with the quality for argumentative essays, whereas mean clauses per T-unit (a measure of subordination) was positively correlated with quality for narratives and negatively correlated with the quality of argumentative essays.

As for L2 writing, a few studies have been conducted in the Korean context (Bae & Min, 2020; Hwang, 2013; Park, 2012). Park (2012) investigated the syntactic complexity of Korean college EFL learners' narrative and argumentative writings, and found that genre has an effect on syntactic complexity in their writings. Moreover, Hwang (2013) reported Korean EFL college learners wrote their narrative compositions more fluently and complexly than argumentative ones. In her study, they wrote longer texts with more coordination structures and complex nominal structures in narrative composition. However, more recently, Bae and Min (2020) investigated how

syntactic complexity measures are different in Korean L2 college learners' writings of four different genres including narrative, exposition (comparison & cause-effect), and argumentative. They found that 13 out of 14 syntactic complexity measures showed statistically significant genre differences. The longer length of production was observed in expository and argumentative writings compared to narrative writings. In addition, more complex nominal and verb phrases were found in argumentative and cause-effect writings. On the other hand, more coordination clauses were found in expository genres than argumentative ones.

So far, previous studies in fluency and syntactic complexity of L1/L2 writing are briefly reviewed in terms of writing quality and genre. As shown above, there have been inconsistent findings regarding the linguistic features according to writing quality and genre. With this background, the present study set out to examine the following research questions:

1. How does the writing quality relate to fluency and syntactic complexity of L2 writings by Korean EFL learners?
2. What are the effects of two different genres, narrative and exposition, on Korean EFL learners' fluency and syntactic complexity?

3 Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of the present study were 48 college students of a Korean university, who took beginning English writing classes at the time of data collection, in 2021. All the participants were freshmen majoring in English: 19 female and 29 male students. Their ages ranged from 19 to 23.

3.2 Data collection

The participants were asked to write two different genres of writings as part of their coursework: narrative and exposition. A total of 95 writings were collected via word files: 47 narrative and 48 exposition. The topic of the narrative writing was their "unforgettable memories" in life, and the expository writing was to explain "two festivals," where they compared the chosen festivals in similarities and differences.

The participants' narrative and expository compositions were evaluated, based on Hyland's (2003) holistic scoring scale, by an English teacher with more than 10 years of English writing teaching experiences in universities into higher and lower level of writings: 21 higher level, 26 lower level for narrative; 19 higher level, 29 lower level for exposition.

3.3 Data analysis

A computer program of syntactic complexity analyzer, L2SCA, was used to investigate the writings' linguistic features. Then the statistical programs of ANOVA and t-test were employed to compare the linguistic differences of the writings in terms of writing quality and genre.

For measuring the fluency of the participants' texts, text length (TL) was used including the number of words (NW) and the number of sentences (NS). With regard to syntactic complexity, L2SCA (L2 Syntactic Complexity Analyzer), a web-based computerized system developed by Lu (2010), was used as indices of L2 writers' language development. The 9 basic units and its definitions of L2SCA are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. L2SCA Basic Unit and its Definition (Ha, 2021, p. 426; Lu, 2010)

Unit	Description	Definition
W	Word	token(except punctuation marks)
S	Sentence	a group of words which ends with punctuation marks that signal the end of a sentence
C	Clause	Subject + finite verb (finite independence clause, finite adjective clause, finite adverb clause, finite noun clause)
DC	Dependent Clause	(a) finite adjective clause (b) finite adverb clause (c) finite noun clause
T	T-unit	(a) independent clause + dependent clause (b) independent clause + a structure that is not a clause
CT	Complex T-unit	independent clause + dependent clause
CP	Coordinate Phrase	(a) adjective + coordinate conjunction + adjective (b) adverb + coordinate conjunction + adverb (c) noun +coordinate conjunction + noun (d) verb +coordinate conjunction + verb
CN	Complex Nominal	(a) noun+adjective, possessive, prepositional phrase, relative clause, participle, or apposition (b) noun clause (c) gerund or infinitive as a subject
VP	Verb Phrase	(a) finite verb phrase (b) non-finite verb phrase

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Table 2 shows 16 measures used for the present study: 2 fluency measures and 14 syntactic complexity measures. The 14 syntactic complexity measures were categorized into five types according to the purpose of investigation of the development of L2 learners' syntactic complexity: length of production (LP), sentence complexity (SC), subordination (S), coordination (C), and particular structure (PS). The following shows the six categories with 16 syntactic complexity measures:

