

The Use of Metadiscourse in Korean University Students' Persuasive Essays*

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The present study investigates the uses of metadiscourse employed in Korean university students' persuasive essays. It attempts to examine whether there is a significant difference in metadiscourse use in the essays of students in different academic disciplines, as well as between the high or low scoring essays. 28 essays were selected, half of which were produced by students who were majoring in history, and half by students majoring in chemistry. The frequency and the category of metadiscourse were coded for analysis based on Hyland's (1998) classification. It was observed that all students utilized both interpersonal and textual metadiscourse in their writing. Also, the students who were majoring in chemistry employed more interpersonal metadiscourse than those in history, while the students in history displayed a wider range of expressions for interpersonal metadiscourse. In addition, the essays that were given a high score contained a higher frequency of metadiscourse, as well as a larger variety of metadiscourse features. These findings shed light on the need for explicit instruction of the use of metadiscourse for more successful L2 writing.

[metadiscourse/metadiscourse instruction/L2 writing/academic discipline/essay rating/
상위 담화/상위 담화 지도/제 2언어 글쓰기/학문 분야/글쓰기 평가]

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that for nonnative speakers of English to write in the target language is a difficult task. There are numerous aspects of writing, aside from the need for a

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considerable degree of linguistic knowledge, that challenge the ability of the language user. To this end, essays written by second/foreign language learners are often considered to be idiosyncratic in either language styles or rhetoric, and somewhat ineffective in conveying their ideas to native English speakers as well as non-native English speakers. It has been ascribed to several reasons, such as culturally different thought patterns (Kaplan, 1966), different degrees of responsibility that the reader or the writer carries for communication through written texts (Hinds, 1987), language developmental factors (Mohan & Lo, 1985), and a lack of knowledge of the writing conventions and norms within the discourse community (Bizzell, 1982). On the other hand, there are scholars who view writing as a part of social interaction that highlights second language writers' lack of awareness of audience as a reason in their ineffectiveness as a writer (Cooper & Holzman, 1989; Kroll, 1984; S. Yun, 2012).

The difficulty that second language (L2) learners face in writing seems too complicated to be delineated due to the individual differences of each learner, as well as variations due to culture and language proficiency. However, some of the challenges in L2 writing, such as constructing a natural rhetoric style or creating an appropriate tone, may well be mitigated through instruction. For example, Mao (1993) suggested that metadiscourse instruction would be beneficial for second language learners to learn both universal and unique aspects of rhetoric that are normally constructed through metadiscourse use in texts of target language. These rhetorical features display certain characteristics depending on different discourse communities and genres, and are applied primarily to help readers grasp the ideas of texts more efficiently. In order to incorporate the use of metadiscourse in L2 writing instruction for Korean university students, it is essential to examine their metadiscourse use in written texts.

Intraprawat and Steffensen (1995) discovered discrepancies in metadiscourse use between good and poor essays. In addition, Hyland (1998) noted differences in metadiscourse use in the texts from the humanities and the natural sciences. Based on the findings of these studies, it was hypothesized that metadiscourse use would differ in terms of two categories, different academic disciplines (history and chemistry) and different levels of L2 writing.

Currently, however, the use of metadiscourse employed by L2 learners has not been as vigorously researched as other topics in second language acquisition (SLA). Among the few studies that have focused on metadiscourse use of Korean learners, J. Kim (1999) and C. Uhm, J. Kim, H. Nam, and Y. Oh (2009) compared the use of metadiscourse between NESs (native English speakers) and Korean learners. Although M. Ryoo (2008) did conduct a cross-cultural and intra-cultural investigation into the use of metadiscourse, she only focused on the category of code gloss, a type of textual metadiscourse. This lack of research on metadiscourse use employed by Korean students highlights a demand for

further research.

The present study seeks to address metadiscourse use in the essays written by Korean university students from different academic disciplines and compare essays from high and low scoring categories. Through the examination of metadiscourse use of Korean students from two different academic disciplines, and from those of different writing proficiency levels, the findings will offer a valuable source for L2 writing instruction and future research. To achieve this, the current study will specifically examine the questions as follows:

- 1) Do the frequency and the types of metadiscourse differ in essays written by students majoring in history from those majoring in chemistry?
- 2) Do the frequency and types of metadiscourse differ in high scoring essays from those in essays that scored low?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Metadiscourse

The term *metadiscourse* represents a variety of linguistic devices employed to facilitate both the writer and the reader in achieving better communication within written texts. It is generally defined as “discourse about discourse” or “communication about communication” (Vande Kopple, 1985, p. 83). As Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen (1993) noted, the linguistic devices that fall into the category of metadiscourse were previously referred to by a variety of terms, such as ‘signaling devices,’ ‘signposts,’ ‘Gambits,’ ‘metatalk,’ and ‘metacommunicative markers,’ and the term *metadiscourse* was adopted to comprehensively cover these devices (Vande Kopple, 1985). As J. Kim (1999) noted, metadiscourse plays a significant role in a text as a written text is generally composed of two parts: propositional content and metadiscourse features. According to William Vande Kopple (1985), metadiscourse does not exist in the propositional content, but rather helps readers “organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to such material” (p. 83). Similarly, Crismore and her colleagues (1993) defined it as “linguistic material in texts . . . that does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the information given” (p. 40). Mao (1993) further explained that metadiscourse refers to “various kinds of linguistic tokens that an author employs in her text to guide or direct her reader as to how to understand her, her text, and her stance toward it” (p. 265). Hyland (1998) analogously defined the term as “aspects of a text which explicitly organize the discourse, engage the audience and signal

the writer's attitude" (p. 437), and later modified it to the features that writers employ to signal their attitude towards both the content and the audience of the text (Hyland & Tse, 2004).

