Contribution of collaborative writing techniques to Korean college students' English writing abilities

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Ku, Keong Yeun. 2011. Contribution of collaborative writing techniques to Korean college students' English writing abilities. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal.* *19*(4). 83-108. The study was designed to investigate how collaborative writing techniques influence on English writing products of Korean college students and the improvement of their English writing abilities, compared to an individual writing opportunity. 54 college students (48 Korean students and 6 international students) taking two parallel in-tact English composition classes offered by a national university participated in this study. The participants, depending on which section of the writing course they registered, were asked to work on writing an English essay either collaboratively or individually, as three writing phases, pre-, during-, and post-writing step with a variety of activities, proceeded. Three major research instruments (students' written texts, survey, and interview) were employed to answer three research questions on the contribution of collaborative writing to their English writing improvement. The findings were that collaborative writing techniques were helpful for EFL college students not only to achieve knowledge of English, in particular, usage of grammar and punctuation but to develop their communication skills and English writing strategies even though the study failed to demonstrate that students writing their essay collaboratively produced better written texts than those writing individually. Lastly, pedagogical implications for college English composition courses and suggestions for future studies were also provided.

Key Words: collaborative writing, EFL composition, EFL writing instruction practice

1. Introduction

The technique of collaborative writing, since the publication of Elbow's *Writing Without Teachers* (1973), has been widely employed in U.S. college classrooms where teaching English writing as a first language (L1) and business writing (Daiute, 1986; Ede & Lunsford, 1990; Louth, McAllister, & McAllister, 1993), and there are two distinctive voices on collaborative writing. One voices have argued that students have problems when asked to write collaboratively because of different personalities, writing styles (Nelson and Smith, 1990), unresolved emotional issues (Forman and Katsky, 1986), and unbalanced contribution to their writing work (Ewald and MacCallum, 1990; Morgan et al., 1987). But, the other voices on collaborative writing have supported that collaborative writing enables students to develop their social skills including their communication strategies, to facilitate their affective factors, and to have joint responsibility over the production of a better text. Thanks to the empirical evidences of the advantages of collaborative writing in L1 writing classrooms over the disadvantages, writing instructors and researchers have still used and expanded this technique even into specific subject classrooms such as social studies and science (Dale, 1994; Hamilton, 2000).

The popularity of collaborative writing could not be exceptional in second language (L2) writing classroom when communicative competency was emphasized. Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms have usually been done in a certain format such as pair or small group work, and L2 writing instructors and researchers have applied this technique to various steps of L2 writing process, either before, during, or after writing, in order to examine how L2 learners work collaboratively in their writing classrooms. Especially, Storch has carried out several experiments on collaborative writing with L2 learners of English (see, for example, 1999, 2001, 2002, 2005, 2007 & 2009 with Wigglesworth). Her studies are divided into two areas; two of his earlier studies (2001 & 2002), through the analysis of group or pair interactions, tried to determine if adult ESL learners work collaboratively on their writing task. On the other hand, his later studies with Wigglesworth (2003, 2007, & 2009) discovered the advantages of collaborative writing technique in terms of task fulfilment, fluency, accuracy, and complexity. They measured the quality of written texts produced by

participants working in a group and those working individually based on the total number of words, a count of T-units and clause analysis. However, taking into consideration several domains of writing assessment such as content or organization, the assessment tool used to measure students' writing ability, which focused only on sentence structure and writing length, needs to be reconsidered. As a result, it is expected that different writing assessment tools bring about different results of effectiveness of collaborative writing.

While the use of collaborative writing in the English as a second language (ESL) classroom has been paid much research attention to with positive effects, the collaborative writing technique is far less common in foreign language writing classrooms such as English writing courses as a foreign language (EFL) in Korea. If any, most research in Korea has been done with elementary (Choi & Kim, 2010), secondary school students (Kim, 2003; Lee & Kim, 2009; Lim, 2003; Min & Kim 2006), contrary to those in ESL writing classrooms done with adult learners. Even though those studies with Korean K-12 students have indicated that both collaborative and cooperative learning opportunities facilitate Korean EFL K-12 students to achieve the improvement of writing ability, there are very few studies examining impacts of collaborative writing on college students' English writing ability. Therefore, this study was designed to investigate how collaborative writing techniques influence on improvement of English writing ability of Korean college student.

2. Literature Review

According to Louth and others (1993), collaborative writing is defined as "more than one person contributing to the process", which menas that group members interact during writing process and have shared responsibility for their final product. That is, collaborative writing is explained as a writing technique which requires a singular text but more than one author. A number of studies on collaboration writing have been done and investigated several features that enable writing teachers to apply this technique to their writing instruction successfully.