Table 2. Categories and Measures

Category		Measure	Code	
Fluency	Text Length	Number of words	NW	
		Number of sentences	NS	
Syntactic Complexity	Length of Production	Mean length of clause	MLC	
		Mean length of sentence	MLS	
		Mean length of T-unit	MLT	
	Sentence Complexity	Clauses per sentence		C/S
				C/T
	Subordination	Clauses per T-unit	Complex T-units per T-unit	CT/T
			Dependent clauses per clause	DC/C
			Dependent clauses per T-unit	DC/T
			Coordinate phrases per clause	CP/C
	Coordination	Coordinate phrases per T-unit	Coordinate phrases per T-unit	CP/T
			T-units per sentence	T/S
			Verb phrases per T-unit	VP/T
	Particular Structures	Complex nominals per clause	Complex nominals per clause	CN/C
			Complex nominals per T-unit	CN/T

The measures of length of production include mean length of clause (MLC), mean length of sentence (MLS), mean length of T-unit (MLT), which are calculated by dividing the number of words by the number of clauses, sentences, and T-units. Sentence complexity is measured by clauses per sentence (C/S), which divides the number of clauses by the number of sentences. Subordination is measured by clause per T-unit (C/T), complex T-units per T-unit (CT/T), dependent clauses per clause (DC/C), and dependent clauses per T-unit (DC/T), which are computed by dividing the number of each unit such as clause, complex T-unit, and dependent clause by the number of T-unit or clause. The measures of coordination of the text contain coordinate phrases per clause (CP/C), coordinate phrases per T-unit (CP/T), and T-units per sentence (T/S). The measures of particular structures include verb phrases per T-unit (VP/T), complex nominals per clause (CN/C), and complex nominals per T-unit (CN/T), which are computed by dividing the number of

each particular structure by the number of T-unit or clause.

4 Results and Discussion

4.1 The effect of writing quality on linguistic features

For the first research question, the linguistic features of the writings were analyzed in terms of their different writing quality. Table 3 displays the means and standard deviations of fluency and syntactic complexity measures according to the two different groups of writing quality. As shown in Table 3, regardless of genres, the higher writing quality group generally produced higher means on all the measures than those of the lower writing quality group.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Linguistic Features by Different Groups

Measure	Group	Narrative		Exposition		
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
TL	NW	1	286.92	115.89	201.86	56.53
		2	461.71	181.47	316.26	120.28
	NS	1	22.27	9.08	15.31	4.75
		2	32.43	13.53	20.47	6.48
LP	MLS	1	13.22	3.83	13.77	3.86
		2	14.74	3.04	15.96	4.26
	MLT	1	11.16	2.54	13.14	2.36
		2	11.66	1.45	13.65	2.71
	MLC	1	7.96	1.18	9.80	2.39
		2	8.04	.76	10.41	1.36
SC	C/S	1	1.65	.42	1.40	.23
		2	1.83	.30	1.52	.33
S	C/T	1	1.39	.19	1.29	.19
		2	1.45	.12	1.36	.21
	CT/T	1	.32	.12	.25	.14
		2	.40	.09	.32	.16
	DC/C	1	.26	.08	.21	.10
		2	.29	.06	.24	.09
	DC/T	1	.38	.16	.29	.17
		2	.43	.11	.34	.18

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C	CP/T	1	.23	.10	.33	.19
		2	.26	.09	.41	.17
	T/S	1	1.18	.19	1.08	.09
		2	1.25	.15	1.11	.17
	CP/C	1	.16	.07	.25	.13
		2	.18	.06	.31	.12
PS	VP/T	1	1.70	.24	1.57	.32
		2	1.76	.15	1.71	.57
	CN/T	1	.89	.41	1.35	.50
		2	.99	.21	1.53	.51
	CN/C	1	.62	.23	1.04	.38
		2	.69	.16	1.10	.27

Note. 1: Lower group of writing quality 2: Higher group of writing quality

Regarding the text length, the higher group of narrative showed higher means of NW and NS (NW: 461.71, NS: 32.43) than those of the lower group (NW: 286.92, NS: 22.27), and the higher group of exposition also revealed higher mean scores (NW: 316.26, NS: 20.47) than those of the lower group (NW: 201.86, NS: 15.31). The means of MLS, MLT, and MLC of the higher group were slightly higher than those of the lower group for narrative and exposition. In the case of C/S measure indicating sentence complexity, the higher group also showed higher means ($M = 1.83$ for narrative, $M = 1.52$ for exposition) than those of the lower group ($M = 1.65$ for narrative, $M = 1.40$ for exposition). As for C/T, DC/C, DC/T and CT/T measures showing subordination complexity, the means of higher group of narrative were 1.45, .29, .43, .40, while those of lower group were 1.39, .26, .38, and .32. Regarding coordination complexity, the higher group indicated 1.25 mean of T/S, .26 mean of CP/T, .18 mean of CP/C for narrative writing, while the lower group were 1.18, .23, and .16 respectively. As for VP, the higher group was 1.76 and the lower group 1.70 for narrative writing. As for noun complexity of narrative writing, the means of CN/T were .99 for the higher group and .89 for the lower group. In addition, the means of CN/C for narrative writing were .69 for the higher group and .62 for the lower one. All the measures indicated positively increasing trends according to writing quality. It suggests that fluency and syntactic complexity were developed in accordance with the participants' writing quality.

