THE EFFECTS OF L1 PRE-WRITING DISCUSSION ON ESL WRITING

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for
the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate
School of the Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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ABSTRACT

Whether L1 has a place in the ESL classroom is not a new question. In this study the researcher undertook to determine whether L1 use in pre-writing discussion among adult ESL learners in a university intensive English program had any impact on writing in terms of fluency, grammatical complexity and overall proficiency. Fluency was determined by a simple word count, grammatical complexity by T-unit analysis and overall proficiency by the mean of holistic scores given by a panel of three trained raters.

The subjects of the study were 35 students enrolled in high-intermediate and advanced classes in an intensive English program in a large university. Five times over ten weeks the subjects were given a short story to read outside of class. On the next class day they were asked to discuss a theme related to the reading in pre-assigned groups. Of the ten total discussions held during the quarter, half were conducted in homogeneous language groups in Arabic, Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean or Spanish and half in heterogeneous language groups in which the discussion was conducted in English. Following group discussion, the subjects were given a writing prompt also related to the theme of the reading and discussion, and asked to write about it in English.
When a total of 273 compositions were analyzed using a mixed effects ANOVA, no significant main effect was found between compositions written following discussion in L1 or in English. However, over the course of the 10 week study, it was found that the overall mean of four of the six independent variables were higher at the beginning of the quarter when discussion was held in L1 and that this pattern crossed in the middle of the term so that by the end the reverse was seen and the mean scores were higher following discussion in English.
Dedicated to my family
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Overview

The role of a learner’s first language (L1) in the second language (L2) classroom setting, and its part in classroom discourse has been a significant question in second language acquisition research for many years. Over the last decade in particular, researchers (Auerbach, 1993; Bailey, 1993; Berman, 1994; Camilleri, 1991; Chamot, 1992; Danhua, 1995; Harbord, 1992; Neff and Pica, 1997; Pennington, 1996, 1998; Polio and Duff, 1990 and 1994; Prieto, 1994; Silva, 1992; Yu; 1996) have been interested in when, why and how much learners and teachers in L2 classrooms use L1. In models of second language teaching, the formalized or intentional use of L1 has waxed and waned along a continuum ranging from near total reliance on the L1 to its near prohibition. On the L1 end of this spectrum we find the often criticized, but perennially present Grammar-Translation method, in which classes are conducted in the L1 with attention paid almost exclusively to grammatical rules and memorization of vocabulary. Language skills are generally practiced within the context of translation from L1 to L2 or vice versa, sometimes both orally and in writing, but more often than
not, in writing only. Foreign language immersion or English as a second language settings where instruction takes place in L2 and learners may also live in an L2 environment falls at the other end of the scale. In between there are other methods which employ varying mixes of L1 and L2 in the classroom which have enjoyed periods of popularity over the last five decades. Some of these methods include, but certainly are not limited to the Audiolingual Method, which began life on American military bases as “the Army Method” during World War II and focused on habit formation through the use of pattern practice and drills; Suggestopedia (Lozanov, 1979) which required that classical music be played during lessons in order to induce a state of relaxation in the learner on the assumption that language could be learned more easily and better at a deeper level of consciousness brought on by this relaxation; Community Language Learning (Curran, 1972; LaForge, 1973) which has its beginnings in the field of psychology and in which the teacher serves as an informant and facilitator rather than instructor and learners support each other in non-threatening interpersonal interactions; the Silent Way (Gattegno, 1972) in which the teacher remains silent most of the time and learner language production is based on problem solving and creativity while manipulating colored Cuisinere rods; Total Physical Response (Asher, 1981) which is based on learners’ physical responses to commands given by the teacher in L2; and the Natural Approach (Krashen, 1982) emphasizes acquisition of language in stages similar to those experienced by children learning their first language and it relies on comprehensible input presented at a level slightly above the learner’s proficiency level in a low stress
environment (Brown, 1994). Interestingly, these methods may have developed in reaction against the Grammar-Translation method in that they all focus on the oral/aural aspect of language learning.

In the United States, when a language other than English is being taught, foreign language instruction in which the students and/or the teacher share an L1, its use often falls somewhere in the middle of this spectrum, as in the case of bilingual education. Indeed, whether or not a learner's first language can be an effective tool for use in the instructed acquisition of a foreign or second language is a question that has been debated for the past several decades.

Language teaching methodologies developed since the late 1950s, have stressed the importance of developing learner confidence in and reliance upon the target language. When neither the class as a whole or the teacher and the class share an L1, as in the case of intensive English as a second language classes taught in an English-speaking country, complete use of the target language seemed to be only natural and all to the good. Foreign and second language teachers-in-training were warned to ban L1 use regardless of the function that it might serve in classroom discourse. Teachers were encouraged to extinguish not only interpersonal L1 use between students and to limit their own use of L1, but also the intrapersonal use of L1, usually in the form of silent translation, dictionary use and glossing reading passages. One of the first methodology texts (Brooks, 1960) published in the last half of the 20th century strongly recommended that classroom interaction be limited to L2 almost exclusively. In the guise of good classroom management technique, this dictum handed down by Brooks and others was designed to encourage L2 acquisition by requiring
learners to use it wherever possible and to decrease dependency on their L1.

If any part of the class is conducted in English [the L1], it is brief and at the end of the period. This assures the learner of what is available to him nowhere except in his language class: a sustained period of time in which the target language is the sole means of communication with those about him. (p. 129)

The thought behind Brooks’ suggestion resonates with foreshadowings of Krashen’s Input Hypothesis (1982). While Krashen would not agree that a classroom setting that input can best be obtained in a classroom setting, the Input Hypothesis does emphasize the importance of sustained input in the target language. Brooks also claims that it makes sense to provide learners with as much exposure to the target language as possible. The problem with the ban on L1 proposed by Brooks and others is that not only was L2 use to be encouraged, it was to be expected, some teacher trainers going so far as to advise the imposition of penalties for L1 use and rewards for attempts at using L2.

During the mid 1960s and through the late 1970s foreign language teachers were trained to encourage learners to use the L2 as much as possible, and at the same time instruction was viewed in terms of discrete language skills to be taught in isolation of each other with little thought given as to how these skills might be integrated to promote real communication. Interaction most often occurred between teacher and learner and when it did happen occasionally among learners, it was often limited to elicited responses to drills and questions. Small group work, it was often advised, especially in homogeneous foreign language classes should be used sparingly because of the nearly overwhelming temptation that it presented for learners to use their L1.

As in foreign language instruction, the question of L1 use in the second
language classroom is also a contentious issue, perhaps even more so. Some teachers tolerate the use of L1 while others forbid it completely, and as described above, going so far, even 40 years later, as to collect fines or impose other forms of negative reinforcement on any learner who uses L1 in class. Although such cases may be extreme, it is probably safe to say that very few teachers, actually encourage the use of L1 in their classes.

What language to use in the language classroom appears to be a simple question, but it is a highly charged one on a variety of levels. From a political point of view, Auerbach (1993) points out that the assumption that ESL teachers do not need to know other languages in order to teach English may even contribute to the advancement of such “English only” policies in ESL classrooms. At the core of his book, “Linguistic Imperialism”, Phillipson (1992) provides numerous illustrations of the subjugation or extermination of a population’s native language in favor of English, which has long been an integral part of the British process of colonization, and also of the practice of Americanization in the United States as evidence of the role of language in political and social power. Heller (1995) articulates this sentiment clearly and points out that

[I]anguage practices are inherently political insofar as they are among the ways individuals have at their disposal of gaining access to the production, distribution and consumption of symbolic and material resources, that is insofar as language forms part of the processes of power. (p. 161)

Indeed, consider how the balance of power changes in the classroom when learners communicate with each other in a manner which excludes not only learners who do not share the L1, but also the teacher. On some level, power is removed from the teacher who no longer has control over or even
knows what is being discussed. Such a loss of power can be threatening to teachers who find themselves unable to join in and guide the course of a discussion in class. The imposition of the L2, particularly if the teacher is a native speaker of the L2, carries with it political undertones of one language being better or more desirable than another. It necessarily gives unequal weight to the L1 of the learners and that of the teacher.

Language choice in the classroom also has social and psychological ramifications. Chastain (1976) divides variables which affect language learners into two categories -- intrinsic, those variables that come packaged within the individual learner and extrinsic, those which are independent of the learner but nonetheless interact to color the learning experience. Both Auerbach and Heller point out that code switching to L1 gives the learner access to resources which may not be accessible in the L2. It is reasonable to believe that this access has an effect on intrinsic variables such as self-perception and that the ability to retrieve and communicate information is an essential part of maintaining one’s own status within a group. It is part of the foundation of an individual’s personal power. The current study considers how access to internal resources through the use of L1 in prewriting discussions affects the learners’ L2 writing. If learners discuss a question in their L1 with other learners who share the L1, will their L2 (English) writing on that topic be different from samples of L2 writing that are produced when the discussions take place in the L2 with other learners with a variety of L1 backgrounds?
Statement of the Problem

Adult learners in university-based intensive English as a second language programs (IEP) are often in a situation which demands demonstration of English proficiency, generally by means of some type of score, must be earned as quickly as possible to meet university entrance requirements. Added to this may also be the very practical concern of the relatively high cost of such English instruction. As a result, those responsible for the development of the curriculum in such programs are, by necessity, concerned with providing efficient instruction that will prepare learners to compete in an institution of higher learning in which English is the medium of instruction in the shortest possible amount of time. To this end, it behooves curriculum developers to be vigilant and responsive to methodological theory and practice that will offer learners the swiftest and smoothest path to the necessary proficiency goal.

While the larger question addressed by the current study has as its focus the role of L1 in the IEP curriculum for adult learners, it is the more specific question of whether L1 has a legitimate role in the acquisition of L2 writing skills in such an environment that is at its core. Writing is the central concern of this study primarily due to the the value placed on writing skills in a university context, the volume of writing that students, both undergraduate and graduate are required to produce, and because of the importance of accuracy in their writing.

Researchers and teachers of L2, in an effort to provide instruction that is relevant to and reflective of the university experience, are continually concerned
with what classroom and homework tasks will be required of learners, not only in terms of writing, but all other academic skills as well when they become fullfledged members of the academic discourse community. In addition, it has been useful for researchers to investigate how other members of this community, namely faculty, perceive varying degrees of inaccuracy in L2 user writing. Studies and surveys conducted by Sherwood (1977), Behrens (1978), Ostler (1980), Johns (1981), Casanave and Hubbard (1992), Zamel (1993), Carson and Leki (1994), Meyer (1995), May and Bartlett (1995), Kim (1997) and others have looked at both the types of academic tasks, including writing, that learners will face once they are matriculated into university classes and at how important various features of L2 user writing affect assessment by faculty. It is because writing carries such significance for the adult learner in an academic setting that it was chosen for the focus of the current study, which addresses the controlled use of L1 in prewriting discussion and its effect on resultant in-class L2 writing assignments.

Theoretical Framework

That first language has some influence on the acquisition of second language is not a new idea. Phonological, lexical and syntactic influence of one language on another is not only a subject for academic research. Awareness of cross-linguistic influence is evident when a native speaker of one language imposes phonological and syntactic influences of another on his or her language. It is called an “accent”. Actors often purposefully strive to incorporate elements
of another language in to their own in order to make their performances realistic. What is known about the effects of cross-linguistic influence, or transfer, on the process of L2 acquisition is part of the foundation for the current study.

Cross-linguistic influence

While effects of early behaviorist theory can be seen in Charles Fries’ (1945) very influential text Teaching and Learning English as a Foreign Language, this question first came into full focus of research with the publication of Skinner’s 1957 work Verbal Behavior in which language learning is viewed as the development of automatic responses or habits through operant conditioning involving reinforcement of desired behaviors through reward and their elimination through absence of reward and through much repetition and practice. These ideas were quickly incorporated by educators into teaching models. In 1960, Nelson Brooks published Language and Language Learning, a popular theory and methods text used in countless foreign language teacher training programs around the U.S., which emphasized this philosophy.

The single paramount fact about language learning is that it concern, not problem solving, but the formation and performance of habits (p. 49).

The concept of cross-linguistic influence on L2 acquisition sprang from the argument that where the L1 and the L2 were identical in structure, positive transfer would take place, providing a ready-made set of habits that worked in the L2 and that where L1 and L2 differed, an analogous set of bad habits or
errors would result from negative transfer.

The Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) (Lado, 1957) looked at cross-linguistic influence on language learning as related to the degree of similarity existing between the L1 and the L2. In short, Lado claimed that the more the target language had in common with the native language, the easier it would be to learn and conversely the more dissimilar, the more difficult. In terms of pedagogy, the CAH was thought to be predictive. If a comprehensive contrastive analysis were performed on two languages, the L2 and the target language, it was suggested, predictions could be made about what features of the target language would be difficult for learners to acquire and what errors they would make when beginning to use the L2. As more analyses were performed on a variety of languages, it became clear that difference between languages could not be viewed simply as one language having a feature that the other did not which led to researchers categorizing differences in an attempt to enhance the predictive power of the CAH. Stockwell, Bowen, and Martin (1965) suggested that difference in syntax can be classified as features that cause more or less trouble for the learner from a particular L1. On one end of the spectrum, for example, they claim that a correspondence of form and function between languages will result in minimal difficulty for the learner (e.g. x in L1 = y in L2); but a split in meaning from L1 to L2 where x = either y or z, depending on specific intention, will cause problems for the learner. However, a number of studies conducted in the 1970’s and early 1980’s cited by Ellis (1994, p 302) indicated that errors which could be accounted for by L1 interference was below 50%. Other researchers proposed that errors not accounted for by the CAH
might be explained if the process of L2 acquisition were considered to be developmental in nature, as cases of over generalization of L2 rules. Further, others suggested that it might not be difference that caused the most difficulty for learners. Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970) illustrated this in a study of the effect of alphabet type on L2 spelling. They found that learners whose L1 used the roman alphabet made more spelling errors in English that those whose L1 employed a non-roman alphabet. Eckman (1981) showed that between unmarked and unmarked forms (e.g. unmarked = work, marked = works), marked forms are acquired later than unmarked forms, which are more widely distributed throughout the L2. Still, while no longer considered predictive, a weaker version of the CAH suggested by Wardhaugh (1970) had value in explaining learner errors after the fact, but it still required, in the case of English as a second language, that a time-intensive analysis of the target language be conducted. Particularly for classroom teachers, this process could be unwieldy. However, a moderate form of the CAH, proposed by Oller and Ziahosseiny (1970) can be a useful pedagogical tool because while it does not allow for the prediction of specific errors by individuals, it can predict areas of syntax and phonology where learners of a particular L1 background might encounter problems.

Selinker (1972, 1992) introduced the idea of interlanguage based on the premise that contrastive analysis falls short not only in its predictive value, but also in terms of description. He rejects the notion that learner language is simply the syntactic, phonological and lexical manifestation of L1 transfer to L2. While acknowledging that L1 does influence L2 in a variety of ways, he suggests that
interlanguage be viewed in terms of everything that is brought by the learner to bear on the construction of his/her interlanguage, including knowledge from L1, knowledge from other languages with which the learner might be familiar, knowledge of the rules of Universal Grammar (UG), the learner's own cognitive abilities, and the learner's purposes in learning an additional language.

In addition, other researchers (Gass, 1979; 1983 and Odlin, 1989) posit that contrary to the CAH notion of areas of difference always equals difficulty for the learner, positive transfer can and does often occur between L1 and L2. Both Gass and Odlin suggest that similarities between syntactic and phonological structures in the L1 and the target language can increase the rate of learning those features in the L2. However, in her study of the transferability of relative clause structures Gass also argues that in addition to specific L1 characteristics, transfer of certain linguistic features depends also on the rules of universal grammar.

Current views on the role of L1 in second language acquisition are still contradictory. In general, the literature focuses on the transfer of features of L1 to L2 within the theory of Universal Grammar (UG). Simply put, the UG theory, developed by Chomsky (1981, 1965) was based on his earlier work on the existence in human beings of a language acquisition device (LAD) and states that the human mind is equipped by nature to learn language and that all human language is governed by a finite framework of principles and parameters. Within this framework all languages are governed by the same set of principles, but the parameters are unique to each language. Odlin (1989) asserts that universalists assumptions are broadly based on relatively small samples and that
caution should be exercised in making claims which generalize to the entire universe of human language. Cook (1993) contends that the UG model as proposed by Chomsky is incomplete. Citing work by Felix and Weigl (1991) which demonstrated that UG is not always the basis of learner utterances, Cook argues that for second, third or fourth language acquisition, learning processes must be combined with input in the UG to produce within the learner a grammar of the L2 and that a multicompetent speaker of two or more languages does not learn a language in the same way that a monolingual speaker learns a second language.

Contrastive Rhetoric

Because the goal of the current study is to determine whether L1 has an impact on L2 writing, it is important to include an overview of the area of contrastive rhetoric in its theoretical framework. The foundation of this notion lies in the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis, developed in the middle of the 20th century, which posits that language influences thought and perception. In particular, it claims that native language influences thought and therefore necessarily and effectively limits the acquisition of a second language. As concerns writing, the central question in this area is whether modes of discourse are culturally determined. The concept of contrastive rhetoric in L2 teaching was introduced by Kaplan (1966). In this classic paper Kaplan argues that speakers of different languages have widely differing perceptions of what is considered to be “good writing”, that is, clear and effective presentation of information, and that these
differences account for many of the difficulties that L2 learners have in reading and writing in English. However, evidence against the strong version of the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis and against Kaplan's concept of culturally determined rhetorical development sprang largely from studies of bilinguals who exhibit no difficulty in moving comfortably between all aspects of their two languages.

Current thinking by writing theorists (Connor, 1996, Folman and Connor, 1992; and Carson, 1992) in this area allows for differences in rhetorical style among speakers of various languages, but links these differences primarily to the cultural influences of instruction and cultural self- and other-perceptions and their effect on performance rather than to differences in cognitive processing and underlying linguistic knowledge. The current thinking in this area of research, then is that while L1 does influence L2 writing, this influence is largely cultural in nature rather than cognitive and linguistic. In addition, L1 does not necessarily interfere with the acquisition of L2. Indeed, it very likely that L1 supports L2 learning.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of the current study is to determine whether the language used by learners, either L1 or English, in small group pre-writing discussion has an effect on a short timed writing done in English. Specifically this study undertakes to answer these questions.

• Do two groups of L2 writing samples, those generated following discussion in L1 and those generated following discussion in English (L2),
differ in fluency as measured by a word count?

