David Doms
460140

A Text analysis of a newspaper article about Konglish taken from 'The Korea Herald'

1.0. Introduction

Although the emphasis of English classes in most countries has gradually shifted away from teaching written English to conversational English, many Korean students still use English mainly as a 'library language'. As a result, developing students' reading skills still remains a priority and, consequently, so does understanding how written language is organized in English. Recently, an increasing amount of attention has been given to the study of Written Discourse, or "how we string sentences together," (Brown 1994: 362) which has revealed the necessity of describing written language not as an abstract, sentence-level phenomenon with neat grammatical descriptions, but as a meaningful and functional whole made up of interrelated pieces constructed for interactive purposes with an active reader. Since the 1960's, several descriptions of written language at the level of discourse have also emphasized the importance of context and social action in approaching texts. Yet an insufficient amount of teaching is dedicated to textual patterns, both in textbooks and in classrooms.

The aim of this paper is to describe the role of discourse in the written English language through a text analysis of a newspaper article. The first part will review the importance of the main textual patterns and their signaling in English; the second part will offer a diagrammatic representation of the newspaper article to analyze and comment on its textual patterns, while the third part will examine the implications for language teaching and testing.

1.1. The Importance of Discourse: Textual Patterns in English

As Bachman (1990: 87) points out, 'organizational' competence in writing does not only include 'grammatical' competence, but also 'textual' competence (rhetorical organization and coherence). Indeed, just as studies on spoken discourse have described the structures of various types of oral exchanges, the growing field of written discourse analysis has described the main frames commonly used by writers in English. Working at the supra-sentential level is essential because "discourse requirements partially determine the general order of major information blocks within the sentence." (Rutherford 1987: 73) Discourse analysts thus have identified the main types of texts, or genres:

> A genre is a means of achieving a communicative goal that has evolved in response to particular rhetorical needs, and (…) a genre will change and evolve in response to changes in those needs. (Dudley-Evans in Coulthard 1994: 219)

Since writers use various moves to develop their argument, the typical organizational patterns and signaling within each genre were recognized. As Nunan (1991: 73) explains,

> one of the claims of genre theory is that language exists to fulfill certain functions and that these functions will largely determine the structure of the text and the language it contains.

These frameworks and signaling devices will be used in this paper for the analysis of the newspaper article.

1.2. Overall Patterns and Signaling

Reading is a process that involves a constant negotiation of meaning between a writer who tries to develop his purpose with an imagined reader in mind, and a reader who decodes the message by using not only the information in the text but also, as stated by the schema theory, his own background knowledge, expectations, and intelligence:

> When we read any text we draw not only on linguistic knowledge, in the narrow lexico-grammatical sense, but also on our knowledge of discourse structures and our knowledge of the world. (Little in Odlin 1994:108)

Also, language, Rutherford writes (1987: 68-69), "is temporal. It is strung out in linear fashion, and these 'stretches' - whether they be phrases, sentences, whole texts, or whatever - have beginnings and endings… whatever language material appears in these stretches has to be in some kind of sequential order." Since a text is organized prospectively, "the more predictable a sequence of linguistic elements, the more readily a text will be processed." (Nunan 1991: 66) Therefore, writers (at least in European languages) rely on predictable temporal patterns to present their message in a comprehensible linear form to the reader:

> Language is shaped and organized to form different types of texts in which "beginnings", "middles" and "ends" have distinct functions. The structures which shape and organize texts are typically referred to as schematic structures. (Coffin 2001: 109-110)

Texts, through their rhetorical patterns and lexical signals, exhibit certain characteristics which make them easier to process while differentiating them from other types of texts. Since the 1960s, several linguists, including such well-known researchers as Winter, Labov, and Hoey, have described some popular frameworks used in written English:

• The *Problem - Solution* pattern begins with the description of a *situation* that contains a *problem*. The problem requires a *response*, which is followed by a description of its *result*, with an *evaluation* of the response / result at the end:

Problem - Solution

Situation
V
Problem
V
Response
V
Result / Solution
V
Evaluation

• The *General - Specific* pattern starts with a general statement which is followed by a series of (often progressively) more specific statements, and ends with another general statement:

General - Specific

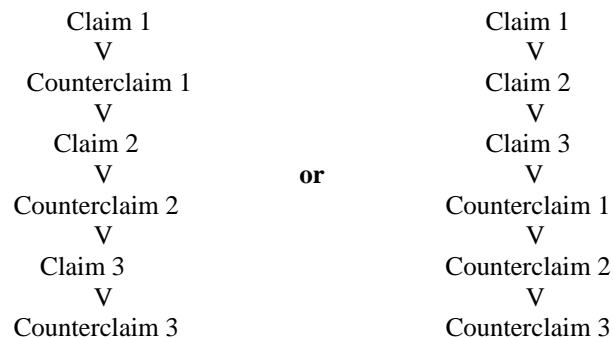| General Statement	General Statement
V	V
Specific Statement 1	Specific Statement
V	V
Specific Statement 2	More Specific Statement
V **or**	V
Specific Statement 3	Even More Specific Statement
V	V
Etc…	Etc…
V	V
General Statement	General Statement

• The *Claim - Counterclaim* pattern consists of a series of contrasting statements (and, often, some common ground):

Claim - Counterclaim

Claim 1	Claim 1
V	V
Counterclaim 1	Claim 2
V	V
Claim 2	Claim 3
V **or**	V
Counterclaim 2	Counterclaim 1
V	V
Claim 3	Counterclaim 2
V	V
Counterclaim 3	Counterclaim 3

Other patterns exist (Question - Answer, Hypothetical - Real, etc…), and all these patterns are flexible, since texts never follow one pattern exactly. In any case, "finding patterns in texts is a matter of interpretation by the reader, making use of clues and signals provided by the author." (McCarthy 1991: 161) Also, while one pattern may dominate a text at its most general level, several sub-patterns can also exist within the main pattern.

Each pattern is signaled to the reader through typical lexical items. For example, the *Problem - Solution* pattern will likely contain words such as 'problem, danger, drawback, change, improve, process, method, prevent'. Such words are "discourse-organising words, since it is their job to organize and structure the argument [… They] give us indications of the larger text-patterns the author has chosen, and build up expectations concerning the shape of the whole discourse." (McCarthy 1991: 75-76)

1.3. Cohesion, Clause Relations, and Signaling

Besides the overall text structure, the relations between clauses (within the same sentence or across sentences) are essential to organize the text and create cohesion. Winter (in Coulthard 1994: 49) explains that "a Clause Relation is the shared cognitive process whereby we interpret the meaning of a Clause or group of clauses in the light of their adjoining clauses or group of clauses," and speaks of "basic clause relations of matching, logical sequence, and their multiple and mixed relations." (1994: 67) Logical relations include cause - consequence, phenomenon - reason, basis - conclusion, etc… Matching relations include those of compatibility, or equivalence (based on the similarities of the two elements compared) and incompatibility, or contrast (based on their differences). More details and examples are given by McCarthy (1991: 155-157) and Winter in Coulthard (1994: 50-54). Cohesive devices play an important role in signaling clause relations and are useful guides for the reader to establish overall coherence. The two main ways to signal relations are through grammar (subordinators and coordinators), and lexical items. Lists of discourse markers are given by Brown (1994: 311) and Winter (1977, in McCarthy 1991).

Besides clause relations, cohesion describes how the words of a text combine to create texture. "Texts are structured not only according to rules of rhetorical organization but also of cohesion within paragraphs, sentences, grammar, and word choice," writes Bachman (1990: 88). Rutherford (1987: 90-95) lists the categories that explicitly mark semantic relationships: reference, substitution, ellipsis, conjunction, all created by grammatical words; and lexical cohesion, created by nouns and other content words.

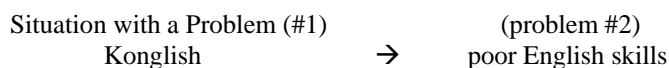## 2.0. Textual Patterns in the Newspaper Article

The newspaper article (Appendix A) is taken from 'The Korea Herald', a daily English newspaper in Korea. It was written by a Westerner (whose name is not given) in February 2000. The target audience is the foreigner working in Korea, not only because the majority of the readers are expatriates, but also because the article was published in a section entitled 'The Weekender' written by foreigners specifically for foreigners. The article was chosen because it addresses a topic (Konglish) that is familiar and enjoyable to Koreans and thus particularly suitable for a conversation class. Also, since many university students occasionally read this newspaper to improve their reading skills, analyzing this article in class should be relevant to their goals. The length and difficulty of the article, despite a few complex words, seemed accessible to the intermediate classes it will be used in. As for its structure, a clear overall Problem - Solution could easily be analyzed in class. (See appendix B for a diagrammatic representation.)

