Advanced Korean Language Learners' Perception of Korean Writing Class - Targeting the Learners Aiming for College Admission -

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to suggest the future direction of effective Korean writing education for advanced Korean language learners aiming for college admission by analyzing their perception, evaluation, and expectation of writing study in Korean class hours. For this, this thesis conducted a surveyed on difficulties in writing study, and writing process targeting total 30 advanced Korean language learners residing in Korea. In the results, the advanced learners' goal of learning Korean language was desperate. Due to the grammar-centered writing education in the education site, the learners wanted the education for writing suitable for discourse structure, and understanding the types, forms, and structure of writing. Also, currently, the class was focusing on the results of writing, so that the learners were interested in the activity of writing process. The foreign learners who aim for college admission, should cultivate an ability to enhance each individual's thinking skills based on the primary purpose of college scholastic ability, an ability to mutually adjust their own opinions with others, and an ability to have an insight for oneself. Thus, in order to provide the education for the successful improvement of their writing skills in the site of Korean language education, it would be necessary to understand the learners' perception and needs of writing.

Keywords: Korean, Writing Education, Advanced Learners, Learning Purpose, Discourse Structure, Process-oriented

1. Introduction

The learners have various motives for learning Korean language, and they aim to concentrate on learning suitable for their own goals of learning. In most cases, such speaking and listening are regarded as essential linguistic activities for practical life while the writing activity is usually treated as secondary activity. In the advanced level, however, the Korean writing activity is gradually increasing, so that the weight of Korean writing study is increasing as well. It has been revealed that the most difficult areas to foreign students in reality are

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writing, speaking, listening, and reading in order[1]. It is because the writing activity is in charge of comprehensive functions[2] well-equipped with all the areas besides vocabulary, sentence composition ability, and spelling. Thus, in the actual site of Korean language education, it is spending a lot of time on the teaching/learning situations for the improvement of learners' writing ability. Nevertheless, the teachers of writing education are suffering from many difficulties because of teacher-centered limited teaching method, writing homework suitable for various themes and forms, and unfulfilled feedbacks because of lots of homework.

As the writing education aims to cultivate the learners' writing ability, it is so natural to provide the education meeting the learners' needs and expectation. Therefore, this study aims to suggest the future direction of effective Korean writing education for advanced Korean language learners aiming for collage admission by analyzing their perception, evaluation, and expectation of writing study in Korean class hours.

First, the preceding researches related to needs survey on writing education in Korean language education include Lee, Jeong-Yeon(2017)[3], Jang, Mi-Jeong(2016)[4], Jeong, Da-Woon(2014)[5], and Bang, Seong-Won(2013)[6]. Lee, Jeong-Yeon(2017)[3] conducted a needs survey targeting overseas Korean of Russian bloc aiming for college admission in Korea, and reported that they felt the most difficult in spelling and vocabulary when writing. Jang, Mi-Jeong(2016)[4] conducted the needs analysis of Chinese learners with the purpose of study. In the results, despite the high necessity of writing study for learners, it was not performed well. According to Jeong, Da-Woon(2014)[5] who conducted a needs survey on the academic writing education for foreign graduate students, there were differences in the perception of writing education between students and professors. Bang, Seong-Won(2013)[6] performed a needs survey targeting the advanced-level Korean language learners, and in the results, the foreign learners showed the positive attitude toward Korean writing class using computer, and mentioned that the teaching/learning methods for it should be actively utilized.

Even though these researches conducted the needs surveys targeting the subjects with various purposes, there were no active surveys on the perception of writing targeting the advanced Korean language learners having college admission ahead. The foreign learners who aim for college admission, should cultivate an ability to enhance each individual's thinking skills based on the primary purpose of college scholastic ability, an ability to mutually adjust their own opinions with others, and an ability to have an insight for oneself to grow through expressive behavior after getting out of the writing ability of daily life focusing on theme and function[1]. Thus, in order to provide the education for the successful improvement of their writing skills in the site of Korean language education, it would be necessary to understand the learners'

perception and needs of writing.

2. Research Scope and Method

2.1 Learner Information and Research Scope

This survey was conducted targeting total of 30 advanced Korean language learners residing in Korea, and they were all the learners aiming for college admission. In the gender ratio, there were 14 women(47%) and 16 men(53%), so that the difference in gender ratio was pretty low. This survey aimed to understand the current state of writing study by examining the difficulties in writing study and writing process of learners. The survey contents were largely divided into ① personal information of learners, ② learners' overall thinking of writing study, ③ writing process of learners and ④ difficulties in writing study of learners.

