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Investigating the Effect of Group Translation Activity on High School EFL Students with Different TL Proficiency

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The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of group translation activity on high school EFL students with different TL proficiency. For that purpose the study conducted an experiment with 60 high school students, using group translation as the classroom activity. In the group translation activity the students formed groups of six and cooperatively translated a cartoon written in Korean into English. In order to examine whether the activity affects students with different TL proficiency differently, the study divided the participants into three proficiency groups and their performances in the pre-test and post-test were compared. In order to measure whether students of different proficiency groups have different attitudes toward the activity their responses to five relevant items in a questionnaire were analyzed. For in-depth information about students' attitudes toward the activity an interview was also conducted with 12 participants. According to the result, group translation activity had different effects on students with different TL proficiencies, with a more positive effect on the lower-proficiency students. However, it was found that higher-proficiency students tended to have more positive attitudes toward the activity. Based on the result, the study concludes that group translation activity can be a useful means to teach beginner writing.

[translation/group activity/EFL students/sentence writing/attitude]

I. INTRODUCTION

Writing is often referred to as the most difficult language skill to teach. This is particularly true when it comes to an EFL context, where there are various limitations (such as large class size, non-native English teacher, test-oriented English education, etc.) which are rarely found in the ESL context. With the limitations existing in the EFL

context, however, it seems that a total lack of attention to developing students' target language (TL) writing ability (unfortunately, this is the case in many EFL classrooms at the present time) can hardly be accepted any more. This is because of the increasing demand for the development of TL writing ability and its usefulness in gathering information as well as communicating with the people outside the country in today's internet-dominated international society.

In accordance with the recognition of the importance of writing in the life of people in modern society, there has been an increasing concern inside as well as outside this country regarding how EFL students' writing ability can be developed. Within the country this is evidenced by the increasing number of research studies recently published on EFL writing instruction for various student levels. The publication includes studies on elementary level (e.g., Ha & Ahn, 2013; Park & Kwon, 2010; Shin & Lim, 2011), high-school level (e.g. Back, et al., 2012; Cheong, 2014; Kang, 2011; Kim, 2014; Lee, E.-Y., 2011; Lee, Hong & Lim, 2014; Park & Ahn, 2013) and college level (e.g. Bae & Choe, 2013; Choi, 2013; Han, 2012; Jang & Rhee, 2014; Kang, 2013; Lee, J., 2012; Lee, K., 2013; Park, S.-Y., 2012; Park, Y.-Y., 2013; Shin, 2011; Yoo, 2012).

Despite the increasing concern of the scholars, however, many EFL teachers are still reluctant about dealing with writing in their classes probably due to time constraint and also due to the teacher's lack of confidence in teaching writing itself. As a result, their students have little opportunity to practice writing in their English classes. Considering the difficulties that EFL teachers face in their classrooms, it is understandable to a certain degree that they refrain from teaching writing. However, given the reality that English writing ability has become one of the language skills that any successful English learner today must possess, it seems unavoidable that EFL teachers must deal with writing in their classes.

With the belief that English writing ability is a skill that EFL learners must develop, the study aims to investigate the effects of group translation activity on EFL students' sentence writing and attitude. The specific research questions addressed are the following:

1) Does group translation activity affect students with different TL proficiencies differently in their sentence writing?
2) Do the students with different TL proficiencies have different attitudes toward the group translation activity?
3) What are the reasons for the positive or negative attitudes toward the group activity?

The answers to these questions are expected to help EFL teachers decide whether group translation activity can be a means to teach their students.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Writing and Foreign Language Acquisition

It has been claimed that writing plays an important role in second/foreign language (L2) acquisition (Harklau, 2002). However, writing is considered to be the most difficult skill to develop for most people. Even in a well developed society writing is considered to be the skill least used and most difficult (Davies & Pearse, 2000). As known, good writing skill requires an extensive reading and a certain amount of training and hard practice. Despite the efforts required to be a good writer, however, the writing skill, once acquired, becomes a useful means for communication especially in this internet-dominated international society, where people can gather the information they need more easily through the written language rather than the face-to-face communication.

To be able to communicate properly in a language one must have a good command of both the spoken and written language. This has been claimed by many studies on second language development (e.g., Izumi, 2002; Leki, 2002; Mackey, 2002; Swain, 1985, 2000; Williams, 2012). According to those studies, learner language production, or output, is essential for language development process and both speaking and writing are important for language acquisition.

In most EFL contexts, developing students' TL writing ability tends to have been neglected up until very recently. This is probably due to the difficulties involved in writing instruction and also due to the limitations inherent in the EFL context. Understanding the difficulties and limitations, however, no one would deny that in the foreign language (FL) education field where developing the communicative ability in the TL is the goal, the writing ability, just like the speaking ability, deserves more attention as a productive skill important for communication (Carduner, 2002; Hubert, 2010). Moreover, in a learning context where the language learners have little opportunity to use the TL in their daily life, which is true with many EFL learners (Eskey, 2005; Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos, & Linnell, 1996), more attention is required for the development of written language ability and the teachers in the classroom are not free from the responsibility.

The success of L2 learning depends on several factors including learner factors, linguistic factors, and environmental factors (Reichelt, Lefkowitz, Rinnert, & Schultz, 2012). Even though it may be beyond the teacher to control all these factors in their classroom, it will be the responsibility of the teacher to try to reduce the negative effects resulting from the limitations of the factors and help their students develop the TL in a more effective way. Considering that writing is a useful tool in modern society rather

than a skill that can be taught later than other language skills (Raimes, 1985), it seems unavoidable now that L2 teachers deal with writing in their classes.

