



Beyond K-Pop: A Discourse Analysis on ELT

Research Article by Korean Authors

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Abstract

This study analyzes the English research article written by Korean authors as one fruitful genre of academic discourse. It emphasizes how the discourse elements reflect Korean academic writing culture. This study employed a qualitative method with genre-based discourse analysis. The researchers chose one qualified research article on ELT written by Korean authors from a reputable journal. The article was analyzed in two layers: generic structure and rhetorical structure. The results showed that the writing of the Korean article uses the IMRAD as the international standard of research reports. The results also suggest that Korean academic writing places a strong emphasis on empirical evidence and formal language to ensure clarity, objectivity, and professionalism. Understanding these rhetorical structures is essential for both writers and readers in the academic community, as it provides insight into how knowledge is communicated and legitimized in Korean education.

Keywords: *Discourse Analysis, English Writing, Korean, Research Article*

Introduction

One of the key foundations of a nation's success and the development of its people resources is education. Similar to its pop culture, the educational system in Korea is regarded as one of the most inventive and competitive in the world. Korea's educational system in a global setting is also dealing with new issues like the need to comprehend cultural diversity and the move toward technology-based learning (Education, 2023; Taqwa, Said, Machmoed, Dafirah, & Muin, 2023; Kwak, 2018). Korean researchers and educators must assess and adjust their work in light of the rapid social changes and technological breakthroughs to comprehend the dynamics of education today and then disseminate their academic inventions and innovations globally.

Korean authors frequently draw from their own linguistic and cultural traditions while writing in English, which can have an impact on how they express themselves and the material they present. The Korean language reflects a variety of social, political, and cultural variables, as the nation has a rich history and culture (Choi & Lee, 2024; Kim & Len-Ríos, 2023; Samsudin, Ansas, & Triarisanti, 2021). In Korean authors' news or scientific pieces, language serves as a vehicle for communicating ideology, national identity, and power dynamics between the author and the reader in addition to providing information (Levitt & Shim, 2022).

Previous studies on English-language writing and translation by Korean authors often focus on the phenomena of language interference that arise as a result of differences in linguistic structure between Korean and English (Joo, Seong, Suh, Jung, & Purpura, 2023; Kim, Belcher, & Peyton, 2023; Kamei, 2021; Schenck, 2020; Jwa, 2020). Researchers show that Korean authors tend to produce longer and more complex sentences with subject-object-predicate structures that are more frequently changed or simplified in English. These studies also identify difficulties in the use of prepositions, articles, and tenses, indicating deep differences in the way these two languages organize information and context.

Those studies focus more on technical issues but less explore the pragmatic and rhetorical aspects of writing. The use of discourse analysis is highly relevant to study Korean writings in terms of pragmatic and communicative aspects. Discourse analysis blends linguistic and pragmatic views emphasizing the relationship between language, context, and the function of communication (Brown & Yule, 1983). Discourse analysis of English article by Korean authors can shed light on how they adopt writing conventions, including lexical choices, argument structures, and conjunction usage. These elements are crucial to be studied because they can highlight how Korean authors overcome linguistic and cultural barriers, as well as how much they modify the discourse typically seen in academic or professional English writing.

The objective of this study is to analyze Korean writing, particularly in the form of research article in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT). This study identifies and analyzes the structure and style of the article, with particular attention to how these elements reflect Korean academic writing culture. This study analyzes the research article by Korean authors as one fruitful genre of academic discourse. The result of the research is expected to give useful information about the Korean academic writing style that might inspire others to write scientific publications.

Method

This research employed a qualitative method with genre-based discourse analysis in which the genre is a Korean research article. The researchers chose one research article on ELT written by Korean authors. The researchers ensured the article's good quality writing by downloading it from a reputable academic journal. In genre-based, the discourse is analyzed in two layers: generic structure and rhetorical structure (Paltridge, 2012). For the generic structure, the article was examined in terms of research design according to IMRAD (Introduction, Method, Result, and Discussion) by Cresswell (2009).

As for the rhetorical structure, the article was analyzed according to representation and communicative features by Brown & Yule (1983) namely transactional and interactional functions, pragmatic, cohesion, and coherence. Transactional and interactional functions are the concepts developed to understand the purpose of communication in discourse. Pragmatic emphasizes the importance of understanding the social, cultural, and situational context in interpreting messages. Cohesion refers to the formal relationship between elements in a text, such as the use of pronouns, conjunctions, and repetition. Coherence refers to how the text makes sense and can be understood by the reader/listener through context and interpretation.

