THE USE OF SHELL NOUNS IN JAPANESE AND AMERICAN STUDENT WRITING

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ABSTRACT

This thesis addresses the quality of ‘difference’ in L2 English argumentative essays written by Japanese students by focusing on the use of metadiscursive nouns. It does this by comparing the similarities and differences in the use of 33 shell nouns (Schmid, 2000) as discourse construction devices in two corpora: the Japanese subcorpus of ICLE – Japanese writing in English as a foreign language – and the US subcorpus of LOCNESS – Americans writing in English as a first language. Based on Schmid’s (2000) theory, discourse roles of shell nouns are analysed according to three aspects: noun frequencies, syntactic patterns where shell nouns occur, and lexicalisation of nouns. This thesis demonstrates that one source of different impressions in non-native speaker writing stems from their use of shell nouns. The findings show that each group of students uses shell nouns differently, most notably for anaphoric referring functions. Employing different lexicalisation patterns, Japanese students use nouns for these functions more frequently than American students. Different lexicalisations are correlated with preferred discourse construction and argumentation patterns in each of the corpora. This thesis describes the findings and discusses causes of difference that suggest a transfer of L1 cultural values and essay conventions. Aspects of shell noun usage that the Japanese students tend not to handle well are identified and implications for pedagogical practice are discussed.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1: Overview of the thesis

It has often been noted that English texts written by non-native speakers of English (NNSs), even at an advanced level, give the impression of sounding somewhat 'different' from texts written by native speakers of English (NSs). This perception covers a wide range of linguistic items, some of which are profound and obvious, and some of which are more subtle. For example, consider the extract below, written by a university student whose first language (L1) is Japanese:

> I think that the most important invention in 20th century is television. People who see it at fast must be surprised well because in the small box, people are speaking and dancing. Now we take it for granted to be able to see TV, but if I were a people who saw TV at fast, I would have got off into a faint. I think what TV game us is great. From ancient time, to live well and to develop our life stile, we have had to get much information. For example, from china, a great deal of culture such as Buddhism and Kanji are conveyed.// But the **process** were hard and took many year and effect of many people. In contrast, now, we once turn on TV, we can see…[1]

There are a number of obvious features that mark this essay as 'different' from a text written by an educated native speaker. For example, there is no definite article before the noun television, and *first* is spelled as '*fast*'. More subtle variations from the native norm can be seen; for example, in the ordering or selection of words (e.g., *surprised well, got off into a faint, effect of many people*), in the pragmatically unusual use of certain phrases (e.g., *take it for granted*) and also in the vagueness or imprecision of some meanings (e.g., *a great deal of culture such as Buddhism and Kanji*). However, the focus of this thesis will be on an issue exemplified by this writer's use of the noun ***process***. The issue here is that the reader may struggle to identify what it is that this noun is referring back to anaphorically.

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[1] The excerpt is from the Japanese subcorpus of the International Corpus of Learner English (ICLE) (Granger et al., 2009). The text is exactly the way the text appeared in the original, and errors have not been corrected.

Process is a metadiscursive noun. Metadiscursive nouns are abstract and uncountable nouns, and they belong to a class of nouns that have both general and vague meanings.[2] Metadiscursive nouns can help to structure a discourse or comment on the discourse by recovering meaning from other parts of a text in which they occur, and thus can play metadiscursive roles. This thesis looks at how metadiscursive nouns are used and function in English essays written by Japanese students, in comparison to those written by native speakers. The empirical focus of the thesis is on two computerized corpora: the Japanese subcorpus of the International Corpus of Learner English (henceforth JICLE) (Granger et al., 2009) is used for texts written by Japanese students, and the US subcorpus of the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays (LOCNESS) (henceforth US) is for texts written by American students. These corpora are collections of students' argumentative essays, in which metadiscursive nouns are particularly prevalent (Francis, 1986; J. Flowerdew, 2003). The US data, which are chosen partly because Japanese English education is American-English based, are used as a reference corpus to examine differences in the use of metadiscursive nouns in the JICLE corpus, through a methodological approach called Contrastive Interlanguage Analysis (CIA) (Granger, 1996).

The analysis will focus on Schmid's (2000) concept of metadiscursive nouns, which he calls shell noun. By analyzing shell noun frequencies, syntactic patterns where nouns occur, and noun lexicalisations, this thesis investigates whether or not the use of shell nouns is an empirically identifiable dimension of difference in the JICLE and the US essays, and if there are differences, where these differences lie. It also discusses what Japanese students should be taught about the use of shell nouns in the classroom. This thesis does not, however, discuss specific instructional strategies for teaching shell nouns; that would have to be the subject of an altogether different thesis.

Chapter 2 develops the theoretical framework guiding this research project. Chapter 3 explains the methodology of the research. Chapter 4 investigates shell noun frequencies and syntactic patterns where shell nouns can function as metadiscursive items.

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[2] Channell (1994: 190) shows that vagueness can perform a number of vital, contextually appropriate and entirely intended functions. Therefore vague language can be used for politeness and face saving purposes in some cultures (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, this thesis focuses on instances of linguistic vagueness which may cause the text to be perceived as difficult or impossible to interpret by the reader.

Chapter 5 looks in detail at the ways in which the meanings of shell nouns are recovered in the text where the nouns occur, whilst discussing differences and causes of differences observed between JICLE and US. The conclusion is presented in Chapter 6, with some suggestions for teaching metadiscursive nouns to Japanese L1 students. First, however, the remainder of this chapter will establish the research context of the study.

1.2: The position of English as a Lingua Franca

In conducting the present study, it is necessary to acknowledge that any discussion of non-native 'difference' from a native 'norm' is vulnerable to criticisms that have been raised by researchers in the field of English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), such as Jenkins (2000, 2002, 2007, 2012), Seidlhofer (2001, 2009, 2011) and Mauranen (2010: 21). These and other scholars have pointed out not only that there are many types of English around the world and that they are all equally legitimate, but also that many, if not most, interactions in English occurring around the world today are between non-native speakers, and not between native and non-native speakers. Given that English is predominantly used as a tool of communication between speakers of different first languages, advocates of ELF argue, it makes no sense for judgments of 'correctness' or 'acceptability' to be made for English by comparing non-native usage against native speaker 'norms'. While this thesis is broadly supportive of the idea that communicative effectiveness is more important than formal accuracy, I will nevertheless continue to regard native speaker norms as a valid benchmark for evaluating the naturalness and/or acceptability of non-native written English.

There are three reasons for taking this position. First, in written academic essays, I consider it important for writers to follow the target language writing conventions. There are some specific conventions in the target language for each written genre, and readers of that genre – both native and non-native – will have some expectations about how these texts will be written and structured when they read them. If the writing does not follow these conventions, it may negatively impact the reader's perception of the flow of the discourse, and messages may even be entirely misunderstood by the reader (Bhatia, 1993, in Upton and Connor, 2001: 316). My second reason is more pragmatic: as a teacher of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), I cannot overlook the fact that my students will

eventually have to take examinations in English, and that their work will be graded according to its conformity or lack of conformity to native speaker rules and conventions. Finally, as Hunston (2002: 194) has pointed out, the ELF argument applies only to English, because of its unique hegemony in the modern world. Learners of French, German, Japanese, etc. might be less disconcerted by having access to a corpus of language produced by native speakers only. In other words, I would argue that there is nothing inherently wrong with learners wanting to aspire to native-like norms, or with teachers and researchers using such norms as points of reference or comparison when evaluating language produced by learners.

In using native speaker data as a norm of English usage, an issue that has to be taken into consideration will be what variety of English (British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English, etc.) is to be used. Also, criteria for selection of NS data will need to be defined, including whether or not, or to what extent, texts produced by 'students' can provide a model of good writing. These issues will be discussed later in Section 3.1.

1.3: Rationale for focus on metadiscursive nouns

This section explains why the present study focuses on metadiscursive nouns as target linguistic items. It is driven by a broad interest that stems from my personal experience as an English-Japanese translator and also as an EFL teacher at a Japanese University. As an English-Japanese translator, I have noticed when translating from Japanese to English in particular, some instances where the inclusion of a metadiscursive noun in a translated English text can make the English discourse clear and easy to follow, whilst the original Japanese text is written without such a noun. An example is seen in Figure 1.1, which shows an extract from a Japanese novel and the professionally translated English text:[3]

[3] The novel is *Umino futa* (There is no lid on the sea), written by Yoshimoto, B. and translated by Emmerich, M. (2004, March 6) *The Yomiuri Shimbun*.

<Japanese original>
私も開店以来一杯も出なかったエスプレッソのことで「どうしようかなあ、薄めて出すかなあ」と頭を悩ませていた矢先に…

(since the opening, no single cup was sold)
Watashi mo kaiten irai ippai mo denakatta espresso no koto de 'doushiyou kana, usumete dasukana' to atama wo nayamasete ita yasaki ni,...

<Translated into English>
I was just starting to worry about **the fact** that I hadn't sold a single cup of espresso since I opened, and wondering if I could water the stuff down or something….

('*Umino futa* (There is no lid on the sea)', 2004)

Figure 1.1. Inclusion of *fact* in translated English text

The translated English text has *fact* that summarises the content that *since the opening* (*of the shop*) *no single cup* (*of espresso*) *was sold*, but the original Japanese text does not use such a content summarising noun. A similar case is seen in the newspaper commentary shown below in Figure 1.2[4]:

<Japanese original>
父親約３００人にきくと、中高生の頃はコミュニケーションがとりにくかったが、大学生になって改善した と４割弱が答えた。

(Junior/senior high days, communications were difficult,… in university days… improved)
Chichioya 300-nin nii kiku to, chuukousi no koro wa communication ga toriniku katta ga, daigakusei ni natte kaizenshita to 4-wari-jyaku ga kotaeta.

<Translated into English>
Slightly less than 40 percent of some 300 fathers covered by the survey said they had found it difficult to communicate with their daughters when they were junior and senior high school students, but **the situation** improved when they became university students.

('*Tensei jingo* (Vox populi)', 2014)

Figure 1.2. Inclusion of *situation* in the translated English text

The translated English text includes *the situation* to refer to the preceding discourse, but the Japanese original text does not use a discourse summarising noun. These examples seem to indicate that metadiscursive nouns can play an important role in forming discourse in English texts, but discourse may be formed relying less on the use of such nouns in Japanese texts.

Next, as an EFL teacher I have sometimes noticed inappropriate use of metadiscursive nouns. Example 1.1, shown below, is from data I collected from Japanese student writing. It shows a missing metadiscursive noun:

4 The commentary is 'Tensei jingo: Chichi to musume no kankei kaizen? (Vox populi: Fathers, daughters grow closer after girls enter college)' (2014, March 6) *The Asahi Shimbun.*

Buyers often unconsciously want to **convey others that** they have reached a certain notable status and afford to buy high price brand products. And buying brand product means simply to give ourselves a treat.

Example 1.1. The use of metadiscursive noun *weakness* in a Japanese student' essay

The extract describes a reason why he buys luxurious brand items. In the phrase *convey others that they have reached a certain notable status*, a metadiscursive noun, such as (*a*) *message*, is missing between *others* (the object of verb) and the *that*-clause that follows. This example may indicate the writer's lack of knowledge of metadiscursive nouns. In other cases, metadiscursive nouns are used but the selection of vocabulary is not quite appropriate, as shown in Example 1.2, below. This is also from my own data:

Finally, I am interested in culture relationships and differences between Japan and foreign countries. Now, I cannot make a comparison since I don't know other countries' culture. Therefore, to overcome these **my weakness**, I want to learn how Germany and other foreign people regard Japanese culture and know various types cultures.

Example 1.2. The use of weakness in a Japanese student' essay

The extract is from an essay applying for an overseas exchange program, and describes a reason why the writer wants to study abroad. He uses (*my*) *weakness* by referring to his state that he does not know other cultures than Japanese culture. He seems to know how to use a discourse summary noun, but the referred content and the noun selected do not form an effective association. It seems challenging for L1 Japanese student learners of English to use metadiscursive nouns appropriately, and I am curious to find out why they are difficult to use.

Furthermore, metadiscursive nouns are of primary importance in argumentative essays (J. Flowerdew, 2003: 331). Metadiscursive nouns function as 'one of the main means whereby a reader/listener [constructs] a discourse' in argumentative essays' (Hoey, 1983: 63), and they are 'pervasive in academic language' (J. Flowerdew, 2003: 331). According to Coxhead (2000, cited in J. Flowerdew, 2003: 331), 'out of 281 lexical items with the initial letter "a" in the *Academic Word List*, 70 are used [metadiscursively]'. These findings provide a strong rationale for focusing on the use of metadiscursive nouns in the writing of academic essays by Japanese students.

1.4: Dearth of literature on the discourse of Japanese student writing

Discourse marking roles of metadiscursive nouns in expository and argumentative essays are well established in English linguistics, but the research has mainly focused on published texts written by native-speaker professionals, and there has been much less work on how these nouns are used in student writing, particularly in essays written by NNSs. Although the data is not extensive, this section will show what is known about the use of metadiscursive nouns in student writing from these studies (Section 1.4.1). This section then explores studies on the use of this class of nouns in English essays by Japanese students in the Japanese research context (Section 1.4.2).

1.4.1: Findings on metadiscursive nouns in student writing

There have not been many studies that investigated the discourse of NNS student writing from the perspective of their use of metadiscursive nouns. The whole research area of cohesion in student writing is relatively new. This may be because in English linguistics the focus was traditionally on 'good descriptions of the grammar and pronunciation of utterances at the level of the sentence' (Jaworski & Coupland, 1999: 4), and the teaching of English emphasised the correct use of vocabulary and sentence-level grammar (Witte & Faigley, 1981: 189; Silva & Brice, 2004: 76-77). The focus on English teaching shifted to the discourse of texts in the 1980s, and after the publication of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) ground-breaking work, *Cohesion in Text*, many studies have been conducted by applying their conceptualisation of cohesive items.[5] However, most of these studies (e.g., Witte & Faigley, 1981; Tierney & Mosenthal, 1983; Connor, 1984; Johns, 1984; Allard & Ulatowska, 1991; Johnson, 1992; Karasi, 1994; Field & Yip, 1992; Norment, 1994) focused on grammatical cohesive items (e.g., demonstratives, pronouns) and lexical cohesive items other than 'general nouns' (i.e., same items, synonyms, superordinates).

[5] Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive items comprise grammatical items that can connect textual segments (i.e., demonstratives, pronouns, conjunctions, ellipsis, substitution) and lexical items that can create meaning connections and form textual cohesion (i.e., reiteration of four subclasses: same items, synonyms, superordinates, general nouns; and collocation).

The concept of general noun is considered to have developed into that of metadiscursive noun. In recovering its meaning, a general noun can work either as a grammatical item such as the pronoun *it* or a lexical item forming a meaning connection to a noun item in the preceding discourse (Halliday & Hasan, 1976). Studies that investigated the use of a class of nouns that have a general and unspecific meaning (e.g., general nouns, metadiscursive nouns) in student writing are significantly fewer in number. As far as I have been able to determine, such studies include Hinkel (2001), Hinkel (2003), L. Flowerdew (2003), Mojica (2006), Caldwell (2009) and J. Flowerdew (2010). They were conducted in different research contexts, with different purposes and variables (e.g., L1 types, topics, text length), and are not easily comparable. Nevertheless, on the basis of these studies it is possible to make some tentative claims about the use of this class of nouns, as explained below. (For more detail, refer to my Module 2.2 Ph.D. assignment, 2010.)

One claim concerns the frequency and range of nouns: NNSs students use metadiscursive nouns less frequently and in a smaller range than NSs do, but can use the core and most important nouns with a general competence. This was exhibited in the study by J. Flowerdew (2010), who investigated the use of a type of metadiscursive noun which he calls 'signalling nouns' by L1 Cantonese NNS and NS English students. Frequency of signalling nouns in the NS writing was 2.7 times higher per individual text than in the NNS writing. Caldwell (2009) investigated the use of varied types of abstract nouns by L1 Xhosa NNSs, NSs and professional writers (PWs) and found that NNSs repeated the same items many times, but used many fewer abstract nouns than NSs and PWs. In Mojica (2006), the use of metadiscursive nouns, called text-structuring words (D. Liu, 2000), was investigated in higher scoring and lower scoring essays written by Filipino NNS students. Text-structuring words occurred 20% more often in higher than in lower scoring essays. The study of L. Flowerdew (2003) is an investigation of the use of key words (Scott, 2000) in the Problem-Solution text pattern, using NS and L1 Cantonese NNS student writing. NNS writers constructed problem and solution segments by heavily relying on a small number of core noun items, whilst NS writers used many more non-core noun items as well.

Another claim addresses lexicalisation patterns: NNS students use metadiscursive nouns and similar types of nouns without clearly explaining the meanings. This feature is found in Caldwell (2009) regarding cataphoric functions of nouns in particular. NNS

students used cataphoric lexicalisation more than NS students and PWs, but without clearly explaining the meanings of nouns. In Hinkel (2001), the use of two types of metadiscursive nouns was investigated in English essays written by students of different L1 backgrounds (i.e., Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Japanese and English). One type of metadiscursive noun was enumerative nouns that can mark the main points of an essay and mark the elaboration and clarification which is to follow (e.g., *fact, advantage, problem*) (Quirk et al., 1985, in Hinkel, 2001). The NNS students used them while providing little elaboration and contextual information in the referent. The other type of noun was resultative nouns (e.g., *end, result, outcome*), which refer to the completion of a process and indicate a discourse turn (Tadros, 1994, in Hinkel, 2001: 118). NNSs used them for the purpose of superficial generalisations without clearly explaining the content of the referred nouns. In NS student texts or published texts in English, such superficial generalisations were harder to find (Hinkel, ibid.).

These claims can gain support from the study of the use of grammatical items and lexical reiterations other than general nouns (e.g., repetitions, synonyms). Firstly, many studies (e.g., Witte & Faigley, 1981, Ferris, 1994; M. Liu & Brian, 2005) find that the use of lexical items excluding same item repetitions (e.g., synonyms, antonyms and hyponyms) was much less frequent in NNS than in NS writing. As for same item repetitions, NNS used them much more often than NS students did. Secondly, NNSs used grammatical items (*it, this*) without having an obvious or explicit referent in the immediate preceding text; moreover, in the referent, ideas were often not clearly stated but only implied (Zhang, 2000; Hinkel, 2001). Thus, it can be stated that NNS students tend to use 'core' nouns as much as NS students do, but use 'non-core' nouns much less frequently than NS students. Also, NNS students tend to use metadiscursive nouns without clearly explaining the meanings in the referent.

Other than studies of frequency and lexicalisation of nouns, a small number of studies investigated the use of metadiscursive nouns in relation to syntactic patterns where nouns occurred. However, this thesis cannot form a claim about any tendencies of preferred/dispreferred syntactic patterns because the number of such studies is so small. Moreover, syntactic patterns used for the examination were varied among the studies. Therefore, only a few interesting findings can be noted, as follows. A finding in Caldwell (2009) is that the **th-be-N** pattern was used significantly less by the NNS students, who

were L1 Xhosa students, than the NS students (p. 89). Another finding concerns the frequency of *that*-clauses in J. Flowerdew (2010). He used such syntactic categories as across-clause anaphoric, across-clause cataphoric, and In-clause (e.g., 'N + *that*-clause', 'N + *to*-clause'), and reported that In-clause (mostly, N + *that*-clause) occurred twice as often in the NS essays as in the L1 Cantonese NNS essays. On the other hand, *that*-clauses in 'N + be + *that*-clause' occurred significantly more in the NNS student essays than in NS essays at a ratio of 112 and 41 per 100,000 words, respectively (p. 47-52).

1.4.2: Studies of cohesion in the English as a Foreign Language research context in Japan

As shown in the immediate above section, the number of studies are not many but they have discovered some common features of the NNSs use of metadiscursive nouns. Regarding discourse of English essays by L1 Japanese students, the past studies include little information. An exception is Hinkel's work (2001, 2003), but in these studies L1 Japanese students constitute only one of several L1 groups. I searched for more specific studies on Japanese students' use of this class of nouns, only to find that metadiscursive nouns have not been of interest in the English as Foreign Language (EFL) research context in Japan.

Rather, the discourse of English essays seems to have been conducted following its own agendas in Japan. This may be influenced by the fact that writing of essays is not sufficiently taught before students go to university, mainly due to the Japanese university entrance examination systems that emphasise reading and grammar skills (Aiga, 1990, in Heffernan, 2006), and accordingly, when entering university, students are often unprepared for writing a 'well-balanced piece of academic writing that would conform to the standards of Western universities' (Heffernan: 2006). Then, some major agendas and what is known about the discourse of L2 English essays by Japanese students conducted in the Japanese research context are explored in the following sections.

L2 writing as part of holistic writing skills

One type of discourse study of L2 writing investigates holistic writing skills, examining students' L2 writing from such aspects as L1 and L2 (or L3) writing experience, language competence, instruction that students have received in varied educational contexts (e.g., high school, university, study abroad), and social/cultural context. Hirose and Sasaki (1994), for example, examined relationships between L1/L2 writing ability, composing competence and instructional background, and reported a generally positive correlation between L1 and L2 writing quality (students who have a higher L1 ability can write a higher quality of L2 essays) and an increase of L2 writing competence and proficiency by 'self-initiated' L2 writing (e.g., diaries, essays about books that the writer read, p. 216). In H. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2008), effects of intensive teaching of L1/L2 essay writing for university entrance exams were investigated, and students' tendency to apply their L1 meta-knowledge to L2 essay writing was reported. The work of H. Kobayashi and Rinnert (2012) is a comparison of L1 and L2 writing by diverse groups of Japanese students. It reports reverse (L2 to L1) and bi-directional transfer, and an evolving repertoire of writing knowledge; experienced writers choose appropriate features of L1 and L2 that can meet needs and expectation of a particular writing context.

Transfer of rhetorical patterns

L2 discourse is also studied in terms of transfer of rhetorical patterns, a theoretical tradition known as contrastive rhetoric (Connor 1996). The concept of contrastive rhetoric is that 'each language and culture has unique rhetorical conventions and they negatively interfere with [or positively influence] L2 writing' (Kaplan, 1967, 1972, 1986; Grabe & Kaplan, 1989). Rhetorical patterns often focused are inductive (Specific-General) and deductive (General-Specific) patterns. Such research investigates whether or not a general tendency for many Japanese essays to be written in a Specific-General pattern, where a general comment comes at the end of a stretch of discourse, is transferred to L2 English writing. The findings are not conclusive. Some studies (e.g., H. Kobayashi, 1984) found a transfer of these characteristics of L1 writing, though not absolute, and in some cases the resulting L2 writing was perceived by native speakers as unclear, ambiguous or incoherent (Kaplan,

1966 in Fujiwara, 2003: 91). Other studies (Kubota, 1992, 1998; Hirose, 2003) found very few instances of transfer of this L1 cultural rhetoric. L2 writing was often composed in a General-Specific pattern.

Other rhetorical features focused on involve argumentative patterns. Whilst inductive/deductive patterns emphasise organizational features, argumentative patterns emphasise 'extra-organizational aspects' of contrastive rhetoric, such as affective appeal and cultural influences (Kamimura & Oi, 1998: 308). Studies (e.g., Oi, 1986; Oi & Kamimura, 1997; Kamimura & Oi, 1998) have found a tendency that Japanese writers use bi-directional argumentation, where both sides of an argument are incorporated and their positions sometimes fluctuate during the course of an essay. This is different from NNS students' tendency to 'take one view of an argument and maintain it all the way through' (Oi & Kamimura, 1997: 66). In fact, Japanese students seem to value highly 'balanced' approaches in L2 essays, rather than 'one-sided' arguments, according to Rinnert and H. Kobayashi (2001: 199). This tendency was particularly evidenced among inexperienced Japanese EFL students, indicating a transfer of Japanese rhetorical features.

Use of varied types of connectives

The discourse of L2 English writing has also been studied from the viewpoint of use of connectives of varied types, including inter-sentential markers that connect only two sentences (e.g., *and, then, but*) and partial metadiscourse markers that connect paragraphs or multi-sentential chunks within a paragraph (e.g., *firstly, therefore, consequently*). Some studies have used Hyland's (2000, 2004) list of metadiscourse markers (hereinafter MDMs). MDMs are interactive resources that the writer uses 'to manage the information flow to explicitly establish his or her preferred interpretations' (Hyland, 2004: 138). Many MDMs seem, in effect, no different from connectives, but they can involve such interactional devices as hedges (e.g., *perhaps, mig*ht), attitude markers (e.g., *unfortunately, surprisingly*), and 'engagement markers' that explicitly build a relationship with the reader (e.g., *consider, note that, you can see that*…). MDMs in Hyland (2004) also include 'frame markers' (e.g., *to conclude, my goal is …, my purpose is…, here I do this).* Frame markers can mark the discourse very explicitly, by forming a sequence, labelling text stages, announcing discourse goals, or indicating topic shifts (Hyland, 2004: 138). Some examples

of the studies on the use of these varied types of connectives are the following. Fujiwara (2003) focused on connectives that can realise the Reason-Consequence discourse pattern (e.g., *because, since, because of*); Narita and Sugiura (2009) concentrated on the use of subordinators (e.g., *because, though*) and logical connectors (e.g. *therefore, consequently*); and Y. Kobayashi and Yamada (2008) investigated the use of Hyland's (2000) MDMs.

The findings from these studies pointed to one common feature; that is to say, Japanese students constructed discourse by using fewer types of connectives significantly more frequently than NS writers did. However, these studies on the use of connectives are not approached from the perspective of Halliday and Hasan's theoretical framework. Instead, connectives were seen simply as formal grammatical links which can overtly connect sentences or clauses. These studies focusing on connectives have described the discourse in terms of statistical distribution patterns of different types of connectives, and no description has been provided regarding how the cohesion is formed through meaning connections.

Lexically-motivated studies

There are some studies that emphasise the use of lexical items, including nouns. However, the 'use of lexical items' investigated in the studies refers to general vocabulary proficiency. For example, the study of 'lexical proficiency' in Baba (2009) focuses on whether or not a writer uses a variety of vocabulary, has a deep knowledge of vocabulary, or has good vocabulary definition abilities. Therefore the studies on lexical items are similar to studies on overall writing competence in L2 writing. They do not analyse in what ways the students use such lexical items as synonyms, superordinates or general nouns to form cohesion in writing.

1.4.3. Summary: Gap in the previous studies

This section has reviewed previous studies on NNS students' use of metadiscursive nouns in English essays, to show there are very few studies that have focused on their use by L1 Japanese students. This section also showed that in the Japanese ELF research context,

cohesion of the students' L2 English essays seems not to have been investigated by taking the Hallidayan view of cohesion. Therefore little is known about the ways L1 Japanese students use metadiscursive nouns in their L2 English essays. The present study attempts to fill this gap in knowledge.

1.5: Japanese equivalent to English anaphoric nouns

Now I turn the reader's attention to a Japanese equivalent to English anaphoric nouns. Although the use of metadiscursive nouns has not been investigated in the study of L1 Japanese student writing in the Japanese EFL context, the Japanese language does have an equivalent to English anaphoric nouns. These are called *laberu bari* (*labelling)* (Iori, 2007). An example of *laberu bari* is *kachi-no tenkan* (*change of values*), as exemplified in Figure 1.3:

<Japanese original>
「終盤は駒の損得より速度」の例題にピッタリだ。序盤では一歩得のために３手くらいかけるのに、終盤の現在だと２手と馬の交換ならオンの字というしだい。**この価値の転換**をインプットする難しさが、コンピューター将棋の最大難関だそうな。

'Shuubann-wa koma-no sontoku yori sokudo' no reidai-ni pittari-da. Jyoban-dewa ippotoku-no tameni 3te kurai kakeru-noni, shuubannno genzai-dato 2te-to uma-no koukan-nara on-no ji to iu shidai. Kono **kachi-no tenkan** wo inputo suru muzukashisa-ga, konpyuta shougi-no saidai nankan dasouna.

<Translated into English>
It is a good example of 'toward the end, the gain or loss of pawns is overweighed by the speed of the game'. At the start of the game, it takes Sante (three moves) to gain Ippo (pawn of good value), but toward the end, it is good to gain Uma (lower value pawn) by Nite (two moves). How to input this **change of values** is the most difficult part of computer shogi, Japanese chess.

(Iori, 2007: 92)

Figure1.3. *Laberu bari* (*labelling*) used in a Japanese text

This text describes how chess tactics change from the beginning of the game to the end, and the writer expresses the shift of tactics as *kachi-no tenkan* (*change of values*). Thus, *laberu bari* is an expression of the writer's evaluation of previous sentences and resembles an anaphoric noun in structural terms (Francis, 1986).

However, some findings on Japanese referring items suggest that *laberu bari* are different from anaphoric nouns with regard to textual roles, and may not have a discourse marking role at all. One reason is that the Japanese referential system is not as textually self-sustainable as English, in that it is less dependent on linguistic factors, such as textual

indices (e.g., to what extent coreferencing relations are established by linguistic markers such as pronouns), and more dependent on extra-linguistic factors, such as deictic indices (e.g., whether something is physically present or not) and memory indices (e.g., readers' background knowledge) (Watanabe, 2006: 102-109). A referring noun and the referred item can sometimes form a meaning association, and at other times they cannot, depending on complex linguistic and extra-linguistic forces operating where the noun phrase is used (Kinsui & Takubo, 1992).

Laberu bari never use zero demonstratives but require *ko/so/a* demonstratives (Iori, 2007), implying that there is no connective role in the nouns themselves. In other words, the discourse marking role of *laberu bari* may not be embedded in the nouns but in the demonstratives that are attached to them. In Figure 1.3 above, the discourse role lies not in the noun phrase *kachi-no tenkan* (*change of values*) but in the demonstrative particle *kono* (*this)*. In contrast, English anaphoric nouns are recognised as doing more than just referring to the referent; specifically, they steer the reader toward a particular interpretation of the preceding discourse (Petch-Tyson, 2000, in Swales, 2005: 3). This may also be shown in the presence of 'attended' or 'unattended' nouns (Swales, 2005), where some discourse role is assumed in anaphoric nouns whether they are accompanied by demonstratives or not. The suggested difference in the presence/non-presence of metadiscursive roles in anaphoric referring nouns between Japanese and English seems potentially helpful when exploring the use of anaphoric and other types of metadiscursive nouns in Japanese L2 English writing.

Chapter 1 has explained why I chose metadiscursive nouns as target items for the discourse study of student essays, and pointed out a gap in the existing research. This thesis therefore proposes to investigate this neglected area in the writing of English essays by Japanese students. The present study will focus on a sub-type of metadiscursive nouns called *shell nouns* and investigate the use of these nouns. Chapter 2 will explain the research by providing the theoretical basis.