2.1. Features of Collaborative Writing and its benefits

The first benefit is that collaborative writing foster the development of social skills through mutual interactions among learners. While working together, learners have mainly experienced two types of conversational modifications, such as negotiation (Jarratt, 1991; Pica 1994; Storch 2001, 2002) and conflict with their peers (Dale, 1994; DiNitto 2000; Morgan et al. 1987; Tocalli-Beller 2003). According to Pica (1994), negotiation is used to modify and restructure interaction between learners and their peers when they encounter problems comprehending either written or oral messages. The most common features of negotiation can be found in mutual interactions dealing with clarification requests, confirmation checks, and comprehension checks. For example, Dale conducted her study with nine high school students to compare interaction differences between three different groups (a model, a typical, and a problem group) by analyzing their conversations. She found a model group which seemed productively engaged and involved with their work had more conversational turns related to clarification and comprehension of ideas than other groups. Storch (2001) also analyzed conversations between four different dyads (Collaborative, Dominant/Dominant, Dominant/Passive, Expert/Novice) which consisted of 33 ESL college learners with diverse linguistic backgrounds and discovered that collaborative dyad not only offered ideas and clarification questions but engaged with each other's ideas in working on their writing more actively than three other dyads.

The other feature of conversational modifications, cognitive conflict, is also an interesting concerns to make collaborative work successful in classrooms. When learners negotiate differences of opinion in order to arrive at consensus, conflict is bound to happen (Dale, 1994). However, the cognitive conflict plays a positive role in the learning process (Allen et al. 1987; Dale 1994; Ede and Lunsford, 1990; Storch 2002; Tocalli-Beller 2003). Dale's (1994) and Stortch's (2002) study showed that the groups with more conflicts were satisfied with their collaborative writing work than those with less conflicts. Allen and others (1987) suggested that the practice of collaborative writing in business writing class plays a crucial role in problem-solving processes by providing a broader understanding about the problem or issues for group members. From these empirical studies, it can be believed that collaborative writing not only helps

learners to be more creative and it results in better language use and enhances writing by providing different dimensions of looking at things.

Collaborative writing is considered to be the most useful technique because learners can have an ample opportunity to share their expertise. All of leaners in a writing classroom have different backgrounds in terms of their English proficiency, writing strategies, interesting areas, and prior knowledge. When they are asked to work collaboratively with their peers, they contribute their strengths to their group (Dale 1997; DiNitto, 2000; Ohta 1995; Storch, 1999). For example, in writing class, those who are full of information may have good ideas or examples upon a writing topic. Some are better at sentence structure, coherence, spelling, and writing mechanics. Others may be responsible for writing purposes, computer skills, or even time management. Finally, due to the contribution of each group member's strengths to their group writing, collaborative writing can provide each learner with a greater chance of enhancing the learner's zone of proximal development suggested by Vygotsky (1978) and also of producing a better quality essay (Daiute, 1986; Dale, 1994; Louth et al., 1993; Storch, 1999, 2005). That is, Ede and Lunsford (1990) explains in their book that mutual sharing of ideas and knowledge, contributions of different writing styles and strategies can produce a more accurate and richer text. To find some evidences for Ede and Lunsford's belief on collaborative writing, Louth and others (1993) evaluated 136 English (L1) essays from three groups with different writing instructions. Compared scores between a pretest essay and a posttest essay, learners receiving group writing instruction improved their writing abilities more than those receiving individual writing and interactive writing instruction. Daiute (1986) also had a case study with two fourth grade co-authors and discovered their collaborative texts were better than their individual texts. Like an L1 writing class, collaborative in an L2 writing setting can produce better and richer text. For example, Storch (2005) measured 13 writing examples produced by seven pairs and by five individuals in two ways: (1) fluency, accuracy, and complexity quantitatively with T-unit and (2) content, structure of the text and task fulfillment qualitatively based on 5-scale global evaluation scheme. As a result, she found that pairs produced better text despite of their shorter text than individuals did in areas of task fulfillment, grammatical accuracy, and complexity. Based on the findings of these

researchers, it can be supported that the pooling of diverse abilities enables learners interdependently to build their knowledge and to improve their writing skills to a greater extent than what they could achieve individually. Therefore, their willingness to share their knowledge and skills make their learning processes more meaningful, productive, and successful for themselves as well as for others.

The last benefit of collaborative writing suggested in this study is associated with an affective factor. While working on their writing project collaboratively, learners successfully complete their writing project due to facilitated affective factors, such as trust, reliability, commitment, and respect towards their group members (Dale 1994; Tocalli-Beller 2003). Tocalli-Beller (2003) explained that she felt a difficulty in voicing her opinion when she and her two subjects, one native speaker of English and one non-native speaker of English, had different understanding of the same text and in the long run, the prevailed hostile atmosphere stopped their discussion on the specific topic and made their work incomplete. However, when they had positive feelings towards each other, they would be more collaborative and generous to accept others' opinions and finally successfully achieved their goals. Dale's study (1994) also supports that affective factors influence on failure and success of collaborative writing. Her Model group with the most productive writing work had no negative feelings between group members, whereas her Problem group with the least productive writing work showed their negative feeling to their group members. Learners who are free from the fear of being ridiculed are more likely to communicate and those who feel their responsibility for assigned work are more like to cooperate wholeheartedly (Dale 1997). These studies have indicated how important the affective bonds among group members are in order to lead to the effective and efficient collaborative writing activities in L2 writing class.

