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ESL Students' Narratives of Writing Process: Multiplicity and Sociocultural Aspects

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Within a framework of sociocultural approaches to writing process, this study examined six ESL graduate students' writing processes in depth based on individual interviews and their narratives of writing process. The narratives and interviews were analyzed to discover salient aspects of the students' writing processes and to understand the socially situated nature of the writing processes. First, it was observed that these six students displayed multiplicity in terms of their representations of writing process, episodes, textual practices, and concerns. Several factors including the writing task, students' familiarity with genre, literacy skills, attitude toward writing, and involvement in interaction contributed to individualized trajectories of writing process. It was also revealed that writing is unavoidably a socially situated practice. Students were situated in their cultural arenas as well as their disciplinary arenas, and these contexts helped the students serve as active agents producing and sharing knowledge. The confluence of personal, cognitive, and social factors observed in their writing processes suggests that writing process should be understood from multiple perspectives.

[writing process/sociocultural perspective/post-process]

I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last three decades, studies of writing both in First Language (L1) and Second Language (L2) have followed distinctive approaches to understand and teach writing. Several researchers (Berlin, 1988; Bizzell, 1986; Faigley, 1986) classified three major approaches, namely, expressive, cognitive, and social view. In the early theories of process, the expressive and cognitive views were influential. The first view, linked with

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the expressivist movement, focused on liberating student writers from the formal constraints of academic writing and emphasized self-exploration through personal, expressive writing. The second view saw writing as a cognitive problem-solving process inspired by the research of Flower and Hayes (1981). This approach aimed to explore writers' thinking and composing behaviors and help student writers learn how to write more like experienced, expert writers.

While the process models remained as a dominant pedagogical orthodoxy for over 30 years, they came under siege from a socially-oriented view of writing (Hyland, 2003). The field of applied linguistics has increasingly paid attention to the role of culture and identity in second language learning, developing a sociocultural theory. A sociocultural perspective sees writing as a contextually situated practice and expresses concerns that the process models fail to consider social forces outside writers which influence both writing process and product (Lantolf, 2000).

In order to extend the narrow textual and procedural focuses of the past and to explore the extraordinary diversity of L2 writing and writing contexts from expanded perspectives, Casanave (2003) suggested that more qualitative case studies need to be conducted in three areas: written products, writing processes, and writer identity. Riazi (1997) also suggested that more studies need to account for complex writing processes by revealing how tasks, strategies, learning, and context interact with each other. Responding to the need for case studies on writing process from expanded perspectives, the current study has examined six ESL students' writing processes in depth based on individual interviews and narratives they wrote about their writing processes. The study has focused on understanding the multiplicity and the sociocultural aspects of their writing processes. Specifically, this study has answered the following research questions: 1) what are the salient aspects of the ESL students' writing processes? and 2) how do their writing processes suggest writing as a socially situated practice?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Genre and post-process approaches have been influential in promoting the view of writing as a social practice. A genre approach suggests that since writing is a means of connecting people with each other in ways that convey particular social meanings, it cannot be considered as a mere accumulation of cognitive abilities (Hyland, 2003). Thus, a genre approach is interested not only in features of written products but also in the social contexts where genres are produced for social purposes of communication within groups that share purposes, understandings, and ways of using language (Swales, 1990). Therefore, genre-based research extends beyond texts to the social contexts where

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relationships influence writing and to the discourse communities where texts will be used and evaluated (Hyland, 2000). Casanave (2004) considered this approach as a socially situated product perspective.

Whereas both genre and post-process approaches attempt to add social orientation to the previous theories of writing, social orientation is more broadly conceived in a post-process approach. In his review essay, "Taking the Social Turn: Teaching Writing Post-Process" (Trimbur, 1994), Trimbur first used the term "post-process" to refer to the shift of emphasis from cognitive issues to social issues in writing studies. Kent (1999) acknowledged that contributors to the book, *Post-Process Theory,* may disagree about the nature of the "post" in "post-process" theory, even though they all see a shift in theories of writing process. Petraglia (1999) considered that disagreements about the nature of post-process are not surprising because the "after" process has become more hybridized and complex. In spite of these disagreements, most post-process theories hold that "the writing act is public, thoroughly hermeneutic, and always situated and therefore cannot be reduced to a generalizable process" (Kent, 1999, p. 5).

