L1 and L2 English Writers' Metadiscourse Use
in the Argumentative Essays of English Newspapers*

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Kim, Se-in & Uhm, Chul Joo. (2013). L1 and L2 English Writers' Metadiscourse Use in the Argumentative Essays of English Newspapers. *The Linguistic Association of Korea Journal, 21*(4), 165-183. The current study investigates the use of metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English writers' argumentative essays, which appeared in the Op-Ed section of three English newspapers published in Korea. A corpus of 200 essays written by both groups (100 each) was analyzed by the model of Hyland (2004). The results exhibited that the density of the overall metadiscourse use in both sets of texts was similar, but the frequency, proportion and range of subcategories of metadiscourse varied. Of all the subcategories of interactive devices, transition and code glosses were most frequently used by both groups. When it comes to interactional markers, L1 writers employed more hedges, boosters, and attitude markers than L2 writers did. The difference between L1 writers and L2 writers in this regard was primarily in the use of self-mentions and engagement markers, with their comparatively higher frequency in Korean L2 writing.

Key Words: metadiscourse, argumentative writing, media discourse analysis

1. Introduction

Since written communication requires a "cognitive" empathy in which the writer must communicate ideas with a clear intuition and judgment of the reader's state of mind (Brown, 2007), it seems apparent that successful writing is associated with interactive accomplishment as well as rational exposition. In this

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regard, writing is usually the result of a struggle between a writer and his/her material, even for native professional writers.

The reason writing is so difficult, especially for non-native writers, seems to be that they must acquire the basic rules of grammar and appropriate vocabulary along with rhetorical skills which involve knowledge to convey facts effectively, support their argumentation convincingly, and negotiate social relations. Moreover, writers need to take account of the genre criteria, cultural conventions and register awareness. Particularly, the writers of argumentative essays such as Opinion-Editorial (Op-Ed) columns in the newspaper need to construct an appropriate attitude and convincing claims towards their readers; therefore, they are much more careful about the logical chain of reasoning, evidence, opposing arguments and accommodations of the audience's views. In other words, reflecting expectation of the audience can be one of the key features of successful argumentative writing.

One of the effective ways to deal with the above matter is the use of metadiscourse by which writers organize the discourse, facilitate communication, and build a relationship with an audience (Hyland, 1998). Therefore, as regards the analysis of persuasion and interaction between reader and writer in argumentative writing, metadiscourse plays a significant role. To date, research on metadiscourse has increased in many different contexts, however, little has been studied involved with the genre of newspaper discourse.

Based on the necessity and importance of studying metadiscourse, this study will explore it in the L1 and L2 English writers' argumentative essays of English newspapers published in Korea in order to discover the ways writers negotiate their interpersonal demands from a metadiscourse perspective. The study is motivated by the following research question:

What are the similarities and differences between L1 and L2 English writers'uses of metadiscourse in the argumentative Op-Ed essays of English newspapers?

2. Review of the Literature

2.1 Metadiscourse, Language, and Culture

Since Harris (1959), who introduced the term metadiscourse, it has been recognized as one of the key features for understanding the relationship between a speaker/writer and her audience in discourse. Vande Kopple (1985, p. 83) defines metadiscourse as words and phrases that "do not add propositional material but help our readers organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to such material. Metadiscourse, therefore, is discourse about discourse." Crismore, Markanen & Steffensen (1993, p. 40) also states that metadiscourse refers to "the linguistic material in texts, whether spoken or written, 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." Their views are based on the idea that language is not just the presentation of ideational meaning but a set of social acts which involve its users to interact with each other to affect the ways ideas are presented and understood.

In this respect, Hyland's (2004) definition draws particular attention. According to him, metadiscourse is the linguistic devices writers employ to shape their arguments to the needs and expectations of their target readers. Metadiscourse thus may provide a link between texts and disciplinary cultures, helping to define the rhetorical context by revealing some of the expectations and understandings of the audience for whom a text was written (Hyland, 2004, p. 136).

In recent years, metadiscourse has contributed to a range of work in properties of various genres of texts, cross-cultural variations and writing pedagogy (e.g., Hyland, 1999; Intraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). More recently, rhetorical preferences of different discourse communities and cultural conventions have become a highly dynamic topic in metadiscourse research. For example, Dahl (2004) explored metatext in 180 articles representing three languages, English, French and Norwegian, and three disciplines, economics, linguistics and medicine. The result revealed that English and Norwegian represent writer responsible cultures, while French is a representative of a reader responsible culture. With regard to discipline, national culture is more important in economics and linguistics where the IMRD (Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion) structure implemented globally seems

more influential. In other words, the analysis shows that culture and discipline play a crucial role in the use of metadiscourse.