2.2. Collaborative Writing Technique in Korean Classrooms

Like the preference of collaborative writing activities in L2 classrooms, collaborative learning has been widely used in English writing classrooms in Korea to help improve English of Korean learners since the importance of communicative competency in language learning are acknowledged. However, many studies done in Korea, which are related to collaborative activities either

in a small group or a pair work, tend to be limited to English reading instruction or English speaking instruction. Even though there are a few empirical studies exploring effectiveness of collaborative activities in English writing classrooms in Korea, these studies were conducted either in primary classrooms or in secondary classrooms. Therefore, more studies including diverse participants, especially college students, are expected.

In this section, the findings and some limitations of previous studies with Korean subjects are discussed. First, Choi and Kim (2010) investigated the effects of small group learning on elementary school students' writing ability by comparing writing test scores between the control group of 32 students and the experimental group of 30 students. Both groups took 20 multiple choice question tests and free-writing tests before and after the three week writing instruction. They found that there was, in both tests, significant improvement of students' writing abilities due to small group learning opportunities. In particular, the opportunity to work in a small group helped elementary school students not only use more words in a sentence but also improve their abilities of grammar, writing organization, and English fluency.

Like positive effects of small group work on student English writing ability shown in Choi and Kim's study (2010), a few studies discovered that collaborative writing is beneficial to Korean high school students not only to improve their writing ability but also to change their attitude and perception of English writing. Three studeis (Lee & Kim, 2009; Lim, 2003; Min & Kim 2006) administered pre- and post-test to measure students' writing ability and one study (Kim, 2003) evaluated four writing tasks to explore any changes in student English writing ability. All studies found that small group work either in collaboration or in cooperation led students to improve their writing ability even though there were slightly different results among these studies depending on levels of student English proficiency. Kim (2003), Lim (2003), and Min and Kim (2006) compared the degree of writing improvement depending on three different levels of English, that is, low, intermediate, and high level of English proficiency, and concluded that students with low English proficiency made significant progress in their writing and those with intermediate English proficiency made slight improvement of their writing. However, among these studies, there was dissensus regarding writing improvement of students with

high English proficiency. In Lim's study (2003), students with high English proficiency did not show any statistically significant changes in their writing ability while those, especially working in a heterogeneous group, made significant differences between achieved scores on the pre- and the post-test in Min and Kim's Study (2006). But, the later study conducted by Lee and Kim (2009) found that students with high English proficiency took advantage of small group writing activities to improve their English writing.

In addition to the positive effects of collaborative or cooperative work on student writing improvement, this type of work in EFL writing classrooms also helps EFL students not only change their attitude toward English writing but facilitate their affective factors. For example, Lee and Kim (2009) reported that EFL high school students perceived the usefulness of collaborative work in completing their writing task and they also mentioned group competition enabled them to improve their English listening and speaking ability, to enjoy their learning, and to lessen their borden of task completion. The similar results can be found in other studies, especially when compared between two groups, an individual group and a collaborative group. First, in Lim's study (2003), students working in a group showed more interest in their writing learning, achieved more confidence of English writing, had less dependence on their English teacher, and felt less burden than those working independently. On the other hand, students working independently preferred to their individual work because they could concentrate on their own work. Kim (2003) also explained the effectiveness of collaborative English writing on students' attitude and affective factors; group work evoked their interest in and confidence of English writing and furthermore, helped them develop an ideal English writing habit.

Based on the results of these previous studies in ESL settings and EFL settings, specifically, the three inferential research questions along with two descriptive research questions proposed were as follows:

(1) Are written texts produced by collaborative groups better than those produced by individuals?

(2) Do collaborative writing techniques help EFL college students improve their writing ability and if ever, how ?

(3) Are collaborative writing techniques effective for EFL college students to complete their writing task and how much?

3. The Study

3.1 Participants

The study was conducted in an English composition class offered for credit at a large university located in southeastern of South Korea. All participants were 54 college students with highly advanced English proficiency (based on their reported average TOEIC scores), consisting of 6 international students with diverse linguistic and cultural background and 48 native speakers of Korean, who were enrolled in two separate sections of English academic composition I course. This composition course was one of requirement courses for undergraduates majoring in English language and literature and these students had a privilege to register the course before non-English-major students did.