Whereas Trimbur (1994) sought to draw a line between process and post-process, situating the social outside the process paradigm, several researchers defined post-process not as a rejection of the process but as its extension. Warning against considering post-process as the complete rejection of all principles of process theories, for example, Matsuda (2003) noted that post-process might be more productively defined as "the rejection of the dominance of the process at the expense of other aspects of writing and writing instruction" (p. 78). Similarly, Atkinson (2003) pointed out that the term "post-process" does not refer to a paradigm shift but to the expanding and deepening areas of interest in L2 writing. He explained that research investigating the complex activity of L2 writing in its full range of sociocognitive situatedness, dynamism, diversity, and implications can be considered as "post-process" oriented research.

Several studies have revealed multiplicity and situatedness of writing by examining disciplinary enculturation, identity construction, and literacy activities. Prior's (1997) case study of two L2 graduate students showed that their different trajectories of participation can be attributed to different degrees of alignment to disciplinary practices and different relationships with other members of their disciplines. Abasi, Akbari, and Graves (2006) showed ESL students' different levels of awareness of identity options in the social contexts of writing, which are influenced by their disciplinary enculturation. Hirvela and Belcher's (2001) case studies on three L2 writers who had histories as successful first language (L1) writers showed the complexity of the writers' identities that arose when they transitioned from L1 to L2 writing. From a sociocultural perspective, Lei (2008) investigated two English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners' writing strategy use and found that the learners strategically mediated their writing

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processes with diverse resources and activities. In a study of Korean EFL graduate students' conceptualizations of audience for their English academic writing, Hyun-Woo Lim (2008) found that the writers' ideas are multiple, and that their conceptualizations influence their writing behaviors.

In sum, previous studies that examine writing from a sociocultural perspective challenge a fixed and linear process approach. They suggest that writing that requires interpretation, interaction, and mediation cannot be reduced to a process. As "post-process" oriented research, the current qualitative case study was designed to understand the multiplicity and sociocognitive situatedness of ESL students' writing processes.

III. Research Design

1. Subjects

Participants were six ESL graduate students attending a large state university in the United States. In order to ensure variety of students' characteristics, students with different first languages and from different disciplines were recruited. Table 1 shows the profile of the participants in terms of gender, nationality, area of study, and length of study in the U.S. They voluntarily participated in this study and signed on a consent form.

TABLE 1

Profile of Participants

Name (pseudonym)	Gender	Native Country	Program/Department	Years of studying in the U.S.
Son	Male	Cambodia	MA/Linguistics	0.5
Woo	Female	South Korea	MA/Linguistics	0.5
Kee	Female	South Korea	PhD/ Educational Psychology	2.5
Yun	Female	South Korea	PhD/English	2.5
Gee	Female	Taiwan	PhD/Speech Hearing & Science	2.5
Dan	Female	Malaysia	PhD/Educational Psychology	2

2. Data Collection

1) Narrative of Writing Process

In order to examine students' writing processes, students were asked to reflect on their process right after producing a text in English, and then to narrate their writing process in a written form (1-2 pages). No restriction on the English text was assigned, thus

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students could choose any text they wrote. As seen in the guidelines for the writing process narrative (See Appendix A), the task asked students to represent their entire writing process (from the first event to the last), and to reflect on the major events (episodes), thoughts, and concerns involved in their writing process. This task was performed individually and took from 25 minutes to an hour, depending on how quickly the participant wrote and how much detail they provided. They were asked to submit a copy of the English text they wrote and of their narrative about the writing process.

2) Interview

Based on their narratives of writing process, a semi-structured interview was performed in order to obtain more in-depth information. General interview questions were prepared (See Appendix B), however, in addition to those questions, students responded to several questions more tailored to each student's individual writing process. Interviews took 30-40 minutes. With students' permission, interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed using pseudonyms.

3. Data Analysis

Students' narratives of their writing process and the interviews were analyzed in three ways with different purposes. The first analysis focused on examining salient aspects of the writing processes of all six students. Four salient aspects were found: (1) representation of writing process; (2) episodes/events; (3) textural practices; and (4) problems and concerns. Since they were asked to narrate major events, thinking, and concerns involved in their writing process, it was not surprising that these features were found to be salient.

TABLE 2

Categories for Analyzing Salient Features of Writing Processes

Category	Description	Issues
Representation	How students represent their writing process	Focus of narrative Mode of representation
Episodes/events	What kinds of events they experience during writing process	Textual events Interpersonal events
Textual practices	What kinds of textual practices were employed within the events	General practice Remedial practice
Problems/concerns	What kind of concerns were reflected in narratives	General concerns about writing Specific concerns a given task.