- Do the two groups of samples differ from each other in their grammatical complexity as measured by a count of T-units and error-free T-units?

- Do the two groups of samples differ from each other in their syntactic maturity as measured by the mean length of T-units and error-free T-units?

- Do the two groups of samples differ from each other in overall proficiency as measured by the mean of holistic scores assigned by three trained and experienced raters?

Of secondary interest are the following related questions:

- Do learners from different L1 backgrounds differ significantly from each other in terms of each of the six measurements taken?

- Does learner proficiency level make a difference in the impact of discussion language on the written product?

Finally, it is of interest to learn whether any of the independent variables interact with each other to produce significant effects. Of special interest is the effect of time in combination with the language used (either L1 or L2) in the pre-writing activities and the effect of their interaction on fluency, grammatical complexity and maturity and overall proficiency of their writing. That is, do we see significant effects when the means of the measurements for each variable is considered over the course of the quarter as opposed to when we look only at
the overall means.

In addition to answering these research questions, it is hoped that this study adds data to the currently limited corpus of literature in the field of second language acquisition, particularly the area of second language writing as concerns the role of L1 in the instructional process.

Significance of the Study

Because this investigation focuses on the effects of selected use of L1 in the classroom on L2 writing, it is significant in several ways. First, it adds data to the SLA corpus, which is limited in regard to how controlled use of L1 by learners can affect L2 acquisition. Because it examines these effects among six language groups, it will also provide important information about the variables outlined in the research question when viewed within language-specific contexts. Moreover, results which focus on the interaction of proficiency level and the effect of L1 on writing raises practical questions about the applications of L1 in the development of IEP writing curricula and is of interest to curriculum designers and teachers when viewed from a pedagogical point of view. Finally, unlike most of the related studies reviewed in the literature, this research takes a longitudinal view of the effects of L1 on L2 writing and focuses on adults in an ESL environment rather than on children in bilingual settings.
Assumptions

The current study is based on the following set of assumptions:

- Subjects' placement within the intensive English program (IEP) focused on in this study is accurately based upon performance parameters of standardized on proficiency tests, specifically the TOEFL and/or the MELAB, specific to this intensive English program. It is accepted that placement parameters will vary from program to program and that for example, not all learners who are considered advanced in one program will necessarily be considered so when judged by proficiency parameters used in another IEP.

- Subjects will cooperate with the protocol of this study by attending class and participating fully in the gathering of data.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used in accordance with these definitions:

- Intensive English as a second language instruction - English learned in an instructed setting of more than 18 hours per week in which the L1 of
learners vary and in which the L2 is used as a primary language of instruction. Such instruction is usually conducted in an English-speaking environment and in these cases the teacher often does not share an L1 with the learners. Intensive English instruction can also be found in EFL (English as a foreign language) settings. In such cases it is usual for the learners and the teacher to share a common L1. Of these two contexts, the former is most applicable to the current study.

- **Code-switching** - the act of interchanging words, phrases or sentences from two or more languages.

- **Holistic scoring** - a method of assessment of writing samples based on a qualitative impression derived from an agreed upon rubric of writing features by a calibrated panel of raters. This method does not incorporate quantification of any feature of the writing.

- **T-unit** - measurement of the syntactic complexity of writing defined by Hunt (1977) as one main clause and all of its attached or embedded clauses or phrases regardless of accuracy.

- **Error-free T-unit** - the same structure as described above of a T-unit, but accurate in terms of syntax and morphology. In this study, errors in spelling, punctuation and article usage do not detract from the classification of “error-free”. In addition, lexical errors are permitted if
they do not interfere with the message being communicated by the
writer, based on the judgement of expert raters.

- **Mean length of T-unit/Error-free T-unit** - mean number of words per t-
  unit or error-free t-unit in a writing sample. Used as a measurement of
  the syntactic maturity of writing. Abbreviations are counted as the
  number of words that they represent, e.g. UAE = United Arab Emirates,
  or three words. Contracted or hyphenated words such as well-written
  are counted as two words. In

- **Word count** - the measure of fluency as determined by the total number
  of words in a writing sample. Abbreviations and hyphenated words are
  counted in the manner described above.
CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Part I

Because the purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of L1 in an ESL classroom has an effect on learner writing following group discussion, this review of literature focuses primarily on six related areas which are discussed in the first section of this chapter. These include language choice among L2 learners, the transfer of linguistic and literacy skills from L1 to L2, possible roles of L1 in the L2 writing process, language choice of the teacher, group interaction and L2 development, and the role of L1 in learner personal power and self-esteem. The second section of this chapter deals with the literature related to the methods of data analysis applied to the current study, these being fluency (overall length) of writing, T-unit analysis and holistic scoring as indices of growth in proficiency.

Language Choice among L2 Learners

The question of whether L1 use in an instructed L2 context can serve to enhance L2 acquisition either qualitatively or quantitatively can be viewed from the perspective of learner use or teacher use. Both have been studied by a
number of researchers over the past 15 years. Regarding learner use of L1 in an ESL context, Auerbach (1993) points out that while most teachers in the field of ESL would reject the political and social implications of the notion of English only, many actually do practice it at a micro level in their own classrooms. She conducted a survey in which she asked ESL teachers at a state level TESOL conference whether they believed that ESL students should be allowed to use their L1 in ESL classes. In response 20% said yes, 30% said no and the remaining 50 percent responded that they did sometimes, but interestingly, of these many offered apologetic qualifications like “only as a last resort”. The thrust of her paper is that native language ought not to be prohibited in ESL classrooms, because it can be an effective aid to L2 acquisition. She proposes that students be given the chance to reach their own decisions regarding when using their first language might be useful in helping them acquire their second and believes that there are many situations in which L1 is not only useful for communication among learners of the same L1 background, but may have instructional value that results in enhanced L2 acquisition.

Atkinson (1987) and Harbord (1992) suggest that learner preference is among the advantages to giving L1 a place as a pedagogical tool in the L2 classroom. Other advantages cited by Atkinson (1987) include efficient use of class time, and the affective benefits that may occur with an approach that is more “humanistic” in that it allows the learner access to all of his or her cognitive resource regardless of in what language they may be stored than one which denies learners the chance to use all of what they know. However, both Harbord and Atkinson warn against an excessive use of L1, particularly for
purposes of translation. As was stated earlier, Harbord explains that it is important to encourage students to use the L1 for communication and functional, i.e. bringing meaning to the text or to the conversation rather than for word-by-word translation. Atkinson warns that overuse of L1 can result in a dependence on such translation and to a sense of insecurity in using the L2 where learners do not feel that they can understand meaning without word for word decoding. He believes that while L1 is “not a suitable basis for curriculum or methodology”, it is an undervalued and often neglected resource for the L2 classroom. Regarding the question of potential dependence on L1, Chang (1992) found that when students were given the opportunity to select either L1 or L2 to use during group work in the classroom, they elected to use L2 more often than L1. Auerbach (1993) also reports that especially among higher-level learners, there is a preference for using L2 over L1.

It is clear, then that code-switching, whether as an intentional part of the pedagogical plan or as an independent phenomenon, occurs in L2 classrooms. The literature in this area suggests two important things about mixing languages in the L2 classroom. First, there seem to be specific sociolinguistic reasons for code-switching among learners and second, code-switching not only does not impact negatively on L2 production, but that it may even have a beneficial role in the acquisition of L2. Eldridge (1996) points out that decreasing the use of L1 in a classroom does not guarantee an increase in the use of L2. He studied code-switching among Turkish learners of English and found that contrary to what was expected, learners with both strong and weak levels of L2 proficiency employed code-switching at the same rate. However, the function of code-
switching did vary among learners with different levels of proficiency in the L2. He suggests that the amount of L2 actually practiced in ESL classes did not decrease when learners switched to Turkish, because often the switching could be considered developmental and therefore, also transient as it was most commonly prompted by what he terms some type of “linguistic deficit” in the L2, usually a deficit of vocabulary or of hesitation and floor holding techniques in the L1. Similarly, Hancock (1997) studied learner language choice during small group work in an L2 classroom where learners share an L1 and found that a specific pattern of intention could be attached to code-switching. He determined that the L1 was used either to signal in-group status through jokes, asides or other non-task oriented language, or for some communicative purpose such as clarification of unfamiliar vocabulary. He points out that it may be possible, by helping learners recognize the difference between the two, to reduce the number of instances of L1 which are not related to the task, but that it may be neither possible nor desirable to reduce L1 use which, in effect, supports the development of L2.

Transfer of Linguistic and Literacy Skills from L1 to L2

Growing interest in the field of bilingual education and immersion language models has generated a good deal of research on the transfer of literacy skills from one language to another. Cummins (1981) claimed that the potential for such a transfer does exist in his interdependence hypothesis, which states:
To the extent that instruction in Lx is effective in promoting proficiency in Lx, transfer of this proficiency to Ly will occur provided there is adequate exposure to Ly (either in school or environment and adequate motivation of learn Ly. (p. 29.)

A number of studies (Masny and d’Anglejan, 1985; Scribner and Cole, 1981, Genesee, 1979) have provided evidence that reading and writing skills successfully learned and practiced in L1 will be applied to an L2. This foundation in literacy serves to support the acquisition of L2. According to Odlin (1989), “[t]here is reason to believe that individuals with more developed native-language literacy skills will perform better in second language writing” (p. 135).

In addition to his interdependence hypothesis, Cummins argued that a learner’s cognitive/academic language proficiency in L1 also exists in L2 and that such proficiency can be transferred to L2 after a learner has reached what he calls a “threshold level” of L2 proficiency, which provides the foundation necessary for the use of high-level language. Studies by Clarke (1978), Cziko (1978) and Alderson (1984) support the notion that, as concerns reading skills in particular, transfer of literacy skills seems to be dependent on such a threshold level of L2 proficiency. Mohan and Lo (1985) suggest that organizational skills in L2 writing are representative of what has been learned in L1 and which transfers to L2. Jones and Tetroe (1987) found that whatever writing skill learners possessed in their first language, whether weak or strong, it was transferred to L2 writing regardless of the proficiency in the L2.

Carson et al. (1990) suggest that the interdependence and threshold level hypotheses proposed by Cummins do not take into account the role of L2 input and instruction in the acquisition of literacy skills. They conducted a study which
examined the relationship between the development of reading/writing skills in L1 and L2 within the same subjects to see whether second language proficiency affects the transfer of skills. Carson et al. found that transfer of reading skills was stronger than that of writing skills. They assert that while interlingual transfer can occur, there seems to be variation which is dependent on L1 background and educational experience.

More recent studies on the issue of transfer of educational training (Leki, 1995; Spack, 1997) dealing with international students who were able to successfully pursue academic study in the United States showed that a majority of these students had strong reading and writing skills in their L1 providing them with a solid foundation upon which to build their L2. A study by Uzawa (1996) supports this finding. He employed a think-aloud methodology for an investigation concerning the characteristics of L1, L2 and translation writing processes. He also found not only a transfer of level of writing skill between L1 and L2 writing, but also that the process of writing was also transferred. That is, the subjects who used successful planning strategies in L1 also used them in L2 and those who were inexpert in L1 were also inexpert in L2. Not only do L2 writers appear to transfer their L2 writing skill and strategies, but also methods of learning to write. Dong (1998) studied the type of writing instruction university level ESL learners had received when learning to write in their own languages and what differences they perceive between learning to write in their own language and learning to write in the writing in L2 when compared to writing in their L1. When she categorized the data concerning type of instruction, the responses received fell roughly into four categories: 1) learning
to write through reading; 2) learning to write through practice; 3) learning to write from peer and teacher feedback and 4) being motivated to learn to write by the high expectations of the teacher. Interestingly, regardless of the method of learning to write in L1, her subjects reported relying on the same method to learn to write in English. This suggests that individual learning strategies may be conduits for transfer of skills, especially in adult learners.

Ting (1996) questioned the extent to which this holds true. After making extensive self-observations as he drafted a story in his L1, he categorized and analyzed the strategies that he used and then attempted to employ the same strategies when writing in English, his L2. His experience led him to two conclusions that pose limitations on the concept of transfer of skills as outlined in the earlier research cited above. First he hypothesizes that “different strategies require different threshold levels of L2 proficiency in order for transfer to happen” (p.139). Second, he proposes that while the transfer of L1 writing strategies does facilitate L2 composing, “at a certain proficiency level they may work to the learner’s disadvantage if they are not modified or used with caution”.

Berman (1994) looked at L2 writing to determine if there was a difference in grammatical proficiency and overall organization related to whether subjects received writing instruction in Icelandic (L1) or English (L2). His results indicate that improvement for subjects with lower grammar proficiency was greater when writing instruction was conducted in English (L2), but there was little difference between organization scores on the pre- and post-tests among the subjects with higher grammar proficiency whether they received instruction in
L1 or in L2, suggesting that perhaps a threshold level of grammatical competence exists which influences a learner’s ability to apply, in this case, writing skills acquired in L1 to L2 writing. It should be noted here that Berman employed a “holistic” measure of grammatical proficiency and so what specific features of grammar which may determine what constitutes the threshold is not clear.

L1 in the L2 Writing Process

Friedlander (1990) hypothesized that if learners utilized brainstorming techniques to plan their writing then and then translated it into English, the content and organization would be superior to responses both planned and written in English when the writer’s knowledge of the topic had been acquired in the L1. His study focused on the effect of the interaction of language and topic and he found evidence to support his hypothesis. The results of the study confirmed that when students were allowed to use their L1 to explore and develop their ideas that had been acquired and stored in memory in the L1 in pre-writing activities, their L2 writing was significantly enhanced in terms of length, number of details, and overall quality as determined by a holistic rating. Cumming (1987) found that as learner proficiency increased, the use of L1 in relationship to L2 writing became more focused and specific. His study indicates that learners with low level L2 proficiency use L1 to “generate content” and that learners with high level L2 proficiency also use the L1 to make initial lexical
choices and then to check these choices.

By using taped think-aloud protocols, in which learners vocalized their thoughts during the process of composing in L2 and follow-up questionnaires, Raimes (1985) determined that low proficiency ESL learners, as identified by the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency (one third of the MELAB), rely on their L2 as part of their writing strategy, even when no instructions to do so are given. Osbourne and Harss-Covaleski (1992) conducted a study to determine the effect of translation on L2 writing in adult ESL composition students. They found no significant differences between writing which was translated from L1 and that which was composed directly in L2 on measurements of holistic rating, T-unit length, percentage of error-free T-units, and length of composition (word count). A study by Kobayashi and Rinnert (1990) also looked at differences between compositions that were composed directly in English and those that were composed in Japanese and then translated. Interestingly, the findings of neither of these studies support the concerns that Atkinson (1983) expresses for the use of translation in the classroom. Instead, they determined that the syntactic complexity of the written product was greater in the translation among writers regardless of proficiency in English. In addition, Kobayashi and Rinnert found that lower proficiency subjects produced L2 writing of higher quality in terms of content, organization and style when they translated. For subjects with a higher level of proficiency in English there was no difference between translated and direct composition. Another interesting note about their study is that when questioned in a follow-up debriefing, more than fifty percent of the subjects reported that they used their L1 in the composition process in some way, even
though they had been instructed not to translate.

Garrett et al. (1994) conducted a study with elementary children in bilingual instructional settings in which a variety of pre-writing activities were done alternately in L1 and L2. Over a three month period, they measured the subjects’ writing both qualitatively and quantitatively and while they found that no significant effect which could be attributed to L1 use, the subjects did report that they liked being able to use their L1 in a supportive environment.

Polio (1990) disagrees that L1 use in the writing process is beneficial. She makes the argument that when writing is held to be a thinking process, allowing students to use their L1 in the planning and drafting of compositions could interfere with the thought processes involved in writing. Further, Polio asserts that use of L1 deprives learners of necessary L2 input and opportunities for negotiation that are essential to L2 acquisition.

Research by Cumming (1990), Cummins (1991) and Jones and Tetroe (1987) offers evidence against this portion of Polio’s argument. Their studies demonstrate that specific language skills including that of composition may exist independent of L2 proficiency, lending support to the notion that use of the L1 in class is not detrimental to the development of L2 writing.

[A] number of studies have indicated that, regardless of a language prescription, writers will transfer writing abilities and strategies, whether good or deficient, from their first language to their second language. (Friedlander, 1990, p. 109)

The review of the literature on this point suggests that whether or not the use of L1 by learners is consciously nurtured or whether it is banned in the classroom, it is there; learners use it either interpersonally or intrapersonally.
This being the case, reason calls for the investigation and design of pedagogically sound methods for the integration of L1 into the L2 classroom learning experience.

Language Choice by the Teacher

The studies cited above lend support to the notion that learner use of L1 can enhance L2 writing. However, the question of L1 use on the part of the teacher seems not to enjoy similar support. In a study in which they compared the classes of instructors in university foreign language classes who were prohibited by department policy from using the L1 in class and those of instructors who were allowed to use either the L1 or the L2, but encouraged to use the L2 as much as possible, Polio and Duff (1990) found that when the teachers did not use the students’ L1 in class, students used the L2 more often than did students whose teachers used both the L1 and L2 in class. Wong-Fillmore (1985) points out that teacher talk can be a rich source of L2 input for learners and that when teachers fail to utilized the L2 exclusively, learners are deprived of the opportunity to negotiate meaning and to exercise listening skills which incorporate contextual referencing to support limited overall language proficiency.

Polio and Duff (1994) conducted studies to determine actually how much of the target language teachers in American university foreign language classes use. They found that among the 13 classes that they observed, the amount of target language used by the teacher varied from as much as 100% to as little as
9.5%. These authors also argue that part of the teacher's job is to facilitate students' use of the target language by providing them with opportunities to listen/negotiate input/listen again and to respond/negotiate output/respond again and when the amount the target language input and output drops, so does the number of chances for these types of meaningful interactions. In fact, they cite this as one of the principle reasons for the "lack of success on the part of many FL learners". In their study, they divide the reasons for which teachers used the learners' L1 (in this case, English) into categories such as administration, empathy building, and translation of difficult vocabulary, and point out that when asked, the teachers in their studies were not always aware that they were using English at all or of how often English was being used in the classroom.