Table 1. Description of Participants

	Section A (Collaborative Group)	Section B (Individual Group)
total numbers	28	26
native languages	Korean (25); Chinese (1) Tagalog (1); Malay (1)	Korean (23); Russian (1); Chinese (2)
male/female	11/17	10/16
average age	24 years	23 years
major in college	17 English major/ 11 others	21 English major/ 5 others
average scores: TOEIC	850.5	850

However, the course was not restricted to English major students and could be taken by students from other departments in the university. The participants were divided into two groups depending on which section they enrolled in. One month after the class began, they were asked how they would like to complete their final writing assignment, either individually or in group. Majority of

participants in a section preferred individual writing assignment, while those in the other section did collaborative writing assignment: a Collaborative Group (CG) in the section A (n=28) and an Individual Group (IG) in the section B (n=26). And then, the participants in the CG were suggested to form a group of three or four students. The more detailed information about 54 participants, related to their English proficiency, English learning experiences, and other linguistic background, is described in the Table 1.

3.2. Procedure and task

All participants in the study took two parallel in-tact composition classes with two 75 minute lessons a week but just met in two separate classrooms. The study proceeded for 12 week university academic schedule plus an extra one more week for interviews only with the CG participants. On the first day of the course, all participants were asked to take a diagnostic test of writing proficiency, consisting of 35 multiple choice questions which was one of writing sections in online Scholastic Aptitude Test from College Board. Although the students were not randomly allocated to the two groups, the diagnostic test scores showed that the difference between the two groups was not significant (df=32, p-value=.329), in terms of their English writing proficiency. After the diagnostic test, this study began following a process-oriented writing instruction with three phases, a modification of Lee's suggestion (2001): pre-writing, during-writing, and post-writing. The main instruction of the course took place considering information given in the textbook, *Introduction to Academic Writing* written by Alice Oshima and Ann Hogue (2007). During 12 week instruction, all participants in the CG used 10 to 20 minute class hour in working with their group members.

Completing all their class activities, at the end of the course, a writing attitude survey in two formats, modeled on one developed by Louth, McAllister, and McAllister (1993), was administered to two groups of students in the study, respectively. Fifteen survey questions in six point Likert scale were answered by two groups of subjects; first seven questions were used for self-assessment regarding their writing improvement and next eight questions dealt with students' attitude toward English writing. The CG was asked to answer 15 more

questions to explore how collaboratively they worked on the writing task and what they thought of collaborative writing techniques.

Table 2. Three phases in a process-oriented writing instruction

duration	phase	activities & instruction content
3 weeks	pre-writing	three parts of paragraph structure, topic selection, brainstorming of writing ideas and making an outline
7 weeks	during-writing	working on each part of an essay, making good coherence and unity, transition expressions, and three strategies of making a good conclusion
2 weeks	post-writing	peer response, conference with the instructor, revising the 1st draft

To hear their tangible experiences regarding collaborative writing activities, 28 subjects in the CG were individually contacted to set up the interview schedule. However, since only fourteen responses arrived at the researcher, a half of the CG subjects participated in a semi-structured interview to describe the roles of collaborative writing techniques in a college composition course. The interviews took place for three days after completion of the course, and each interview lasted between 15 and 20 minutes, consisting of 11 common questions, one question for Korean subjects which asked their English learning experience and, three questions for international subjects which asked their Korean learning experience. However, this semi-structured approach was chosen as it allows the research to alter the sequence and probe for more information as well as to ask the major questions.

3.3. Analysis

The independent sample t-tests in SPSS 19 program were mainly employed to determine any statistically significant differences of English writing proficiency and improvement between the CG and the IG. First, the essays were evaluated by three experienced English writing instructors including the researcher of this study based on the analytic writing rubric, which was developed based on the course lessons. There were seven subareas: introduction, unity, coherence, organization, conclusion, content, and mechanics (see the

Chapter 4.1). First, to explore to what extent three raters had agreed on their rating, Cronbach's alpha was checked and reached at 0.745, which was above the satisfactory level, 0.70. The average scores of the written texts among three raters were keyed into SPSS and the descriptive statistical data were calculated and t-tests were also performed to unveil if the written texts produced by the CG and those by the IG were statistically significant different. Each question on the survey was also analyzed in the same way as the essay scores were treated. At last, the 14 audio-taped interviews were transcribed and categorized into three parts, based on the recurrent themes with focuses on the features of collaborative writing discussed in the previous chapter.

4. Results

4.1. The Written Texts

In order to begin answering research question 1, the written texts produced by the CG and by the IG were analysed. The following two tables summarize the results of the quantitative analysis of the written texts. First, Table 3 presents that the written texts varied in length. The CG used more words and less sentences in their writing assignment than the IG did; therefore, the written texts of the CG included more words in a sentence than those of the IG. However, since any p-values were bigger than the significant level, (.05), the results of T-test revealed that the differences in using numbers of sentences and words between two groups are not statistically significant.

