

# The English Connection

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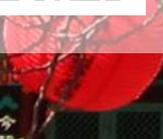
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# Contents

<b>Editorial</b> – <i>by Julian Warmington</i>	6
<b>President’s Message</b> – <i>by Lindsay Herron</i>	7
<b>Features</b>	
Topics, Choices, and Motivation in the Writing Class <i>by Tim Self</i>	10
Experiential Advice for Improving Job Prospects <i>by Karl Hedberg and Paul D. Tanner</i>	12
Creative Writing with <i>Sijo</i> <i>by Michael Free and Yuri Angie White</i>	16
So, What Are Discourse Markers, Anyway?! <i>by Andrew White</i>	23
<b>Columns</b>	
Contemplative Practice: From <i>Letting Go To Letting Come</i> <i>by Thomas S.C. Farrell</i>	8
KOTESOL People: Introducing Michael Free <i>by Julian Warmington</i>	14
Course Review: My Macquarie University Experience <i>by Eric Fileta</i>	21
Book Review: Academic Written English <i>by Angela Guanying Wu</i>	26



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Layout / Design: Mijung Lee, Media Station

Printing: Myeongjinsa

**Cover photo** by Steve Garrigues.

Suggestions and contributions to [tec@koreatesol.org](mailto:tec@koreatesol.org)

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# Editorial: Spring 2016

By **Julian Warmington** Editor-in-Chief

## **Spring** (First Stanza)

By Gerard Manley Hopkins

*Nothing is so beautiful as Spring –  
When weeds, in wheels, shoot long and lovely and lush;  
Thrush's eggs look little low heavens, and thrush  
Through the echoing timber does so rinse and wring  
The ear, it strikes like lightnings to hear him sing;  
The glassy peartree leaves and blooms, they brush  
The descending blue; that blue is all in a rush  
With richness; the racing lambs too have fair their fling.*



Welcome to the first official issue of *The English Connection* for the new year, the issue for the season when baby birds, lambs, and plants alike all dance joyfully in the blue-sky breeze in fresh fields of glossy green. Here at TEC, the wondrous variety of different subjects on offer continues apace; we include four general groupings: teaching spoken English, teaching written English, the use of technology, and the challenge of job mobility.

With regard to spoken English this issue, Andrew White introduces the importance of attention to the often overlooked detail of discourse markers to help students sound like natural-born English speakers. Written English topics dominate this issue though, with Michael Free and Yuri Angie White describing their use of the traditional Korean poetry style *sijo* to teach creative writing in English. Tim Self also describes his top tips and helpful hints to make English writing lessons fun. To round out our features for this issue, Karl Hedberg and Paul Tanner offer their perspective on attaining and maintaining a great job in the local TESOL industry.

Continuing the focus on written English within our regular columns this issue, new reviewer Angela Guanying Wu outlines her reading of *Academic Written English*, by Ken Hyland. In other columns, Eric Fileta shares his experiences at Sydney's Macquarie University for their MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL program. Tom Farrell tells us more about the value of professional reflection in his second contribution to his column, focusing on the concept of contemplation. This issue's special guest interview features returning Gangwon Chapter President and newly elected National Conference Chair Michael Free, as he tells the story of how music led him to Montreal and now Gangwondo.

Finally, two more words: thanks, and welcome! Thanks to all those who have helped behind the scenes to edit and proof the text and images we're happy to share herein. And, if you have interest in writing, reading, taking photos of people doing notable work in the fertile field of local TESOL, or any other way of contributing, please contact us at [TEC@KoreaTESOL.org](mailto:TEC@KoreaTESOL.org). We would love to have you as part of the team.

*Julian Warmington*

# President's Message

**By Lindsay Herron**  
KOTESOL President

Happy spring, everyone! I hope your new semester is off to a promising start and that you are returning from the winter break refreshed, rejuvenated, and eager for another exceptional year of KOTESOL events. We have a wealth of great offerings on the schedule for this semester, which I hope you can attend!

One of our biggest events of the year, the annual national conference, will be held at Sangji University in Wonju at the end of May. I am particularly excited about this event for several reasons. First, I love the theme "Our Provinces"; it strikes me as delightfully clever and intriguing. I really admire the play on words here, alluding as it does to both the provinces of ELT and the provinces of Korea, connoting a well-rounded whole that emerges from the parts. The conference will also feature presentations in a variety of formats, including pecha kucha (a perennial favorite!) and 110-minute special colloquia in addition to the standard workshops. Personally, I am hoping to make a full weekend of it, staying an extra day to enjoy the beauty of Wonju and Gangwon-do. Even the scenic bus ride through Korea's verdant countryside will undoubtedly be a treat!



Our special interest groups (SIGs) are also gearing up for a busy and rewarding semester. Our Christian Teachers SIG has been involved in preparing for the Christians in ELT (CELT) International Conference in Seoul this June. The Reflective Practice (RP) SIG is also thriving, especially at the local level; indeed, multiple chapters boast active RP-SIG groups, some of which meet regularly. Our Multimedia and Computer-Assisted Language Learning SIG has begun making inroads online with new tech-related posts on the KOTESOL website. And as this issue of TEC goes to press, there are some rumblings about the possibility of a new SIG making its debut in the near future.

As usual, our chapters continue to offer excellent events, from regular meetings and workshops to special events and regional conferences. You can find a list of chapters and their respective events on the KOTESOL website.

If none of these activities fit into your schedule, then perhaps you can find inspiration by visiting a peer's classroom. KOTESOL's classroom observation program is designed to facilitate connections between members who wish to observe classes and members who are willing to let themselves be observed, as well as members who desire feedback from other members. The classroom observation program is always looking for volunteers, especially now at the beginning of the school year. Interested in participating? Additional information is available on the Membership Committee's page online (<https://koreatesol.org/membership>).

It also seems appropriate now at the beginning of the school year to remind everyone about a wonderfully handy resource: our email newsletter, *KOTESOL News*. One of my favorite things about KOTESOL is how much we have going on each month, but it can be difficult at times to keep everything straight. If you want to know what is happening, *KOTESOL News* is a great place to start. You can keep abreast of developments in the organization, track proposal or paper submission deadlines, learn about opportunities to represent KOTESOL overseas, keep apprised of new publications that you can access online, discover new perks and discounts your membership entitles you to, check the dates of upcoming local workshops, and more – all in one central location.

There's something for everyone this semester in KOTESOL! I look forward to seeing you at one of our many events this spring. In the meantime, best wishes for a successful and satisfying semester!

*Lindsay Herron*

# Contemplative Practice: From *Letting Go* To *Letting Come*

By Thomas S.C. Farrell

In my first column for TEC, I wrote about the importance of reflecting on self-knowledge for language teachers, and I mentioned that I would outline various ways teachers can get to know themselves professionally and personally so that they can understand the “self as teacher.” This is an important aspect of reflective practice that seems to be missing in the latest moves in TESOL to encourage teachers to engage in research, cognition, or action research projects. While all of these moves are very important parts of teacher reflection, they focus on the behavioral aspects of teaching in the classroom and seem to be divorced from the main person responsible for these actions: the teacher.

***Recent focus on teacher cognition studies, language teacher research engagement, and action research can all be summarized as research ON teachers, BY academics, FOR academics. This focus should be changed to research WITH teachers, BY teachers, FOR teachers.***

In addition, calls for teachers to engage in research, action research, or cognition awareness all seem to be for the benefit of academics and not the teachers who are undergoing the study. In fact, the recent focus on teacher cognition studies, language teacher research engagement, and action research can all be summarized as research *ON* teachers, *BY* academics, *FOR* academics.

