

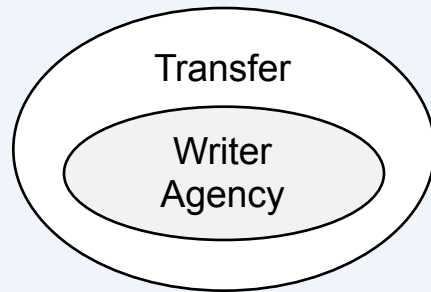
Writer Agency and Transfer in Argumentative Essays

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Abstract

This case study explores writer agency and transfer from second language (L2) to first language (L1) of two Japanese students in composing argumentative essays.

Introduction

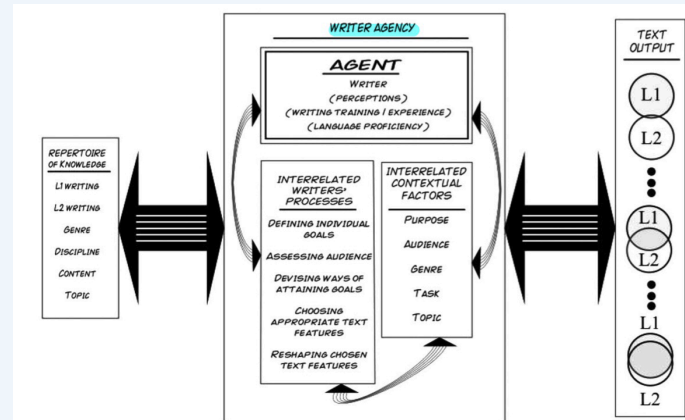


- Transfer is to reuse and reshape previous knowledge in a new context.
- Writer Agency is to control the transfer process = decision making.

(Rinnert et al., 2015)

Transfer from L1 to L2

Rinnert et al. (2015) point out that writers activate their writer agency while constructing L2 essays, in other words, they reuse and transfer their L1 writing knowledge and experience to L2 writings.



Objectives

- explore writer agency and transfer from L2 to L1
- make a hypothesized model of writer agency and transfer

Study

- 1) Make a renewed coding system referring to Rinnert et al. (2015).

	Japanese	English
Argumentation subtypes		
Justification		
Recommendation		
Exploration type-1 (Ki-Sho-Ten-Ketsu style)		
Exploration type-2 (putting forward a position)		
Introduction components		
Context		
Focus		
Position (thesis statement)		
Preview (overview of contents)		
Structure (overview of structure)		
Conclusion components		
Concession		
Counterargument / refutation		
Position (reinforcing thesis statement)		
Suggestion		
Summary		
Text-based extension		
Writer-based extension		

- 2) Collect two participants' essays in L1 Japanese and L2 English.

Student A		Student B
female	sex	male
2nd grade	grade	2nd grade
Education	major	Economics
CEFR A2	English level	CEFR B2
8 years	learning period	8 years
No	overseas experience	No
• extensive English writing classes	writing experience	• studying English outside classroom for TOEFL iBT
• Japanese argumentative writing classes		

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Prompt: “Self-Control in Early Childhood and Future Development.”

- 3) Conduct semi-structured interviews
- 4) Analyze data

Results

Student A

	Japanese	English
Argumentation subtypes		
Justification		
Recommendation		
Exploration type-1 (Ki-Sho-Ten-Ketsu style)	•	
Exploration type-2 (putting forward a position)		•
Introduction components		
Context		
Focus	•	•
Position (thesis statement)		•
Preview (overview of contents)		
Structure (overview of structure)		
Conclusion components		
Concession		
Counterargument / refutation		
Position (reinforcing thesis statement)	•	•
Suggestion		
Summary	•	•
Text-based extension	•	
Writer-based extension		

L1 Japanese essay:

- *Exploration type-1 (Ki-Sho-Ten-Ketsu)*
= inductive, bottom-heavy pattern

- explicitly proposes her idea in the conclusion

L2 English essay:

- *Exploration type-2*
= deductive, linear pattern
- implicitly proposes her idea in the introduction then develops her argument

Student B

	Japanese	English
Argumentation subtypes		
Justification	•	•
Recommendation		
Exploration type-1 (Ki-Sho-Ten-Ketsu style)		
Exploration type-2 (putting forward a position)		
Introduction components		
Context		•
Focus	•	•
Position(thesis statement)	•	•
Preview (overview of contents)		•
Structure (overview of structure)	•	•
Conclusion components		
Concession		•
Counterargument / refutation		•
Position (reinforcing thesis statement)	•	•
Suggestion		•
Summary		
Text-based extension		
Writer-based extension		

L1 Japanese essay:

- *Justification*
= agree / disagree, good / bad

- explicitly states his position
- proposes whole structure using a number

L2 English essay:

- *Justification*
- explicitly states his position
- gives the background information, overview, position, and structure
- reinforces his standpoint by showing concession, counterargument, and suggestion

Discussion

How does their L2 writer agency transfer to their L1 writings?

L2 experience and knowledge

Student B:

- Same argumentative pattern
- Study for TOEFL iBT test by himself

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- ➡ Writing experience and knowledge are major factors affecting writer agency.

L2 proficiency

- ➡ L2 proficiency does not seem to affect L1 essays.

L2 awareness of audience

Student B:

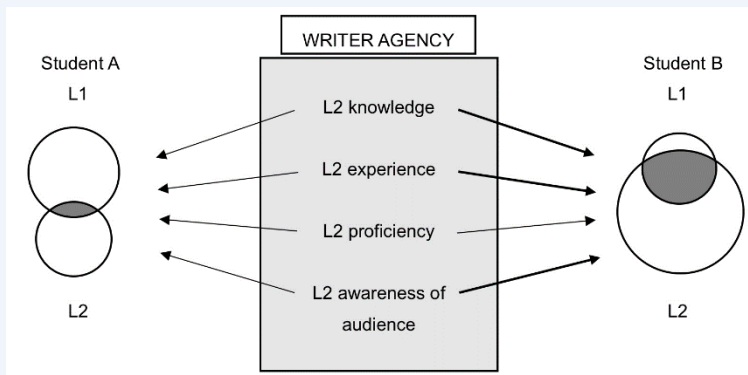
- Same writing style
- A TOEFL rater for both L1 and L2 essays

- ➡ L2 awareness of audience is a factor impacting writer agency and transfer to L1.

Conclusion and Implications

- Student A does not show much transfer from L2 to L1 thanks to intensive writing lectures in L1 and L2.

- Student B showed a strong transfer from L2 to L1 due to the unbalanced writing knowledge and experience.



Pedagogical implications

- Teachers should acknowledge the importance of L1 writing as well as L2 writing.
- It is important to reconsider the curriculum of L1 and L2 writing and have Japanese and English teachers collaborate with each other.

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