When compared the total scores of the written texts achieved by the two groups. as shown in Table 4, the means of the CG (23.25) are higher than those of the IG (20.65). On the other hand, the scores of the IG more widely ranged from 11.5 to 28 than those of the CG did from 17.5 to 27.5. Like the result of the comparison of the total mean scores between the two groups, the mean scores of all sub areas in the written texts achieved by the CG are higher than or are equal to those did by the IG. However, considering the p-value from the t-test, the differences of the mean scores between the two groups are not statistically significant in all sub areas except two parts, 'conclusion' and 'mechanics.' The

p-value of 'conclusion' is .042 and that of 'mechanics' is .007, both of which are less than significant level, .05. It means that the CG demonstrated a better writing ability related not only to writing conclusion but to using proper grammar and punctuation in their written texts than the IG had.

Table 3. A comparison of the written text length between CG and IG

Length/Group	Collaborative (n=8)	Individual (n=26)	T-Test *p*
Average No. of words	783.25 (range: 745-858)	742.50 (range: 382-889)	.188
Average No. of Sentences	43.44 (range: 30-60)	47.04 (range: 20-67)	.364
Average length of sentences (in words)	18.78	16.9	.328

Table 4. A comparison of rated written texts between CG and IG

Area		Group	Mean	SD	Levene's *p*	T-Test *p*
Total		Collaborative	23.25	3.59	.667	.135
		Individual	20.65	4.34		
Intro.		Collaborative	3	.755	.953	1
		Individual	3	.748		
Body	Organization	Collaborative	3.43	.495	.782	.232
		Individual	3.15	.596		
	Unity	Collaborative	3.43	.678	.927	.251
		Individual	3.11	.682		
	Coherence	Collaborative	3.125	.79	.802	.474
		Individual	2.884	.828		
Conclusion		Collaborative	3.437	.563	.375	**.042**
		Individual	2.788	.802		
Content		Collaborative	3.312	.752	.874	.146
		Individual	2.884	.697		
Mechanics		Collaborative	3.5	.534	.495	**.007**
		Individual	2.826	.582		

4.2. Survey of self-assessment and writing attitudes

The results of the survey administered right after the completion of this composition course are used to find the answer to the second research question dealing with writing improvement and attitudes. First, Table 5 presents to what extent the collaborative writing influences on improvement of English writing ability by being compared students' self assessment of improving their writing ability after taking the English composition course. As a result, even though the CG answered that the composition course helped improve their English writing ability more (M=4.83 on a scale of 1 to 6) than the IG did (M=4.61), the IG felt that they would improve their writing ability in all areas except 'mechanics' more than the CG did. However, as seen in the comparison of the written texts, these differences are not statistically significant. Therefore, like the results of the comparison of the written texts, the CG could be equipped with better knowledge of English grammar and punctuation due to their collaborative writing experiences than they had been before.

Table 5. A comparison of self perception of writing improvement between CG and IG

Survey Qs	Group	Mean	SD	Levene's p	T-Test p
Idea Generation	Collaborative	4.03	.958	.161	.229
	Individual	4.4	1.154		
Idea Organization	Collaborative	4.38	.707	.043	.081
	Individual	4.8	.941		
Sentence	Collaborative	4.34	1.056	.452	.85
	Individual	4.4	.957		
Word Choice	Collaborative	3.8	.98	.826	.411
	Individual	4.04	1.019		
Essay Structure	Collaborative	4.61	.982	.45	.56
	Individual	4.79	1.141		
Mechanics	Collaborative	3.8	1.224	.93	.792
	Individual	3.7	1.197		
Overall Improvement	Collaborative	4.83	1.022	.654	.423
	Individual	4.61	.868		

In addition to their self-assessment of writing improvement, the study explored if there existed any differences of attitudes toward English writing between the two groups. The results are summarized in Table 6. Overall, the CG

responded to the seven questions related to their experiences and attitudes toward English writing at the lower rate than the IG did. Given more detailed information, the IG enjoyed English writing (means=4.83), changed their writing styles (means=4.79), and learned the whole writing process (means=5.16) more than the CG did, and these differences between the two groups are statistically significant with consideration of p-values. In the rest four questions, the IG achieved more confidence of English writing (means=4.62), learned more strategies of idea generation (means=4.4) and revising their previous draft (means=4.41), and had better sense of writing for their audience (means=4.38) than the CG did. However, these differences are not statistically significant, either.

