



## The Effectiveness of International University Students' Learning Logs in the Course of English Communication

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### ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study is to measure the English writing ability, and perceptions of international college students toward a learning log (a way for learners to record their learning and progress around topics), particularly those who have taken English courses in Korean universities. Eighteen students from four countries participated in the experiment. Students filled out a total of 8 study logs over a 15-week period. According to the results of a *t*-test ( $t = -2.234$ ,  $p = .039$ ) that was conducted to measure the accuracy of their first and last learning log entries, the accuracy of their writing significantly increased. When the students' first and eighth entries were compared, it was discovered that they used more English words in the latter than in the former one, and the descriptions were more detailed. In the two surveys that the students participated in, it was seen that their interest in learning English ( $t = -2.608$ ,  $p = .018$ ), their paragraph writing skills, and their awareness of proper English grammar showed significant growth. We hope that systematic learning strategies that can make English more interesting and fruitful for international English learners will be developed through continuous research on learning log activities in the future.

### KEYWORDS

international college students, learning log, English writing ability, attitudes, perceptions

## 1. Introduction

Thanks to the Korean Wave (*Hallyu*) and combined efforts to attract international students, the number of foreign university applicants is increasing year by year (Park, Kim and Kim 2020, Won 2019). According to the 2021 University Formal Information Disclosure, the number of international students studying in Korean universities is more than 110,000. Moreover, the role of international students in Korean universities is more important at a time when the school-age population is steadily falling. Therefore, it is believed that more prudent academic policies must be implemented to ensure these foreign students successfully complete their studies in Korea.

Most universities in Korea offer English courses as prerequisites with the aim of strengthening their competence as global citizens. For the international students, it is a requirement to attain four to six credits for two semesters. Learning logs have been used for several decades for foreign language learning (Choi and Ma 2019, Lee 2005, Lee and Lee 2013, Lee and Lee 2015, Wu 2015). Each university has a different way for first-year international students to participate in required liberal arts English classes.

Some universities are designed to participate in classes with new students including international students in Korea, while others run university English courses with only international students. The first-year students in the universities are divided into upper, intermediate, and lower classes by evaluating their English proficiency. On the other hand, international students are divided into classes without considering their English proficiency because the number of classes is not large enough to be divided by level. In addition, it is possible to have big different English proficiency levels in different countries and students. For this reason, instructors are more urgently required to take a closer look at the English learning process of international students and to provide learning guidance that considers each student's level.

Learning logs are a valuable educational task. These activities proved beneficial for learning mathematics, sports, and foreign languages to enhance motivation. Foreign language learning should continue with learners' interest and attention to the target language. Therefore, rather than acquiring simple knowledge in a short period, a way to form a positive attitude as an English learner from a long-term perspective and increase educational effect should be sought (Lee 2013). Moreover, international students have different English learning backgrounds and experiences. Since they all study in one class with the same curriculum, it is necessary to establish learning strategies that take into consideration each student's English learning ability and preferred learning styles. Various studies on learning journals are being conducted in domestic EFL situations; in this study, we would like to study the effectiveness of learning journals for foreign college students. Each international student's progress will be observed via their learning log.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Benefits of Learning Logs

Learning logs are a learner's narrative self-report describing diverse aspects of the learning process; they are authentic data (Oxford et al. 1996). Logs are a longitudinal research method that collects learners' reflective data over a period of time (Friesner and Hart 2005). A reflection is an act of thinking about their thinking as a controller of learning (Shih 2020). Learning logs have been used for several decades in various educational contexts from mathematics (McIntosh and Draper 2001), sports (Kim et al. 2011) to foreign language learning (Ahn 2013, Carson and Longhini 2002, Lee and Cha 2017, Litzler 2014, Litzler and Bakieva 2016, Shih 2020) to enhance motivation

and reflection. Bailey and Ochsner (1983) are the first scholars who researched on the effectiveness of learning diaries in foreign language learning.

Learning log activity in the Korean EFL situation is a new research interest in self-directed practice (Ahn 2013, Chang 2009, Kim, Lee and Lee 2018, Lee and Cha 2017, Park and Lee 2014). Chang (2009) researched Korean university students' attitude toward keeping reflective journals in English and the instructor's role in the situation. His results show journal writing helped to improve English writing confidence. In Ahn's (2013) case study with 22 pre-service English teachers, she contends the effectiveness of study logs for learning English, especially in students' metacognitive aspects, motivation, confidence, and mindset. A meta-study also analyzed 27 papers (published year from 2002 to 2016) on learning logs in the field of English education in Korea (Kim, Lee and Lee 2018). Since there are mixed results, positive and negative, they suggest a follow-up study to analyze the effectiveness of feedback by different factors such as the form and frequency of feedback in the learning log. In a study of English listening classes using learning logs for a semester in which 42 Korean college students participated, Lee and Cha (2017) show the improvement of learners' English listening ability, motivation, perception, and listening strategy, which is vital for English listening.