Pica (1997) believes that L1 use can be a useful tool in the L2 classroom, playing critical roles in classroom management; instructional guidance for successful completion of tasks and assignments; clarification of vocabulary and complex rules; provision of context; establishing rapport among learners and between the teacher and learners; and reduction of learner anxiety. In addition, she points out the value of raising the status of learners' L1, which aids in balancing the real and perceived power differential that can exist when it is exclusively the prerogative of the teacher to decide what language will be spoken; that is, which language has value in the classroom.

Group Interaction and L2 Development

The question of learner participation in small groups is relevant to the
current study from several interrelated perspectives. Because the integration of language skills is vital to successful L2 acquisition, it is important to examine what happens to learner aural comprehension and oral production in group activities. Interaction with peers in small groups serves not only as a point of departure for writing, it also provides a forum for peer review and editing. More than that, it encourages learners to become actively involved in generating meaning with their peers, which has an important role in the writing process and essential relationship to the written product. In a study that addressed both the question of the effectiveness of modified input, negotiation and interaction on learner oral production, Gass and Varonis (1994) found that while modified input has a positive and immediate effect on learner comprehension, it seems to be interaction which affects the grammatical and lexical quality of oral production in the long run and that negotiation enhances this process by causing interlocutors to focus their attention on areas which cause communication to break down. Most interesting is that this seems to be the case whether the interaction occurs between a native speaker of English and a learner or between two non-native learners. In either case, resulting changes in learner production in L2 move in the direction of the target language along the interlanguage continuum.

Pica and Doughty (1985) showed that negotiation of meaning among participants in group interaction creates comprehensible input and thereby should enhance L2 acquisition. Pica (1987) focused on the amount of interparticipant negotiation that occurred in one-way (e.g. decision-making tasks in which no exchange of information among participants is necessary) versus two-way (e.g. problem-solving tasks where exchange of information is
necessary) group interaction. She found that two way group interaction contained up to 400% more tokens of negotiation than were contained in one way interaction. Porter and Long (1985) feel that one of the major reasons to engage learners in group work is to increase the individual’s ability to participate, while Pica and Doughty (1987) warn again that small group work is most effective in facilitating negotiation of meaning among learners when based on a two-way exchange of information. They believe that more open discussion in which there is no required interaction gives less assertive learners the chance to avoid it all together. Ellis et al (1994), to the contrary, found that even learners who elected only to listen to the discussion rather than to actively participates showed an increase in comprehension.

Brown (1991) extended Pica’s view of one-way interaction and found that task type is a significant factor in the amount of negotiation that takes place. He classified task as having three characteristics 1) tight or loose (how controlled the task is); 2) closed or open (whether specific answers are required); 3) interpretive or procedural (the purpose of the interaction). While Brown found that there was no significant difference in the amount of negotiation between tight and loose or between open and closed tasks, he did find that interpretive tasks required more significantly more negotiation than did procedural tasks.

Rulon and McCreary (1986) studied interaction as it occurred in small group contexts. They found that this format provided greater opportunity for negotiation among learners and that negotiation was enhanced when the small group work was conducted within the framework of content. They hypothesized that students would negotiate in small groups which focused their
discussion on content and in fact, their research confirmed that a higher frequency of content-focused comprehension checks occurred in small groups than did in teacher-fronted classes.

To determine whether amount and type of L2 interaction affect different areas of learner proficiency, Spada (1986) conducted a study in which she analyzed pre- and post-test measurements of the listening section of the Comprehensive English Language Test (CELT), the Michigan Test of English Language Proficiency and three other in-house tests of reading, writing and speaking developed where the study was conducted. The findings concerning the impact of interaction on writing are the most germane to the current study. Spada found that whether the interaction was authentic, semi-authentic, form-focused or meaning focused, a significant positive correlation consistently occurred between interaction and writing proficiency.

Go (1994) suggests that group discussion as a pre-writing activity is a useful means of raising learners’ level of familiarity with topic, and enhancing planning skills which serve to broaden the contextual foundation upon which the written product can be based. Calder (1995) believes that the interactive nature of group work “provides the time and opportunity needed for thinking and talking about topics as well as revising. Due to its interactive nature, collaboration increases student awareness that successful communication requires writers to develop a sense of audience ...” (p.99)
Language and Power

Philipppson, (1992) writes extensively about the role of language in colonization and the establishment of English as the language of imperialism. His concept of linguistic imperialism springs from the broader definition of this term which he defines as an inequitable relationship between societies in which one dominates the other through exploitation, penetration, fragmentation and marginalization. He argues that the imposition of the language of the colonists on a native population, the accompanying pejorative attitude with which the use of the native language is met and the disparate levels of power represented by the relative status of each language is really the basis for considering the question of personal power and language in the first place. Heller (1995) also points out that language and one's ability to use it is key to personal power. She argues that

... language is seen as related to power in two ways. First, it is part of the processes of social action and interaction, part of the ways in which people do things, get things, influence others, and so on. Second, language itself thereby becomes a resource which can be more or less valuable, according to the extent that the mastery of ways of using language is tied to the ability to gain access to, and exercise power. (p. 159)

As Heller points out, language and one's ability to use it is key to personal power. This is true not only in the larger society, but also in the microcosm of the language classroom. Cook (1999) considers the role of the L1 in the L2 classroom within the context of his discussion of the limited view taken by some language educators that “the only appropriate models of a language’s use come from its native speakers.” He takes exception to the term “L2 learner” in that it
implies that speakers of an L2, students or not, fall and will always fall short of L1, which is viewed as the standard and the target. The term "learner" necessarily assigns members of an educational community such as a classroom unequal status. He recommends the term "L2 user", which does not carry the implication that the L2 is somehow lacking. This view is based on his belief that rather than exhibiting where L2 exists on a continuum between L1 and L2 as in Interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), L2 is a demonstration of multicompetence in a language user and he believes that L2 syllabus design should take into account the purpose for which the L2 is to be used. On this basis he suggests that there are a minimum of two uses of the L1 in a language classroom. The first use that he discusses is that of "presentation of meaning". In this case, the L1 is used to explain grammar or the meaning of a vocabulary item. The second is for communication among learners during classroom activities. Cook believes that separating the L1 from the L2 as if the one had nothing to do with the acquisition of the other is fallacious. He recommends that since "the aim of language teaching is to create L2 users" rather than the impossible but often strived for goal of creating new native speakers, it is logical that language instruction should be based upon models of successful L2 users, rather than of native speakers, and that L1 can play a role in a classroom with such a goal.

Summary

From this review of the literature on language choice of learners, the transfer of linguistic and literacy skills from L1 to L2, some possible roles of L1 in
the L2 writing process, language choice of the teacher, group interaction and L2
development, a dn the role of L1 in learner personal power and self-esteem, it is
clear that precisely what role, if any, L1 has as a tool in the instructed acquisition
of L2 has received a good deal of attention over the past four decades and it
seems possible to make several broad summary generalizations about this
question which will be related to the current study.

First, learners have a great deal at stake from an affective point of view
when they place themselves in the vulnerable position of learning a second
language. Allowing learners to employ their L1 for various purposes tends to
equalize the power differential that exists in an L2 classroom, especially when the
teacher and the learners do not share an L1. Second, L2 learners use their L1 in
the writing process whether instructed to do so or not. Since this seems to be the
case, it makes sense to explore way in which to incorporate it into the learning
process. Third, there appears to be some transfer of L1 writing skills to L2 writing
and this does not seem to be closely related to learner proficiency in L2, but
giving learner’s access to their L1 at least in the planning stages of their writing
appears to have a positive correlation with higher measurements of proficiency.
Fourth, the amount of L1 used by teachers varies greatly and the effects are
equally varied. Some never use L1. Some use it only to clarify instructions or
explanations. Some use it most or all of the time. There has been little empirical
research conducted to study the effects of L1 teacher talk on the learner’s
acquisition of L2. Finally, group interaction in L2 is a powerful classroom tool for
building L2 proficiency and in terms of writing specifically, helps learners
generate meaning and develops their sense of audience.
Part II

Methods of Analysis

In the current study, data concerning the writing performance of L2 learners will be assessed in relationship to the language (L1 or L2) that is used in a pre-writing discussion activity. The procedures chosen for the analysis of the writing samples are based on the following review of literature concerning fluency (overall word count), analysis of T-units, error-free T-units and their mean lengths, and holistic scores assigned by a panel of trained raters.

Fluency

Fluency is a complex construct. Reid (1990) suggests that it "demonstrates an ease of writing...of keeping pen to paper" without obvious starts and stops that "...can characterize breaks in thought and coherence on the part of the writer; often then, fluency is demonstrated by overall length of essay." (p. 195) That is, length of the text produced by learners, has been considered by some researchers to provide one basis for determining proficiency (Hillocks, 1986; Pawley and Syder, 1983). It has been shown to have a measurable impact on reader perception. The longer a piece of text, the more proficient readers believe the writer to be (Brelend and Jones, 1982). Larsen-Freeman and Strom (1977) also looked at the relationship between length and proficiency and reported a
significant correlation between these two variables. In her investigation of topic effect on length, Tedick (1988, 1990) found that familiarity of topic had a significant positive impact on overall length and that this correlated positively with a general assessment of writing proficiency as measured by holistic evaluation. Fluency in writing is often associated with the overall quality of an essay (Reid, 1990).

T-units

More than thirty years ago, Hunt (1965) studied the structure of sentences produced by native speakers of English at different ages in order to gauge their ability to say more in fewer words; what he termed their “syntactic maturity”. He determined that this could be measured through analysis of “minimal terminal units” (T-units). A T-unit was defined as an independent clause and all of its attached subordinate elements. By counting T-units and the number of words in each of the writing samples of native English-speaking children, Hunt established that a correlation existed between the age of the writer and the length of T-units produced; that is, as children mature, so does their ability to use subordination in their writing.

While T-unit analysis was generally accepted to be a valid overall means by which to judge L1 writing, it did not always seem to work as well as an index of syntactic maturity for second language data. Often, L2 writers lack precise vocabulary which sometimes forces lexical circumlocution that produces more and longer T-units than would occur in L1 (Moffett, 1968). For this reason, a
modified system which addressed syntactic and perhaps lexical control as a measurement of development was needed. In addition, the use of T-unit analysis as an index of overall proficiency for L2 learners was unclear (Larsen-Freeman and Strom, 1977). For researchers in the field of second language acquisition, the question of whether and how much T-unit analysis might be applicable to second language data resulted in the development of the error-free T-unit as an index of syntactic maturity in L2 writing.

Scott and Tucker (1974) were among the first to consider how T-unit analysis might be applied to second language writing since L2 writing necessarily contains errors that would not normally occur in L1. They looked specifically at the number of error-free T-units, which were determined to be those in which all syntactic and function words were correct, as one measure syntactic maturity. Larsen-Freeman and Strom (1977) conducted a study in which they attempted to fine-tune this method of looking at writer error within T-units and determined that it was problematic to categorize and give weight to specific error types. For this reason, in their study, they looked only at completely error-free T-units, that is perfect in all aspects. Gaies (1980, p.55) cites doctoral research in which Vann (1978) found no significant correlation between mean length of T-units and TOEFL scores but did find such a correlation between TOEFL scores and both error-free T-units and the ratio of error-free T-units to total T-units. However; Kameen (1979) determined that mean length of T-units could be used to differentiate relative syntactic skill of writers. He looked at mean length of T-units in compositions written as part of the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery which had been scored by two trained raters and classified
as either “good” or “poor” and found that the “good” writers produced T-units with a mean length of 18.4 word while the T-units produced by “poor” writers had a mean length of only 14.30 words. Barnwell (1988) disagrees and asserts that the T-unit is not an indicator of greater syntactic maturity in writing. Witte (1979) also challenges the notion that mean length of T-units is an accurate predictor of writing quality and points out that different genres of writing such as descriptive and argumentative style tend to elicit different lengths of T-units. This observation suggests that T-unit measurement may be sensitive to the effect of topic.

The analysis of error-free T-units is clearly more concerned with accuracy than with complexity. Polio (1997, p. 112) points out that “an essay can be full of error-free T-units, but contain very simple sentences”. This being the case, this sort of analysis presents a different set of difficulties to consider. The first and least problematic is the question of what constitutes the “unit” of analysis. There is some disagreement among researchers (Gaies, 1980; Pery-Woodley, 1991; Lin, 1983) about this question in relationship to L2 writing, particularly for low-proficiency learners. Ishikawa (1995) suggests that because L2 writers may over- or under-coordinate, error-free T-unit analysis may not provide an accurate picture of the writer’s syntax development. To remedy this, she suggests that the error-free unit of analysis be defined as “the stretch of discourse within which the desired qualities will be considered.” The second and more contentious factor is what exactly constitutes “error-free”. In the time since those first studies examined L2 writing in terms of T-units, researchers have used various methods for determining the definition of “error-free”. Polio (1997)
suggests that the error-free T-unit can be a reliable index if researchers make as clear as possible the definition used in their studies so that they are replicable. One other concern is that L2 writers may not produce a sufficient number of error-free T-units, particularly when they are strictly defined, to allow for meaningful analysis (Larsen-Freeman and Storm, 1977). For these reasons, calculation of the mean length of error-free T-units, in addition to the number of error-free T-units that occur per composition adds evidence of syntactic control when the ratio of these measurements is analyzed.

Holistic Assessment of Writing

Holistic assessment as it applies to learner writing is based on the view that writing is more than the sum total of its component parts. Analytic scoring, which focuses quantitatively on those parts (T-units, spelling, punctuation, handwriting, etc.) independent of the whole, has been "almost universally rejected as primary measures of writing ability on the grounds that they are invalid" (Charney, 1984, p. 66). Quantitative scoring generally does not address writing at the discourse level. It is not an evaluation of performance, that is, the process of writing, and is, therefore, not valid as a means of evaluating writing. Composition profiling is an intermediary method proposed by Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, et al. (1981). In composition profiling raters focus on, but do not count occurrences of features such as T-units, cohesive devices, misspellings, etc. These features are grouped into five categories (content, organization, vocabulary, language use, and mechanics) and a score is given to each category.
In this way, the raters are guided by the rubric to focus on specific aspects of a composition and because numbers are assigned to each area, composition profiling is neither holistic nor quantitative in the strict sense of either term.

White (1985) says that readers respond to writing on many levels and that to dissect that response into discrete features does not accurately measure the whole product. He argues that qualitative models of writing assessment offer validity that cannot be achieved with quantitative approaches. If writing is what is to be assessed, then the entire product needs to be judged qualitatively. What, then, is a qualitative model? Charney (1984) suggests that while holistic scoring does not provide specific information about the syntactic, lexical or rhetorical weaknesses of an essay to the scorer, nor offers correction or advice on editing to the writer, it is a “quick impressionistic qualitative” (p. 67) procedure that can be used for rating writing samples based on an established rubric which outlines scoring criteria. The classic definition of holistic assessment was conceived by Cooper (1977) as

any procedure which stops short of enumerating linguistic, rhetorical or informational features of a piece of writing. Some holistic procedures may specify a number of particular features and even require that each feature be scored separately, but the reader is never required to stop and count or tally incidents of the feature. (p. 4)

Hamp-Lyons (1992, p. 39) has identified five characteristics that she defines as minimally necessary for the holistic assessment of learner writing. These are 1) the physical presence of the writer who writes continuously for the time allotted; 2) a prompt which is flexible enough to allow for creativity on the part of the writer; 3) scoring by trained human beings; 4) a common set of criteria for
judging the writing and 5) the score is represented by a number with or without additional verbal commentary.

A number of researchers (e.g. Clifford, 1981; Lloyd-Jones, 1977; Odell, 1981; Gere, 1980) offer definitions of holistic assessment within which exist sets of commonalities that should be noted. All agree that there must be some rubric, a set of criteria or some type of qualitative scale against which writing samples are judged, raters who have been trained and a writing sample to be judged and rated.

As questions of reliability as well as content and construct validity in holistic assessment were identified in relationship to specific types of discourse, and recognition that many combinations of various factors can result in the same score, a number of modifications in criterion-reference evolved. Two of these are primary-trait scoring and multiple-trait scoring.

Primary trait-scoring is unlike most other holistic scoring methods and is founded on the notion that the prompt itself influences topic, genre, mode of discourse, and a variety of other features of writing to such an extent that specific scoring criteria should be established for each prompt in order to account for these effects (Lloyd-Jones, 1977). By designing the scoring criteria with this in mind, construct validity is said to be maintained, as is reliability. However, Hamp-Lyons (1991) argues that because a new rubric must be developed for every prompt, it is costly in terms of both time and money and that it does not produce scores that are any more reliable than other methods of holistic scoring.

Based on the Lloyd-Jones' assertion that criteria for holistic scoring should
be referenced to the context and task imposed by the prompt, Hamp-Lyons (1991) developed a system of multiple trait scoring which allows for the “on-site development” (p. 248) of a rubric against which a variety of prompts can be created and used by a consistent group of trained raters to score writing produced by groups of L2 writers. She claims that a system of multiple trait scoring allows for raters to react to different features of a piece of writing and assign a score to each of them because in reality raters do not notice and respond to many factors and allowing for some recognition of this, but limiting the traits to three or four, results in more reliable scores as well as preserving construct validity.

Summary

As the review of the literature on fluency, T-unit analysis, and holistic scoring indicates, the evaluation of writing, particularly of second language writing is a complex process, and proficiency in L2 writing may be measured in a number of ways. While not all researchers agree with all aspects of L2 writing assessment presented here, it is possible to make a few broad statements about why these methods have been employed in the current study. First, fluency seems to have an important impact on reader perception of proficiency. The more a writer can write in one sitting, the more proficient some readers believe him or her to be. In addition, there is evidence to suggest that there is an actual correlation between fluency and proficiency as determined by more objective measurements. Second, T-unit analysis provides information about
how precisely and efficiently a writer can use language. It is a measurement of
the syntactic maturity of writing. In the evaluation of L2 writing, this concept is
sometimes restricted to the analysis error-free T-units in order to gauge
acquisition of L2 syntax. T-unit analysis has been shown to be useful in
demonstrating the relative syntactic skill and general proficiency of L2 writers.
Finally, holistic assessment of writing brings the less well defined aspects of L2
writing into the overall picture of evaluation. Because it focuses on the ability of
the writer to create comprehensible, smooth and readable text, it is largely left to
the rater or raters to determine what constitutes such a text. Holistic scoring
brings together the reader and the writer in a way that other means of
evaluation do not.