Table 6. A comparison of writing attitude between CG and IG

Survey Qs	Group	Mean	SD	Levene's p	T-Test p
Enjoyment of English writing	Collaborative	4.11	.993	.747	.021
	Individual	4.83	1.129		
Achievement of confidence	Collaborative	4.26	.777	.108	.189
	Individual	4.62	1.095		
Change of writing style	Collaborative	4.15	1.084	.124	.025
	Individual	4.79	.832		
Learning of writing process	Collaborative	4.5	1.104	.255	.022
	Individual	5.16	.868		
Learning of generating ideas	Collaborative	3.92	1.48	.579	.797
	Individual	4.04	1.64		
Learning of revising	Collaborative	4.04	1.01	.246	.22
	Individual	4.41	1.1		
Having a sense of writing for audience	Collaborative	3.78	1.6	.784	.172
	Individual	4.38	1.58		

4.3. Survey and Interview regarding collaborative writing

To collect more tangible thoughts of collaborative writing, survey and interview were given to the participants in the CG. First, they were asked to rate

15 more statements related to their collaborative writing experiences, and the results are presented in Table 7. Overall, the 28 participants in the CG moderately agreed that they had a positive experience while writing their essay with their group members (M=4.38 on a scale of 1 to 6). In particular, they described themselves as active participants in writing collaboratively in the following three questions: (1) every member had chances to express their opinion (M=4.92), (2) their group member listened to opinions of every group member (M=4.8), and (3) their ideas and opinions were accepted and used in writing their essay (M=4.84). Despite their positive views of collaborative writing, their preference of collaborative writing (the means of item number 14=3.57 and 15=4) was relatively low.

Table 7. Survey results of collaborative writing experiences

Item Number and Statement		Means
1.	Learning to writing in groups was a positive experience	4.38
2.	Writing in groups helped me learn to write for other people	4.3
3.	I got the chance to express my views in the group	4.92
4.	My ideas got into the papers we wrote	4.84
5.	People in my group listened to each other's ideas	4.8
6.	Member of my group sometimes disagreed about what to say or how to say it	3.46
7.	One person in the group tended to be the leader	3.38
8.	My group spent more time planning papers than I do when I write alone	3.92
9.	My group spent more time revising papers than I do when I write alone	4.34
10.	My group spent more time checking spelling, punctuation, and grammar than I do when I write alone	4.23
11.	Every member of the group put about the same amount of effort into writing the papers	4.5
12.	We wrote all parts of the paper together rather than dividing up the work	3.53
13.	I like group writing more than before	4.03
14.	I'd rather write with a group than alone	3.57
15.	I would like to write in group again	4

Another interesting finding is that the means in the question 12, which dealt with the way of completing their writing, is only 3.53. Based on this result, it is

hard to say that the written texts completed by the CG were authentic group product in that most participants divided work and independently wrote their assigned part in their essay.

Interviews with the fourteen participants in the CG yielded some interesting insights about the learners' reactions to the collaborative writing activities. All interviewees mentioned their relatively positive experiences about collaborative writing. In particular, of these interviewees, eight (57%) articulated strong preference of collaborative writing by agreeing that they would like to write jointly with their friends in future composition class. On the other hand, six participants (43%) expressed some reservations about collaborative writing. The positive experiences most frequently found during the interviews were categorized into three areas, which were aligned with the features of collaborative writing explained in chapter 2: (1) sharing their strengths, (2) developing their communication skills, and lastly (3) facilitating their affective factors. First, of 27 responses accounting for sharing their strengths, 12 (44%) are related to learning of language and 15 (56%) to that of writing strategies. In particular, 12 stances in learning of language include achievement of grammar knowledge (5 comments, 42%), new vocabulary (1 comment, 8%), and various English expressions (6 comments, 50%). For example,

(1) a. They checked all grammar. When I write, I did not think grammar much; however, my group members checked everything (from *C* interviewee[1])

b. 문법 같은 거. 무조건 제가 한 게 다 맞는 건 아니라서 그래도 조금이라도 더 옳은 표현이 많고 (from *D* interviewee)

c. 시제측면, 문법 측면에서 저렇게 해야겠다고 실제로 글을 쓰는데 도움이 되었고 *A*친구는 CNN을 주로 본데요. 그래서 어휘가 좋더라구요. (from *J* interviewee)

d. 글쓰기 자체에서는 같은 표현을 하더라도 여러 표현법이 나오는데 어떤 분들은 첫 단추부터 잘 끼어야 된다는 말을 하는 사람도 있고 잘잘히 쓰는 스타일도 있고 같은 말을 다양한 문장으로 쓰는 걸 배웠어요. (from *I* interviewee)

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1) 14 interviewees were identified as from A to *N*, respectively, according to the Korean alphabetical order of their names.