2.2 Recognition Survey Results

2.2.1 Learners' Overall Thinking of Writing Study

The learners' overall thinking of writing study was briefly researched. The survey asked about their opinions such as the parts considered to be improved through Korean writing activity, and desired method and field of writing study, and it was summarized as follows. All the survey responses selected multiply were also counted and summarized.

[Fig. 1] Functions Felt the Most Difficult

When asking about the functions felt the most difficult when learning Korean language among four functions of language such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing, the 67% of

students said 'writing', which was followed by 'speaking(27%)' and 'reading(6%)' while there were no learners who felt 'listening' the most difficult. Because they were relatively a lot exposed to Korean-speaking environments while studying Korean language in Korea, it might be relatively easy for them to understand Korean language through listening and reading. However, it seemed to be not easy for them to express their own opinions through speaking and writing.

Next, the survey asked about if they felt their writing skills were improved, and also asked them for subjectively describing the reason why they responded like that. The 10% of learners responded 'very much', and the 50% responded 'most likely', which was followed by 'average(37%)', and 'not really(3%)'. However, there were no learners who said 'not at all'. The reasons for 'most likely' included 'language environments, lots of writing practice, and teacher's help', and the learners who said 'average' mentioned 'difficult grammar, and not much effort in writing practice'.

The reasons why the learners thought that their writing was most likely improved, could be the language environments, lots of writing practice, and teacher's help. The learners responded that it would be because they were relatively a lot exposed to Korean language environments as they were living in Korea, and also because they only learned Korean language while living in Korea. In the results of lots of practice, the writing skills were gradually growing, and their teacher also corrected the writing contents well. The learners who responded 'average' to the improvement of writing, pointed out such difficult grammar of Korean language and not much effort in writing practice for its reasons. Even though they were a lot exposed to Korean-using environments and the main purpose of their visit to Korea was to study Korean language, they could not feel the improvement of their writing skills. It would be needed to examine the reasons more carefully.

[Fig. 2] Learnt the Most From Writing Education

The survey asked about what they learned the most from writing education. The 36% of learners said grammar, which was followed by how to compose writing(23%), writing process(13%), writing contents(13%), vocabulary(13%), and writing method in each genre(2%). This result shows that many learners are receiving the grammar-centered writing education leaning towards more formal aspect. Also, in relation to desired writing education, the learners were told to select three things from the presented examples. The most learners selected 'grammar(22%)' and 'vocabulary education related to themes(22%)', which was followed by 'various writing methods(18%)', 'writing process(18%)', 'reading lots of writings related to themes(13%)', and 'referring to example writings(7%)'.

Many learners responded that they would like to study grammar and vocabulary in writing class because they felt the shortage of vocabulary and grammar required for composing sentences. This result also shows that many learners are more paying attention to relatively small units like vocabulary and sentence than the whole writing when writing in Korean.

Besides this, many learners responded that they would like to learn about writing methods or writing process, so that it would be necessary to think about how to reflect such needs to writing lesson in the future. On top of this, they were asked if there were any types of writing they would like to learn, and they were presented with relatively many examples such as email, letter, expository writing, persuasive writing, and report of college or graduate school. The types of writing related to school life showed the relatively high percentage while the learners selected other various answers. This is such a natural result as the purpose of studying Korean language was variously shown like school admission, employment, and others, so that it would be necessary for them to try various types of writing.

2.2.2 Writing Process of Learners

In order to understand the Korean writing process of learners, the writing process was divided into 'pre-writing', 'writing', and 'post-writing' in the survey, and the results are as follows.

First, in the 'pre-writing' stage, they were asked about if they would roughly jot down their thinking about the theme, if they would decide the contents for introduction, body, and conclusion in advance, and if they would think about which form and structure would go well with the writing. Even though jotting down their thinking about the theme is deeply related to teacher's learning/teaching measures, the 40% of learners said that they did not really jot it down, which was followed by average(26%), jotting down their thinking(24%), and mostly jotting down their thinking(10%). The teacher could teach how to jot down thinking roughly through mind mapping during writing activity in class. Besides this, to the question about if

they would think about the contents for introduction, body, and conclusion in advance, and the form and structure suitable for the writing in the pre-writing stage, the percentage of learners who selected 'yes' and 'most likely' were relatively high like 33% and 41% respectively. However, a considerable number of learners selected 'average' or 'not really', so that it would be needed to pay more attention to pre-writing activity.