Chapter 2: Theoretical basis of the study

This chapter outlines the theoretical considerations that informed the design of the study. The present study investigates the discourse of student writing from the use of metadiscursive nouns, and the basic assumption underlying the research follows the Hallidayan model of *cohesion* (1976). In the Hallidayan model, unity in a text is formed by surface linguistic links that connect two segments, each of which is either a word, a phrase, a clause, or a longer stretch of the text. Some linguists, however, criticise the concept of *cohesion*, stating that only *coherence* can form a text. Moreover, *coherence* is sometimes used interchangeably with *cohesion*. Therefore, this chapter begins by defining *cohesion* and *coherence* outlining the Hallidayan model (Section 2.1). This chapter also defines metadiscursive nouns and explains the concept of *shell noun* (Schmid, 2000) as the focal concept used for the present study (Section 2.2.). Section 2.3 compares shell nouns (Schmid, 2000) and carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991), which can justify the methodology in which proto-typical members of the carrier noun class are analysed within the shell noun concept in this thesis.

2.1: Cohesion and textual unity

This section defines *cohesion* and *coherence,* which are two dimensions that form a text (Eggins, 2004), and explains why the concept of *cohesion* is used in the present study.

2.1.1: Cohesion and coherence

In the concept of *cohesion,* a unity of passages is formed when two items or segments are connected by surface linguistic devices. Such linguistic devices include grammatical items (e.g., *it, that*), which can form meaning connections by identifying a referent in a one-to-one referring relation, and lexical items (e.g., reiteration, synonyms), which can

form a meaning connection between referred and referring items. Shown below in Example 2.1 is how (*the*) *man* and (*the*) *minister* have a meaning connection and are perceived as creating a unity of the passage:

> Didn't everyone make it clear they expected the **minister** to resign? - They did. But it seems to have made no impression on the **man**.
>
> (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 274-275)

Example 2.1: A unity of the passage created between *minister* and *man*

(*The*) *man* is a general noun and a cohesive item referring back to a preceding sentence to recover its meaning as *the minister*. Like this example, in the *cohesion* dimension, a set of cohesive items can make a meaning connection between the two passages and form a textual unity. In contrast, in the *coherence* dimension, passages are connected and perceived as a unified entity by means of non-linguistic factors such as: the reader/speaker's world knowledge, including the social context where the language is used; knowledge about the topic; or an ability to understand the connection. For example, the two sentences in Example 2.2, below, have no cohesive items, but can be made sense of by using a cognitive link:

> The fish are dead. There was a powercut.
>
> (Pearce, 2007: 36)

Example 2.2: A unity of the passage created with no cohesive items, but by a cognitive link

Fish and *powercut* are not linguistically connected, maybe because they are very unlikely to be considered as belonging to the same lexical field. However, if the reader knows that 'the fish were tropical and lived in an electrically heated tank' (Pearce, 2007: 36), which is contextual information, the two sentences can make sense together and form a text. Such non-linguistic connections that can form unity of passages comprise *coherence*.

2.1.2: Application of the 'cohesion' theory to textual analysis

The Hallidayan view of *cohesion*, explained in the immediately preceding section, is strongly criticised by some linguists who state that textual unity can only be formed by *coherence* (e.g., Rumelhart, 1977; Morgan & Sellner, 1980; Carrell, 1982; Johns, 1986, Chen, 2008). Their main contention seems to hinge on the idea that the reader cannot perceive a meaning connection between two parts of a textual segment without perceiving *coherence.* However, this argument can be refuted, as Hallidayan linguists do, by stating that the reader can recognise a link by using their common sense combined with their knowledge about the vocabulary (Halliday & Hasan, 1976: 290). For example, *man* and *minister* would be easily perceived as having a meaning link, in normal circumstances, as they belong to a lexical field of *people.* The *cohesion* theory can be upheld because people have innate language ability to perceive *coherence*. In addition, the argument of the *coherence*-only linguists, which denies *cohesion* altogether, seems irrelevant to the Hallidayan model of *cohesion*, because the Hallidayan model does not deny *coherence*. In the Hallidayan concept, a text is created by 'texture' which is comprised of two dimensions: *cohesion* and *coherence* (Eggins, 2004). Each of them is a system in which passages of varied length are connected and perceived as a unified entity. In other words, Hallidayans only emphasise *cohesion* as an element to form a text, whilst acknowledging roles of *coherence.* This idea seems expressed in such a statement in Halliday and Hasan (1976) as '[*cohesion*] is a necessary though not a sufficient condition for the creation of text' (298-299).[6] This helps us to uphold *cohesion* theory.

The concept of *cohesion* is particularly valuable in the analysis of written texts, often referred to as written discourse analysis. Discourse analysis is an investigation into how actual talk or writing is performed. It is conducted in diverse research fields and applied to varied types of analysis (Johnstone, 2008: Ch.1). It is conducted not only in linguistics, but also in humanistic and social-scientific disciplines (e.g., psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, ethno-methodologies, pragmatics, education). Of diverse research projects, discourse analysis in some areas, such as ethno-methodologies and pragmatics, particularly

[6] Halliday and Hasan (1976), however, are sometimes inconsistent in their view of what makes text, in that one section of the book (p. 9) states 'cohesive ties between sentences are the ONLY sources of texture', as J. Flowerdew (2013) also notes.

emphasise cultural and social settings where communication among people takes place. Such studies describe unity of passages by taking into account ‘the social constraints of politeness and face-preserving phenomena in talk’ (McCarthy, 1991: 6), that is to say, who is talking to whom, what power relations hold between speakers, what situation the talk is taking place in, or what constraints there are in terms of information exchange. Discourse analysis in these fields is often conducted by analysing *coherence*; this is because textual unity is formed in spoken discourse. Spoken discourse takes place between interlocutors who are positioned face to face, and *coherence* can be formed without linguistic factors. For example, a referent in a conversation can be known as a book by pointing at it, without any cohesive devices. Conversely, in written texts, meaning is formed between the writer and the reader who are not physically at the same place; moreover, the writer does not know exactly who the readers are. Therefore written discourse needs a clear *cohesive* device so that the reader can easily understand meaning connections between two parts of the text. In other words, text-linguistics analysis needs a tool that can depict how meanings are formed between passages in the text, and *cohesion* theory has provided an effective means of describing a text. This may be why the theory has been extremely influential since it was first proposed in Halliday and Hasan (1976), and remains the standard approach to text analysis to this day. The present study also applies this theory.

2.2: Shell nouns as metadiscursive nouns

I now define metadiscursive nouns and varied sub-types of these nouns, to explain why this thesis uses shell noun as the focal concept to design the research. Metadiscursive nouns are generally regarded as nouns that can mark a discourse shift or construct the discourse by recovering their meanings in the text where they occur. Shell noun belong to this type. However there are some linguists who take metadiscursive functions as signalling textual patterns, and this thesis also utilises this type of metadiscursive functions. Each type of metadiscursive function is explained in the following sections, firstly the type that can signal functional segments of text patterns.

2.2.1: Metadiscursive functions that signal rhetorical patterns

Metadiscursive nouns that can signal a shift in functional segments of textual patterns are best represented by Vocabulary 3 (Winter, 1977), which is reviewed below.[7]

Vocabulary 3 (Winter, 1977)

The concept of vocabulary 3 is correlated to the notion that in English texts 'there is a distinct preference for certain ways of organising and presenting information and… some rhetorical or discourse patterns tend to recur with a regularity which cannot be coincidental' (Coulthard et al., 2000:14). Rhetorical or discourse patterns include text patterns, such as Problem-Solution, General-Specific or Argument-Counterargument, and also clause relations such as instrument/achievement and condition/consequence, and matching relations. Vocabulary 3 items can tell the reader what functional meaning nouns are representing within a 'textual pattern' by '[clustering] around the elements of larger patterns in text' (McCarthy, 1991: 79). For example, the noun *drawback* can be an indication that a certain paragraph is a Problem segment within a Problem-Solution. Or the noun *result* can indicate that the passage, *I switched the kettle on. The* ***result*** *was the water boiled* (from Coulthard et al., 2000: 32), has a cause/consequence clause relationship.

Similar to Vocabulary 3 are 'key words' proposed by Scott (2001). They can indicate functional segments of text patterns, although in Scott's context key words were meant as nouns that can signal the Problem-Solution text pattern.

2.2.2: Metadiscursive functions that connect two parts of discourse

Another type of metadiscursive function is to organise or construct the discourse of English texts. Metadiscursive nouns have general and unspecific meanings. When referring to the preceding/succeeding discourse to recover their meanings, these nouns can mark a discourse shift or construct the discourse. This type of metadiscursive function seems to be

[7] Vocabulary 3 is composed of varied classes of lexical items other than nouns (e.g. verbs, adjectives, adverbs, adverbial phrases), but this section focuses on nouns in Vocabulary 3 items.

developed from the concept of general nouns. An important factor for nouns to function metadiscursively is that the referents of the nouns are larger than a clause. With general nouns, many of them (e.g., *man, place, creature*) refer to a noun item, but some of them may refer to a segment larger than a clause (e.g., *affair, matter, thing*), as expressed in Mahlberg (2005: 8):

> …[general nouns] refer back not only to previous noun phrases but also to longer stretches of texts. In Halliday and Hasan (1976) this aspect of the cohesive function… does not seem to play a central role. However, possible links between general nouns and preceding stretches of text are the basis on which parallels between general nouns and other sub-classes of nouns can be established.

With metadiscursive nouns, a crucial factor is that they have abstract meanings and the referents of the nouns are larger than a clause. Recovery of the meaning of a noun in the segment is a complex phenomenon, where several factors are working at the same time such as: what segment they refer to (e.g., a clause, a larger stretch of discourse); where the meaning is expressed (e.g., within or across the clause); and in which direction the referred to item is located (i.e., anaphoric, if before; cataphoric, if after). Perhaps because of the complexity, previous studies have not produced a comprehensive account of what metadiscursive functions of nouns are, even 40 years after Halliday and Hasan (1976) proposed the concept of general nouns (Benitez-Castro, 2015: 170, 190). Instead, previous studies only emphasised one or two aspects of functions of metadiscursive nouns. This has resulted in the development of a number of sub-types of metadiscursive nouns (e.g., anaphoric nouns, carrier nouns, enumerations, retrospective/advance labels, shell nouns, signalling nouns). Of the varied sub-types, this section explains the concepts of anaphoric noun (Francis, 1986), carrier noun (Ivanic, 1991), and shell noun (Schmid, 2000). Each of these represents different aspects of metadiscursive functions, with some overlap between them. Through a comparison of the three sub-types, I will show that shell noun can basically encompass the other sub-types in functions and in concept, and consequently provide an extensive account of metadiscursive nounhood. (Nouns in this section refer to singular nouns. Metadiscursive functions of shell nouns in the plural are shown in Section 2.2.3.)

Anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986)

A main feature of anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986) is that they refer to a long stretch of preceding discourse, mostly comprised of multiple sentences, and serve as anaphorically cohesive devices. Also, whilst mainly referring backward, they can, at times, concurrently play a cataphoric referring role, which is because an evaluation of the preceding discourse expressed in an anaphoric noun constitutes a new topic, and the noun can lead the discourse into a new line of discussion. Working in this way, an anaphoric noun often occurs at a paragraph-initial position or at major division in the discourse (Francis, 1986) as can be seen in the use of *change* in Example 2.3:[8]

> MADRID –When Spain's government employees report to work Monday, they will be forced to abandon a tradition that has typified Spanish life for decades. Instead of taking the customary two or three hours for lunch, they will be allowed only one. // Under new rules that took effect on Sunday, employees of the central government will adopt the new schedule, eliminating the long break at midday that pushes the close of the typical Spanish workday as far back as 8 p.m., sometimes later. // **The change,** announced by the government in early December, is intended to align the Spanish work schedule with the rest of Europe's, and to reduce the time that employees, particularly working parents, spend away from home.
>
> ('For many in Spain', 2006)

Example 2.3: *Change* at a major textual division as an anaphoric noun

In this extract, the meaning of *change* is expressed in the whole stretch of the preceding two paragraphs, which explains the situation where Spain's tradition of long lunches and break time will come to an end. The term *change* is a label that the writer attaches to the referred content and a term used for the first time in the discourse. Occurring at the paragraph initial position, *change* starts a new focus in the discourse as to how the 'change' is going to affect the Spanish work schedule.

Carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991)

Although similar in many respects to Francis' anaphoric noun, the concept of carrier noun as elaborated by Ivanic (1991) is different in that it focuses more explicitly on the metadiscursive role of the noun in question; specifically, on the way the noun signals the organisation of the local discourse by '[referring] back to more than one clause or sentence'

8 'For many in Spain, siesta ends'. McLean, R. (2006, January 1) *The New York Times*.

(p.104-105). Thus, a long stretch of discourse, as emphasised in anaphoric nouns, is not considered as the referent. Accordingly, the role of carrier nouns is to indicate a functional segment where a new topic starts and ends. An example of a carrier noun discourse marking role is *difficulty* in Example 2.4, shown below:

> Squaring numbers involving two places of decimals is a tedious matter. This **difficulty** can be circumvented by using…
>
> (Ivanic, 1991: 99)

Example 2.4: A carrier noun *difficulty* indicates a functional segment in the discourse

(*This*) *difficulty* refers to a preceding passage, which describes a 'difficulty' of squaring numbers (underlined is the referent), and signals the start of a section that describes how the difficulty can be circumvented. Thus the discourse shift is on a clause relational level. (See Section 2.2.3 for carrier nouns in the plural, which refer to a long stretch of discourse.)

Much more emphasised in the conceptualization of nouns than this local discourse signalling role is that carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991) occur in two types of syntactic patterns, which Ivanic calls Vendler's container sentences, as shown below:

nominalisation is N.
N is nominalisation.[9]

In container sentences, the meanings of carrier nouns are supplied in a complement within the clause. The focus on these sentences can explain a feature of carrier nouns; that is to say, carrier nouns are both abstract and countable. The two features are opposite and cannot occur at the same time in normal circumstances. However, because the meaning of a carrier noun (N) is supplied in a complement within the clause, N can assume the countable quality in a nominalisation. For example, *difficulty* in the phrase *without* ***difficulty*** is an abstract noun expressing the abstract 'quality' of 'being difficult' and is uncountable. In contrast, when *difficulty* refers to a context-specific types of difficulty expressed in a nominalisation, such as 'cutting other items on the budget, [or] persuading the Prime minister to agree' (Ivanic, 1991: 111), the noun refers to a process, activity, or

[9] N. = container noun

event, and becomes a countable noun. Therefore, the abstract and countable feature of carrier nouns seems to illustrate a carrier noun feature of having a text-dependent meaning that is expressed in a nominalisation.

Shell nouns (Schmid, 2000)

To summarise the discussion so far, Francis (1986) emphasises the way a noun complex, which is comprised of a label and lexicalisation, operates across clause boundaries and functions as a text organising role. Ivanic's (1991) focus is more on the local discourse organising role of nouns. Ivanic also considers within-the-clause functions of carrier nouns in two syntactic patterns. In contrast, the concept of shell noun (Schmid, 2000) emphasises that metadiscursive nouns occur in certain syntactic patterns. Schmid (2000) states that shell nouns are co-interpreted with their contents, and such a co-interpretation is triggered when nouns occur in certain syntactic patterns. In other words, some syntactic patterns can 'link shell nouns to their contents and the semantic relations underlying them' (Schmid, 2000: 21). This thesis calls such syntactic patterns 'host syntactic patterns', and four such syntactic patterns were proposed by Schmid (2000) as follows:

> **N:CL** (shell noun + postnominal clause)
> **N-be-CL** (shell noun + *be* + complementing clause*)*
> **th-N** (referring item + (premodifying adverb) + shell noun
> **th-be-N** (referring item as subject + be + shell noun (phrase).

In both the **th-be-N** and the **th-N** types, shell nouns refer back to the preceding discourse to recover their meanings. A difference in the two types is in the lexicalisation patterns of the shell noun. In general the referent of a shell noun lacks saliency and cannot formulate clear 'conceptual partitioning' (Talmy, 1991, in Schmid, 2000). In **th-be-N**, the shell noun can be clearly conceptualised by having a short distance referent. In **th-N** the conceptualisation of the shell noun is in a long stretch of discourse, and the noun can signal a discourse topic change (Schmid, 2000: 343).

The ways that shell nouns can occur in each of the host syntactic patterns are shown in Figure 2.1, below:

Syntactic pattern	Example	Explanation
N-be-CL	1. The **aim** was to offer enough sticks to placate conservatives, and enough carrots to satisfy the pro-migrants, … 2. The weak **point** of the teacher's manual is that it does not provide any supplemental activities.	**Aim**-be-*to*-clause P**oint**-be-*that*-clause
N:CL	3. The debate will continue with each side winning its share of battles. But it's hard to avoid the **conclusion** that with less than six months left in office, the Bush Administration is set to dismantle some established environmental protections while it has the chance.	**conclusion-***that*-clause
th-N	4. When Spain's government employees report to work Monday, they will be forced to abandon a tradition that has typified Spanish life for decades. Instead of taking the customary two or three hours for lunch, they will be allowed only one. Under new rules that took effect on Sunday, employees of the central government will adopt the new schedule, eliminating the long break at midday that pushes the close of the typical Spanish workday as far back as 8 p.m., sometimes later. **The change**, announced by the government in early December, is intended to align the Spanish work schedule with the rest of Europe's,…	the **change**
th-be-N	5. I used the words as a pairwork activity in which students would quiz each other. One student would read the English word and the other would give the Japanese meaning, or vice versa. I felt it was a good **way** to open the lesson and the students also found it useful.	It-be-**way**

Figure 2.1: Schmid's four major host syntactic patterns for shell nouns[10]

For shell nouns, metadiscursive functions of the noun are considered from three specific functions, which are characterisation, temporary concept-forming, and linking. These specific functions interact with each other differently in relation to individual host-syntactic patterns. These roles, however, seem to subsume those of other sub-types of metadiscursive nouns. Characterisation is similar to the evaluation role in anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986) or carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991); temporary concept-formation is similar to nominalisation of carrier nouns (Ivanic, ibid.), as explained below.

[10] Sources: Example 1 by Cornwell, R. in *The Independent*, May 20, 2006: Examples 2 and 5 by Gorham, P. in *The Language Teacher, 34(4)* July 2010; Example 3 in *TIME*, August 25, 2008: Example 4 by McLean, R. in *The New York Times*, January 1, 2006.

The characterisation role works to '[portray] the shell contents according to their needs' (Schmid, 2000: 308). Characterisation expressed by shell nouns is very general, and they recover their full meanings by referring to the text. Nouns with full meanings can play a characterisation role (p. 15-16). The characterisation role of shell nouns is strongest in **th-be-N**, as illustrated by the shell noun *mistake* in Example 2.5:

> For a while there I was thinking, you know, I'm gonna write pop songs, dammit. And that was a big **mistake**.
> (Schmid, 2000: 329)

Example 2.5: Strong characterisation role of *mistake* in the th-be-N syntactic pattern

In **th-be-N**, the characterisation role of N (*mistake*) is strong, because of anaphoric reference through the demonstrative (*that*) and the *given* status of *mistake* that is expressed *as new* information at the focus position, which is the most prominent part of the clause and draws the attention of the reader (p. 312). Characterisation in the **th-N** pattern is also strong, but to a lesser degree than in **th-be-N**, because the shell noun in **th-N** occurs at any position in a sentence, and the discourse role of the shell noun has little to do with the topic or the focus position. However, a shell noun in **th-N** always refers to *given* information and thus attracts a certain degree of attention.

The concept-forming role serves to pack different kinds of experiences into one single neatly bounded entity of a thing-like quality (Schmid, 2000: 16-17). A shell noun works to encapsulate experiences as a 'thing', but the concept of a shell noun is variable depending on the context in which the noun is used. Hence it plays a 'temporary' concept-forming role (p. 18). The role is most strongly associated with **N:CL**. An **N:CL** complex can exert a strong rhetorical effect. For example, take *decision* in Example 2.6, shown below:

> For Spain's ruling Socialists, 'Super judge' Baltasar Garzon is an almost priceless asset. His **decision** to stand for them at the general election on June 6 seems to guarantee something …
> (Schmid, 2000: 330)

Example 2.6: Strong rhetorical effects formed by temporary concept-forming role of *decision* in N:CL

Decision is *new* information but its meaning is partitioned as one bounded conceptual entity and placed in the appositive clause as if the reader already knew it. This gives the **N:CL** function a strong rhetorical effect. On the other hand, a weak concept-forming role and a weak rhetorical effect is present with N in the **N-be-CL** pattern. In this pattern, a shell noun would occur in the following way as shown in Example 2.7, below:

His **decision is** to stand for them at the general election on June 6. …

(Schmid, 2000: 312)

Example 2.7: Weak rhetorical effects formed by temporary concept-forming role of *decision* in N-be-CL

Decision is not *given* but still occurs at the Theme position, and a message is thus constructed from the noun assumed as *given* information, and in this way a weak rhetorical effect is formed with the shell noun (Schmid, 2000: 312).

The other role of shell nouns is the linking role. The linking role operates in all four types of syntactic patterns, but a link in **N:CL** and **N-be-CL** is formed 'by means of the grammatical structure of clauses' (Schmid, 2000: 339) and is weak. A strong linking role is seen with a shell noun in the **th-N** and **th-be-N** syntactic patterns. This seems to occur because whilst the meaning of a shell noun is unbounded, when occurring in these syntactic patterns, the unbounded information and the shell noun are linked by a 'semantic match' (Schmid, 2000: 343).

As explained so far, almost all consideration of shell nouns is associated with their host syntactic patterns. However, Schmid (2000) includes, very briefly, a shell noun function that occurs without being dependent on host syntactic patterns. It is a signposting role that faces both anaphorically and cataphorically and marks a major text division, very similar to Francis's (1986) anaphoric nouns. This is shown by *problem* in Example 2.8:

Scores of children with hopeful, gap-toothed smiles gaze out from the pages of Be My Parent, a bi-monthly newspaper published by the British Agencies for Adoption and Fostering.// It is one of the main market places for advertising children for whom local authorities are seeking long-term carers. It is a highly competitive business; the supply of children far exceeds the pool of people prepared to provide them with a home and a family life.// The **problem** was highlighted this week when a newspaper in Oxford published...

(Schmid, 2000: 351)

Example 2.8: A shell noun *problem,* functioning as an anaphoric and cataphoric link at paragraph initial position

Summary

This section has compared anaphoric nouns, carrier nouns and shell nouns. Although it may be somewhat of an over-simplification, the comparison has shown that the concept of shell noun mostly encompasses those of the other two sub-types, in terms of functions and emphasis in the concepts. Regarding metadiscursive functions, shell nouns' (Schmid, 2000) three-way specification – characterisation, temporary concept-forming and linking –

seem to overlap metadiscursive functions of other sub-types of nouns that have been identified:

- Shell nouns' concept-forming roles are similar to nominalisation of carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991).
- Characterisation and/or linking roles of shell nouns are similar to discourse organisation roles of anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986) and carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991).
- Cataphoric signposting of shell nouns is not different from discourse organising roles of anaphoric nouns that often occur at paragraph divisions.

In addition, shell noun syntactic patterns (Schmid, 2000) include carrier noun container sentences (Ivanic, 1991).

Overall, the shell noun concept seems to provide the most comprehensive account of metadiscursive functions of nouns in English texts, and this is a major reason why it was chosen as the focal concept of the present study. In addition, the concept of shell noun includes metadiscursive functions of plural nouns, which is explained in the next section.

2.2.3: Metadiscursive nouns in the plural

Functions of metadiscursive nouns are often discussed without paying attention to the status of nouns as either singular or plural nouns, and they are generally assumed to be singular nouns. Some sub-types of metadiscursive nouns, such as carrier noun (Ivanic, 1991); enumeration (Tadros, 1985, 1994), advance label (Francis, 1994), and shell noun (Schmid, 2000), however, seem to refer to nouns in the plural (Nplural), although we should be cautious in accepting this general observation about the plural nouns because it is based mainly on the examples identified in this study. In Nplural, the meaning of a noun is often explained in a long stretch of discourse, across several paragraphs, with one paragraph explaining one aspect of the meaning of the noun, and another paragraph explaining another aspect of the same noun. Schmid (2000) calls this Nplural function 'cataphoric signposting' (Schmid, 2000), and points out how the plural shell noun, *issues* can play a cataphoric signposting role as shown below (adapted from Schmid, 2000: 357):

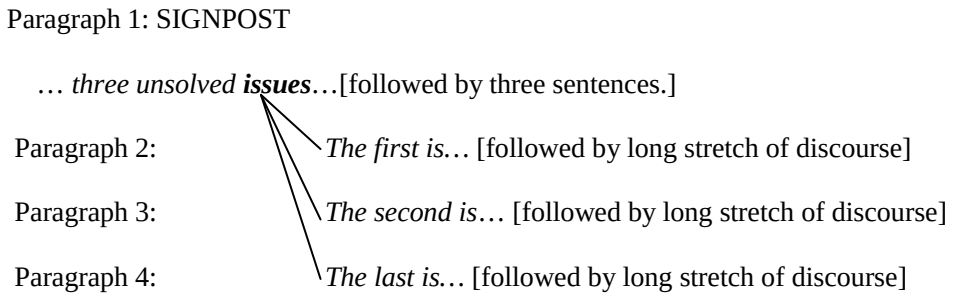

Figure 2.2: Cataphoric signpost *issues* and its meaning in the text (adapted from Schmid, 2000: 357)

In the work of Ivanic (1991), Nplural's role is proposed in combination with ordinal adjectives. She states that occurring as an 'ordinal adjective + Nplural', a carrier noun can function as a 'precise discourse processing [signal]' (p. 108) and 'a most economical way' of eliciting an extended lexicalisation of the meaning of a noun (ibid.). In *advance label* (Francis, 1994), the discourse marking role of Nplural is called a 'prediction' role. Nplural predicts that precise information will follow, and the expectation is met when the predicted information is fully provided in what follows (Francis, 1994: 84). Similarly, in Tadros (1985, 1994), a sub-type called *enumeration* explains the discourse roles of Nplural as a prediction.[11] Tadros's prediction occurs in a combination of the predictive member (V) and the predicted member (D). She emphasises the presence of a colon or period after Nplural; that is to say, Nplural (predictive member V) before a colon demands a complement (predicted member D), and the predicted member (D) will follow the colon without delay (p. 72), as shown in some examples below in Figure 2.3:

… the major **points** are:…
V (+ D)

The term 'question of law' is used in three distinct though related **senses** …
V (+ D)

… there are a number of **ways** by which risks can be reduced.…
V (+ D)

Figure 2.3: Prediction role of *points, senses* and *ways*, as enumeration (from Todros, 1994: 71-72)

[11] Advance label in Tadros (1985, 1994) is like a metadiscursive statement (e.g., *to make the important distinction, let us distinguish between x and y*). For example, if a predictive member (V) is '*let us distinguish between x and y*', the predicted member (D) is committed to show a distinction between the two items concerned (Tadros, 1994: 73).

This section has shown that metadiscursive functions of varied sub-types of Nplural can converge to one function, which is to serve as 'cataphoric signposting'; and shell noun (Schmid, 2000) is one of the concepts that propose it. The shell noun concept seems to explain metadiscursive functions of nouns in the most comprehensive way among existing concepts, by including the singular and plural use of nouns (refer to Section 2.2.2 for sub-types for singular nouns). This is why I use shell noun as the focal concept to analyse the use of metadiscursive nouns in student writing in the present research.

2.3: Shell noun concept and carrier noun items

This thesis uses shell nouns as the focal concept, but the noun items analysed are drawn from the list of carrier nouns in Ivanic (1991). This section attempts to justify this decision. First of all, shell nouns are comprised of 670 items as proto-typical members, and they are too numerous to be handled with the relatively small corpora in this thesis − the JICLE corpus has 366 essays with a total word count of 198,241, whilst the US corpus has 176 essays of 149,574 words (see Section 3.1.2). Therefore, there was a need to narrow down the number of noun items. Next, regarding reasons why carrier noun (Ivanic, 1991) was selected, instead of other sub-types, there are several factors. One factor is the quantity of the proto-typical members. The number of carrier nouns is 33, as listed below (in alphabetical order), and it seemed ideal for the size of the corpora:

> advantage, aim, aspect, benefit, cause, comment, criticism, decision, difference, difficulty, effect, element, example, explanation, fact, factor, feature, function, idea, intention, interpretation, issue, justification, opinion, principle, problem, purpose, question, reason, result, solution, thing, view

Moreover, these carrier noun items are 'core' carrier nouns, which 'take a bulk of their meaning from context, [and] they are not subject-specific' (Ivanic, 1991: 96). Therefore they can be applicable to any field of discourse, and this makes them good candidates to learn in secondary education (Barnes, 1986). Not all of the 33 items are classified as Schmid's shell nouns; one item in Ivanic's list (*element*) is not included in Schmid's (2000) list. However, there will be no problem in using *element* as a shell noun because

metadiscursive nouns are open-set items and an index of metadiscursive nouns occurring in a certain corpus is not a guarantee that these noun items will occur in another one.

The other factor for the selection of carrier nouns as specific noun items analysed in the shell noun conceptual framework is that both carrier and shell nouns play metadiscursive roles in relation to sentences where the nouns occur (see Section 2.2.2). This means that proto-typical members of each concept are identified based on this common factor, although other factors come in. Furthermore, the carrier noun's container sentences and the shell noun host syntactic patterns, reproduced below, are similar in some respects. One similarity is that both were conceived within the framework of Halliday's Functional Grammar (1985).

nominalisation is N.
N is nominalisation.

(Container sentences, Ivanic, 1991)

N:CL (shell noun + postnominal clause)
N-be-CL (shell noun-be-complementing clause)
th-N (referring item + shell noun)
th-be-N (referring item as Subject + be + shell noun)

(Host syntactic patterns, Schmid, 2000)

Vendler's (1967, 1968) syntactic pattern were originally proposed as linguistic evidence for a 'philosophical debate about differences between facts and events' (Ivanic, 1991: 101). However, Ivanic uses Vendler's container sentences within the framework of Halliday's (1985) Functional Grammar, in which a noun in a container sentence is the grammatical subject of a clause that expresses relational processes. In other words, Ivanic uses the syntactic patterns to characterise the structure of relational process clauses. This theoretical base also explains the reason why she chose the term 'carrier', which is 'a term Halliday used in Functional Grammar' (Ivanic, 1991: 97).