2.1. Surface Observation: Overall Patterns and Signaling

At the most general level, a Problem - Solution pattern is the overall frame that will guide comprehension for the reader. The argument develops at various stages along these lines:
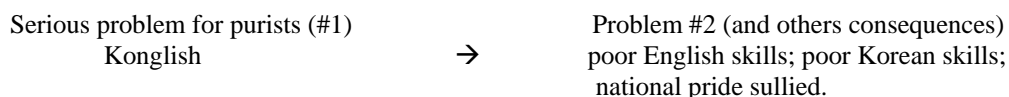
• **Situation:** *Title and Sentences 1-4*
The title emphasizes the purpose of the article by pointing ahead to what the writer will be saying: mangled English is a serious problem for Korea and for Koreans struggling to get better at English (another problem).
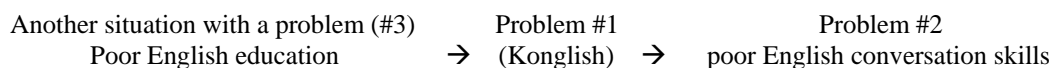
Situation with a Problem (#1)   (problem #2)
Konglish   →   poor English skills

Before describing the initial situation, and possibly to 'catch' and entertain the reader, the writer enumerates some popular examples of improper English frequently used by Koreans. This section is brief because the imagined reader shares the necessary background knowledge about the situation. This section serves as a starting point that the reader trusts as true and is meant to provide a context for subsequent sentences. The use of the present tense ('is creeping') in general statements is typical of a 'situation' section. The words used to describe Konglish all connote negatively: 'plagued,' 'mangled,' 'struggles,' 'creeping quirkily.' Yet the writer does not report it as a threatening issue; so far his neutral view on the topic is probably close to that of the imagined reader, although one could also view the use of not-so-subtle negatives as showing that the writer is not neutral on the subject but is trying to keep an appearance of such and to lead the reader to have a less neutral view on the subject.
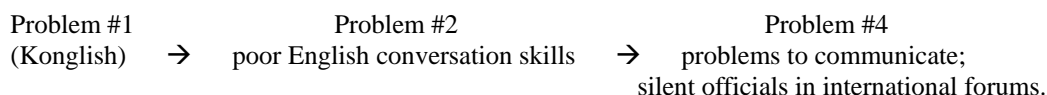
• **Problem:** *Sentences 5-12*
The problem takes a different dimension and develops into a series of deeper issues ('for purists, though'). Purists evaluate the situation differently than most people and see the use of Konglish as 'a serious social problem'. It is this extreme perspective that will be developed throughout the article. The problem - solution pattern is clearly reflected in terms that connote negatively: 'hybrid lingo,' 'sullies,' 'sabotages,' 'proliferates,' 'neither,' 'nor,' 'without,' 'phony.'

Serious problem for purists (#1)   Problem #2 (and others consequences)
Konglish   →   poor English skills; poor Korean skills;
                      national pride sullied.

The next section answers the question that the imagined reader might be asking: in what sense is it such a serious problem? Sentences 8-9 expose some background information about Korea's development, evaluated positively ('huge,' 'vigorous') and the English education system, evaluated negatively ('but,' 'rote,' 'at the expense of') and seen as a cause for Koreans' limited English skills (echoing the title of the article).

Another situation with a problem (#3)   Problem #1   Problem #2
Poor English education   → (Konglish) → poor English conversation skills

Further negative effects of Konglish are then examined to justify why the initial problem is a source for national concern while reinforcing the Problem - Solution pattern ('but,' 'falter,' 'lament,' 'hardly,' 'lack,' 'only,' 'limited').

Problem #1   Problem #2   Problem #4
(Konglish) → poor English conversation skills → problems to communicate;
                                  silent officials in international forums.

• **Response / Solution:** *Sentences 13-15*
Now that the problems have been identified, a response is required. The Korean President stresses the importance of the English language and wants to 'reverse the lapse.' Several other words reflect the response / solution section: 'is trying to,' 'aware,' 'addressed the weakness,' 'warning.' Since Konglish was described as a national problem ('domestic,' 'international,' 'officials'), the response will come at the national level ('country's economic competitiveness,' 'world competition.'). Although the solution is not described explicitly, the example at the end of the paragraph implies that, in order to 'master' the language in times of globalization, strict measures will be taken to improve the people's English speaking skills and to develop the English education system.

