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## L2 Writing Socialization of South Korean Graduate Students in a North American Academic Context

The purpose of this paper is to help understand South Korean graduate students' L2 writing difficulty and thus facilitate their socialization into their target discourse communities. Given that South Korean graduates' linguistic, cultural, and educational differences affect their academic writing practices in a North American academic setting, these factors must be explained to examine their influence on students' writing. This paper will briefly describe the linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds of South Korean L2 graduate students in terms of both their L1 and L2 writing. Second, it will scrutinize the previous research that focuses on how L2 students in general become socialized in North American university settings. Last, based on the discussion, suggestions will be made for deeper investigation of how L2 students in general and Korean students in particular become better socialized, focusing on their access to resources.

### Introduction

According to a report from the Institute of International Education (2006), South Korea ranked third in the number of students enrolled in U.S. institutions of higher education with a total of 58,847 students. This number comprises about 10.4% of the total international student population in the United States, a 30% increase since the year 2000, and it is predicted that this number will continue to increase steadily. However, this growth in the number of students is not necessarily associated with South Korean students' successful adjustment in this unfamiliar environment, especially into the North American academic community.

When these Korean students come to North American universities for advanced study, as Spack (1988) says, "There is most often a large gap between what students bring to the academic community and what the academic community expects of them" (p. 30). More specifically, foreign students, including those from Korea, lack the language, prior experience, and cultural

awareness of the cultural, social, and rhetorical expectations of the North American academic community, and this lack creates a constant struggle for many international students to survive in this community (Casanave, 1992; Johns, 1992; Prior, 1991).

According to Nelson's (1990) research on native English-speaking (NES) students, "Too often teachers expect students who are newcomers to a field to be able to determine the implicit ways of thinking and presenting evidence required to write successfully in their particular disciplines" (p. 389). Although the students in her study relied on a range of individual and situational resources, the result showed that 6 out of 13 students' responses did not match their teachers' expectations for written assignments. We may assume that non-native English-speaking (NNES/L2) students will have a similar problem, and it is clear that L2 students are placed in complex and demanding situations (Riazi, 1997), in which they must quickly learn if they are to succeed.

Zamel (2002) sees L2 writing and language as the greatest concern for these L2 students, and she found that faculty often consider L2 students as unprepared for undertaking the work in their courses. Particularly in a graduate context, where writing plays a significant role as a mediational tool in many activities of learning (Lantolf & Appel, 1994), L2 students coming directly from their home countries are often at more risk than their native-born counterparts both linguistically and culturally.

Despite the investment of large amounts of time, money, and effort, upon entering graduate programs, Korean L2 students are faced with the discontinuity between their primary socialization in their home country and their secondary socialization in North American graduate contexts. This discontinuity is explained by Lantolf and Appel (1994), who assert that mediational tools such as languages are created by people under specific cultural and historical conditions and that "they also exert an influence on the individual in that they give rise to previously unknown activities and previously unknown ways of conceptualizing phenomena in the world" (pp. 7-8). As a result, L2 students are often unable to access cultural knowledge and the sources of understanding that are the foundation for their secondary socialization. Instead, they tend to draw on the discourse conventions of their own culture and may fail to produce contextually adequate or educationally valued texts in the American context (Hyland, 2003).

While experiencing these frustrations and challenges, L2 students tend to blame their own capabilities for these difficulties, comparing themselves to students from other cultures and claiming that they do not have enough preparation to accomplish these tasks (Johns, 1992). Even worse, L2 students often attribute their inability to carry out the writing tasks to their lack of intelligence, not to their language proficiency or their status as novices in the community (Currie, 1998). However, if they wish to participate in and make meaningful contributions to their target communities of practice, L2 graduate students need to learn how to construct texts commonly represented in the writing of their new academic communities (Johns, 1997; Kim, K., 1996; Swales & Feak, 1994).

According to the sociocultural approach, learning to write academically is not only a matter of mastering writing skills but is also a process of becoming

socialized into the academic communities of practice (Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1992, 1995; Guo, 2006; Spack, 1997). To address this issue of Korean L2 graduate students, this paper will review relevant studies in L2 writing and then propose directions for further research.