In addition, Vendler's container sentences are equivalent to **N-be-CL**, in Schmid (2000), which is one of the two 'more significant' patterns of the shell noun's four host syntactic patterns, along with **N:CL**. Why **N-be-CL**, as well as **N:CL**, is a more significant pattern is that shell nouns can always serve as metadiscursive devices in this syntactic type, and this pattern 'more or less guarantee[s] that the noun in the nominal slot is actually a

shell noun' (Schmid, 2000: 40). For example, a non-metadiscursive item, *century*, cannot function in **N-be-CL**, as shown below in example 2:

(2) * This **century** was *that*-clause/complement….
N be CL

Similarly, it cannot be used in **N:CL** as shown in example 3:

(3) *** century** *that*-clause
N CL

In contrast, in the **th-N** and the **th-be-N** patterns, there is no guarantee that nouns can work metadiscursively. A non-metadiscursive noun like *century* can function in these patterns.

To summarise, carrier noun is similar to shell noun in that both sub-types carry out their metadiscursive roles in relation to syntactic patterns. This feature of carrier nouns cannot be found in other sub-types of metadiscursive nouns. In addition, Vendler's container sentences are very similar to one of the shell noun host syntactic patterns, **N-be-CL**, in form and in concept, because both are conceived within Halliday's Functional Grammar. Furthermore, carrier nouns are considered 'strongly metadiscursive', because nouns in container sentences, or **N-be-CL**, can function metadiscursively without fail. These features of the carrier noun concept seem to provide a justification for the use of carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991), rather than other sub-types, as target nouns for analysis.

2.4: Research questions

We now set up the research questions for the present study, which investigates different impressions of L2 English essays in comparison to essays by American students, from the perspective of the use of shell nouns. Based on the shell noun framework, the overarching research question is as follows:

> What differences can be found in the use of shell nouns as discourse forming strategies in English argumentative essays written by L1 Japanese students and L1 English students?

The most prominent feature of the concept of shell nouns is that the meanings of the nouns are 'interpreted together with their content' and that such a co-interpretation is triggered by lexico-grammatical patterns, which can 'link shell nouns to their contents and the semantic relations underlying them' (Schmid, 2000: 21). Accordingly, this thesis addresses the research question by focusing on the occurrences of shell nouns in host syntactic patterns and the lexicalisation of nouns. To guide the analysis of the data, these features were transformed into the following more detailed research questions:

Question 1

How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

This question investigates whether or not there are differences in the frequency of metadiscursively functioning shell nouns and the range of those nouns, between the essays written by Japanese student and American students, for both singular and plural noun use.

Question 2

How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell noun host syntactic patterns in comparison to L1 English students?

This question investigates whether or not there are differences in the preference for host syntactic types of metadiscursive shell nouns in the two groups of essays, and if there are differences, what they are. According to Schmid's (2000) theory, shell noun discourse roles are correlated with particular syntactic patterns and shell nouns can function as metadiscursive nouns with three major discourse roles working concurrently (i.e., characterisation, temporary concept-formation and linking) in certain host syntactic patterns. Therefore, the frequencies of the syntactic patterns in Question 2 are indicative of discourse functions that are preferred or dispreferred in each of the corpora. However, frequency results cannot be directly considered to reflect the actual state of discourse roles of shell nouns because it is not known to what extent shell nouns are lexicalised in a text. In this regard, an investigation of syntactic frequencies in Question 2 lays the groundwork for Question 3, which aims at revealing shell noun discourse roles in JICLE and US.

Question 3

In what ways do L1 Japanese student writers lexicalise shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

Question 3 focuses on the ways shell nouns are functioning as metadiscursive devices in the texts. Although nouns are identified as metadiscursive, such identification does not provide information as to what extent the meaning is lexicalised in the referent unless the ways they are lexicalised is known. This lexicalisation analysis is conducted under Question 3. This can be expected to indicate the functionality of metadiscursive nouns in the text.

Combining the findings gained in addressing the three research questions, this thesis aims to discover what aspects of the use of metadiscursive nouns by Japanese students are different from that of American students, and in what ways such differences are influencing the discourse of L2 essays written by Japanese students. The next chapter explains how these research questions are addressed in the present study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This thesis is an empirical investigation into the use of shell nouns (Schmid, 2000) in student essays, to investigate sources of different impressions of L2 English essays by Japanese students, in comparison to L1 English essays by American students. The investigation addresses the three specific issues as follows (see Section 2.4 for more details):

1. How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

2. How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell noun host syntactic patterns in comparison to L1 English students?

3. In what ways do L1 Japanese student writers lexicalise shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

This chapter explains the methodology to address these questions. It firstly explains the text data to be analysed (Section 3.1). Next, because this thesis uses corpus-linguistic methodology, reasons why this thesis uses corpus-linguistics (Section 3.2) are detailed. The text analysis tool used for the data analysis is explained in Section 3.3. Last, because this thesis uses shell noun host-syntactic patterns by reformulating Schmid's (2000) syntactic patterns, how this thesis formulates host-syntactic patterns using metadiscursively functioning nouns is explained in Sections 3.4 and 3.5.

3.1: Text data

This section explains the text data for the study, written by the two groups of students (i.e., Japanese and American university students), providing a rationale for why this thesis

compares non-native speaker (NNS) student writing with native speaker (NS) student essays. NS student essays are used as a reference corpus, which is ‘a standard of comparison, or norm, against which to measure the characteristics of the learner corpora’ (Leech, 1998: xv). The use of a reference corpus in the present study relates to the purpose of the study. The aim of the study is not so much to describe the use of shell nouns in English essays by Japanese students, as to identify differences of the use from a natural norm in English essays, so that material writers or syllabus designers can write ELT materials reflecting such differences, and/or teachers can direct learners’ attention more explicitly to where such differences lie (Leech, 1998: vx). If data analysis is conducted only on the NNS text data, differences or deviation from the norm will never be revealed however detailed the text analysis can be, as stated in Granger (2003: 543).

Regarding the use of NS data as a reference corpus, often debated is which type of corpus can serve a native norm better: writing by professional writers or NS students, as discussed in Adel (2006) and Gilquin et al. (2007). Linguists who support the use of professional writing state that journalistic articles, research articles, or newspaper editorials may be good candidates as a model as they can ‘combine the advantages of being argumentative in nature and written by professionals’ (Granger, 1998 fn:18, in Adel, 2006: 205). Also, an obvious advantage of professional writing over NS writing would be that if a comparison with NNS student writing is made for the purpose of creating instructional and pedagogical applications, the corpus data used as reference should be written by professional writers as stated in Leech (1998: xix, in Adel, 2006: 206). NS student data may not serve this purpose, because NS students do not necessarily speak/write English as ‘everyone would want to imitate’ (Leech, 1998, xix); that is to say, they sometimes use language in an unnatural, unidiomatic, or unlikely way, in comparison to a corpus of standard English. Also, NS students ‘go through a series of stages before they become fully proficient in the language’, similar to the way second/foreign language learners do (Granger et al., 2009: 42).

However, the present study uses NS student essays, taking the stance that unnatural, unidiomatic use of English is acceptable as natural language usage, and ‘the ultimate authority on acceptability still rests with the native speaker’ (Lorenz 1999: 18). A basic assumption about the NS student data used as a reference corpus is that the NS writers need to be proficient writers, because ‘problems of less proficient native writers are

comparable to non-native writers' problems', as stated in Taylor (1986: 144) and Ringbom (1987: 77), which are both cited in Lorenz (1999: 14). An advantage of NS student text data over professional writing is that NS data are much more comparable with NNS data. For one thing, the purpose of the writing is similar. Whilst texts by professional writers are mostly written to get their work published, expressing a confident claim or a conclusion based on a thorough survey of the literature (Lee & Swales, 2006: 68 in Nesi, 2013, 2016), students, either NNSs or NSs, write their essays to learn and practice writing in order to pass a course module or exam (Lorenz, 1999: 14). Also, NS and NNS student writing are similar to each other, for example, in task variables (e.g., text length, text topic, target readership) and writer variables (e.g., age, proficiency level, mother tongue) (Gilquin et al., 2007: 322). Such similarity is important because 'foreign language essays constitute a highly idiosyncratic type of text' (Lorenz, 1999: 14). Thus, NNS writing may be 'hardly… compar[able] to professional writing [that was written] under real-life conditions' (ibid.). The use of NS student texts can also gain support from the failure of past studies in contrastive rhetoric, which compared NNS writing with professionally written texts (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996: 197). Also it has been found that even though NS student writers share a number of difficulties with NNS student writers, 'overlap between native and non-native writing is far from perfect, and quite a few difficulties [seem to] appear to be specific to learners', as stated in Gilquin et al (2007: 323).

Turning now to the L1 English student data that is used as the benchmark dataset, it is taken from the Louvain Corpus of Native English Essays or LOCNESS.[12] As stated earlier in Section 1.2, particular criteria are needed to select appropriate data from among the varieties of native English (British English, American English, Canadian English, Australian English, etc.). In the current research, the NS corpus used is a specific subset of the LOCNESS corpus, rather than the corpus as a whole. As well as American university student essays, LOCNESS also contains essays written by British university students, and essays by British A-level students, which is to say, students who are in their last year of secondary education before university entrance. All essays from the latter group were discarded as they are clearly at a different point in their educational careers and thus do not constitute a 'like-for-like' point of comparison. It was also decided to discard the UK

[12] The LOCNESS corpus is available at http://www.uclouvain.be/en-cecl-locness.html.

university student essays because Japanese English education is mostly American-English based. The resulting dataset thus consists exclusively of American university student essays, and will be referred to henceforth in abbreviated form as US.

Before discussing analysis of the texts, some limitations should be noted here at the outset. One is that the two corpora are different in size, including the number of texts and average length of texts. The JICLE corpus is a collection of 366 essays written by students at 21 Japanese universities, and has a total word count of 198,241 tokens. In comparison, the US corpus contains 176 essays collected from five American universities, and has a total of 149,574 running words. As for the text length, the JICLE text average is 542 words (Granger et al., 2009), whereas the US average is 850 words (149,574 words comprised of total 176 essays). Another limitation is that essay topics are diverse in each of the corpora, and different in the two corpora. Although there are some common topics in the two corpora, such as whether or not nuclear energy should be upheld as source of power, and whether the death penalty should be abolished. However, the majority of the topics appear only in one of the corpuses. Topics only in the JICLE corpus include whether or not women should be allowed to retain their maiden names after marriage, English education in Japan should start earlier at the elementary school level, one's future career, or Japan's seniority system should be maintained. The US corpus, in contrast, include such corpus-specific topics as: whether or not such medical practices as the use of euthanasia, abortion, and prolonging life by advanced technologies are ethically acceptable, and religious and racial issues on campus. Difference in topics undoubtedly play an important role in the use of shell nouns, particularly as to which nouns occur in what frequencies, or in what syntactic patterns the nouns occur. However, because they cannot be controlled, such differences need to be taken into account in interpreting the text data. Table 3.1, below, summarises the information on the JICLE and US corpora described in this section:

Students	Corpus	No. of texts	Word count	Ave. text length	Common topics	Corpus-specific topics
L1 Japanese students	Japanese subcorpus of ICLE (JICLE)	366	198,241 (202,099 in AntConc)	542	pros and cons of death penalty, Nuclear energy	maiden name, early start of English education, seniority system, future career
L1 English American students	US subcorpus of LOCNESS (US)	176	149,574 (150,530 in AntConc)	850		euthanasia, abortion, life prolonging medical practice, religious and racial discrimination

Table 3.1: Information on JICLE and US corpora

3.2: Use of corpus linguistics methodology

This thesis uses a corpus-linguistics methodology to analyse the use of shell nouns in student essays. This is because the present study attempts to identify general features of Japanese students' use of shell nouns, and the use of computers is indispensable. Computers can handle large amount of data in a quicker and more competent way than manual analysis, as they can manipulate, select, sort out and format the data, and also adapt it for the purpose of the analysis with ease (Barnbrook, 1996: 11-12); moreover, findings based on many examples are generalisable. Conversely, manual analysis can handle only a small number of examples, and the findings are more likely to represent features of individual students. In addition, in manual data analysis the judgment is based on intuitions and introspections of raters, which are less valid and prone to errors. Such weakness of manual-based text analysis is in Witte and Fraigley (1981), which analyses the use of Halliday and Hasan's (1976) cohesive items in five low-quality and five high-quality English essays by NS students. Firstly the judgment of high and low quality of student writing may not be entirely reliable, because it was based on the holistic scores given by the two raters, even if they were experienced raters. Also the findings may not be generalisable but only explain a tendency of the ten texts. Thus, for generalisability of features, reliability of the analysis and speed up of the analysis, this thesis uses computers in the text analysis.

Nevertheless, computer-based studies have their own weakness, which can be exemplified by Y. Kobayashi and Yamada (2008). The study used a large volume of corpora, including written and spoken texts in English by Japanese students, and analysed

the quality of texts in terms of the use of English metadiscourse markers (MDMs) (Hyland and Tse, 2004). The written corpus has 600,000 words and the spoken corpus has 1,300,000 words. The quality of written and spoken texts by Japanese students was determined by frequencies of individual types of MDMs, such as transition markers (e.g., *and, but, thus*) or frame markers (e.g., *to conclude, my purpose is…, here I do this…*). This means that quality was basically expressed as over-use or under-use of certain items. The findings are reliably supported by a large volume of data, and also, they are generalisable. A drawback of such statistically-motivated studies is, however, that they can only describe the quality of writing or speaking as a bundle of relevant linguistic features. It cannot provide more specific information as to in what ways certain MDMs, such as frame markers, are used in each of the corpora.

This thesis uses corpus-linguistics both for quantitative and qualitative analysis. Actually, corpus linguistic is most beneficial when the quantitative machine analysis of data is combined with a manual qualitative analysis, as Leech (1991: 14-15) points out and many of the past studies on metadiscursive nouns have been conducted by using both types of analysis (Hinkel, 2001, 2003; L. Flowerdew, 2003; J. Flowerdew, 2010). In the present study, frequencies of shell nouns (research question 1) and host-syntactic patterns (research question 2) are basically conducted with quantitative statistical analysis, and qualitative analysis is used for the interpretation of metadiscursive functions (research question 3). For both types of investigation, computers can provide the contextual evidence, which is made readily available in concordance lines by using the AntConc text analysis tool (see Section 3.3 for data analysis using AntConc).[13]

Regarding specific approaches to statistical data analysis, there are two broad theoretical orientations: corpus-driven and corpus-based approaches (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). Corpus-based research 'takes a more confident stance towards existing theories' (Mahlberg, 2005: 2), and thus, uses corpus data to verify findings or knowledge. This type of research tries to test previous findings. In contrast, corpus-driven research 'aims to derive descriptive categories from the observation of data' (Mahlberg, ibid.), where a theoretical statement is formed based on corpus evidence or emerges from corpus analysis. Tognini-Bonelli (2001: 85, in Mahlberg, 2005: 18) explains this approach as follows:

[13] AntConc is downloaded from Laurence Anthony's website at: http://www.laurenceanthony.net/software/antconc/

‘observation leads to hypothesis leads to generalisation leads to unification in theoretical statement’. The present research employs a methodology borrowing both types of corpus approach. On one hand, the study is corpus-based, because there are some very specific questions. They are formed based on a specific linguistic theory proposed in Schmid (2000), and the theory has a clear influence on the way the corpus research is carried out. On the other hand, the present study does not directly apply his theory, but rather tries to reclassify shell nouns’ host syntactic patterns based on features that will emerge from an analysis of the two corpora, as explained later in Section 3.5.

3.3: Using text analysis tools

The present study uses the AntConc text analysis software package for the three research questions. What AntConc can do, and how it is used for the research is explained below.

Frequency counts adjustment

When using the AntConc software tool, first of all, the word token count in each of the two corpora is recounted according to AntConc calculations: 198,241 words in the JICLE corpus and 149,574 words in US are recounted as 202,099 and 150,530 respectively. Next, the total raw frequency of each of the 33 shell noun items for each of the corpora is counted as basic information. With the use of AntConc, the raw frequency of a shell noun is obtained by opening the corpus (e.g., JICLE) and inputting a search item, which is any of the shell noun items (e.g., *problem*). Then, for statistical calculations, rather than using the hit counts that are automatically gained, hit counts are manually adjusted, or post-edited, by removing false hits (e.g., nouns that have different meanings, such as *cause* meaning *movement;* homographs that are used as verbs, such as *cause, propose, question* and *view*). (It was found out that these errors were due to a wide range of vocabulary use and occurred mostly in US).

In the data analysis, all raw frequencies in AntConc for the two corpora are adjusted to a base figure of ‘per hundred thousand words’, in order to make direct quantitative comparisons between the two corpora possible.

KWIC function

A primary research tool used for the data analysis is the 'Key Word In Context (KWIC)' sort function. The KWIC sort function provides all the occurrences of a search item in concordance lines. This thesis sorts them alphabetically by setting a list order at level 1 and L1 (left one word). Shown below are concordance lines for the search item *problem* at Level L1:

sion. The government office should set about this **problem** in no time. But smokers consideration is more pre
possibility that it might be a fraudulence. This **problem** has often happened these days. Thirdly, individua
tural resources at present. We need to solve this **problem** all over the world. From above thing, we can have
break such situations? As we can't consider this **problem** without private problem between man and woman, I
, elementary school, is a good way to solute this **problem**. The second reason is about the equality of getti

Figure 3.1: Concordance lines of *problem* in JICLE sorted by KWIC sort function at level L1

Concordance lines obtained are used for an identification of the metadiscursive status of shell noun items, and also the syntactic pattern for the noun. For example, in the following concordance line in example 1, below, where a shell noun is *problem*, the syntactic pattern for the noun is the **N-be-CL** pattern:

(1) …, but the **problem** is how to use the cell phone. Kids can use whatever phone.
N be CL

This concordance line can also show the metadiscursive status of the shell noun in a straightforward way: With its meaning expressed in the within-the-sentence clause, the noun *problem* is considered a metadiscursive noun. In the following example 2, *reason* is not metadiscursive, as it is not lexicalised:

(2) I have no positive **reason** I wanted to enter university. Most of our high school…

Text View function

Another primary function of AntConc that this thesis used is the Text View function. It is used when an identification of the metadiscursive status of a noun requires a reading of the surrounding context of the shell nouns. A click on a key word in the concordance line will

show the surrounding context of the shell noun, which is the Text View functions of AntConc. For example, *problem* is clicked in the concordance line below:

> (3) respond to antibiotic treatment at all. This **problem** is compounded by the fact that…

Then the surrounding text appears in the Text View. Shown below is part of the text appeared:

> (4)
> Eventually the antibiotic no longer works and the doctor must use an alternative, perhaps stronger, antibiotic treatment. Now, Doctors are finding strains of bacteria that do not respond to antibiotic treatment at all. This **problem** is compounded by the fact that not all illnesses that Doctors prescribe antibiotics for are caused by bacteria because they fail to take the time to test for bacteria.

The segment in the Text View can indicate the noun is metadiscursively used or not to some extent, and syntactic typologies. In the segment above, because the meaning of (*this*) *problem* is in the preceding clause, the noun is identified as metadiscursive. At the same time, the syntactic pattern is categorized as a **th-N** type. The surrounding text shown by the Text View function is also used for Question 3, which is a qualitative analysis of the ways shell nouns are lexicalised in the text.

Next, by reading the concordance lines with the KWIC function and interpreting the lexicalisation of nouns in the surrounding texts, the ways in which this thesis determines metadiscursive nouns and shell noun host syntactic patterns are explained in detail in the following section.

3.4: Determining metadiscursively functioning nouns

Whether or not a shell noun is metadiscursively functioning is to some extent defined under the Hallidayan concept of cohesion. For example:

- Nouns whose meanings are in the writer's/reader's world knowledge, or knowledge on the topic, are not metadiscursive (e.g., *problem* in the phrase *the 2000 problem*);.
- Same item repetitions are not metadiscursive nouns;

- Nouns that do not require a lexicalisation, such as a noun in fixed phrase (e.g., *fact* in the phrase *in fact*) are not metadiscursive;
- Shell nouns whose meanings are specified in *of*-phrases are not metadiscursive, such as *problem* in *problem of taking pictures,* because the referent is smaller than a clause.

However, other than these clear-cut cases of shell noun use, as either metadiscursive or non-metadiscursive, the JICLE and US essays evidenced some types of shell noun use where nouns' metadiscursive status is not so clear. They are: a) shell noun in *it*-cleft and existential-*there*; b) a specific case of same item repetitions; c) noncollocational ways of lexicalisation; d) insertions of a summary before lexicalisation; e) nominal sentences; and f) plural shell nouns (Nplurals). How this thesis handles each of them is explained in the following:

Shell noun in *it*-cleft and existential-*there*

The JICLE students tended to use shell nouns whose meanings are presented in the adjacent clause in an *it*-cleft sentence and in an existential-*there* more than the US students, particularly so in the *it*-cleft sentence. Regarding the metadiscursive status of shell nouns in these two similar syntactic patterns, a shell nouns in an *it*-cleft sentence is defined as not metadiscursive, whereas it is metadiscursive in an existential-*there* sentence, as Schmid (2000) suggests. This is because in *it*-cleft, a *that/to*-clause is not a post-nominal appositive clause, which can form a conceptualisation boundary. An example is *problem* in the *it*-cleft sentence below in example 5:

(5) It's a big **problem** that schools can't have so many teachers financially… (JICLE)

The content of the clause: *schools can't have so many teachers financially* is an 'extraposition of a clause Subject' (Schmid, 2000: 24) or the notional Subject of the clause, and is not a post-nominal appositive clause.

In an existential-*there* sentences a shell noun is considered to form a weak conceptualisation boundary between N and CL. For instance, a post-nominal appositive relation is formed between a shell noun (*speculation*) and the content in the appositive *that*-clause in example 6:

(6) ... there is **speculation** that he might move into politics. (Schmid, 2000: 24)

Same item repetitions

Same item repetition is by definition not a metadiscursive noun. However, sometimes whether the noun is a repetition or not is not clear, as (*cost*) *problem* in the example below shows:

(7) There is also a cost **problem**. Students of online university have to pay as much as normal one. Actually the cost should be less than normal one … (omission of two long sentences)…// … (omission one paragraph)… //… Cost **problem** is still remain… (JICLE)

The second (*cost*) *problem* is in one way a repetition of the first one. However, rather than referring to the first one, the second *problem* refers to the long preceding stretch of discourse (underlined) and thus can be classified as a metadiscursive shell noun. This type of repetition of shell nouns was quite frequent in JICLE. This can be attributed to a JICLE-preferred discourse pattern, which this thesis calls 'circular discourse patterns'. It is shown below:

Generalised statement - Explanation of the statement - Repetition of the generalised statement.

Figure 3.2: Circular discourse patterns used in JICLE

This circular discourse frame is somewhat similar to the General-Specific text pattern in English texts (McCarthy, 1991), which is shown below:

General statement - Specific statement 1 - Specific statement 2, etc - General statement
or
General statement - Specific statement - More specific statement, etc - General statement.

Figure 3.3: General-Specific text pattern (Adapted from McCarthy, 1991: 158)

However, the circular discourse pattern and General-Specific pattern are basically different. With the General-Specific pattern, the Specific segment explains General statement with specific examples and explanations using cohesive lexical items, and then the General statement summarises the Specific segment (Coulthard et al., 2000: 22). However in the

circular discourse pattern (see Figure 3.3), the content of the Explanation of the statement segment is not an expansion of the initial statement, and it often includes a list of more than two points that may often not be well connected with each other. Also in the circular discourse pattern the final statement is virtually an exact repetition of the initial statement.

Noncollocational lexicalisation

Another instance of vague identification of nouns as metadiscursive or not was when the JICLE students lexicalised shell nouns in an noncollocational and/or ungrammatical way. For example, the lexicalisations of two *reason*s and *problem* in the examples shown below are collocationally unnatural, if grammatically allowed:

(8) … we learn only the **reason** that just a company need or we are bothered in future. (JICLE)

(9) It is not special by **reason** that it is 21st century. (JICLE)

(10) there is a financial **problem** to pay for the teachers or educate them. (JICLE)

In this thesis, judging from the strategies used by the JICLE students normatively, instances of noncollocational or unnatural lexicalisations are categorised as metadiscursive uses of shell nouns; that is, they will be regarded as properly used if the students managed to convey their intended meaning successfully, rather than whether they produced language that is formally correct in grammatical terms.

Insertions of a summary before lexicalisation

Vagueness of metadiscursive status of nouns was also shown in a specific way of cataphoric lexicalisation of shell nouns in JICLE, where a short summary comment was placed before the full lexicalisation of a shell noun in the subsequent discourse. An example of a short comment is *It's the score of TOEFL*, in the following segment:

(11) Recently, a serious **problem** has come up in Japan. It's the score of TOEFL. Japanese scored low on the TOEFL. It' s clear that Japan is near the bottom among Asian countries… (JICLE)

The comment is placed between the shell noun *problem* and its full lexicalisation in the succeeding discourse (underlined). Such an insertion of a summary comment was only observed in JICLE. In contrast, cataphoric lexicalisation of a long stretch of discourse in US did not start with a summary comment. An example of this is in the excerpt below, where *problem* is a shell noun:

(12) … there is the **problem** of freedom. The individual is paramount in the post-modern world. This seems highly contradictory to the forces that bind us: family, religion, common language & experience. There is a constant tension between the rights of the individual and the good of the society as a whole. (US)

From one perspective, an insertion of a summary comment in JICLE seems to hinder a direct rhetorical relation between the shell noun and its referent. Furthermore, in referring to the discourse role of enumeration, Tadros (1994) states that a colon allows no interruption and the predicted member will follow without delay (p. 72). This thesis, however, accepts such a break as an allowable deviation from the norm, and regards it as a case of metadiscursive lexicalisation of nouns since the predicted member is somehow expressed in the discourse.

Similar to an insertion of a comment before lexicalisation, JICLE often started a cataphoric lexicalisation of a shell noun with *for example*, as shown below:

N CL

(13) … a very horrible **problem** may have happened. For example, in Russia, if the computers … (JICLE)

US rarely started a full lexicalisation with the phrase *for example*. Because the inserted *for example* does not seem to break the rhetorical relation between the shell noun *problem* and the content of the referent, the shell noun was also regarded as metadiscursive. Thus, shell nouns are metadiscursive when the meanings are explained in the succeeding discourse if a short comment or the phrase *for example* is placed before.

Nominal sentences

Another feature in JICLE was a frequent use of shell nouns in nominal sentences, as shown below:

(14) Another **example**. English is used by Internet too. (JICLE)

(15) **Function** of language: to state one's opinion or thought. (JICLE)

N and the lexicalised content appear to form a **N:CL** or a **N-be-CL** pattern. In either way, the rhetorical effect of N seems lost in the nominal sentence. This is why this thesis does not handle N in a nominal sentence as metadiscursive.

Plural shell nouns (Nplurals)

At issue with shell nouns in the plural (Nplurals) is whether or not an Nplural whose meaning was expressed by focusing on only one aspect of the meaning as *one of* Nplural, is metadiscursive. An example is shown below:

(16) One of the **solutions** is to establish honour codes at universities. (US)

This thesis deals with such a case as metadiscursive use of Nplural. This is because, although *one of* Nplural may not serve a signposting role by explaining several meanings of N in the succeeding discourse, it can make the discourse explicit by stating what the referred section is about, as *solution*, above, can exemplify.

This section explained criteria for the identification of metadiscursive nouns. By applying them, this thesis formulates host syntactic patterns, where shell nouns' metadiscursive roles are triggered by recovering the meaning from the text. How this thesis formulates host-syntactic typologies is explained next.

3.5: Formulation of syntactic typologies

This thesis examines what types of host syntactic patterns shell nouns occur in the two corpora (for research question 2), by firstly reclassifying Schmid's (2000) core syntactic patterns (i.e., **N-be-CL**, **N:CL**, **th-N**, and **th-be-N**). A reason why not directly apply them to the study is that **N:CL** and **th-N** do not specify the position of a shell noun in a sentence; this is despite the possibility that the position of a shell noun in a sub-syntactic pattern may reveal some corpus-specific syntactic features. Another reason is that the four syntactic patterns are core syntactic patterns, and this implies that there are non-core patterns, which could be specific to either JICLE or US.

This thesis formulated host syntactic patterns by analysing all the metadiscursive occurrences of 33 shell noun using the KWIC and the Text View functions of AntConc (refer to Section 3.3). More detail of formulation processes are in the following sections, starting with for singular nouns.

3.5.1: Host syntactic patterns for singular nouns

Firstly, the resultant host syntactic patterns identified for singular shell nouns in the JICLE and the US were the following 10 types, comprising four general syntactic types (i.e., **N=CL**, **N:CL**, **th-N**, **th-be-N**), as shown below in Figure 3.4. Schmid's (2000) four core patterns are also shown for reference:

Schmid's (2000) patterns	General syntactic types in this thesis	Syntactic host patterns in this thesis (Sub-types)
N-be-CL	N=CL	N-be-CL (Pattern 1) CL-be-N (Pattern 2)
N:CL	N:CL	there-be-N:CL (Pattern 3) N:CL-Pv (Pattern 4) Np-v-N:CL (Pattern 5) Peripheral N:CL (Pattern 6)
th-N	th-N	th-N-Pv (Pattern 7) Np-v-th-N (Pattern 8) Peripheral th-N (Pattern 9)
th-be-N	th-be-N	th-be-N (Pattern 10)

Figure 3.4: Singular shell noun host syntactic patterns formulated for JICLE and US in comparison to Schmid

For the formulation of the syntactic patterns, this thesis simplified a variety of forms in JICLE and US, concerning some components of the sentence (e.g., Subject, Verbs, Predicate). How they were simplified is explained below.

N/th-N

An article combined with a shell noun does not necessarily correspond to actually occurring type of articles in text. Rather, N is used for a shell noun whose meaning is in the succeeding discourse, and **th-N** is for a shell noun whose meaning is in the preceding discourse. Therefore, *the fact* in the following sentences is N because the meaning is expressed in the succeeding discourse in example 17, below:

N
(17) I was shocked at the **fact** Japanese arts attracted one of the most prestigious artists in the world. (JICLE)

Conversely, *a problem* in the following example is **th-N**, because the referent is in the preceding discourse:

(18) Some people might want to go to parties with other people of the opposite sex; however, their partners do not allow such things. Other people might find that their partners do not even allow them to talk to friends of the opposite sex. Jealousy th
can be a **problem**. (JICLE)
be N (th-N)

The last sentence belongs to **th-be-N**. *Jealousy* is anaphorically referring to the whole preceding discourse, and placed at the subject position, whilst it is evaluated as *problem*.

