



Roles of Context in L2 Learners' Self-Regulatory Actions: The Case of Videoconference-Based EFL Writing Course

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ABSTRACT

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To date, studies of English as a foreign language (EFL) learners' motivational regulation have centered on the traditional offline classroom setting with little consideration of the contingency of learning context. The aims of this study were to reveal the dynamics of EFL learners' self-regulatory responses to and their instructors' perspectives of videoconference-based writing class. Specifically, this study focused on several factors embedded in the context, including native English-speaking instructors, videoconference platform, and English-medium instruction (EMI). A mixed method was used to analyze the questionnaire responses of 264 students from two science and engineering universities and subsequent interviews with seven students and ten native English-speaking instructors. The analyses revealed that learners' three proficiency levels affected their engagement with instructor feedback and text processing, the most prevalent motivational regulation strategies. In the two lower proficiency groups, these regulatory actions did not correlate with the EMI factor. The beginner group in particular struggled to regulate motivation, disfavoring the videoconference platform. In the analysis of instructor interviews, the discrepancy in the students' self-regulatory actions among proficiency levels was rarely acknowledged or addressed by the instructors. The findings are discussed to give insight into EFL writing instruction in the emerging higher education context.

KEYWORDS

Self-regulated learning, Motivational regulation, Videoconference, EFL writing, English-medium instruction, Learner autonomy

1. Introduction

In 2020, educational institutions began fully adopting online platforms to address the inevitable external circumstances of the global pandemic. This sudden transition to a virtual learning environment put pressure on higher education (HE) institutions to adjust their educational policies and provide their faculty and students with specific guidance on classroom management. Several recent studies have yielded mixed results on the effectiveness of full-scale online learning in English as a foreign language (EFL) classroom (Jung 2020, Kozar 2016, Park 2020). According to Jung (2020), Korean EFL learners preferred online learning more than traditional offline classes due to its promotion of class activities and group interactions. Another recent study of Korean EFL learners (Park 2020) found that students in synchronous real-time online courses based on videoconference tools such as ZOOM are more anxious than students in asynchronous courses. Likewise, Indonesian EFL students performed better in discussions and assignments on an asynchronous online platform than ZOOM (Atmojo and Nugroho 2020).

The emerging learning context has been problematized in light of learners' autonomous attitude towards learning (J. Kim and V. Kim 2021, Park 2020). Learner autonomy emphasizes learners' active participation in learning processes, from initiating to maintaining motivation to learn. Autonomous learners optimize their knowledge and skills to stay motivated to learn, namely motivational regulation, achieving success in learning (Csizér and Tankó 2017, Dörnyei 2001). Motivational regulation, central to self-regulated learning (SRL) theory, has been shown it to be critical to the success of EFL learning experiences, including EFL writing (J. Kim and V. Kim 2021, Tang 2012, Teng and Zhang 2016). Notably, EFL learners' motivational regulation has been found to vary according to two main factors: learners' individual proficiency level (Teng et al 2020) and their personalized reactions to specific contextual factors such as an online learning environment and a foreign language policy (J. Kim and V. Kim 2021). These studies have called for further research which identifies the relationship between context-bound factors and EFL writing motivation.

Given the increased need for research on EFL learner autonomy in the rapidly changing HE landscape, the current study focuses on the context of videoconference platforms for teaching EFL writing at the tertiary level. Learner traits like motivation are indispensably related to educational settings, working as either antecedents or correlates in their temporal dynamics (Dirk and Nett 2022). Based upon situated learning (Dirk and Nett 2022, Lave and Wenger 1991, Wertsch 1991), which views learning as a situated practice that interacts closely with context, the study investigates how EFL writers respond to factors embedded in the class as they regulate their motivation (Zimmerman 2011). These context-specific factors for the investigation include the native English-speaking instructors, the online platform, and the university-wide policy of English-medium instruction. By comparing students' perspectives of these factors with their instructors' views of the videoconference-based EFL writing class, this study aims to shed light on the future direction of EFL writing instruction.

2. Review of literature

2.1 Motivational Regulation in EFL

Recent developments in motivation research revolve around how L2 learners autonomously optimize their knowledge and skills to stay motivated (Dörnyei 2001). Online-based, technology-enhanced instructional environments have been shown to offer increased opportunities to develop learner autonomy. While monitoring and managing learning in these environments, learners take responsibility for their own learning and are consequently more engaged in learning processes (Jia et al., 2023, Lantolf and Pavlenko 2000, Prince 2011). Individual learners' ability to collaborate with others, i.e., instructors and peers, is just as important as enacting 'agents' of learning to developing learner autonomy (Prince 2011). Collaborative experiences mediated via computer-assisted language

learning are crucial to exchanging necessary information for task completion and knowledge acquisition. Thus, a technology-enhanced online learning context may support two aspects of learner autonomy: individual and collaborative experiences. While interacting with the material to be learned individually via technology, a learner can interact with others. They may also autonomously regulate their motivation during the participation in online activities and the interaction with peers (Wang 2004).