2. Role of Translation in FL Learning

Translation is defined by Oxford (1990) as converting the expression of the target language into that of the native language, or the reverse. Another definition given by O'Malley & Chamot, 1990) is that it is using one's native language as the basis when one tries to understand or express a sentence. As these definitions suggest, translation seems to be inevitable to a certain degree when an L2 learner, especially a low-proficiency learner, tries to communicate in the TL. In fact, according to O'Malley and Chamot (1990), learners use translation commonly as a strategy in learning another language, and translation holds more than 30% of the strategies used by the learners.

The role of translation in L2 learning has been recognized by many scholars (e.g., Ali, 2012; Carreres & Noriega-Sanchez, 2011; Chellappan, 1991; Cordero, 1984; Hummel, 2010; Stulajterova, 2008). For instance, Chellappan (1991) contends that translation raises learners' awareness of the similarities and differences between the two languages. Similarly, Ali (2012) argues that through the process of doing translation, students apply their linguistic knowledge into practical use and raise awareness of the similarities and differences in morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics between the two languages. In a similar vein, Hummel (2010) suggests that exposure to translation equivalents and active translation may be considered as allowing deeper and more elaborated processing and therefore may facilitate retention.

In addition to the role of translation recognized in L2 learning in general, translation has also been acknowledged to play an important role in L2 writing (e.g., Cumming, 1989; Ellis, 1992; Friedlander, 1990; Harmer, 1991; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Uzawa, 1996; Widdowson, 1978). According to Cumming (1989), for instance, learners use their L1 as an important resource in their continual processes of decision making while writing. Friedlander (1990) also states that translation from L1 into L2 helps L2 learners' writing by providing them with an access to more information when they write in L1 than in L2. Therefore, he maintains, it is more effective for the writing teachers to allow the learners to use their L1 and then translate what they have written in L2 until they make the first draft.

Despite its important role in L2 writing and learning in general and despite its common use by the learners, translation has not drawn much attention especially in the ESL context, where some people even saw translation as an object for ridicule and discounted the possibility of using it as a teaching means (Popovic, 2001). Such a negative attitude, however, is not commonly found in the EFL context. In fact, studies

(e.g., Ellis, 1992; Harmer, 1991; Ur, 1996; Widdowson, 1978) in the EFL area have recognized its value and found that many EFL teachers already use translation as a teaching strategy. In fact, as Kobayashi and Rinnert (1992) recognized, despite the criticism imposed on translation primarily due to L1 interference, renewed attention has been directed to L1 use in L2 writing process.

A common belief is that translation requires high language proficiency and thus it can be used only for learners with high language proficiency. However, Popovic (2001) claims that this belief is not true. According to him, translation, if appropriately used, can be a technique that can be used with students of any level of proficiency and age. He claims that teachers can employ translation as a teaching strategy not to develop professional translators but to help the learners develop the TL. In other words, translation can be used not as the goal but as the means to reach the goal.

3. Group Activity in the FL Classroom

A common teaching strategy in the classroom today is to assign students to work on a task in pairs or groups. The use of group activity in education, and in particular, cooperative group work, is supported by a substantial body of research (see Johnson & Johnson, 1990 for a review). Cooperative work is working together to accomplish shared goals and is considered to produce social and cognitive gain (Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Storch, 2001). According to Slavin (1994), there are three fundamental concepts to all cooperative learning/student team learning. First, students are rewarded as a team but are graded individually. Second, the team's success is not conditionally based on individual performance of one student. All students must help each other to achieve learning goals. Third, all students are expected to improve based on their own previous performance, thus ensuring all students are challenged to do their best. These fundamental concepts suggest that in order to make the group activity beneficial to all the group members, teachers must ensure that the students actively participate in the group activity both as an individual and also as a group member.

In the field of L2 pedagogy, research findings on group work support such classroom organization over teacher-fronted classes. Long and Porter (1985), for instance, reviewed L2 literature on group activity and showed that group activity provided L2 learners with more opportunities to use the TL, created a positive affective climate in the classroom, and increased student motivation. Other researchers (e.g. Pica & Doughty, 1985; Varonis & Gass, 1985) have shown that compared to teacher-fronted classes, learners in groups engage in more modified interactions which has been claimed to be crucial for L2 acquisition.

Group activity is known to provide benefits to both the students and the teacher. A task which is too difficult for an individual to do alone may be done successfully if a pair

or group does it (Wigglesworth & Storch, 2012). Along with the benefits it provides to the students, group activity also provides advantages to the teachers; it requires little preparation by the teacher, and reduces the teacher's supervision and marking load (Nation, 2009). As such, group activity is considered to be a highly recommended instruction procedure (Johnson & Johnson, 1990; Puzio, Keyes, Cole, & Jiménez, 2013).

Despite the potential benefits that cooperative learning or group work can provide, it can be said that the effect of using group activity depends very much on the teacher. In order to make it work and maximize the effect, the teacher must ensure with appropriate techniques that all the group members, and not just the good ones, are actively engaged in and contribute to the group activity with whatever knowledge and information they have. Otherwise, it is possible that the activity is dominated by the good students only, depriving the slow ones of the opportunities to participate and making them only lookers-on.