Conclusion

As is evident from the review of the literature of areas germane to both
the content of the current study and the assessment procedures used to collect
and measure data, there is little that touches on how using L1 in an L2 context
can have a measurable impact on learner writing. The current study attempts to
add to the limited literature on this topic. This study investigates the extent to
which L2 learners' writing is affected by pre-writing discussion held in L1. The
resulting samples of writing were judged on the basis of overall length, syntactic
maturity and overall proficiency. The methods used to evaluate student writing
are methods conventionally used for assessing composition: measurement of
length, analysis of T-unit indices and holistic scores assigned by a panel of trained and experienced raters.
CHAPTER 3

Design and Procedures

The Instructional Context of the Study

Both the pilot and current studies were conducted at the American Language Program (ALP) at The Ohio State University (OSU), a full-time intensive English program focusing on English for academic purposes. The program has six curricular levels in which students receive 4-5 hours per day of English instruction. Initial placement within the program is determined on the basis of scores received on the MELAB (described in Chapter One, above). Placement of continuing students in subsequent quarters is based on a combination of MELAB or TOEFL scores and teacher recommendations.

Learners at all levels of instruction are exposed to an instructional approach which integrates all language skills. For example, at all levels of the ALP reading/writing curriculum learners talk about readings, graphs or other forms of visual input in small groups, sometimes with task-specific guidance and sometimes as focused free discussion. Often writing assignments proceed from such discussions.
The Pilot Study

The question of whether L1 prewriting discussion has an effect on L2 writing was tested in a small-scale study which is the basis for the current investigation. Would the benefits of interactional negotiation and the related increases in comprehension of input (Porter and Long, 1985; Pica and Doughty, 1987; Ellis et al, 1994), be reflected in learner writing if the interaction were conducted in the learners’ L1?

The subjects of the pilot study were 3 native speakers of Japanese at the beginning level of intensive English study. They were not enrolled in any university classes. Their placement at the beginning level was based upon results of the MELAB, on which all received below 45.

It was hypothesized that L1 prewriting discussion would measurably impact the L2 writing produced by the subjects in terms of fluency (length), grammatical complexity and overall organization. In order to test this idea, repeated measurements of the same subjects over time were collected so that growth could be taken into account in the analysis of data. Because only three subjects were used in this study, it is not possible to report the results in terms of statistical significance. Therefore, the results are reported only as raw data.

Twice weekly for four weeks, the subjects were given a passage written in L2 of 150-200 words to read. These eight readings included topics such as mandatory helmet laws for cyclists, international students acclimating to new surroundings, and the problems of living in a tree house, among others.
Readings were selected from *Weekly Reader* and an ESL reading text (Ackert, 1994) aimed at the beginning level learner. Efforts were made to ensure that the topics were more or less equivalent in terms of length and difficulty. In addition to the judgement of this researcher, input from other experienced teachers in the program was sought in measuring these factors.

The protocol required that twice a week, with very little introduction from the teacher, the subjects read the selected passages without the use of dictionaries. After reading the passage, they discussed it among themselves. Once a week they were instructed to discuss the passage in Japanese while the other reading for the week was discussed in English. In order to control for growth in proficiency that would hopefully occur from week to week, the sequence of L1 and L2 interaction was alternated so that on Tuesday of the first week discussion would take place in L1 and on Thursday in L2. During the next week the order would be reversed to L2 on Tuesday and L1 on Thursday and so on. Because of limited numbers, the L1 group always consisted of the same three subjects while the L2 groups included learners from other L1 backgrounds, but from whose writing measurements were not taken. The teacher played no part in the discussion other than to give the most fundamental instructions (e.g. "Talk about anything you like in the passage. Help each other.") By the third repetition of the protocol the teacher added "Discuss everything. Your ideas and your opinions are important." There was some concern on the part of the researchers that when the discussions were held in Japanese, the learners were using L1 to translate the reading and that when the discussion occurred in English, learners were heard to say "What is this?", as if asking for a definition.
It was thought that perhaps the discussions were less discussions of the text and more word-by-word decoding sessions. In order to encourage expansion of their discussion they were asked to consider the reading in broader terms.

The discussions lasted from 7 to 12 minutes. A time limit was not imposed by the teacher. When the conversation seemed to end naturally, learners were asked to leave their groups and respond to a prompt related to the reading. The response was always written in English regardless of which language was used in the discussion. The subjects were given 15 minutes to write. The teacher discussed the prompt as little as possible, making sure only that the subjects understood the question it posed. Because interest, for purposes of this study, was focused strictly on original learner-generated language, the subjects were not allowed to refer to their original reading passage while writing and no use of dictionaries was allowed.

In total twenty four writing samples were collected, eight from each of the three subjects. Twelve of the writings had been preceded by discussion in L1 and the other twelve by discussion in L2. For purposes of analysis, three factors were considered. The overall fluency was determined by a simple word count. The complexity of grammatical structures used was determined by counting the number of correct simple, compound and complex sentences as well as number of incorrect attempts to use the latter two of these sentence types. Finally, the samples were examined for signs of rhetorical organization such as evidence of a topic sentence with supporting detail. In order to make the ratings impartial, I, rather than the teacher of the class, assigned a score of 0 (lowest) to 3 (highest) to each sample.
The raw data collected during the pilot study (See Appendix D) indicated no clear pattern of difference in the number of correct simple, compound or complex sentences in the writing samples preceded by interaction in either L1 or L2. However, it appeared that fluency, number of attempted complex sentences and rhetorical organization might be positively influenced by the use of L2 in the pre-writing discussions. Perhaps the most interesting result was that the writing samples were rated higher for rhetorical organization when the writing followed discussion in L2. In fact, writing samples that were rated 0, 1 or 2 on a 0-3 scale after L1 discussion were rated higher (with the exception of one sample) by at least one point when the discussion was held in L2. Interestingly, no writing proceeding from L2 discussion was rated lower than any writing from L1 use.

Because of the extremely low number of subjects in the pilot study, it was not possible to draw any conclusion of consequence from these results. The value of the pilot study was that it raised interesting questions that might be addressed by a new investigation with a sharper focus.

Changes suggested to the protocol of the present study

Several important lessons were learned from the pilot study about changes that could enhance the investigation, making it more useful and generalizable. In addition, questions concerning the pre-writing discussions themselves and their effect on L2 writing suggest that focus of the study needed to be refined so as to take these issues more fully into account. These changes and questions were incorporated into a more comprehensive study.
The first major change is the number of subjects in the study. This was significantly increased. In addition to providing a basis for a more sophisticated analysis of the data, a larger number of subjects would ensure that several L1 backgrounds were represented, allowing for greater generalization of the results to speakers of languages other than Japanese. Second, while the pilot focused on learners at the beginning level of intensive English study, the focus of the current study is on learners at the high intermediate and advanced levels of instruction. The reason for this is that learners at higher levels of proficiency have acquired a more well-developed language base with a broader lexicon and a wider knowledge of grammatical structures in both oral and written communication. The writing samples collected during the pilot study were usually too short and simple to provide much insight into the overall effects of L1 interaction on L2 writing. The more advanced learners also have more highly developed reading and listening skills. As a result, longer pieces of writing and more sophisticated discussion are expected and may yield a clearer picture of whether learners can benefit from the use of L1 in their L2 classrooms. Finally, the pre-writing discussion prompts were expanded. Rather than asking subjects simply to discuss the readings freely, without guide questions, as was the case with the pilot study, a broad discussion question related specifically to each reading was provided.

The assessment of the pilot study and its results in terms of the number of subjects, language groups represented and level of learner proficiency has led to the reformulation of the procedures for the selection of subjects used for the current study. The hypothesis for the present investigation is that in post-L2
reading small group interaction, the use of L1 effects the fluency, grammatical complexity and overall proficiency of subsequent L2 writing, as determined by analysis of six measurements; word count, holistic score, number of T-units, number of error-free T-units, mean length of T-units and mean length of error-free T-units.

Of secondary interest is whether L1 or learner proficiency level interact with these effects. Both of these questions were examined in the context of each of the dependent variables listed above.

The Current Study

Population and Sample Selection

The population from which the sample was drawn consisted of international students enrolled in the American Language Program (ALP), the intensive English language training program at The Ohio State University (OSU), a state-supported, land-grant institution. Students enrolled in the ALP have not yet met the English proficiency required for entrance to OSU, but many plan to attend OSU or some other American college or university.

The Subjects

Two sections each of high-intermediate and advanced classes were used in the study. The study was conducted with a total of 35 subjects, representing 6 native languages; Arabic (n=5), Chinese (n=6), Indonesian (n=6), Japanese (n=2), Korean (n=13) and Spanish (n=3). The subjects ranged in age from 18 - 34 years and included both males and females. They were equally divided between
potential undergraduate and graduate students. Three of the subjects had no plans to continue at the university after studying English.

Experimental Procedures

The experiment was conducted twice weekly every-other week over a period of 10 weeks for a total of ten repetitions between the second and tenth weeks of the quarter. This time frame was selected because it seemed to be the least intrusive for the learners, teachers and the ALP as a whole.

The major research question concerns differences that may be seen between learners' writing samples depending on whether the pre-writing discussion of the passage occurs in L1 or L2. In order to investigate this question, subjects were given a poem, fable or short story to read as a point of departure for the discussion. Readings, rather than other types of stimuli such as photographs or recordings of music were chosen in order to smoothly incorporate the study into the reading/writing curriculum of the intensive English program. After each trial of the study was conducted, the classroom teachers were free to use the reading in any way that they wished. They were able to use it to teach vocabulary, reading attack skills, rhetorical organization or as a springboard for further discussion. The selection was given at the end of a class period and the subjects were assigned to read it at home for discussion the next day. The use of dictionaries and other aids was neither encouraged nor discouraged. On the subsequent class day, subjects were assigned to small groups of three to five persons. It is within these groups that the study treatment took place. On the day on which treatment was administered, the
subjects were assigned to linguistically homogeneous groups and instructed to
discuss in their L1 a topic provided by the researcher which was related to the
reading. On another day of the same week, assignment was made to
linguistically heterogeneous groups and discussion took place in English (L2).
For a period of ten minutes, subjects discussed a cue (language of discussion was
dependent on the protocol schedule) related to the reading. Following the
discussion, the subjects were given a writing prompt and asked to respond to it
individually, writing in English for thirty minutes. The thirty minute writing
protocol is based on the MELAB composition test, in order to give subjects
practice with this format.

A total of 273 writing samples were collected and analyzed on the basis of
fluency, grammatical complexity and overall proficiency. Fluency was
determined by a simple count of words generated in each sample. Grammatical
complexity was determined by an analysis of T-units. Overall proficiency was
determined by rating each sample using the adaptation of the MELAB
composition scoring rubric (Appendix C) that is currently used by the American
Language Program. A team of three trained raters read and scored each piece of
writing holistically.

The reading selections chosen for this study (Appendix A) were written by
a variety of authors. In order to avoid the time, expense and frustration of
seeking and obtaining copyright permission to use recent stories in this study,
selection of stories was limited to those originally published before 1922. Stories
published before this date are now considered to be in the public domain
according the United States Copyright Office. The poems, fables, fairy tales and
short stories are all under 2000 words. Some modifications in antiquated vocabulary and sentence structure were made in order to make the readings accessible to the greatest number of students. In a few cases, the stories were also edited for length. The following readings were selected for use in the present study and were paired according to length.

Set #1

Aesop, *The Boy, the Man and the Donkey* (360 words)
Gibran, *Your Children are not Your Children* (from *The Prophet*), (172 words)

Set #2

Andersen, *The Princess and the Pea* (431 words)
Chekov, *A Nincompoop* (592 words)

Set #3

Chopin, *The Story of an Hour* (982 words)
Saki, *The Open Window* (1182 words)

Set #4

De Maupassant, *An Old Man* (1460 words)
Twain, *My Watch* (219 words)

Set #5

O. Henry, *The Gift of the Magi* (735 words)
Tolstoy, *The Three Hermits* (1911 words)

The readings were given to the subjects on the day before the protocol was administered. This allowed time for them to read the stories at home as many times as they wished and required less class time than were the subjects to read the stories in class. Moreover, it was hoped that allowing them to read on
their own time would enhance overall group discussion by reducing the need to use discussion time for translation and overall comprehension of the readings.

Discussions were limited to 10 minutes and participants were provided with a discussion focus cue. For example, after reading “The Princess and the Pea” by Hans Christian Andersen (no date), subjects were told to focus their discussion on the concept of “standards” for judging people as it relates to the story. Discussion took place in either L1 or L2, depending on the protocol schedule.

Following the discussion, the subjects were asked to write individually in English for 30 minutes on a topic related to both the reading and the discussion. In the case of the Andersen story, the writing prompt supplied asked the subjects to consider the standards that they use to measure other people. Specifically, they were asked to write about their own standards for judging a good husband or wife.

No dictionaries or other aids were allowed during the composing process. The papers were collected, copied, and returned to the subjects after a mock MELAB writing score had been assigned by the panel of raters. The copies were retained by the researcher to be analyzed for fluency and syntactic complexity.

Procedures for Analysis of Data

The 273 writing samples were collected and the data were processed for analysis. All of the writing samples were typed so that handwriting would not
be a factor that might affect the raters’ judgements. The typist was instructed to
type the samples without alteration of any kind. That is, misspellings,
grammatical errors, sentence fragments and run-on sentences were not
corrected.

Fluency was determined by a simple word count. Hyphenated words (e.g.
well-known, over-cooked) were counted as two words and abbreviations or
anagrams were counted as the number of words represented (ALP / American
Language Program). Contractions were counted as two words.

A T-unit has been defined above as an independent clause and all of its
attached or embedded clauses or phrases. A sentence like
According to what I mentioned before, let other people share with us, but do not let
them make a decision for us. contains one T-unit. Sentence fragments were
counted as part of a contiguous T-unit if they were related in thought to a
previous or following sentence and were judged to be separated only due to
faulty punctuation. For example, I must do the thing I know right. Because it is my
life. would be counted as one T-unit. A sentence fragment was counted as a T-
unit when an error such as the omission of the copula verb would account for its
fragmentary nature as in My country very small country. Similarly, run-on
sentences were divided into T-units and counted as such. Where a fragment
could not be related to a T-unit, nor interpreted as a T-unit in its own right, it was
not included in the count of T-units.

Error-free T-units were defined as those T-units which were accurate in
terms of syntax and morphology. For example, My country very small country.
would not qualify as error-free because of the omission of the verb. In the same
way, a verb missing the third person -s would not be counted due to an error of morphology. Problems with spelling, article usage and punctuation were not counted as errors. In addition, lexical errors were not counted if they did not interfere with the message being communicated. The mean length of T-units and error-free T-units is equal to the mean number of words per T-unit or error-free T-unit in a writing sample.

The holistic score was determined by averaging the scores given to each piece of writing by three trained and independent raters. The mean of the three scores was assigned as the holistic score for that sample. The raters selected for this study had been teachers at the American Language Program for 5 to 15 years. During that time, as part of their regular testing duties, the teachers are calibrated for reading the Michigan Composition Test four time in each calendar year, that is, at the end of each quarter. Raters were also calibrated at the beginning of the study. With assistance from the Statistical Consultation Service Center at Ohio State University, the data were analyzed quantitatively using a SAS general linear model which was fit to all six dependent variables. Some of the interactions of the variables were also analyzed as fixed effect covariates and a random effect for student using PROC MIXED in SAS. Data from this part of the study were also analyzed in a four factorial blocked design to determine whether subjects from varying L1 backgrounds differ significantly from each other in terms of each of the measurements described above.
The Variables

The Independent Variables

In order to assess the effects of L1 pre-writing discussion on L2 writing, four independent variables were considered. The first of these was the treatment variable, language of discussion, which had two levels:

- native language (treatment)
- English (control)

The design of the study called for the alternating use of L1 and L2 in small group pre-writing activity on two days every two weeks. Tuesdays and Thursdays were choose as days on the experiment would be conducted. This was done in order to reduce any disruption to the classeses participating in the study. The treatment continued every two weeks during the ten week quarter for a total of five trials each of pre-writing discussion in L1 and in L2. The second independent variable was native language, which for this study had six levels:

- Arabic (n=5)
- Chinese (n=6)
- Indonesian (n=6)
- Japanese (n=2)
- Korean (n=13)
- Spanish (n=3)

The third variable was class level. The two levels of this variable were:

- high intermediate
- advanced
The final independent variable was week of the quarter during which trials were made. This variable had five levels:

- week 2
- week 4
- week 6
- week 8
- week 10

The Dependent Variables

Six dependent variables were analyzed in relationship to each of the independent variables outlined above. These were:

- simple word count (fluency)
- count of T-units
- the mean length of T-units
- number of error-free T-units
- the mean length of error-free T-units
- holistic scores

In addition, these dependent variables were measured against the interactive effect of all possible pair combinations of independent variables which included:

- native language / class level
- native language / week of the quarter
- discussion language / native language
- discussion language / class level
• discussion language / week of the quarter
• class level / week of the quarter.

Two three way interactions were examined to determine whether there was significant interaction among

• discussion language/native language/week of the quarter
• discussion language/class level/week of the quarter

Control of Confounding Variables

Growth in L2 proficiency

In order to reduce the effect of growth in L2 proficiency that is expected of learners enrolled in an intensive English program while living in an English-speaking environments, several steps were taken. First, discussion occurred alternately in L1 and in L2 (a cross-over design). In this way, the natural growth in L2 proficiency that one would expect to see over the course of a quarter of intensive language instruction is not always correlated with discussion in L1 or L2. In addition, while the readings have been paired for length and difficulty so that during any week the two readings would be more or less analogous, the sets were given to the subjects by random selection during the study. The order of administration of the paired sets of readings listed below was Set 3, Set 2, Set 4, Set 1, Set 5. This was done to prevent correlation between natural proficiency development and longer/more difficult readings.
Teacher effect

In attempt to control the effect of different teachers, all of the trials of the study were administered by the researcher. In addition, trials were administered to two groups at one time in order to reduce any possible variation in the delivery of instructions and in test conditions. Although instruction in the classes necessarily varied, the basic content of the instruction was delineated by the curriculum guidelines of the American Language Program, which helped to provide added stability to the variable of instruction.

Subject effect

The groupings were made randomly from among these subjects. The same procedure occurred with the advanced group. In both cases, the instructions were given by the same teacher, thereby reducing the number of treatment administrators to one and increasing the randomization of groupings. Discussion groups were assigned and fixed throughout the course of the study. Subjects were each assigned to two groups. One group consisted of other speakers of the same L1 and the other group was linguistically mixed. Groups were limited in size, ranging from two to five persons.