One of the learner variables related to autonomy is motivation to learn. Learners are considered self-regulated to the extent that they are “meta-cognitively, motivationally, and behaviorally active participants in their own learning processes” (Zimmerman 2011). Specific strategies associated with regulation have been found to be related to successful learning experiences and outcomes (Gibriel 2019, Tang 2012, Teng and Zhang 2016). For example, EFL writers/learners choose writing strategies depending on the level of anxiety (Gibriel 2019) and proficiency level (Teng et al., 2020). According to Teng and colleagues (2020), Chinese EFL learners with higher writing proficiency performed better in using strategies like self-communication, maintaining interest in writing, and emotional control than those with lower proficiency. Further studies are thus needed to understand the relationship between individual learners' proficiency level and their actual uses of motivational sources.

2.2 Situated Learning and Videoconference

Recently, L2 researchers have focused on the specific role of learning context in cultivating and maintaining learners' motivational experiences (e.g., Dirk and Nett 2022). From the perspective of situated learning (Lave and Wenger 1991, Wertsch 1991), learning context has a tangible effect on learning processes. L2 learning is a situated practice and can occur through continuous interactions with specific contextual factors during activities or experiences, namely situated L2 learning. L2 researchers have consistently shown that EFL learning and teaching are inextricably linked to context-specific factors such as instructors (e.g., J. Kim and V. Kim 2021), medium of instruction (e.g., J. Kim et al., 2018), and technology-incorporated activities (e.g., Kozar 2016, Lin 2014, Wang 2004). Learning is an act of participating in the context; through interacting with these factors, they (re)construct tasks and learner identities (Wertsch 1991).

Online learning has been rigorously examined as a major L2 learning context that conditions learning processes. L2 researchers have recently taken a renewed look at online education and launched a variety of projects investigating its place in teaching and learning. Videoconference platforms, such as ZOOM, have been widely adopted as a practical substitute due to their ability to enable synchronous video-incorporated interactions (Kozar 2016, Lenkaitis 2020, Wang 2004). These platforms in L2 teaching settings primarily helped to restore the perceived presence of face-to-face interaction between students as well as between students and teachers (Stanchevici and Siczek 2019). Kozar (2016) investigated the perceptions of instructors and students regarding the use of videoconference in a L2 learning context in which most of learning activities occur mainly online. Both students and instructors responded favorably to the technology mostly due to improved interaction and ability to build rapport during class (Kozar, 2016). The impact of an online context was profound when the class materials to be learned became relevant to learners' personal goals as well (Stanchevici and Siczek 2019). To increase interactivity, class contents had to be coordinated in an authentic manner, so that diverse task-based activities can be embedded into on the platform (Stanchevici and Siczek 2019).

Indeed, learning context is closely related with the ways EFL learners use motivational resources. In a recent study of Korean EFL learners' motivational regulation in a ZOOM writing class, J. Kim and V. Kim (2021) investigated how learners manifest their motivational regulation strategies in accordance with their perceptions of the imminent learning context. They found that the high proficiency group valued the synchronous online platform and the university-wide policy of English-medium instruction (EMI) significantly more than the low proficiency group. The significant correlation between students' use of motivational regulation strategies and their perceptions of context-dependent factors highlighted the importance of situating motivational regulation strategies in a context-specific

environment (J. Kim and V. Kim 2021). Further research is still needed which diversifies learner variables in design, such as proficiency levels, and extends the scope to the EFL instructors- their views of the context and learner autonomy.

Despite the wealth of research on synchronous and asynchronous online interactions for L2 learning, videoconference has only recently drawn attention as a major instructional and interactional tool for developing EFL literacy and cultivating learner autonomy (Jung 2020, Lenkaitis 2020). This study, grounded on situated learning, addresses this research gap while critically considering the emerging challenges placed on HE, such as internationalization and crisis coping. Of particular interest are context-specific factors, such as videoconference as a form of medium of teaching and learning, instructors, and an instructional language policy for the internationalization of HE, in this investigation of how learners exert autonomy and use motivational regulation strategies in an EFL writing course.

2.3 Research Questions

This research project has been guided by the following questions:

1. What strategies do science and engineering major college students enrolled in a videoconference-based EFL writing course adopt to regulate their motivation according to different English proficiency levels?
2. In what ways do these choices of motivational regulation strategies they perceive the context-specific factors (videoconference, native English-speaking instructors, and an English-medium instruction policy) by proficiency level?
3. What views do their instructors have regarding their students' regulatory actions to the context?

3. Methods

3.1 Context

The context of the current study features two major science and engineering universities that have taken the lead in internationalization of HE among Korean universities for more than a decade. Since 2020, all classes, including the English language courses of these universities, have been taught via the online platform ZOOM except for the few classes involving experimental procedures. Also significant to the context are the universities' policies of EMI and native English-speaking instructors. Devoted to the internationalization of research and education, these universities have offered a very high percentage of EMI classes: 99% of undergraduate classes in University I and 88% of undergraduate classes of University II. In these universities, EFL courses are graduation requirements and 100% of EFL courses have been taught in only English by native English and native Korean-speaking instructors. EFL writing courses of interest in this study have been taught by native English speaker instructors with classroom caps of 20 students in one university and 16 in the other.

The instructional context of EFL writing courses that students followed was based on the videoconferencing platform, ZOOM, on which all writing classes were conducted. The writing courses were divided into two distinct instructional segments. The first focused on the development of syntactic skills, which primarily followed the direct instruction. Instructors used ZOOM's 'Share Screen' option to work through the different metagrammatical elements and handouts to conduct direct instruction. ZOOM's 'Whiteboard' was used to map out specific elements of writing skills during the direct instruction. The second segment was basically a paper writing workshop that placed students in small groups in their own 'Individual Breakout Rooms'. In these rooms, instructors also worked with these groups on their progress and problems related to their writing process. The goal was to provide feedback as students were planning, structuring and completing their writing final paper. The underlying principle of using ZOOM in the

writing courses was that students would best learn by being guided to the course end to become autonomous writers as prior students had become in the traditional face-to-face classroom environments.