### **Review of the Relevant Literature**

This section will describe the linguistic, cultural, and educational backgrounds of Korean L2 graduate students in terms of both their L1 and L2 writing to demonstrate what they may bring with them, followed by research that has focused on Korean ESL and English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students' L2 writing. Studies on L2 students in general will be reviewed since there are few studies on Korean students' L2 socialization in particular. However, it is important to recognize that studies of L2 students in general or even of Asian students may not be easily generalized to the situation of Korean students. Despite their cultural diversity, which Kumaravadivelu (2003) describes as "contrasting and conflicting" among the Chinese, Indian, Japanese, Korean, Vietnamese, and many others, students from Asia tend to be "all thrown into a single cultural basket labeled as *Asian*" (p. 710).

#### ***Korean L2 Graduate Students' Background***

As described in many studies, there is an overall lack of formal writing instruction in L1 and L2 in Korean educational settings (Chon & Kim, 2005; Kim, S., 2001). The educational background and limited writing experience that Korean L2 graduate students will bring with them into North American university settings will thus create challenges in the North American academic context.

Drawing from data collected through questionnaires and semistructured interviews from 162 Korean university students, Chon and Kim (2005) concluded that the students felt that they had received poor training in formal writing instruction in both L1 and L2. Their results revealed that the students' experience of L1 writing instruction was limited to exam-oriented, short-term training in high schools. This training ranged in topics from current issues in newspaper editorials or articles to classical Korean literature in the form of persuasive essays, but usually writing was not practiced in classes as a regular part of the curriculum. Moreover, major class evaluations were commonly done through standardized multiple-choice exams: The writing of an essay or reflective paper is an unfamiliar form of testing in Korea.

Koreans generally value poetry, short novels, and expository essays among other types of genres (Lee & Scarcella, 1992). However, most Koreans believe that only experts in subject areas are capable of composing meaningful expository writing, and they assume that not every Korean is expected to have the writing proficiency needed to write in genres such as exposition. Expository writing with an unstated thesis is considered "good," as the reader is usually viewed as responsible for interpreting the thesis from hints within the text. Korean students in the US may be affected by the underlying cultural values tied to these writing genres, including the reluctance to state opinions strongly, the desire to save face, and the tendency to write indirectly (Lee & Scarcella, 1992).

With respect to L2 writing instruction, Lee and Scarcella found that Korean students did not have any formal foreign language writing instruction until the university level, although some students gained experience in writing about topics of interest in the L2 on their own or at language institutes. However, the traditions of the grammar-translation method and writing as a sentence-by-sentence translation from L1 to L2 are still the prevalent methods of instruction. For example, Y. Kim (2001) states that in Korean EFL classes, “writing is often regarded as translating Korean sentences into English ones, or combining a couple of simple English sentences into a complex sentence using given rules of sentence combination” (p. 23). Such instructional practices have resulted in preventing Korean ESL/EFL learners from developing appropriate writing skills during their study at the university (Kim, S., 2001; Kim, Y., 2001).

Moreover, most English courses provided in Korean universities usually focus on developing either conversation skills or reading skills, and unfortunately, most teachers do not have sufficient skills to teach writing (Kim, S., 2001). Studies have revealed that Korean EFL students, despite the long period of target language study (i.e., at least 6 years), rarely have the opportunity to develop writing skills. Lee and Scarcella (1992) assert that writing is one of the most serious problems that Korean students face in North American universities. However, to understand better why Korean students actually have difficulties in academic writing in North American contexts, underlying cultural values must also be taken into consideration.

### ***Studies on Korean Students' L1 and L2 Writing***

Introduced for the first time in 1966 by Kaplan, the concept of contrastive rhetoric was used to study the written texts of L2 learners. Contrastive rhetoric postulates that the rhetorical conventions used by L2 learners writing in English reflect their culture-specific thinking styles. Contrastive rhetoric research in its early years was mostly based on text analysis focusing on the differences in the rhetorical organization of written texts. However, these text-based studies have been criticized for examining the written product only. They have ignored the context and the process of writing, and when applied to L2 writing, the findings have been prescriptive: “In English we write like this; those who would write well in English must look at this pattern and imitate it” (Leki, 1991, p. 123). Studies that focus on written products may not explain how the learners learn to write under what contexts. Moreover, contrastive rhetoric research has been criticized as being culturally deterministic (Kubota, 1999; Leki, 2000; Raimes, 1998), as ignoring the diversity of styles that may exist in one community, and neglecting the reality of linguistic and cultural contact. The result is that when multilingual students use the strategy of transferring their L1 vernacular discourses to the L2, it is perceived as interference (Canagarajah, 2002).