This focus should be changed to research *WITH* teachers, *BY* teachers, *FOR* teachers. In other words, we should be more focused on looking at what language teachers think about what they do, which is the core of reflective practice. In this column, I will outline the various ways teachers can get to know themselves (for more details, see Farrell, 2015).

## Contemplative Practice

In order to gain more self-knowledge, I combined the concepts of contemplation, where teachers can reflect on the self (more as a prerequisite to more systematic reflections on practice), and reflection, where teachers engage in more systematic reflections on practice (which will be the focus of future columns). In order to “see” and gain self-knowledge, Anthony De Mello (1992; cited in Farrell, 2015) urged people to just observe and not interfere with whatever may appear:

Watch everything inside of you and outside, and when there is something happening to you, to see it as if it were happening to someone else, with no comment, no judgment, no attitude, no interference, no attempt to change, only to understand. (p. 25)

This is a powerful meditation to try because it means not trying. I realize this may sound contradictory, but by not trying to interfere with what is happening around and in us, we reduce the power of the influence. Try this meditation and see what you discover as you contemplate your inner world. Conduct this meditation as you teach, and you will become more aware of what is happening in your mind as you teach. Just “listen” to your mind as you teach. When you begin to listen to yourself as you teach, you may feel a sense of calmness of the mind because we are beginning to reach higher levels of awareness of our inner world, which will ultimately help

us better understand our outer teaching world.

However, in order to enter such a contemplative state, you must “let go” of your desire to control what you see and just let it happen. Trust yourself as you are most likely doing a good job as a teacher, but have never



taken the time before to look at yourself as you teach. In other words, we must let whatever will happen in our contemplations happen without any interference by anything. We just observe ourselves and allow whatever thoughts appear to enter our state of consciousness. The ultimate aim of letting go in such a contemplative state is to become more *mindful* of who we are as humans when we teach. Contemplation can help us reach this state of *mindfulness*, where we can experience an enhanced awareness of our thoughts, feelings, emotions, and perceptions. I will talk in more detail about *mindfulness* in my next column.

### Conclusion

In TESOL, we must be careful of encouraging teacher research, action research, and teacher cognition research solely as a one-dimensional, intellectual exercise, while overlooking the inner life of teachers, where such reflections are able to not only lead to awareness of teaching practices, but also to increased levels of self-awareness. We must remember that teachers are whole

persons and teaching is multidimensional (including the moral, ethical, spiritual, and aesthetic). In order to tap into the whole person as a teacher and the multidimensional aspects of teaching, I have suggested in this article that teachers can engage in contemplative practice, a precursor to more systematic and evidence-based reflective

practice, because it can help teachers become more aware of themselves as human beings first. This is because contemplative practice places individuals at the center of the contemplative process, without trying to take any control or intervening with the contemplations so that we can become more aware of our surroundings in a more mindful way. Thus, engaging in contemplative practice means being able to consciously observe the self in the present moment simply by paying quiet attention to the “here and now,” without any intervention (“letting go”) so that we can become more aware of who we are as human

beings (“letting come”). We can thus move from “letting go” to “letting come.” Try it!

### Reference

Farrell, T.S.C. (2015). *Promoting teacher reflection in second language education: A framework for TESOL professionals*. New York, NY: Routledge.

### The Author

#### Thomas S.C. Farrell

is Professor of Applied Linguistics at Brock University, Canada. Professor Farrell’s professional interests include reflective practice, and language teacher education and development. He has



published widely in academic journals and has spoke at major conferences worldwide on these topics. A selection of his most recent books are available at: [www.reflectiveinquiry.ca](http://www.reflectiveinquiry.ca)

# Topics, Choices, and Motivation in the Writing Class

By Tim Self

One of the challenges faced in the English language writing programs of Korean universities is motivation. A large number of learners in writing classes are not taking these courses out of interest, but because they are a requirement for graduation. As such, motivation is often an issue that instructors need to address in order to help learners produce the best work they can in a difficult context. There is of course a whole range of motivational techniques that can be applied, but I have been focusing on two connected areas: topic suitability and choice.

As part of my interest in motivation, I have been communicating with colleagues and learners who have studied with at least two different instructors at my university over the last few months; this has led to some very interesting results and a noticeable difference in practice among instructors. This inquiry is ongoing, as it is something that is helping to shape my approach to writing classes and something I hope other writing instructors will consider for their own practices.

## Topic Suitability

The first area I would like to address is topic suitability. The instructors I spoke with used a wide range of different topics for their assignments, essays, and projects, yet there was an overwhelming sense that “making it personal” was the preferred focus. The rationale is that by making topics personal, learners are able to connect and relate to them quickly and have natural interest in them. The topics offered by instructors varied, but included writing about hometowns, favorite movie characters, and opinions on recent events. Writing length requirements also varied by instructor, from roughly five sentences to around 150 words.

In contrast, I have always utilized different kinds of topics in my writing classes; for example, global issues such as same-sex

marriage, the best technological invention in history, and the question of whether it is best to gain work experience abroad as a young adult. I expect learners to write a minimum of three reasons/five paragraphs/250 words. When I mentioned this to the other instructors that I spoke with, the majority of them made it clear that they felt this was not the best approach for learners, mainly because they viewed my format as too difficult, and requiring too much work from learners.

They also seemed to believe that the difficulty would result in a lack of motivation because of the challenge it would pose due to learners’ perceived lack of writing experience or language skills. Several instructors suggested that this method may work for advanced classes, but not across the board. I am sure some of you reading this will have a similar initial response.

What is interesting is what learners had to say on the issue. They made it clear that dealing with such topics as hometowns is boring and leaves them feeling like they are in middle school again, and many commented on how little time they spent working on these assignments (most stating somewhere between 10-40 minutes). They often mentioned how little they cared about their work, and how they often wrote “on automatic.” Global issues, in contrast, were much more positively received by learners regardless of their level. The majority of the learners that I spoke with said that these topics were far more interesting as the topics forced them to think about their values and opinions on these issues. Many said that they felt they learned new things while writing these assignments, and several also mentioned how they appreciated being treated as adults and being given the opportunity to address more complex topics. I was surprised to find that even lower-level learners generally enjoyed thinking about these issues, despite the challenges they faced with writing.

Of course some learners had negative comments as well – most said it was difficult in the beginning, but that it got easier over time, and that they needed the instructor to show them how to proceed as they had not approached writing in this way before. They also commented on the sheer amount of time they put into these kinds of assignments – many cited six hours or more, some saying it took an entire weekend. Yet despite these negatives they continued to reiterate their feelings that these kinds of topics were more beneficial and enjoyable, and that they were willing to put in the time because they cared about the issues.

Interestingly, one instructor I spoke with decided on a whim to try getting learners to deal with the refugee crisis in Europe and how they would react if they were in the same situation – something the instructor admitted to being worried about as they thought the learners would have a difficult time writing about this topic, particularly since only more general personal topics had been covered up until that point. Ultimately, the instructor found that the learners generally submitted their best work of the whole semester when writing about this topic, and they seemed far more motivated than previously.