Np

Np refers to a noun phrase, and occurs as the subject in **Np-v-N:CL** (Pattern 5) and **Np-v-th-N** (Pattern 8). **Np** includes people agents (e.g., *I, we, he, she*) and demonstratives (e.g., *it, this*). Examples of people agent at Np from the JICLE data are shown below, where *problem* and *idea* are shell nouns:

(19)If **we** overcome this serious **problem**… (JICLE)
Np v th-N

(20) **I** agree/disagree with the ***idea***. (JICLE)
Np v th-N

Be/v/Pv

Verbs come in varied types. For a simplification, this thesis categorises verbs into three types: *be*, v, or Pv (which means 'Verb functioning as Predicate'). Firstly, *be* refers to *be*-verbs or linking verbs (e.g., *appear, seem, remain*). When a verb can be replaced with a *be*-verb without causing much difference in meaning, it is regarded as *be*-verb. For example *have* in the following sentence is taken as *be*-verb:

(21) … it have a big **problem** from bring up our Japan. (JICLE)
th be N

V refers to a verb that takes a shell noun as an object. Therefore, v occurs in **Np-v-N:CL** (Pattern 5) and **Np-v-th-N** (Pattern 8). The example below is a **Np-v-th-N** (pattern 8), in which v (*teach*) takes a shell noun *difference* as the object:

(22) How can you teach this **difference** to children without using English? (JICLE)
Np v N

Verbs that function in much the same ways as modal or auxiliary verbs are not taken into account as a component of the sentence, such as *begin* in *begin believing.* Thus, the V is *believing* in example 23, below:

(23) They begin believing all of the atrocious **things**… (US)
(×) V

When v is a ditransitive verb (S-V-O_i-O_d), where a shell noun can occur either on the indirect object (O_i) or direct object (O_d), this thesis regards the shell noun as the object, as in S-V-O for a simplification of sometimes complex grammatical rules. In the following example, the syntactic type for the shell noun *problem* is **th-v-N:CL** (although the CL segment is not shown):

(24)

S	V	O_i	O_d
This	brings	us	(to) one major **problem**. (US)
th	v	×	N+(CL)

Though in a very rare case, in US v took a direct object (O_d) and object complement (O_c) (S-V-O_d-O_c,), where a shell noun occurs at the object complement (O_c) position, as shown with *problem* in the following sentence. This thesis took O_c (*problem*) as a case of not belonging to the main sentence, but a peripheral segment:

(25)

	S	v	O_d	O_c
… the Drug Enforcement Agency…	called	marijuana	the most urgent drug **problem**… (US)	
	Np	V	O	Peripheral N

Lastly, Pv stand for ‘verb functioning as Predicate’, and it take a shell noun as the Subject. Therefore, Pv occurs in **N:CL-Pv** (Pattern 4) and **th-N-Pv** (Pattern 7). Pv can be a *be*-verb that takes a complement, as shown below:

(26) The **problem** of privacy was more complicated. (JICLE)
N[1] (head N) Pv

Pv also includes an intransitive verb, as in example 27; passive form of a verb as in example 28; and a transitive verb combined with a non-shell noun object, as in example 29:

N Pv
(27) The **question** will clearly remain: do a woman's rights have… (US)

N Pv
(28) Nevertheless, a crucial **question** must first be answered: Why does welfare exist? (US)

N Pv
(29) That **fact** often has some troubles. (JICLE)

Peripheral clauses (Non-clausal element)

The unit of host syntactic patterns is the clause, which is ‘structured around a verb phrase’ (Biber et al., 1999: 120). At issue in this thesis is that a clause often occurs in several layers of embedding, and it is not always clear whether a certain segment is a clause or a non-clausal element. I firstly define the clause in this thesis. It includes not only a single clause sentence (e.g., *It is a problem.*), but it can occur in a coordinate relation or an embedded adverbial relation. (These are shown below in Figure 3.5 and Figure 3.6, illustrating a coordinate clause and an embedded adverbial clause, respectively.)

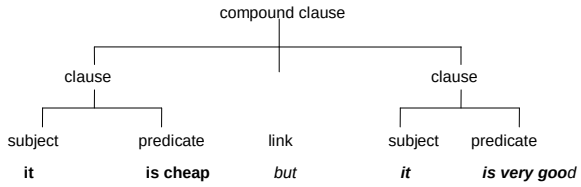

Figure 3.5: Coordinated clauses (*it is cheap; it is very good*) (Adapted from Biber et al., 1999: 135)

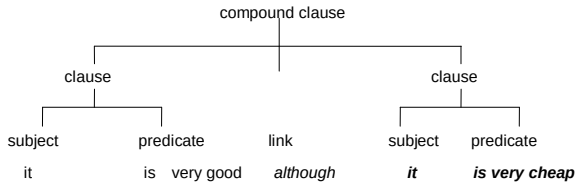

Figure 3.6: Embedded clause (*it is very cheap*) (Adapted from Biber et al., 1999: 135)

Also a ‘post-predicate *that*-clause’ is taken as a clause in this thesis. It is a *that*-complement clause to a verb. For example, in example 30 below, a post-predicate *that*-clause (*that is a problem*), which is the *that*-complement clause to the verb *think*, is a clause that can form a **th-be-N** (Pattern 10), when N recovers its meaning in the preceding segment:

```
(30) I  think  {that   is   a problem}. (JICLE)
                th    be       N
```

Taking a post-predicate *that*-clause as a clause can be justifiable because the verbs that take a *that*-complement clause in post-predicate position fall into three types (i.e., mental verbs, speech act verbs, other communication verbs) that often present the content as if reporting

(Biber, 1999: 196-197, 661); that is to say, the reported content can be taken as an independent clause.[14]

We now focus on metadiscursive shell nouns in a non-clausal element. Major types of non-clausal elements in JICLE and US included: a) a relative clause; b) an adverbial phrase; and, c) a N^1 of N^2 nominal phrase. These and other non-clausal elements where shell nouns occur metadiscursively were formulated as Peripheral syntactic types in this thesis. They are either **Peripheral N:CL** (Pattern 6) or **Peripheral th-N** (Pattern 9) (refer to Figure 3.3). Firstly, a shell noun in a relative clause can be seen with *problem* in (*that contributed to this problem*) in example 31 below:

(31) these··· conditions arose from··· companies that contributed to this **problem**. (Biber et al., 1999: 136)
Peripheral th-N

Referring back to the preceding discourse, *problem* is under **Peripheral th-N.** Next, a shell noun in an adverbial phrase is shown below, with *problem* in the phrase *to solve the problem*:

(32) I have an idea to solve the **problem**. (JICLE)
Peripheral th-N

Problem in example 32, above, also belongs to **Peripheral th-N**. The next is when a shell noun is in an N^1 of N^2 nominal phrase. A N^1 of N^2 is comprised of a head noun and non-head noun. If a shell noun is the head noun, the noun is a component of a clause. For example, *problem* in example 33 below is the head noun, and forms a **th-N-Pv** syntactic pattern (Pattern 7):

(33) The **problem** of privacy was more complicated. (JICLE)
th-N Pv

When a shell noun is not a head noun in N^1 of N^2, it can form a peripheral pattern. An example is below:

[14] Examples of mental verbs are *think and know*; those of speech act verbs are *say* and *tell*, and other communication verbs that do not necessarily involve speech include *show*, *prove*, and *suggest*.

(34) People, as a whole, do not have a keen awareness of this **problem**. (JICLE)
N[1] (head N) of N[2]

(*This*) *problem* in the phrase *awareness of this **problem*** is not a head noun, and forms a **Peripheral th-N** pattern.

N:CL

N:CL used in the syntactic typologies in the present thesis is comprised of two major types, **Appositive N:CL** and **Non-appositive N:CL.** In Schmid (2000), N in **N:C**L is most likely (though this is not stated clearly) to refer to a shell noun whose meaning is in the adjacent clause (Type a), such as below:

N:CL
(35) Television sets also have **problem** that it obstructs conversation for dinner. (JICLE)

However, in the data for the present study, N and CL sometimes occurred not adjacent to each other. In one type, N and the CL were within the same sentence but placed apart (Type b):

N CL
(36) … the **idea** is not correct that the strong countries rule the weak countries. (JICLE)

In another type, CL was a clause placed right after a period (.), colon (:), or semi-colon (;), following the sentence where N occurred (Type c):

N CL
(37) The real **problem** lies deeper than this. The parents are expressing the conflict that happened before the divorce. (JICLE)

Another type was similar to Type c, but the CL was a long stretch of discourse (Type d):

N CL
(38) … we often hear the **problem** about TV. In dinner table, each of members of family is absorbed into TV. They are laughing at talking of guest of TV program. They don't talk with their own family. A child who are looking at TV alone in… (JICLE)

This thesis defined the adjacent **N:CL** complex (Type a) as **Appositive N:CL** and non-adjacent **N:CL** complex types (Types b, c, d) as **Non-appositive N:CL**.

These different types of N:C complexes, particularly between **Appositive N:CL** and **Non-appositive N:CL**, may have different types of metadiscursive functions. N in **Appositive N:CL** emphasises a strong temporary concept-forming role (Schmid, 2000) and can function as a rhetorical gambit by presenting *new* information as if *given* (p. 331). However, N in **Non-appositive N:CL** may not play a clear concept-forming role; at least no literature seems to explain a metadiscursive function of N for Type b, where the meaning of N in the clause in **N:CL** is not adjacent to N but embedded in the sentence where N occurs. As for N for Type c, where its meaning is in a clause but after a period, as in example 37, functions of N seem similar to an enumeration (Tadros, 1985: 16, 1994) or an advance label (Francis, 1994), where N predicts that the meanings of the noun will be explained in the succeeding discourse and the prediction is realised (Tadros, 1994: 70), although Tadros (1994) and Francis (1994) seem to refer only to plural nouns. Regarding N for Type d, in example 38, where the meaning of N is lexicalised in a longer segment, it may function similarly to the signposting role of anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986) or shell nouns (Schmid, 2000: 350). Thus, functionally, a **Non-appositive N:CL** complex seems not to play the same role with an **Appositive N:CL** complex.

However, the two types of **N:CL** are handled as **N:CL** in the syntactic typologies. This is because metadiscursive functions of N for each of the lexicalisation types (Type a to Type d) appear on a cline, and a clear line cannot be drawn between them. Besides, host syntactic patterns are formulated focusing on the position of N only, not taking into consideration the lexicalisation of N. (This handling of **N:CL** is assessed later in Chapter 6.)

This section explained how host-syntactic typologies are formulated in this thesis. Examples of each of the syntactic patterns in both JICLE and US are shown below:

Syntactic Patterns	Examples from JICLE or US
N-be-CL (Pattern 1)	2nd **question** was 'what can we do to protect our environment?' (JICLE)
CL-be-N (Pattern 2)	Whether Japanese students need to master English as a second language is very difficult **question**. (JICLE)
there-be-N:CL (Pattern 3)	Appositive N:CL … there is a **problem** that too many cats are thrown away …. (JICLE) Non-appositive N:CL There is also a cost **problem**. Students of online university have to pay as much as… (JICLE)
N:CL-Pv (Pattern 4)	Appositive N:CL … but the **fact** that the court ruled that this type of freedom of speech is o.k. does not mean it would feel the same way about … (US) Non-appositive N:CL … the **problem** that technology has brought cannot deny. A cell phone has radio waves and it operates other machines. … (JICLE)
Np-v-N:CL (Pattern 5)	Appositive N:CL I agree with this **idea** that Japanese students need to master English. (JICLE) Non-appositive N:CL I know **the reason**; he is scared of going outside. (JICLE)
Peripheral N:CL (Pattern 6)	Appositive N:CL … this is due to the **fact** that women have successfully entered the once male-dominated work world, and … (US) Non-appositive N:CL … the **problem** that technology has brought cannot deny. A cell phone has radio waves and it operates other machines. In hospital, it must not approximate to medical machines, … (JICLE)
th-N-Pv (Pattern 7)	(referent, omitted) … the **problem** consists in lack of correct information (JICLE)
Np-v-th-N (Pattern 8)	The inhabitants complain of crows. So they try to drive away them. If there is only one crow in the world, does people do **such a thing**? (JICLE)
Peripheral th-N (Pattern 9)	(referent, omitted) I have an idea to solve the **problem**. (JICLE)
th-be-N (Pattern 10)	(referent, omitted) This poses a **problem**, since undoubtedly those at-home tasks contribute…(US)

Figure 3.7: Examples of individual syntactic patterns for singular shell nouns

3.5.2: Host syntactic patterns for plural nouns

The syntactic patterns for plural nouns (Nplurals) were formulated under the condition that Nplurals are metadiscursive if the meaning of the noun is recoverable by at least one aspect of the meaning of the noun, where Nplural often occurs as ***one of*** **Nplural-be-CL** (see Section 3.4). The resultant host syntactic patterns for Nplurals in the JICLE and the US were the following nine syntactic typologies, comprised of four general lexicalisation types (i.e., **Nplural=CL**, **Nplural:CL**, **th-Nplural**, and **th-be-Nplural**), as shown below in Figure 3.8:

General type	Plural syntactic typologies	Singular typologies
Nplural=CL	Nplural-be-CL (Pattern 1) [Not occurred]	N-be-CL CL-be-N
Nplural:CL	there-be-Nplural:CL (Pattern 3) Nplural:CL-Pv (Pattern 4) Np-v-Nplural: CL (Pattern 5) Peripheral Nplural:CL (Pattern 6)	there-be-N:CL N:CL-Pv Np-v-N: CL Peripheral N:CL
th-Nplural	th-Nplural -Pv (Pattern 7) Np-v-th-Nplural (Pattern 8) Peripheral th-Nplural (Pattern 9)	th-N-Pv Np-v-th-N Peripheral th-N
th-be-Nplural	th-be-Nplural (Pattern 10)	th-be-N

Figure 3.8: Syntactic patterns used in JICLE and US for singular and plural shell nouns

Some points for reformulation of each of the syntactic patterns are explained below according to the general syntactic type, not the sub-syntactic pattern. This is because the syntactic typologies for Nplurals are basically the same as those of singular nouns, and an explanation by each individual sub-type will be redundant.

Nplural-be-CL (Nplural=CL)

Nplural for **Nplural-be-CL** occurs as *one of* Nplural, to express only one meaning of Nplural. The **CL** occurs as a *that*-clause, a *to*-clause or a deverbal noun in both corpora. **Nplural-be-CL** (Pattern 1) occurred but **CL-be-Nplural** (which would have been Pattern 2) did not occur.

Nplural:Cl

Nplural of **Nplural:CL** is lexicalised in more than one meaning, and ***one-of*-Nplural** form does not occur. The meaning of Nplural is lexicalised in the CL, expressing several meanings of N: It has several sub-syntactic patterns (Patterns 3, 4, 5 6; see Figure 3.8 above).

th-Nplural

In the **th-Nplural** syntactic type, Nplural refers back to the preceding discourse and is lexicalised with more than one meaning. Nplural does not occur in the *one-of*-Nplural form. It is comprised of several sub-syntactic patterns (Patterns 7, 8, 9; see Figure 3.8, above).

th-be-Nplural

In the **th-be-Nplural** pattern (Pattern 10), Nplural can occur either as *one of* Nplural or Nplural.

Actual occurrences of Nplurals are shown in Figure 3.9 below, according to the general syntactic type (i.e., **Nplural-be-CL**, **Nplural:CL**, **th-Nplural**, **th-be-Nplural**). However, it should be noted that types of Nplural for each of the syntactic types, which are either *one of* Nplural, or Nplural, is shown (Nplurals are in bold):

Syntactic Type	Examples from JICLE or US
Nplural=CL (Nplural-be-CL)	One of Nplural type … one of the most important **things** for the companies to hire the people is to look for the positive thinking person… (JICLE) One of the **solutions** is to establish honor codes at universities. (US)
Nplural:CL	there-be-Nplural:CL (Pattern 3): Nplural type There are many pending **problems** left unsolved. [lexicalisation] (JICLE) There are also **examples** of where a lack of animal testing comes back to haunt humans. [lexicalisation](US) Peripheral Nplural:CL (Pattern 6): Nplural type I do not support this idea with the following **reasons**. [lexicalisation] (JICLE) … watch these cartoons for two **reasons**; first, because … (US)
th-Nplural	th-Nplural-Pv (Pattern 7): Nplural type These **reasons** make some people feel unfamiliar to the nuclear… (JICLE) None of these **ideas** do anything to promote the American Family… (US) Peripheral th-Nplural (Pattern 9): Nplural type With these numerous **examples** … (US) For these **reasons**,… (JICLE)
th-be-Nplural (Pattern 10)	Nplural type These are the two main **reasons**… (JICLE) These are all excellent **reasons** for excluding filming of executions… (US) One of Nplural type This is one of the **reasons** that are creating the severe situation for couple. (JICLE) That was one of the main **reasons**…(US)

Figure 3.9: Examples of individual syntactic patterns for plural shell nouns

This chapter explained the methodology and procedures of the present study to address the three research questions (see Section 2.4). By applying the methodologies, the next two chapters address each of the three research questions in turn.

Chapter 4: Shell noun frequencies and host syntactic patterns

This chapter addresses the first two research questions:

Question 1: How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

Question 2: How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell noun host syntactic patterns in comparison to L1 English students?

Question 1, addressing the frequencies of shell nouns for singular and plural use, is presented in Section 4.1. Question 2, examining the use of host syntactic patterns, is in Section 4.2.

4.1: Frequencies of shell nouns

I firstly investigate total frequencies of shell nouns in the two corpora, JICLE and US. The word counts of each of the corpora for the statistical calculations are 202,099 words in JICLE, and 150,530 words in US. These are figures that were gained after the original word counts in JICLE and US, 198,241 and 149,574, respectively, were recounted according to the AntConc calculations, and also after removing false hits (e.g., homographs of shell nouns that were used as verbs, and homonyms of shell nouns used for different meanings). In the analysis, raw data are normalised to a base figure of 'per 100,000 words', and frequency ratios in the two corpora are interpreted applying the log-likelihood test.[15]

15 In the present study, I measure the log-likelihood score by using the log-likelihood calculator developed by the University Centre for Computer Corpus Research on Language (UCREL), in which the asymptotic distribution for the

Investigated first is the use of shell nouns in the singular. (See Section 4.1.2 for the use of plural shell nouns.)

4.1.1: Frequencies of singular shell nouns

Let us look firstly at what degree each of the corpora used shell nouns as word tokens. They are 1,723 in JICLE and 1,217 in US, which are at the normalised ratios of 853 and 808, respectively, to a base figure of 'per 100,000 words'. A log-likelihood (hereinafter LL) test of significance for the total word tokens yields a score of 2.02, which is insignificant against the null hypothesis at the level of 5% ($p<.05$). Focusing on metadiscursive functioning shell nouns, word tokens are 560 in JICLE and 408 in US. These are at the normalised ratio of 277 and 271, respectively, and their frequency difference is also statistically insignificant with an LL score of 0.11. Therefore the results suggest that the total occurrences of the 33 shell nouns are not statistically different, either as word tokens or metadiscursive occurrences of nouns, as shown in Table 4.1:

	JICLE		US	
Size of the corpora	202,099		150,530	
Use of 33 shell nouns: normalised (raw figures)	MD freq.	word token	MD freq.	word token
	277 (560)	853 (1723)	271 (408)	808 (1217)
LL score for total word token between JICLE and US	2.02			
LL score for metadiscursive Ns between JICLE and US	0.11			

Table 4.1: Frequencies of singular shell noun word tokens and metadiscursive use in JICLE and US

In addition, the ratios of metadiscursive use against the total occurrences of shell nouns are: 0.32 (277/853) in JICLE and 0.33 (271/808) in US, indicating that there is not any evident difference in proportional terms.

Now focusing on metadiscursively functioning nouns, I examine which nouns are used in each of the corpora. Shown below, in Table 4.2, are the analysis results for the use

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log-likelihood G2 is the Chi-squared distribution with one degree of freedom. If we use the 0.05 significance level for rejecting the null hypothesis, the critical value for G2 will be 3.84.

of singular nouns. (The JICLE use of shell nouns is in the left-hand column, and the US use is on the right. Figures are normalised to the base figures of 100,000.):

JICLE			US		
Rank	Shell nouns	Frequencies	Rank	Shell nouns	Frequencies
1	reason	62	1	fact	59
2	problem	48	2	problem	39
3	thing	47	3	reason	31
4	fact	29	4	idea	22
5	idea	18	5	decision	19
6	question	18	6	question	17
7	example	10	7	issue	15
8	opinion	9	8	thing	11
9	issue	4	9	solution	9
10	purpose	3	10	example	8
11	function	3	11	view	7
12	difference	3	12	purpose	7
13	advantage	3	13	aspect	5
14	result	2	14	factor	3
15	solution	2	15	function	3
16	aspect	2	16	effect	3
17	decision	2	17	difference	3
18	cause	2	18	cause	3
19	view	1	19	result	1
20	benefit	1	20	advantage	1
21	aim	1	21	opinion	1
22	difficulty	1	22	benefit:	1
23	factor	0	23	explanation	1
24	interpretation	0	24	interpretation	1
25	criticism	0	25	principle	1
26	effect	0	26	criticism	1
27	principle	0	27	element	1
28	intention	0	28	comment	1
29	element	0	29	difficulty	0
30	explanation	0	30	feature	0
31	feature	0	31	justification	0
32	comment	0	32	intention	0
33	justification	0	33	aim	0
JICLE MD nouns total		277	US MD nouns total		271

Table 4.2: Frequencies of metadiscursive singular shell nouns in JICLE and US

As can be seen in the table above, the JICLE use of nouns is characterised by a smaller number of items and an extreme preference for certain nouns. The JICLE students strongly prefer *reason* (N=62:31, LL score 17.44), *problem* (N=48:39, LL score 1.61) and *thing* (N=47:11, LL score 41.45). After the three frequently occurring nouns, the frequency rates of nouns in JICLE quickly drop to *fact* (N=29), *idea* and *question* (N=18 for both), followed by dozens of nouns whose frequencies are between 1 and 4. In addition, there are

many shell nouns which are found in the US data but which do not occur in JICLE at all (i.e., *effect, principle, intention, element, explanation, feature, comment, factor, interpretation, criticism*). The JICLE use of metadiscursive shell nouns is thus characterised by a smaller range of nouns and a sharp frequency drop in a steep Zipfian manner (Zipf, 1935, in Sinclair, 2001) from item to item.

Different from the JICLE pattern, the US frequency data (in the right-hand column in Table 4.2) exhibits a predominantly high frequency of *fact* (N=59), and other nouns are more evenly spread across a wide range. Accordingly, frequencies of items in US are more evenly distributed across nouns and decrease much more gradually: *Fact* is followed by a group of nouns occurring at the frequencies of 39 to 11 (e.g., *problem, reason, idea, decision, issue, question, thing*). There is another group of nouns whose frequencies vary from 9 to 5 (*solution, example, view, purpose, aspect*). Five other shell nouns occur at a frequency ratio of 3, and 10 nouns occur at a ratio of 1. Because shell nouns are comprised of a wide range of nouns, the frequency ratio of each of the nouns in US tends to be lower than in JICLE.

The frequency data above, Table 4.2, show that there are differences in preferred shell nouns in JICLE and US. The JICLE students preferred such nouns as *reason, thing* and *opinion*; the US students preferred most clearly *fact*, followed by *decision, issue* and *solution;* and nouns that occur with a similar frequency in both corpora are *problem, idea, question* and *example*. This is shown in Table 4.3, below:

Type of preference	JICLE preferred Ns	Frequency ratios (JICLE:US)	US preferred Ns	Frequency ratios (JICLE:US)	Similar frequency Ns	Frequencies (JICLE:US)
Preferred items	reason	(62:31)	fact	(29:59)	problem	(48:39)
	thing	(47:11)	decision	(2:19)	idea	(18:22)
	opinion	(9:1)	issue	(4:15)	question	(18:17)
	advantage	(3:1)	solution	(2:9)	example	(10:8)
			purpose	(3:7)	function	(3:3)
			view	(1:7)	difference	(3:3)
			aspect	(2:5)	cause	(2:3)
			factor	(0:3)	result	(2:1)
			effect	(0:3)	benefit	(1:1)
					aim	(1:0)
					difficulty	(1:0)
					interpretation	(1:0)
					criticism	(1:0)
					principle	(1:0)
					element	(1:0)
					explanation	(1:0)
					comment	(1:0)
					intention	(1:0)
					feature	(1:0)
					justification	(1:0)

Table 4.3: Three frequency types of shell nouns: JICLE-preferred, US-preferred and similar frequencies

4.1.2: Frequencies of plural shell nouns

We move to the analysis of frequencies of shell nouns used in the plural form (Nplurals) in JICLE and US. In this thesis, Nplural is regarded as metadiscursive if the meaning of the noun is lexicalised in at least one aspect of the noun, such as '*one of the* Nplural' as defined in Section 3.4 (see also Section 3.5.2). The frequencies of Nplurals are very different from those of singular shell nouns analysed in the immediately preceding section. The overall number of word tokens of Nplurals is significantly higher in US than it is in JICLE, at the normalised ratio of 387:490 (LL score 20.70). However, the rate of metadiscursive use of Nplurals is significantly higher in JICLE than in US at the ratio of 107:76 (LL score 9.40), which is shown in Table 4.4 below:

	JICLE		US	
Size of the corpora	202,099		150,530	
Use of 33 Nplurals: normalised (raw figures)	Metadiscursive Ns	word token	Metadiscursive Ns	word token
	107 (217)	387 (783)	76 (114)	490 (737)
LL score for total word token between JICLE and US	20.70			
LL score for metadiscursive Ns between JICLE and US	9.40			

Table 4.4: Normalised frequencies of plural shell nouns in JICLE and US

Regarding the ratios of metadiscursive use against the total occurrences of Nplurals, they are substantially higher in JICLE than in US, as is evidenced by the rates of 0.28 (107/387) in JICLE and 0.16 (76/490) in US.

We now consider which nouns account for a significantly higher frequency of Nplurals in JICLE, and conversely, a substantially lower frequency in US. The analysis results are shown below in Table 4.5:

JICLE			US		
Rank	Nplurals	Frequencies	Rank	Nplurals	Frequencies
1	reasons	46	1	problems	15
2	problems	17	2	reasons	14
3	things	16	3	questions	7
4	examples	4	4	ideas	7
5	opinions	3	5	things	4
6	ideas	2	6	examples	4
7	differences	2	7	views	4
8	aspects	2	8	issues	4
9	issues	2	9	facts	3
10	factors	2	10	effects	2
11	facts	2	11	differences	2
12	effects	1	12	results	2
13	difficulties	1	13	factors	2
14	questions	1	14	intentions	1
15	results	1	15	solutions	1
16	purposes	1	16	opinions	1
17	causes	1	17	advantages	1
18	advantages	0	18	aspects	1
19	aims	0	19	interpretations	1
20	views	0	20	purposes	0
21	functions	0	21	functions	0
22	solutions	0	22	aims	0
23	decisions	0	23	decisions	0
24	benefits	0	24	benefits	0
25	interpretations	0	25	difficulties	0
26	principles	0	26	causes	0
27	intentions	0	27	principles	0
28	criticisms	0	28	criticisms	0
29	elements	0	29	elements	0
30	explanations	0	30	explanations	0
31	features	0	31	features	0
32	comments	0	32	comments	0
33	justifications	0	33	justifications	0
JICLE MD total		107	US MD total		76

Table 4.5: Frequencies of Nplurals in JICLE and US

The table above shows that many Nplurals occurred at the frequency ratio of 0 in the two corpora, and ranges of metadiscursively functioning nouns are similarly small. A notable difference in the two corpora is in the occurrences of *reasons* (N=46:14, LL score 30.37) and *things* (N=16:4, LL score 12.69). They occur much more often in JICLE than in US, and mostly account for the significantly higher frequency of Nplurals in JICLE than in US (N=107:76, LL score 9.40). *Problems* is a high frequency Nplural in the two corpora, but it occurs in similar frequencies and thus does not affect frequency differences in the two corpora.

4.1.3: Summary: Frequencies of shell nouns

The following are results regarding frequency patterns of shell nouns in JICLE and US, for singular and plural shell nouns.

- Singular shell nouns occurred as metadiscursive items in not significantly different ratios in the two corpora (N=277:271, LL score 0.11), but the frequency in JICLE was achieved mainly through repetitions of *reason*, *thing* and *problem*, whilst that in US was predominantly due to frequent use of *fact* and a wide range of nouns.
- For the use of plural nouns, metadiscursive shell nouns occurred substantially more frequently in JICLE than in US (N=107:76, LL score 9.40). The higher frequency in JICLE is accounted for by the much more common use of *reasons* and *things* than in US.

4.2: Frequencies of host syntactic patterns

We now move on to the use of host syntactic patterns, firstly for singular shell nouns (see Section 4.2.2 for plural shell nouns).

4.2.1: Frequencies of syntactic patterns for singular shell nouns

This study reformulated Schmid's host-syntactic patterns into 10 sub-syntactic patterns, with four general syntactic types: **N=CL, N:CL**, **th-N** and **th-be-N**, as explained earlier in Section 3. The reformulated patterns are shown below in Figure 4.1 (reproduced from Figure 3.1):

Schmid's (2000) patterns	General syntactic types in this thesis	Syntactic host patterns in this thesis (Sub-types)
N-be-CL	N=CL	N-be-CL (Pattern 1) CL-be-N (Pattern 2)
N:CL	N:CL	there-be-N:CL (Pattern 3) N:CL-Pv (Pattern 4) Np-v-N:CL (Pattern 5) Peripheral N:CL (Pattern 6)
th-N	th-N	th-N-Pv (Pattern 7) Np-v-th-N (Pattern 8) Peripheral th-N (Pattern 9)
th-be-N	th-be-N	th-be-N (Pattern 10)

Figure 4.1: Singular shell noun host syntactic patterns formulated for JICLE and US in comparison to Schmid

We now examine the types of syntactic patterns where shell nouns functioned metadiscursively in each corpora. Shown below firstly in Table 4.6 are the occurrences of shell nouns in four major syntactic patterns. (Figures are normalised to the base figure per 100,000 words.):

	JICLE	US	LL scores between JICLE and US
	MD frequencies	MD Frequencies	
N=CL	91	77	2.00
N:CL	50	86	17.19
th-N	100	78	4.19
th-be-N	36	29	1.25
Total MD shell nouns	277	271	0.11

Table 4.6: Frequencies of shell nouns in general syntactic types

The total occurrences of singular shell nouns in JICLE and US are not significantly different at 277:271 (LL score of 0.11). However, there are clear and substantial differences in the syntactic patterns across the two corpora: As can be seen in the table above, the JICLE students prefer the **th-N** type and the US students prefer the **N:CL** type. The JICLE students' preference for **th-N** in comparison to the US students is shown by a significant LL score of 4.19, and the US preference for **N:CL** is indicated by the LL score of 17.19. **N=CL** and **th-be-N** occur in JICLE and US with no significant frequency differences (LL scores of 2.00 and 1.25, respectively).

