This and *These* in Korean Graduate Students' Academic Writing*

Sun-Young Oh
(Seoul National University)

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This study examines the use of the demonstratives *this/these* in Korean graduate students' research papers in Applied Linguistics. The focus of analysis is on the frequency of their occurrence as determiners and pronouns, the linguistic contexts in which each demonstrative type occurs, and the identification of inappropriate uses. The findings are discussed in comparison with published authors' use of these demonstratives in the same academic field (Gray & Cortes 2011). The results of the study reveal both similarities and differences between the two groups and disclose typical misuses by the students. The implications of these results for teaching academic writing are considered with some examples of useful exercises.

Keywords: Demonstratives, Academic writing, English for Academic Purposes, Corpus linguistics

1. Introduction

The past decade or so has witnessed a rapid increase in the number of studies which investigate various lexico-grammatical features of academic prose in order to provide adequate descriptions of its characteristics and to assist learning, instruction, and materials preparation in the field of EAP (English for Academic Purposes). The features that have been examined include academic vocabulary (Hyland & Tse 2007), pronouns (Hewings & Hewings 2002; Martínez 2005; Luzón 2009), collocation (Gledhill 2000; Marco 2000) lexical bundles (Cortes 2004; Biber et al. 2004; Hyland 2008), citations or reporting verbs (Charles 2006a, 2006b; Thompson 2000), and discourse features such

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as metadiscourse (Hyland 2004; Kim 1999; Samraj 2004). The demonstrative *this* (along with its plural form *these*) is one such feature, which, despite the long tradition of linguistic research on the topic (e.g., Ariel 1988, 1990; Givón 1983; Halliday & Hasan 1976; Lakoff 1974; Lyons 1977), has only recently attracted attention from the academic writing perspective (Gray 2010; Gray & Cortes 2011; Swales 2005).

Reasons for the initial interest in *this/these* include their key role as cohesive devices in discourse (Halliday & Hasan 1976) as well as their ubiquity in academic prose (Biber et al. 1999). While fully embracing these aspects, recent EAP studies on demonstratives further raise as an issue the status of the so-called "unattended *this*" (Geisler et al. 1985), or demonstratives used as pronouns, in academic writing. Most style manuals or textbooks that students consult for help with their academic writing tasks, it is noted, advise against the use of *this/these* that is not followed by a noun (e.g., Axelrod & Cooper 2008; Faigley 2006; Lunsford 2007; Strunk & White 2000; Swales & Feak 2000, 2004). Such a warning is based on the widespread belief that using a demonstrative alone (i.e., as a pronoun) is most likely to result in ambiguous or vague reference, which is to be avoided by adding a noun to the demonstrative (i.e., turning it into a determiner) and thereby providing better guidance for the reader on the antecedent. Corpus-based analyses of published research articles in diverse academic disciplines, however, have shown that expert writers do make recurrent use of demonstratives not only as determiners but also as pronouns in order to create cohesive and effective texts (Gray 2010; Gray & Cortes 2011; Swales 2005). These studies have also described in varying details linguistic contexts in which *this/these* occur, contributing to an enhanced understanding of the demonstrative usage in academic prose. What is still missing, however, is the information on the EAP students' use of these demonstrative structures, specifically in terms of convergences with and/or divergences from the published writers' use. The EAP writing instruction would be better informed by detailed facts about the ways that the target learner group utilizes (and doesn't utilize) demonstratives in their writing. Although there have been a few investigations into non-native learners' use of English demonstratives (e.g., Leńko-Szymańska 2004; S-Y Oh 2009; Petch-Tyson 2000), the texts examined in those studies were argumentative essays written

by college students instead of postgraduate-level research papers, which are more typical samples of academic writing comparable to published articles.

Motivated by the recent attention paid to *this/these* in academic prose and the lack of research analyzing student academic writing in this area, the present study explores how Korean graduate students employ these demonstratives in research papers. The study will identify and describe the frequencies and characteristics of use of *this* and *these* in student writing, and interpret the findings in comparison to those drawn from published articles as reported in previous literature. Applied Linguistics has been chosen as the target academic discipline mainly for practical reasons: it was one of the two disciplines in which expert writers' use of *this/these* has been described extensively by Gray and Cortes (2011), and the researcher, as a member of this disciplinary community, had easier access to student writings in this field. It is hoped that the results of the present study will help novice EAP writers to become aware of potential gaps between their own writing practices and those of published authors, and by conforming better to the latter, to make "an essential adjustment to the academic culture they are entering" (Howarth 1998:186). The findings will have implications for EAP writing pedagogy and materials development as well.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Demonstratives *this/these* as Cohesive Devices and Potential Problems in Their Use

One of the hallmarks of a good piece of writing is being cohesive. Cohesion, according to Halliday and Hasan, "occurs where the interpretation of some element in the discourse is dependent on that of another" (1976:4, emphasis in original). In their pioneering book which has brought forth a vast amount of subsequent work on this topic, the researchers discuss in detail five different kinds of cohesive tie, which are reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, and lexical cohesion. Demonstratives, by relying on some other element in context for their interpretation instead of being interpretable by them-

selves, constitute one important type of referential cohesion.

Although they appear to be simple lexical items, the use of the demonstratives *this/these* "can be problematic for both native and non-native speakers of English" (Swales 2005:1). Swales mentions at least three such problems, the first being the selection of *this* or *it* as a sentence subject. Consider the following examples that he provides:

(1) *The temperature will fall below freezing tonight.*

(1a) ***It*** *will be as low as -5 degrees Celsius in some areas.*

(1b) ***This*** *may cause frost damage to plants.*

Swales explains that *it* is appropriate where the antecedent is an entity, typically a noun phrase such as "the temperature" in (1a), whereas *this* should be chosen for "a larger entity, typically an entire proposition (usually a sentence, but sometimes a clause) that has already been stated" (*ibid*:2) as in (1b). The latter type of reference is called "text reference" by Halliday and Hasan, who suggested that it represents the majority cases of demonstrative uses in most genres and constitutes "one of the major cohesive devices of the English language" (1976:67). The problem of selection between *this* and *it* often becomes more complicated in real discourse with another competitor, i.e., *that*. In other words, the choice that writers (or speakers) have to make is often not a binary but a tripartite one. There have been attempts to account for the writers'/speakers' referential choice specifically in this regard, with some relying on different degrees of focus (defined as the degree of attention given to the referent) with which each of the three alternatives is associated (e.g., Strauss 1993, 2002), and others invoking their different functions in the signaling of focus and topicality in texts (e.g., McCarthy 1994).

The second problem in the use of demonstratives which has been largely neglected in standard grammars or research literature, Swales points out, is the choice between demonstrative pronouns and demonstrative determiners: that is, when to use a demonstrative by itself, and when to follow it with a noun. It has been widely believed in the pedagogic circle that anaphoric demonstratives not accompanying any nouns can confuse readers by unclear reference and are thus to be avoided in general. Accordingly, efforts have been rare to address the

issue of when it *is* apt to use demonstratives as pronouns. One significant exception is Geisler et al. (1985), who have provided a classification for distinguishing clear from unclear uses of "unattended" or pronominal *this*. According to them, *this,* whether used as a pronoun or a determiner, "can make a topic out of a central predication and can put this newly formed topic into focus for further discussion" (*ibid*: 149). The main difference between the two lies in the type of predication being referred to: pronominal *this* points to a "unified," or simple predication whereas complex predications require some noun following *this*. Geisler et al. further note that there are both advantages and disadvantages of choosing one over the other. Writers run the risk of losing economy by unnecessarily following *this* with a noun, a point they make with the following pair of examples:

(2) *John won the race.* ***This*** *made him very happy.*
(2′) *John won the race.* ***This win*** *made him very happy.*

In (2) pronominal *this* refers efficiently to the whole preceding sentence whereas in (2') *this* is followed by the noun *win*, which is redundant with no added referential or attitudinal meaning, resulting in an awkward-sounding statement. On the other hand, using a standalone *this* (when an attending noun is necessary) may cost clarity and/or valuable rhetorical resources that are made available only through the noun following *this*. The researchers thus recommend keeping a good balance between economy and clarity in making a referential decision regarding *this*.