This is where choice comes in. It is essential to provide choice for learners when dealing with challenging issues, and to allow them to select what they are interested in; after all, interest equals motivation. Since these topics are generally complex and focused, the more choice that learners have, the better, as it increases the chance that they will be able to find a topic that they care about, and which they will find worthy of their time to write about. Personally, I use around 35 different topics and allow learners to pick any three. By categorizing them into general themes, learners tend to not feel overwhelmed – they are provided with a choice of six themes, and then a choice of four or five topics per theme, rather than having to face 35 “unique” issues. The learners that I spoke with stressed that being able to choose what they want to write about was essential, and that they would hate to write about some of the topics provided.

### **Topic Choice**

Using these kinds of global issues is always tricky, as this approach still ultimately relies on whether or not learners will be interested in the topics provided. Not everyone cares about the same issues, and their writing is only likely to improve if they are motivated. Forcing everyone to write about a topic such as same-sex marriage would probably not be as effective as allowing learners to choose which topics they would prefer to write about.

### **Concluding Thoughts**

The 1600+ assignments I have read and graded over the past four semesters have shown that learners can deal with these challenging issues, but that choice is essential. The motivation provided by allowing learners to address challenging topics helps them to improve the content in their writing, and it becomes clear that they care more about their work. As an added bonus, I do not have to read 130 dull paragraphs about hometowns or favorite movies, but instead get a complete range of mature ideas across a huge variety of topics – and this is far more interesting for me as a reader!

Rather than doubt your learners or worry about their ability, challenge them with something like this, and you may be pleasantly surprised by what they produce. Just remember to provide them with guidance as needed.

### **The Author**

**Tim Self** has taught academic writing courses at Sejong University since 2013, with prior university and high school teaching experience in Korea since 2007. He actively takes part in Sejong’s internal professional development program, with a particular passion for reading and writing strategies.



Email: [t.self@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:t.self@hotmail.co.uk)

# Experiential Advice for Improving Job Prospects

By Karl Hedberg and Paul D. Tanner

*Though there are some differences between Japan and Korea when it comes to getting a permanent teaching job, other aspects of career development are similar for expat English teachers in both nations. Karl Hedberg and Paul Tanner offer a glimpse into how job prospects can be easily improved, no matter where you are located.*

We had no idea what our futures held when we arrived in Japan over 20 years ago. We thought we would stay and work in Japan for just a year or two and then travel. Yet, here we are in Japan today, both married with children and in permanent jobs teaching at a national university. In the words of David Byrne, "How did I get here?"

We started off with entry-level positions, one teaching conversation as an assistant language teacher (ALT) at a high school, and the other as a dispatch teacher traveling to companies for lessons on-site. Then there were stints at high schools, a technical college, a self-operated English school, and years of part-time university work. Along the way, we chose to make EFL a career, so we worked on developing our teaching skills and qualifications in order to become full-time university teachers.

***Do you have ten years of teaching experience, or one year that has been repeated ten times? Update yourself and your lessons.***

After gaining the needed skills, we started applying for full-time contract university positions. Most of these jobs are term-limited, usually three to five years in length. Eventually, we were both

working five-year limited contract jobs. Although the work was enjoyable and our colleagues great, the worry of what to do when the contract ran out always hung over us.



Karl Hedberg with a class of happy students.

Planned happenstance (preparation + luck = opportunity) was the key factor when it came to landing permanent posts. Shiga University had two contract positions finishing. The faculty realized that they were losing two excellent teachers, and therefore decided to open two new permanent positions. In that respect, we owe the permanence of our jobs to the dedication of our predecessors.

What we learned about being viable candidates and professional teachers came from our own experiences and the wisdom of our mentors and colleagues. The following is a summary of ten essential points to improve your prospects when searching for a full-time position.

1. Foreign-language ability is essential. Every university job we interviewed for included at least a few questions in basic Japanese. Interviewers are not looking for perfection; they

just want to see your communication ability and attitude towards foreign language in action.

2. Be positive. If you don't like where you are, your choices are to change, adapt, or leave. If you don't like teaching, consider a new career. Do yourself and your students a favor. Negativity is contagious and lowers morale. Show respect for your colleagues, students, and the country in which you reside.
3. Get better at what you do. You need to improve, whether trying out a new teaching situation or reworking a course you have long been teaching. Don't let your language teaching fossilize. Do you have ten years of teaching experience, or one year that has been repeated ten times? Update yourself and your lessons.
4. Be familiar with the literature in the field. Do you know the names Lev Vygotsky, Jack Richards, Michael Swan, Paul Nation, Rod Ellis, B. Kumaravadivelu, and Noam Chomsky? You should. They are part of the canon of EFL teaching. These names also come up at job interviews.
5. There is a randomness to getting a job. Therefore, you should be prepared at all times and recognize that finding a good job is an ongoing process. At certain times, we have been turned down for jobs that we thought were a perfect match for us; other times we have landed a job through a personal contact. Don't be upset if you don't get a job you applied for. Teaching is a fluid situation with lots of changes and opportunities. You should always have an updated resume.
6. Pride goes both ways. Too much pride may be characterized by a refusal to ask for help or advice, and taking umbrage at requests for change or improvement. It is also demonstrated when people think their current job is beneath them. Having no pride manifests itself in slipshod teaching. Slovenly dress is just one telltale sign of this malady.
7. Have a *plus alpha* factor. This means doing something more than is required. Helping an ESS club, assisting students with speeches, and sharing knowledge of IELTS are some examples of extra effort. We were told that our *plus alpha* factor was a deciding factor in getting our positions.
8. Network. Share ideas and job information with your colleagues at work and at conferences. One of us landed a previous university job by meeting someone who made a recommendation.

Remember planned happenstance and the words of Woodrow Wilson: "I not only use all the brains I have, but all I can borrow."

9. Don't shirk duties. Resistance to odious tasks is not the winning way. Working on entrance exam committees or doing sample lessons are ways to prove your worth to your colleagues. Complaining and refusing to be flexible are stains on your reputation that will remain long after the actual request has been forgotten.
10. Differentiate yourself from other candidates. Developing a practical area of expertise can aid in your job search and help you get the classes/jobs that will utilize your specialization. Examples include CALL, vocabulary, TOEIC, extensive reading, and essay writing. Controversial specialty areas (World War II, persecution of minorities, feminism) can be enlightening for students or just make them uncomfortable, depending on how the instructor presents the material. Whatever topics are taught, the teacher has a duty to make the material relevant to students.

With a little preparation and planning, an opportunity for full-time university work will arise. Be ready for it!

### The Author

**Karl Hedberg** earned his bachelor's from Rutgers University and his master's in education from Temple University. He has been teaching in Shiga Prefecture, Japan, for over 21 years. In addition to working at Shiga University, he also co-owns a language school.

Email: [hedberg@biwako.shiga-u.ac.jp](mailto:hedberg@biwako.shiga-u.ac.jp)



**Paul D. Tanner** is a foreign lecturer at Shiga University in Hikone, Japan. His research areas include essay writing (peer review and error correction), the use of dictation, and critical thinking.



# KOTESOL People Interview: Michael Free

Michael Free was born and raised in Scarborough, Canada, spent a few years in Montréal, and is now based in Gangneung, where he is a visiting professor at Gangneung-Wonju National University. He was recently approved as the 2016 National Conference Chair, and he's just been re-elected for the second time as Gangwon Chapter President. Who is this capable Canadian and how is he coping so far away from moose and poutine? TEC caught up with him via Skype to investigate the secrets to his success.

## **TEC: What did you do in your previous life before coming to Korea?**

My initial training was in music. My undergraduate degree was in piano performance at the University of Western Ontario in London, and my first master's degree was in music criticism at McMaster University in Hamilton. This led to a move to Montréal, where I spent a few years at McGill studying and finding that my real passion was teaching.