3.2 Participants

Participants of the study comprised 264 undergraduate students enrolled in English writing courses at two major universities of science and engineering in South Korea (198 students from a university and 68 students from the other). Out of 264, 183 were male students, 80 were female students, and the gender of one student was missing (Table 1). The participants represent four academic years, senior students being the largest in number (43.2%). Based on their TOEFL scores acquired as a means of placement test - a test that all the freshmen were required to take immediately following official registration to each university - the proficiency levels of the participants were divided into three levels: beginner (level 1); intermediate-low (level 2) and intermediate-high (level 3). These students were enrolled in writing courses taught by native English-speaking instructors from Western English-majority countries and self-selected as participatory volunteers following an email concerning study information and a link to questionnaires. At the time of the research, these instructors had taught the course for at least two semesters through ZOOM.

For the provision of qualitative data, seven volunteering students (6 males, 1 female), out of the survey respondents, participated in the subsequent interviews conducted by the researchers either by phone or via ZOOM.

Table 1. Student Participant Information (N=264)

	N (%) (Questionnaire)	N(%) (Interview)
Gender		
Male	183 (69.3)	6
Female	80 (30.3)	1
Missing	1 (.4)	0
Academic year		
Freshmen	68(25.8)	1(14.29)
Sophomore	42(15.9)	2(28.57)
Junior	39(14.8)	1(14.29)
Senior	114(43.2)	3(42.86)
Missing	1(.4)	
English Ability		
Beginner (level 1)	128(48.5)	4(57.14)
Intermediate-low (level 2)	98(37.1)	2(28.57)
Intermediate-high (level 3)	38(14.4)	1(14.29)
Total	264(100)	7 (100%)

In order to triangulate the dataset and obtain the instructors' perspectives of EFL learning writing motivational regulation, all the instructors teaching the courses at the time of the research were contacted through email correspondences for interviews. The qualitative data were collected from 10 native English-speaking instructors (5 males, 5 females) from Western English-majority countries. Their EFL teaching experiences varied between 3 and 10 years, and EFL writing experience ranged from 3 years to 6.5 years. At the time of the research, these instructors had taught the writing course for at least two semesters through ZOOM. The requirement for approval from an Institutional Review Board was waived by the ethics committee of the universities.

3.3. Questionnaires

This study was a part of a project regarding EFL learners' motivational regulation and foreign language education reform. Framed within Dörnyei's theoretical taxonomy (2001), the classifications of motivational regulation include learners' conscious control over their commitment (e.g., to preserve or increase their original goal-directed commitment), metacognition (e.g., monitoring concentration), satiation (e.g., eliminating boredom and bringing interest or fun), emotion (e.g., increasing emotional readiness), and environment (e.g., eliminating negative surroundings). Informed by SRL theory and prior research on motivational regulation strategies for the classification of motivational regulation strategies (Csizér & Tankó, 2017; Zimmerman, 2011), the quantitative part of the study was conducted through questionnaires. Consisting of three parts, the questionnaires of the current study included a brief description of the purpose of the survey and questions on the participants' demographic information (3 items), followed by the items on motivational regulation strategies with nine sub-categorical factors (20 items). The final part (15 items) was related specifically to three major contextual factors under investigation: native English-speaking instructors, videoconferencing, and EMI (Table 2). Revised by the researchers, those items on the motivational regulation strategies and the contextual factors were presented on a five-point Likert scale (1-5), 1 corresponding to 'strongly disagree' and 5 to 'strongly agree'.

Table 2. Student Survey Questions

	<i>Types (Example items)</i>	<i>Item number</i>
Strategies	Text Processing (#5. When writing, I check for correctness of sentence structures.)	5, 6, 7,
	Idea Planning (#9. Before writing, I think about the core elements of a good composition I have learned to help me plan.)	8, 9,
	Goal-Oriented Monitoring (#11. I monitor my learning process in writing courses.)	10, 11
	Feedback-Peers (#12. Feedback from my peers help to complete a writing.)	12, 13,
	Feedback-Instructors (#15. I try to improve my English writing based on peer feedback.)	14, 15
	Interest Enhancement (#16. I connect the writing task with my real life to intrigue me.)	16, 17,
	Motivational Self-Talk (#18. I tell myself that I need to keep studying to improve my writing competence.)	18, 19, 20
	Emotional Control (#21. I try not to get anxious when answering questions in this course.)	21, 22
	Environment Structuring (#23. I've changed my surrounding so that it is easy to concentrate on writing)	23, 24,
Context	Native English speaker instructors (#27. Having a foreign instructor is important to learning English writing)	25, 26, 27
	Videoconferencing (#29. ZOOM (or WebEx) is effective in learning English writing.)	28, 29, 30, 31
	EMI (#33. It is important to become a good English writer when taking courses taught in English (English lectures))	32, 33, 34

Note. The items offered on a Likert scale are included for the reliability estimates.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Analysis

The questionnaires were administered in two weeks before the end of the 2021 spring semester. Upon the data collected, the items for each variable were checked for the reliability estimates. Cronbach's coefficient alpha scores ranged from .6 to .8, suggesting that the items have acceptable internal consistency. We then ran descriptive statistics in terms of means and standard deviation by the three proficiency groups including level 1 (beginner-high), level 2 (intermediate-low) and level 3 (intermediate-high/advanced-low). The statistical significance of between-group differences by proficiency level was tested through ANOVA statistics and a subsequent Post-hoc Scheffe test. The relationship between the choices of motivational regulation strategies and each of the contextual variables was calculated through the Pearson correlation coefficient.