On the other hand, Cuenca & Bach (2007) examined the form and use of metadiscourse in research papers written in English, Spanish and Catalan. The result showed that English authors usually reformulate to add more information to the concept, whereas Catalan and Spanish authors reduce the contents of the previous formulation more frequently than English. Faghih & Rahimpour (2009) also attempted to find out the influence of mother tongue upon the use of metadiscourse, comparing English texts on applied linguistics written by native English speakers and Persians. The finding of the study demonstrated that different language can lead to significant differences in the use of metadiscourse.

Genre comparability is another factor for a variation in metadiscourse use. Hempel & Degand (2008) examined a specific class of metadiscourse, frame markers, and proposed a further sub-classification of this class, which is defined as sequencers. According to them, academic writing is the genre that is the most structured by sequencers while fiction is the genre that is least structured. In case of journal, it is situated in between them. This implies genres can be a decisive factor involving the choice of structuring devices.

In the Korean context, there has been a handful of studies on metadiscoure. For example, Lee (2004) investigated metadiscourse items from eight persuasive texts of Korean high school English textbooks through Hyland's functional model of metadiscourse, and suggested that metadiscourse items should be included explicitly for organizing the texts in the English textbooks. Uhm, *et al*. (2009a) analyzed Korean L2 English writers and native English writers' metadiscourse use in the discussion section of applied linguistics articles. The study indicated that differences in using interactional resources are more marked than that in interactive resources in the two language groups. This result can be interpreted that native English writers are more likely to reveal their identity in the academic world than Korean L2 English writers. In addition, Kim (2009a) examined the use of self-mentions in English and Korean newspapers, revealing the influences of socio-cultural context and syntactic dissimilarities between two languages. Ryoo (2008) also studied code gloss markers in Korean and English research articles, and showed significant differences in the degree of diversity.

2.2 Metadiscourse in Newspaper Opinion Columns

Newspaper discourse (opinion columns, in particular) can be considered "some of the most adequate examples of persuasive writing" (Connor, 1996, p. 143). Lee (2009) doing 'news analysis' shows that articles in the newspaper are composed of four main discourse categories (introducing topics, providing background, analyzing/diagnosing, and providing argumentation). Concerning its hybrid nature in terms of the genre, articles in the newspaper include a great number of textual and interactional metadiscourse markers for the reflections of the writers' epistemic and affective attitudes toward texts and potential readers.

Among the various types of newspaper articles, opinion columns, which are an example of argumentative writing, have been discussed frequently in the field of text analysis, since they are "considered to be of particular societal importance at the time of publication" (Le, 2004, p. 688). Kim (2009b) analyzed argumentative texts written by professional columnists in the British newspaper The Guardian and L2 English argumentative texts written by Korean university students. The result indicated that the British writers used more writer-reader's interpersonal metadiscourse, while Koreans employed more textual metadiscourse. This difference suggests that raising learners' awareness of constructing the writer-reader interaction can provide some important implications for English language writing classes.

Dafouz-Milne (2003) also explored the role of metadiscourse in the editorials of the Spanish *El Pais* and the British *The Times* to compare how professional writers guided and engaged with their readers in persuasive texts. She found that while the Spanish and British writers used similar amounts of metadiscourse overall, the Spanish texts contained significantly greater frequencies of interactive metadiscourse, particularly sequencing devices and code glosses, while writers in *The Times* used more interactional metadiscourse. In her study the most interesting differences were in the use of transition markers where the Spanish overwhelmingly preferred additive markers to link ideas while the British writers made far greater use of adversative markers. These differences might be explained by the Spanish tendency to produce much longer sentences which need to be coordinated by additive markers.

Later, Dafouz-Milne (2008) from a different perspective examined 40 opinion columns in the British and Spanish newspapers to identify how metadiscourse

operates as a persuasive mechanism in texts. The result demonstrated that both interpersonal and textual metadiscourse markers play a key role to the overall persuasive effect of a text. As for textual metadiscourse, it serves a persuasive function including 'add, sequence, contrast or conclude' ideas, not overtly persuasive though. In the case of interpersonal markers, combinations of hedges and attitudinal markers which can result neither too assertive nor too vague contribute to the construction of a relationship with the reader. This cross-linguistic perspective also indicate that newspaper-genre characteristic of opinion columns suggest a certain uniformity across languages.