Several taxonomies have been suggested to classify metadiscourse features. Halliday's (1985) classification of three language functions, the ideational set, the interpersonal set, and the textual set, arranged an underlying structure for Vande Kopple's taxonomy of metadiscourse. Vande Kopple argued that metadiscourse is present in the last two sets, and classified them into seven sub-categories: text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, validity markers, narrators, attitude markers, and commentary.

Based upon Vande Kopple's taxonomy, Crismore et al. (1993) presented their classification of metadiscourse. They maintained the two major categories, textual and interpersonal metadiscourse, and reconstructed the other sub-categories. Textual metadiscourse comprised textual markers and interpretive markers which were used for logical and ethical appeals. Under the category of interpersonal metadiscourse for displaying emotional and ethical appeals, they placed hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentary.

Hyland (1998) suggested a new taxonomy of metadiscourse which was based on that of Crismore et al. (1993). He also maintained the two major categories of Crismore et al., textual and interpersonal metadiscourse, but distinguished the metadiscourse features into more specific functions in his system. Textual metadiscourse consists of logical connectives, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses; whereas interpersonal metadiscourse comprises hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers, and personal markers. These various classifications of metadiscourse not only denote diverse features embedded in each text, but also insinuate some universal features displayed in written texts, as shown in overlapping categories among different classifications.

2. The Contrastive Analysis of the Uses of Metadiscourse

Studies of metadiscourse have gained growing attention from writing researchers since the 1980s (Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 1998, 1999; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Intraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; C. Kim, 2009; J. Kim, 1999; H. Lim, 2009; Mao, 1993; M. Ryoo, 2008; Uhm et al., 2009; Vande Kopple, 1985). These researchers have mostly adopted the approach of contrastive analysis for studies about metadiscourse, and the results have revealed differences in metadiscourse use in writing—i.e. between L1 and L2, between high and low scoring essays, as well as among different genres of writings. In an important study, Crismore and her colleagues (1993) studied the differences in metadiscourse use between native English and Finnish speakers in written texts. The results showed that both

males and the Finnish native speakers made use of more metadiscourse than their counterparts. Similarly, Uhm and his colleagues (2009) examined the use of metadiscourse between native English speakers and Korean learners of English in academic writing. The results demonstrated that native English speakers used a similar frequency of metadiscourse as did Korean learners of English, but employed more interpersonal metadiscourse—the authors used the term *interactional resources* in their article—than textual metadiscourse—which was labeled *interactive resources*. They highlighted that native English speakers attempted to be inclusive of their readers through their use of metadiscourse in their texts, and used more SM (self-mentions) to assert their opinions more strongly. M. Ryoo (2008) narrowed down the scope of her research on metadiscourse and examined differences in the use of code glosses in Korean and L2 English articles written by native Korean speakers, as well as in English research articles produced by native English speakers, in order to compare the use of metadiscourse in inter- and intra-language communities. The results indicated that English research articles displayed larger numbers of code glosses than those written in Korean and L2. Also, L2 English articles showed greater use of limited types of code glosses. For example, the words, “*i.e.*” or “*e.g.*”, were used more often in L2 English articles than in the articles written in English by NES, and the Korean texts.

In addition, Hyland (1998, 1999) used a corpus to analyze metadiscourse, and focused on the amount and type of metadiscourse in English texts written by English native speakers. His study in 1998 compared research articles in “soft-applied disciplines (e.g. marketing and applied linguistics)” and “hard-pure disciplines (e.g. astrophysics and microbiology).” The study reported that writing in all the disciplines contained a high use of logical connectives, and that research articles in soft-applied disciplines used more interpersonal metadiscourse than its counterpart—for example, hedges were more often used. He also examined the differences in frequency of metadiscourse between 21 textbooks and research articles in similar fields through the use of a corpus, showing that research articles used a greater variety of metadiscourse and a higher number of interpersonal features since they entail more persuasive and rhetorical functions within texts than do introductory text books (Hyland, 1999).

Intraprawat and Steffensen (1995) investigated differences in the use of metadiscourse in high and low scoring essays written by ESL students. They found that the essays which were scored as high, showed more varied use of metadiscourse within each category than those that were low scoring. In addition, high scoring essays showed a higher use of interpersonal metadiscourse, accounting for 54% of metadiscourse use, whereas of the total metadiscourse use in low scoring essays, 57% was textual metadiscourse.