Agency is the foundation of motivation (Brown and Lee 2015, Burton and Carroll 2001). Keeping learning logs is an essential way of increasing agency in language learning in that "to understand who language learners are and why and how they think the way they do" (Lee and Cha 2017, p. 271). In addition, learner autonomy is positively connected to metacognition (Murray 1999). In most EFL contexts, students do not have enough time to learn four English skills in class; Korean students spend about 730 class hours for the period of 10 years from 3rd year of elementary school to the 12th grade of high school (Lee 2008). In order to achieve high proficiency in English, Korean students need to spend more time outside the classroom, mostly in autonomous activities through varied channels such as English radios, TV news, dramas, the internet, and Youtube. Litzler (2014) contends that using independent study logs is an effective way of improving language learning in EFL contexts. Learning logs are mostly done at regular intervals during the course, once a week or every other week, and students can get individual guidance and feedback from their teacher (Kemp 2010).

## **2.2 Considerations of Learning Logs**

On the other hand, since different students have different learning styles and preferences, some students may be reticent about the activity of the learning logs (Litzler and Bakieva 2016). Without a prior explanation on the importance and necessity of the activities of learning logs, their effectiveness and positiveness cannot be expected (Kim, Lee and Lee 2018).

Despite the benefits of learning logs in the process-based approach, studies on learning logs have still been underexplored, such as, how to utilize its usefulness, what to include in the logs, how many times a week, students' view on the overall activities, and how much the teacher controls his/her students' autonomy.

It is believed learning log can help check each international students' English progress. However, there is little research on international students' learning logs in English communication courses. Given these facts, this paper aims to examine the effect of a learning log for international university students in English communication, focusing on reading and writing. In this study, here are two research questions:

RQ1: How do learning logs play a role in the development of the English proficiency levels of international university students?

RQ2: What are the perceptions of the students toward the English learning log?

### **3. Method**

#### **3.1 Participants**

This study was conducted with 18 students from four nationalities, all of whom were taking English Communication Reading and Writings as a compulsory course for freshmen at an H university in Seoul. It is offered by the liberal arts department of a university located in Seoul. The class was composed of four students from China, one from Mongolia, one from Morocco, and 12 from Vietnam. Other freshmen enrolled at this university sat for the placement test before taking this course. The results of the test determined their class placement. They were placed according to their English proficiency level. The foreign students, however, did not take the test. They were placed in a separate class based on their language needs and insufficient numbers to divide the class by level. As a result, their listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills differed significantly from person to person. It must also be noted that they belonged to different majors. Seven came from the college of creative humanities and arts, eight from the college of social sciences, one from the college of IT engineering, and one from the college of design. According to the survey, the daily English learning of international students varied from less than 30 minutes to 2 hours.

#### **3.2 Data Collection**

The 18 students (3 males and 15 females) involved in this study were chosen from a class of 27. They were chosen because they completed the required activities, namely eight study diaries, and a pre- and post-survey (see Appendices). The class was conducted during the fall semester of 2021. It lasted 15 weeks and was taught every Wednesday for three hours. Due to the spread of COVID-19, the classes had to be conducted in a live online format via Cisco Webex. Even though all 18 students were foreigners, the entire course was taught in Korean by the instructor at the request of the majority.

All of the subjects kept a learning log throughout the semester as part of their homework. They logged eight entries in total from the second week to the 11th week. All eight learning log entries were submitted through the e-learning classroom. The students were given a one-week deadline. They were exempted over holidays and exam periods. Before beginning the learning log activity, which was given as an assignment, the instructor took time to explain its importance and necessity. She also gave the following tips about what to include in it. Namely, a summary of what was taught in class, interesting or important points in the lesson, and how much time was spent studying English, as well as the study method used. The instructor did not give the students any standardized learning log format. The instructor also emphasized the student's freedom to write whichever way he or she wanted. The instructor made it clear that they all were to write at least five and seven sentences per entry in the learning log. The instructor thought that five to seven sentences in each log would be enough to describe their study each week. If the recommended sentences are too many, they could have felt a burden. However, this was a recommendation and not a requirement. After submission, the instructor checked each entry and gave her feedback on the student's 8th study log. The survey was conducted twice.

The 18 students who participated submitted their filled-out survey forms through the E-learning classroom. All participation was voluntary. The pre- and post-survey questions regarding the students' perceptions of the learning log activity were adapted from previous research work (Kang and Park 2013, Lee and Cha 2019, Lee and Cha 2021, Park and Lee 2014). One was carried out in week one of the semester. The purpose of the pre-survey was to establish a baseline for each student's language background and experience. The second survey, the post-survey,

was conducted in week fifteen. The purpose of this survey was to determine how much their skill and attitudes in regard to English had improved as a result of the course lectures and activities. Both survey questionnaires were prepared in English and Korean to enable all students to participate. The two types of questions addressed various facets of the students' English learning. The pre-test questionnaire focused on the pupils' backgrounds. The pre-test questionnaire contained 12 survey questions including living space, experience keeping a learning log, length of time spent in Korea, and the ability to communicate in either Korean or English, etc. The post-questionnaire, however, focused on their perspectives and experiences with keeping learning logs. The post-survey questionnaire contained eight questions which sought to ascertain several things, namely, whether they desired to continue keeping a learning log diary in the future, whether they enjoyed writing new learning log entries, and whether they believed their English proficiency had improved, or boosted their confidence, etc. Two open-ended questions were added to the post-survey questionnaire. Both questions probed the most exciting things and inconveniences the students had had while keeping their learning logs. Seven questions were retained from the pre-survey questionnaire. The following are the same questions between pre- and post-questions to assess the level of improvement in learning English, reading comprehension, writing, grammar, vocabulary, and knowledge of sentence structure.