The frequencies of syntactic types will now be further analysed by sub-types to uncover similarities and differences in the preference for any particular sub-types between the two corpora.

N=CL frequencies

N=CL has two sub-syntactic types: **N-be-CL** (Pattern 1) and **CL-be-N** (Pattern 2). The frequencies of each type and its associated shell nouns are shown in Table 4.7:

		JICLE		US		LL scores
Pattern	Sub-patterns	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
N=CL	1.N-be-CL	80	Reason 36 thing 14 problem 9 question 3 example, fact, purpose, advantage, opinion 2 difference, solution, aspect 1	66	reason 20 problem 9 solution, thing, purpose 5 question 4 fact, ide 3 example, issue 2 difference, effect, view, cause, aspect, benefit, factor, function, criticism, decision 1	2.06
	2. CL-be-N	11	Thing 5 problem, issue 1	11	problem, issue 3, reason 2, question, thing, cause, idea, decision 1	0.04
Total		91		77		2.00

Table 4.7: Metadiscursive shell nouns and normalised frequencies in sub-types of N=CL

The total frequency ratios for the general **N=CL** syntactic type are not significantly different in JICLE and US (N=91:77, LL score 2.00), and also, at the sub-type level, frequencies of the two syntactic types do not indicate significant differences either: **N-be-CL** (Pattern 1) occurs at 80:66 (LL score 2.06), and **CL-be-N** (Pattern 2) at 11:11 (LL score 0.04).

A difference is seen, however, in the range of vocabulary. Higher frequencies of *reason* and *thing* in JICLE and a wider range of vocabulary in US are shown in the table, reflecting a general tendency of the noun frequency patterns in each of the corpora.

N:CL frequencies

N:CL in this thesis is comprised of two types: **Appositive N:CL** and **Non-appositive N:CL** but they are handled as a single **N:CL** syntactic type (refer to Section 3.5.1). Under this condition, the four sub-syntactic patterns of **N:CL** occurred as follows, as shown below, in Table 4.8:

		JICLE		US		LL scores
Pattern	Sub-patterns	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
N:CL	3. there-be-N:CL	5	example, thing 1 problem 3	3	Problem 2 difference 1	0.78
	4. N:CL-Pv	9	idea 3, fact, problem 2	18	fact 9, question 3, problem, decision, idea, aspect 1	4.75
	5. Np -v-N:CL	19	fact 6, idea 4 question, problem 2 reason, opinion 1	34	fact 18, idea 8 question 4 problem, thing, view, reason, decision 1	9.52
	6. Peripheral N:CL	13	fact 7 reason 2 opinion 1	31	fact 24 decision 3, idea 2 reason, comment, problem 1	15.90
Total		50		86		17.19

Table 4.8: Metadiscursive shell nouns and normalised frequencies of N:CL sub-types

The **N:CL** pattern occurs significantly more in US than in JICLE (N=50:86, LL score 17.19). At the level of sub-type, too, most of the sub-syntactic patterns of N:CL occurred significantly more in US than in JICLE: Pattern 4 (**N:CL-Pv**) occurred at the ratio of 9:18 (LL score 4.75), Pattern 5 (**Np-v-N:CL**) at 19:34 (LL score of 9.52) and Pattern 6 (**Peripheral N:CL**) at 13:31 (LL score of 15.90). A major factor contributing to the higher frequencies of these sub-types is a strong predominance of *fact* in US as opposed to JICLE.

An exception is Pattern 3 (**there-be-N:CL**), in that the frequency of the pattern is not statistically different between the two corpora, at the ratio at 5:3 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 0.78). This indicates a JICLE preference for Pattern 3 in comparison to the other **N:CL** sub-types. Pattern 3 is an existential-*there* construction. According to Huckin and Pesante (1988), existential-*there* construction has such roles as: to 'introduce "new" information' to the discourse (p. 378) or to allow for 'isolated topic shifts', with which the writer does not need to discuss the topic beyond the single sentence in which *there* occurs (p. 383). In other words, existential-*there* allows a smooth shift of topics without discussing the topic very much. Because of this feature, the JICLE students may have preferred using Pattern 3.

th-N frequencies

The **th-N** syntactic type has three sub-types. Shell nouns that occurred in each of the syntactic patterns are shown in Table 4.9:

		JICLE		US		LL
Pattern	Sub-patterns	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		scores
th-N	7. th-N-Pv	27	problem 6 fact 5 thing, idea 3 function, question 2 example, opinion 1	25	problem 5, fact, idea 3, decision 2 issue, difference, example, question, view, explanation, element, effect, factor, function, interpretation, purpose, principle, opinion 1	0.23
	8. Np-v-th-N	36	thing, problem 10 idea, question, fact 3 opinion 2, result 1	14	problem 5, question 2 fact, difference, example, effect, thing, view, reason, function, purpose, decision 1	17.16
	9. Peripheral th-N	37	reason 13, problem 7, question 5, thing 3, fact 2 view, issue, idea 1	39	issue 8, problem 7, reason 5, idea 4, decision, view 3, question, thing 2 difference, example, solution, aspect, fact, factor 1	0.15
Total		100		78		4.19

Table 4.9: Metadiscursive shell nouns and normalised frequencies in th-N sub-types

The **th-N** type occurs significantly more in JICLE than in US at a ratio of 100 to 78, respectively (LL score 4.19). Regarding sub-types, Patterns 7 and 9 occur with frequency ratios not significantly different in the two corpora, and shell nouns that comprise each of the syntactic patterns exhibit the general tendency of the JICLE and US use of shell nouns; that is, the use of a few items of a very high frequency ratio in JICLE (e.g., *reason* in Pattern 9) and a wider range in US.

Only Pattern 8 (**Np-v-th-N**) occurs significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=36:14, LL score 17.16).[16] This can be accounted for mostly by the higher frequencies of *thing* (N=10:1) and *problem* (N=10:5) in JICLE. Another factor leading to a higher frequency in JICLE for Pattern 8 is the use of a wider range of shell nouns. Although this is

[16] Shell nouns in JICLE for **Np-v-th-N** (Pattern 8) actually are comprised of several more nouns than those shown in Table 4.8. However, those not shown occur with a raw frequency of 1 or 2, which is normalised as zero in the JICLE corpus.

not shown in Table 4.9, JICLE had several more shell nouns in Pattern 8 which occurred only once and so were normalised as zero.[17]

Other than the higher frequencies of *thing* and *problem* and the wider range of nouns, the significantly higher frequency of Pattern 8 may be influenced by *I/we* at the subject position in JICLE. Examples of *I/we* in Pattern 8 (**Np-v-th-N**) in JICLE are as follows:

(1) I agree/disagree with the **idea**. (JICLE)

(2) I do not support this **idea** with the following reasons. (JICLE)

(3) I can't understand her **idea**. And below I wrote *the* reason. (JICLE)

The use of *I/we* as the subject is also reported in some studies (e.g., Natsukari, 2012). and stated as an often-identified feature of English essays written by Japanese students Functionally, Pattern 8 with *I/w*e seem to function as 'frame markers', a type of metadiscourse markers (MDMs) (Hyland, 2004). They allow the writer 'to manage the information flow to explicitly establish his or her preferred interpretations' (Hyland, ibid.: 138).

Also noticeable in Table 4.9 above is the occurrences of *issue* in Pattern 9 in US. It occurs significantly more in US than in JICLE at the ratio of 1 in JICLE to 8 in US, which is unusual for **th-N**, because most of the shell nouns in **th-N** tend to occur more frequently in JICLE than in US. If so, why *issue* occurred more in US than in JICLE comes as a question to be discussed later (see Section 5.3.4).

[17] The reason for JICLE frequencies that are not shown in Table 4.9 is that in JICLE the raw frequency of a noun that occurred once is 0.5 in a normalised ratio which is counted as zero in the excel calculation in this thesis. In US, one time raw frequency 1 is 0.7 which is counted as a normalised ratio of 1.

th-be-N frequencies

We now consider the frequency data for **th-be-N** in JICLE and US; these are shown in Table 4.10 below:

	JICLE		US		LL scores
Syntactic pattern	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
th-be-N	36	thing 10 problem, reason 8 example, question, issue, difficulty, opinion 1	29	decision 5 problem, example, solution, reason 3 aspect 2 question, result, thing, view, cause, issue, fact, function, purpose, idea, advantage 1	1.25
Total	36		29		1.25

Table 4.10: Metadiscursive shell nouns and normalised frequencies in th-be-N

Frequencies of **th-be-N** pattern (Pattern 10) are not significantly different in the two corpora (N=36:29, LL score 1.25). Differences can be identified only in noun frequency patterns in each of the corpora. Reflecting a general vocabulary frequency patterns, JICLE realises the frequency mostly with *thing, problem* and *reason*, and US realises it with a wider range of nouns.

This result regarding the frequency ratio of **th-be-N** in JICLE and US is interesting, because it is quite different from the findings in a similar study by Caldwell (2009). She compared essays written by L1 Xhosa students (NNSs), NS students (NSs) and professional writers in the South African English teaching context, and found that **th-be-N** occurred the least frequently in the NNS essays and stated that it was 'a complex enough construction for L2 writers to avoid using' (p. 89). Even discounting differences in the L1s between Xhosa and Japanese, it raises the question of whether or not the JICLE students lexicalised shell nouns in a similar way to the US students, and whether shell nouns are functioning similarly in JICLE as in US. This will be addressed in Chapter 5.

Summary: Frequencies of syntactic patterns

This section has analysed the frequencies of host syntactic patterns in JICLE and US and which shell nouns realised individual syntactic frequencies. The results are summarised in the following:

- The frequencies of **N=CL** and **th-be-N** were not strongly different in the two corpora (i.e., **N=CL** at 90:77, LL score 2.00; and, **th-be-N** at 36:29, LL score 1.25). However, the frequencies of these syntactic types were realised by a small range of shell nouns (e.g., *reason, thing, problem*) in JICLE, as opposed to a wider range of shell nouns in US. This reflects the general shell noun occurrence patterns in JICLE and US.
- **N:CL** and **th-N** exhibited clearly different frequency patterns in the two corpora. **N:CL** occurred significantly more in US than in JICLE (N=50:86, LL score 17.19), which was mostly attributed to the high frequency of *fact* in US.
- In contrast, **th-N** occurred significantly more in US than in JICLE (N=100:78, LL score 4.19). The significantly higher frequency of **th-N** in JICLE was accounted for by the JICLE preference for Pattern 8 (**Np-be-th-N**) (N= 36:14, LL score 17.16), which may be in part used as metadiscourse marking in JICLE.

4.2.2: Frequencies of host syntactic patterns for plural shell nouns

This thesis formulated host syntactic patterns for metadiscursive Nplurals under the condition that Nplurals are regarded as metadiscursive if the meaning of the noun is recoverable by at least one aspect of the meaning of the noun (see Section 3.5.2). The resultant syntactic patterns are comprised of four general lexicalisation types (i.e., **Nplural=CL**, **Nplural:CL**, **th-Nplural**, **th-be-Nplural**) and nine sub-types. These patterns are shown below in Figure 4.2 (reproduced from Figure 3.8):

General type	Plural syntactic typologies	Singular typologies
Nplural=CL	Nplural-be-CL (Pattern 1) [No occurrences]	N-be-CL CL-be-N
Nplural:CL	there-be-Nplural:CL (Pattern 3) Nplural:CL-Pv (Pattern 4) Np-v-Nplural: CL (Pattern 5) Peripheral Nplural:CL (Pattern 6)	there-be-N:CL N:CL-Pv Np-v-N: CL Peripheral N:CL
th-Nplural	th-Nplural -Pv (Pattern 7) Np-v-th-Nplural (Pattern 8) Peripheral th-Nplural (Pattern 9)	th-N-Pv Np-v-th-N Peripheral th-N
th-be-N	th-be-Nplural (Pattern 10)	th-be-N

Figure 4.2: Syntactic patterns used in JICLE and US for singular and plural shell nouns

The total occurrences of Nplurals functioning metadiscursively are significantly higher in JICLE than in US (N=107:76, LL score 9.40). Table 4.11 below lists the frequencies of Nplurals by the general syntactic type:

	JICLE	US	LL scores
General syntactic types	Frequencies	Frequencies	
1 Nplural=CL	7	3	3.33
2 Nplural:CL	35	11	20.93
3. th-Nplural	57	53	0.22
4. th-be-Nplural	9	9	0.01
Total	107	76	9.40

Table 4.11: Normalised frequencies of metadiscursive Nplurals in the general syntactic types

As shown in the table, **Nplural=CL** and **th-be-Nplural** occur in small frequencies. The **th-Nplural** type is an anaphorically referring pattern, and is the most strongly preferred in both corpora (N=57:53, LL score 0.22). Also, the table indicates very clearly that the higher frequency of metadiscursive Nplurals in JICLE is accounted for by **Nplural:CL**, which occurs at the ratio of 35 in JICLE to 11 in US (LL score 20.93).

The frequencies of each of the syntactic patterns will now be investigated in more detail, focusing on which Nplurals occur in each of the sub-syntactic types, and whether or not there are any sub-syntactic types that show frequency differences in the two corpora.

Nplural=CL frequencies

The **Nplural=CL** general syntactic type occurs as the **Nplural-be-CL** pattern (Pattern 1) only. Shown below in Table 4.12 are frequencies of Pattern 1 in JICLE and US:

		JICLE		US		LL score
Pattern	Sub-patterns	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
Nplural=CL	1. Nplural-be-CL	7	reasons 3 things 1	3	problems, results, solutions, issues 1	3.33
	2. [No occurrences]	-		-		-
Total		7		3		3.33

Table 4.12: Normalised frequencies of Nplurals in N=CL

Nplural occurs as *one of* Nplural in not significantly different in the two corpora (N=7:3, LL score 3.33). However, even this small range of nouns for this syntactic pattern clearly shows the broad tendency of vocabulary use patterns for Nplurals in JICLE and US; that is, high frequencies of *thing* and *reason* in JICLE (refer to Section 4.1.2).

Nplural:CL frequencies

Nplural:CL is comprised of four sub-syntactic patterns, and frequencies of each pattern are shown in Table 4.13 below:

		JICLE		US		LL scores
Pattern	Sub-pattern	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
Nplural:CL	3. there-be-Nplural: CL	13	reasons 7, problems 4 opinions 1	5	reasons 2 examples, problems, things, ideas 1	5.47
	4. Nplural:CL-Pv	1	reasons, opinions 1	1	effects	0.11
	5. Np-v-Nplural:CL	14	reasons 4 examples, factors, difficulties, effects, problems 1	4	things, advantages, questions, reasons 1	12.40
	6 Peripheral Nplural:CL	6	reasons 5, examples 1	3	reasons 3	2.73
Total		35		11		20.93

Table 4.13: Normalised frequencies of Nplurals in N:CL

Nplural:CL occurs significantly more often in JICLE than in US (N= 35:11, LL score 20.93). Past studies (e.g., Quirk et al., 1985, in Hinkel, 2001; Ivanic, 1991; Schmid, 2000) suggest that native speakers use **Nplural:CL** very frequently as cataphoric signposts in English texts, because it is very convenient in eliciting an extended answer. If so, it is both interesting and surprising that the JICLE students used this typically native-preferred pattern much more than the US students do.

At the sub-syntactic level, a strong preference for Pattern 3 (**there-be-Nplural:CL**) in JICLE in comparison to in US is seen in the table above (N=13:5, LL score 5.47). A JICLE preference for Pattern 3 was indicated earlier for singular shell nouns (see Section 4.2.2), and the findings of this study suggested that Japanese students prefer using the existential-*there* construction (i.e., Pattern 3) more than native speakers of English. A significantly larger frequency of Pattern 3 for Nplurals in JICLE provides evidence for this claim. It may be that the JICLE students use Pattern 3 for such functions of existential-*there* constructions as to 'introduce "new" information' to the discourse (Huckin & Pesante, 1988: 378), or to allow 'isolated topic shifts' without describing a new topic in a longer sentence (ibid.: 383).

Along with Pattern 3, Pattern 5 (**Np-v-Nplural:CL**) also occurs much more frequently in JICLE than in US (N=14:4, LL score 12.40). **Np-v-Nplural:CL** in JICLE often has *I/we* at the subject, as shown below:

(4) I'll state three **reasons** why I assent to the death penalty. (JICLE)

(5) I will give you two **examples**. (JICLE)

(6) Let us look at the three **factors** to support this idea. (JICLE)

These sentences are functioning to shape the arguments in an explicit way, and working as frame markers, a type of metadiscourse marker (Hyland, 2004, 2004). As discussed earlier Japanese students seem to prefer using *I/we* in their English essays (Natsukari, 2012). Similar to Pattern 8 for the use of singular shell nouns (**Np-v-th-N**), some of the Pattern 5 sentences for Nplurals in JICLE occur with *I/we* as the subject, as exemplified above, and they seem to be functioning as frame markers. Incidentally, regarding the use of *I/we* by Japanese students, Natsukari (2012) suggests it is an influence of Japanese topic-comment sentence patterns, as follows:

> English is a subject-predicate type language, while the Japanese language is typologically a topic-comment type: Comments… in Japanese discourse are provided from the speaker's point of view. Therefore, if Japanese students try to translate what they want to say in Japanese into English, the easiest subject for them to use is *I*.
>
> (p. 72-73)

Therefore, the JICLE preference for Pattern 5 and Pattern 8, where the subject Np can be *I/we*, suggests a transfer phenomenon from the Japanese language.

th-Nplural frequencies

The **th-Nplural** general type had three sub-types. The frequencies of each type are shown below in Table 4.14:

		JICLE		US		LL scores
Pattern	Sub-patterns	Nouns and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
th-Nplural	7. th-Nplural-Pv	14	things 5 problems 4 reasons, ideas, opinions 1	23	ideas 4 problems 3 differences, questions, things, views 2 examples, results, effects, aspects, issues, reasons, facts, factors, opinions, intentions 1	3.71
	8. Np-v-th-Nplural	10	things , problems 3 differences 1	12	problems 5, views 2 questions, results, effects, issues, facts, ideas 1	0.38
	9. Peripheral th-Nplural	32	reasons 17 problems, things 4, differences, facts, opinions 1	14	reasons 4, questions 3, examples, solutions, things, views, issues, facts, interpretations, ideas 1,	7.75
Total		57		53		0.22

Table 4.14: Normalised frequencies of Nplurals in th-N

There are no significant differences between JICLE and US for the th-Nplural general type (N=57:53, LL score 0.22). However, reflecting a general tendency of the two corpora, the JICLE frequency is mostly realised by small number of items, mostly *thing* and *reason*, whilst US uses wider range of nouns. With respect to the sub-types, a big frequency difference is exhibited for Pattern 9. It occurs significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=32:14, LL score 7.75), and this seems attributed to significantly more occurrences of *reasons* (N=17:4) in JICLE than in US.

th-be-Nplural frequencies

The **th-be-Nplural** pattern occurred in the following frequencies in each corpus, as shown in Table 4.15:

	JICLE		US		LL scores
Syntactic pattern	Noun and frequencies		Nouns and frequencies		
10. th-be-Nplural	9	reasons 6 things 1	9	problems, reasons 3 examples, factors, questions 1	0.01
Total	9		9		0.01

Table 4.15: Normalised frequencies of Nplurals in th-be-N

In **th-be-Nplural** (Pattern 10), Nplural occurred both in the form of *one of* Nplural and in the form of Nplural in both corpora (see Section 3.5.2). This syntactic pattern shows no frequency difference between JICLE and US (N=9:9, LL score 0.01), but, once again, the vocabulary range is different: the JICLE frequency is mostly by *reasons* only, whereas the US frequency is attained by means of a wider range of Nplurals.

Summary: Use of Nplurals in syntactic patterns

The frequencies of Nplurals in the host syntactic patterns in JICLE and US have indicated the following features:

- Nplurals occurred in small frequencies in **Nplural=CL** (N=7:3) and **th-be-Nplural** (N=9:9), where Nplural occurred in the form of *one of* Nplural, and the meaning of Nplural is expressed with only one aspect of the noun.
- Nplurals mostly occurred in **th-Nplural** (N=57:53) and **Nplural:CL** (N=35:11). In these patterns, the meaning of an Nplural was lexicalised in plural forms. Of the two patterns, the syntactic type that exhibited clear frequency differences in the two corpora is **Nplural:CL** (N=35:11, LL score 20.93). It is an explicit discourse constructing device and is frequently used by NSs in their L1 essay writing (e.g., Ivanic, 1991), but the L1 Japanese JICLE students used this pattern much more frequently than the US students is particularly noteworthy.
- At the sub-syntactic level, a JICLE preference for **Nplural:CL** was accounted for by Pattern 3 (**there-be-Nplural:CL**) (N=13:5, LL score 5.47), and Pattern 5 (**Np-v-Nplural:CL**) (N=14:4, LL score 12.40). This may be because each of the Patterns can serve as discourse organising sentences. Pattern 3, which is an existential-*there* construction, can present a new topic without discussing the topic in much detail (Huckin & Pesante, 1988), and Pattern 5 can serve as an explicit discourse organising device.

4.3: Summary and discussion

Chapter 4 shows that shell nouns in the singular were used in similar frequencies in JICLE and US (N=277:271, LL score 0.11), but shell nouns in JICLE were mostly repetitions of *reason, thing* and *problem.* Shell nouns in US comprised a wider range of nouns. Plural shell nouns (Nplurals) occurred substantially more in JICLE than in US, at the ratio of 107 to 76, respectively (LL score 9.40). The higher frequency of Nplurals in JICLE was due to remarkably more use of *reasons* (N=46:14, LL score 30.37) and *things* (N=16:4, LL score 12.69) in JICLE than in US.

Chapter 4 also shows for which syntactic types the shell nouns occurred in JICLE and US. For singular host syntactic patterns, **N=CL** (N=91:77, LL score 2.00) and **th-be-N** (N=36:27, LL score 1.25) did not indicate significant frequency differences in JICLE and US; whilst **N:CL** (N=50:86, LL score 17.19) occurred significantly more in US, and **th-N** (N=100:78, LL score 4.19) occurred significantly more in JICLE. At the sub-syntactic level, JICLE preferred such patterns, for either singular or plural noun as: Pattern 3 (***there-be*-N:CL/Nplural:CL**), Pattern 8 (**Np-be-th-N**) and Pattern 5 (**Np-v-Nplural:CL**).

In Schmid's (2000) concept, these frequencies of syntactic patterns can suggest what types of discourse roles shell nouns functioned as metadiscursive devices in each of the corpora. The shell syntactic patterns are correlated to characterisation, temporary concept-formation, and linking (Schmid, 2000) roles, in the following ways:

- The characterisation function of a shell noun is strongest in **th-be-N**, followed by **th-N** and the **th-be-N**.
- The temporary concept-forming function is strongest in **N:CL** followed by **N-be-CL**.
- The linking function of shell nouns refers to anaphoric links in **th-N** and **th-be-N**.

In other words, shell nouns in **N-be-CL** can function as metadiscursive devices, playing strong characterisation and temporary concept-forming roles; in **N:CL** they can play strong concept-forming roles; in **th-N** they function with strong linking and characterisation roles; and in **th-be-N** they take strong characterisation and linking roles. These shell noun roles are triggered in the syntactic patterns only when shell nouns refer to the text and their meanings can be clearly recovered. In this thesis, shell nouns are identified as metadiscursive only by examining whether or not the meanings of nouns are lexicalised in the text. This does not indicate to what extent the meanings are lexicalised, and in what

ways. Without knowing this information, the functionality of shell nouns cannot be discussed. The next chapter addresses this missing information, and investigates similarities and differences of metadiscursive roles of shell nouns in JICLE and US.

The lexicalisation analysis, however, concerns singular nouns only. In the corpora used in the current research most Nplurals occurred in **th-Nplurals** (N=57:53, LL score of 0.22) and **Nplural:CL** (N=35:11, LL score 20.93), where Nplurals were lexicalised from more than one aspect. The other syntactic types occurred in small frequency and Nplurals were lexicalised from only one aspect of meaning. Applying further analysis seems redundant and unnecessary. Therefore, the lexicalisation analysis in the next chapter will focus only on the use of singular shell nouns.

Chapter 5: Lexicalisation of shell nouns

This chapter addresses the third research question of this thesis, which is:

In what ways do L1 Japanese students lexicalise shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

Chapter 4 showed the frequencies of shell syntactic patterns in JICLE and US (Question 2). Each of the syntactic patterns can suggest what type of discourse roles (i.e., characterisation, temporary concept-formation, and linking) shell nouns were used for. However, the actual roles of shell nouns cannot be fully established without taking their lexicalisation into account. This chapter will analyse the lexicalisation of shell nouns and discuss the ways shell nouns achieve their metadiscursive status in JICLE in comparison to US.

The analysis is conducted examining the surrounding context of a shell noun retrieved from the corpora using the Text View functions of AntConc. Lexicalisation is analysed incorporating such factors as: a) distance between the referent and the noun; b) the size of the referent; c) the clarity of the meaning of the referent; and, d) a shift of the functional segments. The last aspect utilises the concept of Vocabulary 3 (Winter, 1977) and English rhetorical patterns (e.g., clause relations, text patterns) (see Section 2.2.2). To make the analysis more manageable in size, the lexicalisation analysis is limited to shell nouns which occur at a normalised frequency of more than five (5) per 100,000 words in respective sub-syntactic patterns in either of the corpora. As explained in Chapter 4 (Section 4.3), the lexicalisation analysis in this chapter focuses almost exclusively on singular nouns. Plural shell noun (Nplural) lexicalisation will be included, however, when it has some close relevancy to singular noun lexicalisation.

5.1: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in N-be-CL

We firstly consider lexicalisation of shell nouns in **N-be-CL**.[18] A shell noun in **N-be-CL** can work as a metadiscursive device with a weak characterisation and weak temporary concept-forming role (Schmid, 2000). To what extent shell nouns are functioning for this type of metadiscursive roles in JICLE, in comparison to in US, is analysed with the nouns *problem* (N=9:9), *reason* (N=36:20), *thing* (N=14:5), *solution* (N=1:5) and *purpose* (N=2:5).[19]

5.1.1: Problem in N-be-CL

Problem in **N-be-CL** (Pattern 1) occurs with very similar frequencies in JICLE and US (N=9:9, LL score 0.01). Lexicalisation patterns of the noun are also similar, as the meaning of *problem* is mostly expressed in a complement *that*-clause, and sometimes in a *to*- or *wh*-clause, as in the following way:

[*Problem* - *be* - *that/to/wh*-clause].

Examples are shown below (see Appendix 1 for all occurrences):

(1) But the **problem** is that we converse from Japanese to English. (JICLE)

(2) The main **problem** was that it seemed to be made in haste. (US)

Because the noun is lexicalised in a similar way, *problem* appears to be similarly playing metadiscursive roles with weak characterisation and weak temporary concept-forming.

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18 Of the two sub-syntactic patterns of N=CL, CL-be-N (Pattern 2) occurred less than 5 normalised frequency ratios in both corpora, and lexicalisation of Ns in this patterns is therefore not analysed.

19 Frequency rates and LL scores referred to hereafter, in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6, correspond to the data presented in Chapter 4, but are not mentioned every time they appear in these chapters.

5.1.2: Reason in N-be-CL

Reason in **N-be-CL** occurs significantly more frequently in JICLE than in US (N=36:20, LL score 7.65). The lexicalisation patterns of *reason*, however, are similar in the two corpora, as the noun meaning is expressed in the complement *that*-clause, as in the following way:

[*reason* (*for/why*) - *be* - *that*-clause].

Similar lexicalisation in the complement clause may indicate that *reason* is functioning in a similar way as a metadiscursive device in the two corpora, with a weak characterisation and a temporary concept-formation role.

However, a difference is exhibited in the way *reason* occurs in combination with adjectives. In JICLE, nearly half of the occurrences of *reason* are pre-modified with ordinal adjectives (e.g., *first, second*) and the other half are without modifications, as shown below with examples 3 and 4, respectively:

(3) The second **reason** is we started to use Hinomaru from the beginning… (JICLE)

(4) The **reason** is airplane is the most efficient way to go across sea and mountains. (JICLE)

When modified by ordinal adjectives, as in example 3, *reason* functions as an enumerative. The JICLE students seem to construct discourse by enumerating several points on a given topic using ordinal adjectives, as in: *First reason is that*…, followed by *Second reason is that*…. Incidentally, this discourse enumerating strategy in the JICLE essays suggests a close link to a strong JICLE preference for the **Nplural:CL** syntactic type, which occurred at 107:76 (LL score 9.40) (see Section 4.2.2). In **Nplural:CL**, the meaning of Nplural (*reasons*) is explained in the CL, which is comprised of several 'ordinal adjective + **N-be-CL**' patterns, as illustrated below:

(*three*) ***reasons**:* CL
- *First* **reason** is that-clause
- *Second* ***reason*** *is that*-clause
- *Third* ***reason*** *is that*-clause

In contrast in US, *reason* is almost always modified by restrictive adjectives (e.g., *another, one, main*) as in example 5:

(5) The main **reason** would be that the people committing these murders don't plan on getting caught, … (US)

Restrictive adjectives seem to allow the US students to direct an argument to a focused aspect and construct the discourse in a more implicit way, rather than enumerating some points.

Thus, the lexicalisation analysis shows that *reason* in **N-be-CL** is lexicalised in a similar way in JICLE and US, and its function as a metadiscursive item may be similar in the two corpora. However, the JICLE students use *reason* as an enumerative and create the discourse in an more explicitly marked way. The US students use more restrictive adjectives, and tend to construct the discourse in a more implicit way.

5.1.3: Thing in N-be-CL

Thing in **N-be-CL** occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=14:5, LL score 6.65) (see Section 4.2.1). Similar to *reason*, analysed above, *thing* in **N-be-CL** is lexicalised in the complement *that*-clause in both corpora, and pre-modified by an evaluative adjective, therefore in the syntactic form of:

[evaluative adjective + *thing* - *be* - *that/to*-clause].

Example 6 is from JICLE, with an evaluative adjective *important*, and example 7 is from US with *scary* as follows:

(6) The important **thing** is to use English so that it will not be disliked. (JICLE)

(7) The scary **thing** is that it's just around the corner! (US)

In both corpora, the surface lexicalisation of *thing* is in the complement *that*-clause, and *thing* appears functioning similarly in **N-be-CL** playing a weak characterisation and a weak temporary concept-forming role.

Difference is revealed, however, in evaluative adjectives in JICLE and US. In JICLE, adjectives are almost always *the most important thing* and used in the concluding statement at the end of a whole text. The evaluation function of terminating the discourse is an established concept; as Hunston (1994: 209) puts it, 'structural units or organisational patterns are terminated by evaluation'. Hoey's (1983, 1994) Problem-Solution pattern is an example of each stage being terminated by evaluation (Hunston, 1994: 209). The concept also seems to be working with *the most important* (*thing*) in JICLE.