For the provision of qualitative data, seven volunteering students (6 males, 1 female), out of the survey respondents, participated in the subsequent interviews conducted by the researchers either by phone or via ZOOM. First, the student interviews were conducted one-on-one by each researcher in Korean over the phone or via ZOOM for about 30 minutes. The semi-structured interviews consisted of eight questions mainly regarding their learning experiences through ZOOM while completing tasks (e.g., feedback response activities) and their views on EMI and instructors. These audio-recorded interviews were transcribed and cross-referenced with the quantitative data. Next, the written interview questions were emailed to the instructors. The ten questions were created to investigate their experience with EFL writing courses, their responses to the instructional context in terms of videoconference classes, campus-wide EMI policy, and their students' regulation of motivation. The transcribed student interview data and the instructor interview dataset were inductively and deductively examined first. Using a coding analysis (Saldaña, 2015), principal codes (ZOOM, motivation to improve writing, instructor, English writing competence, and EMI) were drawn, and the subsequent classification of the specific codes were later contrasted with the results of the quantitative results.

4. Results

4.1 Choices of Motivational Regulation Strategies by Three Proficiency Levels

The EFL learners responded to the part of strategies for motivational regulation in the questionnaires, and showed their frequent uses of all the nine strategies, as the mean scores staying higher than the median, 3. The mean scores for use of instructor's feedback and text processing were the highest of the nine at about 4.2 (Table 3). While completing those writing tasks, they frequently used their native English-speaking instructors' feedback and tried to follow the hierarchical writing processes in English writing- from sentence-level structures to paragraph-level idea presentation. The student participants however neither appreciated nor used the feedback from their peers as the mean score fell to the lowest ($M=3.303$). They made little effort to monitor and evaluate their learning processes against their learning goals (goal-oriented monitoring); nor did they reorganize their learning environment for better learning (environment restructuring).

These uses of the strategies varied by their English proficiency levels: beginner (level 1), intermediate (level 2), and advanced (level 3). Overall, the higher the proficiency level was, the higher the mean scores for the strategies were. To test the statistical significance of the variance, the ANOVA statistics was run for the between-group differences. The result demonstrated the difference was significant only in their uses of text processing ($p<.05$); none of the other between-group comparisons were found statistically significant. Although statistically insignificant, the F value for the students' strategic 'motivational self-talk' was high ($F=3.447$). Thus, as shown in the incremental trend in the mean scores of motivational self-talks by proficiency levels, the more proficient they were, the better they

can deliberately relate writing tasks, through self-talk, with their own pragmatic purposes.

Table 3. Motivational Regulation Strategies by Proficiency Levels

<i>Strategies</i>	<i>Mean (Sum of Squares)</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>F</i>
Text Processing	4.1982 (.64135)	4.0990 (.60381)	4.2483 (.69082)	4.4035 (.58076)	3.861*
Idea Planning	4.1742 (.66836)	4.1523 (.65074)	4.2347 (.63491)	4.0921 (.80417)	.755
Goal-oriented Monitoring	3.7576 (.86654)	3.6875 (.84648)	3.8010 (.86971)	3.8816 (.92586)	.930
Feedback -Peers	3.3030 (.99954)	3.3281 (.93581)	3.2959 (.98660)	3.2368 (1.23975)	.125
Feedback - Instructors	4.2045 (.77252)	4.1875 (.78620)	4.2092 (.76631)	4.2500 (.76007)	.098
Interest Enhancement	4.1326 (.75988)	4.1289 (.77674)	4.1071 (.78402)	4.2105 (.64338)	.255
Motivational Self-Talk	4.1881 (.62307)	4.1016 (.64879)	4.3163 (.57111)	4.3491 (.62336)	3.447
Emotional Control	3.7727 (.78572)	3.8164 (.76300)	3.7194 (.80931)	3.7632 (.81155)	.425
Environment Structuring	3.7500 (.83416)	3.6680 (.86779)	3.8418 (.78844)	3.7895 (.82717)	1.258

* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The subsequent post-hoc test identified specifically where the group difference occurred in the use of text processing. Those with beginner level proficiency showed significant differences from those with the highest proficiency, while the difference between level 2 and level 3 was not statistically significant ($P < .05$) (Table 4).