### **3.3 Data Analysis**

To assess the frequency of students' opinions as shown in the survey findings and compare the proportion of correctly and incorrectly written sentences from students' learning logs between the first and last learning logs, the researchers employed IBM SPSS Statistics 23. In order to accurately count the number of words and characters in the students' learning journals, the word count dialog box in MS Word was used. One of the researchers closely analyzed the students' learning log entries and evaluated them based on a criterion that included grammar and vocabulary. He has been a university professor in English education for more than 30 years. The errors found in the submitted learning logs involved articles, verb tense, subject-verb agreement, fragments, run-on sentences, and word choice. A paired *t*-test was used to check the improvement of students' writing skills based on whether there are correct or incorrect sentences in the logs. In addition, Cohen's Kappa Coefficient (Landis and Koch 1977) was used to determine the reliability of two researchers in this study. Finally, it was conducted seven survey questions were compared between pre-and post-survey questions.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1 Effects of Learning Log Activity on Students' English Proficiency Development**

#### **4.1.1 Increase in character count**

Students wrote learning log entries eight times. They were evaluated by comparing the first entry with the last one to determine how far their writing progressed. Upon combining all the submitted logs, the total count for the first entry was 1549 words (102 sentences) that averaged out to 5.5 sentences per student. For the last entry, the number rose to 2004 words (136 sentences) that boosted the average to 7.7 sentences per student. This indicates that the students' English writing fluency improved significantly during the semester.

#### 4.1.2 Changes in English writing accuracy

One of the two researchers in this study evaluated the accuracy of the phrases and sentences that the students wrote in their first and eighth learning log entries. In order to evaluate the reliability of the raters, both researchers conducted a reliability test using 119 sentences (51 sentences from the first learning log entry and 68 sentences from the second), which is half of the total number of sentences in both entries. The result of the Kappa coefficient is  $k = .754$  ( $p = .000$ ) which means that the reliability between the two raters was high, according to Landis and Koch (1977).

The students' learning progress was investigated by comparing the first and eighth study journals. Of the 102 sentences in learning log 1, 69 (67.6%) sentences were correctly written and 33 (32.4%) were incorrect. In learning log 8, 107 (78.7%) out of a total of 136 sentences were correctly written and 29 (21.3%) were incorrect. Table 1 is the result of conducting a paired  $t$ -test on the accuracies and inaccuracies of learning logs 1 and 8, which comprise all 18 participants. The conclusion arrived at based on the  $t$ -test result, ( $t = -2.234$ ,  $p = .039$ ), is that the accuracy rate of the students' English writings significantly increased over the semester.

**Table 1. Changes in Learning Log Accuracy Rate Based on Paired  $t$ -test Result**

| The types of translation process | Paired differences |        |       |   |        | $t$    | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|-------|---|--------|--------|-----------------|
|                                  | M                  | SD     | SEM   | 95% Confidence interval of the difference |        |        |                 |
|                                  |                    |        |       | lower                                     | upper  |        |                 |
| Interest                         | -9.804             | 18.608 | 4.386 | -19.057                                   | -.5502 | -2.235 | .039            |

#### 4.1.3 Learning log samples from two students, first and eighth entries

In the learning logs, all 18 students mainly described what they learned in class and how they studied English on their own. In this section, two sample learning journals that contain similar elements to the others. Assignments of the first and eighth learning log entries are presented, as well as feedback from the instructor. Those submitted by student 1 are displayed in Table 2. The student used 105 words in the first study journal and 123 words in the eighth. Evidently, she had more to describe in the eighth entry.

In the first learning log entry, there were many errors pertaining to pronouns, particularly the writing of "I" in lowercase. In this case, however, the instructor did not make mention it in the feedback. Instead, she taught capitalization rules in the class. The reason for the absence of correction in this instance is that the instructor did not want her students to focus on errors while writing in their learning log. The most important thing involving this learning log activity is that the students shared their learning experiences in writing without any tension or stress. As time went by, the students came to understand proper capitalization rules. When the eighth study journal, the last one, is closely examined, this error is no longer present.

Secondly, errors pertaining to word order, run-on sentences, and parallel structure were discovered in the first learning log entry. Grammar errors were also present in the 8th study journal, but the number of error types had clearly decreased. In his first learning log entry, student 1 wrote the following, "Right now I am learning new words using Quizlet." The instructor prepared word games for each unit using a Quizlet application. She hoped that these word games would help her students learn new vocabulary terms. After reading his log, the instructor understood that the student played the word games that the teacher had created. It seemed to be pleasantly accepted by the class.