Following group discussion, subjects wrote individually for thirty minutes without benefit of dictionaries or reference to the original reading. The writing cues to which the subjects are asked to respond have been designed in such a way to allow for maximum participation in the writing task. The topic questions are loosely and broadly based on the overall theme of the reading, but do not require even minimum comprehension or recall of the passage. It is

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important to bear in mind that the writing sample is intended to reflect any effect of the discussion, not effects of reading comprehension or recall.

Topic Effect

In order to limit the effect of topic on learner writing, the writing prompts were purposefully designed to draw only upon the subjects' own opinion, world knowledge and personal experience which had been activated through group discussion, rather than from any previously learned academic information.

The discussion focus cues and writing prompts provided for each of the readings were:

Set #1 (Week 8).
Aesop, The Boy, the Man and the Donkey

Discussion focus: How do you make important decisions?

Prompt: Other people's opinions sometimes influence the decisions that we make. How much do you consider other people's opinions when you make decisions?

Gibran, Your Children are not Your Children (from The Prophet)

Discussion focus: What is the relationship between parents and children in your country?

Prompt: Parents are responsible for giving their children the things that they need to succeed in life. They give them food, medical care, clothing, shelter and an education, but how much control should parents have over their children's lives?

Set #2 (Week 4).
Andersen, The Princess and the Pea

Discussion focus: How do you decide if people are good or bad?
Prompt: Everyone has standards that they use to measure other people. What are your standards for a good husband or wife?

Chekov, A Nincompoop

Discussion focus: What makes you trust other people?

Prompt: Everyday we trust our friends to do the right thing. When would you stop trusting a friend?

Set #3 (Week 2)
Chopin, The Story of an Hour

Discussion focus: How do people know if they are in love?

Prompt: People want to have happy relationships. Do you think that men and women can agree on what makes a happy marriage?

Saki, The Open Window

Discussion focus: Is it possible to never tell a lie?

Prompt: Do you think that all people tell lies? A some lies worse than others? Is there ever a good reason to tell a lie?

Set #4 (Week 6)
De Maupassant, An Old Man

Discussion focus: How can people control their fears?

Prompt: People can be afraid of many things - snakes, flying, heights, spiders, etc. Are you afraid of anything? If you are, how do you control your fears? If you are not, why do you think that you are not?

Twain, My Watch

Discussion focus: What makes a situation frustrating?

Prompt: Have you ever been in a frustrating situation? Describe a frustrating situation and how you dealt with it.

Set #5 (Week 10)
O. Henry, The Gift of the Maji

Discussion topic: How important are things to you?
Prompt: In most cultures material wealth is considered a good thing. How important are possessions to you? What is your favorite possession?

Tolstoy, *The Three Hermits*

Discussion focus: What are the qualities of a good teacher?

Prompt: When we think about learning, we generally think about receiving information from people who know more than we do. What could be learned from an uneducated person?

The subjects were free to draw upon information gleaned from the readings assigned before each trial and/or from the discussion. Indeed, it was hoped that the pre-writing discussions would stimulate the subjects' background knowledge, ideas and feelings concerning the topic.
CHAPTER 4

Results and Discussion

As the review of literature concerning the various roles of L1 in L2 classroom discourse suggests, L1, whether used inter- or intra-personally, can support L2 acquisition in general and L2 writing in particular. The research supports the concept of use of L1 in pre-writing planning as well as in composition within some contexts. The purpose of the present study is to focus on the use of L1 in pre-writing discussion and to explore various dimensions of its effects on L2 writing over a period of 10 weeks.

As noted above, results of this study were analyzed using SAS General Linear Models Procedure. A mixed effect ANOVA was used to model the repeated measures data. The model had a mixture of random and fixed effects. The random effect was person and the fixed effects were native language, discussion language, class level and week of the quarter. The results reported below are considered to be significant when the probability of random occurrence is less than .05 (p < .05). In this section the results of the analysis of each of the dependent variables will be reported in terms of the main effects of each of the independent variables (discussion language, native language, class level, and week of the quarter) as well as in terms of two-way and three-way interactions when the independent variables are considered for their combined
effects. Tables 4.1 - 4.6 below provide the results of the ANOVA for each of the
dependent variables. Analysis and discussion follow the report of the main
effects and interactions. Table 4.1 illustrates the effects of the independent
variables listed above on the number of words produced. Table 4.2 focuses on
their effects on the number of T-units, Table 4.3 on the mean length of T-units,
Table 4.4 on the number of error-free T-units, Table 4.5 on the mean length of
error-free T-units and Table 4.6 on the holistic mean score.

Main Effects

Discussion Language

In the analysis of data, the principle issue being investigated was whether
there was any direct effect of L1 use on the L2 written product. The analysis
revealed no significant effects for any of the dependent variables when related to
the discussion language as the main effect in the pre-writing activity. That is, any
difference in measurements of word count (p = 0.5566), number of T-units (p =
0.2531), mean length of T-units (p = 0.8846), number of error-free T-units (p =
0.6597), mean length of error-free T-units (p = 0.5783), or in the holistic mean
score (p = 0.6386) were attributable to chance.

These results indicate that the subjects did not produce more text, more
complex text, or text that was judged to be of higher overall proficiency when
the pre-writing discussion was held in L1 than in L2. Of course, the reverse is also
ture. Using L1 did not have a negative effect on the fluency, complexity or
proficiency of the subjects' writing. This being the case, we can speculate that
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Table 4.1 Test of Fixed Effect - Word Count (p < .05)

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Table 4.2 Test of Fixed Effects Number of T-Units (p < .05)

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Table 4.3 Test of Fixed Effects Mean Length of T-Units (p < .05)

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Table 4.4 Test of Fixed Effects Number of Error Free T-Units (p < .05)

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Table 4.5 Test of Fixed Effects Mean Length of Error Free T-Units (p < .05)

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Table 4.6 Test of Fixed Effects of the Holistic Mean (p < .05)
justification for L1 use in the classroom may be related more to affective variables than to the discourse variables measured in this study.

Native Language

The analysis of the main effects indicates that a subject's native language had a significant effect on fluency (p = 0.0460), the mean length of T-units produced (p = 0.0001), the mean length of error-free T-units produced (p = 0.0001), as well as on overall proficiency as measured by the holistic scores assigned to the writing samples (p = 0.0005), regardless of the language used in the pre-writing discussion. No significant difference was seen for the number of T-units (p = 0.2776) or error-free T-units (p = 0.2825) found in the subjects' writing.

As there was a significant effect on fluency by native language, it is important to look at these results in more depth. There was a great deal of variability in the amount text produced by subjects of different L1 backgrounds. Interestingly, the L1 groups which produced the least amount of text were the Japanese with 203.93 average number of words per writing sample, followed by the Koreans with 206.41 words per essay and then the Chinese with a mean of 220.52 words per sample. Between this average and that of the group with the next largest mean number of words, there is a rather large jump. The Spanish speakers wrote an average of 242.34 words. The Arabic speakers wrote an average of 264.35 words while the Indonesians produced the most text with an average of 271.57 words in their writing samples.
It is interesting to note that measurements of some of the dependent variables are higher for some language groups than with others. For example, the Japanese subjects produced an average of 12.29 error-free T-units while the Arab subjects generated an average of only 9.316. However, the Japanese subjects had a lower average mean length of T-units of 8.92 words per T-unit while the Arab subjects produced an average of 15.62 words per T-unit. As noted above, this group of subjects also generated more text than the Japanese speakers as measured by word count. That is, the Japanese subjects had better control of their syntax but wrote less complex sentences while the Arab subjects produced longer, more complex sentences and more text in general, but with more error. Perhaps these variations are attributable to differences in educational systems around the world which may have different value ratios for accuracy and fluency. Does the Japanese educational system value accuracy over fluency? Another possibility is that English education begins earlier in some countries than others. Perhaps parameters which influence how much of one’s own ideas can be incorporated into one’s writing in an academic context differ from culture to culture, which might also have an impact on fluency.

Class Level

Further analysis shows that neither class level, high intermediate or advanced, had a significant effect on any of the dependent variables. This may be an indication that the difference between the high intermediate and advanced levels in the intensive English program which served as the context for this study is not significantly different to begin with. However, an examination of the initial
placement tests scores for this group reveals that the two groups were indeed within the guidelines set for each level for placement within the program. That is, the mean MELAB score at the beginning of the quarter for the high intermediate group was 68 while the mean MELAB score for the subjects in the advanced group was 75. Placement guidelines at the ALP place students with MELAB scores between 66 and 73 in the high intermediate level and those with scores between 74 and 78 in the advanced level. Because the current study addresses only composition, however, it may be more valuable to look at those scores. At the beginning of the quarter, the mean composition scores on the MELAB for the high intermediate and advanced groups respectively were 72 and 75. This close approximation of composition scores suggests that the overall scores were affected to a greater degree by the other parts of the test. So, subjects with a relatively higher MTEL (grammar/vocabulary/reading) or LCT (listening comprehension test) could be placed in the advanced level even though the composition scores were approximately the same. Placement which was the result of consideration of other parts of the MELAB that were more disparate might explain why there was no significant difference found for level of class as a main effect.

It is also possible that the subjects at the two levels did not make progress in a parallel progression. That is, the high intermediate subjects may have made more gains in less time than the advanced subjects which would account for unequal development. However, checking the mean scores of the official placement tests administered to both groups indicates that there was a similar change in MELAB composition scores from the beginning to the end of the
quarter. On average, the high intermediate group gained 5 points on the compositions while the advanced group gained 7 points. This is not enough of a difference to support the concept of rates of development during the quarter that were not parallel.

Week of the Quarter

The week of the quarter in which the data were collected did have a significant effect on word count (p = 0.0094), mean length of error-free T-units (p = 0.0510) and on the holistic scores (p = 0.0001) assigned to the writing samples. However, no significant effects were detected for number of T-units (p = 0.2374), number of error-free T-units (p = 0.0938) or on the mean length of T-units (p = 0.8259).

These results indicate that as the quarter progressed, the subjects wrote compositions that were longer, with more accurate and longer dependent clause structures, and with more higher overall proficiency. It is important to remember that over time, it is hoped that learners will produce fewer T-units and that those will become longer and more accurate. In this case, the number of T-units and error-free decreased over the 10 weeks which means that the subjects were writing fewer sentences, but that the sentences that they did produce were longer, more complex and were more accurate as the quarter went on. This is to be expected as a result of the intensive English training that the subjects received for 25 hours a week for ten weeks.

The question of how each of the six L1 represented in the study affected the dependent variables can be seen in Table 4.7 below.
Figure 4.1. Word count mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study.
Figure 4.2 Number of T-units mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study.
Figure 4.3 Mean length of T-Units mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study
Figure 4.4 Number of error-free T-units mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study
Figure 4.5 Mean length of error-free T-units mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study
Figure 4.6  Holistic score mean profiles in all languages over the 10 week period of study
It is interesting to note that while L1 Chinese, Japanese, and Korean consistently produced fewer and shorter T-units than the L1 Arabic, Indonesian and Spanish, the T-units that they did produce were more accurate. Also interesting is that in the end, i.e. by the 10th week of the quarter, the holistic scores means for all groups were within three points of each other. But on a practical note, these three points are extremely important because the overall holistic MELAB score required for undergraduates for admission to OSU is 80 (rounded). Of the the L1 groups, the Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Spanish speakers failed to achieve this score by the 10th week of the quarter. In the 10th week the mean score for both the Chinese and Japanese speakers was 78.66, 78.15 for Korean speakers and 79.00 for Spanish speakers. The other L1 groups achieved the necessary score (Arabic, 80.91; Indonesian, 79.61). While the Spanish speakers did not earn a mean score equal to or greater than 80 on the final trial of the study, they had achieved mean scores of 80 or greater on three of the five trials and so it is important to consider the possibility of topic effect to account for the slightly lower mean on the final trial.

The fact that groups of subjects which produced higher means on the main indicator of accuracy (number of error free units) and yet lower average means on ratings of overall proficiency suggests an interesting possibility. Is it possible that the panel of raters may have placed slightly more value on fluency than on accuracy when assigning the holistic scores? If so, is this situation unique to this group of raters, or does fluency actually carry more weight than accuracy in the assignment of holistic scores? Whatever the answers to these questions,
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Table 4.7 Weekly means of dependent variables by native language
there are important curricular and pedagogical implications here that will be addressed in Chapter 5.

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Table 4.8 Summary of the main effects (p<.05, ns = nonsignificant)

Interaction among the Independent Variables

Six two-way interactions of the independent variables were analyzed for statistical significance. These were 1) native language X week of the quarter; 2) native language X class level; 3) discussion language X native language; 4) discussion language X class level; 5) discussion language X week of the quarter; 6) class level X week of the quarter. In addition two three-way interactions were examined for effect on the dependent variables. These combinations were 1) discussion language X native language X week of the quarter and 2) discussion language X class level X week of the quarter. A summary of the results is provided in Table 4.9 below.
Native Language and Week of the Quarter

Because discussion language had no significant main effect, it is possible to look at the means of all writing samples collected during a week and plot them against the ten weeks of the quarter in order to illustrate visually the significant main effects of L1 across time. A statistically meaningful effect was only for the holistic score in relationship to this interaction ($p = 0.0007$). None of the other dependent variables were significantly effected by the interaction of native language and week of the quarter. However, some interesting observations can be made about the interactions represented by Figures 4.1-4.6, which plot the weekly means of each of the dependent variables for each of the native languages represented in the study. They show that for almost every dependent variable, the distribution of L1 is different. That is, the information on these graphs tells us that over the course of the entire 10 weeks for this group of subjects, native speakers of Arabic wrote the longest complex sentences, were the most fluent, the most proficient in terms of holistic assessment, and the least accurate in terms of grammar. The subjects for whom Indonesian was the L1 wrote the largest number of sentences. The results place them in the middle of the group for length, accuracy, and overall proficiency. Native speakers of Korean and Chinese ranked about the same for each of the variables. Their results place them in the middle for all variables. The Japanese speakers wrote the shortest compositions with the shortest sentences, but they were the most accurate. In terms of overall proficiency they ranked with the speakers of Korean and Chinese. This may be partially due to the influence from the length and type of L2 training that these subjects had received prior to coming to the
U.S. It could be too, that for the different variables, the instructional methods employed by the American Language Program are more or less effective for students depending on their L1.

Discussion Language and Week of the Quarter

The analysis of the data reveals that interaction between discussion language and week of the quarter had a significant effect on four of the six dependent variables -- 1) word count; 2) number of T-units; 3) number of error-free T-units; 4) holistic scores. The mean length of T-units and error-free T-units were not statistically significant (Figures 4.7 -4.12).
Figure 4.7 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of number of T-units

Figure 4.8 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of mean length of T-units

Figure 4.9 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of number of error-free T-units

Figure 4.10 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of mean length of error-free T-units
Figure 4.11 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of holistic scores

Figure 4.12 Comparison of L1 and L2 means of word count
Fluency and Week of the Quarter

When fluency is considered in relationship to the week of the quarter a significant increase is to be expected. After all, the subjects are enrolled in an intensive English program whose aim it is to increase their overall language proficiency, and indeed, when increase in fluency is examined over time without regard to discussion language, this is exactly what is seen. However, when the interaction of the discussion language and the week of the quarter are applied to the measurement of fluency, a significant effect becomes clear. What is particularly interesting here, though, is the pattern in which this effect is expressed. On average, more text was produced when the pre-writing discussion was held in the L1 at the beginning of the quarter. This difference evened out by the middle of the quarter and by the end more text was produced when the pre-writing discussion was conducted in L2. This cross-over pattern emerges when these data are plotted. See Figure 4.7

Over the course of the 10 week quarter, the number of words produced rose whether the pre-writing discussion took place in the L1 or the L2. From this it is possible to conclude that development of fluency is not diminished when learners talk about the stimulus in their native languages. Interestingly, however, the results of this analysis indicate that it may be useful, in terms of fluency, to encourage learners to use their native languages in pre-writing discussions early in the academic term and then to encourage a switch to the L2 toward the end. Why this is the case is not entirely clear. It is possible to speculate, however, on several major points. First, at the beginning of the academic term, conducting the pre-writing discussion in L1 in a group with other
speakers of that L1 may give the learner access to ideas and vocabulary that are not as accessible in the L2 in a limited time period. In addition, the use of a common L1 may facilitate the understanding of the prompt in a way that discussion in the L2 with learners who share neither the L1 nor a common cultural background can not.

Another reasonable assumption to make in such a case is that using the L1 may facilitate the building of the foundation for the discussion at the beginning of the academic term as it is at this time of the term when the subjects were least likely to have developed interpersonal relationships with each other. In fact, group interaction and the negotiation of language which occurs therein may have become more effective in L2 as the subjects became more comfortable with each other. As the term progressed and the subjects became more comfortable with their classmates, this effect may have diminished.

There seems to be a trend toward higher measurements among all subjects in holistic scores, number of words (fluency), number of T-units and number of error-free T-units when the L1 is used for pre-writing discussion at the beginning of the quarter and vice versa when L2 is used at the end of the quarter. These results cross in the middle of the quarter, suggesting that perhaps using the L1 at the beginning of the quarter gives the learner confidence, access to memories, ideas, vocabulary and other cognitive resources in his/her own language.
Grammatical Complexity and Syntactic Maturity and Week of the Quarter

A measure of syntactic maturity in the subjects' writing was determined by four measurements: 1) the number of T-units, 2) the mean length of those T-units, 3) the number of error-free T-units produced and 4) the mean length of error-free T-units. While each of these variables contributes to the overall picture of the subjects' writing, it is important to initially consider each individually.

As Table 4.7 illustrates, when measured for main effects from discussion language, native language, class level and week of the quarter, no meaningful differences were seen in the number of T-units or the number of error-free T-units produced in the subjects' writing. However, when viewed within the context of the interaction between the discussion language and the week of the quarter, the number of T-units and error-free T-units, were significant at \( p = 0.0093 \) and 0.0014, respectively. When this is plotted, we see the same cross-over pattern (Figures 4.8 and 4.9) that was revealed above for fluency over the quarter in Figures 4.7. Analysis of the data again reveals a similar pattern of higher values at the beginning of the quarter related to L1 pre-writing discussion and relative lower values related to L2 pre-writing discussion which crosses near the middle and reverses near the end of the quarter.