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However, interestingly, given the same directions for narrating their writing process, students' representations of their writing processes were different; therefore, representation of writing process was included as one of the salient aspects. Table 2 describes each category and presents several related issues.

The second analysis focused on comparing students' writing processes within pairs in terms of episodes, textual practices, and concerns. Since students produced their texts in response to different writing tasks, it was assumed that it would be difficult to compare students' writing processes. Even though the study did not intend to control for genre, students writing could be categorized into three genres: (1) introduction of a research paper; (2) response writing to classroom readings; (3) a report of data analysis. Table 3 presents detailed information about students' writing tasks. Students were paired according to similarity of their writing tasks.

TABLE 3

Students' Academic Writing Tasks

Student	Task	Requirement
Son Woo	Introduction of a research paper (final paper)*	Select choose a research topic for the paper and then provide introduction (including literature review)
Kee	Analytic response to reading	Analyze perspectives discussed in class readings
Yun	Moodle response	Write response to reading and classmates' response to reading on a online discussion website
Gee	Report of conversational analysis	Describe and explain conversation data
Dan	Statistical analysis	Describe and make inference about data with principled statistics language

Note. Since Son and Woo took the same class, they responded to the same writing task.

The final analysis focused on the features that reveal the socially embedded characteristics of writing process. More specifically, the study tried to test three major tenets of post-process: "writing is public, interpretive, and situated" (Kent, 1999, p. 5). To do this, three aspects were examined: (1) their perception on whether writing is public; (2) their interpretive interaction/communication during the writing process; and (3) students' situatedness in their disciplines.

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IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Salient Features of Students' Writing Processes

1) Representation of Writing Process

Whereas students were all given the same guideline for writing a narrative, their narratives were different in terms of the mode (format) and focus of their representation, and it seemed that the two features were interrelated. In other words, depending on students' focus of representation (i.e., what they want to highlight in their narratives), the ways in which they presented their writing process varied. Four students (Son, Woo, Yun, and Gee) followed the general structure of a narrative, giving account of a series of events without any attempt to analyze the events.

FIGURE 1
General structure of Kee's narrative of writing process: response writing

1. A plan for a task
   1) Reading the directions of a writing task
   2) Deciding one of possible positions
2. Rereading
   1) Summarizing main points of the postpositive perspective (in English)
   2) Comparing the postpositivist view with other alternative views (in Korean)
3. Writing
   1) Planning of a general structure
   2) Writing general ideas (in Korean)
   3) Rereading and writing (in English)
4. Revising

However, Kee and Dan's narratives were organized somewhat differently. Figure 1 shows the general structure of Kee's narrative. Kee narrated her writing process under titles for each event and activity, and her titles for major events reflect the writing process suggested in the process approach; prewriting, writing and revising. In addition, Kee indicated whether her activities were performed in her first language, Korean, or in English. This format of representation revealed that Kee tried to highlight the general steps she followed and activities she experienced as well as her language switch during her writing process. Kee explained that her reason for adopting the format was that her understanding of and familiarity with process theory provided a general framework for her explanation of writing process. She commented, "When I saw the word 'writing process' in the directions of the task, common steps of writing process came to my mind and urged me to explain what I did in each steps of process." She explained that she

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highlighted her language switch because she thought it could be a distinctive feature of her writing process.

Den used a table format to represent her writing process. In her table (Figure 2), three columns contained information about date/time, episodes/events, and interpretation. Except Den, none of the students indicated the total time needed for producing their text or time slots assigned for each event. As seen in Figure 2, Den organized her narrative around date and time. She then explained the episodes/events in each time slot and added her own interpretations to the events.

FIGURE 2

Examples of Den's Narrative Table

Date & Time	Events/ Episodes	Interpretations
Friday 10/7 5:45 pm to 6:20 pm	I first opened a document and gave it a new file name. Wrote down my name and at least the title of the paper and the course number. Spent time reading my notes and his e-mail message to get a clearer idea on how I should approach this task. Stopped for while to breakfast.	I usually do this just to get started. Reading for me is an integral part of writing.
10/7 7:44pm to 9:40 pm	Went back to my computer. Looked at the document as I had left it, I read the bullets that were already typed…. Was interrupted by my daughter but I told her not to disturb me and I continued. I got to a fairly good start. Things were actually flowing and as I was writing up to fill information for the first bullet, I got a message that my husband is online.	Despite the interruption and the chatting, I would think that it was a rather intense writing episode.

