A COMPARISON OF AN EFFECTIVE AND AN INEFFECTIVE WRITER'S MENTAL REPRESENTATIONS OF THEIR AUDIENCE, RHETORICAL PURPOSE AND COMPOSING STRATEGIES

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Abstract
Effective and ineffective writers have been found to differ significantly in their planning, writing and revising processes. The present study attempts to add to the corpus of investigations that have attempted to find out how successful writers undertake the task of writing in a second or foreign language and how much ineffective writers differ from them. The objectives of the present study are: (1) the students' writing patterns, (2) successful and unsuccessful writing strategies, (3) the differences between the writers' mental representations of the target audience and of the rhetorical purpose for performing the writing task, (4) correlation between the writers' mental representation of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose and the writing strategies employed, (5) verbal data as a valid source of information about the writers' cognitive processes. The results indicate that the effective and ineffective writers showed two completely different notions of what writing entails, two different mental representations of their readers and different rhetorical purposes.

Keywords: *successful writers, unsuccessful writers, mental representations of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose, writing strategies*.

1. Introduction

Investigators (Raimes 1985, 1987; Sengupta 1999; Victori 1999; Manchón, Roca de Larios and Murphy 2000; Wong 2005; Roca de Larios *et al*. 2008) of the composing strategies of both experienced and inexperienced writers conclude that there are important differences between both groups of writers at the planning, writing and revising stages of the writing process. Experienced writers use successful composing strategies, defined as strategic actions that writers employ to acquire, store, retrieve and use information (Oxford 1990: 8), such as planning, extensive readings and revising of their drafts and rehearsing as a strategy to try out different ideas. Inexperienced writers, however, use other less cognitive demanding strategies, such as repeating and translating, although they have also been found to use effective strategies ineffectively. Both groups of writers further differ in their mental representations of the audience and in their purpose for undertaking the writing task. While successful writers take into account the readers' expectations and try to "convinc[e] readers of their opinion" (Victori 1999: 544), unsuccessful writers lack audience awareness and their purpose is "not to communicate with a reader" (Raimes 1985: 250). However, proficient writers have also been found to lack discourse concerns when revising their texts (Suzuki 2008: 226). These results were concluded from the students' think-aloud protocols, the analysis of the drafts and written plans, the video recordings of the composing processes and the data from the follow-up interviews.

Few studies (Raimes 1987; Grabe and Kaplan 1996; Porter and O'Sullivan 1999; Wong 2005) have undertaken the task of studying the effects of the writers' mental representations of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose for undertaking the writing task on the composing strategies that they employed and have given contradictory findings. Grabe and Kaplan (1996), Porter and O'Sullivan (1999) and Wong (2005) point out that the audience and purpose have an influence on the production of discourse, unlike Raimes (1987), who indicates that her writers' audience concerns and purpose when writing did not

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have effects on the composing strategies that they employed. Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 207-208) distinguish a five-item framework of audience influence: (1) the number of persons who are expected to read the text, (2) the extent of familiarity of the readers with the writer, (3) the extent of shared background knowledge between the readers and the writer, and (4) the extent of shared specific topical knowledge between the readers and the writer. Ede and Lunsford (1984) added a sixth item of audience influence: the distinction between "addressed" or real audience with a focus on the reader and the "invoked" or imaged audience with its focus on the writer.

The rhetorical purpose of composing has also been found to influence the cognitive processes of composing. Swales (1990) believes that purpose is related to the concept of genre since there has to be a relationship between the purpose accomplished by the genre and the schematic structure of the genre, the text and the language employed. As he states,

> Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience. If all high probability expectations are realized, the exemplar will be viewed as prototypical by the parent discourse community (Swales 1990: 58).

Grabe and Kaplan (1996: 210) also suggest a direct relationship between the writers' representations of the communicative purposes and the composing strategies used, although the purpose also addresses speech acts such as apologizing, complaining and explaining, which are independent of any written genre.

Even fewer studies have compared how much effective and ineffective writers differ in their representations of audience, rhetorical purpose and composing strategies. One might speculate that there should be important differences between both groups of writers as regards audience and rhetorical purpose and their influence on the composing processes evoked. It is hoped that this study adds to the understanding of how successful writers undertake the task of writing in a second or foreign language and how unsuccessful writers differ from them.