III. METHODOLOGY

1. Participants

The participants were 60 students drawn from two classes in a high school in a metropolitan city. Just like that of other high school students their main goal of studying is to get a good score in the college entrance exam, which still fails to encourage communicative language teaching/learning in the English classroom. Thus, it must be understood that the participants have not had much experience in their English classes with diverse classroom activities including the group translation activity used in the present study. In fact, their English teacher confessed that despite the national emphasis on communicative language teaching, she, just like most other teachers, could not ignore the demand of the entrance exam. Thus, she admitted that her teaching approach had not been very different from the traditional grammar-translation approach and the goal of her teaching had been to help the students get a good score in the entrance exam. Despite her efforts to help the students, however, the teacher also confessed that her students were not highly motivated to study, and as a natural result they generally had a low TL proficiency including the writing ability.

2. The Procedure

The experiment was conducted in two separate classes in middle of the first semester, each of which consisted of 30 students. Due to the class schedule it was virtually

impossible to put all the 60 students from two classes in one classroom and teach them as one class. Thus, the same experiment had to be repeated in two separate classrooms and the results were put together for analysis. All the conditions in the two classrooms were kept as similar as possible during the experiment.

The experiment in each classroom was conducted in three consecutive classes and was finished in one week. In the first class the participants took a pre-test, where an easy-to-understand cartoon consisting of four pictures with a Korean description (See Appendix A) was provided and each student translated the Korean description into English. After they finished, their writing products were all collected to be scored. The score thus obtained was used to represent their writing ability.

Based on the performance in the pre-test, the 60 participants in the two classes were divided into three proficiency groups: high-proficiency group, mid-proficiency group, and low-proficiency group. However, it needs to be remembered that the division of the participants into proficiency groups here was not based on any objective criterion. Thus, it does not mean, for instance, that the participants belonging to the high-proficiency group actually possessed a high TL proficiency. It simply means that their scores in the pre-test were relatively higher than the other participants.

Each proficiency group consisted of 20 participants and the mean of their test scores was calculated to be compared with that of the other groups. All the materials used in the pre-task writing test were collected. The time used for all the students to finish their writing in the test was roughly 20 minutes.

In the second class the participants were engaged in a group translation activity. For the group translation activity the participants in the class were divided into five groups, each of which consisted of six members (two from each of the high-proficiency, mid-proficiency, and low-proficiency group). Each group was given the same cartoon as used in the pre-test and was asked to translate the Korean description into English through cooperation. During this activity participants were allowed to use a bilingual dictionary and ask the teacher for help with their problems, if any.

While the participants were involved in the group activity, the teacher moved around the class to respond to their request for help. When a question is asked by a group, then the teacher provided the answer to the whole class so that the teacher's help would not cause any difference in each group's performance. In order to make the participants do their best in the cooperative group work, they were informed that their performance would be evaluated both as a group and as an individual and the result would be counted toward their final grade. All the materials used in the group translation activity were collected after the group work was over.

In the third class, which was taught three days after the second class, the participants were given a post-test, where the same cartoon as used in the pre-test and in the group

activity was provided and the participants individually translated the Korean description in the cartoon into English. The result of the participants' performance in the post-test was compared with that in the pre-test. Even though the same cartoon was used for both tests as well as for the group activity and hence, a learning or memory effect was inevitable on the post-test, it was expected that the different gaps in the scores of the two tests would reflect the different effects of the activity on the different proficiency groups.

For information about students' attitudes toward the group translation activity the relevant items in a questionnaire survey which was administered a week after the post-test were analyzed. For in-depth information about students' attitude about the group translation activity an interview was also conducted with 12 participants.

3. Data Collection

1) Pre-test and Post-test

In order to investigate how group translation activity affects high school students' writing, a pre-test and a post-test were each given before and after the group translation activity with an interval of four days. In both tests the participants were given the same cartoon and were asked to translate the Korean description into English. There was no time limit set, but the time used for all the participants to finish their writing in each test was roughly 20 minutes. All the materials used in the two tests were collected after each test.

2) Questionnaire

The questionnaire, which consisted of 20 items, was intended to examine the students' attitudes toward English study in general, their previous writing experience, their recognition of the importance of writing, and attitudes toward the group translation activity. However, the data used for the purpose of the present study were participants' responses to the five items on attitudes toward the group translation activity they experienced. The items were on 1) whether s/he thinks that the group translation activity was fun, 2) whether s/he prefers group work to individual work for his/her learning, 3) whether s/e thinks that the group work had a positive effect on his/her attitude toward writing, 4) whether s/he thinks that the group work helped him/her improve his/her English ability, and 5) whether s/he wants the group work to be continued.

3) Interviews

In order to obtain information about why the participants liked or disliked the group translation activity, 12 participants (four from each proficiency group) were selected and

interviewed by the teacher. The selection was based on their performance in the pre-test and post-test. The four interviewees in each proficiency group belonged to top 20 students, mid 20 students, and bottom 20 students respectively in both tests. The interview questions, developed by the researcher, consisted of six items including whether they liked the group translation task or not, what difficulties they experienced during the task performance, whether they preferred group translation to individual writing, whether the task was helpful, and whether they wanted to continue the group work. Besides answering the questions asked, the interviewees were also encouraged to freely express their opinions regarding group translation activity and English writing in general.