Examination of her time slots showed that she started writing on Friday afternoon and finished on the following Tuesday night. Her events were disconnected and suffered many interruptions and multitasking during writing process. This feature explains why so much time was needed to produce her text. It was found that by using the table format, she wanted to highlight the disconnected nature of her writing process and her multitasking. When asked to characterize her writing process, Den explained,

> I must say that I'm not one of those who can sit for hours in front of the computer and write away. I take breaks, I do other things but you know most of the time when I'm not writing, I am always engaging in some kind of thinking. It doesn't leave me until I complete the writing task. (from the interview with Den)

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In sum, the examination of students' different representations of writing processes provided evidence that they have different understandings of what constitutes "writing process." For example, Kee interpreted writing process as a series of idealized steps, while Den interpreted writing process as a series of personalized stories. In other words, different representations of writing process reveal that it is appreciated differently by different writers.

2) Episodes/Events, Textual Practices, and Problems/Concerns

Prior (2004) noted that "a key issue in tracking writing process is how a text get initiated thus accounts of writing process should not bracket off the task" (p. 168). Since writing process is influenced by the writing task, students' writing processes were examined after students were paired based on similarity of their writing tasks.

(1) Response Writing : Kee and Yun

Kee and Yun reflected on the writing processes involved in producing their response to writing tasks. The writing tasks, however, were different in terms of mode of response and cognitive demand. Kee's required mode of response was to submit a written hard-copy response to class readings, while Yun was required to upload her response to an on-line class discussion format called "Moodle." In addition, in contrast to Yun's open response, Kee's response required an analytical comparison of different perspectives presented in readings and a critical interpretation of those perspectives.

In spite of these specific differences, reading was understandably the most important event in their writing process, and detailed descriptions of the reading process were observed in their narratives. Kee and Yun put emphasis on clear, but at the same time, critical understanding of the readings, and employed several textual practices such as underlining, note-taking, and summarizing to facilitate their reading. Examining the writing process of Iranian graduate students, Riazi (1997) also found that reading purposefully or reading to write was a salient cognitive activity in the students' writing process.

Kee and Yun's reading-to-write process was very dynamic and interactive. Their reading did not end before writing; rather, they continuously referred to the articles or their notes during writing process. In addition, Kee reflected on classroom learning and discussion, and her comment showed how this reflection led to a visual-textual representation (i.e., a chart), which eventually led to text.

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> Instead of making a summary of the articles, I made a chart for comparison. In classroom, we discussed that the perspectives are different in four aspects: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and values. So focusing on the four aspects, I compared postpositivism to other alternatives and completed the comparison chart. (from Kee's narrative)

In Yun's case, the Moodle response required her to interact with class members through writing. About this interactive process, Yun explained,

> Readings were continuously used from the start to end. After writing a small portion, I went back to the readings and also to the responses already posed to make connections. Sometimes much time was spent just understanding others' responses…The awareness of bigger audience, class members, added to the burden as well. (from Yun's narrative)

Their descriptions of problems/concerns focused on reading, rather than writing. Since reading is the basis for writing in their tasks, it makes sense that their ability to write was dependent on and influenced by their ability to read. In spite of the adoption of several strategies such as rereading, summarizing, and completing a chart, Kee experienced difficulties in understanding her reading assignments. She explained,

> Even though I reread the articles, I could not completely understand the readings, and that made me frustrated. I realized that my lack of background knowledge on the philosophies prevents me from understanding and interpreting of the readings with confidence. As a remedial strategy, I decide to write in Korean. Whenever I feel that my understanding or interpretation is unsatisfactory and disorganized, I write in Korean first, and it became one of my old writing habits. (from Kee's narrative)

In contrast to Kee, who attributed her reading difficulties to a lack of background knowledge, Yun attributed her difficulties to reading in her second language. In her narrative, she explained that due to reading difficulties, repeated reading served as a "filter" through which the exact meaning of article is produced. She was more concerned with a clear understanding of ideas from reading than with her interpretation of the ideas. Therefore, to facilitate clear understanding, she focused on understanding the exact meanings of words and expressions. In her narrative, she explained,

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> To understand the text thoroughly enough to write a response, an average of two or three hours (sometimes even more) were spent finishing on reading. There are several steps in the reading process that explains the long hours spent. English not being my first language, I looked up the meaning of all the vocabularies and expression that I did not know the exact meanings of and wrote them in the margins (in Korean). Repetitious reading was required to get the foggy "filter" out of the way (The "filter" describes a feeling that I sometimes get when reading something in English). (from Yun's narrative)