As seen in the results of Intraprawat and Steffensen’s (1995) study, instruction of metadiscourse would provide the learners of English with useful linguistic sources of L2

writing. Cheng and Steffensen (1996) noted that the instruction of metadiscourse would help L2 learners view their writing as the reader's stance and thus make writers more aware of their audience. Also, Mao (1993) pointed out that training in metadiscourse would help L2 learners grasp the rhetorical context of their own writing as metadiscourse is intrinsically linked with rhetorical traits. To this end, L2 learners from a non-Western culture would benefit by learning the rhetoric of the target language to increase their effectiveness when writing in the target language.

III. DESIGN OF THE STUDY

The present study is designed to investigate the use of metadiscourse in persuasive essays by Korean university students' from different academic disciplines, as well as from essays that were in high or low scoring. This study aims to provide insight into metadiscourse use, and draw a connection to scoring on essay writing which will provide useful, in-depth data for teaching Korean university students writing in English in order to help convey their ideas more effectively in consideration of their readers.

1. Setting and Participants

A total of 52 students who registered for an English introductory course as a required course for graduation were selected for the present study. They were 28 students who were majoring in history and 24 majoring in chemistry at a university in Korea. All the students were Korean, and all were between 19 and 23 years old with a similar educational background. The introductory course was designed to equip the students with basic conversation and writing skills in English. The class was twice a week, for two hours each class, and each class was equivalently devoted to speaking and writing lessons. In writing classes, in particular, the students were instructed on making sentences in controlled patterns to writing a paragraph and a short essay on a given topic of the week, and the class also included periodic instructions on grammatical items such as the parts of speech and verb tense. The students were also given ample opportunities to learn about the importance of coherence and cohesion in writing essays, as well as to get accustomed to the structure of English essays. A mid-term writing exam was conducted in the eighth week of the semester, and mostly dealt with writing a sentence in different patterns and building a paragraph by connecting sentences. The history students scored an average 76.9% ($SD=9.25$), and the chemistry majors' average score was 77.3% ($SD=9.53$). The results of the midterm demonstrate that the students of both majors had similar writing abilities.

2. Data Collection

For the data of the study, the students were asked to write a persuasive essay on the preselected topic within 300 words as part of the course assignment. The writing prompt given was as follows:

Some people think that we learn our most important lessons in school. Others think that the knowledge we acquire outside of school is the most important. Which view do you agree with? Use specific reasons and examples to support your opinions.

The topic was chosen to be interesting enough to stimulate the students' ideas, as well as to be relevant to them. It was given in the 13th week of the semester, followed by a review session of the writing lessons from the class. The students were encouraged to use dictionaries or other internet sources in case they do not have enough vocabulary knowledge to express their ideas effectively. Further, a persuasive writing question was chosen as it was expected to entail more metadiscourse and have more rhetorical functions such as the research articles in "soft-applied disciplines" as Hyland (1998) noted. Furthermore, five percent of the total score was allotted for their final course grade to promote better quality essays. In order to reduce the effect of the length of the text on using metadiscourse, the limitation of words for writing was established. After a screening of the essays, 28 of the grammatically better written essays were selected for use in this study (14 essays from each major, and seven essays from each gender) while the others were excluded as they were difficult to understand due to lexical or grammatical inappropriateness.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 of the selected students in the week following the submission of their essays. These students were chosen as their essays had some unclear parts due to vague phrases or noticeable metadiscourse use. Several questions were created and prepared before the interview in order to clarify the vagueness of their phrases and discover the students' intention for using certain metadiscourse. For example, one of the questions checked the reason of the frequent use of person markers, such as "you," "your," or "we." The questions were asked based on the question sheet made for the semi-structured interview (See Appendix) and follow-up questions were made occasionally so as to gain additional information. For more accurate analysis of the study, all of the interviews were video-taped.

3. Data Scoring, Coding, and Analysis

The 28 essays were evaluated by both the writer of this study and a native English

speaking teacher (who has eight years of experience teaching English to Korean university students) by employing a holistic scoring scale used in the Test of Written English (TWE). This evaluating instrument was adopted as it measures overall writing quality and is suitable to evaluate the academic writing of ESL students (Berg, 1999). Furthermore, the topic for the writing assignment was also taken from the list of topics for TWE. After the two raters discussed scoring guidelines, the grading of essays was completed separately. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for measuring inter-rater reliability, and the result was 0.82, showing an acceptably high reliability between evaluations.

In a study which aims to discover the types and frequency of metadiscourse used in the essays, consistent coding is highly essential (Mackey & Gass, 2008). However, it is a challenging task due to the "fuzziness," as Crismore called it, of the categories of metadiscourse themselves (Crismore et al, 1993; Hyland, 1998). The essays were closely examined and manually coded by both the native English speaking teacher, who was also the other rater of the essays in the scoring process, and the author of this study. The coded essays were then compared in terms of the number and types of coded items. In the first trial coding, inter-coder reliability was 0.74, as calculated by Cronbach's alpha. The disagreement of some categories between the two coders was resolved through discussion, and the essays were coded again. In the second trial coding, inter-rater reliability reached 0.89. Some expressions which have multiple metadiscourse simultaneously in the same context, for instance, *I think* (*I* as a person marker, and *I think* as a hedge), were counted more than one. The coding scheme was based on Hyland's (1998) classification.