**Table 2. Sample Learning Log 1: Student 1****Learning Log 1**

*This is the first week that we have met each other in our class, it was a pity that we had to meet through Webex but it does not matter. In class, the first lesson that I learned was "What kind of person I am?". I have learned many new words about human characteristics through this class and now i can describe that who am I, what i am good at. The lesson was not too difficult but it worths learning because i think it is very important. Right now i am learning new words using Quizlet and i hope that hard-working will pay off.*

**Feedback from the Instructor**

*I received your learning log entry from week 2 and have read it thoroughly. Thank you for sharing your learning progress. To help enrich your English learning, I encourage you to watch informative videos on sites like YouTube and TED talks. I also encourage you to find time to read English books and magazines on a daily basis. This is a fun way to learn English.*

**Learning Log 8**

*This week, we have learned about a very important chapter which is called "How can you change an unhealthy habit? Well, I have to say that I have so many bad habits that need changing. I stay up late every day, drink too litter water, working hard all the time, etc. I also rarely doing exercises. The Reading in this chapter helped me a lot in order to change my bad habit. I will start to change my habit next week.*

**Feedback from the Instructor**

*Thank you for sharing what you learned in week 11, and how the lessons helped you. I am glad you recognize your bad habits and that you are trying to break them. I hope you will succeed. You wrote a good learning log entry. You included everything I asked. Keep up the good work!*

The instructor also encouraged them to watch TED talks often to enhance their English skills. The researchers learned, through learning log 8, that student 1 watched the TED talks before going to bed. Overall, the instructor understood how far he had progressed in his writing, what he had learned from the lecture, and the good study habits he had picked up along the way. It was evident that he had favorably received the instructor's suggestions and tips.

Table 3 contains the sample learning log entries submitted by student 2, as well as instructor feedback. This particular student wrote 62 words in the first entry, and 128 words in the eighth, more than twice as many as the first. In Learning log 1, the students were asked to briefly describe the kind of person they believed they were. Student 2 wrote about her physical appearance, and what she understood from the new list of words. In the 8th learning log entry, she described not only what she learned in class, but a bad habit she had developed in class. She also journaled her struggles to break this habit, and the new plan she came up with to finally do away with it based on the textbook. To conclude, although not specifically mentioned in the last sentence, student 2 mentions the method she uses to learn English and adds that she continues using it. In this sample learning log, the instructor encourages the student to keep up the good work.

**Table 3. Sample Learning Log 1: Student 2****First learning log**

*Today's lesson was about "what kind of person are you?". The first thing we learned was to describe our personality. For example: Am I quiet person or noisy person? Am I funny or serious? and we learned to describe our look. In our book we found words that dependent meanings and also filled in the correct words to enter the sentences.*

**Feedback from the Instructor**

*I received your learning log entry from week 2 and have read it interestingly. I think you did a great job. You clearly expressed how you felt about the lesson. I also noticed that you included all the elements I had mentioned. Keep up the good work!*

**Eighth Learning Log**

*This week lesson was about 'How can you change an unhealthy habit?'. The topic of this lesson was how to get rid of bad habits, so I think it was a very interesting and helpful lesson. I have a bad habit of going to bed late and cracking my knuckles. Bad habits are really hard to break. I tried so many times but it doesn't work at all. But with the help of this lesson I decided to give it another try. In this unit we learned new words and read the textbook about 'Habit' and 'Dr. Lee on health'. Also for reading skill we learned to identifying pronoun preferences. For improving my English, I did exactly the same thing this week as I did last previous weeks.*

**Feedback from the Instructor**

*Thank you for sharing your learning progress for week 11. This learning log entry has been well-written. Keep up the good work!*

**4.2 Effects of Learning Log Activity on Students' Attitude and Perceptions toward English****4.2.1 The result of pre-survey questions**

As shown in Table 4, 18 international students (100%) who participated in this study resided in Korea. Of the 18 participants, 4 (22.2%) answered that they had written a study diary, 13 (72.2%) answered that they had no experience writing a study diary, and one student did not answer the question of whether to record the study diary.

**Table 4. The Influence that Living Location and Past Experience Has in Regard to Keeping a Learning Log**

| Number | Questions                          | Yes          | No            | No answer | Total     |
|--------|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| 1.     | I currently live in Korea.         | 18<br>(100%) | 0<br>(0%)     | 0<br>(0%) | 18 (100%) |
| 2.     | Have you ever kept a learning log? | 4<br>(22.2%) | 13<br>(72.2%) | 0<br>(0%) | 18 (100%) |

Out of the 18 students who participated in the study, as shown in Table 5, 3 (16.7%) have lived in Korea for more than 6 months but less than 1 year. Six (33.3%) have lived in the country for longer than 2 years but less than 3 years, and 9 (50%) for longer than 3 years.