The last of the three problems discussed by Swales arises with the choice of a demonstrative determiner over a pronoun: What noun should be selected to follow the demonstrative used as a determiner? Writers/speakers need to make a selection from numerous candidates that are available for this purpose, including a repeat of the antecedent, superordinates, synonyms, general nouns, etc. Choosing the one that is most apposite to the writer's purpose often constitutes a critical rhetorical strategy in that the noun can emphasize or further characterize the referent in a certain way (Geisler et al. 1985) or convey attitudinal meanings (Francis 1994), thereby influencing the reader's understanding of the text.

The foregoing discussion illustrates some of the intricacies involved

in the use of *this/these*. It is expected that student writers, especially non-native learners, will most likely find it hard to deal with all or some of the problems mentioned above as successfully as expert writers.

2.2. Previous Corpus-based Studies of Demonstratives in Academic Writing

In recent years a few studies have begun to investigate how demonstratives are used in the specific register of academic prose, utilizing large electronic corpora and corpus-linguistic tools and techniques. In the context of academic writing, proximal demonstratives have enjoyed special attention due to their greater frequency in this genre and presumably also to their critical role in signaling high focus on the referent to which the writer wants to draw the reader's attention (Strauss 1993, 2002). As a well-known EAP teacher and materials writer, Swales (2005) makes a confession that he has long discouraged his students from using unattended *this*, advising them to always follow it with a suitable noun (Swales & Feak 2000, 2004). This, according to him, was in order to reduce potential ambiguities that often result from the use of pronominal *this* and also to endow the text a more professional style. He has come to observe, however, an adverse effect of this "benign neglect" of the cases where *this* without any attending noun is actually a better choice than the other. One of his students, who was pursuing a doctoral degree in Educational Technology, developed a referential habit of avoiding, almost completely, unattended *this* (especially in clause-initial position), apparently induced by his teaching. Much to their surprise, this turned out to be severely abnormal when compared with the standard practice of published journal articles in her discipline. Prompted by this casual yet unanticipated finding, Swales launched an investigation on this issue using a corpus consisting of 340 research articles drawn from ten disciplines. Indeed, he found that of all the clause-initial occurrences of *this*, which accounted for half of the total frequencies, approximately a third were uses as pronouns. An examination of the most common nouns following *this* used as a determiner revealed that they frequently refer to the article itself (e.g., *study, article, paper, account*) and method (e.g., *method, technique, procedure, process*) or results (e.g., *result, finding)* of the research.

The issue raised by Swales has been picked up and subjected to

more systematic and detailed analyses by Gray. In her 2010 study, Gray explored the use of sentence-initial *this/these* and their cohesive function in a corpus of published research articles in Education and Sociology. In addition to confirming Swales' observation that published authors do use *this/these* as pronouns (as well as determiners), Gray reported a few additional findings about the linguistic contexts of the demonstratives through comprehensive computerized analyses. When *this/these* were used as pronouns, they predominantly referred to clausal antecedents but not a longer stretch of text across sentence boundaries. This is in line with Geisler et al.'s (1985) account that unattended *this* is a reference to a unified concept whereas attended *this* refers to a complex predication. When used as determiners, on the other hand, *this/these* were often found to be followed by "shell nouns" (Hunston & Francis 2000; Schmid 2000),[1)] and the antecedents tended to be either full clauses or extended passages that are longer than a single sentence. One limitation of this study is that by focusing only on sentence-initial tokens of *this/these,* the majority (approximately three-fourth) of the total occurrences were left unanalyzed. Additionally, shell nouns were operationalized as the nouns on the Schmid's (2000) predetermined list without actually examining each instance in its context, which is essential for accurate classification.

In another research that she conducted with a colleague (Gray & Cortes 2011), Gray analyzed *this/these* in academic research articles in Applied Linguistics and Materials and Civil Engineering, this time analyzing a smaller-sized corpus mostly by hand. The authors were again interested in both determiner and pronoun uses, and additionally in similarities and differences between the two disciplines. The study disclosed that overall, Applied Linguistics had a higher frequency of *this/these* than Engineering (1097 vs. 749) but the two disciplines were comparable in that pronominal *this/these* were chosen about a fifth of the time. When *this/these* were used as determiners, they were followed by five different types of nouns, i.e., concrete nouns, deictic nouns, and abstract nouns, with the last being sub-categorized into shell, adverbial head, and other abstract nouns. The most frequent noun type was shell nouns, representing over 40% of the total nouns

1) A detailed explanation and examples of shell nouns will be provide in the Method section.

following *this/these*, and their abundant occurrences were not dissimilar across academic disciplines. The authors thus pay special attention to *this/these* plus a shell noun as an important cohesive structure in academic writing.

There also exist a few studies which examined the ways in which non-native learners employ English demonstratives, comparing them with the native writers' use. Unlike the studies reviewed above, these studies dealt with undergraduates' argumentative essays instead of a postgraduate level of academic writing, and partly for that reason, included both proximal and distal demonstratives in their scope of analysis. Petch-Tyson (2000), who analyzed the essays written by EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners with various European mother tongues (i.e., Dutch, French, Finnish, and Swedish), uncovered some discrepancies between the learners and native writers. While the learners overall used demonstratives less frequently than the native group, they showed a tendency to overuse the distal demonstrative *that*. In addition, the learners' demonstrative usage showed less frequent reference to extended text as well as unsuccessful reference (i.e., unclear or no antecedents). The learners often failed to fully exploit the choice of a noun which, following a demonstrative, can serve a useful rhetorical function. These learner characteristics were found to remain relatively the same across different L1s although some L1-specific features were occasionally observed. In partial conflict with Petch-Tyson (2000), Leńko-Szymańska (2004) reported Polish learners' overuse of demonstratives in general, and of distal demonstratives in particular. This study was specifically interested in the effect of learners' proficiency on the patterns of demonstrative use, and the results indicated no significant changes across different levels. The conclusion was thus drawn that native-like use of demonstratives is not acquired implicitly by these learners.

In the Korean EFL context, S-Y Oh's (2009) comparable analyses of college students' use of English demonstratives revealed that the students utilized the demonstratives less often than do the native peers. She found additional differences, such as the learners' greater dependence on the distal demonstratives, underuse of *this/those* as a pronoun and of *these* as a determiner, and overuse of *that* as a pronoun, when compared with the native norm. Qualitative analyses have revealed consistent findings as the previous studies: in learner essays, demon-

stratives are not frequently used for text reference while nouns and modifiers co-occurring with demonstratives are limited in type and variety. The researcher attributes some of these findings to the transfer of the native language and of spoken characteristics to a written register. As in Leńko-Szymańska's (2004) study, higher-level learners did not perform significantly better than lower-level learners despite the former group's occasional better performance. This confirmed that increase of the general language proficiency does not automatically guarantee the native-like use of demonstratives.