Results

The English research article analyzed is written by Je-Young Lee and Minkyung Baek from the Department of English Education, Jeonju University, Republic of Korea. The article is entitled "Effects of Gamification on Students' English Language Proficiency: A Meta-Analysis on Research in South Korea" (Lee & Baek, 2003). It is available in an open access journal "*Sustainability*" Volume 15 Number 14 on 20 July 2023. The publisher of the journal is Multidisciplinary Digital Publishing Institute (MDPI) Switzerland. The journal is indexed by Scopus Q1 and Web of Science (WoS) SCIE and SSCI. The article can be accessed through the link <https://www.mdpi.com/2071-1050/15/14/11325>. The article reports the study about a meta-analysis of research on the impact of gamification on English language proficiency among South Korean students. Based on the article metrics on 5 December 2024 the article access statistics are 5110 views and citations are 4 Scopus, 1 Crossref, and 1 WoS.

The Generic Structure of the Article

The generic structure of the Korean research article followed the research writing by Cresswell (2009). The article consists of an Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion, also completed with References. The first part is "Introduction" in which the article presents the importance of gamification in education, especially in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning in South Korea. The authors explain that while gamification has been applied in various contexts, its impact on English language proficiency still requires further analysis. The main objective of this study is to conduct a meta-analysis of the effect of gamification on English language proficiency, as well as identify factors that moderate the effect.

The second part is "Method". This part of the article describes great detail of the research including inclusion and exclusion criteria, literature search methods, and the use of *PRISMA flowcharts* to demonstrate the article selection process. These steps ensure transparency and replicability of results. The research reported used several statistical tools and software such as *Comprehensive Meta-Analysis (CMA)* and *R Studio* to calculate effect sizes (Hedges' g) and test data homogeneity. The approach used suggests in-depth analyses and is more common in international scientific writing compared to many Indonesian research articles.

The third part is "Results and Discussion". The results of the article show a medium effect size ($g = 0.517$), indicating that gamification has a significant positive impact on English language proficiency. The authors also note that the results have higher effect sizes than another research. The authors interpret the results by illustrating how gamification can increase students' engagement and motivation in learning English. They also discuss the pedagogical implications of these findings and encourage more effective implementation of gamification in teaching.

The last part is "Bibliography". The bibliography in the article follows a consistent writing style, most likely referring to the APA (American Psychological Association) style. This can be seen from the way the author's name, year of publication, article title, journal name, volume, page, and DOI are written. Consistency in format is very important to make it easier for readers to find the referenced sources.

The Rhetorical Structure of the Article

The analysis of transactional and interactional functions, pragmatic, cohesion, and coherence are presented to clarify the rhetorical structure of the Korean article. The transactional functions of the article can be analyzed from the building meaning. The article shows that gamification can improve English learning

outcomes. This reflects how game elements in an educational context can shape a more meaningful learning experience for students. By presenting quantitative data, the article makes a concrete argument about the effectiveness of gamification, which readers can understand and assess in the context of educational research. The authors used meta-analysis to provide empirical evidence on the effect of gamification, thus emphasizing the importance of data in building a valid argument.

The interactional functions of the article are analyzed from the reader and text interaction, social context, and environmental influence. For reader and text interaction, the authors highlight various gamification elements (such as rewards and challenges) that serve to increase student engagement. This shows that the learning experience is not just about the content, but also about how students interact with the content. For social context: the research reported in the article was conducted in South Korea, which has a unique educational context. The article highlights how cultural and social factors in Korea can influence the acceptance and effectiveness of gamification in English language learning. For environmental influence, the authors mention that the presence of technology in gamification can affect learning outcomes, suggesting a complex interaction between technology, gamification, and learning that is heavily influenced by the social context in which education takes place.

The pragmatic analysis shows that the article implies that gamification serves not only as a learning tool but also as a motivator that increases students' engagement. This implication can be understood through the argument that more engaged students tend to achieve better learning outcomes. The authors considered civility in how they presented the results. They present the findings in a way that does not ignore previous research, thus showing respect for the work of others and avoiding conflict with conflicting results. In the article, the authors attempt to fulfill a couple of principles namely quantity: providing a sufficient amount of information without overdoing it; quality: presenting valid and reliable data; relevance: relating gamification to significant learning outcomes; method: organizing the article clearly for easy understanding. Then, the forms of authors' arguments are assertive: statements about the effectiveness of gamification; directive: advice to educators to adopt gamification methods; expressive: confidence in the potential of gamification in education.

The next analysis is the cohesion and coherence of the article. The Korean article analyzed uses present tense to describe general conditions or established concepts, while past tense is used to refer to related research that has been done previously. The examples are:

1. “Gamification is defined as the application of game design elements in non-gaming environments.”
2. “reported that gamification yielded higher effects in East Asian regions.”