**Table 5. Length of Living in Korea**

| Number | A question   | Less than 6 months | More than 6 months but less than 1 year | More than 1 year but less than 2 years | More than 2 years but less than 3 years | More than 3 years | Total     |
|--------|--|--------------------|---|--|---|-------------------|-----------|
| 3      | If you are currently in Korea, how long have you lived here? | 0 (0%)             | 3 (16.7%)                               | 6 (33.3%)                              | 9 (20%)                                 | 0 (0%)            | 18 (100%) |

As can be seen in Table 6, 2 students (11.1%) stated that it was very difficult for them to communicate in Korean, 3 (16.7%) said it was somewhat difficult 3 (16.7%) said they were not good at it, and 6 (33.3%) said they had no trouble at all. Conversely, 13 (72.2 %) said they had difficulty communicating in English, 4 (22.2 %) said it was an average experience, and 1 (5.6%) believed he was proficient in English. Based on the survey, only 27.8% of students reported that they couldn't communicate well in Korean, while more than 70% reported that they could not communicate well in English. When the instructor asked students over an online chat during the first week of the class what their preferred language of communication in class was, the majority sided with Korean.

**Table 6. The Ability to Communicate in Either Korean or English**

| Number | Questions                                | Very Poor | Poor      | Average   | Good      | Very Good | Total     |
|--------|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 4      | How well can you communicate in Korean?  | 2 (11.1%) | 3 (16.7%) | 7 (38.9%) | 6 (13.3%) | 0 (0%)    | 18 (100%) |
| 5      | How well can you communicate in English? | 6 (33.3%) | 7 (38.9%) | 4 (22.2%) | 1 (5.6%)  | 0 (0%)    | 18 (100%) |

#### 4.2.2 Changes in students' attitudes and perceptions based on pre- and the post-test

In this study, a total of 7 survey questions taken from the pretest and the post-test were analyzed. These pertain to the student's duration of study, personal interests, communication skills, writing skills, use of appropriate English grammar, choice of vocabulary, and sentence structure. All seven questions appeared in both the pre- and post-test.

##### 4.2.2.1 Changes in length of time spent studying English

As shown in Table 7, in the pre-test, seven out of 18 students reported that they either do not study English at all or do so for less than 30 minutes. However, in the 15th week, only three students reported to having done so. No student (0%) studied English for more than 2 hours, according to the pre-test, but, in the post-test, 3 (16.7%) said they did so. In week 1, 11 (61.1%) students studied English for more than 30 minutes to less than 2 hours a day, and in week 15, 12 (66.6%) students responded, showing no significant change in their perceived degree of learning. The number of students increased only by one. This means that out of 18 students, 9 (50%) have developed a regular study habit over the 15-week period.

**Table 7. Changes in Length of Time Spent Studying English Based on Pre- and Post-test**

| Type      | A question  | Less than 30 minutes | More than 30 minutes but less than 2 hours | More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours | More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours | More than 3 hours |
|-----------|---|----------------------|--|--|---|-------------------|
| Pre-test  | How much time do you spend each day studying English? | 7 (38.9%)            | 6 (33.3%)                                  | 5 (27.8%)                              | 0 (0%)                                  | 0 (0%)            |
| Post-test |   | 3 (16.7%)            | 6 (33.3%)                                  | 6 (33.3%)                              | 2 (11.1%)                               | 1 (5.6%)          |

#### 4.2.2.2. The changes in student's attitudes and perceptions

This section compares the pre- and post-survey results and highlights the changes in the students' attitudes and perceptions towards English learning after completing the learning log activity. This is shown in six aspects through the paired *t*-test, which can be seen in Table 8. These aspects include the student's interest in learning English ( $t = -2.608$ ,  $p = .018$ ), writing skills ( $t = -4.123$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and the use of proper grammar ( $t = -5.215$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Significant results can be noted in Table 8. On the other hand, there was no significant improvement in their English communication ability, choice of vocabulary, and sentence structure.

**Table 8. The Changes in Student's Attitudes and Perceptions Based on Paired *t*-test**

| The types of translation process | Paired differences |       |      |   |       | <i>t</i> | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-------|------|---|-------|----------|-----------------|
|                                  | M                  | SD    | SEM  | 95% Confidence interval of the difference |       |          |                 |
|                                  |                    |       |      | lower                                     | upper |          |                 |
| Interest                         | -.667              | 1.085 | .256 | -1.206                                    | -.127 | -2.608   | .018            |
| English Reading Skill            | -.889              | 2.026 | .478 | -1.896                                    | .119  | -1.861   | .080            |
| Writing a Paragraph              | -1.167             | 1.200 | .283 | -1.764                                    | -.570 | -4.123   | .001            |
| Proper English Grammar           | -1.33              | 1.085 | .256 | -1.873                                    | -.794 | -5.215   | .000            |
| Appropriate Vocabulary           | -.722              | 1.904 | .449 | -1.669                                    | .224  | -1.610   | .126            |
| English Sentence Structure       | .389               | 2.173 | .512 | -.692                                     | 1.470 | .759     | .458            |

#### 4.2.3 The result of the post-test

In this section, the researchers describe the students' attitudes and perceptions as revealed in the post-test. Table 9 shows the responses they gave when asked whether they desired to continue keeping a learning log in the future. Nine out of 18 students (50%) answered that they really wanted to do so even if it was not a task. Seven casually agreed that they wanted to continue writing it. Two students did not respond to this question.