Measurements of the mean length of T-units and the mean length of error-free T-units were the only two of the six dependent variables that did not repeat the cross-over pattern seen above when plotted against the interaction of discussion language and week of the quarter (Figures 4.10 and 4.11). What is revealed here, is that as the quarter progressed, the number of T-units and
error-free T-units produced increased. However, but the syntactic maturity of these T-units did not increase in the same way. On all other measures, the writing samples demonstrated higher levels of fluency, greater use of independent clauses, greater accuracy in those clauses, and higher overall proficiency. The reason for this could be specific to the curriculum of the IEP in which this study was conducted or more generally, it may be that as the subjects acquired more L2 structure, they were likely not to incorporate it into lengthy complex sentence structures at first. It is possible to speculate that this phenomenon could be related to language training and cultural backgrounds of some subjects which might inhibit the risk-taking behavior necessary to expand the complexity of sentence structure, thereby increasing the probability of error.

Overall Proficiency and Week of the Quarter

Not surprisingly, the holistic mean was also affected by the week of the quarter in which the measurements were taken. As expected, the mean of holistic scores assigned by the panel of trained raters increased as the quarter progressed regardless of whether the pre-writing discussion was carried out in the L1 or the L2 (Figure 4.12) This is, of course, the goal of the instruction delivered in the IEP. Again we see a sequential increase in overall proficiency scores under both conditions, but within this exists the same cross-over from a higher mean when discussion took place in the L1 at the beginning of the quarter to a higher mean at the end of the quarter when discussion took place in L2 that was seen with the effect of this interaction on the dependent variables.
There are several possibilities for this phenomenon. It is possible that, as with other variables, at the beginning of the quarter the subjects were not yet familiar with the writing task required by the protocol of this study. We can hypothesize that use of the L1 in the pre-writing discussion, at least at the beginning of the quarter provides a bridge from the subjects' cognitive abilities, memories and ideas to the writing task. As the subjects became more comfortable negotiating, and planning in English and became familiar with the writing task, it is possible that it was easier for the subjects to discuss in English and then write in English rather than discuss in L1, go through a process of switching thought processes to writing in English.

Two sets of three-way interactions were investigated for significant effect on the dependent variables. These were 1) discussion language X native language X week of the quarter and 2) discussion language X class level X week of the quarter. There were no significant effects found for either of these interactions.
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Table 4.9 Summary of the effects of the interactions of the independent variables. (p<.05, ns = nonsignificant)

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study which compromise its generalizability. First was sample size among some L1 groups. Because this study was conducted within the context of existing classes of an IEP, it was not possible to control how many speakers of each language were available to use as subjects. There were only two Japanese speakers and three Spanish speakers involved in this study. It is impossible to generalize from such a small sample. The best that can be said is that the significant results related to the small numbers of subjects in the Japanese and Spanish groups may indicate a trend.
is only possible to talk in terms of this sample, not in terms of a causal relationship of any type. The second limitation was a rather large absence rate among the subjects. This also makes generalization unwise. It is also possible that the absence rate influenced the results of the study. Was there a pattern to the absences? Was it the strong subjects who were absent because they were bored or was it the weak students who were absent because they were frustrated or was it a combination of both? This is a difficult question to answer because there was not a consistent set of subjects who were regularly absent during the 10 week quarter. In order to answer these questions, the MELAB scores earned at the beginning of the quarter by those subjects who were absent more than twice during the run of the study were examined. It was found that slightly more than half of these students had initially lower MELAB scores than subjects who participated faithfully in the study. If this means that as the quarter went on, a higher concentration of subjects with higher proficiency remained to participate in the study, then the findings may indeed be skewed. This might be especially true for the main effect of class level or for interactions involving the main effect. Indeed, it might be the reason that class level produced no statistically meaningful effects.
Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

Overview

The current study has been informed by the theoretical knowledge that has emerged and evolved from second language acquisition research focusing on the areas of transfer of linguistic characteristics from L1 to L2, transfer of cognitive skills from L1 to L2 and contrastive rhetoric. The purpose of this study was to add to the existing body of L2 research on the effects of classroom use of L1 in pre-writing discussion on L2 writing and to examine them in the context of English as a second language for adult learner as much of the similar research focuses on L1 use by children in instructed L2 settings.

The subjects of the study were thirty-five graduate and undergraduate students, both male and female, representing six native languages at two different levels of intensive English instruction. Over a ten-week quarter, the subjects read ten short stories in English. They read two stories a week, every other week at home with the use of dictionary or any other type of aid. On Tuesdays and Thursdays of weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 these students were given topics related to the stories to discuss for 10 minutes in pre-assigned small
groups. On one of the two days, the groups were linguistically homogeneous and on the other the groups were linguistically heterogeneous. Following the 10 minute discussion period, students responded to a writing prompt related to both the reading and discussion topic. Their writing performance was assessed for fluency, syntactic complexity, and overall proficiency. These characteristics were measured by simple word count, counts of T-units and error-free T-units, and their mean lengths and by holistic ratings.

The data were analyzed using a mixed effect ANOVA to model the repeated measures data. The model had a mixture of random and fixed effects. The random effect was human subject and the fixed effects were native language, discussion language, class level and week of the quarter. Two factor interactions were included in the model as well as the three factor interactions of interest, those being the interactions among week of the quarter/discussion language/native language and the interaction among week of the quarter/discussion language/ and class level.

Summary of Findings and Conclusions

The data generated by the current study support finding reported in other studies which examined the use of L1 in relationship to L2 writing (Berhens, 1978; Friedlander, 1990; Garrett, et al., 1994; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Osburne & Harss-Covaleski, 1992). The general conclusion supported by these studies is that L1 use in certain contexts can have a positive impact on some aspect of L2 writing. Each of these found that when L1 was used in some type of pre-writing
activity, whether for purposes of instruction, planning, activation of prior knowledge, or translating, learners generally wrote better compositions. In all cases, even when no improvement in writing was documented (Garrett, et al.), there was a positive attitude toward using L1 in class among the subjects of these studies. A statistical analysis of data in the current study revealed that use of L1 in pre-writing activities did not have a significant effect on L2 writing in any of the measurements examined. Furthermore, the analysis of the data demonstrated (not surprisingly) that the fixed effects of L1 and the week of the quarter in which measurements were made had a significant effect on fluency and overall proficiency. Surprisingly, class level had no effect either as a main effect or in interaction with any other of the independent variables.

The results of the mixed effects ANOVA indicated interaction only in two pairs of the independent variables. The interaction of native language and week produced significant effects for the mean length of T-units and for the holistic mean. In addition, the interaction of discussion language and week of the quarter produced significant effects for four of the six independent variables. It was found that over time, it did make a difference which language was used in the pre-writing group discussion. At the beginning of the quarter, the measurements were higher when the discussion was conducted in L1 and by the end of the quarter, this had changed. By week 10, the measurements were higher when the discussion was held in L2. In other words, when subjects carried out the pre-writing discussion in L1 at the beginning of the quarter, their writing was longer, more complex and of higher overall proficiency than when the pre-writing discussion was held in the L2. At the end of the quarter, the
opposite was seen. Subjects who used English in the pre-writing discussion during the last weeks of the quarter produced writing that was judged to be longer, more grammatically complex and of higher overall proficiency than when they used L1 for the pre-writing discussion.

The findings of the current study that L1 pre-writing discussion supports L2 writing early in the academic term leads to several conclusions that may be taken from these results. First, while the act of writing is often viewed as a solitary task, the pre-writing process is not always so. In order for pre-writing discussion to be effective, there must be some level of interpersonal relationship between the discussants. Within a linguistically and culturally heterogeneous class, such relationships can and should be forged in low-risk environment to support L2 acquisition in an instructed setting. The findings of this study suggest that allowing learners access to L1 use in small homogeneous groups as a prelude to L2 writing, which might be considered a stressful activity, may actually enhance learner performance on such a task and support the conclusions of Friedlander (1990), which indicate that allowing students to use their L1 to access and explore cognitive resources such as personal ethics, values, ideas and opinions that had been formed in L1 provides a deeper well from which students may draw the background information and details necessary to support their writing.

Secondly, the results of the current study suggest that something happened within the subjects at the midpoint of the study which caused their writing to benefit more from using English than from using their native languages in the pre-writing discussion. Whether this phenomenon is cognitive
or affective in nature is unclear. One possibility is that at the beginning of the academic term when the subjects were in a new class with new classmates, they may have been more comfortable discussion topics related to personal values and ethics within a culturally and linguistically homogeneous group of strangers rather than in the context of a group of strangers from varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds. It is likely that over the course of the quarter, after spending five hours every weekday with their classmates, the comfort level of the subjects increased and perhaps equalized between homogenous and heterogeneous groups which may account for the increase in performance levels following discussion in English during the second half of the term. This combined with an increasing proficiency in overall language ability which can be attributed to the intensive nature of the ESL instruction received over the ten-week period, may have tipped the balance in favor of English for the pre-writing discussions as evidenced by the improved scores correlated with L2 at the end of the term.

Finally, Cook's (1999) assertion that L2 teaching can be enhanced by using the learners’ L1 is supported by this data reported herein. Cook makes that point that current L2 teaching methodologies stress the need for learners to express themselves in the L2 and to negotiate meaning. This, he claims, can be done without a native speaker model in the classroom. He argues that L1 should not be viewed as a threat to L2 acquisition, but rather as a pedagogical tool. It is clear that at least in the beginning of the time frame of the current study, L1 served a useful purpose to the subjects on linguistic and cognitive levels, but it may also be fair to speculate that allowing the use of L1 in the classroom could
have positive affective results in terms of allowing students to retain a degree of personal power which Heller (1995) associated with L1 use in the classroom.

Contrary to the assertions made by researchers like Polio (1990) who assert that use of L1 deprives learners of necessary L2 input and opportunities for negotiation, the findings of the current study suggest that any deprivation of L2 input that might occur as a result of allowing L1 use in limited circumstances may be outweighed by the benefits of using L1, particularly as an element of pre-writing activity. While it is true that both L2 input and negotiation of meaning may be necessary for L2 acquisition, this does not deny the importance of L1 as a tool that may also facilitate language learning.

Pedagogical Implications

The results of the current study have significant specific implications for curriculum and methodology in university intensive English programs as well as for ESL and L2 instruction in general. The findings here clearly indicate that there is no detriment in allowing learners at least some access to their L1 in an L2 classroom in certain controlled contexts. In fact, the data suggest that at the beginning of the term using L1 in some pre-writing activities may make the learners writing better in terms of overall proficiency, fluency and grammatical complexity. However, it is not possible to say that the data do support the use of L1 in such activities after the second half of the academic term.
One of the unexpected findings of the study was that L1 has a significant impact on overall proficiency and that current methods and techniques do not always adequately address the needs of learners of specific L1 backgrounds. The current study indicates that subjects who produced the most accurate text also produced the fewest clausal structures and those who produced the most text were among the least accurate in their writing. This suggests that perhaps there is a relationship between accuracy and fluency in writing among adult learners at the high intermediate and advanced levels of intensive English instruction. In addition, the results of the current study suggest that perhaps holistic assessment gives somewhat more weight to fluency than accuracy. In such cases, learners who have not been instructed in techniques to increase written fluency may be at a disadvantage, as the results of the current study indicate. In cases where the learner's need for accuracy and fluency are not balanced, it makes sense to take steps at a curricular level to help these students bring both fluency and accuracy to their writing. If it is the case that holistic raters give unequal value to these characteristics, then the possibility exists for potentially serious ramifications for assessment of learner proficiency.

The results of the current study and others indicate that perhaps there is a place for L1 in group work, especially when L1 use can provide access to background information, ideas and opinions that are not easily accessible in L2. There may also be a place for L1 in the writing process, especially in the pre-writing and planning stages. What is being advocated here is not a predominant or random use of L1 in L2 instruction. Rather, what the current study suggests is
that the limited and controlled use of L1 can be a useful tool for the teacher and the learners.

Recommendations for Further Research

In order to understand more about the results of the current study, research focusing on the linguistic processes that take place in the type of controlled L1 discussion group among L2 learners that are described here are needed to answer questions about the types of negotiation, translation, and discussion that happen among learners in that context. Such information might reveal to us connections and causes that are not apparent from this research.

The role of L1 in L2 instruction is an extremely complex issue which has long been debated in literature of second language acquisition. The issue is neither entirely quantitative nor qualitative in nature and both qualitative and quantitative research are necessary in the development of a clearer picture in this area of language learning. This study has focused only on a very narrow aspect of how L1 use impacts learner writing among learners in the contexts of an intensive English program focused on English for academic purposes. Studies with a broader range of subjects, proficiency levels and L2 instructional settings are needed to add to the understanding of how L1 can support L2 acquisition. Qualitative studies that focus on the affective influences of L1 use and issues of personal power in language choice are also needed. While writing was the focus of this study, writing is only one part of language. Further investigation is
required to understand how L1 use in L2 instructional settings of differing types influence not only writing, but also the acquisition and development of L2 reading, speaking, and listening skills.

In addition, studies with a focus similar to the current investigation would could be enhanced through the use of retrospective interviews with the subjects or audio recorded think-aloud protocols which would provide more insight into the writing process following pre-writing activities conducted in L1.

Overall Limitations of the Study

In any study that deals with human beings, there will be a few uncontrolled factors that will contribute to overall error in the analysis of the data. These are culture, gender and variability in L2 proficiency.

The question of culture is a very complex one. Not only are there differences in the sets of cultural assumptions about teaching and learning that the subjects bring to the classroom, there are also differences in the amount of experience the subjects have had in the United States and/or other countries in an academic situation. Some may have several quarters of experience at the ALP while others may be newly arrived for their first quarter of study. Some may have culturally determined feelings about group work with classmates of the opposite gender, which may influence their ability to participate fully. Indeed cultural norms concerning gender roles in group discussion may also be at work in this design. The mixed effects model used in the analysis of the data collected
in this study is designed to compensate for these random effects, but it is not certain that this actually happened.

In addition, the original plan for the study protocol called for discussion groups to be recorded, translated when necessary and analyzed to determine the type of interaction that was happening in each group; ie to discover how much negotiation, translation or simple statement of opinion was occurring when L1 was used versus L2. Unfortunately, due to technical problems in obtaining intelligible recordings in a classroom in which multiple groups were all conducting discussion at once, this part of the plan was not realized. It is hoped that this aspect of the pre-writing discussion activity can be analyzed in a future study.
References


APPENDIX A

Stories used in the study
The Man, the Boy and the Donkey

Aesop

A man and his son were going with their donkey to market. As they were walking along next to the donkey, a peasant passed them and said, “You fools, what is a donkey for but to ride upon?”

So the man put the boy on the donkey and they went on their way. But soon they passed a group of men, one of whom said, “See that lazy child! He lets his father walk while he rides.”

So the man ordered his boy to get off the donkey and walk and he climbed onto the donkey’s back himself. But they hadn’t gone far when they passed two old women, one of whom said to the other, “What a terrible father! Shame on him for making his poor little son walk while he rides comfortably.”

Well, the man didn’t know what to do. At last he pulled the boy up to ride on the donkey with him. By this time they had arrived at the town where the market was held. People pointed at them and jeered as they passed. The man stopped and asked what they were jeering at. The people said “Aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” You are nearly killing your poor donkey with all of that weight -- yours and that of your huge boy.

The man and the boy got off the donkey and tried to decide what to do to fix the situation. Finally, they cut down a young tree, tied the donkey’s feet to it and carried it on their shoulders. As they continued down the road carrying the donkey on their shoulders, the people laughed and pointed at them. As they were crossing the bridge in the center of the town, the donkey worked one of its feet loose and began to kick and struggle. This caused the boy to drop his end of
the pole and the donkey rolled off of the bridge. Because his front feet were still tied together, he couldn’t swim and he was drowned.

An old man who had followed them for nearly the entire journey said, “That will teach you. When you try to please everyone, you please no one.”
Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thought,
for they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot
visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backwards nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are
sent forth.
The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite, and He bends
you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the archer’s hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies, so He loves also the bow that
is stable.
Once there was a prince who wanted to marry a princess, but she would have to be a real princess. He traveled all over the world looking for a real princess to marry, but he always found something wrong. Indeed, there were many princesses, but he could never be sure that they were real princesses. With each of them there seemed to be something that wasn’t quite right. Eventually, he gave up looking and went home sad and miserable because he had found no princess to marry.

One night there was a terrible storm. It rained hard and the wind blew with such force that trees fell down. The lightning and thunder were terrifying. Suddenly there was a knock at the palace door and the old king went to see who was out in the horrible weather.
When he opened the door, he saw a princess. She had been blown and beaten by the storm and looked not like a princess at all. Her clothes were torn and soaked with rain. Even her shoes were filled with water. Still she declared that she was a real princess.

"Well", thought the old queen, "we must test her to prove that she is a real princess, fit to marry my son." The queen told no one of her plan. Quietly she went to the bed chamber where their guest was to spend the night. She removed all of the bed clothes and the mattress and put a pea on the bed frame. Then she piled twenty mattresses on top of the pea and then she added twenty feather beds to the twenty mattresses. It was so high that the princess had to climb a ladder to get into bed.

In the morning, the queen asked her how she had slept.

"Oh, I did not sleep well at all!" said the princess. "I do not know what was in my bed, but it was something so hard that it has made me black and blue all over! It was terrible!"

The queen realized at once that this was a real princess and she told her son and husband of the test and how the princess had proven herself. After all, no one but a real princess would be so delicate and sensitive to feel a pea through twenty mattresses and twenty feather beds.

So the prince married the princess for she was indeed a real princess. The princess kept the pea for the rest of her life as a sign of her royal status and life in the kingdom continued in peace and prosperity.
A Nincompoop, Chekhov

A few days ago I asked my children’s governess, Julia Vassilyevna, to come into my study.

“Sit down, Julia Vassilyevna,” I said. “Let’s settle our accounts. Although you most likely need some money, you stand on ceremony and won’t ask for it yourself. Now then, we agreed on thirty rubles a month....”

“Forty.”

“No, thirty. I made a note of it. I always pay the governess thirty. Now then, you’ve been here two months, so . . .”

“Two months and five days.”

“Exactly two months. I made a specific note of it. That means you have sixty rubles coming to you. Subtract nine Sundays . . . you know you didn’t work with Kolya on Sundays, you only took walks. And three holidays . . .”

Julia Vassilyevna flushed a deep red and picked at the flounce of her dress, but—not a word.