A very interesting point regarding the discourse termination in JICLE is that the content of the *that*-clause often is not particularly relevant to the content of the preceding paragraphs. Although the meaning of *thing* in the complement *that*-clause is usually expected to be derived from the argument in the preceding discourse, this is often not the case in JICLE, as shown in Example 5.1:

Finally, in the future, for we flourish not only in Japan, but also in foreign country, Japanese students need to master English as a second language. It is never easy, but someday our efforts will be paid off. The most important **thing** is enjoy to learn English. I think it is good for Japanese to use English as a second language. I want to let foreigners know about Japan. <text end>

Example 5.1: *Thing* with its meaning having little relevance to the preceding discourse in JICLE

The excerpt above is the last paragraph of an essay written on the topic of the importance of English for Japanese students. The preceding paragraphs, which are not shown in the excerpt, explain varied aspects relevant to learning English: from benefits in doing business, finding jobs, and making friends, to the writer's dream of working using English and plans to study at an English conversation school. The extract above follows these paragraphs. Let us consider the content of (*the most important*) *thing*. It is (*to*) *enjoy to*

learn English expressed in the complement clause. It is not directly relevant to the argument in the preceding paragraphs, but a general comment that would not be contested by anybody. This illustrates the observation that *thing* for the **N-be-CL** syntactic pattern occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=14:5 LL score 6.65), often by presenting a generalised comment, not summarising the argumentation of the preceding discourse.

The US students, too, use evaluative adjectives (i.e., *scary, interesting,* and *natural*). They also use restrictive adjectives (i.e., *another, only*), but the phrase *the most important* does not occur in my US data (see Appendix 2). Evaluative adjectives in US seem to be functioning to terminate the text, just as they are in JICLE. However, unlike in JICLE, the content in the complement clause in US tends to be derived more directly from the preceding paragraphs than in JICLE, as shown in Example 5.2 below:

```
// Each year a new amazing product astonishes me even more. I am starting to wonder when we
will have robots cleaning our house and driving us around. The scary thing is that it's just
around the corner! <text end>
```

Example 5.2: An evaluative adjective *scary + thing* that terminates the text by summarising the preceding discourse in US

The excerpt above discusses whether or not cell phones are really a great 20th century discovery. The omitted segment that precedes the excerpt firstly describes the advantages of cell phones and then shifts the discourse to the negative side of having cell phones, pointing out that they are not a necessity, that they can cause traffic accidents, and that they result in high phone bills. What follows the segment is the excerpt above. Although the entire preceding discourse does not clearly state which side the writer takes, the final paragraph finally evaluates the preceding content as *scary* (*thing*) and terminates the text. The meaning of *scary* (*thing*) in the complement *that*-clause is *it's just around the corner!*, which is a comment that is consistent with the preceding argument and is substantiated in the preceding segment.

The feature of the discourse summarisation in the complement in JICLE, that is to say, a general and often well-accepted summary that follows *the most important thing,* not directly drawn from the preceding paragraphs, indicates a striking similarity to the conclusion pattern in Japanese editorials identified in Ushie et al. (1997). They point out that Japanese editorials '[concluding generalisations] are often unsubstantiated… in the body of the essay' and that 'they are often not directly derived from the points developed in

the body of the editorial' (p. 146). This suggests an unsubstantiated comment in the JICLE may have been influenced by one of the students' L1 writing conventions. (This will be discussed more in Chapter 6.)

5.1.4: Solution and *purpose in N-be-CL*

Unlike many other shell nouns in **N-be-CL**, *solution* (N=1:5, LL score 5.48) and *purpose* (N=2:5, LL score 2.80) occurred more frequently in US than they do in JICLE. These nouns are lexicalised in a similar way in the complement *to*-clause. *Solution* occurs modified by an adjective in both corpora in the syntactic form of:

[adjective + *solution* - *be* - *to*-clause].

Adjective types do not indicate any major differences, as they are either restrictive (i.e., *one, only, another*), evaluative (i.e., *acceptable, best, simple*), ordinal (e.g., *third*), or non-modified in both corpora, although the US adjectives come with more variety. This can be seen in Figure 5.1 below:

JICLE

ke them cause the next crime following the case. "**Solution** for this is the use of filtering software", says
mals which are really important for them. Another **solution** will be to live in a large family. Living in a la

US

children if prayer was brought into schools. The **solution** by Anthony Lewis, which is to give students a mom
mells of other foods to which they are near. One **solution** would be to put the odorous food in a bag, but if
ient amount of English should be hired. The only **solution** to the problem is to make the Ph.D.s prove they k
fare system or make it their way of life. Another **solution** to the welfare challenge would be to cut welfare
eserve freedom from religion. The most acceptable **solution** is to allow students to form prayer and Bible gro
up in the water table" (Recycler's 4). The best **solution** for household toxics is to buy only the necessiti
ep their bowl games at the same time. The simple **solution** to solving one of college football's most
food in the bag, to keep the smell out. A third **solution** would be to bag everything! But, there are other

Figure 5.1: Less adjective variety in JICLE and more adjective variety in US, for *solution*

Considering similarity in lexicalisation, *solution* in **N-be-CL** may be functioning in a similar way in the two corpora, playing a weak characterisation and a weak temporary concept-forming role. The difference is mainly only in frequency.

A reason for the higher frequency in US may be that the JICLE writers are not familiar with using *to*-clause lexicalisation. This hypothesis is applicable to the use of *purpose* in the two corpora; *purpose* is lexicalised in the *to*-clause and occurs more in US than in JICLE, (N=2:5, LL score 2.80). Regarding the higher frequency of *that*-clauses in 'N + *be* + *that*-clause', the study by J. Flowerdew (2010) also found that this syntactic pattern occurred significantly more in the L1 Cantonese NNS student essays than in the NS student essays (N=112:41 per 100,000 words, respectively). According to Flowerdew, a 'N + *be* + *that*-clause' seems to be 'a straightforward pattern that translates naturally from Chinese' (p. 52), and therefore is a relatively simple pattern to use for a Chinese learner. This interpretation does not seem applicable to Japanese, but it is interesting that 'N + *be* + *that*-clause' was a syntactic pattern which both L1 Japanese and Chinese students used in a high frequency in L2 English essays.

In another view, regarding *solution*, the significantly less frequent use of the noun in JICLE may result from the students not being aware of the Problem-Solution text pattern, where *solution* is a typical vocabulary item. Conversely the US students may know the pattern better. A finding about the lexicalisation of *problem* in **th-N** seems to indicate this possibility (see Section 5.3.1).

5.1.5: Summary: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in N-be-CL

Shell nouns in **N-be-CL** occurred in varied frequency patterns: *reason* and *thing* occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US; *problem* occurred in similar frequencies in the two corpora; and *solution* occurred more in US than in JICLE. As a tendency, shell nouns whose meanings are expressed in a *that*-clause occurred at a higher frequency in JICLE than in US, and those whose meanings are presented in a *to*-clause occurred less often in JICLE. However, the noun lexicalisation in the complement clause itself did not show any major differences. This seems to suggest that shell nouns functioned in a similar way as metadiscursive devices in the two corpora, with a weak characterisation and a weak concept -forming role for **N-be-CL**.

However, shell noun in **N-be-CL** exhibited a clear difference in the way shell nouns occur in combination with adjectives.

- *Reason* was combined with ordinal adjectives (e.g., *first, second*) in JICLE, and functioned as enumerative that can mark the start of the discourse. In contrast, adjectives in US were mostly restrictive adjectives (e.g., *one, another*), and this helped the US students construct the text in an implicit way, focusing on a specific aspect of the topic.
- *Thing* occurred significantly more in JICLE by using an adjective (*the most*) *important.* A feature of using (*the most*) *important* was that the content of *thing* expressed in the complement clause (CL) was an uncontested, generalised comment, not derived from the preceding discourse. This lexicalisation pattern was observed only in JICLE.

5.2: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in N:CL

Let us move to the lexicalisation analysis of shell nouns in **N:CL**, which occurred significantly more in US than in JICLE at the normalised frequencies of 50 to 86, respectively (LL score 17.19). These frequencies of **N:C**L in the two corpora are figures that combine occurrences of two major types of **N:CL**: One is **Appositive N:CL**, where N and CL are adjacent with each other, as shown in example 8:

(8) Television sets also have **problem** that it obstructs conversation for dinner. (JICLE)
N:CL

The other is **Non-appositive N:CL**, where N and CL are separated from each other, either placed within the same sentence, or CL is placed in the succeeding sentence after a period (.), a colon (:) or a semi-colon (;). This type of **N:CL** is shown with examples 9, 10, and 11:

N CL

(9) … the **idea** is not correct that the strong countries rule the weak countries. (JICLE)

(10)

N CL

The real **problem** lies deeper than this. The parents are expressing the conflict that happened before the divorce. (JICLE)

(11) N CL

… we often hear the **problem** about TV. In dinner table, each of members of family is absorbed into TV. They are laughing at talking of guest of TV program. They don't talk with their own family. A child who are looking at TV alone in… (JICLE)

This thesis handles the two types of **N:CL** as a single syntactic typology, because whether N and CL occur adjacent to, or separated from, each other is not considered relevant to the N position in a sentence. In the lexicalisation analysis, however, each of the **N:CL** types is viewed as a separate syntactic type, because the different relations of N and CL in Appositive and Non-appositive N:CL suggest different types of metadiscursive roles of shell nouns. Those in **Non-appositive N:CL** may not play a strong concept-forming role as those in **Appositive N:CL** are suggested to play in Schmid's (2000) concept (see Section 3.5.1).

In addition, shell nouns in **N:CL** are rather clearly categorisable into either of the **N:CL** types. Shell nouns strongly associated with **Appositive N:CL** are: *fact*, *decision*, *idea*, *reason*, *opinion*, *comment* and *view.* Frequencies of each of the nouns are shown below in Table 5.1. (Figures are normalised frequencies to the base figure of 100,000. Nouns that also had minor occurrences for **Non-appositive N:CL** are shown by the * mark.):

	JICLE	US	LL scores
fact	15	50	35.10
decision	0	7	11.44
idea	8*	11*	0.69
reason	4*	1*	2.99
opinion	3	3	1.09
comment	0	1	1.09
view	0	1	1.09

Table 5.1: Appositive N:CL type shell nouns and their frequencies

Shell nouns that are associated with **Non-appositive N:CL** are *question, problem, example, aspect, difference* and *thing.* Their frequencies are shown below, in Table 5. 2 (The * mark indicates they also have minor occurrences for **Appositive N:CL**):

	JICLE	US	LL scores
question	3	7	1.78
problem	6*	6	0.13
example	4*	0	10.02
aspect	0	1	1.70
difference	0	1	1.70
thing	1	0	0.54

Table 5.2: Non-appositive N:CL type shell nouns and their frequencies

A clear division among the **N:CL** nouns, as shown above, seems to provide support for the lexicalisation analysis of shell nouns according to each of the **N:CL** types. Analysed firstly, in the next section, are lexicalisation of shell nouns in **Appositive N:CL** with *fact, decision* and *idea* which occurred more than the normalised ratio of 5 times in either of the corpora.

5.2.1: Fact in Appositive N:CL

The shell noun *fact* occurred significantly more frequently in US than it did in JICLE in **N:CL** at the ratio of 15 to 50, respectively (LL score 35.10). The higher frequencies of *fact* in US than in JICLE is seen in all the sub-syntactic patterns: Pattern 4 (**N:CL-Pv**) occurs at 2:9, Pattern 5 (**Np-v-N:CL**) at 5:17, and Pattern 6 (**Peripheral N:CL**) at 7:24, in JICLE and US, respectively. In all sub-syntactic types, *fact* is similarly lexicalised in an adjacent *that*-clause as follows:

[*fact-that*-clause].

The only exceptions found in my analysis are in the following US examples:

(12) The **fact** remains, however, that they were and continue to be influential… (US)

(13) The **fact** still remains that in our current society, the majority of Americans support capital punishment. (US)

Therefore, *fact* seems to be working mostly as a metadiscursive device with a strong concept-forming role in both corpora.

Functions of *fact* in **Appositive N:CL** also seem to be similar in the two corpora in terms of expressing such clause relations as Causal Relation and Comparison and Contrast. This can be most clearly observed with Pattern 6 (**Peripheral N:CL**) (N=7:24, LL score 17.58), where *fact* occurs as *fact*-containing semi-fixed phrases (see Appendix 3). The phrase *by the fact* forms a Causal Relation (Schmid, 2000: 101) as in the next examples:

(14) This is proved **by the fact** that English is the language most commonly used… (JICLE)

(15) This is evident **by the fact** that each writer even bothered to bring these… (US)

Other phrases such as *in spite of the fact* and *beside the fact* can form a Comparison and Contrast relation (ibid. 103), as in the following examples:

(16) If we speak in a formal style **in spite of the fact** that we are familiar with each other…(JICLE)

(17) **Besides the fact** that you will eventually get caught doing a crime… (US)

Therefore, *fact* in **N:CL** is considered to function in a similar way in the two corpora, playing a temporary concept-forming role, and also expressing certain kinds of clause relations (notably, Causal Relation, Comparison and Contrast). The only major difference in use between the two corpora is found to be in terms of frequency (N=15:50, LL score 35.10).

Regarding why *fact* occurred with this big frequency difference in JICLE and US, it may be related to a preference for discourse construction types in the two corpora. A *fact that*-clause is a 'general purpose shelling device' (Schmid, 2000: 242), and a particularly subtle device for manipulating the conceptual status of discourse entities; that is, the noun does not always shell an objective, universally agreed truth, but rather shells what the writer knows or believes to be true. The significantly higher frequency of *fact* in US seems to indicate that US writers prefer implicit discourse manipulation strategies, whilst JICLE writers disprefer this strategy. This interpretation is in line with an earlier claim with regard

to the use of *reason* in **N-be-CL** (Pattern 1), where I argued that the US students' preference for restrictive adjectives (e.g., *another, one*) may be an indication of their preference for an implicit discourse construction. In contrast, the JICLE students' preference for ordinal adjectives may reflect their preference for a more explicit way of constructing discourse by enumerating points of discussion (see Section 5.1.2).

5.2.2: Decision in Appositive N:CL

Decision for **Appositive N:CL** occurred only in US, and the frequency ratio was at 0:7 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score of 11.44). In US, *decision* is lexicalised in the adjacent *to*-clause, thus in the form of:

[*decision to*-clause].

A reason why *decision* in **N:CL** occurred only in US may be that *decision* is lexicalised in the *to*-clause, a pattern which this thesis earlier suggested is a JICLE-dispreferred lexicalisation pattern in reference to *solution* and *purpose* for **N-be-CL** (see Section 5.1.4).

Also, the occurrences of *decision* only in US may be influenced by the topics of the essays. In the entire corpora of JICLE and US, *decision* occurred in two meanings. One meaning refers to 'physically observable events which have a temporal duration' (Schmid, 2000: 261), which is called an Eventive noun (ibid.: 213). For example, a person decided at one time to move to France to spend his retirement life there, and when *decision* refers to the content of what is decided at one time, *decision* is an Eventive noun. (Eventive *decision* does not occur in **N:CL** but it does in other syntactic patterns in JICLE.) The other meaning of *decision* refers to a state of mind where 'the EXPERIENCER… [spends] some time deliberating a future course of action' (ibid), and this type of *decision* is called a Mental noun. *Decision*s for **N:CL** in the US corpus are all Mental *decision.* Mental *decision* in US occurs as shown below:

So, the **decision** to have an abortion or not should be left entirely up to the woman who is dealing with this situation.

Example 5.3: *Decision* that occurs as Mental *decision* in US

The meaning of *decision* in the extract is whether *to have an abortion or not*. It portrays a psychological state of deliberating on which action to choose. Topics in the JICLE and the US corpora are very divergent. Mental *decision* in US occurs in essays on such topics as abortions, assisted suicide, or life prolonging medical practices, to discuss whether or not they are legally, or morally, acceptable. In JICLE, this type of topic rarely occurred (see Section 3.1), and this may explain the zero occurrences of Mental *decision* in **N:CL**.

5.2.3: Idea in Appositive N:CL

In **N:CL** *idea* occurs at a ratio of 8:11 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 0.74). As it mostly occurred in Pattern 5 (**Np-v-N:CL**) (N=4:8, LL score 2.42), the use of *idea* in **N:CL** is mainly analysed with this sub-type. In Pattern 5, *idea* is lexicalised in the appositive *that*-clause in both corpora, in the form of:

[Np - *v* - *idea-th*at-clause].

Examples of lexicalisation of the noun are:

(18) … he thought of the **idea** that dried noodle would be durable. (JICLE)

(19) … society has established the **idea** that violence influences other modes of violence. (US)

A similar lexicalisation of *idea* in the appositive clause suggests that, based on the concept that Schmid (2000) proposed, the strong concept-forming role of *idea* may work in the two corpora.

Information status of the content of *idea*

A closer analysis of the lexicalised content of *idea* in the *that*-clause, however, reveals that this similarity is only superficial; that is to say, the information status of the referent, which is either *new* or *given* information, is different in JICLE and US and difference appears to

affect metadiscursive functions of *idea.* This is because a shell noun in **N:CL** can provide a rhetorical function because the noun is presented as 'information presupposed' (Allerton, 1978: 166, in Schmid, 2000: 331). In other words, the rhetorical role of a shell noun in **N:CL** is triggered when *new* information is presented in the referent as if it is *given.* In US, the information status of the content of *idea* is almost always as *new*, as shown in Example 5.4 below:

I honestly ran out of my room after I read the above quote to ask my fellow neighbors if they too thought tobacco was the most destructive drug in the United States. We came up with the **idea** that it was not the most destructive, and the most destructive was most likely alcohol if all the auto deaths and torn families were included.

Example 5.4: *Idea* in Pattern 5 as *new* information in US

We can see that the meaning of *idea* in the appositive *that*-clause is *new* because there is no similar comment expressed in the earlier discourse.

In contrast, in the JICLE corpus, the information status of the referent of *idea* is *given* in half of all occurrences, as in Example 5.5 below:

I am basically against the death penalty because I think that a man has not the right to judge other persons. If the right to judge criminals exist, only the victims has it. Only the victims know ache that criminals gave them, but not judges in court. I just disagree the **idea** that other human beings have power to judge life or death of criminals, human beings.

Example 5.5: *Idea* in Pattern 5 as *given* information in JICLE

In this extract, the meaning of *idea* is in the appositive clause and expressed as: *other human beings have power to judge life or death of criminals, human beings.* At first glance, it seems no different from the way *idea* is lexicalised in US, being expressed in the appositive clause. However, viewing the content of the clause in the larger context, it can be seen that the clause's content is actually a paraphrase of an earlier statement (*I think that*) *a man has not the right to judge other persons* (underlined). Therefore, the lexicalised meaning of *idea* in *that*-clause in Example 5.5 is a repetition of an initial general statement, in the textual structure of:

General statement - Explanation of the statement - Content of *idea-that*-CL.

In this repetitive discourse structure, which this thesis calls 'circular discourse', the information in the *that*-clause has a *given* status. Such a *given* status of the referent in the

appositive clause seems to be rarely found in English essays, as observed by Schmid (2000), as follows:

> … when shell noun phrases in the Pattern **N:CL** occur as topics, one might expect that the shell nouns or the shell contents or both elements represent given or at least accessible information, but… cases where the information is actually given are very rare.
>
> (p. 330)

What is suggested in the frequent *given* status of *idea* for **N:CL** in JICLE is that *idea* may not function as a strong rhetorical device. Also, if we recount *idea* as a metadiscursive noun whose meaning is expressed as *new* information in the appositive clause, the frequency of *idea* in JICLE is reduced dramatically. As half of *idea*s for **N:CL** in JICLE occurred as *given* status. This indicates that an *idea* whose meaning was *new* in the discourse occurred significantly less in JICLE than in US, even though it occurred in similar frequencies for **N:CL** at the ratio of 8:11, respectively (LL score 0.74). Then, *idea* becomes another shell noun that occurs significantly less frequently in JICLE than in US in **N:CL**, as with *fact* and *decision* analysed earlier.

Pattern 4 and Pattern 5 in JICLE and US

An influence of the *given* status of *idea* in **N:CL** in JICLE seems to be exhibited in the frequency ratio between Pattern 5 (**Np-v-N:CL**) and Pattern 4 (**N:CL-Pv**). Pattern 4 has the noun complex in the Subject position (**Subject N:CL**) and Pattern 5 has it in the predicate (**Predicate N:CL**). According to Schmid (2000: 331), who analysed English essays written by professional writers, **Predicate N:CL** (Pattern 5) occurs much more frequently than **Subject N:CL** (Pattern 4). The frequency ratio of Pattern 4 and Pattern 5 in US mirrors Schmid's professional writers' pattern occurring at the ratio of 1 to 8, respectively. Why Pattern 5 (**Np-v-N:CL**), or **Predicate N:CL**, occurred more in the professionally written texts, and also in the US essays, may be because this pattern has **N:CL** at the focus, which is Rheme, position. N in **N:CL** usually contains *new* information, and **N:CL** at the focus position can form a natural and unmarked information flow. An example is shown below, drawn from the US corpus:

(20)

	Rheme (Focus)	
Np	v	**N:CL** <*new*>

We came up with the **idea** that it was not the most destructive… (US)

In JICLE, the frequency ratio of Pattern 4 and Pattern 5 is at 3 to 4, respectively. This indicates the frequency of Pattern 4 (**Subject N:CL**) is relatively higher than Pattern 5 (**Predicate N:CL**), in comparison to the general frequency pattern in professional texts. Why Pattern 4 occurred relatively higher to Pattern 5 in JICLE may be because an N in **N:CL** often had a *given* information status, about which Breivik (1999: 7) states that 'the elements containing *given* information [come] first in the sentences', which is Theme. This is exemplified in the example below:

(21)

Theme		
N:CL <Given>		Pv

The **idea** we should treat the earth kindly have spread these days. (JICLE)

Although the preceding discourse is not shown in the example, the content of *idea* in the adjacent clause (*we should treat the earth kindly*) is nearly a repetition of the earlier statement, and it is thus *given* information.

Therefore, in JICLE, the *given* status of lexicalisation of *idea* in **N:CL** may be resulted in the relatively higher frequency of **Subject N:CL** (Pattern 4) whilst the relatively lower frequency of **Predicate N:CL** (Pattern 5). In US, *idea* had the *new* meaning status and was placed at the Rheme position. Then higher occurrences of **Predicate N:CL** (Pattern 5) than **Subject N:CL** (Pattern 4) in US seems a natural outcome. The *given* status of lexicalisation of *idea* in N:CL in JICLE affects the flow of the discourse of the text, and it may contribute to different impressions of the JICLE texts in comparison to the US texts.

Summary: Use of Appositive N:CL

The US preference, and conversely the JICLE dispreference, for **Appositive N:CL** was quite clear from frequencies of shell nouns. The most frequently occurring shell noun in **Appositive N:CL** was *fact,* followed by *idea* and *decision.* In general, ways these nouns

are lexicalised in the appositive clauses are similar in the two corpora, and therefore, the most prominent difference in the use of shell nouns in **N:CL** appears to be the significantly lower frequencies in JICLE.

As more specific features, however, the JICLE use of *idea* indicated the *given* status of the lexicalised meaning of the noun in **N:CL** where it generally would be expected to be *new* information. This pattern seemed to be accounted for by means of the noun occurrences in the circular discourse From the use of *decision,* it was exhibited that frequency differences of nouns may not be simply a matter of vocabulary, but rather influenced by essay topics.

5.2.4: Shell nouns in Non-appositive N:CL

Now we look at the lexicalisation of shell nouns in **Non-appositive N:CL** in JICLE and US with *question, problem, example, aspect, difference* and *thing*. Frequency differences of most of these nouns are statistically insignificant in the two corpora (see Table 5.2). In **Non-appositive N:CL**, shell nouns are considered to function metadiscursively in a predictive and predicted relation between N and CL, similar to the concept of enumeration in Tadros (1985; 1994). Shell nouns in this syntactic type may also function as a cataphoric signposts lexicalised in a long stretch of discourse, similar to the role proposed in Francis (1986) or Schmid (2000). Whether or not shell nouns in **Non-appositive N:CL** achieved insignificant frequency differences in the two corpora through similar lexicalisation patterns and similar ways of playing metadiscursive roles is investigated below.

A feature of the shell nouns in **Non-appositive N:CL** is that higher frequency nouns in this syntactic type (i.e., *question, problem, example*) are either what Francis (1986) calls ‘text’ nouns or what he terms ‘ownerless’ nouns. Text nouns are simply labels for stretches of discourse (Francis, 1986: 16), and with ownerless nouns the meanings are ‘the products of social interaction which have come to be thought of as objectively given’ (ibid.: 17). Therefore the meanings of text or ownerless nouns can be easily associated with noun labels without detailed explanations in the text, and the labels may not precisely express the writer’s evaluations of the referred contents. For example, *question* can be

categorised as a text noun. Its referent is usually a short interrogation of direct speech in both corpora. Shown below in Example 5.6 is drawn from JICLE:

It gives us another **question** "Why do we have to learn English for just only two or three times?"

Example 5.6: Direct meaning association of *question* to the lexicalised content in JICLE

Another example of a text nouns is *example*. It occurred in JICLE only (N=4:0, LL score 10.02). The meaning of *example* is an example of a focused topic itself, as shown below in Example 5.7:

… if people contact with English in elementary school, they may be fond of it. There is a good **example** of it: Kasukabe elementary school in Saitama, which have introduced English since April in 1997, sent out a questionnaire to the student who had graduated from that school and entered junior high school to ask them whether they like English or not. AS a result, over 65% students answered they liked English while 12% students answered they didn't. This is a very remarkable result.

Example 5.7: *Example* in Pattern 4 as a text noun referring to a long stretch of discourse in JICLE

The writer argues that students will enjoy learning English if they start in elementary school, and *example* refers to a successful case of English education at *Kasukabe* elementary school. Similar but different from 'text' noun is 'ownerless' noun, *Problem* can be categorised as an 'ownerless' noun. An example is shown below drawn from JICLE:

But, nowadays, we often hear the **problem** about TV. In dinner table, each of members of family is absorbed into TV. They are laughing at talking of guest of TV program. They don't talk with their own family. A child who are looking at TV alone in the house where his parents are going out to work must be missing his parents at the bottom of his heart. We hear that TV would break our basic communication.

Example 5.8: Direct meaning association of *problem* to the lexicalisation content in JICLE

The meaning of (*the*) *problem*, which is actually explained with two examples of the 'problem', is that each of the family members is absorbed in the TV program without talking to each other; and a child eats dinner alone at home watching TV. These phenomena are often-talked-about issues in the society, and identification of the referred content as a *problem* may be easy and straightforward. Thus, Ns in **Non-appositive N:CL** occurred in JICLE as much as in US, and a major reason for this phenomenon seems because the higher frequency nouns were text- and ownerless-type nouns, which do not need a detailed lexicalisation for the interpretation of the meanings of the nouns.

Different use of shell nouns in JICLE and US, however, is shown with shell nouns whose meanings are explained and specified in a long stretch of the succeeding discourse

although statistically the difference looks very small; that is to say the US students use *aspect* and *difference* (both N=0:1, LL score 1.70), but the JICLE students do not use them. Examples 5.9 and 5.10 can show how the meaning of both *aspect* and *difference* is described in a longer stretch of discourse in the US essays:

> The moral **aspect** of crime for the criminal is also something to take into account. For the most part when a criminal is faced with the prospect of losing his or her freedom the resulting emotion is remorse and sorrow. This is also true when the criminal is faced with the victims of the crime, the result of this realization is sometimes as emotional, if not more, as the loss of the one's own freedom. When convicted of a crime a mere "I'm sorry" will not undo the loss or pain already inflicted. The criminal will have to live with his or her actions as long as they live.

Example 5.9: Signposting role of *aspect* in US

> I have repeatedly referred to the "Confederate battle flag" and the "Confederate flag." There is a very big **difference.** The flag that is currently over the state house is the battle flag. It is the flag that is red with blue bars, with stars in them, crossing through the center of it. In my mind that stands for the South fighting to keep slavery. It is the flag that the South would carry into battle. It does not represent the southern way of life, but rather short bursts of fury raging against those who wanted to do away with slavery. The real Confederate flag is much different. It is the one with three large bars through it, two white and one red. In the corner of this flag is a large box with stars that form a circle. This flag means much more than just fighting. That flag stands for a way of life. The real flag was the flag that was decided upon to represent the South and what it stood for. When the South decided to become independent, they decided to take on a certain way.

E1xample 5.10: Signposting role of *difference* in US

Lexicalised in a long stretch of discourse, *aspect* and *difference* seem to be functioning as explicit cataphoric signposts. Thus, although the total frequencies of **Non-appositive N:C**L are not so different in JICLE and US, a difference is indicated in the use of shell nouns which require a detailed lexicalisation to recover the meanings in the text. The JICLE students do not use such a type of shell nouns but the US students do.

5.2.5: Summary: Shell nouns in N:CL

This section has shown that the significantly more frequent use of **N:CL** in US was accounted for by a strong preference for **Appositive N:CL**; and conversely, the much less frequent use of **N:CL** in JICLE was due to a dispreference for **Appositive N:CL**. The difference may suggest a US preference for implicit discourse construction, as opposed to a JICLE dispreference for the strategy.

The use of shell nouns in **Non-appositive N:CL** appeared to be fairly similar both in frequency and lexicalization patterns across the two corpora. The similarity, however, was mainly because most of the shell noun occurrences were accounted for by text- and ownerless-types (e.g., *question, problem, example*), whose meanings can be inferable to some extent from outside the text, such as knowledge of topics and world knowledge, and do not need a full lexicalisation to recover the meanings. Another type of shell nouns which can function metadiscursively only when their meanings are lexicalised in the text in detail and specified (e.g., *aspect, difference*) occurred only in US. The JICLE students seem not to have handled this type of lexicalisation well.