**Table 9. The Desire of Keeping a Diary**

| Number | Questions  | Strongly Agree | Agree     | Disagree     | Unsure       | Strongly Disagree | No Answer    | Total        |
|--------|--|----------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1      | I intend to continue keeping a record of my learning activities, even after completing the course. | 9<br>(50%)     | 7 (38.9%) | 0<br>(13.3%) | 0<br>(38.9%) | 0<br>(0%)         | 2<br>(11.1%) | 18<br>(100%) |

Table 10 shows the answer each student gave when asked about his or her experience keeping a learning log. Ten of the 18 students answered that it was good to review what they had learned and to retain it in their long-term memory. Four students described their journaling experience as fun. However, four other students gave answers that pertained to the overall course, and not merely the contents of the learning diary.

**Table 10. Most Exciting Aspects of Writing Learning Log**

| Student Number | Given Answer   |
|----------------|--|
| 1              | <i>It was helpful to memorize because I could see what I learned once again.</i>   |
| 2              | <i>I can write down what I learned in class and review them.</i>   |
| 3              | <i>It reminded me of that week's lesson.</i>   |
| 4              | <i>Writing learning log every week helps me can summarize the contents of each class in detail.</i>  |
| 5              | <i>It was good to study new words with word games.</i>   |
| 6              | <i>I can recall and write down what I have learned and remember it for a long time.</i>  |
| 7              | <i>Read a sentence and answer a question. Because it helps me to read English better and there are many new words that we need to find out.</i>                        |
| 8              | <i>I summarized and listed what I learned. And can understand better and remember longer.</i>  |
| 9              | <i>The learning log activity I can practice my writing skill and learning the new word so it was interesting.</i>  |
| 10             | <i>I had so much fun learning English with my friends.</i>   |
| 11             | <i>It made recall the lectures and restudy in case I forgot or if missed in class.</i>   |
| 12             | <i>I found out regarding the learning log activity was interesting. Because I always wrote down what we learnt in class and tried to write about my daily lessons.</i> |
| 13             | <i>It helps increase my memory.</i>  |
| 14             | <i>I think the most interesting thing is that I can learn more vocabulary by studying diary.</i>   |
| 15             | <i>I will review what I learned this week.</i>   |
| 16             | <i>It was interesting for me to study English every day.</i>   |
| 17             | <i>The exciting part was memorizing the contents of my presentation because it was based on an interesting topic.</i>  |
| 18             | <i>Study with new friends and get acquainted with a very funny English teacher.</i>  |

Table 11 shows how each student responded when asked what his or her biggest inconvenience was as regards the learning log activity. Nine out of the 18 students made it clear that they had no inconveniences. Four students shared the inconveniences they had while writing their learning log entries. One said that she had difficulty writing more than five sentences. The second expressed that because the same topic was covered over a period of two weeks, both learning log entries were identical. Four gave answers that were not directly related to the question. The survey questions were printed in both English and Korean. It seems that some students did not understand the

questions clearly. This is evidenced by the fact that they wrote unrelated answers regarding the overall course. One student said it was difficult to understand when hearing the new word. Another student said it was uncomfortable to study English in Korean. It was said that it was inconvenient to conduct real-time online classes due to COVID-19. These students' answers are not directly related to the study log, but the researchers think instructors who guide international students should listen to each student's voices and reflect on them in class.

**Table 11. Biggest Inconveniences in the Writing Learning Log**

| Student Number | Given Answer  |
|----------------|---|
| 1              | <i>The instructor asked me to write minimum sentences. Sometimes I couldn't write five sentences.</i>   |
| 2              | <i>I feel like it hasn't any inconvenience.</i>   |
| 3              | <i>I don't have any inconvenience.</i>  |
| 4              | <i>There's nothing uncomfortable about me.</i>  |
| 5              | <i>Nothing</i>  |
| 6              | <i>In the middle of one's speech. Because I can't understand and hear new words.</i>                    |
| 7              | <i>Nothing</i>  |
| 8              | <i>Nothing</i>  |
| 9              | <i>Studying the same topic for two weeks, so I don't have any ideas to write about it</i>               |
| 10             | <i>There were many disappointments because the lecture was conducted online.</i>                        |
| 11             | <i>No inconveniences except to think this class is more suited for face to face classes than online</i> |
| 12             | <i>I thought there wasn't any inconvenience. But sometimes I forget to write it.</i>                    |
| 13             | <i>No, I don't.</i>   |
| 14             | <i>I am not good at English, so I think it will be a little hard to write long sentences.</i>           |
| 15             | <i>Nothing.</i>   |
| 16             | <i>The most uncomfortable thing was that I studied English in Korean.</i>                               |
| 17             | <i>Sometimes I have to use a translator to study, so it's a bit inconvenient.</i>                       |
| 18             | <i>Nothing.</i>   |