4. Data Analysis

1) Pre-test and Post-test Analysis

Since it was hard to find an established scoring system for sentence level writing in the literature, a scoring system with four categories of evaluation was developed for this study by the researcher with the help of the teacher who had taught the participants and conducted the experiment. According to the teacher, the participants had had little opportunity for even a sentence level writing and it would be unrealistic if one expects too much from them. Thus, the researcher decided to focus on the literal accuracy of the translated sentences by focusing on four aspects: quantity of writing, vocabulary accuracy, grammatical accuracy, and communicative success.

In evaluating quantity of writing, the focus was on whether the participant translated each sentence or not. The rationale for such a focus was that since the participants, having little opportunity for writing, tend to give up writing when they feel difficulty. Considering the reality, it was decided that putting something on the paper itself must be valued. Thus, regardless of the grammatical accuracy of the sentence, points were given for each of the translated sentences as long as it is related to the content of the original sentence. In evaluating vocabulary accuracy and grammatical accuracy, an accurate use of the vocabulary and grammar was the focus. In evaluating communicative success, the focus was on whether the meaning of the Korean description was correctly reflected in the English version. Four points were assigned on each category and the maximum points each student could obtain in each test was 16. The specific criteria for evaluating the written products in each of the four categories are provided in Figure 1 and below. As indicated, four points were assigned on each category of evaluation and the total points assigned in the test were 16.

FIGURE 1

Evaluation Form for Individual Participant's Writing Performance

Group: _____ Name: _____ Score: _____/16

	4	3	2	1	0
Quantity of Writing					
Vocabulary Accuracy					
Grammatical Accuracy					
Communicative Success					

The scoring criteria established for each category were as follows:

<Quantity of writing>
4: All the sentences were translated into English.
3: Most of the sentences were translated into English.
2: A large part of the sentences were translated into English.
1: Only some parts of the sentences were translated into English.
0: No parts of the sentences were translated into English.

<Vocabulary accuracy>
4. All the vocabulary items were accurately used.
3: Most of the vocabulary items were accurately used.
2: A large part of the vocabulary items were accurately used.
1: Only some parts of the vocabulary items were accurately used.
0: No vocabulary items were used accurately./No vocabulary items were used.

<Grammatical accuracy>
4. All the grammar was accurately used.
3: Most of the grammar was accurately used.
2: Some part of the grammar was accurately used.
1: Very little part of the grammar was accurately used.
0: None of the grammar was accurately used./No grammar was used.

<Communicative Success>
4. All the content was successfully communicated in English.
3: Most of the content was successfully communicated in English.
2. Some of the content was successfully communicated in English.
1. Very little part of the content was communicated in English.
0. No part of the content was successfully communicated in English.

The results of the pre-test and post-test were compared within the group as well as among the proficiency groups to obtain information about the effects of group translation activity on students with different TL proficiency. To measure the significance of the difference, a statistical analysis using a one-way ANOVA with post-hoc multiple comparison test using Tukey HSD was administered. The significance level was set at $p<.05$ for the statistical decision. In order to assure the reliability of the analysis, two evaluators, the researcher herself and the teacher who conducted the experiment, independently worked on the data using the scoring system developed for this study. The inter-scorer reliability in the first scoring was 0.84. However, when there were discrepancies between the two results of scoring, they were eliminated through discussion.

2) Questionnaire Analysis

Each participant's attitude toward the group translation activity was measured by his/her responses to five questionnaire items. For the coding of the data a 5-point Likert scale was used, where 5, 4, 3, 2, or 1 means 'Strongly Agree', 'Agree', 'Undecided/Neutral', 'Disagree', or 'Strongly disagree', respectively. To measure the significance of the difference among the proficiency groups a statistical analysis using a one-way ANOVA was administered. The significance level was set at $p<.05$ for the statistical decision.

3) Interview Analysis

In order to know the reasons why the participants have positive or negative attitudes toward the activity, participants' responses to the interview questions were recorded and summarized. Even though the information obtained from the 12 interviewees may not be exhaustive, it is expected that their responses could provide some general information about why students liked or disliked the activity and whether and how the activity can be used in high school EFL classes.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Results of Pre-test and Post-test

Comparison of the mean scores among the proficiency groups in the pre-test shows that the participants in the different proficiency groups experienced different level of

difficulty in translating the Korean description into English, reflecting that there were serious individual differences among the students in the same class. As Table 1 shows, the mean score of the high-proficiency group in the pre-test was 12.65 (SD=2.13), that of the mid-proficiency group was 6.30 (SD=2.03) and that of the low-proficiency group was 0.40 (SD=1.23).

TABLE 1

Result of Pre-test and Post-test by Group

Group	Pre-test Mean (SD)	Post-test Mean (SD)	F	P
High (n=20)	12.65 (2.13)	14.85 (2.11)	10.749	0.002*
Mid (n=20)	6.30 (2.03)	13.30 (2.20)	109.272	0.000*
Low (n=20)	0.40 (1.23)	10.90 (2.65)	257.657	0.000*
F	221.065	14.540		
P	0.000*	0.000*		

TABLE 2

Result of Post-hoc Test for the Mean in the Pre-test

	(I) Group	(J) Group	(I-J) Mean Difference	Std. Err.	P
Tukey HSD	High	Mid	6.35000*	.58272	.000
		Low	12.25000*	.58272	.000
	Mid	High	-6.35000*	.58272	.000
		Low	5.90000*	.58272	.000
	Low	High	-12.25000*	.58272	.000
		Mid	-5.90000*	.58272	.000