Then a one-way ANOVA was performed on narrative and expository writings, respectively, to determine whether any statistically significant differences were found in linguistic features according to their writing quality. For the narrative writings, two fluency measures (NW, NS) and CT/T syntactic

complexity measure demonstrated statistically significant differences (NW: $F = 16.06$, $Sig. = .000$, NS: $F = 9.41$, $Sig. = .004$, CT/T: $F = 5.17$, $Sig. = .028$), while other syntactic complexity measures did not indicate a significant difference although the means increased according to writing quality levels, which was consistent with Bae and Min's (2020) findings.

For the expository writings, the numbers of words and sentences were statistically different between the two groups (NW: $F = 19.50$, $Sig. = .000$; NS: $F = 10.53$, $Sig. = .003$). The result corroborated that the L2 learners' writing quality makes a significant difference in the fluency of expository writing. However, any other syntactic complexity measures did not show a significant difference.

4.2 The effect of genre on linguistic features

The following section examines the effects of genres on fluency and syntactic complexity. First, descriptive analysis of 16 measures including the simple numbers of words and sentences was conducted and Table 4 presents the results of means and standard deviations of 16 measures of linguistic features.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Measures by Different Genres

		Narrative		Exposition	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
TL	NW	365.02	171.27	249.74	102.67
	NS	26.81	12.27	17.41	6.01
LP	MLS	3.90	3.55	14.73	4.12
	MLT	11.39	2.112	13.37	3.31
	MLC	8.00	1.01	10.10	2.03
SC	C/S	1.73	.38	1.45	.28
	C/T	1.42	.16	1.32	.20
S	DC/C	.27	.07	.22	.09
	DC/T	.40	.14	.31	.17
	CT/T	.36	.11	.28	.15
C	T/S	1.21	.18	1.10	.13
	CP/T	.24	.10	.36	.18
	CP/C	.17	.06	.27	.13
PS	VP/T	1.72	.21	1.63	.31
	CN/T	.94	.34	1.43	.51
	CN/C	.65	.20	1.07	.34

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According to the Table 4, the participants produced more simple words and sentences in narrative writings than in expository ones. However, with regard to the length of production measures including MLC, MLS, and MLT, expository writings showed the higher means than narrative ones. Sentence complexity measure (C/S), subordination measures (C/T, DC/C, DC/T, CT/T), one coordination measure (T/S) and one particular structure (VP/T) showed higher means in narrative writings than in expository ones. It means that they deployed higher sentence complexity and more subordination clauses in narrative writings. On the other hand, two coordination measures (CP/T, CP/C) and two particular structures (CN/T, CN/C) showed higher means in expository writings than in narrative ones. It resonates with Berman and Nir-Sagiv's (2004, 2007) findings that exposition deploys more complex noun phrase which is regarded as an integral feature in academic writing.

To statistically explore the effects of genres on linguistic features of participants' L2 writing, paired samples *t*-test was performed and Table 5 displays the results of paired samples *t*-test by different genres. As shown in Table 5, there were statistically significant differences in the mean values of 15 measures except for MLS. Regarding fluency, NW and NS made significant differences in the two writing genres (NW: $t = 5.69$, $Sig. = .000$; NS: $t = 6.12$, $Sig. = .000$).

Table 5. Results of Paired Samples T-test by Different Genres

	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>95% CI</i>		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
			<i>Lower</i>	<i>Upper</i>			
NW	115.27	20.24	74.52	156.0	5.69	46	.000
NS	9.34	1.52	6.27	12.41	6.12	46	.000
MLS	-.82	.51	1.86	.21	-1.60	46	.116
MLT	-1.96	.453	-2.88	-1.05	-4.33	46	.000
MLC	-2.09	.317	-2.73	-1.46	-6.61	46	.000
C/S	.279	.054	.168	.390	5.08	46	.000
C/T	.097	.029	.039	.156	3.35	46	.002
CT/T	.077	.034	.028	.125	3.16	46	.003
DC/C	.051	.013	.023	.078	3.75	46	.000
DC/T	.088	.025	.036	.140	3.44	46	.001
CP/T	-.121	.032	1.86	-.056	-3.75	46	.000
T/S	.115	.030	.052	.177	3.72	45	.001

CP/C	-.105	.023	.153	-.057	-4.42	46	.000
VP/T	.097	.045	.006	.188	2.15	45	.037
CN/T	-.491	.081	.655	-.327	-6.02	46	.000
CN/C	-.420	.057	.536	-.305	-7.33	46	.000