• **Evaluation:** *Sentences 16-20*
The 'evaluation', as it is often the case, precedes the 'result'. The evaluation here is not that of the author of the article but a long quotation of Ahn's ('The writer'). Prior sections showed more variety in terms of who was being cited for the problem or the solution. Purists reject early English education, are concerned about Korea's identity, and see English as a tool, not an aim in times of globalization ('unfounded myth'). Words such as 'strongly opposes,' 'why not,' 'should be more… than…,' 'unfounded myth,' 'should be used,' 'should learn,' 'not just' all connote negatively to reflect the negative evaluation.

• **Result / Evaluation:** *Sentences 21-32*
The government took strict measures to solve Problem #3. Yet the 'But' (20) indicates a negative evaluation of the response by the author ('you wouldn't know'), as the phrase *trying to* reverse the lapse' (13) already implied. A second set of Konglish phrases, the basis for the negative evaluation, proves that the problem still exists everywhere ('abound', in contrast to 'not widespread' (4)) More background information on the history of Konglish is then given (25-27), echoing the first interlude (8-9). The words 'twisted,' 'chopped,' 'patched,' again have the negative connotation of destruction, while 'wacky terms,' 'nonsensical, 'tongue-knotting,' 'entirely different meaning,' express incomprehension.

English words flooded in → Konglish (TV, magazines) → Poor English education → More Konglish everywhere

When the text contains a negative evaluation of the solution, "the same or a slightly modified problem is often reinstated and an alternative solution tested; this creates a potentially recursive structure," (Coulthard 1994: 8) which is the case here.

• **Problem / Response:** *Sentences 33-39*
This section is the second development of Ahn's thoughts after sentences 16-20. Ahn redefines the problem at a deeper level. He gives a historical interpretation of Konglish by linking it to other times where Koreans have used foreign languages (Chinese,

Japanese) for the wrong reason ('flunkyism,' and now to 'look smarter.') To him, Konglish is a symptom of a much deeper issue: that of Korea's identity, national consciousness, and old fears. The words 'remnant,' 'misused,' 'hated,' 'problem,' 'pseudo English expressions,' 'wrong,' are used to redefine the problem.

Flunkyism; Social status → Konglish / Using foreign languages → Identity problems

Ahn's implied solution is that Koreans should speak in proper Korean to Koreans and that they should learn English properly to communicate with foreigners. The section ends abruptly with a different perspective introduced by 'though'(38), with 'defenders' redefining the problem not only as a false problem, but even as something necessary and useful ('fit their needs').

• **Situation / Problem:** *Sentences 40-44*
The last section again redefines the problem in a slightly different way by exploring how Konglish affects Koreans in everyday life. The situation is described as a vicious circle, since having Konglish goes against the government's measures and in turn produces more Konglish.

Konglish → Songs full of Konglish → More Konglish (teenagers)

Several words used to describe the problematic Konglish expressions in songs again connote destruction ('worst linguistic butchers') and incomprehension ('baffling,' 'cryptic,' 'meaningless,' 'without knowing').

• **Responses**: *Sentences 45-48*
Two diverging viewpoints are again described. On the one hand, the university professor claims that Konglish is a problem ('blindly trust') and that it should be controlled ('should understand,' 'figure out'). On the other hand, the schoolgirls agree with the first defender of Konglish (38-39) by finding it 'neat' and 'pretty cool.' The end of the article is thus unresolved, without a real conclusion or a positive evaluation of any of the proposed solutions, unlike many other Problem - Solution texts which have a summary, suggestion, or call-to-action at the end of the solution analysis.

2.2. Subordinate Patterns and Signaling
Other sub-patterns can be found embedded within the main patterning. A Claim - Counterclaim pattern can be identified between the third and the fourth paragraph, in which Ahn (16) opposes the government's policy. This counterclaim is clearly expressed through lexical items such as 'strongly opposes,' 'why not,' 'should be more… than…,' 'furthermore,' 'unfounded myth,' 'should be used,' 'should learn,' 'not just.' Shorter Claim-Counterclaim patterns exist at the sentence level. The reader's letter (38-39) introduced by 'though' also goes against Ahn's evaluation of the problem, with 'new phenomena in their culture' (39) contrasting with 'flunkyism toward powerful neighbors' (33). Also, at the beginning of the article, the situation is not described as

problematic (1-4) until the purists argue it is actually grave ('for purists, though'). Finally, the professor's opinion (45-46) is immediately countered by the teenagers' perspective (47-48), although there is no explicit signaling. The writer, when reporting these diverging opinions, remains neutral by introducing all the quotations with the verb 'to say'. The extensive use of the direct mode as a distancing technique for the writer also works as "a textual strategy which dramatizes the narrative, legitimizes or evaluates the story being told." (Caldas-Coulthard in Coulthard 1994: 304)