Hyland (1998, 1999) classified metadiscourse mainly into two categories, textual metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse. The former refers to devices which help "to organize propositional information in ways that will be coherent for a particular audience and appropriate for a given purpose" (Hyland, 1999, p. 7). The latter is used to express the writer's perspective or attitude towards both the propositional information and their readers (Hyland, 1999), and is more concerned with the audience. Both categories are composed of five subcategories which are presented with some examples in Table 1 below. The classification was based on Hyland's taxonomies of metadiscourse presented in his studies (1998).

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted to analyze the data in the present study. The occurrences of each metadiscourse feature found in the students' essays were coded, counted and recorded according to the academic discipline, as well as and the score of the essays (high and low graded essays). The raw numbers with the comprising percentage were used for analyses along with the interview data.

TABLE 1
The Classification of Metadiscourse

Textual	Function	Examples
Logical Connectives	To link the writer's ideas in the text for readers	<i>therefore, in addition, on the other hand</i>
Frame Markers	To signal boundaries in the discourse and stages in the argument	<i>first, to conclude, I propose, well, etc.</i>
Endophoric Markers	To refer to information in other parts of the text	<i>noted above, see Table 1</i>
Evidentials	To display the source of textual material from other texts	<i>according to X, Y states</i>
Code Glosses	To help readers attain the meaning of ideational material	<i>namely, for example</i>
Interpersonal	Function	Examples
Hedges	To express the writer's reluctance to the information	<i>maybe, it seems, possibly</i>
Emphatics	To indicate the writer's certainty and emphasis on the information	<i>in fact, clearly</i>
Attitude markers	To show the writer's affective outlook toward the information	<i>surprisingly, must, I agree</i>
Relation Markers	To include them as discourse participants	<i>consider, you see</i>
Person Markers	To refer to the author in the text	<i>I, we, myself</i>

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. The Use of Metadiscourse in Korean University Students' Writing

The quantitative analysis indicated that each essay included an average of 300.4 words and an average of 44 occurrences of metadiscourse in each essay. It was discovered that although with varying degrees, Korean university students employed both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in their persuasive essays. Table 2 presents the frequency and the percentage of each metadiscourse category employed in the students' essays.

The results revealed the importance of metadiscourse in the persuasive essays, indicating that metadiscourse was used approximately one every seven words (although the text was not proportionally constructed in this way). The students employed 527 items of textual metadiscourse and 710 items of interpersonal metadiscourse in a total of 28 essays. They

displayed 14.8% more interpersonal metadiscourse (57.4%) than textual metadiscourse (42.6%). This finding was parallel to the results of the study of Uhm et al. (2009). In their study, native Korean speakers displayed interpersonal metadiscourse more frequently than textual metadiscourse in their English research articles. The genre of academic writing shares some comparable traits with persuasive writing on account of its rhetorical functions as noted by Hyland (1999) who referred to academic writing as “a persuasive task” (p. 5). The results of this study are similar with Hyland’s (1999) study of research articles in which he found persuasive traits displayed more interpersonal metadiscourse than textual metadiscourse.

TABLE 2
The Occurrences of Metadiscourse Features

Category	Occurrence	Percentage
Logical connectives	404	32.7 %
Frame markers	51	4.1 %
Endophoric markers	5	0.4 %
Evidentials	6	0.5 %
Code glosses	61	4.9 %
Textual	527	42.6 %
Hedges	67	5.4 %
Emphatics	31	2.5 %
Attitude markers	148	12 %
Relational markers	97	7.8 %
Personal markers	367	29.7 %
Interpersonal	710	57.4 %
Totals	1, 237	100 %