For five categories of syntactic complexity such as length of production, sentence complexity, subordination, coordination, and particular structures, most of measures showed significant differences between the two genres. In the case of length of production, genre effects were revealed in the mean length of clause ($t = -6.61$, $Sig. = .000$) and the mean length of T-unit ($t = -4.33$, $Sig. = .000$), while MLS did not show statistically significant differences between the two genres. As for sentence complexity measure (C/S), it showed statistically significant genre differences ($t = 5.08$, $Sig. = .000$), and the four measures of subordination clause (C/T, DC/C, DC/T, CT/T) displayed a statistically significant genre difference (C/T: $t = 3.35$, $Sig. = .002$, DC/C: $t = 3.75$, $Sig. = .000$, DC/T: $t = 3.44$, $Sig. = .001$, CT/T: $t = 3.16$, $Sig. = .003$). Moreover, the subordination clause mean scores (C/T, CT/T, DC/C, DC/T) were higher in the narrative genre than in the expository one. Two coordination clause measures (T/S, CP/C, CP/T) also demonstrated statistically significant differences between the two genres (T/S: $t = 3.72$, $Sig. = .001$, CP/C: $t = -4.42$, $Sig. = .000$, CP/T: $t = -3.75$, $Sig. = .000$). The results are consistent with Bae and Min's (2020) findings that expository writings were observed to use longer length of productions and more coordination clauses compared to the narrative writings, and that their participants' narrative writings displayed use of more complex sentences and more subordination clauses than expository ones.

Eventually, all the three measures (CN/T, CN/C, VP/T) of particular structures showed statistically significant differences between the two genres (CN/T: $t = -6.02$, $Sig. = .000$, CN/C: $t = -7.33$, $Sig. = .000$, VP/T: $t = 2.15$, $Sig. = .037$). Specifically, complex nominal (CNT, CN/C) presented higher ratios in the expository genre, while verb phrases (VP/T) showed higher ratios in the narrative genre. All the results aggregated, it confirmed the text genre has an impact on the syntactic complexity of L2 learners' writings. It means that writing genre causes significant differences in L2 writing, in terms of fluency and syntactic complexity.

5 Conclusion and Implications

The present study began to explore the prominent linguistic features of L2 writing including fluency and syntactic complexity with a reference of L2 writing quality and text genre. The first research question was concerned with

what differences demonstrate in the use of linguistic features according to the writing quality. Text length (NW and NS) was found to be different according to the learners' writing quality, confirming previous studies. With regard to syntactic complexity, the CT/T measure of narrative showed statistically significant differences in the two different groups, although the mean scores on all the measures increased according to the writing quality. In general, it was observed that Korean EFL writers with higher writing quality tended to produce longer texts with more complex structures, while writers with lower writing quality wrote relatively short texts with simpler structures.

The second research question examined the linguistic features of L2 writing depending on the writing genres. The fluency measures showed statistical differences between the two different genres, and 13 of 14 syntactic complexity measures indicated statistically significant genre differences. To be specific, the results presented that Korean college writers tended to write a longer text with more clauses such as dependent clauses in the narrative writing, whereas they tended to produce a text with longer length of clauses, more coordinate phrases and complex nominals in the expository composition.

The findings of the present study have some implications for English writing instruction in Korea. The study indicates that text length has a significant difference in L2 writing according to writing quality and writing genre, confirming that text length is a predictive indicator of Korean EFL learners' writing quality. From the finding, it is recommended that writing instruction should put an emphasis on the development of fluency ahead of other linguistic aspects. Thus, for example, EFL writing instruction could first of all encourage learners, in particular, in beginning level, to compose as much as they like on a familiar topic. Abundant writing practice to write longer texts in narrative genre would be beneficial for improving Korean EFL learners' fluency in L2 writing.

With regard to syntactic complexity, the results proved that Korean college students produced syntactically different texts according to different genres. It suggests that different genres can be used in the classroom in accordance with the target structure to improve students' linguistic competence in L2 writing, recommending genre-based writing instruction. For example, based on findings, writing narrative can be used for practicing and developing the use of independent clause, while writing exposition for improving the use of complex nominal. Also, as Manchón (2011) mentions, writing is a good site for language development, in particular, for L2 learners, and language development can support L2 learners' writing. Thus, language instruction incorporated with appropriate writing genre would be effective for linguistic development in L2 writing.

Last but not least, some limitations have to be mentioned. The number of participants and writing samples were not large enough to generalize the findings of the study. Thus, future studies with a large sample could provide findings with greater reliability and validity. In addition, the present study

investigated the writing samples of the same year of university. As a result, the gap between the writing levels might have been relatively indistinguishable. Future studies with participants of more diverse and distinctive levels would provide a clearer picture of linguistic development of Korean EFL learners' writing.

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