The studies discussed above attest to the latest attention to *this/these* in academic writing and to the use of demonstratives by EFL learners at the college level. It should be apparent at the same time that a research gap exists in that no attempt has been made thus far to scrutinize postgraduate students' use of demonstratives in academic research papers. The present study intends to fill this gap by searching for answers to the following research questions.

Research Questions:

1) How frequently are *this* and *these* used as determiners and pronouns in the Korean graduate students' academic writing in Applied Linguistics?
2) What types of linguistic contexts are frequent with *this/these* used as pronouns, including the types of verbs that follow the demonstratives serving as the grammatical subject?
3) What types of linguistic contexts are frequent with *this/these* used as determiners, including the types of nouns that follow the demonstratives?
4) What kinds of inappropriate uses of demonstratives, if there are any, are found in the student academic writing?

The first three questions deal with issues which proved to be important in the studies of published research articles (Gray 2010; Gray & Cortes 2011), and the last addresses the special nature of the data used in the current study. Whenever possible and appropriate, the results of analyzing the corpus of student writing will be compared with the findings drawn from a corpus of published research articles in the same discipline as reported by Gray and Cortes (2011).

3. Method

3.1. Data

The current study used a corpus of research papers produced by Korean graduate students working in the field of Applied Linguistics (more specifically, foreign language education). The papers were written as a partial requirement for the academic courses that the students took in the graduate program at a university in Seoul during the years of 2008 to 2011, and were reports on empirical research that they undertook. The students may be assumed to be at an advanced level of English proficiency, judging from the fact that they all satisfied the English language requirement in their graduate school, which was a score above 750 on the Test of English Proficiency developed by Seoul National University (TEPS).[2] Since the results of the present study are compared with those of Gray and Cortes (2011) who examined published articles in the same academic discipline,[3] the corpus of student writing was deliberately complied to reach a similar size as theirs in terms of the total number of words (i.e., approximately 100,000 words). Table 1 displays the basic information of the two corpora.

Table 1. Corpora Composition

Corpus	Words	Texts
Student writing	100,677	26
Published writing (Gray & Cortes 2011)	100,461	22

No more than one paper per a student was included in the corpus in order to minimize the possible effect of individual writer characteristics. As part of the normal practice of building academic corpora, all

2) The TEPS grading system suggests that scores ranging from 701 to 800 indicate that the test-taker has an advanced level of communicative competence, 801 to 900, a near-native level, and 901 to 990, a native-level (http://www.teps.or.kr/Teps/info/teps_grade.aspx).

3) The Applied Linguistics Published Writing corpus used in Gray and Cortes (2011) is a sub-corpus of the Published Research Article Corpus (Cortes 2007). The latter is a large corpus composed of journal articles from more than 20 academic disciplines, with each discipline represented by approximately 500,000 words.

the language or material that does not belong to the body of the papers (e.g., tables, figures, references, appendices, etc.) was manually removed.

3.2. Procedure

The procedure for analyzing the Student Writing corpus closely followed that of Gray and Cortes (2011) for the Published Writing corpus in order to make the comparison between the two corpora more valid and meaningful. As the first step, all instances of *this* and *these* were extracted in Student Writing using the concordancing software WordSmith (version 5). The second step involved categorizing each token as a pronoun or a determiner, during which process the tokens that were not produced by the writers themselves, such as those found in excerpts or in citations, were removed from the list. Next, the frequencies and relative percentages were calculated for the two types of demonstratives. Chi-square tests were then performed to determine the statistical significance of the differences in frequency between the two corpora.

For the demonstratives used as pronouns, their grammatical function in the sentence (i.e., subject, object, etc.) was coded for each instance. For those that function as grammatical subjects, the verb was additionally classified as a copular or a lexical verb, given the previous finding that these two emerged as significant verb types that co-occur with demonstrative pronominal subjects (Gray 2010; Gray & Cortes 2011; Halliday & Hasan 1976; Swales 2005). The ratio of copula verbs to lexical verbs was then computed.

The analysis for determiner uses of the demonstratives entailed the classification of the head noun following *this/these* into three main types, i.e., concrete, deictic, and abstract nouns. Abstract nouns were further divided into three sub-categories of shell, adverbial head, and other nouns. The defining characteristics of each category which were described in Gray and Cortes (2011) served as the criteria for the present analysis. They are provided below, along with illustrative examples taken from Student Writing. First, concrete nouns "represented physical entities that could be touched" (*ibid,* p. 35) as in the case of *school, adults,* or *subjects*:

(3) *All participants were undergraduate students at a university. ... **These subjects** were taking an advanced or an intermediate General English conversation classes during the spring semester.*

Nouns categorized as deictic refer to the research paper as a whole, or a certain part of the article (e.g., *study, paper, section*):

(4) *Thus, **this study** aims to investigate how the teaching practicum experience affects a pre-service English teacher's practical knowledge and beliefs of teaching English.*

Shell nouns are "an open-ended functionally-defined class of abstract nouns that have, to varying degrees, the potential for being used as conceptual shells for complex, proposition-like pieces of information" (Schmid 2000:4). These nouns are made specific in meaning only by reference to the immediate linguistic context in which they are used, and thereby create cohesion in text.[4] Typical examples include *issue, example, problem, effect,* and *result*. In the following example, *issue* is used as a shell noun, capturing the entire meaning of the preceding clauses (underlined in the example):

(5) *Concerning these two verbs used above and other substitutive verbs that have similar semantic property such as lead, take, or bring, it follows that interesting word-plays between conceptual and linguistic metaphor surely exist and this kind of feature can give some insights into the foreign language learning and teaching in EFL context. **This issue** will be touched upon later on.*

Nouns were categorized as 'adverbial head nouns' if they occur in structures that function as an adverbial, often serving as a discourse marker. Examples include *way* (occurring in the phrase *in this way*), *manner* (*in this manner*), *reason* (*for this reason*), and *point* in the next

4) The class of abstract nouns that is being referred to here as shell nouns following Hunston and Francis (1999) Schmid (2000), and Gray and Cortes (2011) has been discussed elsewhere under a number of different label. The terms used include "type 3 vocabulary" (Winter 1977), "unspecific nouns" (Winter 1982), "metalanguage nouns" (Winter 1992), "anaphoric nouns" (Francis 1986), "carrier nouns" (Ivanic 1991), "advance/retrospective labels" (Francis 1994), "enumerbles" (Tadros 1985), and "signalling nouns" (Flowerdew, 2003).

example.

(6) *Secondly, autonomous self-learning with pedagogic corpus is possible and appropriate for them in that they have already learned what they want to study* ***at this point****.*

Abstract nouns that were classifiable neither into shell nouns nor adverbial head nouns were categorized as 'other abstract nouns':

(7) *Therefore Koreans who use American online shopping malls and plan to write a product review on their own are advised to pay attention to these differences and adjust their writing style. … Lastly, it is suggested that they take* ***this genre*** *more seriously than they do in Korean.*

Sometimes same nouns were categorized into different types, depending on their actual use in context. For instance, *this study* most often referred to the paper itself (or the project that the paper reports on), in which case *study* was coded for deictic noun. In a few instances, however, *this study* referred back to some other research mentioned in the preceding clause or sentence and thus was classified as other abstract noun. The following is one such example:

(8) *Chon (2007) investigates the role of dictionary as an aid for solving lexical problems that learners meet in their writings.* ***This study*** *indicates dictionary-based problems arise due to writers' lack of knowledge of the L2 word(s) …*

Once the categorization of nouns following *this/these* was complete, the percentage of each noun type was calculated out of all instances of demonstratives attended by a noun. All of the results which were derived from Student Writing were compared with those from Published Writing (Gray & Cortes 2011) in order to disclose any significant convergences and/or divergences between the two corpora. The last step of the procedure involved identifying inappropriate or awkward uses of the demonstrative structures in Student Writing and analyzing them in qualitative manners. Since the goal of this analysis was to describe the source and nature of such uses and suggest some

pedagogical solutions, no attempt has been made to quantify the inappropriate uses, which was beyond the scope of the present article.