General - Particular patterns at the sentence level can also be identified. In the first paragraph, the first sentence after the list of examples (4) contains a general statement followed by more specific statements that develop it and another general statement at the end (7). The third paragraph also begins with a general statement followed by a series of sentences which justify and explain it, and a specific example at the end (15). Ahn's quotations in paragraph 4 also begin and end with a general statement, with more specific sentences in-between, as shown by the hyponym 'adults' used after the superordinate 'people'. The first half of the last paragraph also has a general statement (40) followed by specific examples and another general statement to end the 'problem' section (44).

Last, the three sections which give background and historical information (8-9, 25-29, and 34-36) work like short narratives and follow the structure of longer ones: 'Setting - Complication - Resolution - Evaluation - Moral' (in Jaworski and Coupland 1999: 227) For example, the first section begins with a setting ('War-torn […] a half century ago') followed by a complication ('But schools […]'), a resolution ('Today […]'), and an evaluation ('Domestic newspaper lament […] That's because […]'). The second section also has a setting ('When South Korea industrialized […]'), a complication ('Koreans could not find […]'), a resolution ('They chopped, patched […]'), and an evaluation ('Koreans feel awkward […] So […]'). The third section has a setting ('during Japan's 35-year colonial rule of Korea until 1945 […]'), a complication ('recklessly adopted […]'), a resolution ('were hated by their compatriots […]'), and an evaluation ('the problem is […]').

2.3. Relationship between the Patterns

The sub-patterns are not disconnected from the main pattern and can relate to it through a relation of compatibility or incompatibility. The Claim - Counterclaim patterns are inserted to serve as the backbone of the article to confront the views of purists (counterclaims) to those which most people hold (claims). Many of these oppositions are abrupt: on the one hand, the general view of the public, the Korean government, the reader of the newspaper, the teenage girls (left column in appendix B); on the other hand, through a relation of incompatibility, the purists, Ahn, and the mass communication professor (right column). The tone between these sections changes abruptly: very formal sections describing Ahn's opinions are followed by casual examples of Konglish, just like the worrying professor at the end is undermined by the light-heartedness of the students. It is this alternation between serious and amusing, historical and actual, common people and purists, that creates much of the balance and charm of the article.

The narratives serve as breaks in the overall argument and are meant to inform the reader and shed some light on the current situation. All three use the past tense to introduce the digression ('a century ago' (8); 'when South Korea industrialized' (25) 'were introduced' (34) and the present tense or a quotation from Ahn to go back to the main theme and give the evaluation: 'Today' (10), 'the writer said' (29), and 'Ahn said' (37) "A change of verb form indicates the beginning of a new functional unit." (Hoey in Coulthard 1994: 40)

2.4. Cohesion

Cohesion is realized in two main ways - grammar and vocabulary, and the two often intermingle. Grammatical cohesion, according to McCarthy (1991: chapter 2), has four main categories. The following examples highlight how the smaller pieces of the article (words and groups of words) are closely connected to create meaning while structuring the careful progression within the text from one idea to another:

• *Referential relationships*: Examples of personal reference include 'they' (2, 12, 26), 'he' (7), 'his' (14), 'their' (17, 46), 'we' (14, 20, 48), 'our' (20), I (48), etc… Demonstrative references include 'that' (12), 'those' (20), 'these' (37, 45), etc…

• *Ellipsis* and *Substitution*: In sentence 10 the subject ('college graduates') is not repeated after the 'but', and in sentence 12 the subject ('they') is omitted after the 'and'. Examples of substitution are 'them' (17) standing for 'children', and 'them' (37) replacing Koreans.

• *Conjunctive ties*: In this text they are mostly adversative, reflecting the Claim-Counterclaim patterns ('but' (3), 'though' (5), 'But' (9), 'But' (22), 'but' (37), 'though' (38)) and causal, reflecting the general Problem - Solution pattern ('That's because' (12), 'So' (29), and the unmarked causality between sentences 9-10). Temporal signals sequencing in time include 'Beginning this year' (15) and 'When' (25).

Cohesion in this text is realized mainly through lexical words since numerous semantic links across items of vocabulary can be identified. Lexical ties, according to McCarthy (1991: chapter 3), can be shown through reiteration (synonyms, near-synonyms, and superordinate) and collocation (lexical set).