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

When the foreign students from the four aforementioned countries enrolled in the course of English Communication, their unique educational backgrounds, such as their English abilities, were not taken into account. For this reason, more personalized English learning activities were needed. In this study, the researchers examined how the students' writing skills, attitudes, and perceptions toward English learning had improved as a result of the learning log activity. In this study, 18 international university students took part in the learning log activity, which was part of the English Communication course. Based on the study log data provided by 18 individual students in the course for one semester, it was possible to confirm how they were engaged in learning English. This learning log activity was differentiated from the typical class activities. The students completed eight learning log entries over the course of the semester, and the instructor provided feedback on each of these entries. In order to evaluate the effectiveness of keeping a learning log on a student's English learning, the English sentences contained in their first and last learning log entries were evaluated for their rate of accuracy. A survey was also conducted at the

beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester to ascertain the students' attitudes toward learning English and their perceptions regarding the learning log activity. As a result, the following research implications were obtained. First, it was discovered that, on average, all 18 students used more vocabulary terms in the 8th learning log than they did in the 1st learning log, and their descriptions were more detailed. In addition, the results of testing the accuracy of the English sentences written in the learning log ( $t = -2.234, p = .039$ ), indicated that the accuracy of the submitted entries had significantly improved. Second, according to the results of the students' pre- and post-survey, their interest in learning English, their English writing skills, and their knowledge of grammar significantly improved after completing the learning log activity. On the other hand, the survey involving reading comprehension, choice of vocabulary, and knowledge of proper sentence structure showed no significant improvement. Furthermore, 16 students (88.9%) responded that they intend to continue to keep a learning log even after completing the course.

As the number of foreign student enrollees increases every year in Korea, their backgrounds they each come from must be recognized, thus the instruction will be more systematic and individualized. The learning log is a detailed record of the student's learning progress. In their learning log entries, each student describes not only the most interesting concepts and learning strategies experienced in class, but also his or her response to the instructor's feedback. This involves the instructor going through each learning log entry, then giving appropriate feedback, which appears in the form of comments, corrections, and advice. The use of the learning log itself does not guarantee the learning effect. In order to obtain the maximum effect through the use of the learning log in the school field, we believe that learner-centered customized learning activities are necessary. For example, it is necessary to pay attention to the type, amount, and content of the feedback considering the learner's purpose, style, background, and learning period. Therefore, we suggest the need for further research considering these details essential to the effectiveness of the study log.

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Examples in: English  
Applicable Languages: English  
Applicable Level: Tertiary

## Appendix A

### Pre-Survey

본 설문지는 한성대학교 외국인반 신입생들의 영어 커뮤니케이션 독해와 작문 강좌를 보다 효과적이고 체계적으로 운영하고 학생 개개인의 특성을 고려한 진정성 있는 영어 학습 프로그램을 연구하고 개발하고자 제작하였습니다. 학생 여러분은 설문 문항을 잘 읽고 성실하게 답변하기 바랍니다. (The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather student data that will help in the development of appropriate English learning programs for this course. Please read each survey question carefully and provide honest and complete answers.

주관식 설문 문항 답변 시 한국어 또는 영어 중 학생이 더 편하게 느끼는 언어로 작성하면 됩니다. (You can answer the survey questions using either Korean or English, whichever makes you most comfortable.)

★ 아래의 문항을 읽고 적절한 답안을 하나만 선택하세요. (Read the questions below and select the most accurate answer.) Choose only one.

1. 나는 지금 한국에서 거주하고 있다. (I currently live in Korea.)

① 예 (Yes) ② 아니오 (No)

2. 학습일지(learning log)를 쓴 적이 있는가? (Have you ever kept a learning log?) Learning log: A record of what you cover in your personal study

① 예 (Yes) ② 아니오 (No)

3. 지금 한국에 거주하고 있다면 한국에서 생활 한지는 얼마나 되었는가? (If you are currently in Korea, how long have you lived here?)

① 6개월 이내 (Less than 6 months)

② 6개월 이상 ~ 1년 미만 (More than 6 months but less than 1 year)

③ 1년 이상 ~ 2년 미만 (More than 1 year but less than 2 years)

④ 2년 이상 ~ 3년 미만 (More than 2 years but less than 3 years)

⑤ 3년 이상 (More than 3 years)

4. How much time do you spend each day studying English?

① 영어 공부 하지 않는다. ~ 30분 이내 (None at all but less than 30 minutes)

② 30분 이상 ~ 1시간 미만 (More than 30 minutes but less than 1 hour)

③ 1시간 이상 ~ 2시간 이내 (More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours)

④ 2시간 미만 ~ 3시간 이내 (More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours)

⑤ 4시간 이상 ~ 2시간 이내 (More than 3 hours)