TABLE 3

Result of Post-hoc Test for the Mean in the Post-test

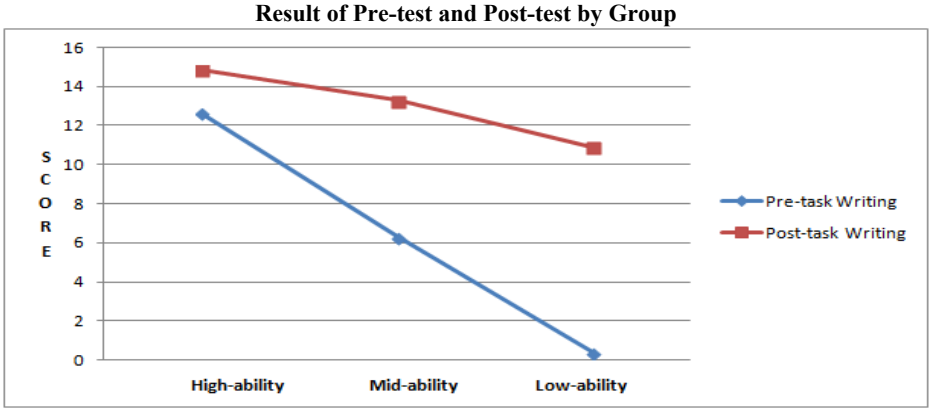
	(I) Group	(J) Group	(I-J) Mean Difference	Std. Err.	P
Tukey HSD	High	Mid	1.55000	.73812	.099
		Low	3.95000*	.73812	.000
	Mid	High	-1.55000	.73812	.099
		Low	2.40000*	.73812	.005
	Low	High	-3.95000	.73812	.000
		Mid	-2.40000*	.73812	.005

What draws one's attention is that in the post-test such a serious gap among groups decreased sharply and the significant difference found in the mean scores of the high-proficiency and mid-proficiency group in the pre-test was reduced, reflecting that the group translation activity was more effective with the lower proficiency students than with the higher proficiency students (See Tables 1, 2, & 3).

The mean score of the high-proficiency group in the post-test was 14.85 (SD=2.11), that of the mid-proficiency group was 13.30 (SD=2.20) and that of the low-proficiency group was 10.90 (SD=2.65). The gap between the two mean scores for each group is graphically shown in Figure 2. Even though one may claim that the increase of the score in the post-test reflects a short-term memory rather than the actual improvement in the writing ability since the interval between the group translation activity and the post-test was short and both the pre-test and the post test were the same and hence, the learning effect could not be avoided, it is still very encouraging that those low-proficiency students, who mostly gave up writing in the pre-test, did write something down and that their performance was not as poor as that in the pre-test. Moreover, given that long-term memory or learning is possible only when short-term memory is available, the increased score in the post-test, even if it reflects a short-term memory, is still encouraging.

FIGURE 2

Result of Pre-test and Post-test by Group



Considering that in the traditional English classes these low-proficiency students have little motivation for study and almost give up studying, one can say that activities such as the one used in the present study can encourage them to pay attention to what they learn. This interpretation is also confirmed by the interview result (See Appendix E).

When one looks into the participants' performance in each evaluation category in both tests, one can recognize that the group translation activity did not affect all the three groups in the same way. As the statistical analysis shows in Table 4, for the high-

proficiency group the activity affected their performance significantly in *grammatical accuracy* and *communicative success*, but not in *quantity of writing* and *vocabulary accuracy*. This may be interpreted as that for the high-proficiency group they already knew enough English vocabulary to translate the Korean sentences and did not gain very much through the activity.

For both the mid-proficiency and low-proficiency group, however, the activity affected their performance in all the four categories of evaluation. Their lack of vocabulary knowledge must have been improved through the group activity and this could have encouraged them to try to translate the Korean description into English and as a result, they wrote more. Especially for the low-proficiency group a sharp increase in all the four categories was found, which may reflect a significant change in their motivation due to the group activity, not just a change in the sentence writing alone.

All the three groups performed better in the post-test in *grammatical accuracy* and *communicative success*. This seems natural in that through the group activity the participants had a chance to correct their grammatical errors, which must have helped them write grammatically more correct and thus easier to understand sentences in the post-test. The results of the comparison between the pre-test and post-test among the proficiency groups and within each proficiency group are provided in Appendices B and C, and samples of pre-test and post-test writing by each of the three proficiency groups are provided in Appendix D.

TABLE 4

Result of Pre-test and Post-test Comparison in Each Evaluation Category

Group		QW		VA		GA		CS	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
High	M	3.70	3.75	3.50	3.85	2.40	3.50	2.95	3.75
	SD	0.47	0.55	0.61	0.49	0.68	0.76	0.83	0.55
	F	.095		4.030		23.222		13.005	
	P	0.759		0.052		0.000*		0.001*	
Mid	M	2.15	3.60	1.70	3.45	1.25	3.0	1.20	3.10
	SD	0.67	0.50	0.80	0.60	0.44	0.86	0.41	0.72
	F	59.846		60.770		65.563		105.523	
	P	0.000*		0.000*		0.000*		0.000*	
Low	M	0.30	3.0	0.25	2.95	0.25	2.40	0.20	2.45
	SD	0.73	0.56	0.55	0.69	0.55	0.99	0.52	0.76
	F	171.000		188.449		71.550		119.118	
	P	0.000*		0.000*		0.0000*		0.000*	