“Three holidays, therefore take off twelve rubles. Four days Kolya was sick and there were no lessons, as you were occupied only with Vanya. Three days you
had a toothache and my wife gave you permission not to work after lunch. Twelve and seven—nineteen. Subtract ... that leaves ... hmm ... forty-one rubles. Correct?

Julia Vassilyevna's left eye reddened and filled with moisture. Her chin trembled; she coughed nervously and blew her nose, but—not a word.

"Around New Year's you broke a teacup and saucer: take off two rubles. The cup cost more, it was an heirloom, but—let it go. When didn't I take a loss! Then, due to your neglect, Kolya climbed a tree and tore his jacket: take away ten. Also due to your heedlessness the maid stole Vanya's shoes. You ought to watch everything! You get paid for it. So, that means five more rubles off. The tenth of January I gave you ten rubles...."

"You didn't," whispered Julia Vassilyevna.

"But I made a note of it."

"Well ... all right."

"Take twenty-seven from forty-one—that leaves fourteen."

Both eyes filled with tears. Perspiration appeared on the thin, pretty little nose. Poor girl!

"Only once was I given any money," she said in a trembling voice, "and that was by your wife. Three rubles, nothing more."
"Really? You see now, and I didn't make a note of it! Take three from fourteen . . . leaves eleven. Here's your money, my dear. Three, three, three, one and one. Here it is!"

I handed her eleven rubles. She took them and with trembling fingers stuffed them into her pocket.

"Merci," she whispered.

I jumped up and started pacing the room. I was overcome with anger.

"For what, this—'merci'?" I asked.

"For the money."

"But you know I've cheated you, for God's sake—robbed you! I have actually stolen from you! Why this 'merci'?"

"In my other places they didn't give me anything at all."

"They didn't give you anything? No wonder! I played a little joke on you, a cruel lesson, just to teach you... I'm going to give you the entire 80 rubies! Here they are in an envelope all ready for you... Is it really possible to be so spineless?
Why don’t you protest? Why be silent? Is it possible in this world to be without teeth and claws -- to be such a nincompoop?"

She smiled crookedly and I read in her expression: “It is possible.”

I asked her pardon for the cruel lesson and, to her great surprise, gave her the eighty rubles. She murmured her little ‘merci’ several times and went out. I looked after her and thought: “How easy it is to crush the weak in this world.”
Story of an Hour, Chopin

Knowing that Mrs. Mallard was afflicted with a heart trouble, great care was taken to break to her as gently as possible the news of her husband's death.

It was her sister Josephine who told her, in broken sentences, veiled hints that revealed in half concealing. Her husband's friend Richards was there, too, near her. It was he who had been in the newspaper office when news of the railroad disaster was received, with Brently Mallard's name leading the list of "killed." He had only taken the time to assure himself of its truth by a second telegram, and had hastened to forestall any less careful, less tender friend in bearing the sad message.

She did not hear the story as many women have heard the same, with a paralyzed inability to accept its significance. She wept at once, with sudden, wild abandonment, in her sister's arms. When the storm of grief had spent itself she went away to her room alone. She would have no one follow her.

There she stood, facing the open window, a comfortable, roomy armchair. Into this she sank, pressed down by a physical exhaustion that haunted her body and seemed to reach into her soul.

She could see in the open square before her house the tops of trees that were alive with the new spring life. The delicious breath of rain was in the air. In the street below a peddler was selling his wares. The notes of a distant song which
someone was singing reached her faintly, and countless sparrows were chirping in the trees.

There were patches of blue sky showing here and there through the clouds that had met and piled above the other in the west facing her window.

She sat with her head thrown back upon the cushion of the chair quite motionless, except when a sob came up into her throat and shook her, as a child who has cried itself to sleep continues to sob in its dreams.

She was young, with a fair, calm face, whose lines showed repression and even a certain strength. But now there was a dull stare in her eyes, whose gaze was fixed away off yonder on one of those patches of blue sky. It was not a glance of reflection, but rather indicated a suspension of intelligent thought.

There was something coming to her and she was waiting for it, fearfully. What was it? She did not know; it was too subtle and elusive to name. But she felt it, creeping out of the sky, reaching toward her through the sounds, the scents, the color that filled the air.

Now her bosom rose and fell heavily. She was beginning to recognize this thing that was approaching to possess her, and she was striving to beat it back with her will -- as powerless as her two white slender hands would have been.

When she abandoned herself a little whispered word escaped her slightly parted lips. She said it over and over under her breath: "Free, free, free!" The
vacant stare and the look of terror that had followed it went from her eyes. They stayed keen and bright. Her pulses beat fast, and the coursing blood warmed and relaxed every inch of her body.

She knew that she would weep again when she saw the kind, tender hands folded in death; the face that had never looked except with love upon her, fixed and gray and dead. But she saw beyond that bitter moment a long procession of years to come that would belong to her absolutely. And she opened and spread her arms out to them in welcome.

There would be no one to live for during those coming years; she would live for herself. There would be no powerful will bending her in that blind persistence with which men and women believe they have a right to impose a private will upon a fellow-creature. A kind intention or a cruel intention made the act seem no less a crime as she looked upon it in that brief moment of illumination.

And yet she had loved him -- sometimes. Often she had not. What did it matter! What could love, the unsolved mystery, count for in face of this possession of self-assertion which she suddenly recognized as the strongest impulse of being!

"Free! Body and soul free!" she kept whispering.

Josephine was kneeling before the closed door with her lips to the keyhole, imploring for admission. "Louise, open the door! I beg; open the door -- you
will make yourself ill. What are you doing, Louise? For heaven’s sake open the door.”

“Go away. I am not making myself ill.” No; she was drinking in a very elixir of life through that open window.

Her imagination was going out of control along those days ahead of her. Spring days, and summer days, and all sorts of days that would be her own. She breathed a quick prayer that life might be long. It was only yesterday she had thought with a shudder that life might be long.

She arose at length and opened the door to her sister's continued begging. There was a feverish triumph in her eyes, and she carried herself unwittingly like a goddess of Victory. She clasped her sister's waist, and together they descended the stairs. Richards stood waiting for them at the bottom.

Some one was opening the front door with a latchkey. It was Brently Mallard who entered, a little travel-stained, composedly carrying his suitcase and umbrella. He had been far from the scene of accident, and did not even know there had been one. He stood amazed at Josephine's piercing cry; at Richards' quick motion to screen him from the view of his wife.

But Richards was too late.

When the doctors came they said she had died of heart disease—of joy that kills.
"My aunt will be down presently, Mr. Nuttel," said a very self-possessed young lady of fifteen; "in the meantime you must try and put up with me."

Framton Nuttel endeavored to say the correct something, which should duly flatter the niece of the moment without unduly discounting the aunt that was to come. Privately he doubted more than ever whether these formal visits on a succession of total strangers would do much towards helping the nerve cure which he was supposed to be undergoing.

"I know how it will be," his sister had said when he was preparing to migrate to this rural retreat; "you will bury yourself down there and not speak to a living soul, and your nerves will be worse than ever from moping. I shall just give you letters of introduction to all the people I know there. Some of them, as far as I can remember, were quite nice."

Framton wondered whether Mrs. Sappleton, the lady to whom he was presenting one of the letters of introduction, fell into the nice category. Do you know many of the people round here? asked the niece, when she judged that they had had sufficient silent communion.

Hardly a soul," said Framton. "My sister was staying here, at the rectory, you know, some four years ago, and she gave me letters of introduction to some of the people here." He made the last statement in a tone of distinct regret.

"Then you know practically nothing about my aunt?" pursued the self-possessed young lady.
“Only her name and address,” admitted the caller. He was wondering whether Mrs. Sappleton was in the married or widowed state. An undefinable something about the room seemed to suggest masculine habitation.

“Her great tragedy happened just three years ago,” said the child; “that would be since your sister’s time.”

“Her tragedy?” asked Framton; somehow in this restful country spot tragedies seemed out of place.

“You may wonder why we keep that window wide open on an October afternoon,” said the niece, indicating a large French window that opened on to a lawn. “It is quite warm for the time of the year,” said Framton, “but has the window got anything to do with the tragedy.”

“Out through that window, three years ago to a day, her husband and her two young brothers went off for their days shooting. They never came back. In crossing the moor to their favorite snipe-shooting ground they were all three engulfed in a treacherous piece of bog. It had been that dreadful wet summer, you know, and places that were safe in other years gave way suddenly without warning. Their bodies were never recovered. That was the dreadful part of it.”

Here the child’s voice lost its self-possessed note and became falteringly human. ‘Poor aunt always thinks that they will come back some day, they and the little brown spaniel that was lost with them, and walk in at that window just as they used to do. That is why the window is kept open every evening till it is quite dusk. Poor dear aunt, she has often told me how they went out, her
husband with his white waterproof coat over his arm, and Ronnie, her youngest brother, singing. Do you know, sometimes on still quiet evenings like this, I almost get a creepy feeling that they will all walk in through that window —"

She broke off with a little shudder. It was a relief to Framton when the aunt bustled into the room with a whirl of apologies for being late in making her appearance.

"I hope Vera has been amusing you?" she said.

"She has been very interesting," said Framton.

"I hope you don’t mind the open window," said Mrs. Sappleton briskly; "my husband and brothers will be home directly from shooting, and they always come in this way. They been out hunting snipe in the marshes today, so they’ll make a fine mess over my poor carpets. So like you men-folk, isn’t it?"

She rattled on cheerfully about the shooting and the scarcity of birds and the prospects for duck in the winter. To Framton, it was all purely horrible. He mad a desperate but only partially successful effort to turn the talk on to a less ghastly topic; he was conscious that his hostess was giving him only a fragment of her attention, and her eyes were constantly straying past him to the open window and the lawn beyond. It was certainly an unfortunate coincidence that he should have paid his visit on this tragic anniversary.
"The doctors agree in ordering me complete rest, an absence of mental excitement, and avoidance of anything in the nature of violent physical exercise," announced Framton, who labored under the tolerably wide-spread delusion that total strangers and chance acquaintances are hungry for the least detail of one's ailments and infirmities, their cause and cure. "On the matter of diet they are not so much in agreement," he continued.

"No?," said Mrs. Sappleton, in a voice which only replaced a yawn at the last moment. Then she suddenly brightened into alert attention -- but not to what Framton was saying.

"Here they are at last!" she cried. "Just in time for tea, and don't they look as if they were muddy up to the eyes!"

Framton shivered slightly and turned towards the niece with a look intended to convey sympathetic comprehension. The child was staring out through the open window with dazed horror in her eyes. In a chill shock of nameless fear Framton swung round in his seat and looked in the same direction.

In the deepening twilight three figures were walking across the lawn towards the window; they all carried guns under their arms, and one of them was additionally burdened with a white coat hung over his shoulders. A tired brown spaniel kept close at their heels. Noiselessly they neared the house.

Framton grabbed wildly at his walking stick and hat; the hall-door, the gravel-drive and the front gate were dimly noted stages in his headlong retreat. A
cyclist coming along the road had to run into the hedge to avoid imminent collision.

"Here we are, my dear," said the bearer of the white mackintosh, coming in through the window; "fairly muddy, but most of it's dry. Who was that who bolted out as we came up?"

"A most extraordinary man, a Mr. Nuttel," said Mrs. Sappleton; "could only talk about his illnesses and dashed off without a word of good-bye or apology when you arrived. One would think he had seen a ghost."

"I expect it was the spaniel," said the niece calmly; "he told me he had a horror of dogs. He was once hunted into a cemetery somewhere on the banks of the Ganges by a pack of pariah dogs, and has to spend the night in a newly dug grave with the creatures snarling and grinning and foaming just above him. Enough to make any one lose their nerve."

Romance at short notice was her specialty.
An Old Man, de Maupassant

All the newspapers had carried this advertisement:

_The new spa at Rondelis offers all the advantages desirable for a lengthy stay or even for permanent residence. Its ferruginous waters, recognized as the best in the world for countering all impurities of the blood, also seem to possess special qualities calculated to prolong human life. This remarkable circumstance may be due in part to the exceptional situation of the little town, which lies in a mountainous region, in the middle of a forest of firs. The fact remains that for several centuries it has been noted for cases of extraordinary longevity._

And the public came along in droves.

One morning the doctor in charge of the springs was asked to call on a newcomer, Monsieur Daron, who had arrived a few days before and had rented a charming villa on the edge of the forest. He was a little old man of eighty-six, still quite sprightly, wiry, healthy and active, who went to infinite pains to conceal his age.

He offered the doctor a seat and started questioning him straight away.

"Doctor," he said, "if I am in good health, it is thanks to careful living. Though not very old, I have already attained a respectable age, yet I keep free of all illnesses and indispositions, even the slightest malaises, by means of careful living. It is said that the climate here is very good for the health. I am perfectly prepared to
believe it, but before settling down here I want proof. I am therefore going to ask you to come and see me once a week to give me the following information in detail.

“First of all I wish to have a complete, absolutely complete, list of all the inhabitants of the town and the surrounding area who are over eighty years old. I also need a few physical and physiological details regarding each of them. I wish to know their professions, their way of life, their habits. Every time one of those people dies you will be good enough to inform me, giving me the precise cause of death and describing the circumstances.”

Then he added graciously, “I hope, Doctor, that we shall become good friends,” and held out his wrinkled little hand. The doctor shook it, promising him his devoted cooperation.

Monsieur Daron had always had an obsessive fear of death. He had deprived himself of nearly all the pleasures of this world because they were dangerous, and whenever anyone expressed surprise that he should not drink wine—wine, that purveyor of dreams and gaiety—he would reply in a voice in which a note of fear could be detected: ‘I value my life.’ And he stressed the word my, as if that life, his life, possessed some special distinction. He put into that my such a difference between his life and other people’s lives that any rejoinder was out of the question.

For that matter he had a very special way of stressing the possessive pronouns designating parts of his person and even things which belonged to him. When he
said "my eyes, my legs, my arms, my hands," it was quite obvious that there must be no mistake about this: those organs were not at all like other people's. But where this distinction was particularly noticeable was in his references to his doctor. When he said "my doctor," one would have thought that that doctor belonged to him and nobody else, destined for him alone, to attend to his illnesses and to nothing else, and that he was superior to all the other doctors in the world, without exception.

He had never regarded other men as anything but puppets of a sort, created to fill up an empty world. He divided them into two classes: those he greeted because some chance had put him in contact with them, and those he did not greet. But both these categories of individuals were equally insignificant in his eyes.

However, beginning with the day when the Rondelis doctor brought him the list of the seventeen inhabitants of the town who were over eighty, he felt a new interest awaken in his heart, an unfamiliar solicitude for these old people whom he was going to see fall by the wayside one by one. He had no desire to make their acquaintance, but he formed a very clear idea of their persons, and when the doctor dined with him, every Thursday, he spoke only of them. "Well, doctor," he would say, "and how is Joseph Poincot today? We left him feeling a little ill last week." And when the doctor had given him the patient's bill of health, Monsieur Daron would suggest changes in his diet, experiments, methods of treatment which he might later apply to himself if they had succeeded with the others. Those seventeen old people provided him with an experimental field from which he learnt many a lesson.
One evening the doctor announced as he came in: "Rosalie Toumel has died."

Monsieur Daron gave a start and immediately asked, "What of?"

"Of a chill," the doctor replied.

The little old man gave a sigh of relief. Then he said, "She was too fat, too heavy; she must have eaten too much. When I get to her age I'll be more careful about my weight." (He was two years older than Rosalie Toumel, but he claimed to be only seventy.)

A few months later it was the turn of Henri Brissot. Monsieur Daron was very upset. This time it was a man, and a thin man at that, within three months of his own age, and careful about his health. He did not dare to ask any questions, but waited anxiously for the doctor to give him some details.

"Oh, so he died just like that, all of a sudden," he said. "But he was perfectly all right last week. He must have done something silly, I suppose, Doctor?"

The doctor, who was enjoying himself, replied: "I don't think so. His children told me he had been very careful."

Then, unable to contain himself any longer, and filled with fear, Monsieur Daron asked: "But... but... what did he die of, then?"

"Of pleurisy."

The little old man clapped his dry hands in sheer joy.
“I told you so! I told you he had done something silly. You don't get pleurisy for nothing. He must have gone out for a breath of air after his dinner and the cold must have gone to his chest. Pleurisy! Why, that's an accident, not an illness. Only fools die of pleurisy."

And he ate his dinner in high spirits, talking about those who were left.

"There are only fifteen of them now, but they are all hale and hearty, aren't they? The whole of life is like that: the weakest go first; people who live beyond thirty have a good chance of reaching sixty; those who pass sixty often get to eighty; and those who pass eighty nearly always live to be a hundred, because they are the fittest, toughest and most sensible of all."

Another two disappeared during the year, one of dysentery and the other of a choking fit. Monsieur Daron was highly amused by the death of the former and concluded that he must have eaten something stimulating the day before. "Dysentery is the disease of careless people. Damn it all, Doctor! You ought to have watched over his diet."

As for the man who had been carried off by a choking fit, his death could only be due to a heart condition which had hitherto gone unnoticed.

But one evening the doctor announced the decease of Paul Timonet, a sort of mummy of whom it had been hoped to make a centenarian and an advertisement for the spa. When Monsieur Daron asked, as usual: "What did he die of?" the doctor replied, "Bless me, I really don't know."
"What do you mean, you don't know. A doctor always knows. Hadn't he some organic lesion?"

The doctor shook his head. "No, none."

"Possibly some infection of the liver or the kidneys?"

"No, they were quite sound."

"Did you check whether the stomach was functioning properly? A stroke is often caused by poor digestion."

"There was no stroke."

Monsieur Daron, very perplexed, said excitedly: "Look, he must have died of something! What do you think it was?"

The doctor threw up his hands.
"I've no idea, no idea at all. He died because he died, that's all."

Then Monsieur Daron, in a voice full of emotion, asked: "Exactly how old was that one? I can't remember."

"Eighty-nine."

And the little old man, at once incredulous and reassured, exclaimed:
"Eighty-nine! So whatever it was, it wasn't old age..."
My Watch, Twain

My beautiful new watch had run eighteen months without losing or gaining, and without breaking any part of its machinery or stopping. I had come to believe it infallible in its judgments about the time of day, and to consider its constitution and its anatomy imperishable.

But at last, one night, I let it run down. I grieved about it as if it were a recognized messenger and forerunner of calamity. But by and by I cheered up, set the watch by guess, and commanded my bodings and superstitions to depart. Next day I stepped into the chief jeweler's to set it by the exact time, and the head of the establishment took it out of my hand and proceeded to set it for me.