2. The controversy regarding verbal report data

There are contradictory opinions regarding the reliability of verbal reports. Verbal reports have been widely criticized since much of the cognitive processes are largely inaccessible and, therefore, unconscious (Seliger 1983) and, even if it is not unconscious, verbal reports may be incomplete and not capture all the complexity of cognitive processes (Dobrin 1986). However, Cohen (1987: 36) discarded the position that cognitive processes are inaccessible and for Ericsson and Simon (1984), who undertake the task of discussing the issue of the incompleteness of verbal reports, self-observation, self-revelation and retrospective reports provide nearly a complete picture of the cognitive processes that take place during task performance. The subjects' think-aloud protocols and retrospective reports reveal the information attended to while performing a task and, by doing so, they provide information on the strategies employed, the inferences drawn and the accessing of memory by recognition. Ericsson and Simon (1984) reject, therefore, the accusation that verbal data are epiphenomenal.

Other criticisms against the use of verbal reports come from the fact that the learner has to rely on memory to report his/her learning process, which may lead to faulty reporting (Cohen 1987). However, Ericsson and Simon (1984: 245-246) indicate that, while it is true

that many cognitive processes remain unconscious, the nature of the task determines the degree of attention necessary for the mental processing. The information in memory can therefore be accessed for certain tasks while the process is still going on, but such information should be attended to during task performance.

There are contradictory results regarding the use of the verbal report by advanced and less advanced writers: while Gaskill (1986: 146) pointed out that the procedure works better for advanced writers than for less advanced writers and that complex activities require writers to think and compose in silence, a more current investigation by Leow and Morgan-Short (2004: 48) working with first year students of Spanish found no detrimental effects on learners' comprehension, intake, or controlled production when compared with the nonthink-aloud group performing the same reading task.

Another reason against the use of verbal data is the fact that the results obtained from the verbal protocols can also vary according to the type of instructions given, the types of materials used to gather information, the nature of the data analysis, and the language used to think aloud. It is also apparent that verbal reports are also idiosyncratic because they reflect the individual differences and, therefore, they do not serve the purpose of a general theory and, also, the encoding of verbal protocols may not be objective (Cohen and Scott 1996). For Ericsson and Simon (1984), however, idiosyncrasy cannot be attributed to verbal reports but, rather, the difficulty stems from the existence of individual differences. To sum up, it seems that verbal reports can only give a partial picture of the writers' composing process; however, when used in combination with other procedures, the protocol analysis can be invaluable.

3. A study using verbal report data: successful and unsuccessful writers

3.1. Objectives

The analysis is carried out at the planning, writing and revising stages of the composing process of two students and tries to determine: (1) the students' writing patterns; (2) successful and unsuccessful writing strategies; (3) the differences between the writers' mental representations of the target audience and of the rhetorical purpose for performing the writing task; (4) correlation between the writers' mental representation of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose and the writing strategies employed; (5) verbal data as a valid source of information about the writers' cognitive processes.

3.2. Subjects

Table 1 below provides information about the students in the study. "Writing Course" refers to the latest English class the students took and the grade they scored at the time of the study. "Academic Average" refers to the students' overall grade point average at the end of the academic year 2000.

Writer	Acad. Status	Age	Writing Course	Course Grade	Acad. Average
Kara	Graduate	33	Modern Drama	B	B^+
Isabel	3rd year English Philology	21	English III	C	C^+

Table 1. Background information for the writers

3.3. Tasks and procedures

Designed as a case study, the study tries to determine the successful and unsuccessful composing processes of one EFL student selected from the student population at the University of Valencia (Spain) during the academic year 2001 and one English native writer, whose contact with the English language was limited since she had been living in Spain. Individual appointments were arranged with the students during a three-week period, they worked for two 90-minute sessions and were videotaped. The writing assignment used in this study required the students to write an argumentative essay. The topic was "The use of marijuana should be legalized", borrowed from Gaskill's (1986) research. The students were told to write a well-developed composition arguing for or against the statement and to justify their argument. After the first writing session, I collected the drafts and returned them during our next meeting. During this second session, the students were free to make any changes that they deemed necessary or they could go on to write the final version of their papers.