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

The current study is based on a corpus of approximately 1,100,000 words from articles of three English newspapers published in Korea (*The Korea Times*, *The Korea Herald*, *Joong-Ang Daily*). The corpus was built on the texts from two groups of writers: argumentative texts written by native English writers (L1) and Korean English writers (L2).

As can be seen in Table 1, the columns used for the study are written by both 100 native English writers (L1) and 100 Korean writers (L2). Writers in this study are 66 professors (33.3%), 20 journalists (10%), 10 teachers (5%), 4 authors (2%) and 100 other various professionals (49.7%). The articles cover the following topics: Education, Economic affairs, European Union, International affairs, and issues dealing with Politics.

Table 1. Number of Columns in Newspapers

Name of the Newspaper	Number of Columns	
	L1	L2
The Korea Times	44	58
The Korea Herald	52	8
Joong-Ang Daily	4	34
Total	100	100

Newspapers basically have a separation of 'report' and 'commentary' sections which holds a central place in the journalistic profession, and the columns analyzed in this study are chosen from the latter section. Because not only does this kind of column contain information about specific events, but also it carries the authors' own interpretations, evaluations or recommendations, we can see how both groups of writers develop their argumentation and convey their points of view by the use of metadiscourse.

3.2 Procedures

To examine the use of metadiscourse markers, all markers in the newspaper texts were compiled first. While compiling, each marker was thoroughly scrutinized with its function and meaning in the context. In the course of compiling, markers not used as metadicourse were excluded. The texts were edited, omitting the name of the newspaper and the writer and the title of the article.

Then, all the texts were electronically scanned using Wordsmith 5.0. Since there is a possibility that a particular form can serve either a propositional or metadiscoursal function (Hyland 2004), the corpus was carefully analyzed again. For example, a great number of words like 'and' or 'but' appeared in the text, but some cases do not function as metadiscourse, but merely as conjunctions. In addition, the type of metadiscourse varied extremely and many of them were multi-functional. The markers, therefore, were coded manually and double-checked by the researchers to ensure all cases were metadiscoursal devices in the context.

After classifying metadiscourse subcategories, each item was put into Excel sheets. Then, proportion, density and subcategories of metadiscourse in L2 English writings were compared with those in the L1 English writings. Finally, to investigate common and different features, the use patterns of metadiscourse markers were also analyzed.

Metadiscourse markers in the columns are classified by the following Hyland and Tse's (2004) model.

TABLE 2. Hyland & Tse's (2004) Classification of Metadiscourse

Category	Function	Example
Interactive resources	Help to guide reader through the text	
Transition	Express semantic relation between main clauses	in addition/but/thus/and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	finally/to conclude, my purpose is to
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	noted above/see fig/ in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to sources of information from other texts	according to X/Z states
Code glosses	Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	namely/e.g./such as/ in other words
Interactional resources	Involve the reader in the argument	
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	might/perhaps/possible
Boosters	Emphasize force or writer's certainty in proposition	in fact/ definitely/ it is clear that
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude toward proposition	unfortunately/surprisingly
Engagement markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	consider/note that/ you can see that
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	I/we/my/our

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 The Overall Result of Metadiscourse

On a general level, the results in Table 3 show that the texts written by L1 English writers, which were longer than those by L2 writers, used a higher number of metadiscourse markers. And the density of overall metadiscourse markers in L1's data is slightly higher than that of Koreans, but there is not a big difference: 78.88 for L1 writers and 78.01 for L2 writers per 1,000 words.

TABLE 3. The Density of Overall Metadiscourse Markers

Category	L1	L2
Total words of the articles	543,590	487,486
Number of metadiscourse markers	42,878	38,028
Density of metadiscourse per 1,000 words	78.88	78.01

Table 4 shows the frequency and proportion of total metadiscourse markers used by L1 and L2 writers. The overall frequency of interactional resources is remarkably higher than that of interactive resources by both groups.