## **TEC: What was your impression of Korea upon jumping off the plane and when was that?**

In 2006, after a couple of years of "treading water" as I euphemistically put it, I was tired of having jobs but no career, and seemingly getting nowhere paying off student debt. So, I got a

quick TESOL certificate, posted my resumé on Dave's ESL Cafe, sold everything I owned, and got on a plane. Then another plane. Then a bus. Then another bus. It was on the last bus that I got my first real impressions of where I was headed. By the time I came over

the mountains on the east coast, I knew my life had changed; but it was only after I had spent a couple of months in my new town, Geojin, that I began to realize the extent to which it had changed.

## **TEC: What do you enjoy about life in Korea, and what do you do now?**

If we're putting teaching aside for this question, I'd say the people and the food. I've met so many fascinating people whose lives and experiences have been so different from my own. As for the food, from goat stew in the winter to spicy raw fish soup in the summer – it's amazing. The beer could use a little work, though. What do I do now? Since I've finished my second master's degree with the University of Birmingham, I've been playing a lot of video games and watching Korean movies. Plus, I get to occasionally hang out with my wife, Soo-young, who is an award-winning kindergarten teacher.

## **TEC: How and why did you first become involved in KOTESOL?**

It was shortly after I arrived that I first became aware of KOTESOL. The then-president of Gangwon Chapter lived in Sokcho, just to the south of me, and invited me to a meeting. It gave me a way to meet other teachers, as I was the only one in my town at that time, but more importantly it connected me to a source of professional development in my new field. This was crucial because even though I had teaching experience, I was new to ELT.

## **TEC: What have been the biggest benefits to you since becoming involved with KOTESOL?**

Living in a sparsely populated area, the ability to make connections with professionals and immensely talented people in other parts of the country has been a really important benefit. Being involved with the executive committee for a few years now has also afforded me the opportunity to give a little back as well. In the end, though, the central benefit has been the opportunity to learn things. Whether it is the refinement of a technique or being introduced to an entirely new area of teaching, ultimately the point of KOTESOL is to learn.



**TEC: What contributions have you made to KOTESOL that you are the happiest about?**

I don't usually think of my work with KOTESOL in terms of happiness, but let's give it a shot. If I had to pick, I'd say that it's been my part in giving the Gangwon KOTESOL chapter more presence in the past couple of years. The teachers out here have, I think, a greater awareness that we're there to help them. There's a lot of room for improvement, but the progress the executive team has made makes me satisfied.

**TEC: Why should newbies to any sector within the Korean EFL scene get involved with KOTESOL?**

If you want to become a better teacher, KOTESOL is one road you can take to achieve that goal. Your organization may not offer you quality opportunities for professional development, and

**TEC: Congratulations on winning a second term as Gangwon Chapter President! What progress have you seen in the time you've been there, and what do you want to achieve in the next year?**

Gangwon is a real challenge, and we've had to be realistic in what we can accomplish. It's such a large province, with a relatively small membership. I think, in the past few years, we've solidified our modest schedule and had some really successful meetings. We've also been getting more involved with professional development for public school teachers, which is a positive. We're experimenting as well with different types of speakers and meetings; the results so far have been a bit mixed. I'd like to reach out to hagwon teachers a bit more in the coming year, but the big project for us is going to be our hosting of the National Conference in May.



some don't offer them at all. KOTESOL events are also places where you can get real feedback and advice about your context from teachers who have (most likely) been in similar situations. Also, if you want a better job, having KOTESOL membership on your resume can't hurt.

**TEC: In what directions do you think KOTESOL should move in the future?**

That's a really tough question to answer. There's a lot of pressure to do a lot of things online. This is understandable; I think we can use technology to bring the membership closer together. It would be especially good for those of us out here in Gangwon, where travel times often meet or exceed the actual meeting time of a regular event. That said, while an online presence is important, I think KOTESOL needs to retain meetings and events that bring people together in real time and space. Otherwise, we miss out on those moments – the post-session coffees and conference-hallway chats – where the real magic happens.

**TEC: What grand plans or secret goals do you have for the national conference this year?**

We're still in a relatively early stage of organizing things. I would like to see the 2016 National Conference be an opportunity to foster a sense of national community as well as really responding to what the membership wants. As you may know, we put out a pre-conference survey, and we're working to include as much of what people have asked for as possible. Theron Muller from Toyama University in Japan is going to be our plenary speaker, and I'm very excited about that.

If there's a goal I have, it's to prepare at least a few sessions where teachers can really dig in to an area or topic. To spend a couple of hours with other interested teachers along with a knowledgeable facilitator and really learn some things and get inspired about the work they're doing! As for secret goals, I'll paraphrase William Hjortsberg's detective Harry Angel: "Sometimes secrets...should stay secret."

# Creative Writing with *Sijo*

By Michael Free and Yuri Angie White

*Sijo* (or *shijo*) is a genre of Korean poetry dating back to the Goryeo period. Both of us have used it in several ways in the classroom. The most successful of these has been with creative writing lessons, and we want to share the ideas that have worked best.

The **brevity** of *sijo* is the first thing that attracted us to using it in writing lessons. You can see the typical, overall structure in this famous example by Hwang Jin-I (1522-1565):

동지달 기나긴 밤을 한 허리를 버혀 내여  
 춘풍 이불 아래 서리허리 넣었다가  
 어른 님 오신 날 밤이여드란 구비구비 꺾리라

*I will break the back of this long, midwinter night,  
 Folding it double, cold beneath my spring quilt,  
 That I may draw out the night, should my love  
 return.*

The second appeal of *sijo* is the importance of **syllables**, an aspect of English that Korean learners often find challenging. Cho Yunche, who helped develop the idea of *sijo* as literary text in the mid-20th century, provides a detailed outline of the syllabic structure in his "Study of Syllable Count in *Sijo*" (O'Rourke, 2002, p. 3). Each "line" is broken into four "divisions." Each division has an ideal number of syllables, but is also elastic, having minimum and maximum values. Articulated in this way, *sijo* has a flexible structure, which is quite useful since it provides the writer a degree of leeway.

*Sijo's* **creativity** is the final appeal since it is a form that requires creative thinking, if not

creative use of the language. A typical *sijo* has the writer introduce the topic (line 1) and subsequently develop it in the turn (line 2). This requirement, coupled with the syllabic restrictions, can make writing *sijo* a challenge; however, the brevity and four-part construction of each line makes it a manageable one. When students are introduced to what happens in the final part of a *sijo*, these technical requirements are subsumed into the creative process. For in the first division of line 3 comes "the twist," where the reader is taken in an unexpected direction. The final part of the line concludes the poem. The following *sijo*, written by middle school students, illustrates "the twist" wonderfully:

### *The Breakup*

I met him. / He's a kind man. / He was handsome.  
 / We fell in love.

We went to mountains. / We went to oceans. / We  
 kissed each other. / We dreamt of the future.

**He is transgender!** / I'll not send her away. / I  
 will marry her. / Still, we love.

— Grade 2, Moongok Middle School

Students *love* to turn the first part of the poem on its head. What might seem at first to be a mechanical, syllable-counting exercise becomes a creative activity.

In addition to the benefits attendant to creative writing, using *sijo* often provides opportunities for focus-on-form, opens the door to class discussion on topics beyond English, and can foreground L2 language learning against the backdrop of students' cultural knowledge.