The study that follows next combines all three forms of verbal report –self-report, self-revelation, and self-observation– in researching the writing process. The self-reports and self-observations are obtained from interviews, while the self-observations come from having the students think aloud while writing. Moreover, the study includes the researcher's observations of the students' behaviors in the videotapes. The interviews were carried out individually, were informal and lasted from forty-five minutes to over one hour. The results corroborate the observations of the writers and the think-aloud protocols (see Table 2). The writers were pre-trained in producing verbal data and were told not to stop talking at any moment. It was considered better that the students worked alone so as not to be influenced by the researcher's presence.

The verbal data were transcribed verbatim and analyzed following a modified version of Perl's (1981) coding categories to see if they could complement the writers' overall picture and corroborate or reject the initial results. For the analysis and coding of revisions, Hall's (1987) classification was employed, which distinguishes four distinct categories with their corresponding subcategories: "cycle of revision", "level of revision", "type of revision", and "purpose of revision". Interrater reliability was obtained by having another rater analyze the verbal data. The results of both raters were compared and any differences were discussed until a conclusion was reached. Both raters coincided in 98% of the cases. The outcomes of this investigation suggest positive findings in the use of verbal reports to gain insights into the students' composing processes.

	Kara	Isabel
Teaching focus	Content and organization	Grammar
Writing processes		
Written or mental outline	Mental outline. Little specificity in her written outline	Written outline
Non-elaborated		
Organization	Yes	Yes
Reader	Yes	No
Purpose in mind	Yes, to convince	No
Revising processes		
Uses several drafts	Yes	Not always
Global revisions	Yes	No
Time devoted to revise ideas to make them clearer (out of 100%)	30%	5%
Time devoted to check for mechanical and grammatical mistakes (out of 100%)	5%	20%
Problems with the composition on the legalization of marijuana	Used to writing with a computer; finding the right word	Building grammatically complex sentences; vocabulary

Table 2. A summary of Kara's and Isabel's interviews

4. Analysis and results

4.1. The composing strategies employed by the writers: successful and unsuccessful strategies

4.1.1. Pre-writing: planning activities and time spent

The literature on native and non-native writing finds contradictory results as to the relation between number and kind of planning activities and writing quality. However, it concludes that, in general, a wide range of time and activities to generate content and organization is usually correlated with good writing. In this study, despite the obvious differences between Kara, the experienced writer, and Isabel, the novice one, Kara did not plan as long as other skilled writers in other studies nor did she plan as extensively. Kara planned for almost 8 minutes, a time that she spent writing down arguments "for" and "against" the legalization of marijuana and considering the ones offered in the assignment sheet and undertook 8 planning activities before setting pen to paper. Isabel, however, planned for 25 seconds and carried out 1 planning activity in her pre-writing time.

Contrary to other skilled writers, Kara's written outline did not include extensive planning but it merely consisted of a list of gist units that summarized the content items of her text. She used instead a mental outline. Throughout her composing, Kara shifted back and forth between her composition and her outline, which acted as a reminder of the most important points of her text, treated extensively in her composition. However, Kara indicated in the interview that, since her composition was not going to be graded by a teacher, she had not planned as much as she would otherwise. In spite of her acknowledged shortage of planning, Kara planned on 19 occasions throughout her composing, 9 of which occurred during the time devoted to pre-writing.

In contrast, Isabel started her planning without any secure sense of where she was heading, evidenced by her comments: "¿qué más ponemos?" "¿qué otra cosa puedo poner?" Her short pre-writing time was devoted to considering the overall structure of her text but she did not reflect on any specific points. Isabel merged her planning process with the writing of her first draft and tried to develop her ideas by writing in a kind of "discovery" process observed in other experienced and inexperienced writers. She only resorted to her outline when she was unable to keep writing and needed to clarify her thoughts, which happened on 27 occasions. However, even when Isabel almost doubled Kara's number of planning occurrences, they did not help to improve her writing. Contrary to the instructions that Isabel had received, she did not argue against the opposing view failing, therefore, to write an argumentative essay.