Based on contrastive analysis and text analysis, many studies (Choi, 1988; Connor, 1996; Eggington, 1987; Hinds, 1987, 1990; Hinkel, 1997; Kaplan, 1966; Kim, K., 1996; Lee & Scarcella, 1992) conclude that the text structure of writing in English by Korean writers is characterized by indirectness, which makes

their writing seem out of focus to native English speakers. For example, Choi (1988) examined the text structure of L2 argumentative writing and found that native Korean speakers more often used indirect strategies, going from evidence to conclusion, and preferred a situation-problem-solution-conclusion pattern to that of the NES subjects, who used a theme-justification-conclusion pattern. Hinds (1987, 1990) gave an explanation for this use of indirectness. He proposed that in Japanese, Chinese, and Korean writing, the writer placed greater responsibility on the reader to derive meaning, in contrast to English, in which it was the writer who had the responsibility of conveying meaning to the reader. In support of this assertion, Hinds analyzed samples written in the participants' native languages and their translations into English. Korean essays were thus characterized by a "specific-to-general" (1990, p. 93) pattern. Kim (1996) compared the rhetorical styles of Korean and North American university students' writing through an examination of the campus newspaper editorials of each country. Like Hinds (1990), she translated the students' texts written in Korean into English for analyses, but she also collected texts written directly in English by Korean students. The findings showed that most of the editorials written by Korean students, whether they were written in Korean or in English, had the thesis statement at the end of the article after a long orientation consisting of several facts on the topic. Korean ESL students were also found to transfer their L1 rhetorical styles into their L2 writing. In other words, Korean writers thought it was the role of readers to deduce the thesis statement based on the facts presented. This is the opposite of the American students' writing, which had a thesis statement in the initial position of the article, followed by arguments in support of or against it. Concluding that rhetorical patterns in Korean and English are different from each other, Kim (1996) refers to the cultural and historical background knowledge of each country to account for these differences. Kim also concludes that in order for L2 students to succeed in the target language, they may need to learn the rhetorical patterns of the target language.

In its early years, contrastive rhetoric research was mostly based on text analysis focusing on the differences of rhetorical organization of written texts. Giving too much focus to the written products, these text-based studies have not taken into account L2 students' socialization issues and how they cope with the difficulties as they enter the discourse community of American academic writing. In this respect, studies of L2 writing socialization are relevant. Therefore, the next section will begin the discussion of studies on L2 students' socialization into the culture of American written academic discourse in general because there are few studies on Korean L2 students.

### ***L2 Writing Academic Communities of Practice***

The focus in L2 writing research has shifted from the earlier emphasis on written text to the context in which the text appears and/or is learned. Of particular current interest is its use in content or subject areas. This approach considers the purpose of language teaching and learning "as socialization into the academic community" (Horowitz, 1986b, p. 789). Most of these context-based studies have been conducted with a sociocultural perspective.

Sociocultural theories emphasize the importance of social interaction and cultural institutions, such as schools and classrooms, in which learning takes place. Based on the work of Vygotsky (1978), sociocultural theories maintain that the sociocultural context in which people learn plays important roles in an individual's cognitive growth and development by influencing what is learned and how it is learned. In the area of L2 writing, this framework has been used to analyze the academic contexts, and more specifically, the writing tasks that students are required to perform, the readers' reactions to L2 writing, L2 students' perceptions, and their typical writing problems. Therefore, these efforts have made considerable use of methodologies such as interviews, surveys, or questionnaires.