Chang (line)	1 ku (division)	2 ku	3 ku	4 ku
1st	3 (2-4)	4 (4-6)	4, 3 (2-5)	4 (4-6)
2nd	3 (2-4)	4 (3-6)	4, 3 (2-5)	4 (4-6)
3rd	3 (3)	5 (5-9)	4 (4-5)	3 (3-4)

## **Sijo with Michael's Middle School Students**

In my earliest *sijo* lessons, I was the one who provided the introduction to the students. It assuaged my co-teacher's fear that the students didn't know anything about *sijo*. However, it felt a bit strange teaching my students about *their* culture, and upon reflection, I also realized I was missing an opportunity for authentic communication. So, I began to make them do the work. I give my students one PPT slide and ask them to tell me about it. Their answers fall into the categories of history, themes, and structure. In single-session writing lessons, there is some discussion of history via general questions (Who wrote this? When did she live?) and traditional themes (e.g., love, nature), but the main focus is on priming the students to deal with the question of structure.

### **Structure: Lines, Divisions, and Syllables**

A description of the *sijo* structure must answer three questions:

1. How many lines?
2. How many divisions in each line?
3. How many syllables in each division?

In smaller classes (up to 12-15 students), a whole-class discussion with the teacher facilitating works well for eliciting answers. In classes with a larger number of students, a small-group (3-4 students) task-based approach is preferable. Whatever the choice, the goal is to sufficiently articulate the structure so that they have a model to which they can later refer.

Students are given an authentic *sijo* (in Korean) and asked to answer the three questions. They are usually quick and consistent in answering the first. With the second, there is typically a range of answers (some students see bigger chunks of language, others go straight to syllables), which later get consolidated. The third question is as easy as the first, though there are more numbers.

Once these questions are answered, students can compare them to Cho's outline. With Question 2, I briefly discuss what division can mean and ask students how they came up with their divisions. With Question 3, I first ask if they found it difficult to answer. The response, when they're looking at a Korean text, is usually "very easy." When I give them

an English translation, it is much more difficult for them. This, of course, has to do with the way syllables are visually represented in Korean script and that maximal syllable structure is significantly more constrained in Korean than in English (a concise Korean CVCC as opposed to the nightmarish English CCCVCCCC). In order to avoid getting bogged down at this point, I tell the class that they can use the resources at hand (i.e., the teacher and their dictionaries) to figure out the number of syllables. That way, they can get to writing.

### **Writing: All – Some – 1**

The introduction to the writing stage involves returning to the idea of the theme of the poem, then describing the general purpose of each line: introduction, development, twist, and conclusion. This can be done quickly in the L1, if you prefer and are able to do so. I usually do a walk-through with the whole class. Together, we **all**:

1. Pick a theme.
2. Make up as many sentences as possible.
3. Select sentences that can be used for lines 1 and 2. Ask: Does it introduce or develop?
4. Make the twist! Tell them: Do something unexpected!
5. End. Ask them: What happens after the twist? How does it end?
6. Review: Check that the parts and syllables are within the limits.

**Some.** Then, I break the class into groups (3-4 students). They work together, repeating the process with the teacher acting as facilitator and resource.

**1.** Finally, if time allows, students can write their own individual *sijo*. They repeat the process again, individually. Students can present their *sijo* at the end of class, or they can be posted in the school. The results are nearly always interesting:

#### *Love*

Couple rings. / Couple necklace. / Couple shirts. /  
Happy darling!

Honeymoon. / Make twin babies. / OMG! / That's ok, lady!

**UGLY BABIES!!** / We'll get a divorce. / Bye-bye  
babies. / I'm so sad.

— Grade 1, Moongok Middle School

### Sijo with Angie's Teacher Trainees

When I ask Korean English teachers, "Do you like to write?" I rarely receive positive replies. When I ask if they teach writing or enjoy teaching writing, the most frequently provided responses are:

- I'm too busy to prepare writing activities.
- Writing is too grammatical, and I am not confident in my English ability.

With such an aversion to writing, attempting to introduce poetry in a writing class would perhaps seem too ambitious. However, as a teacher trainer, it is my goal to change the negative attitude my trainees have towards writing by convincing them that writing is not solely about essays or focusing on form. If the

trainees have a disdain for writing, how can they possibly inspire their students to write?

Ironically, poetry was the writing genre that trainees most enjoyed since poetry is favorable for its

focus on content over form and its tolerance of errors (Widdowson, 1975). I chose to teach *sijo* because students are able to embrace their own culture in the context of a foreign language and blend both L1 and L2 during the writing process.

### Teaching Sijo

The first step in teaching *sijo* is a brief review of syllables. Rather than presenting a drawn out linguistic explanation, I simply explain that syllables are comparable to beats in music by showing a sample of sheet music for "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star." For practice, I had trainees fill in the second and third stanza of the song. I assured the trainees that their students wouldn't need an explanation of syllables if they were to think rhythmically by singing the word or saying the word out loud and listening for the "beats."

The next step involved reading a sample poem in order to demonstrate the target structure and have learners identify the format. This

launched the process of inquiry whereby learners are expected and encouraged to discover knowledge, and to generate rules based on a series of examples. (Lee, 2014).

The sample *sijo* we read was "The Death of Michael Free":

I'm so sad. / My teacher died. / I miss him. / Michael Free's dead.

I loved him. / Come back to me. / I miss you. / I need you, Free.

**HE CAME BACK!!** / He's a zombie now. / He will kill me. / I will die.

— Grade 3, Moongok Middle School

From the sample poem, trainees concluded that a *sijo* consists of three lines with each line containing a certain number of divisions (4), and that within those divisions, a specific number of syllables are used.

Trainees then practiced writing their own *sijo* based on any topic they liked. However, I made one modification to the task by allowing one line of the *sijo* to be written in Korean. Permitting the use of L1 in this task enabled all levels of writers involved, allowing them to make meaning of the text, retrieve language from memory, explore and expand content, guiding their action through the task and maintaining dialogue (Villamil & de Guerrero, 1996, p. 60). Furthermore, because the *sijo* is a Korean poem, the use of L1 added an enriching element of biculturalism to the end result.

Here is an example of a trainee's poem:

### Friend

When I'm sad. / When I'm happy. / When I'm lonely. / You're on my side.

나에게 / 힘이 되는 / 그대여 / 누구인가

Nobody! / Forever with you. / Till time breaks us. / I'm on you.

During the writing process, the class was active with trainees counting syllables out loud, asking for assistance, people laughing over something humorous that was written and even discussing word choice for their poem. It was through experiences like these that the trainees transformed their perception about writing.

### Variations

Trainees were encouraged to incorporate collaborative writing tasks into their lessons.

I chose to teach *sijo* because students are able to embrace their own culture.

To make the *sijo* a collaborative task, students would work in groups and produce only one line of the traditional Korean poem. Then, each group would write their respective line on the board to create a collaborative *sijo*.

Another variation could be to produce an editing task. The teacher would produce a *sijo* with an incorrect number of syllables located in one of the four sections of each line. The students would then identify the error and correct it by rewriting that particular section using a word that satisfies the syllabic rule.

### Conclusion

In using *sijo* as the basis for creative writing lessons, we have both found considerable success. There are technical requirements to be met, which requires giving conscious attention to linguistic elements like syllables. However, these are subsumed into activities that both middle school students and teacher trainees enjoy immensely. We saw that when we shift focus from mechanical manipulation of form to creative expression, and allow the use of the learners' cultural background knowledge and the L1 (either in the process or in the output), the results are positive. The affective filter to write in the target language is lowered while interest and motivation to write increase.