5. 나는 한국어로 의사소통을 할 수 있다. (How well can you communicate in Korean?)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Very poor) ② 그렇지 않다. (Poor) ③ 보통이다. (Average) ④ 잘한다. (Good) ⑤ 매우 잘한다. (Very good)

6. 나는 영어로 의사소통을 할 수 있다. (How well can you communicate in English?)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Very poor) ② 그렇지 않다. (Poor) ③ 보통이다. (Average) ④ 잘한다. (Good) ⑤ 매우 잘한다. (Very good)

7. 나는 영어 학습이 재미있다. (Learning English is a fun experience for me.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

8. 나는 다양한 주제의 영어 독해지문을 읽고 이해할 수 있다. (I can read and understand English texts on various topics.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

9. 나는 영어로 문단 글쓰기를 잘할 수 있다. (I can write a proper paragraph in English.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

10. 나는 영어 문법을 잘 안다. (I often use proper English grammar.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

11. 나는 다양한 영어 어휘의 의미를 알고 문장에서 적절하게 사용한다. (I have a large English vocabulary and often use appropriate terms in sentences.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

12. 나는 영어 문장의 구조를 잘 알고 있다. (I know the structure of English sentences well.)

- ① 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree) ② 그렇다. (Agree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ⑤ 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) Thank you!

설문 조사에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다!  
(Thank you for participating in the survey!)

## Appendix B

### Post-Survey

본 설문지는 영어 커뮤니케이션 독해와 작문 강좌를 한 학기 동안 수강한 한성대학교 외국인반 학생들에게 강좌에 대한 피드백을 받아 학생들의 의견을 수렴하고 연구를 통하여 체계적이고 효과적으로 영어커뮤니케이션 독해와 작문 강좌를 개발하고자 설문조사를 제작하였습니다. (This survey is designed to gather feedback from students who are enrolled in the course English Communication Reading and Writing. The goal is to use the results in the development of appropriate English learning programs for this course.) 여러분은 설문 문항을 잘 읽고 성실하게 답변하기 바랍니다. 또한 객관식 문항은 답변을 하나만 선택해주세요. (Please read through each question carefully and select only one answer.)

★아래의 문항을 읽고 5가지 답변 중 가장 적절한 답안을 고르세요. (Read the questions below and choose the most appropriate answer out of the five options provided.)

1. How much time do you spend each day studying English?

- ① 영어 공부 하지 않는다. ~30분 이내 (None at all but less than 30 minutes)
- ② 30분 이상 ~1시간 미만 (More than 30 minutes but less than 1 hour)
- ③ 1시간 이상 ~2시간 이내 (More than 1 hour but less than 2 hours)
- ④ 2시간 미만 ~3시간 이내 (More than 2 hours but less than 3 hours)
- ⑤ 3시간 이상 (More than 3 hours)

2. 나는 영어 학습이 재미있다. (Learning English is a fun experience for me.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure)
- ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

3. 나는 다양한 주제의 영어 독해지문을 읽고 이해할 수 있다. (I can read and understand English texts on various topics.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure)
- ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

4. 나는 영어로 문단 글쓰기를 잘할 수 있다. (I can write a proper paragraph in English.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure)
- ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

5. 나는 영어 문법을 잘 안다. (I often use proper English grammar.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure)
- ④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

6. 나는 다양한 영어 어휘의 의미를 알고 문장에서 적절하게 사용한다. (I have a large English

vocabulary and often use appropriate terms in sentences.)

- ① 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree) ② 그렇지 않다. (Disagree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure)  
④ 그렇다. (Agree) ⑤ 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree)

7. 나는 영어 문장의 구조를 잘 알고 있다. (I know the structure of English sentences well.)

- ① 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree) ② 그렇다. (Agree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇지 않다. (Disagree)  
⑤ 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree)

8. 나는 이 강좌를 마친 후에도 학습일지를 계속 쓸 것이다. (I intend to continue keeping a record of my learning activities, even after completing the course.)

- ① 매우 그렇다. (Strongly agree) ② 그렇다. (Agree) ③ 보통이다. (Unsure) ④ 그렇지 않다. (Disagree)  
⑤ 전혀 그렇지 않다. (Strongly Disagree)

★ 아래의 문항을 읽고 적절한 답변을 적으세요. (Read the questions below and write down the appropriate answers.) 주관식 설문 문항 답변 시 한국어 또는 영어 중 학생이 더 편하게 느끼는 언어로 작성하면 됩니다. (You can answer the survey questions using either Korean or English, whichever makes you most comfortable.)

9. 학습일지 활동과 관련하여 가장 흥미로웠던 점은 무엇인지 적으세요? (What did you find to be most interesting regarding the learning log activity? Explain why it was interesting.

10. 학습일지 활동과 관련하여 가장 불편한 사항은 무엇인지 쓰세요? (What was the biggest inconvenience involving the learning log activity? Explain why it was inconvenient.)

설문 조사에 참여해 주셔서 감사합니다!  
(Thank you for participating in the survey!)