Table 4. Scheffe Test for Multiple Comparisons (Text Processing)

<i>Proficiency (I)</i>	<i>Proficiency (J)</i>	<i>Mean difference (I-J)</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>p</i>
Level 1	Level 2	-.14934	.08517	.217
	Level 3	-.30455*	.11721	.036
Level 2	Level 1	.14934	.08517	.217
	Level 3	-.15521	.12125	.442

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The predominance of text processing strategy in the writing courses is deemed to be closely linked to the two universities' EFL curricular goals which are highly centered on a process approach to academic writing. To fulfill the needs of science and engineering undergraduate programs, the semester-long writing courses are organized procedurally into brainstorming of ideas, developing topic sentences, finally the completion of 4-5 paragraph scientific essay. Each step includes students' collaborative work. Some interviewees clearly pointed out these instructional emphases, describing them as the "step-by-step procedure" following "brainstorming" (U06: Junior/male/Level 2). However, the procedure was viewed differently by student proficiency level. In the following two quotations, two interviewees project contradictory perspectives into handling writing:

"Professor Victor kept giving us team writing using Google doc. So we couldn't help using it together. Those who didn't really like the team activities dropped the course a few weeks after the semester started. So all the motivated students stayed ((laughter)). It was good to discuss our task and double check the order of text writing with my classmates." (U05: Senior/male/level 3)

"The writing process like expanding the words[sentences and paragraphs] is simply difficult on the site. It's open to everyone and we see each other's writing. I don't think it's easy, or even possible, to have meaningful interaction with my classmates in this type of [videoconference-based] class. Even if there was, it [peer feedback] won't help improve my writing." (P02: Senior/male/level 1)

As shown above, the interviewee from the advanced English proficiency group (U05) highly valued the team writing tasks through Google doc. This online tool served as an instructional tool, enabling instructors to efficiently display revision practices during videoconference-based instruction. Notably, the interviewee emphasized the effectiveness of working in teams to assess writing progress, thereby highlighting the diverse applications of the 'text processing' and 'peer feedback' strategies. The one with the beginner level proficiency (P02) however displayed limited recognition of the procedural aspects of writing and editing (text processing strategy) and denied the efficacy of peer feedback (the utilization of feedback from peers), primarily due to the specific learning context of videoconferencing. The subsequent sections will discuss the impacts of specific context-related factors, including videoconferencing.

4.2 Effect of Context on Strategic Use of Motivational Regulation

The current study focused on three factors contingent on the videoconference EFL writing course: videoconferencing, EMI, and native English speaker instructors. As see in Table 5, each of these factors were found to vary in the perceived effectiveness to learning writing. The context-specific factor of instructors showed the highest mean score ($M = 4.178$), whereas the mean score for the videoconference environment was the lowest ($M = 3.5278$). Each of the contextual factors was further examined to identify group differences by the three proficiency levels. On the ANOVA statistics, the effect of proficiency level was found to be significant for both videoconference and instructors ($p < .05$). Thus, the students differed, by proficiency level, in the ways they perceived the videoconference technology and the contributions of the instructors to their learning processes.

Table 5. Differences in Perceptions of Context by Proficiency Levels

<i>Contextual factors</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Level 1</i>	<i>Level 2</i>	<i>Level 3</i>	<i>F</i>
Videoconferencing	3.5278 (.74738)	3.3932 (.79305)	3.6803 (.62940)	3.5877 (.80327)	4.344*

EMI	3.9747 (.76535)	3.9531 (.81299)	3.9796 (.68333)	4.0351 (.81572)	.170
Native English speaker instructors	4.1780 (.76898)	4.0547 (.79343)	4.2653 (.69684)	4.3684 (.81203)	3.508*

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The post-hoc test disclosed dynamics of motivational regulation by proficiency level for the two contextual factors- videoconference and instructors. The groups of levels 1 and 2 were found significantly different in their views of the synchronous online learning context, as level 2 students' perspectives of the videoconference were significantly more positive than the beginner level proficiency group ($p < .05$) (Table 6). These beginner level students were found to struggle much more than those from the intermediate or advanced level in this new online-based learning context while completing EFL writing tasks.

Table 6. Scheffe test for Multiple Comparisons (Videoconferencing)

Proficiency (I)	Proficiency (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Level 1	Level 2	-.28704*	.09907	.016
	Level 3	-.19449	.13635	.363
Level 2	Level 1	.28704*	.09907	.016
	Level 3	.09255	.14104	.806

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

The perceptions of beginner students (level 1) regarding native English-speaking instructors differed significantly from those of the advanced group (level 3). This difference was confirmed by the post-hoc test, as shown in Table 7 ($p < .05$). Evidently, despite being viewed positively overall, the learning context highlighting EFL instructors elicited distinct responses based on the students' proficiency levels. Students with advanced proficiency levels acknowledged the instructor's involvement in writing activities and their role in enhancing academic writing skills specifically tailored to engineering majors.

Table 7. Scheffe test for Multiple Comparisons (Native English Speaker Instructor)

Proficiency (I)	Proficiency (J)	Mean difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p
Level 1	Level 2	-.21062	.10225	.122
	Level 3	-.32373*	.14073	.045
Level 2	Level 1	.21062	.10225	.122
	Level 3	-.10311	.14557	.778

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

It can be presumed that the beginner students felt less confident than the advanced students, while performing communicative tasks necessary for participating in interactive activities assigned by the instructors. Possibly, their limited proficiency in English interaction might have decreased their motivation towards the class sessions and

activities facilitated by the native English-speaking instructors. The beginner-level group also exhibited a strong aversion towards the fully online learning platform, as indicated by the lowest mean score for this significant contextual factor. This negativity has been revealed in the interviews, as the videoconference context was described to be linked to the “low attention level” and “the lack of interaction with instructors” (P02: Senior/male/level 1). The interviewees from the intermediate or the advanced level however were more likely to highlight the specific effect of the platform on improving their learning processes. One of interviewees from the level 2 group (intermediate proficiency) said:

“There’s a good side about being right before my laptop. It’s nice to get instant feedback and see my professor’s edits on my monitor. I can be more focused on the class” (U07: Sophomore/male/level 2)

Given that these contextual factors are vital to creating a (un)favorable learning environment for those acquiring EFL writing with different levels of proficiency, we investigated the relationships between these perceptions and their strategic choices of motivational regulation. The statistical analysis of Pearson’s correlation coefficients revealed significant relationship between students’ choices of motivational regulation strategies and their perceptions of the relevant contextual factors. Students’ strategic uses of instructors’ feedback (F-I) correlated significantly with all the three contextual factors across all the proficiency levels ($p < .01$). Some of the other relationships between the pairs consisting of a strategy versus a contextual factor were found to be statistically significant only for the highest English proficiency group (level 3). For example, only the level 3 students were found to use feedback from peers (F-P) depending on their perceptions of the contributions of native English-speaking instructors, videoconference, and EMI (Table 8).

The groups of beginner- and intermediate- level were found to become motivated, or demotivated, through self-talk (the strategy of ‘motivational self-talk’) according to their perceptions of the online learning platform; the better they evaluated the online learning platform to be, the more motivated they became through self-talk, or vice versa (Tables 9 and 10). The advanced group, in contrast, employed motivational self-talk strategy independently of their perception of a videoconference-based learning platform, as revealed in the correlation coefficient result (Pearson $r = .198$). Their use of the text processing strategy to regulate motivation however significantly correlated with their perception of the contextual factor of the EMI context which the university offered (Pearson $r = .438^{**}$, $p < .01$). Meanwhile, the beginner- and intermediate- level students were found to use this strategy regardless of the way they perceived the universities’ strong drive for the implementation of EMI in many subject and English courses.

Table 8. Correlation between Motivational Regulation and Context (Level 3)

	Str/ TP	Str/ IP	Str/ GME	Str/ FP	Str/ FI	Str/ IE	Str/ MST	Str/ EC	Str/ ES	Ct/ INS	Ct/ VC
Ct/ INS	.498**	.498**	.323*	.524**	.759**	.330*	.369*	.225	.206	1	
Ct/ VC	.405*	.416**	.544**	.671**	.564**	.050	.198	.240	.225	.488**	1
Ct/ EMI	.438**	.228	.447**	.535**	.574**	.380*	.468**	.489**	.378*	.751**	.518**

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Notes. Str: Strategy; Ct: Context; TP: Text Processing; IP: Idea Planning; GME: Goal-Oriented Monitoring and Evaluating; F-P: Feedback-Peers; F-I: Feedback-Instructors; IE: Interest Enhancement; MST: Motivational Self-Talk; EC: Emotional Control; ES: Environment Structuring; INS: Native English-speaking Instructor; VC: Videoconferencing; EMI: English-Medium Instruction

Table 9. Correlation between Motivational Regulation and Context (Level 2)

	Str/ TP	Str/ IP	Str/ GME	Str/ FP	Str/ FI	Str/ IE	Str/ MST	Str/ EC	Str/ ES	Ct/ INS	Ct/ VC
Ct/ INS	.483*	.324*	.457*	.150	.687*	.422*	.288*	.261*	.177	1	
Ct/ VC	.258*	.357*	.366*	.207*	.464*	.234*	.217*	.142	.202*	.480*	1
Ct/ EMI	.152	.174	.106	.131	.297*	.113	.166	.219*	-.019	.351*	.166

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 10. Correlation between Motivational Regulation and Context (Level 1)

	Str/ TP	Str/ IP	Str/ GME	Str/ FP	Str/ FI	Str/ IE	Str/ MST	Str/ EC	Str/ ES	Ct/ INS	Ct/ VC
Ct/ INS	.189*	.103	.287**	.260**	.476**	.287**	.281**	.246**	.314**	1	
Ct/ VC	.185*	.092	.357**	.318**	.319**	.147	.190*	.298**	.428**	.487**	1
Ct/ EMI	.125	.180*	.249**	.196*	.349**	.365**	.349**	.411**	.417**	.306**	.367**

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

**. The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level.

Several comments made during the interview indicated the profound impact of the abrupt transition to a fully online, videoconference-based learning context on their acts of regulation of motivation to enhance English writing skills. To successfully adapt to the synchronous online platform, they actively engaged in motivational self-talk and sustained their motivation towards writing activities.

"I have been checking my schedule for graduation because my BS thesis is almost fixed. Every week, doing a writing assignment, I have been reminding myself that I can't fail in this class and keep up with Professor Shawn' assignments. I try to be ahead of everything and this online context can be synched to my online scheduler." (P01: Senior/female/level 1)

This quote establishes the correlation between the utilization of the strategy of 'motivational self-talk' and the perception of the videoconference context. The acknowledgement of the online platform as a legitimate and valuable tool was facilitated by the students' self-reminder to maintain motivation (motivational self-talk).