15 comments explaining learning of writing strategies consist of learning of writing format (7 comments, 47%), generating and developing ideas (7 comments, 47%), and refining (1 comment, 6%). There are some examples of interviewee's statements:

(2) a. N은 아이디어가 많은 것 같아요. 글 쓰는데 많은 아이디어가 필요한데 (from F interviewee)
   b. 단편적인 생각에서 벗어나 다른 생각들을 조합할 수 있었고 여러 의견들이 같이 나오니까 좀 더 나은 글이 나온 것 같아요 (from G interviewee)
   c. 난 이렇게 쓰는 데 다른 조원들이 쓰는 거 보고 저렇게도 쓸 수 있구나 해서 다음엔 나도 저렇게 써 봐야겠다는 생각도 하고 (from K interviewee)
   d. 글쓰는 형식, 전체적인 흐름을 잡는 거 이런 부분들에서 친구들한테 도움을 받은 것 같아요 (from N interviewee)

The data from six interviewees also provide some evidence to support the facilitation of affective factors, such as recognition of responsibility, interdependence, trust, and respect each other within group members. One of the interviewees explained how she completed her commitment, saying that

(3) 언제까지 써 오자 기간을 정하면 제가 기간도 지킬려고 노력했고 혹시나 제가 모자랄까 여러 번 보게 되고 (from K interviewee)

The H interviewee, who even preferred individual writing, responded to the question what they liked about collaborative writing, emphasizing interdependence among group members with the statement that "because they depend on me and depends on other people." One of the affective factors, respect, is employed while working on their writing project, as seen in the interview with E, "아무래도 그룹 글쓰기니까 상대방 의견도 존중해 줘야 하고." In addition to these two features of collaborative writing, the interview data also showed that collaborative writing can provide students an opportunity to develop their communication skills. One student said,

(4) 일단 상대방이 먼저 말을 하도록 유도하는 것 같아요. 혼자 하면 하겠지만 그룹으로 하면 의견을 물어봐야 되지 않겠어요. 예를 들어 누구 누구 어떻게 생

각해요? 난 잘 모르겠다고. 만약 제가 먼저 아는 척을 하면 그 쪽 사람들이 그
래 니가 알아서 다 해라 하는 식으로 나오니까 못하는 식으로 모르겠다고 한
후 의견을 듣고 제 말을 합니다. (from *I* interviewee)

A couple of interesting results from the interviews are found. First, it is
known that the degree of using their own idea and opinions in their essay
influences on student satisfaction of their group writing. The more their idea
and opinions were accepted and used in writing their essay, the more satisfied
the students felt about their final essay. The *A* interviewee who was least happy
with their group essay complained that his group members had many unsolved
conflicts, so they couldn't make any corrections. The other recurrent comments
from the interviews are associated with group formation. Five male interviewees
suggested to work with female students; one interviewee strongly expressed his
hostility toward international students because of their unmindful attitude
toward group work.

5. Discussion

The objective of this study was to investigate effects of collaborative writing
on EFL college students' English writing ability. Unlike the results of some
studies by Louth and others (1993) and Choi and Kim (2010), which found that
collaborative work in writing class is a significant factor to influence on
students' writing improvement, the analytic assessment of the written texts
demonstrated that in general, writing collaboratively did not help students
achieve high scores of writing essays more than writing independently did.
However, the interview data proved that collaborative writing positively
influenced on EFL college students' English writing ability. This discrepancy
between the two results can be accounted for with three reasons: English
proficiency, lack of experiences, and cultural issue. It is thought that the result
can be attributed to student language proficiency (Leki, 2001; Lundstrom &
Baker, 2009). Kim (2003) revealed that English learners with high English
proficiency did not relatively take any advantages of collaborative writing to
improve their English writing skills, compared to those with intermediate and

lower English proficiency. The fact is true of this study: the participants in this study could not benefit from collaborative writing in improving their English writing abilities because they could be considered as English learners with high English proficiency based on their average TOEIC scores of 850. The interview data also support the relationship between English proficiency and effects of collaborative writing: The interviewee J said, "차라리 작문 실력이 좋으면 혼자서 하는 게 좋은 것 같아요. 근데 실력이 좀 없는 사람들끼리 모이면 그룹으로 하는게 좋을 것 같아요," and the interviewee L also commented, "제가 영문과였으면 혼자서 해도 되는데 영어 문법을 조금 소홀히 해서 혼자 하는게 조금 어려운 것 같습니다."

Another reason to result in the ineffectiveness of collaborative writing in this study can be found in lack of experience of collaborative work. (McCorkel and others, 1999; Palaus, 1999; Strauss & U, 2007). It can be concluded that most of the students in the CG did not fully understand what was ideal collaborative writing and how collaboratively they were expected to work. They described the process of collaborative writing they had, like that they just divided their writing work load and later, spent the amount of time in putting their assigned work together without enough negotiations. Many of comments from the interviews with the CG students are the examples of non-collaborative features, such as text constructed with little negotiations, some disagreements over task management, and some revisions made without consultation, which Storch (2001) suggested in his study where defining non-collaborative and collaborative features in students' performances during the collaborative writing process. Based on Storch's claim that the non-collaborative features shown among the participants couldn't make any positive impact on the quality of written texts, it is illustrated that little experience of collaborative work caused the results of the study that the CG could not produce better written texts than the IG could do.