TABLE 4. The Number of Occurrences of Metadiscourse

Category	L1	L2	Total
Interactive resources	16,546 (38.59%)	13,363 (35.14%)	29,909 (37.28%)
Interactional resources	26,332 (61.41%)	24,665 (64.86%)	50,997 (62.72%)
Total	42,878 (100%)	38,028 (100%)	80,906 (100%)

Proportionally speaking, L2 writers employed relatively more interactional forms than L1 writers. These outcomes contrast with the findings of many other studies. For example, Faghih & Rahimpour (2009) shows that native English writers used more interactional forms (57.5%) than interactive forms (48.9%) while native Persian writers used more interactive forms (51.1%) than interactional forms (42.5%). Park (2006) and Uhm, *et al.* (2009a) also reported the similar results that native English writers tend to use more interactional forms (hedges, in particular), while Korean writers have higher frequency of the use of interactive forms including much more use of frame markers and code glosses. These results can be interpreted that L2 writers have less intervention and engagement with readers.

Given this study is based on newspaper argumentative writing, it seems that interactional resources which help to reveal writer's stance and make interaction with readers are employed far more than interactive resources in both sets of texts. From now on, we need to look into each category of metadiscourse markers carefully to figure out a detailed picture of L1 and L2 writers' metadiscourse use.

4.2 Interactive Resources

Choices of interactive devices address "readers' expectations that an argument will conform to conventional text patterns and relationships and ordering material in ways that they will find appropriate and convincing" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 54). Therefore, the details of the use of these markers will be helpful to understand how writers guide readers through the text formally.

TABLE 5. Frequency of Use of Interactive Resources

Category	L1		L2	
	No. per 1000 words (Total hits)	% of total markers	No. per 1000 words (Total hits)	% of total markers
Transitions	19.57 (10641)	24.81	17.84 (8699)	22.88
Frame Markers	2.98 (1620)	3.78	2.88 (1403)	3.69
Endophoric Markers	0.72 (392)	0.91	0.44 (214)	0.56
Evidentials	0.57 (311)	0.73	0.19 (94)	0.25
Code Glosses	6.61 (3593)	8.39	6.06 (2953)	7.77
Total	30.44 (16546)	38.59	27.41 (13363)	35.14

As we can see in Table 5, transitions and code glosses are the most frequent devices, followed by frame markers and endophoric markers. The use of transitions constitutes over half of all interactive uses in both sets of texts. The result that transition is the dominant and most frequent interactive marker appears to be in line with Faghih & Rahimpour (2009)'s findings.

Although slight differences across languages and disciplinary communities were found, Hyland & Tse (2004) demonstrated that transition is the most noticeable interactive markers across all disciplinary communities. Intaraprawat & Steffensen (1995) also reported that good essays contained more transition than poor essays. These results indicate that authors use transition frequently, so

that readers can comprehend the text in a coherent and logical structure. In other words, the tendency of the frequent use of transition reveals writer's attempt that helps readers accept his logical views and inferences. Here in the current study, the three most frequently used transition markers are *and*, *but*, and *however*, which comprise 68.7% (L1) and 64.5% (L2) of the occurrence of the transitions, respectively. Interestingly, both groups prefer adversative markers (e.g., *but*, *however*, *yet*) to additive markers (e.g., *and*, *so*, *therefore*) when they try to link ideas.

Regarding the position of transition markers in a sentence, the proportional data of the current study shows that L2 writers employed transitions in sentence-initial position more than L1 writers. For example, Korean English writers' use of *but* (68.8% in L2 vs 30.3% in L1) and *therefore* (39.1% in L2 vs 15.0% in L1) in sentence-initial position is nearly two times more than Native English writers.' Lee (1997) and Park (2006) also reported that Koreans have a tendency to use transitions in a sentence-initial position more than L1 writers. One reason for the result seems to be that L1 writers have been influenced to a greater extent by prescriptive grammarians, who discourage students to use sentence-initial conjunctions (*and* and *or*, in particular) (Bell, 2007).