It was interesting to note that Kee and Yun used their Korean L1 as a means to facilitate their understanding of the English-language texts. However, the functions of their first language use in reading were somewhat different. As seen in the previous excerpts, Kee used her first language to organize her ideas about reading, while Yun used it to help understand the meanings of sentences. When they were asked about the reason for L1 use, Kee explained, "when I confront cognitively demanding writing tasks, I often use my first language (Korean) because first language is useful in making scattered ideas connected." However, Yun explained that she uses her first language mostly for lexical search.

The difference is not surprising. Findings of several studies have shown that L2 learners use L1 and L2 interactively for various strategic purposes while writing in L2. For example, Qi (1998) classified four functions of language switching: (1) initiating ideas, (2) developing a thought, (3) verifying the meaning of a word, and (4) compensating for working memory limitations due to the complexity of the task. These four functions successfully explain why Kee and Yun used L1 during writing processes.

In sum, examining Kee and Yun's narratives and interviews revealed that reading is an integral part of writing process, and various kinds of textual practices are employed for the understanding and interpretation of reading. Yun's narrative revealed that her Moodle response, mutimodal on-line writing, required her to attend to the more demanding role of audience awareness. As second language learners, both participants experienced reading difficulties, especially when writing had to sufficiently reflect the understanding of reading, as Yun indicated in her narrative. They often used their first language as a reading strategy and considered language switching as a part of their writing processes.

(2) Research Paper: Son and Woo

Son and Woo were taking the same class, and their narratives of writing process were targeted at the same writing task; that is, writing the introduction (including literature

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review) of a research paper. Since they had to choose a topic before they wrote, major episodes in their narratives included generating a topic, finding relevant resources, and summarizing references. Descriptions of generating a topic occupied a major portion of Son's narrative. He explained in detail how he pinned down the scope of his research topic, and it seemed that he highlighted the episode because it was the most difficult part for him. In his narrative, he emphasized that it was the third paper that he had written in his academic life, and he explained in the interview that his lack of experience in writing a research paper caused difficulties in accomplishing the writing task. For example, he did not know how to write an annotated bibliography and thus had to search the internet to get information about how to write it.

> I was asked to write annotated bibliography of articles I chosen to base on for my literature review. I needed to read the articles more carefully and pick up only the most relevant information for my topic. At the same, I was also learning how to make a reference of the articles. I was instructed to use "APA" style. I did not receive much instruction about writing an annotated bibliography from my class. I had to read more instructions from the Internet on how to write annotated bibliography and studied some samples before I started to write my own annotated bibliography. (from Son's narrative)

Compared to Son's narrative, Woo's narrative contained a variety of episodes: topic generation, reading references, writing literature review, assistance in writer's workshop, peer review and revising. In interview, she explained that she did not experience great difficulty in deciding a topic or finding references because she was already familiar with the writing task. She said that even though she had no sufficient experience in writing a research paper in English, she had written many research papers in Korea when she was in a master's program. She did, however, experience difficulties in integrating the reading with her ideas, and she expressed her concern about plagiarism.

> This time difficulties came from my limit in using English. If I could write in Korean, I feel like I can write ANYTHING! Even though I was sure about the topic and organization, I had some hard time to write in English. Especially, the hardest part was "citation", or "paraphrasing" from other sources. Because what I'm writing is a kind of academic writing, I have to cite the sources in correct way not to plagiarize. All the sources I was reading look so nice! They explained as exactly as what I want to say! I felt like my thinking is somewhat restricted to what I read. (from Woo's narrative)

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Son also expressed his concern about plagiarism by commenting, "I often cannot decide whether I should summarize, paraphrase or quote it and plagiarism also concerns me when I take notes from these sources."

In spite of the fact that Son and Woo responded to the same writing task, the writing episodes they experienced during writing process were different. In addition, depending on their previous experience performing similar writing tasks and their confidence in second language writing proficiency, their trouble spots were different. It appears that when students perform a conventionalized writing task like a research paper, the influence of familiarity with the genre on writing is greater than when they produce a less conventionalized genre like response writing. Son's concern about the format of a research paper and Woo's concern about plagiarism are evidence of ESL students' needs for knowledge of academic genre. Teaching key genres is a means of helping learners gain access to ways of communication (Hyland, 2003), and knowledge of genre functions as capital in particular academic communities and disciplines.