4. Results & Discussion

4.1. Frequency of *this/these* as Determiners and Pronouns

Figure 1 shows the frequencies of *this/these* used as determiners and as pronouns, as well as in total, in the two corpora of Published Writing and Student Writing. Compared with Published Writing, Student Writing had lower frequencies of demonstratives in both types.

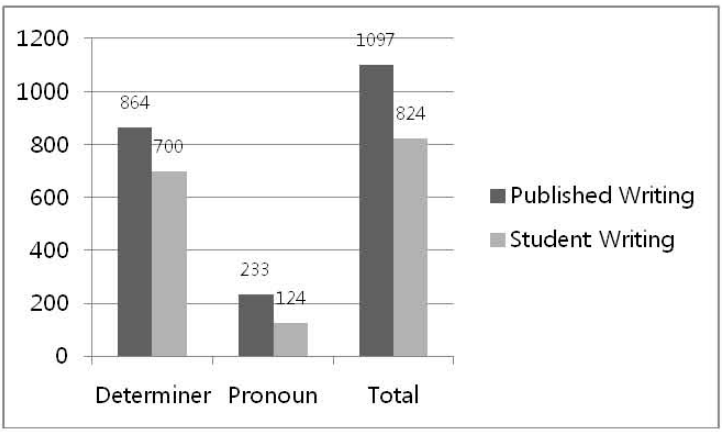

Figure 1. Frequency of *this/these* as determiners and pronouns.

The chi-square tests indicated that the difference in frequency was highly significant all for the determiner (χ^2 = 17.689, *df* = 1, p < 0.001), pronoun (χ^2 = 33.574, *df* = 1, p < 0.001), and total uses (χ^2 = 39.765, *df* = 1, p < 0.001). It thus confirms that Korean graduate students, on the whole, employ the demonstratives *this* and *these* significantly less frequently in their academic writing than do published authors. The Korean students' underuse of *this/these* has also been reported by S-Y Oh (2009) although the level and type of the writing task in the two studies are dissimilar.

Figure 2 displays the relative percentage of pronouns and deter-

miners (out of all occurrences of *this/these*) in the two corpora. The results point to differences as well as similarities between the two. Speaking of the similarities, the majority of tokens of *this* and *these* were used as determiners in both Published and Student Writing (79% and 85%, respectively), with the remaining instances constituting pronominal uses (21% and 15%, respectively). The difference between the two types of writing lies in the greater proportion of the pronominal uses (or the smaller proportion of the determiner uses) in Published Writing than in Student Writing. Putting the results shown in Figures 1 and 2 together, it can be concluded that student writers, compared with published authors, tend not only to employ *this/these* less frequently, but to use them as pronouns less often when they do.

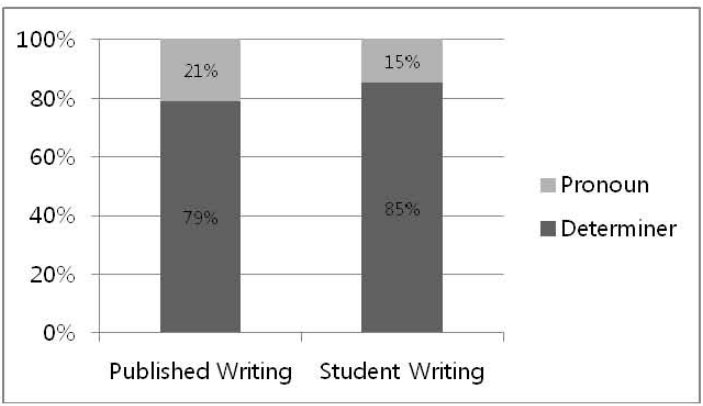

Figure 2. Percentage of *this/these* as determiners and pronouns.

The preponderance of *this/these* in academic prose has often been noted in the literature (Biber et al. 1999; Nishimura 1996; Swales 2005). This is in large part due to the focusing nature of the proximal demonstratives as well as their cohesive role in discourse. While student writers generally seem to understand this function of *this/these* and incorporate them frequently in their research papers, they apparently failed to reach the degree comparable to published writers. The fact that they specifically underused *this/these* as a pronoun suggests a couple of points to consider.[5] First, it is possible that students are under

5) An examination of frequencies in individual texts revealed that occurrences of pronominal *this/these* are not evenly distributed across the 26 student papers. While there were three papers which included no token of *this/these* used as pro-

the influence of most style manuals and guidelines (or writing instructors), which (or who) commonly warn against unattended *this* for reasons of clarity. Second, considering that demonstrative pronouns are typically employed for text reference (Halliday & Hasan 1976), their lower frequency of occurrence may indicate that student writers make text references less often than expert writers. This, in fact, echoes S-Y Oh's (2009) finding that pronominal *this* occurred with significantly lower frequencies in the argumentative essays written by Korean undergraduates than in the native peers' comparable writing, where it was found abundantly and mostly for text reference. As noted earlier, text reference is characterized by its antecedent being a clause or longer stretches of discourse. Given that the pronominal *this* is regularly used in English to refer "economically to a central predication" (Geisler et al. 1985:148), student writers may be at a risk of producing verbose and inefficient writing if they don't make enough use of it.

4.2. Distribution of Verb Types in Pronominal Uses of *this/these*

When *this* and *these* were used as pronouns in Student Writing, they primarily functioned as grammatical subjects in the sentence (n = 105, 85%). In the remaining cases, they took the role of grammatical objects (n = 10, 8%) or some others (n = 8, 7%). In the case of demonstrative pronouns serving as subjects, the main verb of the sentence was classified either into a copula or a lexical verb. Figure 3 displays the distribution of these two verb types in Published Writing and Student Writing.

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nouns, other three papers showed 10 or more of such instances. The majority of the student papers (18 out of 26), however contaied a fewer number of pronominal *this/these* than the average (i.e., 4.7), which confirms the general underuse of this category of demonstratives by the student The comparison with published articles in this respect was not possible due to the unavailability of text-based frequencies in Gray and Cortes (2011).

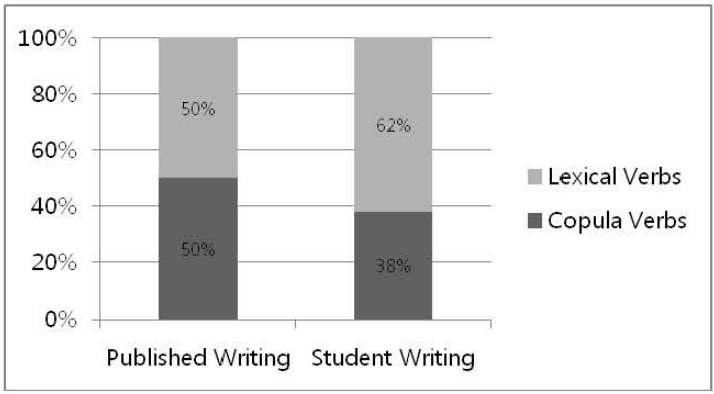

Figure 3. Verb types following pronominal *this/these* serving as subjects.