5.3: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in th-N

The **th-N** syntactic type occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US (ratio = 100:78; LL score = 4.19). Schmid (2000: 312) suggests that shell nouns in **th-N** can function as discourse markers with strong linking and characterisation roles. This section examines whether or not the frequency differences in JICLE and US are accompanied by similar lexicalisations, and whether shell nouns associated with this syntactic pattern function in a similar way across the two corpora. *Problem, reason, thing* and *issue* are analysed because they occur at more than the 5 benchmark frequency ratio in either or both corpora.[20]

5.3.1: Problem in th-N

Problem in **th-N** occurred at a ratio of 22 to 17 in JICLE and US, respectively, indicating no significant frequency difference (LL score 1.53) (see Table 4.9, Section 4.2.1). At the sub-syntactic level, *problem* also occurred at no significant frequency difference in the two

20 The noun *fact* in th-N-Pv (Pattern 7) (N=5:3) and *question* in Peripheral th-N (Pattern 9) (N=5:2) also occurred at more than the normalised ratio of 5, but they are not analysed in this thesis for a lack of space. *Question* is similar in frequency and lexicalisation in the two corpora. *Fact* is also similar in frequency and lexicalisation, but JICLE has a tendency of using *fact* by referring to information that may not usually be considered as a general truth.

corpora in each of the sub-syntactic patterns: Pattern 7 (**th-N-Pv**) occurred at 6:5; Pattern 8 (**Np-v-th-N**) at 10:5 (LL score 1.86), and Pattern 9 (**Peripheral th-N**) at 7:7.

Across the sub-syntactic patterns, lexicalisation of *problem* seems not be influenced by the sub-syntactic pattern. This thesis finds that *problem* occurs with four different types of antecedents, or 'Anti-x' types, in the two corpora as follows:

Ante-1: Shorter antecedent placed immediately before the noun (Short and immediate)

Ante-2: Longer antecedent placed immediately before the noun (Long and immediate)

Ante-3: Distant antecedent from the noun (Distant antecedent)

Ante-4: Paragraph-long antecedent (Paragraphs-long antecedent)

The Ante-1 and Ante-2 types occur in both corpora. However, Ante-3 is a featured pattern in JICLE, and Ante-4 is a pattern in US. I now analyse lexicalisation of *problem* in JICLE and US in detail for each of the antecedent types.

Lexicalisation in short and immediate antecedent (Ante-1)

Ante-1 type, which features a short antecedent placed immediately before *problem*, seems to occur in a similar way in JICLE and US, in terms of lexicalisation patterns and discourse functions. Consider, first of all, Example 5.11 from the JICLE corpus:

However, some who don't agree with the introduction of English say there aren't good teachers in English in elementary school. This **problem** is going to be solved.

Example 5.11: Ante-1 lexicalisation, with short antecedent placed immediately before *problem* in JICLE

The meaning of (*this*) *problem* is expressed as the reported comment *there aren't good teachers in English in elementary school.* By referring to it, the shell noun shifts the discourse from a Problem to a Response, which is signalled by *solved*.

Next, Example 5.12 is from the US corpus:

Eventually the antibiotic no longer works and the doctor must use an alternative, perhaps stronger, antibiotic treatment. Now, Doctors are finding strains of bacteria that do not respond to antibiotic treatment at all. This **problem** is compounded by the fact that not all illnesses that Doctors prescribe antibiotics for are caused by bacteria…

Example 5.12: Ante-1 lexicalisation, with short antecedent placed immediately before *problem* in US

(*This*) *problem* refers to *Doctors are finding strains of bacteria that do not respond to antibiotic treatment at all*, which is expressed in the preceding short segment. Similar to *problem* in Example 5.13 (JICLE), (*this*) *problem* in the above extract shifts the discourse to a Response. The shift can be interpreted because the verb *compound* indicates a Response functional segment. Therefore, *problem* appears to function in a similar way in JICLE and US when lexicalisation is in a short and immediately preceding segment.

Lexicalisation in Ante-2 (Long and immediate antecedent)

Ante-2 type features a longer antecedent, placed immediately before *problem.* The antecedents tend to be shorter in JICLE than in US, but this type of antecedent is observed in both corpora. Lexicalisation of *problem* in the longer antecedent, however, seems different in the two corpora. A difference is in the clarity of meaning of *problem*. This is shown in the comparison between Example 5.13 (US) and Example 5.14 (JICLE), shown below. Consider Example 5.13, firstly:

<text initial> Whenever a movement is began whether it be political, religious, or artistic, stereotypes are quick to form. People normally associated with politics, religion, or art are quickly lumped into categories regardless of individual differences. This tragedy is worsened by the tendency of those outside the movement to remember the radical and ignore the common or ordinary. This is especially true of the Women's Liberation Movement in America. //Since its beginnings in the late nineteenth century, Women's Liberation has been met with adamant, and often obstinate opposition. Some of the first radicals, Susan B. Anthony and George Sand (although French) were noticed and ridiculed, thus defeating their cause, because of their aggressive action. At the same time other feminists such as Emily Dickinson were virtually ignored during their lifetime and only acknowledged posthumously as being part of the movement. This ignorance of other less aggressive feminists, made it seem as though the feminist movement was headed only by wild, disgruntled zealots and was therefore, detrimental to the good of society.//Although "radicals" such as Sand and Anthony seem docile and backward in modern standards, the **problem** still exists. From the very beginning the Women's Movement in America has been fighting a losing battle. However, I contend that the fault does not lie with the radical members of the movement, but rather, in the perception of those observing the movement.

Example 5.13: Ante-2 lexicalisation with a long stretch of antecedent, placed immediately before *problem* in US

In the extract above, the writer argues that it was detrimental to the progress of the women's movement that people perceived the movement only by focusing on aggressive and radical activists, whilst ignoring the quieter actions of many other non-radicals. Then, the content is referred to as (*the*) *problem* in the long stretch of the antecedent (underlined). Although expressed in a long segment, the referent has a specific focus and the writer

develops an argument based on the topic. *Problem* seems to be working as a discourse shifting device, in that the focus moves from the past to the present.

Next Example 5.14 (JICLE) can show an unclear insufficient meaning of *problem* expressed in a long stretch of referent:

> Also, there is an other very big and important problem. **It is "gakubatsu".** I think that the groups of like this exist everywhere: in the company, government and even in the sports field. Of course, it is good that people have a friendship for those who graduated same school. But I feel it **excessive.** For example in a company, when two men who are same capacity and career may be able to career up. But one of them graduated famous university same as his boss. Being able to career up is only one. Then, the boss will select a man of graduating same school. I do believe that something like this can happen. Also this **problem** may make other new problem.

Example 5.14: Unclear/insufficient meaning of *problem* in Ante-2 (long stretch of antecedent, immediately before N) in JICLE

It is at first stated that *it* (=*the problem*) *is gakubatsu*, which is an academic clique; this is followed by an elaboration of *gakubatsu* as a problem, which in turn forms the antecedent for *this problem* (underlined). However, the referred content is not clearly described as a 'problem', because the only vocabulary which expresses any negative evaluation in the referent is the adjective *excessive*. A factor that is contributing to insufficient information in the antecedent may be the explicit statement at the start of the discourse, which states in effect that (a *very big and important problem) is "gakubatsu"*. Furthermore, the antecedent is summarised as the shell noun (*this*) *problem*. This is a discourse pattern that I have previously termed 'circular discourse' (refer to *idea* in Section 5.2.1). Up to a point, the initial and last statements provide a degree of semantic stability, which in turn renders the content in between not so important.

In addition to insufficient lexicalisation, Example 5.14 also exhibits another type of vagueness of meaning, that is to say, bi-directional argumentation. In this extract, *gakubatsu* is discussed as a 'problem' phenomenon. However, the writer does not clearly deny the practice but in part accepts the practice using such expressions as *friendship for those who graduated same school* and *something that can happen*. A cause of this JICLE phenomenon seems to be a tendency among Japanese people to be 'reluctant to contradict other people's opinion' or 'hesitant to take a stance opposing [an opinion] of others' (Oi, 1986: 27). Therefore, they tend to incorporate both pro and con sides of an argument, and not assertively express their opinions (Oi & Kamimura, 1997; Oi, 1986; Natsukari, 2012). This seems in contrast to argumentation in L1 English texts, where NS writers try to persuade the audience by taking one view of an argument, and trying to maintain the view

all the way through not mitigating their tone (Oi & Kamimura, 1997). Despite vagueness of information in the antecedent, either because of insufficient explanation or bi-directional argument, *problem* in Example 5.14 (JICLE) with the Ante-2 type lexicalisation summarises and labels it as *problem*, and functions as a discourse marker. Its discourse marking role may be known because the noun occurs at a shift of the discourse, which is indicated by *other new problem.*

The JICLE essays exhibited another type of vagueness of the referred content as a *problem* in a long stretch of antecedent (Ante-2), and it is multiple meanings of *problem.* This is shown below in Example 5.15:

According to the law of nationality, all people who were born in Japan must be Japanese. This law is applied every case, if either of their parents are Japanese. He was born between Japanese father and Filipina mother. Because his father is Japanese, it is natural be must be Japanese. But, his father didn't recognize he was his child. So officially, we cannot say he is Japanese. That's why he can't spend a life as Japanese. Like him, the children born between Japanese father and Filipina mother, but his father refused to own up to fathering, are called Japanese-Filipino children. Most of these children are the fruit of relationship between Filipina working in bars and clubs and Japanese costumers of the fruit of sexual relationship between the businessmen transferred to Philippine and Filipina who lives there. However, most of that Japanese were already married. They only care for the temporal pleasure, and never care about their mate, pregnancy, and late effects. As soon as they know that their mate got pregnant, they tend to break up that relationship, and pass money to make her abort. But, as is known, Philippine is a Christian country. As Christian regard abortion as sin, most ladies never abort their child. So the increase of stateless children who have irresponsible Japanese father never stop. In short, irresponsible Japanese men cause this situation. They must recognize how hard life their mate and children spend, what they are feeling. They force their mate and children go to hell, there is no happiness, just sorrow and pain. **Now let's turn eyes to such children.** Since they have no nationality, some of them feel identity faults and suffer mental blow, they cannot get a neat job or well education. They have to be a prostitute or physical laborer and get unfair discrimination. So they must spend a life, which is far from ordinary life. All of these things are caused of Japanese moralless fathers. So it is not exaggeration that Japanese males are the devil that robs happiness of children. **What is the best way to break such situations?** As we can't consider this **problem** without private problem between man and woman, I can't clearly say that kind of effort is good or bad, so far.

Example 5.15: Multiple aspect lexicalisation of *problem* in Ante-2 (long stretch of antecedent, immediately before N) in JICLE

The essay discusses the problem of children who have no nationality as a result of absent fathers. *This problem* is lexicalised in a long segment comprised of two Problem segments. The text above starts with a Situation, stating that children have equal rights to be given a nationality by law. This is followed by a Problem segment (first underlined portion), which expresses various aspects of problems related to nationality-less children, ranging from relationships between Filipino mothers and Japanese fathers, pregnancy, and Christianity and abortion. This in turn is followed by a Response (*recognize hardship*). The second

meaning of *problem* focuses on hardships that the children have to face, expressed as *identity fault, mental suffering* and *discrimination* (second underlined segment). Therefore, (*this*) *problem* refers to the two general focuses: fatherless child as a social issue, and hardships on the children. The role of the noun phrase, then, is to summarise various elements of problems as a general notion of a problem. Functionally, *problem* seems to work as a discourse marker belonging to a Solution segment, which is signalled by *way, break, consider,* although the noun item does not occur at the start of the segment shift.

Situation: *Children have equal right*

Problem 1 (social problem): …*does not recognize the child; does not allow abortion*

Response: …*recognize hardship*

← *Now let's turn eyes to such children.*

Problem 2 (hardships on the children): *identity fault; mental suffering*

← *What is the best way to break…?*

Solution: *we cannot consider this* ***problem****…*

Incidentally, Example 5.15 also seems to suggest a preferred use of metadiscourse statement in JICLE. As shown by the expression *Now let's turn eyes to such children* (refer to the functional flow above), it clearly shifts the focus from the first type to the second type of problem, which is the problem that children will have to face in the society. Another metadiscourse statement is: *What is the best way to break such situations?* It shifts the discourse from a Problem segment to a Solution. These statements fit a type of discourse markers (MDMs) called frame markers proposed in Hyland (2000, 2004). Frame markers can shape their arguments very explicitly by forming a sequence, labelling text stages, announcing discourse goals, and indicating topic shifts (Hyland, 2004: 138). Whether or not Japanese learners of English prefer MDMs more than Americans requires more research, but it may be a possibility. This thesis earlier suggested that some syntactic types, such as Pattern 5 (**Np-v-Nplural:CL**) (e.g., *I'll state three* ***reasons*** *why I assent to the death penalty)* and Pattern 8 (**Np-v-thN**) (e.g., *I agree with the* ***idea.***) functioned as MDMs by having *I/we* at the subject, and the JICLE students used these styntactic pattern notably more than the US students.

It has been shown that *problem* in JICLE in a long preceding antecedent (Ante-2) is lexicalised in a vague way, and nevertheless it is working as a metadiscursive device. From this phenomenon, this thesis considers that *problem* may not be not working in the same way as a metadiscursive device as Schmid (2000) suggested; that is to say with a strong linking role and a strong characterisation role. For one thing, *problem* in JICLE may not be playing a strong linking role, because the noun label and the meaning of *problem* in the antecedent are not clearly linked. Also, so as to function as a metadiscursive device, *problem* in JICLE may be assuming a stronger characterisation role that can compensate for a weak linking role.

Lexicalisation in Ante-3 (Distant antecedent in JICLE)

Ante-3 is a JICLE-specific antecedent pattern. A notable feature of *problem* with Ante-3 is that the referent is placed at a distance from (*the*) *problem*, and (*the*) *problem* makes an abrupt shift of focus. Ante-3 is often observed with Pattern 7 (**th-N-Pv**) as shown in Example 5.16:

> … //In the late 1850's, European population had increased and was above of Maori population and European needed the land. But the Maori sticked to their land. European took Maori's land forcibly and in 1860, it became war. The war continued 12 years and the Maori lost. The pride of Maori was beater// …(omission of two paragraphs)… //Governments should not neglect the Maori people and European either. Trade of land should be decided between the Maori and European, the person concerned. Government don't have rights to take land away from the people without permission. Could the **problem** of land happen in Japan? // In Japan, there are the Ainu.…

Example 5.16: Referent of *problem* in Ante-3 (short and distant antecedent), followed by Opinion segment in JICLE

The referent of *problem* discusses the past misappropriation of Maori land by some European countries. Although the referent is comprised of a few paragraphs (first underlined segment), the meaning of *problem* specifically on land misappropriation is expressed only in the two sentences: *European took Maori's land… The pride of Maori was beater* [sic]. The rest of the referent includes vaguely related aspects of the land problem (e.g., New Zealand gold rush, minority cultures, a member of the commonwealth, living conditions of Maori), and each of the aspects are not well explained. (This illustrates another example of multiple aspect lexicalisation of a shell noun in JICLE.). The referent, which can be considered functioning as a Problem segment, is followed by the writer's opinion (second underlined segment), where the writer criticises the misappropriation of

Maori land, stating that *governments should not neglect*, or *should not be decided.* Functionally, this opinion segment serves as a Solution segment, and the discourse seems to be temporary terminated there. Then, (*the*) ***problem*** that follows signals an abrupt shift to a problem of land in Japan. This sequence of the discourse is shown below:

Problem (Antecedent): *European took Maori's land … and the pride of Maori was beater*
(+ other aspects of *problem*)

Solution: *Governments should not neglect, or … should be decided.…*

Problem (new focus) *Could the* ***problem*** *of land happen in Japan?*

Therefore the writer seems to use a pattern that is similar to a Problem-Solution text pattern, but (*the*) *problem* seems not to be functioning to form a natural sequence of the Problem-Solution text pattern.

Regarding metadiscursive functions of *problem* in terms of characterisation, temporary concept-forming and linking roles, the fact that (*the*) *problem* makes an abrupt shift seems to indicate that the noun does not have a clear linking role. Instead, it may have a strong characterisation role.

Lexicalisation in Ante-4 (Paragraphs-long antecedent in US)

The fourth and final lexicalisation pattern for *problem* is Ante-4. This type is entirely US-specific. It is characterised by a very distant and very short antecedent, which often occurs in repetitions with each of the referents placed distantly in a long stretch of discourse. This type of lexicalisation is shown in Example 5.17:

<text initial> The previous statement was one delivered by a young woman enrolled in a Philosophy course at Marquette University. Responding to the question of the day: what is would be like to be of another color, Alberta, being of color, describes what it would be like to be white. With a cold realization in her words, it can be found that racism in our Universities is not a make believe problem. It is a profound one that needs attention from both the black and white communities. The African American on a predominantly white campus is the subject of racial dispute and discrimination caused by stereotypes, and experiences. The way to end this race war is not to highlight the differences, segregating the black students from the white students, but to integrate all races together, ridding campuses of their "politics of difference"//...(four paragraphs)... // Seemingly a perfectly logical thing to do, it is really a step towards a modern kind of segregation and a catalyst for opposition. Primarily, it is an easy way for white students to ignore the obvious problems of racism. As shown previously, racism on campus is a serious issue. In separating the two sides of the issue, it is ignored. Also, in other ways, the segregation is a cause of uneasiness of the white students towards the black students of the university. When the black organizations are formed, an opinion is also indirectly stated. The white students are expected to be reverent and respectful to something they know nothing about and are usually not welcome to become part of. Tying this to an already stereotyped black population is the cause of further ignorance and inequality. It is not dealing with the problem, but ignoring it and in some ways igniting it. As a problem of not only the students who accept the organizations, but the administrators who allow them, the **problem** is not dealt with as it should be, but pushed aside, made separate from the school. In this way, the "politics of difference" is formed. One side, in highlighting their differences, is causing the other side to resist.//

Example 5.17: Ante-4 (short and distant antecedent) lexicalisation with the meaning in the whole text in US

The essay from which this extract is taken discusses whether or not it is appropriate for a US university to form an African American organisation as a response to racial discrimination. *Problem* is represented by the phrase *racism in our Universities*, and its meaning is further explained in more specific terms in several places in the preceding discourse. In this way, racism in the university is focused on as a specific problem which is discussed in the whole of the preceding segment. The referents (underlined) explain how racism was not make-believe on the campus and how the newly-formed organisation made minority African American students feel that they were targets of discrimination and also caused white students to feel uneasy. The content of the referent is summarised as *problem* and the shell noun shifts the discourse to a Response functional segment, which is signalled by (*not*) *dealt with* and *pushed aside.*

A feature of Ante-4 in US is that the content of the antecedent focuses on one specific topic, and if very short antecedents occur in repetitions they are connected in a consistent manner to the topic in focus. By referring to a whole referent, *problem* summarises a lengthy stretch of discourse and functions as a discourse marker.

Summary and discussion (Vagueness of the meaning in th-N)

Problem was used in a similar way by the two groups when the antecedent was a short and immediate segment (Ante-1). However, lexicalisation was different with other types of antecedents. With a longer and immediately preceding antecedent (Ante-2), the JICLE students in my corpus tended to lexicalise *problem* vaguely in the referent; and when referring to a distant antecedent (Ante-3), *problem* was functioning to make an abrupt discourse shift. Used in such a way, *problem* in JICLE with Anti-2 and Anti-3 seemed to play a 'weak' linking role but a 'strong' characterisation role. A lexicalisation type which featured an elaboration of a clearly focused topic over a long stretch of discourse with the Ante-4 antecedent type occurred only in US.

Previous studies suggest some influence of Japanese culture and writing conventions on the lexicalisation features in JICLE. For one thing, multiple meanings of *problem* may represent a transfer from Japanese *danraku* to English paragraphs. *Danraku* is the English equivalent of a paragraph, but it is very different from the English paragraph: Whilst the principle in English writing is one main idea for one paragraph, and a group of related sentences are used to develop the main idea (Oshima & Hogue, 1991: 16, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004: 9), Japanese *danraku* is a collection of varied aspects with each of them not explained well and not connected with each other, but comprised of 'a group of the same content' where 'any sentence can be included… as far as it is related to the topic' (Matsumura, 1999, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004). Therefore, multiple meaning lexicalisation of *problem* in English essays in JICLE could be seen as parallel to a collection of varied topics in the *danraku* paragraph in Japanese essays. At the same time, this multiple meaning lexicalisation of shell nouns may also be a cultural transfer. According to a study by Murata (2001), Japanese tend to bring up one topic after another, trying to look for a topic that the interlocutor is interested in, so that the speaker can come back to the topic that the interlocutor showed an interest in to develop it more. It is a politeness strategy in Japanese culture, and it may be transferred to L2 English writing by Japanese students.

Another type of vagueness of the meaning of *problem* in JICLE, bi-directional argumentation, may also result from L1 cultural transfer. It mirrors a Japanese tendency of being 'hesitant to take a stance opposing [opinions] of others' (Oi, 1986: 27), and trying to incorporate both pro and against sides of an argument (Natsukari, 2012; Oi, 1986; Oi & Kamimura, 1997). This is in contrast to the native English speakers' argumentation style,

where they do not mitigate their tone, but maintain the view all the way through (Oi & Kamimura, 1997), and try to 'persuade the audience' (Winterowd, 1968, in Oi, 1986).

5.3.2: Thing in th-N

Thing in **th-N** was found mostly in JICLE only, with a ratio of 17:3 (LL score 17.34). As *thing* in **th-N** mostly occurs in Pattern 8 (**Np-v-th-N**) (N=10:1, LL score 16.95), I will concentrate on this syntactic pattern for the lexicalisation analysis that follows. In my data, *thing* occurs in Pattern 8 in one of two forms:

[Np - v - *the same th*ing]
or
[Np - v - *such a thing*].

The analysis begins with the lexicalisation of *thing* in *the same thing*.

The same thing

The same thing in Pattern 8 occurs only in JICLE. Of total occurrences of *thing* in Pattern 8, more than half occur with this phrase (see Appendix 4). *Thing* in *the same thing* has two major lexicalisation types. In one, *thing* refers to both the referred and the referring discourse, as in Example 5.18:

… the cause by which animals came to threaten a life of man is in man itself in many cases. For example, it is because man broke nature and took houses of bears that bears went down a mountain and appeared in a private house of man. Also it is because at Nikkou apes accessed to and attacked man that man gave apes foods and apes learned that man had delicious food. Possibly the case of Koro was also **the same thing**. If I kept Koro with my selfish convenience that a child dog was dear, koro did not need to be taken to a health center possibly

Example 5.18: The meaning of *the same thing* lexicalised both anaphorically and cataphorically in JICLE

Thing anaphorically refers to the preceding discourse, which describes a process in which a selfish human desire causes bears and apes to become a threat to people, and at the same time takes the referred content forward to the succeeding discourse, as a parallel situation with *Koro*, a dog. The succeeding discourse (underlined) explains 'how same' *Koro*'s

situation was in that *Koro* was kept as a housepet when it was a puppy but was then abandoned when it lost its charm. In this way, *the same thing* explains 'how same' the two preceding situations were to the succeeding situation.

A much more frequent use of *the same thing* in JICLE is when it refers only to the preceding discourse, and the recovery of meaning is left to the interpretation of the reader. This type of *the same thing* is shown in Example 5.19:

> The investigation also found that 20 percent of single women decided to get married and also gave birth to their babies in their twenties, and 11 percent of single women who were in their thirties said **the same thing**. Moreover, even though they had never thought about marrying their partners…

Example 5.19: The meaning of *the same thing* lexicalised only anaphorically in JICLE

Thing refers back to what the women in their 20s said, but 'how same' the content of what the women in their 30s said is not stated in the succeeding discourse. Although not clearly stating how the two parallel situations are the same, *the same thing* seems to be functioning as a discourse marker because it terminates the discourse. The discourse termination at *thing* can be inferred because the shell noun occurred immediately before a discourse shifting signal word, *Moreover*.

Such a thing

In US, *thing* in Pattern 8 (N=10:1, LL score 16.95) occurred only once in US, and it occurred in the phrase *such a thing*. In JICLE, *such a thing* accounts for nearly one third of the total frequencies of *thing* in Pattern 8. (*The same thing* accounted for more than half of the total.) Frequency patterns are clearly different in the two corpora. However, the function of *such a thing* is similar in both, referring to a short and immediate antecedent and also by functioning to terminate the discourse. Shown below in Example 5.20 is the sole occurrence of *thing* in US:

… Why not bolster what we have seen gets results instead off spending money on a whim. I hate to rain on many a person's parade but, I have a roommate who has an air rifle scholarship. I know, you probably never heard of it before either. This year they did really well. They won their conference in second team shooting. This is the first time I have ever even heard **such a thing**. How much is the university going to gain from such a sport. Nothing. Air rifle is not a spectator sport….

Example 5.20: *Thing* expressing the writer's attitude and terminating the discourse in US

The writer discusses how to increase enrolment at a university, and proposes that the university utilise what it already possesses or can be proud of, rather than spend money on a whim. The writer uses s*uch a thing* to point to an example of spending money on a whim; that is to say, on an air rifle scholarship, which might be seen as a ridiculous expense. *Such a thing* here carries a negative connotation that strongly suggests the university will not gain much and it is therefore a whim to spend money on it, and the phrase functions to temporarily terminate the discourse. A termination is understood because at *How much is the university going…* that follows *such a thin*g, the discourse shifts to a Reason for the proposition in the preceding discourse.

To illustrate the lexicalisation of *thing* in *such a thing* in JICLE, consider Example 5.21 below:

A country is made with land, people and government. These three things are all important and nothing of these can permit to lack. And these have their own right equally, these must help one another. Well, in a country, can a government have the right to take land away without permission? My answer is "No!". And I will explain why I think that a government must not do **such a thing**. If the governments can ban anything on the Internet, they should ban such "evil crimes".

Example 5.21: *Thing* expressing the writer's attitude and terminating the discourse in JICLE

(*Such a*) *thing* refers to a situation where the government *take*[*s*] *the land away without permission*. The phrase carries a negative evaluation of the actions of the government, and is functioning to terminate the discourse (in the next segment, there is a clear shift of focus to a hypothetical situation). Therefore, the lexicalisation of *thing* in the phrase *such a thing* is not used markedly differently in JICLE and US; the main difference is merely in terms of frequency of usage. Specifically, US writers hardly use this phrase at all.

Discussion (*The same* and *such a thing*)

This section has shown that *thing* in Pattern 8 occurs mostly in JICLE, and typically takes the form of *the same thing* or *such a thing.* The use of these *thing*-phrases was found to be a JICLE-specific discourse marking strategy that links referring content to the succeeding discourse without clearly explaining the connection. This very distinctive use of *the same thing* as a discourse marker without a clear lexicalisation could be a reflection of the discourse roles of the noun in JICLE. Shell nouns in **th-N** can play strong linking and characterisation roles (Schmid, 2000) by recovering the meaning of the noun expressed in the preceding discourse. Considering the small amount of meaning expressed in the referring content by (*the same*) *thing,* the shell noun may actually play only a very minor role in linking the referred and referring contents. On the other hand, *thing* functions as a discourse marker because it assumes a strong characterisation role for the referring content by using *the same* or *such a.* Thus, with *thing*, too, like *problem* in the previous section, this thesis claims that the shell noun in JICLE for **th-N** works with a weaker linking role and a stronger characterisation role than Schmid (2000) found to be a norm in native English essays.

A reason why the JICLE students used *the same thing* and *such a thing* in a remarkably high frequency may be that Japanese society is traditionally a 'high-context' culture (Hall, 1976). In a high-context culture, a message is expressed in the physical context, or internalised in the person, and very little is expressed in the explicit and transmitted part of the message (Okabe, 1987, in Kamimura & Oi, 1998: 318). The high-context culture of Japanese society may have formed because the society stresses the strong ties to groups (e.g., the family, work group, corporation), and also because people's relations within a group tend to last for a longer period as Barnlund (1975: 32-33, in Kamimura & Oi, 1998: 308) suggests. In contrast, American society has a 'low-context' culture, where 'a message is transmitted in a clear, verbal code with little influence of social ties among individuals' (Okabe, 1983, 1987, 1993, in Kamimura & Oi, ibid: 318). American society maintains looser ties among members of a group, and relations are more provisional. With these societal circumstances, Americans may emphasise verbal code, or what it said, whilst Japanese may place their trust in what is left unsaid (Barnlund, 1975: 32-33, in Kamimura & Oi, ibid.: 308).

5.3.3: Reason in th-N

The lexicalisation analysis of *reason* in **th-N** is conducted on Pattern 9 (**Peripheral th-N**) (N=13:5, LL score 6.05), which accounted for virtually all the total instances of *reason* in **th-N** (N=13:5, LL score 6.05). *Reason* in Pattern 9 both in JICLE and US occurs in the semi-fixed phrase:

[*for this reason* (and its variations)].

For this reason is a semi-fixed phrase that can trigger a cause-result Causal Relation by directing the reader's attention to the cause component in the preceding discourse, whilst explicitly referring to the result component in the succeeding discourse (Schmid, 2000: 102). This section will investigate in what ways JICLE achieved a significantly greater frequency of *reason*, in comparison to US, and to what extent the *reason* semi-fixed phrase is functioning in a similar way in the two corpora.

Explicitness of Causal Relations

Both corpora have an antecedent that is short and immediately precedes *reason.* However, JICLE and US exhibit some differences in the use of *for this reason* in terms of effects on Causal Relations. Example 5.22 illustrates this:

```
//The reason behind the fear that this energy causes is routed in its incredible power to destroy.
Never before had the world seen something with such a capacity to kill.  Never before had one
object of such small size been able to take so many lives. For this reason, It is considered
the most awe-inspiring and dangerous weapon in the world.//
```

Example 5.22: Short antecedent and a clear Causal Relation created by *for this reason* in US

In this extract, the writer explains why nuclear energy is dangerous. The meaning of (*this*) *reason* is expressed in the preceding discourse, which is a Situation segment, stating the incredible destructive power of a nuclear bomb. *For this reason* connects the Situation to the succeeding clause which expresses the writer's evaluation as *awe-inspiring* and *dangerous*, and the *reason* phrase forms a Causal Relation between the two segments. Schematically, we may represent this as follows:

Situation/Antecedent: *Never before had the world seen something with such a capacity to kill…*

← *For this **reason**…*

Evaluation: *It is considered the most awe-inspiring and dangerous weapon in the world*

For this reason is an explicit language device used to express Causation (Xuelan & Kennedy, 1992: 68). The Causal Relation in the above extract is an explicit one which clearly leads the discourse from the Situation to a statement of how the writer evaluates the Situation.

A main feature of JICLE is that *for this/that reason* does not always function to create a Causal Relation between the two segments connected by the semi-fixed phrase, as shown in Example 5.23:

Another was that France and Great Britain decided the boundary of the Bangkok Dynasty on their own, which became the boundary of Thailand; **for that reason**, many ethnic groups were left which were not Thai.

Example 5.23: An unclear Causal Relation created by *for that reason* in JICLE

The essay from which this extract is taken is about the one-language policy in Thailand. The extract itself describes one of the reasons why the policy was introduced. The referent of *for that reason* (underlined) provides one reason which is *France and Great Britain decided the boundary*, and what follows after the semi-fixed phrase is what happened next in the history of the language policy. *For that reason*, therefore, is used for temporal change and does not express a Causal Relation. The analysis shows that *for this reason* occurred much more frequently in JICLE than in US (specifically, by a ratio of 13 to 5), but the higher frequency of *for this reason* in JICLE is realised not so much for explicit Causal Relations, but for temporal change, which in effect functions similarly to *and*, *then* or *so*.