Cultural issues can also explain the reason that this study did not demonstrate the collaborative writing opportunity helped EFL college students improve their English writing ability. Some ethnographic research on pair or group work in English writing classrooms has claimed that Asian students are likely to be inept to working with their peers in that they tend to depend on their teacher rather than on their peers when they are given a choice to follow either teacher's advice or their classmates' advice in order to improve their ability of English writing (Carson & Nelson, 1996; Tsui & Ng, 2000; Yang,

Badger, & Yu, 2006). The relatively high authority of their teachers over their peers is not exceptional in Korean English writing classrooms (Kim & Ju, 2010) and the Korean students' tendency is presented in this study; the *F* interviewee defended her inactivity in sharing her opinions with her group members, saying that "교수님이 고쳐 주시면 당연히 따라 가는데 학생들이니까 고치면 제가 뭔데 하는 생각이 먼저 들잖아요. 그래서 이건 확실히 맞는데도 불구하고 틀렸다고 하면 약간 자존심도 상하고." The students' dependence on their teacher, in the long run, requires teacher's intervention (Choi, 2007) or directions (Kim & Ju, 2010) even though they work in a collaborative classroom expecting their more accountability on their own learning, compared with a typical traditional teacher-center classroom. The members of the group which showed the lowest satisfaction with their final essay complained that all members received the same amount of credits in spite of unequal contribution to the essay, and furthermore, they suggested me to provide clear directions and some regulations for future students so as that each member makes the even amount of contribution to a group writing project.

Despite little impact of collaborative writing on improvement of English writing of EFL college students, it is obvious that to some degree, collaborative writing enables students to acquire writing strategies as well as linguistic development. First, due to pooling linguistic knowledge among group members, the college students in this study could take some advantage of collaborative work, especially in using proper grammar and punctuation, as previous empirical classroom-based studies on collaborative writing (Choi and Kim, 2010; Storch, 1999, 2005 & 2009; Strauss & U, 2007) have shown. That is, the comparison of the written texts between the CG and the IG confirmed that collaborative writing allowed Korean college students to produce less grammar and punctuation errors in writing an essay than individual writing did. In addition to achievement of more knowledge on the English language, comments from many of interviewees indicated that collaborative writing is beneficial to EFL students, in particular, with respect to the development of writing strategies, such as generating, developing and organizing ideas (Kim, 2003; Lim, 2003).

The analyses of the interviews suggested that EFL college students have preference to collaborative writing due to the decrease of work load and its opportunity to learn how they successfully work with other people. Writing an essay in English is a great challenge to language learners and therefore, they

usually feel to great degree of pressure and anxiety, which causes poor quality of writing or fear of English writing (Scott & Rockwell, 1997). However, given a choice to work with their classmates, the participants in this study seemed to relieve the pressure and the anxiety of writing an essay in English and complete the essay with more confidence. A few of the participants in the study also noticed that collaborative writing techniques could prepare them for becoming a favorable co-worker in their future working place where they would be expected to get involved in team work in that they learned how to communicate with other people and how to complete group work successfully without conflicts.

6. Conclusion

The collaborative writing has been successfully implemented either in L1 or in L2 English writing courses claiming that it benefits to language learners. From the results of this study, it is concluded that Korean EFL college students benefit from collaborative writing techniques in achieving linguistic knowledge of English, English writing strategies, and effective communication skills even though they fail to produce written texts with better quality than they write independently because of their high proficiency of English, lack of collaborative experiences, and familiarity of teacher-centered instruction. However, the findings of the study have important pedagogical implications for EFL college composition courses which implement collaborative activities. First of all, collaborative writing can help EFL college students ease the burden of writing in English, so they can demonstrate their English writing ability to maximum. To make collaborative writing more effective, students need to be trained on how they collaboratively work in a composition class, not just sharing load of writing work. Some given directions from an writing instructor may be helpful for each group member to maximize their engagement in writing work. In addition, how to compose a group is also another factor to be considered for successful collaborative writing class.

One of the limitations of this research is the subject selection: all participants in the study were students of mine, who attended in one university and especially, most of students participating in the IG majored in English. This

convenient sampling might be problematic to generalize the findings of the study. The further study is expected to include students with diverse English proficiency and with different majors from English. Moreover, the three tools employed in the study to find answers to the three research questions can't be enough or appropriate to confirm the effectiveness of collaborative writing in EFL college composition classrooms. Most of previous studies on ESL collaborative writing, through closer class observation, have closely investigated types of interactions among group members during collaboratively working, whereas studies on EFL collaborative writing haven't. Since most of writing activities were carried out outside class, I couldn't provide any in-depth information on students' interactions taking place during the collaborative writing process. However, further studies on EFL collaborative writing are expected to explore what types of interactions occur among Korean college students and how these interactions influence on their writing product.

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