QW: Quantity of Writing, VA: Vocabulary accuracy
GA: Grammatical Accuracy, CS: communicative Success

2. Result of Questionnaire Analysis

Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire items shows that higher-proficiency students tend to have a more positive attitude toward the activity than the lower-proficiency students. The scores of high-proficiency group were the highest in all the five items. In four items (i.e., Items 16 - 19) out of the five high-proficiency group scored significantly better than the other two groups. Also, even in Item 20, where there was no statistically significant difference among the groups, high-proficiency group scored the best (See Table 5). However, one may argue that even the high-proficiency participants' responses in the questionnaire were not positive enough to give one enough confidence about the effect of the activity. The correct interpretation of the result may have to be made considering the reasons for the negative responses, which can be found in the interview result.

TABLE 5

Comparison among Proficiency Groups in the Questionnaire Responses

Item	Content	High M (SD)	Mid M (SD)	Low M (SD)	F	P
16	Group translation activity was more fun than individual work	3.60 (0.99)	2.70 (0.86)	2.95 (1.15)	4.246	.019*
17	Group translation activity was more effective than individual work.	3.70 (0.92)	2.85 (0.67)	3.15 (1.18)	4.130	.021*
18	Group translation activity affected my attitude toward writing.	3.75 (1.02)	2.85 (0.67)	2.95 (1.10)	5.413	.007*
19	Group translation activity improved my English writing ability	3.75 (1.12)	2.95 (0.89)	2.75 (0.91)	5.862	.005*
20	Group translation activity is worth to be continued in future classes.	3.55 (1.28)	3.10 (1.07)	2.80 (0.95)	2.322	.107

P: Positive (Strongly agree & Agree) U: Undecided/Do not know
N: Negative (Strongly disagree & Disagree)

3. Result of Interviews

The responses to the interview questions were diverse depending on the interviewee's preferences. Some participants were fond of the activity, while others were not. The general findings in the analysis of interview data can be summarized as follows: Firstly, the higher proficiency interviewees were clearly divided in their attitudes toward the group activity. Those with a positive attitude liked the experience for the reason that they enjoyed the cooperation with their peers, which they could not experience in their teacher-fronted regular classes. On the other hand, those with a negative attitude preferred individual work for the reason that they did not learn very much from the group activity and it did not help their study for the college entrance exam. Secondly, the

lower proficiency interviewees were also divided in their attitudes. However, many of them tended to have a more positive attitude toward the group activity for the reason that the cooperative experience was not boring and they could get help from their peers. It seems that the negative responses mostly resulted not from the group activity itself but from their lack of language ability and motivation. Thirdly, interviewees' negative responses also reflected their lack of opportunity for writing in their regular English classes. They responded that one time writing experience was not very helpful and in order to improve their writing ability more opportunity for writing should be provided. Finally, most interviewees seemed to feel that their lack of linguistic knowledge (i.e., vocabulary and grammar knowledge) hindered writing and they needed to learn more vocabulary and grammar to improve their writing skill.

As the mixed responses of the interviewees show, group translation activity did not satisfy all the students in the class. Depending on their personal preferences, even students belonging to the same proficiency group had different attitudes toward the activity. These attitudes also seem to be closely related to their immediate need: studying to get a good score in the college entrance exam. However, one can see the possibility that with a careful and systematic instruction to reduce the negative attitudes the activity can be another ingredient for EFL instruction. Some examples of positive and negative interview responses are provided in Appendix E.

V. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the effects of group translation activity on high school EFL students with different TL proficiency. According to the result, group translation activity had different effects on the students' sentence writing depending upon their TL proficiency and their attitudes toward the activity. The general tendency is that the activity had a more positive effect on lower-proficiency students' sentence writing and higher-proficiency students had a more positive attitude toward the activity. However, regardless of their TL proficiency, individual students' preferences also seem to be responsible for the different attitudes toward the activity. Based on the results, the study concludes that group translation activity, if it is used to satisfy students' immediate academic needs, can be a useful tool to teach beginner level writing in the EFL class, which requires a deep consideration into when and how to use it.

Despite the conclusion, however, the study has the following limitations. Firstly, the material used for the group translation activity was only one cartoon. More materials with diverse text difficulties might have produced a different result. Secondly, it is not certain whether all the participants were sincere enough and did their best during the

experiment. In case they were not, the result of the experiment may not reflect the real picture. Thirdly, the participants are from one school only and the result of the study may not be generalized to all high school students with different TL proficiencies. Finally, the interval between the group translation activity and the post-test was not long enough. With the short interval between the two, there could have been a memory effect in the test score. A delayed post-test might have produced a different result.

With the limitations recognized, the researcher would like to make some suggestions for an effective group translation activity in the EFL class. Firstly, teachers need to think about how to get the students, especially the slow ones, actively involved in the group activity. As well known, an effective group activity requires the cooperation of all the members, not just the good ones. For this it may be necessary to let the students know that their efforts both as a group member and as an individual will be evaluated and counted toward their grade. Secondly, teachers need to make the students, good or slow, see the value of group activity and try their best to perform the task. This requires that the students should be able to feel that the activity is beneficial for their academic development. Thirdly, before using a group activity the teacher needs to plan carefully considering what can go wrong as well as what difficulty the students may experience during the activity. Finally, in a school context where the students are mostly test-oriented, it would not be a good idea to try to use such an activity too often. Teachers need to make a wise decision on when and how often to use the activity.