(3) Data analysis: Gee and Den

Gee and Den's writing task was to describe certain data. Gee's writing was about conversational analysis, and Den's writing was about statistical analysis. Since the tasks required a specialized genre, the first thing they did was to clarify the requirements of their writing tasks. To make sure about the format of writing, Gee talked to her professor before she started writing. She explained,

> I haven't written this kind of analysis before so I wasn't sure about some of the requirements and how to start it. Therefore, before I started to write it up, I talked to my professor and clarified some questions, for example, the format of the paper… After talking to the professor, I finally had an idea where to start with. (from Gee's narrative)

When I asked whether she always focuses on clear understanding of her writing task, she commented that, especially in the case of a course term paper, she tries to make sure of the format she should use and to specify the requirements for the writing in order to make a clear outline and not to be off track.

Similarly, Den first focused on understanding of the requirements of the writing task, and the process of task confirmation was the starting point of her writing process.

> What the professor wants us to write. Did I get that right? Perhaps I should go back to my notes or his e-mail just to confirm. Spent time reading my notes and

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> his e-mail message to get a clearer idea on how I should approach this task. After reading I wrote down in bullet points some of the things I need to cover in my writing. (from Den's narrative)

In the interview, Den explained that task confirmation is important if the writing task is directed by someone else, and that knowing exactly what she wants to write and putting it in words are always the most difficult parts for her.

Another important episode observed in their narratives was the step of finding a framework for describing data. For example, in Gee's report, classroom readings served as a framework for writing about data. Gee explained that when she looked at the data, she tried to see if she could observe similar conversation patterns to those discussed in class readings. Reading served not only as a framework for observing data but also a framework for describing data. When she described data, she referred back to the readings and looked at the key words used in the articles and tried to use them. In the interview, Gee explained, "For example, "stepwise topic transition," I knew what it is but was not sure how people call it so I'd look it up in the articles and use the same terms as others do." In Den's case, an important framework for describing data was a statistical method. She explained, "continual reading of statistics books was needed for a more clear understanding of the principles of repeated measure design which I was writing about."

In sum, it appeared that when students had to produce an unfamiliar genre of writing, they paid more attention to clear task understanding and looked at how others perform a similar task. In their reports of data, both Gee and Den tried to make their analysis meaningful by using reading as a framework for describing data. Gee tried to make connections between her data and others' data discussed in readings, and Den tried to make a good argument for her use of a statistics design by reading books on statistics design. In spite of the fact that the writing task was to describe certain data, their approach to writing was not different from the approach employed in argumentative writing; that is, they tried to make a good argument on their data, and reading played an important role in making the argument.

2. Socially Embedded Characteristics of Writing Process

In order to find out whether the current approaches to writing have heuristic power to explain students' writing process, the current study tried to examine aspects of writing processes revealing that "writing is public, interpretive, and situated" (Kent, 1999, p. 5). In spite of acknowledgement that public, interpretive, and situated aspects of writing are connected, I discuss each aspect for analytical purposes here.

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1) Writing is Public?

In their narratives, several students expressed their perceptions of writing process. For example, Son reported, "since this piece of writing is the assignment of my writing class, the writing process mainly follows the instructions by the professor, however, the step-by-step writing process still reflects my personal work." Related to this comment, I asked him whether he considers his writing process as public or private. Without hesitation, he answered that his writing process is private. Indeed, his narrative included a lot of self-discovery activities. Rather than to ask someone for help, he tried to get online help. For example, in order to know how to write an introduction of a research paper, he read instructions from the internet and studied some samples by himself. Even though his narrative contained interactive features, such as peer feedback and group discussion, he did not consider them as interactive features of his writing process since the activities were required practices.

Den also commented in her narrative, "sometimes I thought yes writing is a solitary activity that you need to be totally involved in it to write, but I guess was doing so many things and at the same time." When I asked whether she thinks that her writing is still solitary in spite of interaction with people and influence of the interaction on her writing, she answered,

> Yes, it is solitary. I might discuss with other people about the paper or topic but at the end of the day I'm still sitting alone in front of the computer with my own thoughts and struggling to put them in words. (from the interview with Den)

Both Sun and Den seemed to understand the meaning of *private* as solitary or personal. In spite of the presence of interaction in the writing process, they considered that their writing process is private because of their recognition of the importance of their own decisions and of the prominence of individual work during their writing process.