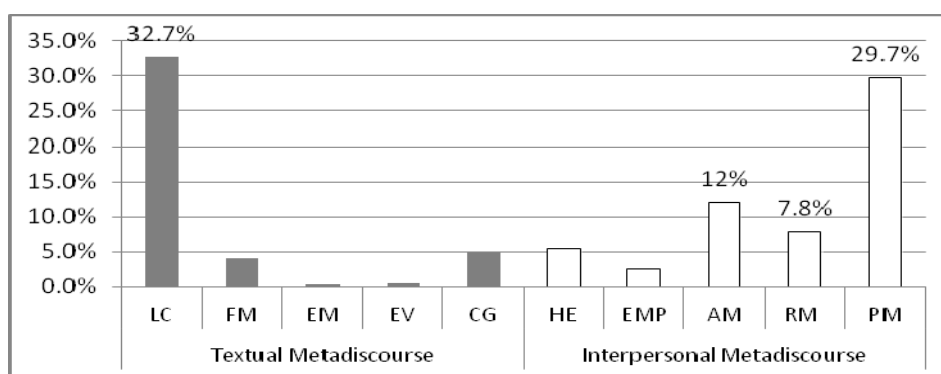


FIGURE 1 Frequency of Metadiscourse Categories

In addition, although personal markers were predominantly employed among interpersonal metadiscourse, a comparatively wide variety of interpersonal metadiscourse categories were used, compared with textual metadiscourse. The results indicate that more numbers and types of interpersonal metadiscourse were employed to perform the persuasive tone in their writing. The high use of personal markers will be further discussed in this section. On the other hand, as seen in Figure 1, the most common metadiscourse category that appeared in the essays was a subcategory of textual metadiscourse, logical connectives. This result is congruent with other studies (Crismore et al., 1993; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; C. Kim, 2009; Uhm et al., 2009). Although the written texts examined for each study were different in genres, the common use of logical connectives suggests that written texts entail some universal features that help to present what the writer is trying to clearly convey. The frequent use of logical connectives, as Hyland (1998) notes, “emphasizes the common interpretation of metatext as guiding the reading process by indicating discourse organization and clarifying propositional connections and meaning” (p. 445). The most recurrently appearing words of logical connectives were “and,” “however,” “so,” and “because,” regardless of the students’ majors.

The next most common categories displayed in the essays were personal markers and attitude markers, as shown in Figure 1 above. The use of these features reflects the rhetorical characteristics of the persuasive text that the students were required to write. Interestingly, 25 out of 28 students wrote their essays in the first person, using “I” or “we”, as seen in the examples below:

- (1) *I can't learn many lessons outside of school because I want to play and difficult for focus things.* (excerpted from the essay of CM, 2)
- (2) *Experience is the most important thing in our lives and in our world.* (excerpted from the essay of HF, 1)
- (3) *We should think about this seriously.* (excerpted from the essay of HF, 4)

The result was congruent with the findings of J. Kim (1999) whose study examined the use of metadiscourse in persuasive writing of Korean university students. He argued that Korean students depended heavily on personal markers in an attempt to convey effectiveness in persuasive writing. It was evident that the students in this study also employed personal markers with a similar motivation. The following responses from the interview highlighted Kim’s argument explicitly.

- (4) *It seems natural to use ‘I’ because I think I can persuade people better by telling my story, and we often use this word in persuasive writing.* (excerpted from the interview with HM 3)

- (5) *I think people can put themselves into the situation more easily and be empathetic with my idea by using the word of "we."* (excerpted from the interview with CM 5)
- (6) *It is more effective to use the pronoun "you" because I want them to really think about what I said.* (excerpted from the interview with CF 4)

In addition to these responses, there were several answers that also similarly pointed to the belief in the effectiveness of persuasion of personal markers use.

Along this line, attitude markers were employed frequently in the texts since persuasive writing usually demands the manifestation of the writer's judgments or stance towards the topic suggested. Most of the students employed the use of the word "*important*" to show their attitude toward the topic. However, it may have been influenced by the writing prompt in which *important* was included (e.g. "*Some people think that we learn our most important lessons in school*").

As shown in Table 2, the least common forms of metadiscourse used in the essays were endophoric markers and evidentials. This is in part because the writing on this topic does not necessarily require it to be based on knowledge from outside sources. In addition, given the level of the students' language proficiency, they might not have had enough knowledge to incorporate these features appropriately.

2. The Comparison of Use of Metadiscourse According to Academic Disciplines

The essays written by the students from history and chemistry majors displayed both similarities and differences in their metadiscourse use. The students majoring in chemistry employed 21.1% more metadiscourse than the students majoring in history. Also, students in both majors adopted more interpersonal metadiscourse than textual metadiscourse. However, the chemistry majors showed a higher percentage of use of interpersonal metadiscourse than the history majors. Interpersonal metadiscourse accounted for 52.6% of total metadiscourse employed by the students majoring in history and 61.3% by chemistry students. Table 3 presents the frequency of each category of metadiscourse according to major.

As noted earlier, more frequent interpersonal metadiscourse use can be attributed to several reasons. As the previous studies reported (Hyland, 1999; J. Kim, 1999; Uhm et al., 2009), it is likely that the texts which possess persuasive traits, such as persuasive writing or research articles, may entail larger numbers of interpersonal metadiscourse as the genre of persuasive writing inherently demands using interpersonal metadiscourse in conveying the writer's attitude or judgment toward the topic. Additionally, it could be due to the fact

that the students in this study favored or became more familiar with the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in their writing, shown in the interview data.

TABLE 3
The Occurrences of Metadiscourse Features

Category	History		Chemistry	
Logical connectives	195	35.1%	209	30.6%
Frame markers	25	4.5%	26	3.8%
Endophoric markers	3	0.5%	2	0.3%
Evidentials	5	0.9%	1	0.1%
Code glosses	35	6.3%	26	3.8%
Textual	263	47.4%	264	38.7%
Hedges	28	5.0%	39	5.7%
Emphatics	11	2.0%	20	2.9%
Attitude markers	58	10.5%	90	13.2%
Relational markers	33	5.9%	64	9.4%
Personal markers	162	29.2%	205	30.1%
Interpersonal	292	52.6%	418	61.3%
Totals	555	(100%)	682	(100%)

The students in both majors exhibited a similar distribution of categories of metadiscourse. The students majoring in history employed logical connectives most frequently, followed by personal markers and attitude markers. The same distribution appeared in the essays of chemistry students.