Horowitz (1986a) attempted to provide an answer as to what writing tasks were actually assigned across disciplines in U.S. university settings. Based on 38 responses from a survey sent to 750 faculty members, Horowitz classified the actual writing assignments and essay examinations given to students into seven categories: summary of/reaction to a reading, annotated bibliography, report on a specified participatory experience, connection of theory and data, case study, synthesis of multiple sources, and research project. Based on the results, he called for recognition of the need to maximize the transferability of the skills necessary to complete various tasks in different academic courses, and to achieve this goal, he emphasized the role of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classes.

Some studies (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Currie, 1993; Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997; Santos, 1988) have enhanced the awareness of the importance of the academic contexts, the writing tasks that students are required to perform, and students' typical writing problems. However, research shows that there is a large mismatch between the tasks and texts practiced in ESL or EAP classes and those required in real academic disciplines (Horowitz, 1986a; Leki & Carson, 1994, 1997). Furthermore, most studies based on EAP approaches used surveys or questionnaires for data collection. However, as Casanave and Hubbard (1992) argue, surveys alone cannot provide "all the information about L2 graduate students' academic needs and problems" (p. 45), and they further call for more in-depth case studies from multiple data sources. Another problem is that the different categories of writing tasks or labels do not accurately reflect the nature of the task and the skills necessary to undertake the writing tasks. Moreover, by depending on surveys or questionnaires for data collection, these studies do not provide concrete descriptions of the dynamic interaction that the students experience in the classroom nor of the institutional contexts of the disciplines and in their personal and social lives (Prior, 1995). In this respect, ethnographic sociocultural approaches would enhance our awareness of the situated process and resources L2 students use when producing writing. For example, Campbell (1998) observed three ESL college students. Her observations of one Korean student and the process of his writing for a content-based anthropology-ESL writing class were particularly insightful. However, the Korean student in her study immigrated to the US at the age of 10 and attended both junior high and high schools in the US, and thus her results might not hold with L2 graduate students, who usually do not have prior experience with English academic writing as her

participant had. Another study, Chung's 2006 8-month ethnography, may shed light on older L2 students' academic writing difficulties, which stemmed from their lack of previous experience with L2 academic writing in their home countries and cultural differences in expectations about student-teacher interaction in college ESL composition courses. In addition, there was little correlation between the ESL composition practices and the writing demands within their content areas. As a result, the students had to develop their own coping strategies. Interestingly, they got the most help through interacting with people around them, which assisted their acquisition of academic literacy practices and further facilitated their disciplinary enculturation.

Although she used surveys, Zamel's (2002) study is notable. She collected 325 responses from first- and second-year ESL students enrolled in courses across a range of disciplines and surveyed instructors who had experience working with nonnative students. Zamel's results are insightful in that she points out that "the very kind of clarity, accessible language, careful explanation, and effort that faculty want students to demonstrate are the kinds of assistance students were asking of faculty" (p. 365).

In addition to the many survey studies that have addressed what kinds of writing tasks native and nonnative college students are required to do and what their typical writing problems are, other studies (Belcher, 1994; Casanave, 1992, 1995; Currie, 1998; Dong, 1996; Johns, 1992; Prior, 1991; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Spack, 1997; Zamel & Spack, 1998) have investigated the situated or socially constructed process of acquiring L2 writing by which newcomers become socialized into academic communities of practice. Also, a variety of challenges, conflicts, and tensions that L2 learners may experience when participating in L2 writing activities have been documented. Classroom observations, interviews, and document analyses have been used to examine values and practices that novice students are expected to learn as well as the role of language and writing in that process. In the following section, additional studies on L2 writing socialization experience in general under the sociocultural perspective, most important those deriving from language socialization (LS) and legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) perspectives, will be discussed. These studies are reviewed because, as mentioned earlier, there has been little research on Korean L2 students' language socialization. More important, these studies are closely relevant and thus could provide a foundation for future research on this particular student population. In other words, these studies could reveal further insights into a broader view of academic writing socialization. Also, further research will provide insights into how Korean L2 students and/or other students with different backgrounds socialize into their target academic communities. Furthermore, it will allow for comparison of the kinds of activities or practices available to students and also what facilitates or keeps them from actively using some of the resources provided for their language socialization. First, we will briefly discuss LS and LPP.