Another relevant context, EMI, was differently described in relation to the way the students regulate motivation during writing activities. Responses from one student interviewee possessing the highest proficiency level revealed a different approach to the instructional language policy from the two lower levels. The following two quotations illustrate the contrasting perspectives on EMI and the corresponding regulatory actions employed to sustain motivation:

"I can't relate what we do in class to my study of major. I've taken Mechanical engineering classes in English with some writing tasks, which can be done without a hook sentence in the introduction etc. The tasks of my major courses are pretty much about listing core words. So I would say writings for an experiment-based class are entirely different from writing for English writing class." (P02: Senior/male/level 1)

"I think this class does have something to do with EMI. It's about improving English skills after all. I know understanding and learning subjects through English can be very difficult. The stress was at peak when I was a freshman. I now have no objection to it. My English reading and writing skills have improved in this class, which

is a big relief. It helps me doing better in other subject classes [taught in English] and prepare for my graduate study” (U05: Senior/male/level 3)

As shown above, the beginner level interviewee (P02) hardly saw the relationship between the EMI context and EFL writing activities, thus employing no specific regulatory actions. The interviewee from the advanced group (U05), despite being in the same year of study (senior), held a positive view of the policy particularly regarding its bearing on EFL writing skills. Although less pronounced, the emotions expressed through the phrases 'no objection to EMI' and 'a big relief' regarding the improvement in writing skills may have triggered the activation of a regulatory action known as 'interest enhancement'. In this manner, a self-regulatory action closely interacted with the learner's evolving perception of the EMI context.

4.3 Instructors' Perception of the Context and Learner Autonomy

Finally, we investigated the EFL writing instructors' views on the context and their students' regulatory actions. The written responses to the interview questions from the instructors showcased two contradictory responses to videoconference in terms of its position as a replacement of the traditional offline classroom setting. In correspondence with student interviewees' comments, its effectiveness has frequently been noted for the visual representation of their feedback on the monitor, such as “the collaborative whiteboard and the ZOOM chat” (PrU01). On the negative side, other than connection or technological issues typically raised for any online tools, the instructors referred to videoconference as a temporary class alternative, mainly for its lack of interactivity which “cannot be duplicated through the use of online classrooms” (PrU02). As one interviewee expressed in the following quotation, videoconference has little bearing on transforming students' motivation to learn:

“Students enrolled in my course have always been of varying degrees of motivation; the minds of those at the lower end of the distribution will naturally wander away from the lesson, while those at the higher end will remain focused across digital and in-person media.” (PrU04)

Most of the instructor interviewees expressed significantly positive perspectives of the EMI context and the contribution of their writing instruction to it. Their students, presumably, should get better motivated to improve EFL writing in the context where the instructional language policy is a major index of internationalization of each institution. This contribution was noted with respect to two major areas: the science and engineering disciplines in which scholarly communication is perpetuated in English journal publications; and immediate application of writing skills to other subject courses taught through EMI. The following two quotations illuminate these two points of the relationship:

“Since this is a science and engineering school and the language of science and engineering worldwide is English, it is extra important that our students acquire the skills they need to write in English and write well. I believe our students know this and thus they are intrinsically motivated to improve their writing abilities. The fact that the university operates bilingually in many cases can only further encourage students in my opinion.” (PrU01)

“I have had a lot of positive feedback from students, usually expressing how the writing course really improved their grades [in other subject courses] because they learned how to write effective paragraphs, and essays from this course. Before the course they felt like they had no clear methodology or approach to writing in English. However, after the course they felt much more confident with their writing abilities, and that they could write much quicker than before.” (PrU03)

Compared with these predominantly positive relationships, one interviewee commented on the limited relationship between these:

“From what I have experienced here quite a while, it's a daunting job to accomplish. They may take courses

taught in English, like physics, nuclear engineering, or mathematics. Most of the times, the standards for writing in their subject classes are likely to be low. Students are unlikely to be motivated to improve or learn more about writing by them.” (PrP03)

These findings corroborate the web of relationships among teaching English writing with special concerns on a text-processing approach and instructor feedback, accommodation to technologies embedded in videoconference, and the campus-wide instructional language policy. Moreover, these instructors' views of the relationships are built upon neither learner autonomy reflected in motivational regulation for EFL writing nor the explicit differences between proficiency levels. This gap between the learners themselves and their instructors is likely to pose challenges to EFL writing instruction.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The findings lead to several major points of discussion relating to the cultivation of learner autonomy in post-pandemic HE facing stringent global competition. First, the strategic use of motivational regulation strategies, as Zimmerman (2011) elucidates, demonstrates the interplay of behavior, environment, and persons. Student regulation of motivation via instructor feedback and text processing, addressed in the first and second research questions of the present study, was highly contextualized within the instructors' pedagogical style and the videoconference platform. While integrating instructor feedback into the learning processes, the learners adopted the text processing strategy to engage in EFL-specific writing processes ranging from sentence-level grammar to paragraph-level idea presentation to short essay organization. This finding was attributed to two instructional foci: process-oriented writing instruction and repeated revision practices. The correlation between adoption of these foci and student proficiency was affirmed in the interviews: while one interviewee from the advanced English proficiency group working in an online document-share program valued the team writing tasks, a beginner level student hardly saw the benefit of procedural writing and editing work and denied the effectiveness of peer feedback provided via the videoconference platform and other online programs.