• Reiteration: Some of the essential words of the article are repeated several times directly or through (near) synonyms. For example, Konglish is described as 'mangled English' (title), 'hybrid lingo' (5), 'neither Korean nor English' (6), 'phony English' (6); Konglish terms are coined as 'nonsensical phrases' (22) 'wacky terms' (26), 'pseudo English expressions' (37) and 'meaningless English lines' (43). The English language is referred to as 'the international language of business' (13) and the 'lingua franca of the Internet age' (14).

• Collocation: The words to describe Konglish expressions are part of the same lexical sets to connote disease ('plagued,' 'proliferates') invasion ('creeping,' 'proliferates,'

'abound,' 'flooded in,' 'slew,' 'recklessly adopted,') destruction ('mangled,' 'sullies,' 'sabotages,' 'chopped,' 'patched,' 'twisted,' 'butchers'), and incomprehension ('baffling,' 'cryptic,' 'meaningless,' 'wacky terms,' 'nonsensical, 'tongue-knotting,' 'entirely different meaning,' 'without knowing,' 'pseudo English expressions,' 'wrong').

3.0. Classroom Exploitation: Implications for Teaching

The recognition of the importance of textual patterns has led to important changes in approaching the teaching of reading and writing. With a higher awareness of discourse patterns, teachers can design their materials and evaluate their students' compositions more accurately. Students will perceive that much of cohesion is governed not by grammar but by discourse, and will learn how to organize their ideas and connect their sentences more effectively and in an interactive way with the reader.

3.1. Raising and Evaluating Students' Awareness of Textual Patterns

Introducing students to a variety of discourse types and teaching words and structures belonging to various kinds of patterns should be a priority. Making them aware of contrasting rhetoric, "the belief that students from different languages and cultural backgrounds present written material differently," (Reid 1993: 9) that choices of patterns reflect cultural preferences, is essential when writing appropriately for English-speaking audiences. Students who come from languages that employ patterns similar to the ones used in English will have less difficulties than those who do not. Learners will find it easier to read authentic texts if they can identify and activate the appropriate schema, and, "once conscious of a larger text-pattern, the[y] can be brought to an awareness of the rich vein of vocabulary tat regularly realizes it." (McCarthy 1991: 81) Some examples of possible tasks include recombining the text, identifying lexical signals, fill-in the gaps with the proper conjunctions to check their understanding of clause relations and cohesive devices, creating their own diagrammatic representation, skimming the text and predicting the writer's intention, etc...

Evaluating students' knowledge of discourse will be about assessing "their use of a variety of rhetorical features for organizing information or marking cohesive relationships (Bachman and Palmer 1996: 278). When testing their reading skills, some questions might test macro-skills, others micro-skills:

> Macro-skills such as scanning text, skimming text, identifying stages of an argument,
> identifying examples presented in support of an argument; and micro-skills such as identifying
> referents of pronouns, understanding relations between parts of text by recognizing indicators of
> discourse, etc… (Hughes 1989: 116-7)

However, testing knowledge of discourse can be tricky for reasons of validity. Since students need more than the particular micro-skill to answer a textual question correctly, and since it is often hard to know what kind of knowledge comes into play exactly - the grammar, the vocabulary, the aspects of discourse, everything is thoroughly interlinked, - it can be difficult to write proper questions targeting a specific skill. Furthermore, the amount of topical or cultural knowledge differs among students: "If authenticity is a

function of the test taker's interaction with the test task, it will affect both the reliability and validity of test scores." (Bachman 1990: 10)

3.2. Written Discourse and Social Action

Another possibility for exploiting the text is to bring critical discourse analysis into the classroom. As Burns and Coffin (2001: 99) explain,

> It is essentially an approach to language analysis that concerns itself with issues of language, power, and ideology. One of its main aims is to highlight how language serves to construct particular ideological positions.