A notable finding is that the chemistry students employed a higher use of interpersonal metadiscourse than history students. Further, the students majoring in chemistry displayed more occurrences of attitude markers and relational markers, both of which belong to interpersonal metadiscourse. The history students, on the other hand, employed a higher frequency of evidentials and code glosses, which are subcategories of textual metadiscourse, in their writing. These results are apparently opposite from the findings of Hyland (1998, 1999). According to Hyland's (1998) study that compared the use of metadiscourse in research articles between soft-applied disciplines and hard-pure disciplines, writers from hard-pure disciplines displayed more textual than interpersonal metadiscourse. He explained that the writers have become accustomed to the writing style of their discipline, which is mostly reporting the facts rather than formulating their opinions toward the topic. This was supported by the findings that they tended to employ textual metadiscourse more than interpersonal metadiscourse. On the contrary, the writers

who majored in soft-applied disciplines were more likely to use interpersonal metadiscourse. Hyland found similar results in his study conducted in 1999 where the biology research articles he examined displayed noticeably more use of textual metadiscourse than those from applied linguistics and marketing which remarkably exhibited more use of interpersonal metadiscourse (although to a minor degree). Contrary to the findings of Hyland (1998, 1999), the chemistry students in this study employed interpersonal metadiscourse more recurrently than textual metadiscourse. This conspicuous difference in the uses of interpersonal metadiscourse, however, was attributed to numerous uses of personal markers in their essays. The students explained that frequent use of personal markers was adopted in an attempt to convey their persuasive tone effectively. These results seem to be related more with the genre of writing itself, rather than the academic discipline that writers belong to.

It is also worth highlighting that there were more numbers of hedges in the chemistry students' writing. Nevertheless, the chemistry majors employed a limited range of words for hedges such as "*maybe*," while the history students exhibited a greater variety of items (e.g. "*may*," "*might*," "*maybe*," "*perhaps*," and "*almost*"). Another subcategory of interpersonal metadiscourse, attitude markers, revealed a similar tendency as hedges in the essays. The students in chemistry used the word "important" repeatedly whereas the history students displayed various features, for instance, "*most (more) important*," "*should*," and "*necessary*." Despite the lower frequency of interpersonal metadiscourse, a wider range of expressions shown in the history students' writing can be explained by the findings from Hyland's (1998, 1999) studies in that they seemed to reveal the students' familiarity with these words and the style of writing likely due to the traits of the texts with which they usually deal in their area of academic study.

In addition, the chemistry majors adopted more relational markers than the history majors. The chemistry students used relational markers for 9.4% of the total metadiscourse, whereas the history students used them for 5.9%. Furthermore, the chemistry students displayed more various types of relational markers. Relational markers address readers to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants, and include second person pronouns, questions, and imperatives. These features were employed regularly by most of the students in chemistry, and the use of questions and imperatives, in particular, was fairly common. The following examples demonstrate these tendencies:

- (7) *I think studying should happen in school for focus better. As you see ...*
(excerpted from the essay of CM 2)
- (8) *In this case, can you know the taste and smell of it?* (excerpted from the essay of CF 2)

(9) *Listen to your teacher in class.*

How can you learn difficult lessons outside of the school? (excerpted from the essay of CF 4)

(10) *Imagine that you don't study at all at school.* (excerpted from the essay of CM 4)

To summarize, the students majoring in chemistry employed a similar number of textual metadiscourse as did the students majoring in history, but the chemistry students displayed more use of interpersonal metadiscourse. A higher frequency in the use of interpersonal metadiscourse employed by the students in chemistry resulted mostly from a frequent use of personal and attitude markers, but they were presented in a limited range. On the contrary, the students majoring in history adopted less interpersonal metadiscourse but used a mixture of expressions for interpersonal metadiscourse. Overall, it appears that the students in this study did not show the writing style of the discipline that they belong to, yet still showed their familiarity with certain features that the texts in their discipline often display as found in previous research. Based on these findings, L2 writing instruction would do well to target particular metadiscourse categories according to the academic discipline of L2 learners. Although these results do not supply the consolidated suggestions for metadiscourse instruction, they do provide a facet of metadiscourse use employed by Korean university students and some factors to consider in constructing instruction for L2 writing.

3. The Use of Metadiscourse in High and Low Scoring Essays

The essays were evaluated by two scorers on a holistic scale and were divided into three categories, high, intermediate and low essays, based on the mean score of each essay. Nine essays whose scores were over 4.0 points were classified as high essays, eight essays under 2.75 points into low essays, and the rest of the essays were put in the intermediate group. Only the essays with high and low scores were examined in this study to analyze the difference in the use of metadiscourse.