LS and LPP place great emphasis on the role of sociocultural context. In addition, LS and LPP complement each other. As language is one of the most significant challenges facing L2 students socializing into the culture of American written academic discourse, LS highlights the importance of being



exposed to and engaged in language-mediated activities through interactions with the members of the culture. LPP concerns relationships and participation in and access to the activities of the community. Combining these two theories will shed more light on exploring L2 students' writing socialization issues and their use of social resources, including their interactions with more experienced others.

Language socialization (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986a, 1986b) views language learning as an interactive social process. Language socialization places a great emphasis on the role of sociocultural context and focuses on the process through which novices in a certain social group become socialized into the group's culture. As language is one of the most significant challenges for L2 students' socialization into the culture of American written academic discourse, LS highlights the importance of being exposed to and engaged in language-mediated activities through interactions with the members of the culture. In other words, the notion of language socialization involves "socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986b, p. 163). Language socialization is a useful framework for understanding the interactions that take place in classrooms or the surrounding environments as second language learners enter into new discourse communities and gain expertise in their new languages and contexts of language use.

The theory of legitimate peripheral participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991) concerns the process by which newcomers gradually become full participants in a given community of practice by interacting with more experienced community members. This is "particularly pertinent to those who enter a new community where practices differ from those they know" (Young & Miller, 2004, p. 521). Within academic communities of practice, there are a variety of relationships between experts and novices, the more experienced and newcomers, so that members are engaged in a process of learning through participation at multiple levels. L2 students already come with membership in other communities of practice. In effect, the cultural and discursive differences L2 students represent tend to be perceived as problematic for academic writing (Canagarajah, 2002). Those students face serious conflicts in adopting the established discourses of their target academic disciplines. Lave and Wenger (1991) further state, "To become a full member of a community of practice requires access to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation" (pp. 100-101).

Under the framework of socialization, Casanave (1992) investigated the role of writing in socializing a culturally diverse group of graduate students into a social-science discipline. The process of socialization requires that graduate students know different kinds and uses of school language from what they are used to. This case study, while investigating the role of writing in socialization, also attempted to explain why a Hispanic woman left her PhD program, focusing on the relationship between "the culture of an academic community and that of an individual with little experience in that community" (p. 149). Because of this cultural discontinuity, the student was not able to socialize into a different community that required the use of aca-

ademic discourse. Similarly, Casanave (1995), in her 18-month-long ethnographic study of a culturally diverse group of first-year doctoral students in Sociology, further examined the contexts for composing, namely a few core Sociology courses. In her conclusion, Casanave emphasizes the importance of the local, historical, and interactive aspects of the contexts that writers construct for themselves. Individual writers interact with resources within themselves by bringing their cultural history to their writing, with external resources through social engagement or collaboration with teachers, and with other learners by taking an active role in the process of each student's experience of socialization. Although there was a Korean student in the first-year group Casanave studied, little information about how the Korean student interacted with resources was presented. It is of note that Casanave (1992, 1995) rejected the passive, unidirectional view of socialization by which an individual gains membership in a group by adopting or internalizing its values, practices, and beliefs. Previous studies tend to address neither the cultural conflicts nor the resources that a culturally diverse student population might bring to a graduate program. Casanave proposed that "rather than being immersed in communities of unidirectional contextual influence, student writers use a multiplicity of local resources to respond to their training in diverse ways" (Casanave, 1995, p. 107).

In this regard, it is noteworthy to review Spack's (1997) 3-year longitudinal study on the process by which a Japanese undergraduate student with high English proficiency acquired academic reading and writing skills. This study examined both the ESL writing classes and the content-area courses that the participant attended. The participant had attributed her writing and reading struggles and her failure to complete a first-year course to her lack of background knowledge in L2 and, more important, to her Japanese way of writing. However, the findings showed that through the years, the participant developed strategies for different purposes, and she came to have confidence in herself as a reader and to appreciate the Japanese background knowledge she brought to the reading. For example, she began to use writing to clarify reading and to use reading comprehension to fulfill writing assignments. Sociocultural theory explains this development of learning strategies as a "by-product" of the socialization process, which is directly connected to the practices of cultural groups and through which inexperienced novices become competent members of these communities of practice (Donato & McCormick, 1994). Although this study gave a thorough description of this particular student, little attention was given to her interactions with her peers, either experienced people or other novices like herself. It also focused exclusively on a high-proficiency student, so the need to study more diverse L2 students with different English proficiency levels remains.