As indicated in Table 5, the second most frequent devices are code glosses in both sets of texts. Overall, there are not major differences between the two groups in using code glosses. In both corpora, *like* was the most commonly used code gloss item. In diminishing order, or follows this list of code glosses resources, with the L1 group using almost twice higher proportion (n=702 (19.5%)) than the L2 group (n= 371 (15.2%)). L2 writers used *such as* and *especially* slightly more than L1 writers, whereas the former used punctuation devices such as colon, semicolon, and parenthesis less. The use of *in other words*, *particularly* and *called* is considered similar in both groups. According to Dafouz-Milne (2008), this result may suggest that writers are aware of the broad audience they are addressing and consequently they are also aware of the need to include a number of explicit reading cues as well as more exemplifications, thus ensuring that the text is read as intended. Here, L1 writers used more code gloss markers than Korean L2 writers. Similarly, Uhm, *et al*. (2009a) found the L1 writers tend to use more code glosses (reformulation and exemplification markers, in particular), which means they seem to create the reader-friendly

environment in order to help readers facilitate understanding their abstract theory or interpretation. Cuenca & Bach (2009) also indicates that English authors prefer reformulation markers to add more information to the concept, compared to Spanish and Catalan authors. Thus, it helps readers understand the text easily and they make interaction with readers consistently assessing readers' needs in information, background and rhetorical expectation.

Like code glosses, L1 writers use frame markers slightly more than L2 writers do. This result is somewhat different from many previous studies which report the non-native students' tendency to overuse sequencing devices (e.g., Kim, 2009b; Park, 2006; Uhm, *et al*., 2009a, b.) For instance, Kim (2009b) reported Koreans employed frame markers nine times more than Native English writers. Compared to the writing of L1 writers which shows diverse items indicating textual organization of the text, he found out that Koreans seem to be excessively relying on sequencing devices like *first*, *second*, and *third* because they are familiar with a typical structure of sequencing. In general, Hempel and Degand (2008) shows that journalese writers employ frame markers frequently in order to convince his/ her readers of the relevance of their point of view.

The use of the remaining interactive markers such as endophoric markers and evidentials is less frequent in both sets of texts. Since texts in this study are not as long as dissertation or other academic writing, there seems to have few opportunities to refer to information in other paragraphs or writer's assertion.

4.3 Interactional Resources

The choice of interactional resources, which mainly function as the reader involvement device in the argument, focuses more directly on the participants of the interaction, with the writer adopting an acceptable persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the community (Hyland & Tse, 2004). Therefore, the use pattern of these resources reveals how writers understand the norms of argumentative writing in the course of its logical development.

As Table 6 indicates, the overall tendency of the two groups' use of the markers is almost the same. Particularly, the order of the markers according to the frequency of use is identical. Self-mentions and Hedges are by far the most frequent devices followed by boosters and engage markers.

TABLE 6. Frequency of Use of Interactional Resources

Category	L1		L2	
	No. per 1000 words (Total hits)	% of total markers	No. per 1000 words (Total hits)	% of total markers
Hedges	13.25 (7203)	16.80	11.48 (5599)	14.72
Boosters	11.01 (5986)	13.96	8.20 (3996)	10.51
Attitude markers	2.76 (1502)	3.50	1.92 (936)	2.46
Engagement markers	3.68 (2002)	4.67	3.85 (1875)	4.93
Self-mentions	17.73 (9639)	22.48	25.15 (12259)	33.24
Total	48.43 (26332)	61.41	50.60 (24665)	64.86

In particular, self-mentions, the most frequent marker in both sets of texts draw a special attention. According to Hyland (2005a), self-mentions refer to the degree of explicit author presence by using first-person pronouns and possessives (e.g., *I, me, mine, we, our, ours*). It is common that in argumentative writing the author often tries to reveal his/her presence by using the self-mentions. In this kind of writing the personal projection through self-mentions such as first-person pronouns is perhaps the most powerful means of self-representation (Ivanic, 1998). In particular, compared to others, self-mentions are one of two resources which L2 writers use more than L1 writers. The heavy use of the first person plural pronoun 'we' in L2 writing makes the resource one of the outnumbered interactional markers for the Korean L2 writers.

However, the result of the current study contrasts the finding of Uhm *et al*. (2009a) which demonstrates L1 and L2 academic writers tend to underuse self-mentions. In the study, they seem to favor the objective style of writing which avoids self-mentions, emphasizing the involvement with authoritative scholars. In contrast, the writers of argumentative essays such as Op-Ed columns

like texts described here frequently project an impression of themselves and how they stand in relation to their arguments. Therefore, the presence of explicit author reference is generally a conscious choice by these argumentative writers to adopt a particular stance (Hyland, 2001).