As revealed in the result of the interviews with participants of different TL proficiencies and preferences, it is hard for any activity to satisfy all the students in the class. Especially when the students have different TL proficiencies and their study is test-oriented, it is harder for the teacher to try any new or unfamiliar approach to the students. Despite the difficulty, however, the study shows that group translation activity is a potentially effective teaching strategy when it is used in an appropriate manner.

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APPENDIX A

The Cartoon



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※ Translate the Korean sentences in the cartoon into English.

I. _____.
II. _____.
III. _____.
IV. _____.

APPENDIX B

Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Result among Groups

Pre-test						Post-test					
High		Mid		Low		High		Mid		Low	
S.	Score	S.	Score	S.	Score	S.	Score	S.	Score	S.	Score
S1	13	S21	9	S41	0	S1	13	S21	16	S41	8
S2	16	S22	5	S42	0	S2	16	S22	16	S42	9
S3	13	S23	10	S43	0	S3	16	S23	16	S43	14
S4	13	S24	10	S44	0	S4	16	S24	14	S44	11
S5	13	S25	6	S45	0	S5	14	S25	10	S45	13
S6	15	S26	5	S46	4	S6	15	S26	12	S46	11
S7	14	S27	5	S47	10	S7	16	S27	10	S47	15
S8	15	S28	5	S48	0	S8	16	S28	12	S48	10
S9	15	S29	5	S49	0	S9	16	S29	9	S49	6
S10	15	S30	5	S50	0	S10	16	S30	12	S50	10
S11	12	S31	5	S51	0	S11	16	S31	13	S51	13
S12	15	S32	7	S52	0	S12	16	S32	16	S52	12
S13	12	S33	6	S53	0	S13	12	S33	16	S53	11
S14	10	S34	4	S54	0	S14	6	S34	13	S54	9
S15	10	S35	4	S55	0	S15	16	S35	13	S55	12
S16	10	S36	4	S56	0	S16	16	S36	13	S56	11
S17	9	S37	7	S57	0	S17	15	S37	13	S57	6
S18	10	S38	7	S58	0	S18	8	S38	12	S58	9
S19	11	S39	7	S59	0	S19	16	S39	14	S59	12
S20	12	S40	10	S60	0	S20	12	S40	16	S60	16
M	12.65	M	6.30	M	0.40	M	14.85	M	13.30	M	10.90
SD	2.13	SD	2.03	SD	1.23	SD	2.11	SD	2.20	SD	2.65
F	221.065					F	14.540				
P	0.000*					P	0.000*				

APPENDIX C

Comparison between Pre-test and Post-test Result within Group

High Group			Mid Group			Low Group		
Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Student	Pre-test	Post-test	Student	Pre-test	Post-test
S1	13	13	S21	9	16	S41	0	8
S2	16	16	S22	5	16	S42	0	9
S3	13	16	S23	10	16	S43	0	14
S4	13	16	S24	10	14	S44	0	11
S5	13	14	S25	6	10	S45	0	13
S6	15	15	S26	5	12	S46	4	11
S7	14	16	S27	5	10	S47	4	15
S8	15	16	S28	5	12	S48	0	10
S9	15	16	S29	5	9	S49	0	6
S10	11	16	S30	5	12	S50	0	10
S11	12	16	S31	5	13	S51	0	13
S12	15	16	S32	7	16	S52	0	12
S13	12	12	S33	6	16	S53	0	11
S14	10	16	S34	4	13	S54	0	9
S15	10	16	S35	4	13	S55	0	12
S16	10	16	S36	4	13	S56	0	11
S17	9	15	S37	7	13	S57	0	6
S18	10	8	S38	7	12	S58	0	9
S19	11	16	S39	7	14	S59	4	12
S20	12	12	S40	10	16	S60	3	16
M	12.65	14.85	M	6.30	13.30	M	0.40	10.90
SD	2.13	2.11	SD	2.03	2.20	SD	1.23	2.65
F	10.749		F	109.272		F	257.657	
P	0.002*		P	0.000*		P	0.000*	

APPENDIX D

Samples of Pre- and Post-writing by Each Group

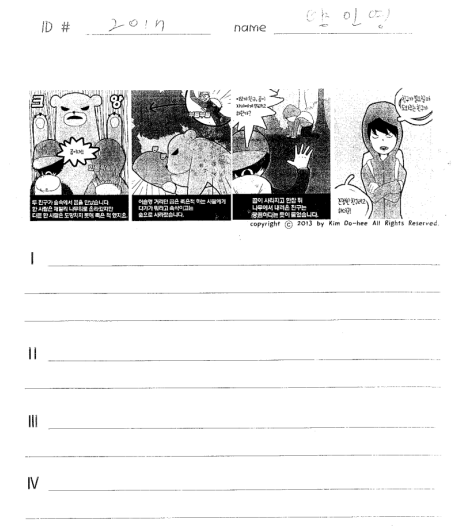
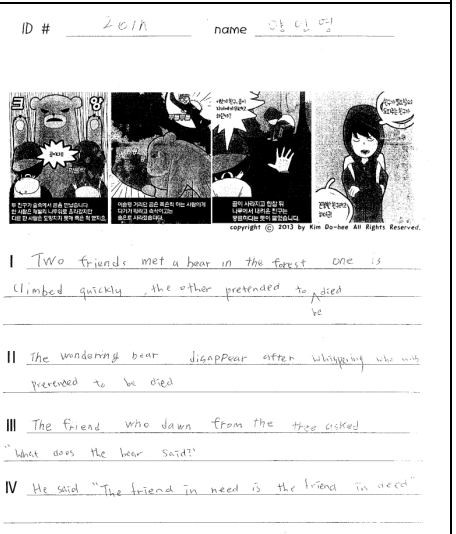
e.g. Pre- and Post-writing sample by a high group student