Unlike the successful Japanese student in Spack's (1997) study, Schneider and Fujishima's (1995) case study of a Taiwanese master's student in International Public Administration exemplifies that "practice did not make perfect" (p. 19). By analyzing journal entries, classroom writing samples, and interviews with the student's English as a Second Language and content teachers, the authors determined that the student's difficulties in his academic program could be attributed not only to his English proficiency but, more

important, to lack of participation in campus life, which “eliminated many opportunities for him to learn from peers outside of class” (p. 19) to improve his English and to gain a better understanding of course materials and the culture of graduate school. In a similar vein, according to Dong (1996), L2 writers tend to work alone, unable or unwilling to participate in communicative interactions that could help them cope with their writing problems and learn the way of writing that is academically acceptable relative to their disciplinary communities. Also, L2 writers are less likely to ask for support from more knowledgeable others or to make use of on-campus writing resources. These studies call for more attention to what prevents students from gaining access to resources that could prevent failure.

One potential resource was examined by Belcher (1994), who focused on the mentoring relationships between nonnative graduate dissertation writers and their advisers, which turned out to play a very important role in the academic and professional success of students in their writing socialization. Successful relationships were found to be dialogic, cooperative, and supportive, and the advisers perceived mentoring as a means of changing both the newcomers and the academic community. It is important to note that the author raises the issue of helping students develop skills for dealing with the wide range of social relationships that interact with locally situated writing activities.

Riazi (1997) also addressed the resources available to L2 students and provided some insights into how and why nonnative students developed certain coping strategies. The study revealed that the participants “relied extensively on interacting with other members of their academic community as strategies” (p. 127) to clarify the assigned tasks before beginning the tasks, during the performance of the tasks, and after they received comments from the professors. However, because this study relied only on students’ perceptions, how the social interactions affected their learning process still needs to be investigated in more detail, possibly in consultation with teachers or advisers.

Finally, in relation to L2 students’ achieving legitimate participation, Guo’s (2006) autobiographic description of the development of her L2 writing skills is of note. Considering herself as no longer “a timid peripheral participant” but as “a legitimate participant” in academia, she attributes this to the help of supportive peers and professors. Most of all, she was more willing to accept suggestions in terms of the content, organization, and mechanics from professors who were more willing to listen to and discuss her different opinions. Like Casanave (1995), Guo (2006) argues that the existing literature seems to suggest that learning to write in a second language is a one-way socialization process, which means L2 students need to learn the conventions and genres of academic writing in English to succeed in North American academia. However, she emphasizes that L2 students’ social, cultural, or linguistic knowledge should be also valued because they will help enrich the North American academic community.

Many studies have been done on the process of acquiring L2 writing in academic communities by focusing on the variety of challenges that L2 learners may experience, as well as some coping strategies they develop to overcome the problems, including various interactions with resources available. As many studies indicate, L2 students, often unable to access cultural

knowledge and resources, consider themselves on the fringes as they attempt to gain membership in their target academic communities. Arriving in U.S. academia with limited exposure to English academic discourse and with conceptions and beliefs regarding academic discourse that prove dissonant with those that prevail in the US, L2 students encounter difficulties. However, it seems that immersion in the new academic context is not sufficient to overcome these difficulties. These students would benefit greatly from being exposed to activities or interactions that introduce them to a wide range of resources to help facilitate their learning. In the following section, based on this literature review, implications for future research to better assist L2 students in general, and Korean students specifically, to learn to write academically and to enhance their knowledge of the North American academic culture will be discussed.