The article makes extensive use of complex sentences with conjunctions such as ‘while’, ‘although’, ‘however’, and ‘therefore’ to connect ideas or compare research results. This reflects the typical academic style of constructing structured arguments. The examples are:

1. “Although gamification has shown potential in various domains, its efficacy in language education is not unanimously agreed upon.”
2. “However, the application of technology does not automatically guarantee improved results.”

Modal verbs, such as ‘can’, ‘may’, and ‘should’ are often used to express possibilities or give suggestions.

1. “Gamification can enhance not only the efficiency but also the overall amount of learning.”
2. “Educators should consider the comprehensive design of the learning experience.”

Discussion

The Generic Structure of the Article

Based on the generic structure analysis, a style typical of academic writing by Korean authors emphasizes clarity, rigor, and statistical precision. The authors adopt a structured approach, using well-defined sections such as Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion, which align with international standards of research writing. The inclusion of statistical tools like CMA and R Studio for calculating effect sizes demonstrates a high level of technical expertise and methodological sophistication. This use of advanced quantitative analysis is common in Korean academic writing, reflecting a strong emphasis on empirical validation and objective measurement (Hwang, 2023).

Furthermore, the authors contextualize their findings within the broader discourse of gamification in education, highlighting practical implications for language learning. This balance of theoretical exploration and practical application is an archetype of Korean research, in which the aim is often to bridge academic inquiry with real-world impact, particularly in fields like education where policy and practice are closely intertwined (Education, 2023).

The Rhetorical Structure of the Article

The analysis of the rhetorical structure of the article utilizes effective techniques for discourse analysis in examining the intricacies of representation and communication due to several important features. There are transactional and interactional functions, pragmatic, cohesion, and coherence.

The analysis of transactional and interactional functions, as well as pragmatic, cohesion, and coherence, reflects the careful construction of the Korean article's rhetorical structure. From a transactional perspective, the article effectively builds meaning by presenting concrete data, which demonstrates gamification's positive influence on English learning outcomes. This is a typical feature of Korean academic writing, where empirical evidence and quantitative data are central to supporting arguments, ensuring that the research is not only persuasive but also measurable and reproducible (Hwang, 2023; Jwa, 2020).

In terms of interactional functions, the authors engage the reader by explaining how various gamification elements, such as rewards and challenges, enhance student engagement. This emphasizes the importance of the interaction between students and content, a key aspect of Korean educational discourse (Education, 2023; Kwak, 2018). Additionally, the article acknowledges the influence of South Korea's unique social and educational context, showing how culture impacts the acceptance and effectiveness of educational technologies like gamification.

Pragmatically, the authors navigate the delicate balance between asserting gamification's benefits and maintaining respect for previous research, avoiding confrontation with conflicting findings. The writing embodies politeness and professionalism, characteristics of Korean academic communication, by presenting results in a way that acknowledges the broader academic context (Choi & Lee, 2024; Kim & Len-Ríos, 2023; Samsudin, Ansas, & Triarisanti, 2021).

Cohesion and coherence are achieved through the use of complex sentences and modal verbs, a hallmark of formal academic writing. This style not only enhances the clarity of arguments but also ensures that the study's conclusions are seen as part of a larger academic conversation, rather than isolated claims. The careful organization of information, through clear distinctions between tense usage and logical connectors, exemplifies the structured, precise writing style typical in Korean academic articles.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the writing of the Korean research article uses the IMRAD where the format has become an international standard commonly used in writing research reports. The IMRAD structure helps the authors convey information clearly and systematically, making it easy for readers to follow the flow of the research. By separating the results from the discussion, readers can easily understand the findings without the influence of initial interpretations. The research article analyzed focuses on the educational context in South Korea. The article is in English with a formal academic style.

The key features of academic communication by Korean authors emphasize the use of transactional and interactional functions to build a persuasive and engaging argument. The effective use of empirical data supports the transactional function, while the interactional function engages readers by explaining the benefits of gamification in English learning. Pragmatically, the authors maintain a respectful tone and acknowledge previous research, ensuring a balanced and professional approach. Cohesion and coherence are achieved through careful use of language features such as complex sentences and modal verbs, reinforcing the formal academic style.

The findings suggest that Korean academic writing places a strong emphasis on empirical evidence and formal language to ensure clarity, objectivity, and professionalism. Understanding these rhetorical structures is essential for both writers and readers in the academic community, as it provides insight into how knowledge is communicated and legitimized in Korean education. Future research could explore the impact of cultural and educational contexts on the rhetorical structures of Korean research articles. Additionally, a comparative analysis between Korean and other academic writing traditions could offer a deeper understanding of global academic communication styles.

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