4.1.2. Rehearsing

Rehearsing, defined as "voicing ideas on content or trying out possible ideas" (Raimes 1985: 242), is possible thanks to the think-aloud protocol and can be found orally and in writing with a grammatical purpose or to test the ideas on an audience. In this study, both the experienced and novice writers used this technique, with Isabel doing it more often than her native counterpart. Like other studies, the present study does not find correlation between amount of rehearsing and writing quality and even finds counterproductive consequences. Kara rehearsed in an attempt to find out what she wanted to say, as in: "but it's clear we suffer…society suffers, society and individuals suffer the consequences of drugs". Often, Isabel started her sentences and rehearsed to express an idea in English that was readily available in her native language. In the course of her struggle to finish the sentence, she stopped and became distracted with spelling conventions. The obvious result was that Isabel forgot what she wanted to say. The excerpt below exemplifies Isabel's lack of fluency in her rehearsing process:

> [talks] the government allows, podíamos poner, permit también estaría bien… [writes] permits. [Talks] porque si el gobierno permite su uso [talks and writes] because if the government permits … its freely… [Talks] its freely consumition? Consumición…consumption. [Talks and writes] con-sump-tion. [Checks the dictionary and talks] consumición…consumption, yo diría consumo. Consumo, consumption. OK. [Writes] consumption. [Talks] consumption… ¿qué? [She has forgotten what she wanted to say].

Isabel also rehearsed to search for a grammatical form both orally: "[reads and talks] countries … of Europe or in Europe?" and in writing: "[writes and talks] criminality is associated con la toma de drogas with … [talks] take drugs, taking drugs? Con guioncito. Taking-drugs o drug-taking? [Writes in her plan] taking drug, drug taking".

Through rehearsals, Isabel's judgment was based on the sound of different alternatives: "[talks] and therefore uncontrolled y además uncontrolled, besides uncontrolled. Therefore me gusta más, and therefore uncontrolled".

4.1.3. Reading

There are considerable differences between Kara's and Isabel's reading behaviors both in the number of readings, in the extension of their readings and in their purpose (see Table 3). Unlike the unskilled writer in this study, Kara read sentences, the paragraph that was currently in progress or the one she had just finished as a strategy to generate content and to assess if the words chosen captured the writer's intended meaning. She also read globally on 6 occasions to keep her composing flowing or to compare her writing with the arguments in

her outline. Due to the fact that she had worked on each individual paragraph, Kara did not read globally at the end of both writing sessions. However, contrary to what is expected, Kara did not read globally at the beginning of the second writing session so as to have an overall impression of her writing. Instead, she concentrated on individual paragraphs, marking areas that she felt needed additional work. Additional behaviors that were marked as readings were "reading the assigned topic" and "reading the plan or outline", both of which Kara employed fairly frequently throughout her composing, 3 and 10 times, respectively. The fact that Kara referred constantly to her notes suggested that she was not keeping all of her plans in mind as she was writing.

Isabel read back words and sentences but she hardly ever read whole chunks of text. During the first 90-minute session, she read a single paragraph and did not read globally, not even at the end of the session. At the start of the second session, Isabel began by reading and did not reach the end. Her readings in both drafts were followed by frequent instances of repeating and translating in her struggle to finish individual sentences: "[reads] People hold strong views for and against the legalization of marijuana … [Repeats] marijuana … use of marijuana … marijuana [talks and writes] in our society", which explains her high accounts for both processes. Furthermore, Isabel did not once read from her plan to compare it with her composition. She did read from the material that she had brought on one occasion, but she did it to keep writing, not to support her arguments or to reject the opposing view.

	Kara (successful)	Isabel (unsuccessful)
Total time spent	2 h 11m	1 h 39 m
Time spent pre-writing before sentence 1 (minutes)	7 m 30 s	25 s
Occurrences of rereading of topic	3	2
Occurrences of rereading of plan or outline	10	0
Occurrences of planning	19	28
Occurrences of repeating of words or phrases	1	81
Occurrences of reading of sentences or part of sentences	42	14
Occurrences of reading of whole draft after sentence 4	6	2
Occurrences of rehearsing	4	19
Occurrences of translating	0	70

Table 3. Writing session: time spent on pre-writing, planning, repeating, reading, and rehearsing
Source: modified version of Raimes (1985)

4.1.4. Language-switch

As in other studies such as Jones and Tetroe (1987) and Woodall (2002), Isabel switched back and forth between her L1 and L2 for different purposes: to make lexical searches: (1) "social rules, ¿no?, romper las normas [writes in her draft and repeats] social rules …;" to carry out higher-level operations like planning and revising:

> (2) [talks] Empezamos con una introducción al tema. Puede ser … si estamos en contra, empezamos con los problemas que tiene la marihuana, pero muy por encima. Luego ya entramos analizarlos. A ver … [talks and writes] cuatro puntos desarrollados y luego conclusión. Vale, vamos con la introducción … Empezamos ya directamente …"

Finally, Isabel switched to her L2 to carry out lower-level operations like editing, spelling and transcribing: (3) "people are afraid of … people are afraid of … people are afraid of …

are afraid of [writes and talks] le-ga-li-za-tion … of … [talks] cannabis se escribe con dos enes, no?". Researchers such as Manchón, Roca de Larios and Murphy (2000) and Woodall (2002) also find examples of such use of the L1 in their writers' protocols. As in Woodall's study, Isabel's use of her L1 was out of control and seemed a way to alleviate the cognitive overload that writing in her L2 imposed.

Shorter episodes of language-switch were also observed. Isabel translated from her L1 into her L2 and vice versa as a way to compensate for the difficulties that she encountered. As in Qi's (1998) study, Isabel changed languages for different purposes:

1. To initiate an idea:

(4) "[writes in her first draft and talks] First … it is said …[talks] es dicho …"

2. To develop a thought:

(5) "[writes and talks] First, it is said … that the free use of marijuana … [repeats] de marihuana … de marihuana"

3. To verify the meaning of a word:

(6) "[talks] si se rompen las normal sociales, entonces hay más criminalidad. Reaching estaria bien?"

4. To compensate for working memory limitations due to the complexity of the task:

(7) "la gente que quiere, que hay gente que quiere y no fuma …who … ¿qué ponemos?"

This study also finds evidence of language-switch for other purposes:

5. To verify the spelling of a word:

(8) "[writes and talks] uniéndose … joining … addicts lleva una o dos des? [checks the dictionary] adicto … adicto … addicts con dos des"

6. To verify the right choice of words:

(9) "take … the case of Holland which is one … [stops and talks] de los países con más crimen … [checks the dictionary and talks] criminal … no creo que sea criminal, que tiene crimen… ¿qué ponemos? One of the most qué?"

7. To try out different words:

(10) "its freely … consumition? consumición …. consumption, yo diría consumo, consumo, consumption"

4.1.5. Repeating

Isabel also showed a high percentage of repetition, while Kara made a single instance of repetition. Isabel repeated for different purposes:

1. To find a way of continuing:

(11) "[talks and writes] Many people hold strong views for and against … for and against … for and against [checks her notes] the legalization …"

2. To find the right word:

(12) "no se respetarán las leyes … [writes in her first draft and talks] breaking … breaking … rompiendo … breaking … therefore breaking"

3. To check the meaning expressed in the text:

(13) "[writes] it is evident … que ellos van a estar … they are going to be … interested … ellos van a estar interesados … en … [writes and talks] in this option but not all of them …. But not all of them".

4.1.6. Writing

Kara and Isabel represented two opposed notions of writing: Kara, for whom writing was a relatively easy and straightforward task and Isabel, for whom writing was a painful and difficult procedure. Both conceptions of writing are easily observable in their individual writing processes in both writing sessions and in the writers' final products (see Table 4 below). Although the skilled and unskilled writers in this study wrote a similar number of words and the same number of sentences in their final drafts, they differed in the number of drafts and in the number of sentences written without interruption, which suggests Kara's greater fluency in composing and Isabel's underlying writing problems.

	Kara	Isabel
Number of drafts	3	2
Number of words in final draft	531	458
Number of sentences in final draft	25	25
Number of sentences written without interruption	5	0

Table 4. Composing: fluency

Writing represented for Isabel a strenuous effort, one that involved much agonizing about what to say next. Isabel would start her sentences with an idea in mind but she would often become distracted with minor problems, such as vocabulary and spelling conventions, which disrupted her flow of composing and, consequently, she would forget what her idea was in the first place. Thus, in an attempt to solve minor difficulties, Isabel ended up creating a bigger problem, and it was usually the case that these "premature revisions" had little, if any, positive effect on what she was trying to communicate.