The group of essays that had the higher mean score contained larger numbers of metadiscourse than the essays with a lower mean score. A total of 480 metadiscourse features, approximately 53 occurrences per essay, were discovered in the high group, whereas the low score essay group had about 38 metadiscourse each—a total of 300 metadiscourse altogether. In addition, they both displayed more interpersonal metadiscourse than textual metadiscourse, showing 313 interpersonal metadiscourse and 167 textual metadiscourse in high essays, and 161 interpersonal metadiscourse and 139 textual metadiscourse in low essays. Table 4 presents the occurrences and percentage of each category of metadiscourse, provided with mean occurrence per each essay in the

parentheses for more accurate examination as each group (high and low group) consisted of different numbers of essays.

TABLE 4
The Occurrences of Metadiscourse in High and Low Essays

Category	High Essays			Low Essays		
Logical connectives	129	(14)	26.9 %	117	(15)	39 %
Frame markers	17	(2)	3.5 %	3	(0)	1 %
Endophoric markers	2	(0)	0.4 %	1	(0)	0.3 %
Evidentials	0	(0)	0 %	5	(1)	1.7 %
Code glosses	19	(2)	4.0 %	16	(2)	5.3 %
Textual	167	(19)	34.8 %	139	(17)	46.3 %
Hedges	31	(3)	6.5 %	17	(2)	5.7 %
Emphatics	8	(1)	1.7 %	13	(2)	4.3 %
Attitude markers	56	(6)	11.7 %	38	(5)	12.7 %
Relational markers	27	(3)	5.6 %	20	(3)	6.7 %
Personal markers	191	(21)	39.8 %	73	(9)	24.3 %
Interpersonal	313	(35)	65.2	161	(20)	53.7 %
Total	480	(53)	100 %	300		100 %

Note: the mean number of occurrences is provided in the parenthesis after being rounded up.

The results revealed that essays in the high group also included more interpersonal metadiscourse than the low group essays. This result is parallel to the studies by Intraprawat and Steffensen (1995) and Uhm et al. (2009), in that the good writers employed a higher number of metadiscourse than did the poor writers, as well as more interpersonal metadiscourse than textual metadiscourse. As metadiscourse is defined as a device which helps carry the writer's idea more effectively, it seems that more frequent uses of metadiscourse features facilitated a flow in the essays which perhaps led to higher scores.

To examine each category of metadiscourse employed in the essays, they displayed a similar distribution of the metadiscourse. Parallel to the ranking of overall metadiscourse use employed by the participants (as shown in Figure 1), logical connectives, personal markers and attitude markers were used most frequently in that order in both essays, although there was a slight difference in the frequency of each metadiscourse. These results were different from the findings of Uhm et al.'s (2009) study as the category employed most recurrently from interpersonal metadiscourse in their study was hedges. They ascribed the frequent use of hedges to the characteristics of Koreans who underscoring

modesty and caution in asserting their opinion. However, in this study, the university students used hedges to a lesser degree, accounting for only 6.5% of total metadiscourse use in essays with a higher mean score and 5.7% in the essays with a lower score. This discrepancy seems to have resulted from the differences of the participants in the two studies. It is inferred that the participants in Uhm et al.'s (2009) study are experts in their fields as they had published research articles written in English in the field of applied linguistics. Considering this aspect, they probably have at least a master's degree, or above, in their relevant fields. Therefore, the discrepancy in the use of hedges might be largely based on the differing degrees of mastery for the skills in actual writing, as well as different levels of L2 writing proficiency of the participants between two studies.

The essays which received a high score revealed a larger variety of expressions for the three most popularly used categories, logical connectives, personal markers, and attitude markers. This result is similar to the findings of M. Ryoo's (2008) study. They included "however," "although," "therefore," and "moreover" for logical connectives, whereas "and," "but," and "so" were reiterated in the low essays. Furthermore, the high scoring essays entailed a wide range of the expressions for attitude markers as "(more/ the most) important," "necessary," "should," and "useful," instead of simply using "important" as was the case in the low scoring essays. It seems that the students who received low ratings on their essay do not possess a large size of vocabulary knowledge or are not aware of general writing rules for avoiding the use of the same expression. The students explained the reasons for the repeated use of the same expressions in the interview as follows:

- (11) *I don't know many words and their spelling. It is difficult to memorize them all.*
(excerpted from the interview with CM 3)
- (12) *The word, "but," is the one that I want to use here. There is no word to replace it.*
(excerpted from the interview with CM 7)
- (13) *No, I did not know that the repeated use of the same expressions should be avoided.* (excerpted from the interview with CF 2)