The second frequent marker is hedges in both sets of texts. The use of hedges shows the way a writer responses to the potential negatability of his/ her claims. In other words, it reflects an intervention to engage the reader and anticipate possible objections of interpretation (Hyland, 1998). Hinkel (1997) reports that Japanese, Korean and Chinese texts often appear to overuse hedging, which reveals uncertainty because of their writing tradition. Uhm *et al*. (2009a, b) also insist that the Korean language tends to be indirect and unauthoritative in tone, so Korean writers often hesitate to convey clear and strong opinions. Another plausible explanation as noted in Scollon and Scollon (1995) is that Korean writers seem to treat this marker as an indicator of politeness, which Korean culture emphasizes.

Interestingly, the current study shows that L1 writers use more hedges than Koreans. This result might be partly explained by the fact that L1 writers have more flexibility to accept a reader's assessment of the affective aspect of texts (Hyland, 1998). The forms *could* (n=1044) *may* (n=915), *would* (n=453) and *might* (n=439) in L1 writing and *may* (n=840), *might* (n=437), *often* (n=409) and *could* (n=381) in L2 writing are the top five most frequently used devices, which make up 39.1% and 36.9% of the occurrences of hedges, respectively.

Boosters, the third frequent markers, are far more employed by L1 writers than L2 writers as well. Hyland (2005a, p. 145) argues that this resource "seeks to present the proposition with conviction while marking involvement, solidarity and engagement with readers." As an intrinsic characteristic of argumentative writing, they usually help writers to convey their commitment to his or her statement and their confidence and assured attitude. Korean L2 writers' most favorite marker is *find* (n=560), followed by *important* (n=451), *believe* (n=379) and *always* (n=318), whereas L1 writers' most favorite marker is *know* (n=741), followed by *find* (n=517), *important* (n=448) and *certain* (n=420). These items constitute 35.85% (L1) and 42.86% (L2) of the whole occurrences of boosters in both groups, respectively.

In both sets of texts, attitude markers and engagement markers are by far the

least frequent metadiscourse markers. Keep in mind that these devices which have relational implications are hard to distinguish in practice. Because both markers function mainly as affective devices, writers tend to neglect this side of orientation to the reader. According to Hyland (2005a), for example, attitude markers are most explicitly signaled by attitude verbs (e.g., agree, expect), sentence adverbs (e.g., (un)fortunately), and adjectives (e.g., interesting, correct) (Hyland, 2005a). Here *agree* (n=190 in L1, n=142 in L2) and *usually* (n= 143 in L1, n=91 in L2) are the most frequently used words. Overall, L1 writers used more attitude markers than L2 writers, which means the former is more accustomed to creating convincing discourse and establishing personal credibility than the latter.

5. Conclusion

The current investigation deals with L1 and L2 English writers' metadiscourse use in the argumentative essays of English newspapers published in Korea. The results exhibited that the density of the overall metadiscourse use in both sets of texts was similar, but the frequency, proportion and range of subcategories of metadiscourse varied. In the study, both L1 and L2 English writers employed more interactional markers than interactive markers. Of all the subcategories of interactive devices, transition and code glosses were most frequently used by both groups. When it comes to interactional markers, L1 writers employed proportionally more hedges, boosters, and attitude markers than L2 writers did. The difference between L1 writers and L2 writers in this regard was primarily in the use of self-mentions and engagement markers, with their comparatively higher frequency in Korean L2 writing.

Judging from the greater use of transition, hedges, and boosters, L1 writers were more likely to create logical structures and flexibility to consider the reader's response and assured attitude. In addition, the tendency of using the other devices more employed by L1 writers might be explained by their superior language ability, showing an efficient setting and understanding of the relationship with the imagined reader and establishing his or her stance.

The observed similarities in the use of metadiscourse between L1 and L2

writers can be attributed to the newspaper-genre characteristics of argumentative writing that seem to transcend the writers' cultural-linguistic backgrounds. In other words, both groups of writers are well aware of the 'rhetorical conventions and stylistic experience that are tacit and routine for the members' (Doheny-Farina, 1992, p. 296) of the discourse community (here, newspaper readers and writers). It is also obvious that metadiscourse is an aspect of language which provides a link between texts and the writers' mastery of the language. In this regard, the linguistic completeness of the L2 writers might be close to that of the L1 writers, with or without the editorial assistance.

Research on metadiscourse can offer an important means of accounting for the ways writers specify the inferences they would like their readers to make. Particularly, comparative studies like this suggest one way in which acts of argumentation define and maintain the relationship between readers and writers from different L1 backgrounds. In order to provide more satisfactory explanations for the results of the present study, further research is needed with understanding a larger number of writers' educational, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds more clearly.

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