This approach states that the writer's choices of words and textual patterns among other possibilities have ideological implications and effects. For example, "the well-known example of *freedom-fighter* versus *terrorist* illustrates how lexical items can articulate opposing viewpoints but retain the same referential identity." (Carter 1998: 109) Discourse is thus inextricably connected to social action, as Halliday argues:

> As a writing system evolves, people use it; and they use it in constructing new forms of social action, new contexts which are different from those of speech. These contexts both engender and are engendered by new lexicogrammatical patterns that evolve in the language itself. (in Burns and Coffin 2001:181-2)

As such, understanding a text does not only include identifying its formal characteristics, but also explaining it in terms of social action. Students could be asked to reflect upon the writer's choices of textual structures, his use of the grammar and vocabulary, and how these choices relate to the social context in which the text is produced. Besides answering comprehension questions, students could analyze how the author manipulates macro-structures (generic structures, the kinds of clause relations, etc…), the connotations of some key words, or, for grammar, could study "the particular roles of nominalization, passivization (especially agent-deletion) and transitivity in newspaper reports […] how a consistent linguistic structuring of events is likely to encode the power structure and political position represented or favoured by the newspaper." (Carter 1998: 109)

For the newspaper article about Konglish, students could be asked to infer the implied assumptions and underlying ideological systems of the article and describe their impact on the reader, "who is at the same time both produced and in a sense imprisoned by the text." (Caldas-Coulthard 1996: 251) They could also be asked to criticize Ahn's arguments as idealistic (the notion that a language can be spoken perfectly, whereas it necessarily evolves in different ways in different social contexts) and rooted in Korean nationalism and elitism rather than in the natural and actual employment of language. They could also re-write the text using a different pattern (Claim – Counterclaim, for instance). More aware of the structures encountered during their readings and of the social function of a text, students will understand the importance of writing with structure and with a purpose, something with real-life implications of constructing and challenging their social reality.

4.0. Conclusion

Although it is still unclear how much written discourse conventions vary across cultures and languages, it is probable that "in interethnic communication it is the discourse system which produces the greatest difficulty." (Agar 1994: 164) It seems that an insufficient amount of attention is given to discourse by both teachers and students, even in the students' L1, which is surprising since, as Brown argues (2000: 43), "the barrier of discourse is one of the most difficult for second language learners to break through." However, it is not the only problem: while students need to focus on discourse, they simultaneously need to have a lot of words and a wide array of structures at their disposal:

> It is not possible to engage in purposeful communication in a language without being able to formulate the structures of the language as well. (McDonough and Shaw 1993: 25)

Furthermore, as McCarthy points out, "it is not always easy to separate discourse-level weaknesses from the lexico-grammatical ones," (1991: 167) so it is important to find a good balance between the grammatical system and the discourse system. Finally, since a piece of writing is primarily a form of personal expression, it is important not to place too great an emphasis on conventional, clear-cut discourse patterns so as not to cripple the students' creativity.

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Appendix A:

Plagued by mangled English, South Korea struggles to improve skills

[1] For a laugh, South Koreans watch a "gagman," or comedian. [2] To see what's on sale, they go "eye-shopping." [3] Those in the fast lane ride "otobai," or motorbikes. [4] The English language is not widespread in South Korea, but it is creeping, often quirkily, into everyday talk. [5] For purists, though, the hybrid lingo known as "Konglish" sullies national pride and sabotages the country's campaign to hone its English skills. [6] "It's neither Korean nor English. As it proliferates, youngsters grow up without learning either language properly," says Ahn Jung-hyo, a novelist and translator whose latest book, "Dictionary of Phony English," includes 1,000 mangled English phrases commonly used by South Koreans. [7] He wanted to convince people that the use of Konglish was a serious social problem.

[8] War-torn and impoverished a half century ago, South Korea has made huge economic strides, thanks largely to a vigorous education system. [9] But schools have stressed reading and rote memorization of English grammar and vocabulary at the expense of conversation. [10] Today, many college graduates can read complex textbooks in English, but falter in chats with native speakers. [11] Domestic newspapers lament that South Korean officials hardly speak during international forums unless the topic directly concerns their country. [12] "That's because they generally lack experience in open debate and have only a limited grasp of English," says Yang Soo-gil, Seoul's ambassador to the Organization of Economic Development and Cooperation.

[13] The government is trying to reverse the lapse, aware that economic competitiveness depends in part on mastery of the international language of business. [14] President Kim Dae-jung addressed the weakness in English during his New Year's speech, warning his countrymen that "we will not win in world competition" unless South Korea masters the lingua franca of the Internet age. [15] Beginning this year, the National Military Academy will expel cadets who fail English tests.

[16] The writer strongly opposes early English education for children. [17] "People think children should learn English when their memories are good," he said. "Why not learn the Korean language and culture first? Adults should be more concerned about developing their children's personality than forcing them to memorize English vocabulary." [18] Furthermore, Ahn said it is an unfounded myth that speaking English will contribute to the globalization of Korea. [19] "English should be used as a communication tool to introduce Korea and its people to the world," he said. [20] "To do this, we should learn our language and culture first. Globalization is upgrading our standards to match those of the world, not just learning to speak English."