While the proportion of copula verbs to lexical verbs was equal in Published Writing, the former verb type occurred less frequently (n = 40, 38%) than the latter (n = 65, 62%) in Student Writing. In other words, pronominal subjects *this/these* tended to be followed by copula verbs more often in Published Writing than in Student Writing although copulas represent a considerable percentage of the total verbs in both corpora.

Earlier studies on the clause-initial *this/these* have found that these demonstratives, when functioning as pronouns, routinely refer to an extended passage of discourse rather than a simple noun phrase (Gray 2010; Halliday & Hasan 1976; Swales 2005). Such text reference commonly occurs "in equative clauses where the demonstrative provides the 'given' element in the message and this then serves to identify some other element that is 'new,' by simply being equated with it" (Halliday & Hasan 1976:67). It thus seems natural that copula verbs occupy a large portion of the entire verbs found in this linguistic context.[6] This kind of equative clauses with text-referential *this* (in the form of the predicative structure *this is*...) was not uncommon in Student Writing, although not as frequent as in Published Writing. Below are some examples:

(9) *Members of English-speaking discourse community have a tendency to*

6) Swales suggests that pronominal *this* is more likely to occur than determiner *this* plus a noun if it is followed by a verb that is "syntactically and semantically simple" (2005:13), the most representative example being the "existence" verb *be* (Biber et al. 1999).

show off expertise on the products. By doing so, they ensure readers that they have adequate experience and insight required to give a comprehensive review. ***This*** *is very important in that expertise makes their review more reliable, convincing, thus appeal to other people better.*

(10) *In spoken communication, the speakers and hearers take the concept of modality as a key in interpreting the degree of certainty and confidence of the other's utterance and attitude.* ***This*** *is not easy even in mother tongue.*

(11) *Although the general frequency of spatial* before *is higher than that of* in front of*, both spatial* before *and* in front of*'s occurrences in imaginative prose outnumber those in informative prose.* ***This*** *can be due to the descriptive nature of fiction when compared to other types of texts.*

As seen in the excerpts above, pronominal *this* followed by a copula verb typically refers to an observation, assertion, or a research finding, which is evaluated (e.g., as "very important" in (9) or "not easy" (10)) or provided an account or interpretation for (e.g., "can be due to..." in (11), or more commonly "is because..."). Copula verbs play a key role in offering such an evaluation or an account/interpretation by serving as a "mental equal sign" (Gray & Cortes 2011:35).

Lexical verbs occurred as often as copula verbs in Published Writing, and much more frequently in Student Writing. Frequent lexical verbs (occurring three or more times) in Student Writing include *mean, indicate, show, call, discuss,* and *lead to*, with the first three also on the top 7 most frequent verb list of Gray and Cortes (2011). Note that these verbs are habitually used in academic prose to provide some kind of interpretation, discussion, or implication of a finding, description, or result of analysis which is stated in the previous clause. There seems to be little difference between published authors and student writers in this regard. Among the following examples, extract (12) is taken from a published article, and (13) and (14), from student papers:

(12) *The most common reasons given were that computers made writing "easier," facilitated the correction of spelling and punctuation mistakes, were "modern," "useful," "interesting," and "faster" than writ-*

ing by hand. ***This corroborates*** *conclusions from other researchers, who report that CMC in the second language classroom facilitates general communication and the revision process.* (Gray & Cortes 2011:38)

(13) *The most surprising thing was sentence 10. In sentence 10, almost every students chose an appropriate item rather than an awkward word in both test*. ***This means*** *that students really knew which was more natural expression.*

(14) *In informative prose, the gap between occurrences of spatial* before *and* in front of *got bigger as 2.8 times. Considering the descriptive use of spatial prepositions, it would be reasonable to deduce that the occurrence of spatial* before *has jumped rather than the occurrence of* in front of *has dropped*. ***This suggests*** *that spatial* before *may be preferred among certain sub-registers of the informative prose.*

In all of the examples shown in this section, *this* refers to the whole preceding clause or sentence, which allows the writer to manage complex information contained therein in a highly efficient manner. The same effect cannot be achieved by the repeat of the antecedent, which will render the resulting text unnecessarily ponderous and much less efficient. While Korean graduate students generally seem to be capable of employing text-referential pronominal *this* to their advantage, they evidently are not making the most of it, given its significantly fewer occurrences in their writing than in published articles. Compared with this relative lack of *this* for text reference, the somewhat lower percentage of copula verbs following the demonstrative subjects does not seem to pose a serious problem as long as both copula and lexical verbs are used by the students and published authors alike for similar functions.

4.3. Distribution of Noun Types Following Determiner *this/these*

It has been shown earlier (see Figure 2) that *this* and *these* were employed more frequently as determiners than as pronouns in both Student Writing and Published Writing, but that the degree of preference was greater in the former than the latter. A further divergence between the two corpora emerges when the distribution is compared

of the five categories of head nouns that follow *this/these* used as determiners. Figure 4 indicates that the biggest difference is found in the proportion of shell nouns.

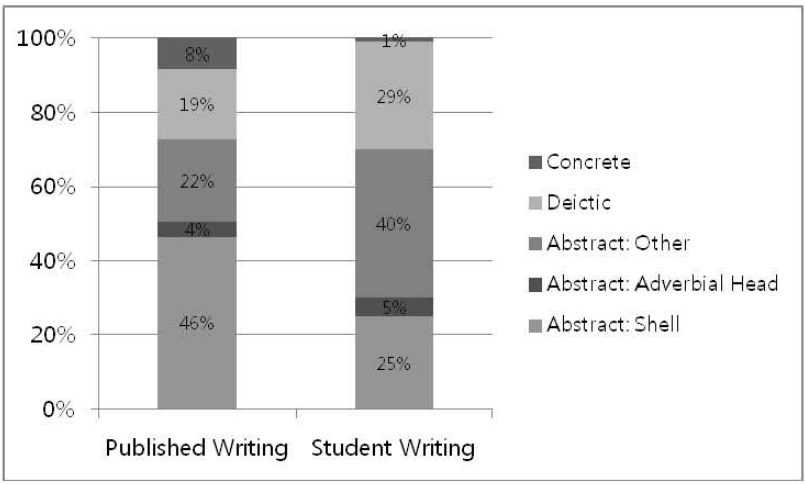

Figure 4. Distribution of noun types following *this/these* used as determiners.

Whereas shell nouns account for the largest part (46%) in Published Writing, this category ranks the third (n = 173, 25%) in Student Writing, following other abstract nouns (n = 281, 40%) and deictic nouns (n = 200, 29%).[7] That is, student writers did not follow the determiners *this/these* with shell nouns as frequently as published writers, choosing other types of nouns more often. Similarities also exist, however, in that adverbial head nouns represent a similar percentage in the two corpora (i.e., 4%, 5%).

The most frequent shell nouns in the corpus of published articles in Applied Linguistics (and Engineering) were *research, method, result,* and *model*, which "deal with the methodologies and findings that are inherently found in research articles and are not discipline-specific" (Gray & Cortes 2011:39).[8] This finding holds true in the present corpus of students' research papers, too. The noun with the highest fre-

7) The distribution of the noun categories in Published Writing is presented by Gray and Cortes (2011) in percentiles only with no actual frequencies.