### **Implications for Future Research**

Most L2 writing studies in relation to Korean ESL/EFL students have so far produced traditional contrastive rhetoric findings that explain some characteristics of processes and products of specific genres (e.g., Korean students tend to be more indirect than native English speakers). By using the research paradigm of text analysis, their research method tends to be quantitative in nature. A few case studies have begun to examine how nonnative speakers learn to write in English in their chosen academic communities (Casanave, 1995; Prior, 1991; Spack, 1997; Swales, 1990), as well as the writing needs and problems of the growing group of nonnative graduate students (Casanave & Hubbard, 1992; Riazi, 1997). Although there are many studies on the language socialization of native English speakers or on Asians such as Chinese or Japanese students in higher education (Casanave, 1992, 1995; Schneider & Fujishima, 1995; Johns, 1992; Spack, 1997), there are few studies on how Korean L2 graduate students in particular are being socialized into their target disciplinary communities with a contextual or social focus and thus, little is known about this particular group. Given the increasing numbers of Korean graduate students in American higher education, such research is clearly needed. Furthermore, past and current research focuses separately on Japanese and Chinese students; we may speculate that differences will also be found for Korean students.

L2 students' English proficiency and learning strategies have emerged as major problems but other factors must be considered, such as a lack of social contact with their academic discourse communities. L2 graduate students' access to resources such as ESL courses, writing centers, or other types of university services in general, and their interactions with more experienced others (professors, tutors) and peers in particular seem to be key factors in constraining and/or facilitating the socialization of L2 students toward full participation within their new academic culture. Most investigations of students' writing practices have been limited to ESL or EAP classes and have depended on the findings of surveys, which do not reveal the situated nature of participation in a broader sociocultural context. As Casanave (1995) argued, it would be useful to consider "the immediate, local, and interactive

factors" (p. 83) situated in a larger notion of context and community of writing, as they have more direct influence on the process of an individual student's being socialized into an academic community. For example, according to Nelson (1990), successful NES freshmen students were found to take advantage of their interactions with teachers, teaching assistants, and classmates in their attempt to interpret and fulfill the writing tasks. Like Parks's (2000) study on the role of self-initiated or other-initiated incidental collaboration in professional writing in a medical setting, which showed that nurses were most likely to learn work-related written genres through interaction with more experienced colleagues, it would also be useful to investigate the role of more experienced others such as advisers, course instructors, or tutors, both native and nonnative, as writing consultants or mentors for these novice L2 graduate students and to examine their interactions in a university graduate context.

Methodologically, most case studies focused only on a brief period in a student's academic life. However, "academic literacy is generally acquired over an extended period of time in a complex, dynamic manner, and from multiple sources" (Braine, 2002, p. 63). There is a lack of direct longitudinal observations of participants in the processes through which students acquire the academic discourse practices necessary to achieve their academic goals (Spack, 1997).

Overall, although L2 researchers have begun to explore the socioculturally embedded nature of writing within academic settings, more attention needs to be given to the practices and activities in which students interact within a broader sociocultural context (Belcher & Braine, 1995; Mohan & Smith, 1992; Riazi, 1997). In addition, a well-designed study should employ multiple sources of data collection over an extended period to investigate the dynamic interactions that Korean L2 graduate students have while becoming socialized into the target communities of practice through legitimate peripheral participation.

A study on L2 graduate students' access to local resources such as ESL courses, writing centers, or other campus-based services in general, and their interactions with more experienced others and peers in particular, will afford valuable insights into better assisting L2 students in general, and Korean students specifically, to learn to write and to enhance their knowledge of the North American academic culture. A study of this type will also help prevent unnecessary failures of L2 graduate students by opening doors to useful resources. Without appropriate intervention or proper help, many L2 students will end up copying from the course texts or source materials to stay out of immediate trouble when carrying out their writing tasks, which may result in immediate academic failure or cause other significant problems later in their academic lives (Currie, 1998). On the other hand, by actively participating in a range of activities, L2 students themselves will shed light on the communities into which they are being apprenticed. A study of this type would also have important implications for teachers and administrators who work with L2 students, for North American academia constantly encounters both linguistically and culturally diverse student populations (Casanave, 1992). Thus, educators will be better able to appreciate the changes these L2 students

undergo, have a better grasp of the educational needs of the students, and help foster students' initiation into their academic communities. In these respects, further research on how L2 writing socialization takes place in a graduate context and more specifically, what resources are available to facilitate the socialization process, is more than necessary.

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