In contrast, Gee considered that her writing process is public. Her narrative reveals that she was actively involved in interpersonal episodes throughout her writing process. Before writing, she discussed her data with classmates and visited her professor to make sure of the format of writing. After she completed a first draft, she asked her professor for feedback, and she asked a friend for feedback on her final draft. All these interactive episodes were voluntarily initiated, in contrast to Den's case, and in the interview she explained, "my writing process is public because I like to get feedback from people even on my writing process because by doing this, I can understand my writing more clearly and thus improve it." In contrast to Son and Den, her decisions were influenced by

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others' feedback, and she appreciated the influence. For this reason, writing was considered public by Gee.

2) Writing is Interpretive

In order to identify the interpretive aspects of students' writing processes, I examined their interactions during writing process and the influence of these interactions on students' plans or decisions. Woo's narrative contained several interpretive features of writing process. In the interview, she mentioned that she regularly visited the university writing center to get help with her writing. She explained that talking to a consultant was helpful in clarifying her ideas to herself.

> I made an appointment at the writer's workshop the day before the due date of introduction. I was thinking of finishing it before the writer's workshop, but I couldn't write a thing! Anyway I don't want to cancel the appointment, so I went to the workshop with my outline only. I talked with the consultant and explained my difficulties and the purposes of my writing. While explaining my ideas, I realized what I really want to focus on my writing. I made some changes in outlining and thesis statement. After I went to the writer's workshop, I felt much relieved and felt like I can start right away. (from Woo's narrative)

She also engaged in a peer review session in class, and she commented, "my peer didn't give much feedback on the content or organization, however, while rereading it with her, I found some areas to be developed, and some part I didn't like very much." Thus, it seems that regardless of the quality of feedback from others, talking to somebody gave her a valuable opportunity to see how her ideas were interpreted by others and thus helped her to reconsider her ideas. Examples presented in Leander and Prior (2004) show how talk and text interact in situated practices because many texts are written to be spoken. Woo's experience in Writer's workshop and peer review provides evidence of interaction between talk and text.

Students' awareness of audience, as observed in their narratives, also shows that writing is interpretive. Kee's narrative describes how classroom discussion served as a springboard for generating ideas for her writing task. She commented, "in classroom we discussed that the perspectives are different in four aspects: ontology, epistemology, methodology, and values, thus focusing on the four features, I compared postpositivism to other perspectives and completed the comparison chart." Interpreting classroom discussion helped her connect with audience, her professors, and eventually influenced her writing process. However, audience awareness seemed to be a burden to students. In

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her narrative, Yun acknowledged, "the awareness of bigger audience, class members, added to the burden as well," Thus, it seems that the interpretive aspect of writing facilitates students' writing process, however, at the same time, it brings difficulties to students.

3) Writing is Situated

Students' concerns about conventions or formats of writing show that they recognize that their writing is situated in specific academic communities or disciplines. Sun's attempt to learn what constitutes "annotated bibliography" by internet search and Yun's attempt to identify the keywords used for conversational analysis all reveal that writing is situated. Students' emphasis on clear understanding of the writing task also shows that individual writing is situated in a writing task, in classroom, and in their relationship with professors. When they encountered an unfamiliar genre, their situatedness became unstable because of their lack of knowledge about the genre. In that case, students put more focus on the appropriate format for their writing and the requirements specified by their professor. When I asked about her motivation to ask her professor for early feedback on her first draft, Gee explained,

> For this course, the feedback from the professor is not required. However, this was my first time writing this type of paper so I really want to get feedback from my professor and see how I can improve it. Through discussion on my writing with a professor, I know where my weaknesses are and most importantly, this process can train my critical thinking. (from the interview with Gee)

In addition to students' situatedness in their disciplines, the study reveals they were situated in their culture. Sun and Woo's narratives show how their cultural background is involved in their writing processes. When Sun decided a topic for a research paper, his original topic (learners' errors in SLA) was too broad; thus he did not know how to start writing. However, once he narrowed his topic to one with which he was culturally familiar (phonological errors of Cambodian English learners), he could develop an outline for the paper, and writing became manageable. It is the same with Woo's case. Once she determined that the findings of previous research could be applied to the situation in Korea, she felt much relieved and felt that she could start writing right away. In sum, participants' situatedness in their culture guided their writing process and also gave it power.