Then he said, "She is four minutes slow—regulator wants pushing up." I tried to stop him -- tried to make him understand that the watch kept perfect time. But no; all this human cabbage could see was that the watch was four minutes slow, and the regulator must be pushed up a little; and so, while I danced around him in anguish, and implored him to let the watch alone, he calmly and cruelly did the shameful deed.

My watch began to gain. It gained faster and faster day by day. Within the week it sickened to a raging fever, and its pulse went up to a hundred and fifty in the shade. At the end of two months it had left all the timepieces of the town far in the rear, and was a fraction over thirteen days ahead of the almanac. It was away into November enjoying the snow, while the October leaves were still turning. It hurried up house rent, bills payable and such things, in such a ruinous way that I could not abide it. I took it to the watchmaker to be regulated.

He asked me if I had ever had it repaired. I said no, it had never needed any repairing. He looked a look of vicious happiness and eagerly pried the watch
open, and then put a small dice-box into his eye and peered into its machinery. He said it wanted cleaning and oiling, besides regulating—come in a week. After being cleaned and oiled, and regulated, my watch slowed down to that degree that it ticked like a tolling bell. I began to be left by trains, I failed at appointments, I got to missing my dinner; my watch strung out three days' grace to four and let me go to protest; I gradually drifted back into yesterday, then day before, then into last week, and by and by the comprehension came upon me that all solitary and alone I was lingering along in week before last, and the world was out of sight. I seemed to detect in myself a sort of sneaking fellow-feeling for the mummy in the museum, and a desire to swap news with him. I went to a watchmaker again.

He took the watch all to pieces while I waited, and then said the barrel was "swelled." He said he could reduce it in three days. After this the watch averaged well, but nothing more. For half a day it would go like the very mischief, and keep up such a barking and wheezing and whooping and sneezing and snorting, that I could not hear myself think for the disturbance; and as long as it held out there was not a watch in the land that stood any chance against it. But the rest of the day it would keep on slowing down and fooling along until all the clocks it had left behind caught up again. So at last, at the end of twenty-four hours, it would trot up to the judges' stand all right and just in time. It would show a fair and square average, and no man could say it had done more or less than its duty. But a correct average is only a mild virtue in a watch, and I took this instrument to another watchmaker.

He said the king-bolt was broken. I said I was glad it was nothing more serious. To tell the plain truth, I had no idea what the king-bolt was, but I did not choose to appear ignorant to a stranger. He repaired the king-bolt, but what the watch gained in one way it lost in another. It would run awhile and then stop awhile, and then run awhile again, and so on, using its own discretion about the
intervals. And every time it went off it kicked back like a musket. I padded my breast for a few days, but finally took the watch to another watchmaker. He picked it all to pieces, and turned the ruin over and over under his glass; and then he said there appeared to be something the matter with the hair trigger. He fixed it, and gave it a fresh start. It did well now, except that always at ten minutes to ten the hands would shut together like a pair of scissors, and from that time forth they would travel together. The oldest man in the world could not make head or tail of the time of day by such a watch, and so I went again to have the thing repaired.

This person said that the crystal had got bent, and that the mainspring was not straight. He also remarked that parts of the works needed half-soling. He made these things all right, and then my timepiece performed unexceptionably, save that now and then, after working along quietly for nearly eight hours, everything inside would let go all of a sudden and begin to buzz like a bee, and the hands would straightway begin to spin round and round so fast that their individuality was lost completely, and they simply seemed a delicate spider's web over the face of the watch. She would reel off the next twenty-four hours in six or seven minutes, and then stop with a bang. I went with a heavy heart to one more watchmaker, and looked on while he took her to pieces. Then I prepared to cross-question him rigidly, for this thing was getting serious. The watch had cost two hundred dollars originally, and I seemed to have paid out two or three thousand for repairs. While I waited and looked on I presently recognized in this watchmaker an old acquaintance—a steamboat engineer of other days, and not a good engineer, either. He examined all the parts carefully, just as the other watchmakers had done, and then delivered his verdict with the same confidence of manner.
He said, "She makes too much steam -- you want to hang the monkey-wrench on the safety-valve!"

I brained him on the spot, and had him buried at my own expense.

My uncle William (now deceased, alas!) used to say that a good horse was a good horse until it had run away once, and that a good watch was a good watch until the repairers got a chance at it. And he used to wonder what became of all the unsuccessful tinkers, and gunsmiths, and shoemakers, and engineers, and blacksmiths; but nobody could ever tell him.
The Gift of the Magi, O. Henry

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by cutting corners with the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until it was almost embarrassing. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and cry. So Della cried, but it didn't make her feel any better.

Della finished her cry and powdered her cheeks. She stood by the window thinking. To-morrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only $1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only $1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. She had spent many happy hours planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling—something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

As she thought, she noticed her reflection in the window and she was struck by an inspiration. Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the mirror. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the Mr. and Mrs. Dillingham Young in which they both took great pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. If the Queen of Sheba
had lived in the flat across the street, Della would have let her hair hang out of the window some day to dry just to make Her Majesty envious. If King Solomon had been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell down her back, rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and almost completely covered her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. She faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she cluttered out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Madame Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." Della went in. There was Madame who did not look at all like a person named "Sofronie.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a look at it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick" said Deila.
In a matter of minutes, Della’s hair was gone. For the next two hours, she went furiously from store to store searching for Jim’s present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had searched them all. It was a platinum watch chain simple and elegant in design. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim’s. It was like him. Quietness and value—the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 78 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim could proudly check the time whenever he liked. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing her hair, which she had given up because of her generous nature added to her love for Jim.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn’t kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he’ll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o’clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.
Jim was never late. Della held the chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please, God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two--and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, and then he froze. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again--you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice-what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he could not comprehend what she was saying.
"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously. "You say your hair is gone?" he said.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you--sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He embraced his Della. Eight dollars a week or a million a year--what is the difference? A mathematician would give you the wrong answer for value in Jim’s life could not be counted in dollars.

Jim took a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it on the table. "Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything like a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

Her white fingers tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick change to hysterical tears.

For there lay The Combs--the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for a long time in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise-shell, with jewelled rims--just the shade to wear in her beautiful hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and
yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the hair that should have adorned the coveted adornments was gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, and at length she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it beautiful, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the Christ child in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones, which of course, could be exchanged in case of duplication. And here I have lamely related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most
unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But let it be said that of all people who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, people like Jim and Della are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.
The Three Hermits, Tolstoy

A Bishop was sailing on the same ship were a number of pilgrims on their way to visit the shrines at the Solovetsk Monastery. The voyage was smooth. The wind favorable and the weather was good. The pilgrims sat on deck, eating, or in groups talking. The Bishop, too, came on deck, and as he was pacing up and down he noticed a group of men standing near the prow and listening to a fisherman, who was pointing to the sea and telling them something. The Bishop stopped, and looked in the direction in which the man was pointing. He could see nothing, however. He moved nearer to listen, but when the man saw him, he took off his cap and was silent. The rest of the people also took off their caps and bowed.

"Do not let me disturb you, friends," said the Bishop. "I came to hear what this good man was saying."

"The fisherman was telling us about the hermits," replied one of the pilgrims.

"What hermits?" asked the Bishop, going to the side of the ship and seating himself on a box. "Tell me about them. I would like to hear."

"They are holy men," answered the fisherman. "I had often heard stories about them, but never had the chance to see them myself till the year before last. They live on an island not far from here."

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And the fisherman told how once, when he was out fishing, he had been stranded at night upon that island, not knowing where he was. In the morning, as he wandered about the island, he came across an earth hut, and met an old man standing near it. Presently two others came out, and after having fed him and dried his things, they helped him mend his boat.

“And what are they like?” asked the Bishop.

“One is a small man and his back is bent. He wears a priest’s cassock and is very old; he must be more than a hundred, I should say. He is so old that the whit of his beard is taking a greenish tinge, but he is always smiling, and his face is as bright as an angel’s from heaven. The second is taller, but he also is very old. He wears a tattered peasant coat. His beard is broad and of a yellowish grey color. He is a strong man. Before I had time to help him, he turned by boat over as if it were only a pail. He too is kindly and cheerful. The third is tall, and has a beard as white as snow arid reaching to his knees. He is stern, with overhanging eyebrows; and he wears nothing but a piece of matting tied round his waist.”

“And did they speak to you?” asked the Bishop.

“For the most part they did everything in silence, and spoke but little even to one another. One of them would just give a glance, and the others would understand him. I asked the tallest whether they had lived there long. He frowned, and muttered something as if he were angry; but the oldest one took his hand and smiled, and then the tall one was quiet. The oldest one only said: ‘Have mercy upon us,’ and smiled.”

While the fisherman was talking, the ship had drawn nearer to the island.
"Is it true that there are hermits who live there for the salvation of their souls?"

"So it is said, your Lordship, but I don't know if it's true. Fishermen say they have seen them; but of course they may only be spinning yarns."

"I should like to land on the island and see these men," said the Bishop. "How could I manage it?"

"The ship cannot get close to the island," replied the helmsman, "but you might be rowed there in a boat. You had better speak to the captain." The captain was sent for and came.

"Of course it could be done," said he, "but we should lose much time. And if I might say so to your Lordship, the old men are not worth your pains. I have heard say that they are foolish old fellows, who understand nothing, and never speak a word."

"I wish to see them," said the Bishop, "and I will pay you for your trouble and loss of time. Please let me have a boat."

So the order was given. The sailors trimmed the sails, the steersman put up the helm, and the ship's course was set for the island. A chair was placed at the prow for the Bishop, and he sat there, looking ahead. The passengers all gathered at the prow, and gazed at the island. Those who had the sharpest eyes could presently make out the rocks on it, and then a mud hut was seen. At last one man saw the hermits themselves. The captain brought a telescope and, after looking through it, handed it to the Bishop.
"That's it. There are three men standing on the shore. There, a little to the right of that big rock."

The Bishop took the telescope, got it into position, and he saw the three men: a tall one, a shorter one, and one very small and bent, standing on the shore and holding each other by the hand.

The captain said to the Bishop, "The ship can get no nearer in than this, your Lordship. If you wish to go ashore, we must ask you to go in the boat, while we anchor here."

When the boat had been lowered and made ready, The Bishop and two oarsmen climbed into it and the oarsmen pulled in to the shore, and steadied the boat while the Bishop got out. The old men bowed to him, and he gave them his blessing, at which they bowed still lower. Then the Bishop began to speak to them.

"I have heard," he said, "that you, godly men, live here saving your own souls and praying to our Lord Christ for your fellow men. I, an unworthy servant of Christ, am called, by God's mercy, to keep and teach His people. I wished to know you, and to do what I can to teach you, also."

The old men looked at each other smiling, but remained silent.

"Tell me," said the Bishop, "what you are doing to save your souls, and how you serve God on this island."

The second hermit sighed, and looked at the oldest, the very ancient one. The latter smiled, and said:
“We do not know how to serve God. We only serve and support ourselves.”

“But how do you pray to God?” asked the Bishop.

“We pray in this way,” replied the hermit. “Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us.”

And when the old man said this, all three raised their eyes to heaven, and repeated:

“Three are ye, three are we, have mercy upon us!”

The Bishop smiled. “You have evidently heard something about the Holy Trinity,” said he. “But you do not pray correctly. You have won my affection, godly men. I see you wish to please the Lord, but you do not know how to serve Him. That is not the way to pray; but listen to me, and I will teach you. I will teach you, not a way of my own, but the way in which God in the Holy Scriptures has commanded all men to pray to Him. Listen, and repeat after me: “Our Father.”


“Which art in heaven,’ continued the Bishop.

The first hermit repeated, “Which art in heaven,” but the second blundered over the words, and the tall hermit could not say them properly. His hair had grown over his mouth so that he could not speak plainly. The very old hermit, having no teeth, also mumbled indistinctly.
The Bishop did not stop until he had taught them all of the Lord's Prayer so that they could not only repeat it after him, but could say it by themselves. The middle one was the first to know it, and to repeat the whole of it alone. The Bishop made him say it again and again, and at last the others could say it too. It was getting dark and the moon was appearing over the water, before the Bishop rose to return to the ship. When he left the old men they all bowed down to the ground before him. He raised them, and kissed each of them, telling them to pray as he had taught them. Then he got into the boat and returned to the ship.

On the ship, the pilgrims lay down to sleep, and all was quiet on deck. The Bishop did not wish to sleep, but sat alone at the stem, gazing at the sea where the island was no longer visible, and thinking of the good old men. He thought how pleased they had been to learn the Lord's Prayer; and he thanked God for having sent him to teach and help such holy men.

So the Bishop sat, thinking, and gazing at the sea where the island had disappeared. And the moonlight flickered before his eyes, sparkling, now here, now there, upon the waves. Suddenly he saw something white and shining, on the bright path which the moon cast across the sea. Was it a seagull, or the little gleaming sail of some small boat! The Bishop fixed his eyes on it, wondering.

And he could not make out what it was. Not a boat, nor a bird, nor a fish! It was too large for a man, and besides a man could not be out there in the midst of the sea. The Bishop rose, and said to the helmsman: "Look there, what is that, my friend? What is it?" the Bishop repeated, though he could now see plainly what it was—the three hermits running upon the water, all gleaming white, their
grey beards shining, and approaching the ship as quickly as though it were not moving. The helmsman looked, and let go of the helm in terror.

"Oh, Lord! The hermits are running after us on the water as though it were dry land!"

The passengers, hearing him, jumped up and crowded to the stem. They saw the hermits coming along hand in hand, and the two outer ones beckoning the ship to stop. All three were gliding along upon the water without moving their feet. Before the ship could be stopped, the hermits had reached it, and raising their heads, all three as with one voice, began to say "We have forgotten your teaching, servant of God. As long as we kept repeating it we remembered, but when we stopped saying it for a time, a word dropped out, and now it has all gone to pieces. We can remember nothing of it. Teach us again."

The Bishop crossed himself, and leaning over the ship's side, said "Your own prayer will reach the Lord, men of God. It is not for me to teach you. Go back and live as you did before."

And the Bishop bowed low before the old men; and they went back across the sea. And a light shone until daybreak on the spot where they disappeared from sight.
APPENDIX B

Selected Samples of Data Collected from Subjects in the Current Study
Writing Sample 1

Subject: Male /Arabic/High Intermediate/ Week 2

Discussion language: English

Reading: The Story of an Hour, Chopin

Discussion Focus: Happiness in marriage

Writing Prompt: People want to have happy relationships. Do you think that men and women can agree on what makes a happy marriage?

Everyone hopes happy life and arranged marriage. But it’s hard to get all you want. Some people think marriage should be perfect way to get happy, the other maybe have different opinion.

Because women are different from men emotionally, so we may expect different opinions about happy marriage. Women usually want her husband to be romantic and to help no matter what’s his job or responsibilities. We can explain that by saying women are more emotions than men. In addition, woman likes to express her feeling and she needs some one to do so. She wants her husband to be beside her and listen to her complaining. If woman got what I have already mentioned she of course will be in happy marriage.

Man want his wife easy to agree and interested in what he interested in. He always need his wife to be sexy and pretty. He thinks a happy marriage may be found if he got marriage to educate women.

Moreover, there is a point that may be agreed by both of men and women. This point could be making happy healthy family and raising their children in a perfect environment. Depending on what they have done to their children they really will feel that they were in a happy marriage.
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Data collected from Sample 1
Writing Sample 2

Subject: Female / Chinese / High Intermediate / Week 6

Discussion language: Chinese

My Watch, Twain

Discussion focus: What makes a situation frustrating?

Prompt: Have you ever been in a frustrating situation? Describe a frustrating situation and how you dealt with it.

We often felt frustration when we met difficult questions or problems, like oversleeping and miss some important classes, failure a test, have argue with your friends, etc. Usually we will have had bad manner, and wave our emotions when we meet frustration, sometimes I felt angry or sad, even cause are under stress. So everyone hate frustration. How to fare the frustration? I think humor is important. You can easily change your emotion from frustration if you have enough humor. For example, when I lose my watch, I tried to find it, and I felt depression, in another hand, I think, it’s too old and maybe I need to buy a new one, I will have a good emotion because I will have a new watch.

Some people always serious and nervous, maybe he or she need more humor, humor can less your tense. In some situations humor is important, when I am worry about my homework, my friend always tell me, “You must do your homework by your brain, not feet”. She means I waste too much time in a few life details, I must rarely my time. She remind me using humor sense, maybe its’ a warn by a joke, but it can make me relax my emotion.

Every different culture has different ways to show their humor. In Asia, most people show their humor are serious, indirect, anyway, whether any different type of humor, it can make us relax and solve our stress when you facing frustrating.
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Data collected from Sample 2
APPENDIX C

Composition Scoring Rubric
ALP COMPOSITION PLACEMENT GUIDELINES WITH SCORES

PLACEMENT OPTIONS:
Compositions are evaluated with respect to placement within the American Language Program. Three major factors are considered in making a placement recommendation: overall competence in writing (language and discourse control), fluency, and comprehensibility. A plus (+) or minus (-) designation can be used to indicate high or low within a placement level.

**NR**   Non-responsive (no response, or only a few words written)
50

**020-, 020, 020+** (ready for beginning level)
53 - 57 - 59
- little competence in writing, in either language or discourse control
- little if any fluency
- extremely difficult for the reader to comprehend with normal effort

**021-, 021, 021+** (ready for elementary level)
61 - 64 - 66
- minimal competence in writing, in language and/or discourse control
- minimal fluency
- difficult but possible for the reader to comprehend with normal effort

**022-, 022, 022+** (ready for basic intermediate level)
66 - 68 - 70
- fair competence in writing, in both language and discourse control
- adequate fluency
- for the most part comprehensible to the reader with normal effort
022.5-, 022.5, 022.5+ (ready for high intermediate level)
70 - 72 - 74
- fair to good competence in writing, in both language and discourse control
- adequate fluency
- generally comprehensible to the reader with normal effort

023-, 023, 023+ (ready for advanced level)
74 - 76 - 78
- good competence in writing, in both language and discourse control
- good fluency
- almost completely comprehensible to the reader with normal effort

Out-, Out, Out+ (ready to begin an academic program)
80 - 85 - 90
- strong competence in writing, in both language and discourse control
- strong fluency
- comprehensible to the reader with normal effort
### Pilot Study Raw Data

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