Next, in the 'writing' stage, they were asked about which method would be used for actual writing and if they would keep thinking about the theme while doing writing. Regarding the method of writing, the most learners(29.7%) responded that 'the mother tongue would be changed to Korean'. To reduce this interference of mother tongue, the overall skills of Korean language should be improved besides writing. Next, the percentage of 'pre-activity' was 21.6%. As the learners feel the shortage of vocabulary when writing in Korean, it would be necessary to teach how to correctly utilize a dictionary, so that they do not depend on the dictionary too much. Besides this, there were many responses, and the 10.8% of learners said that they would receive help from Korean friends. As a method used by many learners for writing homework, the contents written by learners have been already corrected by Korean people, so that this could interrupt the feedbacks from teacher. To the question about if they would keep thinking about the theme while doing writing, the 40% of learners said 'average', which was followed by 'not really(23.4%)', 'most likely(23.3%)', and 'very much(13.3%)'. If the theme is not continuously kept in mind while doing writing, it is highly possible that the direction of writing moves toward totally different, and the connection with the theme is decreased.

Lastly, in the 'post-writing' stage, they were asked about if they would read through the writing again after completing the writing to see if the contents of writing accorded with the theme, and if there were any errors in vocabulary, spelling, and grammar. And how they would utilize the feedbacks on writing from teacher. In the results, a lot of Korean language learners did not usually read through their writing after completing it, and they were not fully utilizing the feedbacks on writing either.

2.2.3 Difficulties in Writing Study of Learners

The last part of this survey asked total eight questions about difficulties in writing study of Korean language learners, and the degree of difficulty was divided into five such as ①very much ②most likely ③average ④not really ⑤not at all. The results of this study could be summarized in graph as follows.

[Table 1] Difficulties in Writing Study

Item	① very much	② most likely	③ average	④ not really	⑤ not at all
Contents	37%	13%	40%	7%	3%
Grammar	20%	10%	43%	27%	0%
Words	40%	27%	20%	13%	0%
Whole composition	7%	10%	63%	20%	0%
Logical writing	30%	27%	36%	7%	0%
Dividing Introduction-Main-Conclusion	17%	20%	56%	7%	0%
Type of writing	10%	23%	50%	17%	0%
self feedback	10%	23%	37%	27%	3%

To the question about having difficulties in deciding which contents, the 50% of learners selected 'very much' or 'most likely'. Next, to the question about having difficulties because of Korean grammar, the 30% of learners selected 'very much' or 'most likely'. To the question about feeling difficult in selecting proper words, the 67% of learners selected 'very much' or 'most likely', which showed the highest percentage. To the question about feeling difficult in planning the whole composition of writing, total 17% of learners selected 'very much' or 'most likely', which showed the relatively low percentage. Total 57% of learners felt difficult in logically connecting many ideas in writing, which was selected by the second-most learners after vocabulary. Next, to the question about having difficulties in properly dividing it into introduction, body, and conclusion, the 37% of learners selected 'very much' or 'yes' while total 33% of learners did not fully know the form depending on the types of writing. Lastly, to the question about having difficulties in modifying the wrong parts for themselves, total 33% of learners selected 'very much' or 'most likely'. Such results of this survey must be because the

foreign learners feel difficult to properly express their own thinking due to the limit of language level when writing in Korean, and there must be a lot to pay attention contrary to their own mother tongue.

3. Conclusion

Those were the survey contents related to Korean writing targeting total 30 advanced Korean language learners aiming for college admission. And the survey results showed the contents as follows. First, the advanced Korean language learners need to perceive the purpose of learning Korean language when receiving the writing education. In the results of this survey, the 'employment' and 'school admission' showed the highest percentage as the purpose of learning Korean language, and there were other purposes as well. As these purposes of learning show differences in types of writing or vocabulary required for writing, there should be the writing education suitable for the learning purpose of learners. Second, the grammar-centered writing education is performed. Many learners responded that they learned grammar and vocabulary the most from writing education, and they also pointed out grammar and vocabulary as the contents of writing education they would like to learn in the future. This result shows that the learners feel difficult in selecting proper words or composing sentences to express their own opinions, and at the same time, many learners are perceiving that writing is the grammar-centered activity. On top of the improvement of grammar or vocabulary, it would be also necessary to teach the learners, so that they could do writing suitable for discourse structure, understand the form and structure in accordance with the types of writing, and also show more consistency in contents. Third, it would be needed to pay more attention to 'pre-writing' and 'post-writing' activities. In the results of this survey, the learners did not have smooth 'pre-writing' and 'post-writing' activities when writing in Korean. Besides this, the results of this survey roughly showed the parts the learners would feel difficult in, and the problems with the writing study process. Exactly there are limits to generalization as a result of this study of 30 learners. However, based on this research, it is expected that specific education methods will be prepared for students entering college in the future.

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