8) There were eleven shell nouns that occurred more than 10 times in Gray and Cortes' (2011) corpora representing the two disciplines, which are *research, method, result, model, test, data, analysis, finding, difference, issue,* and *system.*

quency in Student Writing is *result*, occurring a total of 23 times. Nouns that occurred five or more times include *purpose, example, limitation, phenomenon, characteristics, process, fact, point,* and *problem.* Such a largely "discipline-neutral" characteristic of shell nouns is rather expected, given their essential feature of acquiring specific meaning only from their linguistic context, a point made by Gray and Cortes (2011) as well.

Pairing shell nouns with *this/these* can bring about similar effects as the use of pronominal *this/these* does for textual reference. They both enable the writer to efficiently handle complex pieces of information expressed in long stretches of preceding text, and to use it as a participant in the following discourse. One main difference between the two referential options is that the constructions with shell nouns have additional advantages in characterizing the referent in a way that is rhetorically beneficial to the writer. In a similar vein, Schmid (2000) lists three defining functions of shell nouns, i.e., semantic, cognitive, and textual functions.[9] These three functions may be illustrated with the following examples taken from Student Writing.

(15) *However, two things need to be taken into consideration with respect to understanding and acquiring subcategorization frames of verbs. First, it is not always easy to determine the core participants of verbs. Prepositional phrase is one example of* ***this problem****.*

(16) *A genre refers to a category of spoken or written discourse. The distinction between different genres, however, is not always clear since there is no fixed boundaries. Despite* ***this limitation****, a lot of previous studies attempted to figure out sets of conventions by which a genre is formed.*

In both of the examples above, the demonstrative plus a shell noun structure allows the writer to characterize dense information which is contained in the preceding sentence (semantic function), summarize, or "encapsulate," this information temporarily into nominal shells, i.e., *problem* and *limitation*, (cognitive function), and link those nominal

9) Schmid underscores the critical but often-neglected fact that "whether a given noun is a shell noun or not does not depend on inalienable characteristics inherent in the noun, but on its use" (2000:13).

concepts with the following text which conveys additional or related information (textual function). By choosing a specific shell noun to follow *this*, the writer instructs readers to accept his/her characterization of the proposition being referred to, and thereby guides their interpretation of the text in the direction they have planned.

Deictic nouns, on the other hand, work as a pointer with which the writer takes readers to different parts or entities of his/her text. In Student Writing *study* was used with the highest frequency (n = 133) for this function, followed by *paper* (n = 23) and *section* (n = 12). Less frequent deictic nouns include *research, experiment,* and *chapter.* A comparison with Published Writing exposed both a resemblance and a disparity. The two corpora shared the top two most frequent deictic nouns (i.e., *study* and *paper*), both of which refer to the research paper as a whole in a meta-discursive sense. Unlike Published Writing, however, Student Writing lacked lower levels of deictic nouns which refer to extralinguistic objects within the paper (e.g., *figure, table, graph*).

As for other abstract nouns, the most noticeable two groups are discipline-specific nouns including *word, verb, sentence,* and *corpus* and "species nouns" (Gray & Cortes 2011) such as *kind, type,* and *sort* which typically serve as the head of prepositional phrases. Both types were found to occur in Published Writing, too.

Adverbial head nouns accounted for similar percentages in Student Writing and Published Writing (4% and 5%, respectively). As explained earlier, the term "adverbial head nouns" is derived from the fact that the noun phrases to which these nouns belong as heads have an adverbial function. *Case*, which occurred 8 times in the present corpus, was the most frequently used noun in both corpora. Additional nouns in this category include *sense, respect, point*, *context, regard,* and *reason,* the first three of which were also found in Published Writing. There were some items, too, that seemed to be distinctive to the published articles, among which *way* is noteworthy in frequency (n = 12).

The noun type that occurred least frequently (1%) in the students' papers was concrete nouns. Examples are *subjects, pictures, school,* and *adults*, none of which occurred with significant frequencies. In the published articles, concrete nouns represented 8% of the total nouns following *this* and were mostly people (e.g., *adult, educator, children, teacher, student*). Since concrete nouns tend to be topic-sensitive as

well as discipline-specific (Gray and Cortes 2011), reflecting the nature of the research represented in the corpora, their larger portion in Published Writing than in Student Writing seems to suggest that the former corpus includes a greater number of research that involves human participants.

4.4. Inappropriate Uses of *this/these*

4.4.1. Pronominal *this/these*

It has been pointed out that using *this/these* as pronouns appropriately is a demanding task for novice writers, including native speakers (Geisler et al. 1985; Swales 2005). A writer's misuse of anaphoric demonstratives can result in readers' confusion and misunderstanding or incomprehension of the text. This is the main reason why many writing instructors and manuals disapprove of demonstrative pronouns in students' academic writing. Close examination of the Korean graduate students' use of *this/these* not followed by a noun revealed that there are indeed many instances of vague reference or other types of inappropriate uses. Some of these cases are considered in the current section (In each example, the target demonstrative structure is typed in bold, and its antecedent underlined).

In extract (17) below, the use of *this* is not awkward simply because it does not agree in number with the antecedent in the preceding sentence, i.e., *overused verbal patterns*:

(17) *Corpus-based analysis of grammar patterns of verbs in student writing provides information about the over and under use of verbal patterns. <u>Overused verbal patterns</u> can indicate that students prefer to use these patterns. However,* ***this(?)*** *also can indicate that students are over dependent on those patterns and thus their writing lacks diversity of patterns and styles.*

In the last sentence for which *this* serves as a subject, the writer continues the discussion of the implications of "overused verbal patterns," which has started in the preceding sentence. The awkwardness mainly comes from the fact that a regular pronoun (i.e., *they* in this case) is appropriate for signaling continuation of a topic that is already "in focus" (Geisler et al. 1985).[10] The selection of pronominal

this would have been apt if the writer had chosen to focus on the content of the entire preceding clause (instead of a noun phrase in it) and thereby guided the ensuing discussion in a different direction. The next excerpt shows a similar misuse of *this*:

(18) *The types of complements that follow verbs are also known as verbal complementation patterns.* ***This(?)*** *can be identified with grammar patterns of verbs in many cases, but grammar patterns of verbs (or verbal patterns) here are used in a broader sense which embraces the notion of verbal complementation patterns.*

The use of pronominal *this*, which is normally dedicated to text reference, in the second sentence is most likely to mislead the readers because its antecedent intended by the writer actually appears to be a noun phrase (i.e., *verbal complementation patterns*). Otherwise, the sentence containing *this* is not interpretable. As in the previous example, a regular pronoun (i.e., *they*) would have been a better choice.[11] In both (17) and (18), the readers' confusion is intensified by the incongruence between the demonstrative and the antecedent in number. Now let us consider the next excerpt:

(19) *UG is motivated by learnability arguments: there is mismatch between the input and the output, which gives rise to what is known as the problem of the poverty of the stimulus or the logical problem of language acquisition.* ***This(?)*** *is concerned with the claim that it would not be possible to account for this phenomenon without postulating a built-in system of universal linguistic principles and grammatical properties.*

In the example above, *this* in the second sentence is unclear as to its intended antecedent: Is it referring to the clause "UG is motivated by learnability arguments," "there is a mismatch between the input and the output," or some other part or the whole of the preceding sen-

10) According to Geisler et al., topics are "in focus" when they can be expected by the readers to be picked up for further discussion in the following text.