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V. CONCLUSION

In order to extend beyond the narrow textual and procedural focuses of the past, Casanave (2003) encouraged L2 researchers to conduct qualitative case studies that explore social aspects of local knowledge and local interactions of particular L2 writers in particular settings. In order to meet the need of research, the current study used a qualitative case study methodology. Students' writing processes, grounded in a particular setting, were examined qualitatively with no preference for highlighting either texts, procedures, or writing processes. First, the study reveals the multiplicity of students' writing processes in terms of their representation of writing process, the episodes/events that constitute their process, their textual practices and their concerns. Even though the specific writing task seemed to be an important factor in explaining the differences in students' writing processes, other factors such as students' familiarity with genre, literacy skills, attitude toward writing, and involvement in interaction contributed to the multiplicity.

In students' narratives and interviews, sufficient evidence for socially-embedded features of writing processes was observed. Students were situated in their cultural arenas as well as their disciplinary arenas, and these contexts empowered them by helping them serve as active agents of producing and sharing knowledge. The data also show evidence of students' awareness of audience, and this awareness helped them construct their writing as a site where interaction or communication occurred.

Finally, it was found that students' different perspectives on whether their writing is public or private were related to their writing experiences as well as their individual personalities. Some students considered their writing as private because of the high proportion of individual work and the perceived importance of self-decisions, while others regarded it as public because they recognized that the the interaction with others improved their plans and decisions in writing.

In sum, the current study shows that students' writing process is complex, and thus a single approach or theory is unable to successfully explain the complexity, as claimed in the post-process approach. As Casanave (2003) pointed out, there is an inherent tension in L2 writing research between pragmatic focus on language and rhetorical forms on the one hand and attention to the less text-based aspects, such as social, political, and cultural issues. The findings of that study call for L2 writing researchers' and teachers' to embrace this multiplicity and complexity. Rather than attempting to construct "a" model that explains writing process or suggesting "a" model of pedagogical practices, L2 researchers are encouraged to understand the situated, shifting, and co-constructive nature of student writing. L2 writing teachers are encouraged to understand student writing as participation in discourse construction which is diverse and complex.

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In EFL teaching situations, writing instruction often heavily focuses on language and rhetorical forms, ignoring the sociocultural aspects of writing. EFL writing teachers often impose a fixed and linear writing process or a set of writing strategies while attempting to help students learn the conventions of writing. This approach gives students the wrong impression that writing is a procedure with a certain process, limited audience, and a best strategy. However, EFL writers need to understand writing as participation in local practices embedded in a large social context (Casanave, 2002). EFL writing teachers are encouraged to employ more dynamic, interactive writing tasks to help students realize that writing process is not a fenced-in, formalized space, but an open, dynamic space in which they construct, share, and negotiate meaning with different resources and with multiple audiences.

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APPENDIX A

Directions for Writing a Narrative of Writing Process

The task is designed to get information about your writing process. Please read the following guidelines for the task and write a 1-2 page narrative of what are involved in your writing process.

1. You are asked to reflect on your writing process right after (if possible) you produce a text in English (there is no restriction on the type of a text you choose.) To help your

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reflection, you might note down all types of activities and thoughts briefly while you write, and then add detailed description of them after writing.

2. When you write the narrative of your writing process, you should try to represent the whole process (from the first activity to the last one you take). For example, if you are writing a response to articles as a course assignment, your narrative should include all activities that were involved in producing response writing. The following examples illustrate the kinds of activities you might engage in during the process and write about in your narrative: reading the assignment, asking questions of the assignment, making a plan for the assignment, reading articles, looking for other resources for understanding of the readings, discussing the readings with somebody, making a plan for writing, writing a text, revising the text, finishing writing. If your first language is used in the activities, please indicate when and why your first language is employed. In addition to the activities you write about, you should include in your narrative some of the key thoughts, feelings, and concerns you experienced while writing.

3. After you write your narrative of the writing process, please attach to it the English text you wrote.

APPENDIX B

Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about the task requiring tracing your writing process?
1) Have you ever done a similar task before?
2) Did you have any difficulties in finishing the task? If yes, please explain the difficulties you experienced in detail.
3) Do you think that performing the task helps you examine your writing process?
2. How do you feel about your writing process involved in producing the text (provided for this study)?
1) How do you characterize your writing process? In other words, what are the unique features that explain your writing process?
2) What were your major concerns and difficulties while you wrote the text? How were they reflected in your text?
3) How typical was this writing process of your usual process? Do you sometimes write in different ways? If so, how?

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable levels: Secondary/College/Higher

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