Kara's composing process, however, corresponded closely to those of an experimented writer. Kara wrote with fluency both within and between sentences throughout both composing sessions, did not become distracted with minor problems, was able to work through her drafts and was able to designate areas that she felt needed further development. When she got stuck, she would return to read the previous sentence or sentences or would refer to her plan. Such movements back and forth between paragraphs

and her plan and drafts helped her generate content easily. In the second session, she considered important changes and rewrote some sections, but the content of her essay remained essentially the same.

4.1.7. Revision: global concerns versus editing

Isabel and Kara had completely different notions of what revising is and what it entails. For Kara, the expert writer in this study, revising was a complex activity that implied finding what it is that she wants to communicate to the reader and a form to express it. In the course of discovery of the meaning of her text, Kara undertook minor and major changes following a scale of priorities, in which she concentrated on meaning first, leaving the form for further stages. For Isabel, however, revising was a synonym of editing, a tidying-up activity aimed at eliminating the surface errors of the text while the content remained intact. Despite the obvious differences between both types of writers, there was an important similarity: they both understood revising as a recursive operation that involved the writer going back and forth as she produced a new text.

Like other cognition studies, the present investigation finds important differences between the expert writer Kara and the inexpert writer Isabel in the types of revisions made, the linguistic levels affected, the moment in which the revisions were carried out and the purpose of their revisions (see Table 5). Isabel made the overwhelming majority of all her revisions during the writing of her first draft, premature modifications that contributed very little to the improvement of her text and that, however, disrupted the writer's flow of composing and resulted in a bad quality essay. Moreover, Isabel did not make any major revisions but concentrated on the word and surface levels of the language throughout both writing sessions. The only difference between the first and the second writing session was the fact that Isabel was focused on generating content during the first 90-minute period while she spent the second writing period, which lasted 9 minutes and 40 seconds, on little more than recopying her first draft.

Kara, however, spent her first 90 minutes in writing her ideas as they occurred to her. She wrote two first drafts, the first one included most of her revisions while the second did not represent an important departure from her first rough draft in terms of ideas. The second 90-minute session was the time to make the most important changes: Kara reordered some sentences based on a hierarchy of ideas, scratched out a whole paragraph, wrote a new one and decided to reword part of another paragraph. Such revisions were usually preceded by extensive readings of paragraphs, usually more than once, and by comments on the sound of the text: “this sentence sounds strange… I think I don’t want to say it”. In spite of such global changes, both during the first and second writing sessions, the highest number of revisions were mostly at the word, phrase and surface levels of the language.

Kara's Revising Processes[1]

	FD	BD	FLD		FD	BD	FLD		FD	BD	FLD
Word	30	9	6	Addition	27	14	8	Cosmetic	0	1	0
Phrase	18	10	3	Deletion	14	9	2	Grammatical	7	2	0
Clause	6	6	4	Substitution	28	13	7	Mechanical	14	7	1
Sentence	1	7	4	Reordering	1	4	1	Informational	43	24	12
Paragraph	0	0	0	Consolidation	0	0	0	Referential	0	2	2
Global	0	0	0					Conjunctional	2	0	3
Surface	15	8	1					Lexical	4	1	0
Total:		70 (54.69%)		40 (31.25%)	18 (14.06%)						

Isabel's Revising Processes

	PD + FD	BD + FLD		PD + FD	BD + FLD		PD + FD	BD + FLD
Word	31	24	Addition	30	18	Cosmetic	2	0
Phrase	5	12	Deletion	7	16	Grammatical	9	2
Clause	0	0	Substitution	24	16	Mechanical	16	16
Sentence	0	6	Reordering	0	0	Informational	31	18
Paragraph	0	0	Consolidation	0	2	Referential	2	8
Global	0	0				Conjunctional	2	4
Surface	24	16				Lexical	0	4
Total:		60 (71.42%)		24 (28.57%)				

Table 5. Kara's and Isabel's revising processes

4.2. Target audience and rhetorical purpose

The data on the writers' perceptions of their target audience comes from the analysis of the written products, the think-aloud protocols, observations of the writers while performing the writing task and the follow-up interviews. The data was analyzed using the framework of audience analysis proposed by Grabe and Kaplan (1996) and modified by Ede and Lunsford (1984) (see Table 6).