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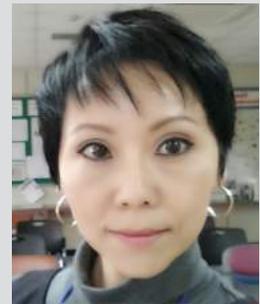
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### Web Resources on Sijo

- <http://www.sejongculturalsociety.org/writing/current/teach.php>
- <http://www.writersdigest.com/whats-new/sijo-poetic-form>

### The Author

**Angie Yuri White**, MA TESOL, is the senior teacher trainer / writing instructor at the Gyeonggi-do Institute for Foreign Language Education (GIFLE), where she teaches genre writing, methods for teaching writing, and writing assessment. She has been a language teacher, teacher trainer, presenter, and materials developer in Korea for nine years. Email: [angie.gifle@gmail.com](mailto:angie.gifle@gmail.com)



**Michael Free** holds master's degrees from the University of Birmingham (M. TEFL) and McMaster University (M.A.). He is very active in professional development and is the president of the Gangwon Chapter of KOTESOL. Michael is currently a visiting professor with the Department of English Language and Literature at Gangneung-Wonju National University (Gangneung). Email: [michaelfree63@gmail.com](mailto:michaelfree63@gmail.com)





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# My Macquarie University Experience

By Eric Fileta

I graduated from Macquarie's MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL program five years ago. I was originally attracted to the program because of its broad curriculum and great balance of language learning and language teaching theory. The purpose of this article is to describe my unique experience with the program, highlight its strengths and weaknesses, and offer some advice for future students.

## Curriculum

Because I am equally interested in language learning and in language teaching, many of the MA TESOL programs in the United States were not a good fit for me. The MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL at Macquarie was the perfect balance of both. The program consisted of core TESOL courses such as assessment and evaluation, methodology, and curriculum development, in combination with core applied linguistics classes such as pragmatics, second language acquisition, and sociolinguistics. The courses were very theoretical and involved a lot of reading and writing. Some classmates of mine complained that the assessments were not dynamic enough, and almost only involved writing lengthy papers. In fact, we did have to write a lot of long papers, typically about three per course, usually 2000-5000 words long. Compared to other MA TESOL courses, this seemed to be a lot more writing. The program is very theoretical, which was great for someone like me who already had a lot of practical experience. However, a few new teachers mentioned that they thought it was a little too theoretical and that they weren't sure how to put all the theory that they learned into practice. There was an optional thesis component that involved taking a few more research methodology classes and working with an advisor to write a thesis. The program took around two years to complete if students chose to write a thesis, or as quickly as one year without a thesis.

## Down-to-Earth Professors

In addition to the staff, the professors were also very approachable. I always felt that I could stop by their offices and ask them anything on my mind. They were very supportive and willing to help with everything from research advice to career advice. I still keep in touch with them and try to meet up with them whenever they are in the area. They have also been very helpful with references and writing letters of recommendation for me. Many of the professors were EFL teachers in the past and could really relate to us. We constantly worked in groups with fellow classmates, and the diverse cohort brought very unique perspectives to the table. Our professors did a great job of mixing up groups and encouraging us to sit with classmates from different backgrounds. In addition to helping students form bonds inside the classroom, the professors encouraged us to meet outside of the classroom as well.

## Program Flexibility

Flexibility turned out to be the most important aspect of the program for me. I had intended to do the entire course on campus, but



Students Matt (left, USA) and Many (center, Vietnam) deliver an in-class presentation as the author (right) looks on. Photo courtesy of Eric Fileta.

events caused me to change my plans, and the program was incredibly accommodating with this. I had finished half of the program on campus and was in Korea on vacation for summer break. I had decided to send some resumes to a few universities while in Korea, just to get interviewing experience for when I finished the program. To my surprise, I was offered a job at a university in the countryside. I told Macquarie about this, and they said that it would be no problem to finish the program as a distance student. Therefore, I finished the second half of the program remotely over the course of a year, while teaching 10-12 hours per week. This not only helped me get some very valuable university teaching experience, but also helped me relate to my coursework

much more as I taught. I was very lucky to already have great friends in the program who I continued to speak with weekly on Skype. Also, having the convenience of studying from my home or office and not having to worry about the very high cost of living in Sydney was great. I often joked with my classmates about the fact that my three-bedroom house in the Korean countryside was twice as cheap as one bed in a shared house in Sydney. I would really recommend completing the program in the same way that I did. It was immensely helpful to have been on campus for the first half of the program, where I was able to build a huge support network and make friends that I will have for life.

### **Sydney Lifestyle**

Life in Sydney is amazing. I lived and studied in Manly, which is a beach town about 25 minutes away from the school. After playing beach volleyball in the morning, I would ride my skateboard to the ferry terminal and take a ferry to the city. I would pass the Sydney Opera House and Harbour Bridge every morning, which always helped me put things into perspective. On weekends, my classmates and

I would watch ska or reggae concerts in New Town, share barbecues in Centennial Park, or hang out on the beach in Manly.

In addition to making some lifelong friends during the program, I made a number of great professional contacts in many different countries. The program participants were so

diverse that only about four out of the 40 students were actually Australian. Also, I enjoy participating in Macquarie's nice alumni community in Korea, and we try to meet up every year.

### **Conclusion**

Down-to-earth faculty and staff, a broad curriculum, a wonderfully diverse cohort, and an amazing city all helped contribute to my overall positive

experience at Macquarie University. However, the program flexibility ended up being the most important aspect of the program for me. I fully encourage other EFL teachers to take advantage of Macquarie University's flexible program to jumpstart their career in the ELT world.

I often joked with my classmates about the fact that my three-bedroom house in the Korean countryside was twice as cheap as one bed in a shared house in Sydney.

### **The Author**

**Eric Fileta** teaches at Sookmyung Women's University in Seoul, Korea. He has been teaching EFL and ESL in a variety of contexts for ten years. He graduated from Macquarie's MA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL program.

His research interests are in second language acquisition (KSL, ESL) sociolinguistics, identities of minority learners, in-groups/out-groups, and intercultural communication.

Email: [ericfileta@gmail.com](mailto:ericfileta@gmail.com)



# So, What Are Discourse Markers, Anyway?!

By Andrew White

## Discourse Markers: Functions in Discourse

So, what are discourse markers, anyway? (Hint: there are two right there.) Well, actually, (sorry, two more) they are the variety of lexical items (i.e., small words and phrases) that work to create good cohesion in both written and spoken discourse. Think of them as the “glue” or “signposts” that operate to connect the prior sentence in written discourse (or utterance in spoken discourse) with the upcoming one, creating a smooth continuation from beginning to end. In written discourse, this usually is achieved with conjunctions (*and, but, so, because, etc.*), adverbs (*actually, surprisingly, often, rarely, basically, etc.*), and a set of phrases that highlight sequential relations and transitions (*first, second, finally, to begin with, in conclusion, etc.*). While these textual functions carry over into spoken discourse as well, the use of discourse markers in spoken interaction is much more complex, and definitely more dynamic and interesting.