Pre-test writing	Post-test writing
ID # 2319 name 유 재연  I Two ~~friends~~ people walking the forest and then seeing the bear. ~~so~~ One people up to the tree, other is don't running so then she look like die II The bears walking to look like dead ~~pe~~people and the bear whisper to him and the bear is again going to the forest. III One people says "Hey what about talking to you?" IV He says "I want to your help and you help me, then this is a really friends"	ID # 2319 name 유재연  I Two friends met a bear in the forest. One climbed up the tree, but the other pretended to be died because he couldn't run away II The bear disappeared after saying something to him III The friend who came down the tree asked "One is told him?" IV The friend who in need is the friend in deed

e.g. Pre- and Post-writing sample by a mid group student

Pre-test writing	Post-test writing
ID # 20123 name [illegible]  I Two friends met a bear, one is raising a tree, the other is not [illegible] and looks like die II disappearing the forest III IV It needs a [illegible] helping it is good friends?	ID # 20123 name [illegible]  I Two friends met a bear in the forest. one man is was climbed the one tree, the other pretended to be [illegible] II The wondering bear disappear after [illegible] III The friend who went down from the [illegible] IV The friend in need is the friend in [illegible]

e.g. Pre- and Post-writing sample by a low group student

Pre-test writing	Post-test writing
	

APPENDIX E

Samples of Interview Responses

<Responses with a positive attitude>

e.g. 그룹 친구들과 그림, 영어에 관한 이러저러한 이야기를 나누다 보니 재미가 있고 잠이 오지 않았다. 활동을 해야겠다는 의욕이 생겼다.

e.g. 혼자 하는 것보다 답이 더 완성적으로 나와서 뿌듯함을 느꼈다.

e.g. 일단 선생님의 일방적 강의식 수업보다 재미가 있어 잠이 오지 않았다.

e.g. 내가 모르는 단어를 친구가 이야기 해 주어서 사전을 찾지 않아도 그 자리에서 해결이 가능하였다.

e.g. 혼자 하면 나 혼자 다해야 한다는 부담감이 큰데 다같이 하니 부담이 줄고 재미가 있었다.

e.g. 이렇게 매일 하는 건 힘들겠지만, 이렇게 스토리가 있고 흥미로운 그림으로 가끔씩 수업을 하면 좋을 것 같다는 생각이 든다.

e.g. 다같이 과제를 완성하다 보니 실력이 한층 더 업그레이든 된 느낌이다. 혼자 한다면 할 수 없었던 것을 해낸 느낌이다.

e.g. 사실 영어에 자신감이 많이 없었는데, 관심도 많이 생기고 자신감도 많이 오른 것 같다.

e.g. 영어로 문장을 쓰는 건 사실 이번이 처음이었다. 엄청 큰 도움이 되었다.

e.g. 혼자 하면 모르는 단어가 너무 많으니까 포기하게 되는데 같이 하니까 의욕이 고취되었다.

e.g. 내가 모르는 단어를 친구들이 다 얘기해줘서 덕분에 잘 참여한 것 같다. 친구들이 가르쳐 준 단어는 더 오랫동안 기억에 남는 것 같다.

e.g. 항상 영어에 자신감이 없고 위축이 되었었는데, 이 정도라면 계속하고 싶고 실력도 향상시킬 자신이 있다.

<Responses with a negative attitude>

e.g. 표현이나 단어에 대한 의견이 맞지 않아 그룹 구성원 사이에서 충돌이 있었다. 또한 단어의 뜻을 이야기 하다가 옆으로 새기도 하였다. 그래서 나는 모둠활동이 그렇게 좋지만은 않았다.
e.g. 혼자 하면 내 생각대로 하면 그만인데, 각자 파트를 나누고 자신의 분량만 하다 보니 친구들의 것은 생각할 기회가 없었다. 또 내가 한 것이 친구들에게 그대로 가다 보니 서로 눈치를 보고 남의 이목을 신경 쓰게 되었다.
e.g. 내가 친구들보다 더 잘하는데 내 능력을 주는 게 싫다.
e.g. 영어를 직접 사용할 기회가 있었던 것은 괜찮았던 것 같지만 그렇게 효과가 있는지 모르겠다. 도움이 안 되었다.
e.g. 나는 본래 영어를 잘 못하기 때문에 나서기 싫고 우왕좌왕 하는 모습을 보여주기 싫었다. 모둠 내에서도 내가 별 도움이 안 되었던 것 같다.
e.g. 여러 번 자주했던 게 아니라 실력이 향상되는 데 크게 기여한 것은 아닌 것 같다.
e.g. 혼자 하면 사전이라도 찾아보면서 할 수 있으니까 그냥 혼자하고 싶다. 다른 친구들에게 못하는 모습을 보여주고 싶지 않다.

Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Levels: Secondary

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