11) If a special focus on the antecedent is desired, a demonstrative plus a noun may be used instead; *these pattern*, which would seem a natural option in that case, however, sounds awkward due to many repetitions of the same noun in the adjacent clauses.

tence? With no clear, identifiable antecedent of *this* at hand, readers have a slim chance to succeed in fully comprehending this sentence, which includes another vague demonstrative reference (i.e., *this phenomenon*).

The last excerpt shows a different kind of trouble in locating the antecedent of *this*:

(20) *The participants had been required to submit their English proficiency test score before they participated in this study. The averages of English proficiency test score (TEPS, TOEIC, TOEFL) and standard deviation are given below (TABLE 1).* ***This(?)*** *was done to ensure the reliability of the test in light of most of the students being highly aware of the individual words which was used in questionnaires of this study.*

In (20), using *this* as the subject of the last sentence is perplexing in that the demonstrative is obviously pointing not to the immediately previous sentence, but to the one that precedes it. This goes against Brown and Yule's (1983) "principle of local relevance," which states that "under normal circumstances a deictic is interpreted in terms of the immediately preceding option (recited from Swales 2005:12). Readers will thus be disoriented by the conflict between their default expectation and the writer's use of *this*. Unlike the student writers of the above examples, experienced writers always provide their readers with good cues for determining the antecedent to anaphoric demonstrative constructions, thus facilitating the readers' understanding of their text.

4.4.2. Determiner *this/these*

Improper uses of *this/these* occurred not only when they are used as pronouns but as determiners as well. Three inappropriate determiner uses of *this/these* are discussed below. First, in (21), a demonstrative plus a noun construction, i.e., *these uses*, appears in the first sentence of a section within one student's paper, directly following the section title.

(21) *4.1.3 Patterns (collocation/combinations with discourse marker)*
Worthy of note in ***these uses(?)*** *of discourse marker* just *is its collocations: frequently used along with subject* I, *sometimes followed by*

present and past tense verb of be.

Such a use, which was not infrequent in the corpus of students' research papers, is unsuitable because there is no antecedent to the anaphoric demonstrative in the immediately preceding linguistic context. As a cohesive device, the demonstrative structure depends for its interpretation on some other element in the prior discourse, which is missing here. Readers are thus left puzzled about what *these uses* refers to. Paragraph-initial uses of anaphoric demonstratives are very often inappropriate for the same reason.

In the second sentence of the following excerpt, *this* is followed by a shell noun, *results*. The antecedent of this demonstrative structure is the entire preceding sentence, and it is a good example of text reference. A problem arises, however, with the second occurrence of the same demonstrative construction in the last sentence shown below.

(22) *Interestingly, experimental groups accepted the distributive interpretation even though the percentage is not so high.* ***This results*** *seem to be considerably similar to those of the experiment performed by Miyamoto and Yamane (1996), in which they investigated the accessibility of UG in Japanese L2 learners of English in terms of the Scope Principle. In the experiment they revealed that concerning the ambiguous quantified and wh-sentence Japanese EFL learners appeared to consider the distributive reading acceptable. In contrast,* ***this results(?)*** *are different from those of the previous experiment in other Korean EFL subjects in which they rejected the distributive interpretation of the same type.*

The sentence that immediately precedes the one with the second *this results* provides a finding of a previous study, with which the writer is making a comparison of his/her own research finding. According to Brown and Yule's (1983) "principle of local relevance" mentioned earlier, readers are most likely to understand the immediately preceding sentence as the antecedent of *this results,* not only in its first time of occurrence but in the second time as well. The content of the last sentence, however, suggests that *this results* therein must refer to the first sentence, which is located four clauses earlier, instead of the closest (i.e., the third) one. Readers are thus forced to revise their un-

derstanding of the referent only after experiencing confusion and possibly frustration. Compared with this semantic/pragmatic inappropriateness, the obvious grammatical error of the mismatch between the demonstrative and the following noun in number is much less serious.

It has been observed by Geisler et al. (1985) that student writers, because of their insufficient grasp of the use of *this*, especially of its focusing function, often abuse demonstratives, repeating demonstrative references in a row. It was not difficult to find such inapt series of demonstrative structures in the students' research papers.

(23) Just *was the second frequent discourse marker in our study and* geunyang *was eighth.* ***This relatively high frequency among teenagers*** *can be explained with a core function of them used as a mitigation or emphatic device. Sometimes they are weakening whole utterance or part of it, and the pragmatic effect is to belittle or trivialize the previous remark. On the other hand,* ***this marker(?)*** *often sounds too emphatic in expressive contexts with intensifying meaning.* ***This emphatic*** *(including 'down-toning' function according to Aijmer)* ***discourse marker*** **just*(?)*** *represents the unmarked use in speech, and* ***this very general distribution*** *can also be seen in teenager talk of <Gossip Girl>.*

The writer of the above excerpt employs as many as four structures of '*this* plus a noun' in a relatively short discourse span. While the first token, *this relatively high frequency among teenagers*, is an exemplary case of text reference, the second one, *this marker,* confounds readers because given the two discourse markers (English *just* and Korean *geunyang*) mentioned in the preceding sentence, it is ambiguous which of the two it is referring to. The next (and the last) sentence is launched with *this emphatic ... discourse marker,* of which the antecedent is clarified by the accompanying *just.*[12] It is only from this reference that readers may infer that *this marker* in the previous sentence is probably intended by the writer to refer to *just*, too, because the two demonstrative constructions must have the same antecedent in order for the clauses containing them to make sense. Awkwardly, the second coordinate clause of the last sentence begins with another anaphoric demonstrative, *this very general distribution*, which apparently refers to the

12) Such an addition of *just*, however, seems inappropriate as well.

preceding clause. According to Geisler et al., "a primary function of the attended *this* is to direct attention and continue along with a topic that is 'out of focus'" (1985:142). For this reason, repeated occurrences of demonstratives in succession tend to strike readers clumsy since writers do not need to signal the "out-of focus" status of a topic more than once. The second demonstrative reference in this excerpt is better replaced by *the discourse marker just*, and the third, by a simple pronoun *it* because the referent is already "in focus" from the preceding sentence. If the writer wishes to exploit the rhetorical opportunity to emphasize or characterize the referent (Geisler et al. 1985), s/he might keep the demonstrative structure in the latter case with some necessary modification(s).

In order to help students avoid such inappropriate uses as shown above, exercises might be useful which assist them in exploring potential advantages and disadvantages of using various referential structures with *this/these*. One good example is illustrated in Swales (2005: 5), which was devised by one of his colleagues, David Charles. The first part of the exercise is designed to raise an awareness of the proper balance between efficient reference and clear reference. The whole sentence of (24) is the antecedent to all four candidate demonstrative constructions below that can launch the next sentence:

(24) *The students said they wanted more tests*.