**Remember,  
conversation is not  
just one person  
speaking, and then  
taking a break and  
listening. It's a dual  
responsibility.**

As you might have guessed, the use of discourse markers is one sign of native-English speaking fluency (McCarthy & Carter, 2006). You'd be surprised at the amount of discourse markers found in normal English conversation. Allwood (1996) classifies them as one of the top-ten word forms. As with written discourse, they function to create cohesion; in this case, the speakers' cooperation in interacting together to create a dialogue. However, there are a significant number of markers that are specifically related to spoken

discourse. Table 1 shows the pragmatic functions of discourse markers:

**Table 1.**  
**Pragmatic Function of Discourse Markers**

### Textual Functions

Opening frame markers (*okay, now*)  
Closing frame markers (*yeah, finally*)  
Turn-takers (*yeah, and then*)  
Fillers, Turn-keepers (*umm, like, and*)  
Topic switchers (*but, and, what about*)  
Information indicators (*so, like, such as*)  
Sequence markers (*first, next, and then*)  
Repair markers (*like, I mean, you know*)

### Interpersonal Functions

Response/reaction markers (*yeah, great*)  
Back-channel signals (*yeah, mmhm, um*)  
Confirmation-seekers (*you know, right*)  
Face-savers (*perhaps, maybe, a bit*)

(Adapted from Brinton, 1996, pp. 35-40)

Discourse markers function to provide responses to the prior speaker, like assessments and acknowledgements (*okay, right, yes, yeah I see, sure, great*). They indicate the attitude of the speaker, through different intensifiers and softeners (*totally, definitely, exactly, perhaps, maybe, not really*). They also help to textually signpost where the conversation is and where it's going; for example, starting and finishing (*first, okay, to start off, finally*), forward (*next, and then, what about, anyway*) and sidetracked (*by the way, actually, however, hold on*).

## Good Listenership

Of special interest to teachers of English conversation is the fact that discourse markers indicate “good listenership” (McCarthy, 2003, p. 36); through small, “yes-plus” words such as *oh, well, right, ok, I think, you know*, listeners are able to signal their interaction and cooperation in a conversation. Remember, conversation is not just one person speaking and then taking a break and listening. It's a dual responsibility. Oftentimes, classroom language can sound disjointed and

impersonal, like two people hitting a tennis ball back and forth. Look at the two sample dialogues below that might commonly occur in the classroom:

- (1) A: How was your weekend, Sunny?  
B: I met boyfriend on Saturday. Sunday I go shoes shopping with my mother. It was fun. Look at my new boots.
- (2) A: How was your weekend, Sunny?  
B: **Oh, well, you know** I met boyfriend on Saturday.  
A: **Oh, really? Great!**  
B: **And then**, Sunday I go shoes shopping with um my mother.  
A: **Yeah?**  
B: **Yeah. I mean, actually**, it was **really** fun. **Say**, look at my new boots.

Okay, maybe this example is a bit contrived, but you get the point. The propositional content is the same in both dialogues. In other words, remove the discourse markers and the information shared does not change, but the discourse markers connect the two participants' speech much better in forming a discourse. More than a back-and-forth tennis match of cut-and-dry propositional content, discourse markers indicate acknowledgement, assessment, pausing, hesitation, sequential marking, good listening skills, and overall a higher sense of involvement between the two speakers. This is a sign of fluency in native speakers, and learners should be encouraged to do it, too.

### Why Learners Have Problems Using Discourse Markers

Research shows that EFL learners have a smaller range of discourse markers in their interlanguage arsenal compared with native English speakers, as well as an over-reliance on those discourse markers they do know. In general, they have a much lower rate of discourse marker usage (Fung & Carter, 2007; Hellermann & Vergun, 2007). Here are some reasons why this is:

Improper usage of discourse markers can lead to a lack of cohesion in spoken discourse, often leading to unintentional vagueness, misunderstandings, incoherence, or even rudeness.

1. Because discourse markers are removable and the propositional content stays intact, learners focus elsewhere in their production planning.
2. Learners are exposed to plenty of discourse markers when they hear authentic English language. The trouble is, because of their high frequency, they do not always stand out for learners to implicitly notice. Learners have trouble perfecting the usage of definite and indefinite articles (*the* and *a*) for the same reason.
3. Because they are commonly located turn-initial (the first thing someone says when they start a new turn), it is often too soon to comment correctly on what the other person just said, depending on their ability.
4. Similarly, learners are often more concerned with preparing their contribution of added information in their turn, rather than focusing on being a good listener and commenting on what was just said. In other words, it's cognitive overload.
5. Often in classroom discourse, especially in teacher-fronted interactions, students know the teacher is not concerned with good listenership or active participation in the turns of talk, but rather a display of correct grammar and complete sentences.
6. Because discourse markers represent a variety of parts of speech – conjunctions (*and*, *so*, *but*), adverbs (*actually*, *amazingly*, *frankly*, *lovely*), clauses (*you know*, *I mean*, *that's right*), interjections (*oh*, *wow*), prepositional phrases (*by the way*, *on the other hand*), and vocalizations (*uh huh*, *mmhmm*, *huh?*) – it is difficult to teach a true definition, and there is no clear semantic denotation or syntactic role (de Klerk, 2005). This makes them difficult to be explicitly taught.
7. Learners have not been exposed to or taught the usefulness of discourse markers in spoken discourse (although they probably have about written discourse, and there's significant carry over).
8. Similarly, most EFL course books spend very little or no time on pragmatic features of the language of which discourse markers are a part.

Discourse markers can be confusing for learners for the variety of reasons mentioned above. As a teacher, think about the very first thing you say when you start your class; probably something like "Okay, everybody!" or "Well, now! Let's all take out our books!" What does "okay" or "well" mean in this context? Native speakers typically take it for granted, but for learners there is really no reference from which to try to gain meaning. Should they try to understand it via their native

language, the dictionary, prior lessons, or the context? Also, think about this: As teachers it is our job to be accustomed to and forgive students' grammatical, semantic, and pronunciation errors as they work to improve their speaking ability. However, since discourse markers are an aspect of pragmatics (more specifically, sociolinguistic pragmatics), they operate towards maintaining culturally, socially, and situationally appropriate behavior (Wierzbicka, 1991). Improper usage of discourse markers can lead to a lack of cohesion in spoken discourse, often leading to unintentional vagueness, misunderstandings, incoherence, or even rudeness.

### Teaching Discourse Markers to Promote Fluency

Since research shows learners have difficulty noticing discourse markers and using them in student-led communicative language classrooms, task interaction between learners will not ensure that natural English discourse marker usage will occur. Therefore, it is suggested that teaching discourse markers by more explicit methods is perhaps best, with a "direct approach" to turn-taking skills that focuses on conversation fluency "more systematically" (Dornyei & Thurrell, 1994, p. 41). Some suggestions for in-class activities to raise students' production of discourse markers are listed below:

1. Raise awareness with authentic TV clips or texts. Highlight the discourse markers as they are used and discuss their functions.
2. Match discourse markers with their meaning using cards.
3. Delete discourse markers from a discourse (for example, a transcribed authentic spoken dialogue). Have students fill in the blanks with their own ideas. Discuss the answers as a group.
4. Explicitly give out discourse marker lists or create a wall display. (Lists of hundreds of discourse markers and their functions can be found here: <http://english.edusites.co.uk/article/improving-writing-discourse-markers-a-teachers-guide-and-toolkit/>)
5. Have students record (with their cell phones) and transcribe pair-work conversations (either in class or as homework). Have them highlight the discourse markers they do use, and add more. Share the work and discuss as a group.

In conclusion, this article has been an attempt to highlight the importance of discourse markers in spoken interaction, as a means to promote fluency. As English language teachers, spending a bit of class time on some of the suggested activities

above can reach these goals. As Terraschke (2007) explains, improved discourse marker usage by learners works "to create an informal and friendly conversational atmosphere...to better relate to their native interlocutors."