[21] English classes are mandatory in South Korean schools from third grade through college. [22] But you wouldn't know it from the often nonsensical phrases that abound. [23] "Click, click, click. Internet. Tell me, tell me, tell me. You can do it! Click baby," a male duo chirps in English in a government-financed TV ad for the Internet. [24] A magazine for young women recently carried a feature with this tongue-knotting English title: "Romantic pastel shadow spring lipstick parade." [25] When South Korea industrialized and English words flooded in, South Koreans could not find - or bother to find - proper translations. [26] They chopped, patched or twisted English words to create a slew of wacky terms. [27] Sometimes they came up with entirely different meanings. [28] Although Korean equivalents for elevator, energy, and (baseball) pitcher exist, Koreans feel awkward when they hear these words in Korean, the writer said. [29] So "villa" means a low-rise apartment building in a congested Seoul street. [30] A "venture company" could mean an Internet-based company, or just any small startup business. [31] Young South Koreans sometimes shout "One Shot!" when they propose a toast. [32] A TV actor, talented or not, is a "talent" and "Leports," which does not exist in English, combines leisure and sports.

[33] Ahn sees Konglish as a remnant of Korean flunkyism toward powerful neighbors. [34] Some of the misused English words in Korean conversation were introduced during Japan's 35-year colonial rule of Korea until 1945, while others have been recklessly adopted from contemporary foreign words used in Japan, he said. [35] Ancient Korean nobles used Chinese characters, leaving the Korean alphabet to the general public. [36] During Japan's colonial rule in 1910-45, many Korean policemen boasted their Japanese skills and were hated by their compatriots. [37] "Regardless of the origin, the problem is that Koreans use these pseudo English expressions,

not realizing that they are wrong," Ahn said. "Most of these words can be expressed in Korean, but Koreans tend to insist on including English in their vocabulary, thinking using English expressions makes them look smarter. [38] Konglish has defenders, though. [39] "Koreans are adopting foreign words to fit their needs and to express new phenomena in their culture," read a recent letter to The Korea Herald.

[40] The worst linguistic butchers may be the country's young pop singers, who sprinkle lyrics with baffling English phrases. [41] Duo JinuSean bops to the chorus: "You say you feel me. You say uh had the key all it's time for all to see." [42] In another song, they get really cryptic: "Got to be real. Feel my power like Omega." [43] Take the reggae/hip-hop group Roora's recent showpiece "Moving", which contains meaningless English lines such as "Think about what you done to me. I can't put up with that shit any more. Your fake ass love about that." [44] These lyrics appear as subtitles on TV screens, and youngsters memorize them without knowing their meaning. [45] "Adolescents set these pop stars as their perfect role model and blindly trust everything associated with them," said Kang Hyung-churl, mass communication professor at Sookmyung Women's University. [46] "Such musicians should understand what they are doing to their young fans and try to figure out what their English lyrics mean." [47] "I think it's neat," says Kim Sung-ae, a 16-year-old student. "You don't consult your grammar book when you sing along." [48] "We usually don't know what these English lyrics mean exactly, but we try to sing along and remember all the words," said Lee Jae-kyong, a 15-year-old middle school girl in Seoul. "I think it's pretty cool."

2000.06.02

Appendix B: Diagrammatic Representation of the newspaper article

SITUATION IN WHICH THERE IS
A PROBLEM. More English but too
much Konglish.

V

PROBLEM: Konglish is a serious issue for purists
('though'). Konglish not only causes poor English
skills but has several other negative effects.

V

CURRENT SOLUTION: Strict governmental   ← Claim - Counter-claim →   EVALUATION
measures to develop the country's English skills   Ahn rejects these ideas
('trying to reverse the lapse')   ('strongly opposes')

V   V

RESULT/EVALUATION: Negative. So far the solution   >   PROBLEM/RESPONSE: For Korea's
has been ineffective. Whatever the causes might be,   identity, purists want less English
the problem still exists although, for some people,   among Koreans and more proper
('defenders') it is not even a problem.   English when speaking to foreigners.

V

SITUATION IN WHICH THERE IS
A PROBLEM: ('linguistic butchers')
Vicious circle: The use of Konglish
in everyday life misleads people.

V

MIXED RESPONSES: Konglish is   <>   Konglish should be controlled
'cool' (middle school girls)   (Mass Comm Professor)