(24a) ***This*** *surprised the instructor.*

(24b) ***This request*** *surprised the instructor.*

(24c) ***This request for more tests*** *surprised the instructor.*

(24d) ***This request by the students for more tests*** *surprised the instructor.*

Starting from (24a) and moving down one by one, the demonstrative reference becomes less economical, yet much clearer. Students, preferably through discussions with the teacher, should learn which would be the best option and in what contexts. The other half of the exercise is intended to illustrate rhetorical options provided by the choice of a noun following *this*. As before, all of the diverse versions of *this* plus a noun have the entire preceding sentence as their antecedent:

(25) *The students said they wanted more tests.*

(25a) ***This statement*** *surprised the instructor.*

(25b) ***This request*** *surprised the instructor.*

(25c) ***This demand*** *surprised the instructor.*

(25d) ***This ultimatum*** *surprised the instructor.*

(25e) ***This hope*** *surprised the instructor.*

In sentences (25a) through (25e), five different nouns, i.e., *statement, request, demand, ultimatum*, and *hope*, are chosen to attend *this* used as a determiner. It is not difficult to see how each referential choice influences and directs the reader's understanding of the previous sentence in a radically different way. Students should be trained to consider such consequences of their referential choice on rhetoric so that "opportunities for useful emphasis or additional characterization have not been lost by leaving a *this* unattended" (Geisler et al. 1985:151). The significance and usefulness of this rhetorical resource has been emphasized by many researchers (Francis 1994; Geisler et al. 1985; Gray 2010; Swales 2005), yet found to be lacking in nonnative learners' writing (Oh 2009; Petch-Tyson 2000). The type of exercise illustrated here will undoubtedly help student writers to improve in this respect.

5. Conclusion

The present investigation has examined the ways in which the demonstratives *this/these* are used in Korean graduate students' research papers in Applied Linguistics. Specifically, the frequency of their use as determiners and pronouns, the relative proportions of the two, and the linguistic contexts in which each demonstrative type occurs were analyzed. The linguistic contexts focused on include the types of verbs that co-occur with pronominal *this/these* serving as the grammatical subject of the sentence, and the types of nouns that follow *this/these* used as determiners. A comparison of the results of this study with the published writers' demonstrative usage (Gray & Cortes 2011) has revealed some remarkable divergences as well as similarities.

Overall, students used *this/these* significantly less frequently than do published authors in the same field. This suggests that students are not taking full advantage of this cohesive device, whose critical role in academic writing has well been recognized. The two groups were comparable in employing *this/these* as a determiner more often than as a pronoun, but the proportion of the latter to the former was greater in the experts' writing than in the students'. Put differently, when students used *this/these*, they tended to attend them with noun phrases instead of using them alone. This was attributed, in large part, to the student writers' infrequent reference to longer stretches of discourse (i.e., text reference), for which pronominal *this* is a dedicated device. As for the linguistic contexts of the demonstratives, student writers often employed copulas as the main verb for pronominal *this/these* functioning as a subject (i.e., *this is* ...) although not as frequently as published authors do. Students were generally not differentiated from published writers in employing pronominal *this* plus a copula verb or a lexical verb (e.g., *mean, indicate, show*) in order to mark a shift from some finding/observation to its evaluation/interpretation. On the other hand, students followed determiner *this/these* with deictic or other abstract nouns more often than with shell nouns, which was the most preferred choice by the expert writers. Shell nouns paired with *this/these* are typically used to point to extended text, and fewer occurrences of this structure again bear a close relation to less common text reference in student writing. Lastly, qualitative examinations of students' use of *this/these* disclosed some inappropriate or awkward uses, pointing to potential difficulties or problems that had not been identified thorough quantitative analyses.

The results of the present study offer several implications for learning and instruction of academic writing. First of all, students may benefit from explicit instruction on the cohesive role of *this/these* and their frequent linguistic contexts of use in academic writing, of which they appear to have at least some degree of tacit understanding. Pursuing a graduate degree in their field, the students whose papers were examined in this study must have been exposed to *this/these* very often through reading a number of journal articles related to their research projects. Still they have exhibited deviations from published authors in the use of *this/these*, some of which can have a quite damaging effect, for example, of producing less cohesive and unclear texts

for readers. The present finding suggests that mere exposure to input does not guarantee full mastery of these linguistic items and focused instruction is perhaps necessary. A similar suggestion has been made in previous studies as well (Leńko-Szymańska 2004; S-Y Oh 2009).

Secondly, the findings of this study highlight the significance of textual reference in academic prose. *This/these* play an important role in organizing and developing a text, especially when they refer to non-nominal antecedents such as preceding ideas, propositions, processes, etc. The present study has demonstrated that appropriate and effective use of *this/these* for text reference is still a great challenge for student writers. In particular, special attention needs to be paid to text reference made through pronominal *this/these*, given its relatively fewer frequencies of occurrence in the student writing. It may not be necessary, however, or even helpful to simply advise the students to use *this/these* as pronouns more often. In a similar vein, Swales (2005) does not promote encouraging non-native students to match the higher rate of unattended *this* in published articles. (In his view, the potential overuse of attended *this* is less problematic than abundant misuses of pronominal *this*.) What seems more critical is to help students understand the necessity and importance of textual reference in building a cohesive and effective text, together with the value of pronominal *this* as an economical device for achieving the purpose. This will naturally increase the frequencies of pronominal *this* as well as textual reference in their writing. In addition, it might be useful to include in the curriculum the distinctive function of pronominal *this* plus a verb (e.g., *this is..., this means..., this indicates...*) in academic prose, i.e., providing an evaluative or interpretive comment on the finding or observation conveyed in the previous clause(s).

Thirdly, to repeat Gray and Cortes' (2011) recommendation, EAP writing instruction should raise students' awareness of *this/these* followed by shell nouns as an important cohesive construction. With the benefit of anaphoric demonstratives, shell nouns can encapsulate preceding propositions and extend it with more details in the subsequent text, thereby creating cohesion and organization in text. At the same time, they enable the writer to influence the reader's interpretation of the text by expressing the writer's attitude towards the information they encompass. This ultimately helps the writer to construct persuasive arguments. It has been further suggested in the context of aca-

demic writing that both the fact of using a shell noun and the chosen noun itself "reflect the *disciplinary* knowledge that the writer brings to bear upon the content with which he deals" (Charles 2003:318, emphasis added). Given the current finding that shell nouns following *this/these* are significantly underrepresented in student writing, the need for an effective instruction on this structure seems even more urgent. There appear to be relatively few shell nouns that are used frequently in academic prose (Gray 2010), and the instruction might as well focus on those common nouns at least initially.

Fourthly, the present study has demonstrated that students often confuse or misguide readers by failing to use anaphoric *this/these* properly and accurately. In order to avoid potential unclear uses (or misuses) of pronominal *this/these*, writers may benefit from developing a habit of checking the consequences of their referential choice on readers' comprehension, for example, by asking themselves whether their readers would have no problem in finding the antecedent (Geisler et al. 1985). Sometimes, novice writers will find it hard to identify the antecedent themselves because they do not have a clear idea of how different parts of their text should be linked with each other. In such cases, (of which excerpt (19) is possibly one example) simply adding a noun phrase to *this/these* will not lead to a clearer reference, and writers should first carefully consider what ideas and what connections between those ideas they wish to develop before revising the reference itself.

While the present study has offered some meaningful findings and useful information on the Korean graduate students' use of *this/these* in the field of Applied Linguistics, the results may not be generalized to other populations or disciplines. Despite the omnipresence of *this/these* in academic prose, there apparently exist some disciplinary variations in the frequency and/or the linguistic contexts of referential structures containing *this/these* (Gray & Cortes 2011). One of the topics for future research would thus be to explore how students from other academic disciplines utilize these demonstratives, in comparison to published authors in their own field, and compare the findings with those of the current study.

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Sun-Young Oh
Department of English Language Education
Seoul National University
1 Gwanak-ro, Gwanak-gu, Seoul, 151-748, Korea
E-mail: sunoh@snu.ac.kr

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