The recurrent use of frame markers and personal markers employed in the high scoring essays was conspicuous. The difference between high and low essays in this study seems to result from the different frequency of frame markers and personal markers in their essays. Frame markers, in general, are used to signal boundaries in the discourse and stages in the argument, including items to sequence material (e.g., *first, next, finally*), to post the signs in the discourse (e.g., *to conclude, in sum*), to announce discourse goals (e.g., *our aim here, I propose*), and to signal topic changes (e.g., *well, now*) (Hyland, 1998). It should be noted here that the two occurrences of frame markers in each essay on average are seemingly small, but that they are not often used as commonly as other metadiscourse categories such

as personal markers on account of their roles. Personal markers, on the other hand, are employed to explicitly refer to the author in the text, and the writers of high scoring essays appeared to employ both of these markers effectively in organizing and expressing their arguments. The findings regarding metadiscourse displayed in the high scoring essays corresponded with the results found in C. Kim's (2009) study. Kim noted that EFL advanced writers depended upon frame markers more heavily, and recurrently employed personal markers for effective persuasive writing in English. Indeed, frame markers were highly useful for guiding their ideas, particularly for inexperienced writers in the intermediate level of language proficiency, in that these features can be rather readily employed in L2 writing without much knowledge of grammar or vocabulary. In addition, the writers of high scoring essays expressed their arguments more successfully, offering some examples and stories using the first person pronouns. As indicated in the study by Cheng and Steffensen (1996), the importance of using certain metadiscourse is well reflected in the essays which received a high score.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the use of metadiscourse employed in Korean university students' persuasive essays. This study was also conducted to examine whether there is any difference in metadiscourse use in the essays constructed by students in different academic disciplines, as well as between essays from high or low scoring groups. 28 essays were collected from history and chemistry majors and were evaluated to separately examine the use of each category of metadiscourse based on Hyland's (1998) classification. Through the findings from an analysis of metadiscourse displayed in the essays and the interview data, this study attempted to account for the use of metadiscourse employed by Korean university students' persuasive essays, as well as the significant roles of metadiscourse in L2 writing.

The quantitative and qualitative analyses of the frequency and the use of metadiscourse in Korean university students' essays displayed some similarities and differences between the students' academic disciplines and between the different scoring groups of essays. The general findings were as follows. First, Korean university students utilized both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse in their essays. Additionally, students from both academic disciplines displayed interpersonal metadiscourse more than textual metadiscourse in their writing. However, the subcategory most frequently employed was logical connectives, followed by personal markers and attitude markers.

Second, the students majoring in chemistry showed a higher number of uses of metadiscourse than those majoring in history. They also displayed a higher percentage of

interpersonal metadiscourse than the history majors. Conversely, the students majoring in history exhibited a larger variety of expressions for hedges and attitude markers than those in chemistry. This result demonstrated that the students in this study showed their familiarity with specific metadiscourse categories that the texts in their discipline normally display.

Third, the high scoring essays showed more frequent use of metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse than did the lower scoring essays. Also, the high scoring essays entailed a wider range of expressions for each category of metadiscourse than their lower scoring counterparts. Frame markers and personal markers seem to have positive effects on the scoring and quality of the essays as these linguistic features were better able to help guide readers to understand the writers' arguments more successfully.

These results indicate some pedagogical implications for L2 writing. First, as Cheng and Steffensen (1996) and Mao (1993) pointed out, instruction on metadiscourse would help learners of English construct and convey their ideas more successfully. Therefore, explicit (or implicit) instruction on the rhetorical functions and uses of each category of metadiscourse would be helpful for particularly inexperienced learners of English in L2 writing. It would promote students to raise their awareness of audience in writing and view the act of writing as a type of social interaction between the writer and the reader rather than as a product. In order to accomplish this, textbook authors and curriculum developers should try to find ways to incorporate metadiscourse lessons in their L2 learning texts.

Second, to ensure good pedagogical practices, teacher training programs on the rhetorical functions and uses of each metadiscourse category should be developed. Additionally, more studies need to be undertaken to find effective instructional models for assisting teachers to encourage learners to use metadiscourse to better express their ideas.

Although these data do not suggest any significant factors or relationships which determine the quality of the essays, they did confirm that appropriate use of metadiscourse is indeed an important criterion for effective essay writing. As this study entails some limitations (such as focusing on essays written by freshmen or employing a rather small sample size), future studies should explore the use of metadiscourse employed by the students who are at different points of completion in their program, from varying disciplines, as well as from different levels of language proficiency. Also, it would be meaningful to conduct interventional research to investigate the effect of instruction of metadiscourse on the quality of essays.

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APPENDIX

The following list of questions was created for the semi-structured interview. Relative questions were asked depending on the traits of each essay that were written by the researcher.

A. For clarification of meaning

1. What did you mean by this phrase?
2. Can you clarify the meaning of this sentence in Korean?
3. Why did you use this word continuously?

B. For the analysis of the use of metadiscourse

1. Why did you employ conjunctions such as "and," "however," "so," and "because"?
2. Why did you use the pronoun "you" ("I" or "we") in your essay? Who were you referring to?
3. Why did you say "maybe" here?
4. What did you mean by the phrase, "I think"? Was it used to provide information or as a hedge?
5. Why did you say "imagine" here?
6. Why did you adopt an imperative sentence here?
7. Why did you say "Let's think about it"?
8. Why did you adopt the requesting form here?

Examples in: English

Applicable Languages: English

Applicable Levels: Secondary/Tertiary

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