The influence of proficiency levels on the manifestation and regulation of motivation within an emerging EFL learning context was found to be significant. This finding not only confirms, but also extends the profound role of the L2 learning context in nurturing and maintaining learners' motivational experiences (e.g., Dirk and Nett 2022, Tang 2012). The findings of this study indicate that the relationship between motivational regulation and the perception of contextual factors is contingent upon the student's proficiency level. Specifically, two of the most prevalent motivational regulation strategies, instructor feedback and text processing, correlated significantly with contextual factors within the advanced proficiency group. The two lower proficiency groups less appreciated the context defined as the videoconferences and the native English-speaker EFL writing instructors compared to the advanced group. This result diverges from several prior studies that emphasize the contributions of online learning platforms and instructors in creating an effective EFL learning environment (e.g., Kozar 2016, Stanchevici and Siczek 2019). Videoconference platforms like ZOOM have been found to simulate the traditional classroom environment by facilitating face-to-face interaction (e.g., Lenkaitis 2020, Stanchevici and Siczek 2019). The feasibility of videoconferences as a platform for teaching EFL writing was expressed by the majority of the interviewed instructors in this study, primarily due to the enhanced structure of class interaction and feedback system. However, the beginner group discredited the platform, pointing out the perceived lack of interaction time with the instructor. Thus, videoconference platforms like ZOOM may be effective for groups with optimal levels of proficiency (i.e., intermediate-low or advanced levels). Similarly, beginner- and intermediate-level learners

engaging in various writing activities rarely perceived improvements in their performance in other subject courses taught through EMI. They did not attempt to regulate their motivation in relation to the impending EMI context, indicating a lack of understanding regarding the relevance of this policy to their learning experiences.

It is important to note the misalignment between students and instructors regarding how the context and the students' self-regulatory actions are intertwined. The final research question in the present study found that the EFL writing instructors viewed factors specific to this EFL writing context and student proficiency levels differently from their students. This proclivity for relating their EFL writing instruction to the university-wide instructional language policy, EMI, corresponded only to the advanced group of students. Unfortunately, these instructors were also less aware of the effect of different student proficiency levels in their views of the contextual factors. Instructor views on (or orientations toward fostering) student motivational regulation strategies have a substantial effect on crafting learning experiences (Wong 2014). This misalignment should thus be born in mind by policy makers and instructors situated in HE landscapes fraught with new challenges. As noted in previous research on EMI as a major context of Asian EFL education (e.g., J. Kim et al., 2018), top-down EMI policy implementation has frequently failed to establish a shared understanding of its goals among students and instructors. They should be offered explicit explanation of the specific roles of EFL writing to both EMI and the internationalization of HE with clear reference to other emerging contextual factors. Furthermore, based on informed understanding of the interactions between student EFL proficiency and context-bound factors, instructors may adopt a systematic approach to addressing student proficiency by using authentic EFL materials designed to online activities (J. Kim and V. Kim 2021, Jia et al., 2023, Teng et al., 2020).

These discussions call for an increased involvement of EFL writing instructors and program designers in cultivating motivational regulation for EFL writing and in assessing and ultimately fostering learner autonomy. Previous studies have demonstrated that L2 learners of EFL writing develop the foundations of motivational regulation via recurrent successful learning experiences (Tang 2012, Teng and Zhang 2016). As shown in this study, those with beginner or intermediate levels of English proficiency encountered difficulties in regulating their motivation and performing assigned tasks and activities through videoconference. Notably, unless effectively addressed, these difficulties can impede the development of self-regulatory responses and learner autonomy in EFL writing. It is thus suggested that the EFL writing program in this learning context incorporates explicit instructional interventions, such as a systematic strategy-based writing instruction. The student participants predominantly employed two strategies—text processing and instructor feedback—which were systematically instructed through diverse online activities. Two most prevalent strategies used by the student participants in this study include text processing and instructor feedback which were systematically instructed and visualized in diverse online activities. Other strategies remained unrecognized or were deemed ineffective, particularly by beginner students. These findings reaffirm the significance of the systematic strategy-based writing instruction in EFL writing curricula (Teng et al., 2016), which may train the students in a systematic manner diverse strategies to regulate motivation including the use of peer feedback. This instruction should also cater to different proficiency levels. Those with lower proficiencies, struggling to cope with the new learning context, may benefit from supplements such as asynchronous, pre-recorded materials to provide appropriate scaffolding (Atmojo and Nugroho 2020, Jia et al., 2023). These interventions, tailored to student proficiency levels, should be constructively adapted to localized context-bound factors, such as videoconferencing (Oxford and Amerstorfer 2018, Wong 2014). Furthermore, EFL writing program designers need to redesign the curricular activities to address broader learning contexts, such as an EMI policy, as well as imminent contextual factors like native English-speaking instructors and a videoconference platform. By diversifying EFL writing activities in this manner, student needs, which continuously evolve according to the emerging HE context, can be effectively embraced.

Despite the contribution of the present study to increasing understanding of the emerging challenges placed on videoconference, its several limitations are to be noted alongside its practical implications for EFL writing instruction. The study was conducted at two Korean universities specialized in science and engineering research and education, both of which place a great emphasis on the internationalization of HE. The findings and implications of this study should thus be applied to other educational contexts in a cautious manner. As the dataset was constructed during two semesters of videoconference-based EFL writing courses, its scope was limited to the particular online context; comparison to the cases of offline EFL writing course in the identical institutions was beyond the scope of the study. Also excluded were the participants' views on other types of platforms or orientations towards those. Possibly, they might have experienced different platforms, either synchronous or asynchronous, and deployed strategies tuned to the classes investigated for the current research. Further studies may overcome these limitations and expand to the changes in students' choices of strategies depending on online tools.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Level: Tertiary