Kara and Isabel had two completely different notions of audience and wrote with different purposes in mind, which shaped how they composed. Kara perceived her audience as someone interested in what she was communicating, while Isabel wrote for the researcher perceived as her teacher, someone who is more knowledgeable, which is typical of school-sponsored writing where students write for the purpose of knowledge display, as concluded by Sengupta (1999) and Wong (2005).

Analysis of Isabel's drafts revealed that they lacked explicit links and signals that made the text reader-friendly, such as signaling devices, clear structure, a good introduction and a good conclusion (Sengupta 1999: 302). Indeed, it was as if she "saw dubious need for signaling and making links because the reader knew the content better than the writer did" (1999: 312). In contrast, despite some structural shortages, analysis of Kara's drafts revealed that she knew the principles of good writing and was aware of the need for signaling devices such as connectors, good introductions and good conclusions. She did acknowledge, however, that had she written this composition for her teacher she would have used more arguments and would have spent more time on the planning stage. This lends support for Sengupta's assertion that the mental representations of audience may have an influence on shaping decisions about content in writing.

[1] Source: Based on Hall's (1987) coding scheme. All the revisions are expressed by 1,000 words of text and rounded off to the nearest whole revision.

	Kara	Isabel
No. of readers	Many	One
Extent of familiarity	Familiar	Familiar
Status of readers	Equal	Very high (evaluator)
Shared knowledge	Higher degree	Lower degree
Audience addressed or audience invoked	Addressed	Addressed

Figure 1. The writer's mental representation of the target audience

Kara and Isabel also differed in their rhetorical purposes for undertaking the writing task. It is also possible to suggest a connection between the writers' mental representations of the audience and the rhetorical purposes for writing: while the former tried to persuade her reader although not strongly, the latter did not have a purpose in mind while writing since the researcher perceived as her teacher knew more about the topic than her.

4.3. Correlation between the writers' mental representations of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose for undertaking the writing task and the composing strategies employed

This study finds correspondence between composing strategies and the writers' mental representations of the audience and of the rhetorical purpose of composing, as concluded in Wong's (2005) study. The successful writer Kara used a wide range of composing strategies leading to good writing, took into account her reader's needs and her purpose was to convince. However, she was less willing to take risks and to try out other ideas because she was not being graded by her teacher.

The unsuccessful writer Isabel employed some of the strategies frequently employed by good writers plus a variety of non-cognitively demanding strategies that had negative effects on her writing. Isabel did not ask herself whether or not her reader would be able to follow her writing nor did she try to convince him/her. It seems that her concern for "writ[ing] it well from the start" may have hindered the use of successful strategies.

5. Conclusions

The present investigation corroborates Wong's conclusions about the correspondence between the writers' mental representations of the audience and of the rhetorical purposes and the composing strategies used. The effective and ineffective writers in this study showed two completely different notions of what writing entails, two different mental representations of their readers and different rhetorical purposes. On the one hand, the successful writer Kara perceived her reader as someone interested in her ideas and her purpose was to convince, but the fact that she was not being evaluated by her teacher limited her use of composing strategies. Therefore, unlike in Wong's study, the teacher perceived as evaluator may have led to more strategy use. This contradictory finding needs to be replicated with more studies investigating the effect of the teacher-evaluator on the composing strategies used. On the other hand, the less successful writer Isabel perceived her reader as an evaluator and wrote for the purpose of knowledge display, which led her to use strategies frequently employed by effective writers although ineffectively. In spite of this limited evidence, the results suggest that students should be given a specific purpose when writing and the audience should be clarified.

Examination of the composing strategies employed showed that both the successful and unsuccessful writers used a wide repertoire of strategies: planning, rehearsing or trying

out different ideas, reading, writing and revising, although they showed important differences in their individual approaches. While for the effective language writer Kara the composing strategies used facilitated the task of putting her thoughts onto paper, Isabel used the same strategies ineffectively and used a variety of other less cognitive demanding strategies, such as translating and repeating only found in L2 writers, with little success. It is the writing teacher's duty to help students use composing strategies successfully through activities that ask students to plan, write and revise, while allowing for individual variability.

Finally, this study concludes positive outcomes from the use of the think-aloud protocol due to the wealth of data available to teachers and researchers which otherwise would go unnoticed. Teachers and researchers may use this technique to gain insights into the students' composing processes in combination with other methods.

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