Yeah. Okay. So...what are you waiting for?

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### The Author

**Andrew White** is an associate professor in the English Department of Induk University, Seoul, where he has worked since 1999. He is currently completing his PhD dissertation in English education at Korea University. His interests include spoken discourse, classroom interaction, and coursebook design.



Email: [andrewprofsr@yahoo.com](mailto:andrewprofsr@yahoo.com)

# Book Review: Academic Written English

Reviewed by Angela Guanying Wu

**Book by Ken Hyland.**

**Shanghai, China: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press, 2015.**

The book *Academic Written English*, published last year by Ken Hyland, starts with the story of the academic journey through the English for specific purposes (ESP) and English for academic purposes (EAP) fields before elaborating step by step on a metadiscourse approach to understanding and analyzing English text as a writer-reader interactional discourse. This analysis uses corpora from eight disciplines, both soft and hard fields. The studies included in this book provide a full picture of this meta-discourse through corpus-based and corpus-driven approaches (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001) to professional and L2 academic writing in terms of stance and engagement.

Metadiscourse is defined by Hyland as “the linguistic resources used to organize a discourse or the writer’s stance towards either its content or the reader” (2000, p. 109). Hyland (2004) suggested three key principles of metadiscourse: propositional vs. non-propositional discourse, writer-reader interaction, and internal vs. external relations (p. 121). Based on these key principles, an interaction model addressing stance and engagement is developed. “Stance” refers to an individual’s voice, which establishes the writer’s tone through such features as hedges (e.g., *possible, might, perhaps*), boosters (e.g., *clearly, obviously*), attitude markers (e.g., attitude verbs such as *agree*, sentence adverbs such as *unfortunately*, and adjectives such as *appropriate*), and self-mention (e.g., first person pronouns and possessive adjectives). Engagement is the writer-reader relationship established by the writer in the text through rhetorical features such as reader mention (e.g., *you, we*), directives (e.g., imperatives, modals of obligation addressed to the reader, and predicative adjectives expressing the writer’s judgment of necessity or importance, such as *It is important to understand...*), questions, knowledge reference (e.g., *We know that...*), and personal asides (e.g., *I believe...*; p. 94). In this



Ken Hyland

book, Hyland illustrates how these core rhetorical features are scattered throughout professional academic articles and L2 dissertations. Of these linguistic features, Hyland clearly states that L2 learners tend to use more hedges in academic writing. On the one hand, hedging shows respect to the related disciplinary community, while on the other hand, it reveals that the modest character of the writer is willing to reassess any misjudgement they make.

A series of studies in this book explore these rhetorical features using a number of corpora from eight different disciplines (engineering, electrical engineering, microbiology, physics, marketing, philosophy, sociology, and applied linguistics). Working from the ten leading professional academic journals (three papers from each discipline, so a total of 240 research articles), Hyland notes that each discipline has its own conventional usage of linguistic features. Under the interaction model he proposes, stance markers were five times more common than engagement features, while hedges were the most frequent feature. In terms of lexical bundles, the hard fields (engineering, electrical engineering, microbiology, and physics) had more prepositional phrase fragments (e.g., *... is shown in Figure...*) and anticipatory it-patterns (e.g., *It is possible/important that...*), while the soft fields (marketing, philosophy, sociology, and applied linguistics) had more *of*-phrases (e.g., *on the basis of* and *in terms of*). In addition, using a corpus of L2 dissertations from Hong Kong from the above-mentioned eight disciplines, Hyland claims



that L2 writers could establish academic writing professionalism through a modest and humble stance using writing features like hedges.

Therefore, based on these results, Hyland proposes that the L2 learners in ESP curriculum should be encouraged by using hedges and practicing with specific knowledge of the field, and teachers of ESP curricula are recommended to give feedback (either praise or criticism) with hedges. I agree with what Hyland proposes. Academic writing for L2 writers is a process of establishing one's personality in the related disciplinary community.

Constructivism, on the other hand, provides us with the idea that learning can be constructed, deconstructed, and reconstructed. Using hedges as a part of feedback to L2 learners as a form of consciousness-raising in ESP curricula could help in the construction of L2 writers' specific academic linguistic knowledge. More specifically, nurturing hedges requires two actions: the raising of hedging awareness by analyzing concordance material, text fragments, and longer texts, as well as increasing the use of hedging in the writing process by focusing on high-frequency items, pedagogic tasks, and writing for an audience. By using this type of ESP curriculum design, L2 academic writers would be able to master particular lexical bundles in different subjects, with "the disciplinary activities ... a central part of their engagement" (p. 414), which reinforces language competence by intensive recycling. However, after recognizing and using hedges, the editing stage of academic writing plays a crucial part in not only the use of this rhetorical feature, but also in building the relationship between L2 learners and their disciplinary community.

Thus, Hyland suggests that "by combining these acts (praise, criticism and suggestions) into patterns of Praise-Criticism, Criticism-Suggestion, and Praise-Criticism-Suggestions, and through the use of hedges, question forms, and personal attribution, [the teachers and L2 learners] sought to enhance their relationship, minimize the threat of judgment, and mitigate the full force of their criticisms and suggestions" (p. 446).

I do think this is an important perspective in teaching and learning L2 writing. As an L2 writer pursuing my own academic writing, my advisor's feedback plays a valuable role in my revision process. Particularly, I have a greater feeling of hope and encouragement when revising my writing if I receive feedback that contains hedges.

Though Hyland mainly emphasizes the use of

hedges in establishing writer-reader interaction discourse in L2 academic writing, there are many other corpus-based studies that analyze L2 writing from other textual perspectives in order to improve ESP/EAP curricula. For instance, Coh-Metrix studies examine readability through text cohesion and coherence (Graesser, McNamara, Louwerse & Cai, 2004; Graesser & McNamara, 2011), while AntConc counts concordances and words in terms of frequency (Anthony, 2014). These studies could help us in recognizing the differences and similarities of World Englishes from an international point of view.

In brief, due to rapid developments in computer technology and knowledge, the recognition of rhetorical variations between disciplines and countries will assist both language teaching and language learning, especially for L2 academic writers.

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## The Author

**Guanying Wu** is currently a PhD student in English education at Kyung Hee University. In 2016, she became the second vice-president of the Yongin-Gyeonggi Chapter of KOTESOL. In 2014, she presented at both international and local conferences. Her interests include corpus-based studies and EFL/CFL classroom discourse analysis. Email: [wlelenorwu@yahoo.com](mailto:wlelenorwu@yahoo.com)



# 2016 KOREA TESOL NATIONAL CONFERENCE

## *OUR PROVINCES*



*Photo: View from Cheonghyeok Mt., Gongju, Korea, by John Steele*

**May 28th, 2016 (Saturday)**  
**Sangji University, Wonju**  
**Plenary Speaker: THERON MULLER, University of Toyoma**

**Pre-Registration:**  
**April 1-May15.**

**Onsite Registration:**  
**From 8:00 a.m.**

**For session details:**  
[koreatesol.org/nc2016](http://koreatesol.org/nc2016)

**For more information:**  
[natcon2016@koreatesol.org](mailto:natcon2016@koreatesol.org)

The theme of this year's conference is *Our Provinces*. First and foremost, the theme refers to ELT's various domains of expertise (from SLA to classroom management). Additionally, the theme refers to the nine provinces of Korea (along with the "special cities").

We invite participation by KOTESOL members from all of our provinces in order to share information and foster a sense of national community.

KOTESOL's National Conference is for everyone!