Clarity of the meaning of *reason*

The meaning of *reason* is expressed not only in short and immediately preceding segments, but also in extended segments that stretch into several sentences, more commonly so in JICLE than in US. Whether or not there are any differences between JICLE and US in the lexicalisation of *reason* in this type of antecedent is analysed, firstly with *reason* in JICLE in Example 5.24:

..But as far as I'm concerned, I stand in opposition to a death penalty.// When a case of murder occur, I often hear victims' view. Almost all the case, they lose sight of themselves because of a hatred for a murderer. They insist that the murderer must be imposed a death penalty because they don't know how to deal with their feelings ? feelings of hate, anger and sad. Since they are quite sad for losing their family or friend, they tend to regard a death penalty as a solution. I don't think, however, a death penalty is a real solution. Because if the murderer dies, a person who were killed would not revive. I consider death is a way to run away from the real world. Only living can be punishment. For example, if the murderer was sentenced to life imprisonment, he or she couldn't go out from prison. If so, he or she mightn't have anything to enjoy: he might a spend regular life in prison, he couldn't eat any delicious food, he couldn't go anywhere and couldn't meet anyone he wanted to. Additionally, if he could be free and could go back to social life before, he must be face a lot of problems. For instance, his neighbor may have prejudice against him, which make him uneasy or annoy badly. I have heard that a person who has commit a crime can't find a job easily. I'm sure there must be much more problems for such a person. I think that's enough for criminals as punishment since they may see hell as they are living. I have another reason against death penalty. Statistics show that death penalty don't have a power to stop criminals from committing crime or murder. Crime rates of countries which have already abolished the death penalty have been lower as a matter of fact.//Though I'm against death penalty **for the reason** mentioned above, I have some suggestions which may be solutions.

Example 5.24: Vague meaning of the referred content of *reason* in *for the reason* in JICLE

This essay discusses whether the death penalty should be upheld or abolished. The writer opposes the death penalty, and expresses this position clearly in the initial and the last statements in the above extract. Firstly, the writer states opposition to the death penalty as: *I stand in opposition.…* (Claim); this is followed by a reason why he/she opposes (Reason). Then the discourse is concluded by repeating the initially stated Claim, *I'm against death penalty* (Claim). In other words, this argumentation is conducted in a circular discourse fashion. Shown below is the sequence of the discourse:

Claim (a statement): *I stand in opposition.…*

Reason for the claim: (described in a long segment)

Claim (repeating the statement): *I'm against death penalty for the **reason** mentioned above.*

The referent of (*the*) *reason* in *for the reason* is expressed in the Reason segment. It is a long and extended segment, and expresses reasons for opposition to the death penalty from varied viewpoints (e.g., the bereaved family's opinions, the meaning of real punishment, enough hardship that imprisonment provides with the prisoners, and ineffectiveness of the death penalty). These viewpoints are listed in an inconsistent way and are not logically connected. This makes the content of the referent hard to understand clearly. Therefore, the lexicalised meaning of *reason* is not specific and clear.

In the US essays, the meaning of *reason* is sometimes expressed in a long segment, but the meaning of *reason* is clear and explicit. This is shown below in Example 5.25:

> //In the second argument against euthanasia, the example of abortion demonstrates what might happen if the practice of euthanasia is allowed to continue. Although abortion is a separate and unique controversy in itself, there are parallels between the issue and that of euthanasia. The most obvious of similarities is that they both involve the ending of a life (or a life to be in the case of abortion). Also, both include the question of whether the life that is being snuffed out has something to offer the world, or if the life has something to receive from living on. Since it has been shown that both involve similar ethical and moral questions, then the consequences America is suffering because of abortion can be compared to what might happen if euthanasia is allowed to continue. The problem of the legality of abortion was supposedly solved in the decision of Roe v. Wade, where the supreme court ruled that the constitution guarantees a woman the right to have an abortion performed. That was in 1973 and over twenty years later the controversy is flaming on at full force. The opponents of abortion have become more and more violent as the years have gone by. Pro life advocates have lined up in front of abortion clinics not allowing patients to enter and doctors to exit. In one instance, the blood of an animal was thrown on a woman who was about to receive an abortion. In 1994, Paul J. Hill, an opponent of abortion, murdered a physician because that physician was performing abortions. That murder took place over twenty years after the supreme court ruling. Since the ruling on euthanasia took place in 1988, it is possible that the worst in the debate on euthanasia is yet to come. What might happen over the next twenty years concerning the controversy over euthanasia? No one can tell if euthanasia will cause the same problems as abortion did. But because euthanasia involves the same ethical questions as abortion, similar problems may arise. **For that very reason,** the law on euthanasia should be modified to restrict its practice, so the risk of future euthanasia related violence is lowered.//

Example 5.25: Clear meaning of the referred content of *reason* in for *that (very) reason* in US

The essay argues for tighter regulation of the practice of euthanasia. In this example *that* (*very*) *reason* refers to the immediately preceding segment (underlined) that states the reason clearly and specifically in the short segment, (*because*) *euthanasia involves the same ethical questions as abortion, similar problems may arise*'. Then this referred content is connected by the phrase *for that very reason* to the succeeding discourse which states *the law on euthanasia should be modified.* Therefore the *reason* semi-fixed phrase functions as an explicit causal relational device. Shown below is the sequence of the discourse:

Antecedent: (*because*) *euthanasia involves <u>the same</u> ethical questions as abortion, similar problems may arise…*

← *For that very **reason**,…*

Claim: *the law on euthanasia should be modified to restrict its practice*

Some may argue that the meaning of the antecedent is not clear, because the meanings of *same question* and *similar problem* are not known. It is so, if we look only at the immediate context of a single sentence. However, they are lexicalised clearly in the preceding segment. The meaning of *the same ethical question* (*as abortion*) is in an earlier segment (i.e., *whether the life that is being snuffed out has something to offer the world, or if the life has something to receive from living on*); and *the similar problem* is expressed as *legality of abortion*.

This type of lexicalisation that is achieved by referring to preceding discourse seems to prove how US discourse is constructed by the expansion and elaboration of vocabulary in the discourse. The comparison between Example 5.24 (JICLE) and Example 5.25 (US) shows how the meaning of *reason* in *for this reason* is general in JICLE and more clearly elaborated in US.

Summary and discussion (Functions of *'for this reason'*)

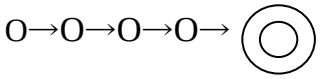
The use of the semi-fixed phrase *for this reason* in JICLE and US is different in terms of the ways *for this reason* is functioning, and also the expression of Causal relations when *reason* refers to short antecedents; and clarity of the meaning of *reason* when the antecedent is a long and extended discourse:

- In JICLE, the antecedent of *the reason* was often a long extended segment particularly occurring in circular discourse patterns. In the referent, the meaning of *reason* was expressed with varied viewpoints, and *reason* was used as a general label that summarised the referred content. Even when the antecedent was shorter, *for this reason* was not functioning as a clear cause-result Causal Relation, but often as a temporal sequence, which functioned similar to *so* and *and*.

- In US, the antecedent of *the reason* was often short, and *for this reason* created an explicit causal relation. When referring to a long stretch of discourse, *reason* had a focused meaning, and was explained by more clearly elaborated referents.

In respect of metadiscursive roles of *reason* in JICLE, such features as varied contents of the referent and the role of *reason* to provide a general label indicate that reason has a weak linking role to the content. Nevertheless the noun labels the vague content as a 'reason', and this indicates that *reason* has a stronger characterisation role than Schmid (2000) proposed as a norm.

Regarding the function of *for this reason* in JICLE to express a temporal change, not for a clear Causal relation, as illustrated with Example 5.25, it may be influenced by a *'Therefore'* thinking pattern. In a *'Therefore'* pattern, a 'topic' is presented and followed by another 'topic', which is also followed by another 'topic', and each topic is connected by *and,* or, *for,* and finally the main Topic is presented (Murata, 2001). This is illustrated below (o represents each topic, and ◎ represents the main Topic):



(Adapted from Murata, 2001: 65)

In contrast, the thinking pattern of English speaking people is usually a *'Because'* type. A main topic is presented at the beginning, and it is explained from varied aspects. Each aspect always returns to the main topic that is presented at first, and when all the aspects of the main topic are explained, the paragraph is terminated. This is illustrated below:

(Adapted from Murata, 2001: 65)

The *'therefore'* thinking pattern seems to explain the JICLE preference for *for this reason* as the effect of a temporal change. This suggests that the Japanese language has an inherent weakness in terms of expressing clear Causal Relations, and that English Causal Relations will need to be brought to the awareness of Japanese English learners in a clear and explicit way.

5.3.4: Issue in th-N

*Issu*e in **th-N** was found to be a US-preferred shell noun, occurring at the ratio of 1:9 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 11.33). This preference is particularly clear in the frequency data for Pattern 9 (**Peripheral th-N**), which occurred at 1:8. Instances of **Peripheral th-N** with *issue* are of varied types, including:

semi-fixed phrases (e.g., *on this issue*),
adverbial phrases (e.g., *to discuss this issue*), and
complex noun phrases in the form N^1 of N^2 (e.g., *part of this issue*).

In what lexicalisation patterns *issue* functioned as a metadiscursive item in JICLE and US is examined in this section.

In JICLE, a small number of cases of *issue* is lexicalised in a short antecedent that states what the 'issue' is, as shown in Example 5.26 below:

> It is sad that there are more crimes than ever in Japan these days. To make the situation better, we need to educate both parents and teachers. I don't know who to educate them but there should be a way. This is what the government should take care of. For the government to discuss this kind of **issue**, we need to express our ideas in every chance.

Example 5.26: *Issue*, whose meaning is a brief summary in JICLE

In the extract above, the meaning of *issue* is only expressed as *there are more crimes than ever in Japan…*(underlined). This provides an outline of what the issue is. Then the antecedent is followed right away by the writer's opinion about what the 'issue' should be addressed, such as *we need to educate parents and teachers* and *the government should take care of*.

In US essays, *issue* is typically lexicalised in a long stretch of a segment, sometimes in the whole preceding discourse. An example is shown in Example 5.27, below:

> //Grace Under Fire is one of the latest hit sitcoms by ABC where a divorced mom is ready to date again and have sex whenever she can; one of her influential, rather clean comment that young people would register by viewing her show would be: <*>. By using this show as an example the supporters of censorship show how the networks have lost all regard for purity and beauty in the department of sex and the influence it has on children. How is a child who is just learning about the birds and the bees suppose to react from a show engrossed with comments such as these? The proponents didn't even have to analyze ABC's Play Boy/Play Girl show because the network let everything out in the open, literally. <*>. While in the first 55 seconds of the premiere show bare breast and buttocks were shown. The advocates for censorship realize that this program not only discusses sex, similar to Grace under Fire only more sultry, but they vividly show the acts of sex. By using NYPD Blue the advocates for censorship prove that censorship is needed on television because whether it's 9:00 PM or 8:30am it's still public television and content of that nature will effect any body's mind whether you're a child or an adult.//Opponents to **this issue** might pose the question: if a parent did not want…

Example 5.27: *Issue*, whose meaning is in the whole preceding discourse in US

This segment discusses whether there should be TV censorship or not. (*This*) *issue* refers to the proponents' views on TV censorship, which includes various reasons and a possible outcome if censorship is not applied, and then summarises the content and shifts the discourse to an exposition of the opponents' views. Thus, the meaning of (*this*) *issue* is explained in detail and in the whole discourse.

The under-lexicalisation of *issue* in JICLE suggests that the shell noun in JICLE functions as a discourse marker, playing a weaker linking role but with a stronger characterisation role than Schmid (2000) suggests is the norm for native English writing, the way *reason* and *problem* in **th-N** did, as we saw in earlier sections of this chapter. In addition, the significantly lower frequency of *issue* in JICLE (N=1:9, LL score 11.33) provides further support for a broad claim of this thesis; that is to say, the JICLE students disprefer a referent where the meaning of a specific topic is expressed in the whole preceding discourse; this is an equivalent of Ante-4 type lexicalisation of *problem* for **th-N**, which was used only by the US students (refer to Section 5.3.1).

5.3.5: Summary: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in th-N

This section has analysed the lexicalisation of *problem*, *reason, thing* and *issue* in **th-N** in the US and JICLE corpora and found out the followings:

- *Problem* in **th-N** (N=23:17, LL score 1.53) occurred with roughly the same frequency in the two corpora. However, *problem* in JICLE often referred to more than one aspect of the meaning in a longer stretch of the antecedent (Ante-2), or is used to make an abrupt topic shift when referring to a distant antecedent (Ante-3). In addition, the antecedent type where the meaning is in the whole preceding discourse (Ante-4) did not occur in JICLE, but only in US.
- *Thing* in **th-N** (N=17:3, LL score 17.34) occurred significantly more in JICLE. It was associated with a far greater use of *the same thing* and *such a thing*, which allowed a discourse shift without clearly explaining the meaning of the referring content, or by leaving the interpretation to the reader.
- *Reason* in **th-N** (N=13:5, LL score 6.05) occurred significantly more in JICLE. Lexicalisation in JICLE featured more than one meaning in a longer referent, also *for this reason* was not used for an explicit Causal Relation, but it functioned similarly to *and* or *then.*
- *Issue* in **th-N** occurred significantly less frequently in JICLE than it did in US (N=1:9, LL score 11.33). In JICLE, the meaning of *issue* was the outline of the meaning, whereas in US it was expressed in detail in a large stretch of the preceding discourse.

Regarding the three types of discourse functions (i.e., characterisation, temporary concept-forming, linking) of shell nouns for **th-N**, thesis claims, based on the findings, that anaphorically referring shell nouns in JICLE work as discourse markers with a weaker linking role but a stronger characterisation role than is the case in the native speaker norm proposed by Schmid (2000) and in the US essays. This is because shell nouns in **th-N** were lexicalised vaguely, expressing multiple meanings (e.g., *problem, reas*on), or not explaining the meanings in detail (e.g., *thing, issue*).

This thesis also discusses causes of JICLE features and proposes they are mostly influenced by the students' L1 culture and writing conventions:

- Multiple meaning of *problem* in JICLE may be influenced by Japanese *danaraku* paragraphing, where one topic is explained by incorporating varied aspects without connecting each of the aspects (Matsumura, 1999).
- A weak Causal Relation expressed by a reason in JICLE may come from the Japanese *'Therefore'* thinking pattern, which is different from the American *'Because'* thinking pattern (Murata, 2001).
- The use of *the same thing* may be influenced by the Japanese high context culture (Hall, 1976), where the meanings are often highly assumed and not clearly explained.

5.4: Lexicalisation of shell nouns in th-be-N

The overall comparative frequencies of **th-be-N** were 36:29 (LL score 1.25), indicating no significant frequency differences between the two corpora. In a similar study investigating the use of shell nouns by L1 Xhosa students (Caldwell, 2009), **th-be-N** was found to be too complex a construction and its use was avoided by the students (p. 89) (see also **th-be-N** in Section 4.2.1). Comparing with the dispreference of **th-be-N** by the L1 Xhosa students, a question that arises is whether or not the JICLE students used this syntactic pattern in a similar way to the US students did. By keeping these questions in mind, lexicalisation of shell nouns in **th-be-N** are examined in the following sections. Shell nouns analysed are *problem*, *thing* and *reason*, which occur significantly more in JICLE than in US, and *decision*, which occurs more in US than in JICLE.

5.4.1: Problem in th-be-N

Problem in **th-be-N** (Pattern 10) occurred significantly more frequently in JICLE than it did in US (N=8:3, LL score 4.61), taking the form of:

[*th - be -* (*a/the*) *problem*].

In both corpora, the antecedent of (*the*) *problem* is a short segment placed immediately before the noun. Below I examine whether or not lexicalisation of the noun was similar in the two corpora, and why the JICLE students used the noun significantly more than the US students.

In the US essays, the referred content is often easily perceivable as a 'problem', which is in part because what the content is about is lexically signalled. It is also because the referent expressing a 'problem' content is often followed by a Reason segment that explains why the referent is a 'problem'. This is seen in Example 5.28 below:

However, most of the traditional household roles formerly performed by women exclusively (but now handled by people of both sexes) have never been compensated by the dollar. This poses a **problem**, since undoubtedly those at-home tasks contribute services to society equally valuable in comparison to marketplace "jobs". Therefore, in order for society to fully acknowledge the value of both types of jobs--in the home and outside the home, some sort of compensation should be made for "home-making service" as well as for he or she who works outside the home. //

Example 5.28: Clearly signalled 'problem' segment, that is followed by Reason segment in US

This extract discusses the issue of to what extent the role of homemakers is recognised in the society. (*This*) *problem* refers to a situation where work carried out by homemakers is not paid. The referent is identifiable as a 'problem' segment, being signalled by *not compensated.* The Problem segment is then followed by a segment which explains why the referred content is considered a 'problem', stating that *since undoubtedly those at-home tasks contribute services to society,* or a Reason segment. The Reason segment makes it clear that the situation where homemakers are 'not compensated' is a problem.

In JICLE, the content of the *problem* expressed in the antecedent may not be easily perceivable as a problem, nor is it often explained in the succeeding discourse. Sometimes, vague identification of the referred content as a 'problem' is attributed to a lack of shared knowledge between the writer and the reader. An example of this is shown in Example 5.29:

<text initial> In Japanese class, teachers take too much time to teach English grammar. I think that it is too enough. However, students aim an entrance examination of Japanese university. It is a big **problem**. In order to increase the number of children who can speak English well, the government has to change the educational system.

Example 5.29: *Problem* for th-be-N, with a weak meaning association to the referent in JICLE

In this extract, the writer criticises the emphasis on grammar teaching in English education in Japan. The referent of (*the*) *problem* in the preceding segment uses *too much* and *too*

enough to indicate a 'problem'. However, the referent may not be clearly perceivable as a problem unless the reader knows that an over-emphasis on English grammar is blamed for Japanese students' lack of practical English skills. In other words, a clear 'semantic match' (Schmid, 2000: 363) is not formed between the referent and the noun. In addition, there is no reason segment in the succeeding discourse that can make the vague 'problem' content clearer. Instead, *problem* in *It is a big problem* is used to terminate the discourse. This can be known because the discourse shifts to a Solution segment after *This is a problem*.

To summarise, the significant frequency differences for *problem* in **th-be-N** (N=8:3, LL score 4.61) is a result of different lexicalisation pattern preferences among US and JICLE writers. One main difference is that the semantic match (Schmid, 2000: 343) between a noun label and its meaning expressed in the referent is weak and vague in JICLE, whereas it is clearer and stronger in US. Also, insufficient information in the referent is not compensated for by the provision of a Reason segment in JICLE, whilst it is in US essays. The result of a weak semantic match between *problem* and its referent in JICLE is a weaker linking role for the noun in JICLE compared to US and to Schmid's proposed norm where N in **th-be-N** should have strong characterisation and linking roles (2002: 342). The vague identification of the segment as a 'problem' means the use of *problem* for **th-be-N** (e.g., *It is a problem.*) is less successful in constructing an explicit argument in JICLE writing.

5.4.2: Reason in th-be-N

Reason in **th-be-N** occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=8:3, LL score 4.61). In both JICLE and US, the noun occurred taking the form of:

[*the -be-* (*a/th*e) *reason* (*wh*y)…].

The content referred to by *reason* is in the preceding discourse. In what ways *reason* is lexicalised in the two corpora is examined in this section.

Analysed firstly is *reason* in the US corpora with Example 5.30, below:

Many people do not realize why the battle flag was first flown above the state house. Some think that the flag has been flying since the Civil war, or even since South Carolina succeeded from the union. These people are wrong. The battle flag was first flown in the year 1964. This was the year that the civil rights movement started. Actually, the flag was set up the day after the civil rights movement started. This clearly shows that the battle flag stands for nothing more than hatred. This is probably the single largest **reason** why the battle flag should be brought down.

Example 5.30: *Reason* in th-be-N, expressing a clear claim of the writer in US

In this extract, the writer argues whether or not the Civil War battle flag flying above the state house should be brought down. The text starts with commonly believed knowledge about why the flag is flying above the state house (Situation), which is denied (Denial) because *the battle flag stands for nothing more than hatred* (Reason for denial). The Reason for denial segment functions as the antecedent of (*the*) *reason,* and *reason* at the same time functions to direct the argument to the writer's claim, which is that *the battle flag should be brought down.* This discourse sequence is illustrated below:

Situation: *The flag has been flying since the Civil Wa*r

Denial: *These people are wron*g

Reason for denial/Antecedent: … *first flown in… 1964, and the flag represents hatred.*

← *This is… **reason** why…*

Claim: … *the battle flag should be brought down*

Thus, Example 5.30 can show that *reason* refers to a clearly demarcated segment, and functions to form a Causal Relation in an explicit way.

In contrast, the *reason*-sentence in the JICLE does not usually form a clear Cause-Result relation. This is shown in Example 5.31 below:

Our ancestors didn't need to learn second language because they have everything they needed inside Japan. They didn't need to import or export their product. This was the main **reason** why our ancestors didn't learn second language, including English.

Example 5.31: *Reason* in th-be-N, which does not express a clear claim of the writer in JICLE

The extract explains the importance of Japanese people learning English. The first clause, *Our ancestors didn't need to learn second language*, expresses a Situation. It is followed by the statement *they had everything they need*, which forms the Reason (for the Situation)

segment. (*The*) *reason* in *This is the reason why…* refers to the preceding Reason segment, and leads the discourse to the succeeding segment, which is an exact repetition of the Situation. This sequence of the discourse has a circular discourse pattern, as shown below:

Situation*: Our ancestors didn't need to learn second language*.

Reason: *They have everything… didn't need to import or export…*

← *This is the reason* (*why*)… [=*therefore*]

our ancestors didn't need to learn second language.

In this sequence, *reason* in **th-be-N** is not functioning to create a Cause-Result relation, to express a claim of the writer. Instead, it is working to express the meaning similar to '*and*', '*so*', or '*therefore*'.

To summarise; the antecedent of *reason* is short and placed immediately before the **th-be-N** in both corpora. Thus, there is little difference in the way *reason* is expressed in the referent itself. However, functions of *this is a reason* are often different in the two corpora. Whilst the *reason*-semi-fixed sentence is functioning in an explicit Causal Relation in US, it is used to express the meaning of '*and*', '*so*', or '*therefore*' in JICLE. In this way JICLE realised a significantly more frequent use of *reason* in JICLE than in US (N=8:3, LL score 4.61). The creation of '*therefore*' sequences in JICLE may be accounted for by a '*Therefore*' thinking pattern of Japanese people, in contrast to a '*Because*' pattern of Americans, as Mimura (2001) proposed. (This was explained in detail for *reason* in **th-N**. See Section 5.3.3.)

5.4.3: Thing in th-be-N

Thing in **th-be-N** (Pattern 10) was almost exclusively associated with JICLE, with a ratio of 10:1 (LL score 15.93). A feature of *thing* in JICLE is that the noun occurs in combination with adjectives in the following form:

[*th* - *be* - adjective + *thing*].

The antecedent of *thing* is in the preceding discourse. Adjectives combined with *thing* are of an evaluative type, including *important, compulsory*, *dangerous* (*e.g., This is an important thing*). (See Appendix 5 for all occurrences.) I examine in what ways *thing* occurs significantly more using evaluative adjectives in JICLE than in US in this syntactic pattern. In JICLE, the referent of *thing* is almost always short and placed in the immediately preceding discourse, as shown in Example 5.32 below:

They should make the murderers pay the expense by making them suffer for their horrible acts and doing something good for the society. The murderers should have to live with the guilty feeling of taking another person's life away. It is a more **proper thing** to do.//Third, would less people commit a crime if there is the death penalty?

Example 5.32: *Thing* modified by an evaluative adjective (*proper*), summarising the discourse in JICLE

In this extract, the writer expresses opposition to the death penalty. *Proper thing* refers to the sentence, *The murderers should have to live with the guilty feeling of taking another person's life away.* The referred content does not sufficiently describe the writer's proposition. The adjective *proper,* therefore, is used to evaluate insufficient information, and, in combination with *thing*, functions to terminate the discourse.

In US *thing* occurs only two times altogether. However, there is still a clear difference in the use of adjectives. One adjective in US is a 'descriptive' adjective (Schmid, 2000: 318), and it evaluates a referent that describes the proposition in detail. It is shown in Example 5.33:

//How many times have we seen on the evening news a family being broken apart, a company going under, or even a nation crumbling simply because there was a desperate desire, on the part of one or many, for something that exceeds what was actually needed or required? Even individuals can be destroyed who are in constant search of what evades them. They think that having the "right" car or living in the "right" neighborhood or knowing the "right" people can bring them happiness or contentment. This love of money urges them on, causes them to neglect their families and at times to commit crimes for which they are imprisoned. Our society pays dearly, both financially and socially, for their love affair with money. It is a **cross-cultural thing**. We can be speaking of the American dollar, the Japanese yen or the Spanish peseta.

Example 5.33: *Thing* combined with a descriptive adjective (*cross-cultural*), summarising the discourse in US

Thing refers to the long stretch of the whole preceding segment, which explains how much people love money and how much it can be a cause of unhappiness in life. Then the content of the referent is summarised in a purely descriptive term as *cross-cultural*.

The other adjective that modifies *thing* in US is a restrictive adjective *one*, as shown in Example 5.34:

I'm not writing this to advocate alcohol, sex, or anything else. I just feel we should not have a curfew period. We are adult enough now to take our actions into our hands. Besides, isn't that what college is about, learning to be an adult and maturing? I know things don't always go our way, but this should be **one thing** that does. The single sex dormitories should not have a curfew just because most of us are freshmen.

Example 5.34: *Thing* used for an emphatic effect in US

The extract expresses opposition to a curfew imposed at a dormitory. The referent of (*one*) *thing* is *we should not have a curfew period. One thing* is used for an emphatic effect.

Discussion (Evaluative adjectives and *thing* JICLE)

The analysis in this section suggests that the significantly more frequent occurrences of *thing* in JICLE than in US (N=10:1, LL score 15.93) is realized by evaluating the short content of a referent of insufficient information, with evaluative adjectives. Evaluative adjectives in JICLE are mostly subjective, expressing how the writer perceives the referent, but perhaps because of the evaluation's discourse terminating role (Hunston, 1994), *thing* in JICLE seems to have functioned to terminate the discourse.

Regarding why the JICLE preferred evaluative adjectives, this preference may be influenced by students' Japanese essay writing conventions. Some studies (Shinmura, 1998, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004: 9) suggest that, in Japanese texts, it is valued to 'express [words] by using modifiers skillfully', and Japanese writers tend to use 'decorat[ive] words, or keep superficial aspects of these words'. Evaluative adjectives used in JICLE are 'superficial' words, because the content which an adjective is referring to is not substantiated with detailed explanation. (A contrasting phenomenon was seen in Example 3.33, where the US writer used a descriptive adjective *cross-cultural* to evaluate the detailed content.) Furthermore, Japanese preference for 'skillful modifiers' seems related to Japanese argumentation patterns. In Japanese essays, it seems valued trying to appeal to the reader's emotions and convincing the reader with the effect of empathy (Kamimura & Oi, 1998: 318). This argumentation pattern is different from the ones the L1 writers of English texts use. English writers try to 'clearly convey information or an opinion' by convincing the reader providing sufficient information in a logical way, as Shinmura (1998, in Kimura

& Kondo, 2004: 12) states. Therefore, this thesis considers that a JICLE use of evaluative adjectives in combination with *thing* is an L1 transfer phenomenon.

Now I focus on a strong preference for *thing* in JICLE, in comparison to US. *Thing* occurred in combination with varied types of adjectives (e.g., ordinal adjectives, evaluative adjectives, *the same*, *such a*) in some patterns (**th-be-N**, **th-N**, **N-be-CL**). One reason for the JICLE preference for *thing* may be because the NNS students have a small range of vocabulary and *thing* can substitute for other nouns, as Hinkel (2003) suggests. Another reason may be that the JICLE students 'learned English under the 2002 and 2003 versions of the [Education] Ministry's Course of Study', which emphasized communicative experiences, using basic nouns such as *thing*, as well as basic verbs amid the English learning context of 'globalisation', 'intercultural communication' and 'international understanding' (Ikegami & Kaneko, 2009: 187-188). A similar view is also found in the study by Hinkel (2003), where NNSs used communicative textbooks in the 1980s, and used significantly more vague language, among which *thing* is one case. Therefore, the JICLE preference for *thing* suggests an influence of English teaching syllabus and materials on the use of vocabulary.

5.4.4: Decision in th-be-N

Decision occurred significantly more frequently in US than it did in JICLE in **th-be-N** (Pattern 10) (N=0:5, LL score 7.00). In both corpora the noun occurs in the following syntactic form:

[*th - be - the/a decision*].

As discussed earlier in Section 5.2.2, *decision* in the JICLE and the US corpora occurs in two meanings. One meaning of *decision* is a Mental noun, which portrays a psychological or conceptual state in which a future course of action is deliberated (Schmid, 2020: 213). Another meaning of *decision* is an Eventive noun. Its referent is a 'physically observable [event] which [has] a temporal duration' (ibid.: 261). The occurrences of *decision* in US appear mostly as a Mental noun. In JICLE, *decision* in **th-be-N** occurred only once, and it

was an Eventive noun. I start examining lexicalisation of each type of *decision* occurring in each of the corpora, firstly with *decision* as an Eventive noun.

Eventive meaning *decision* occurred in both corpora in a small number. (Once in JICLE.) It is lexicalised in a similar way in the two corpora in a short clause or two, expressing what is 'decided', as shown below. Example 5.35 is from JICLE, and Example 5.36 is from US:

Anyway, one of my grandfather's friends decided to live at an old people's home in that area. My grandfather's friend lived with his daughter-in-law for a long time. His son died long time ago and after his death, his wife had taken care of him. Although I said, his son's wife had taken care of him, since he had been very healthy and in reverse he helped her a lot. She worked at a company and he was at home taking care of housework. Grandfather's friend decided to go there because his daughter-in-law was going to get married. He thought if he stayed with her, it would disturb their life. I think it was a good **decision**.// In this essay I want to discuss whether it is good to live long or to live short.

Example 5.35: *Decision* as an Eventive noun in th-be-N in JICLE

There were many faults in the court's decision. The main problem was that it seemed to be made in haste. The judges decided the fate of this innocent four year old boy in a matter of four hours. When the Does took the case to the U.S. Supreme Court they were denied a trial. However, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor ordered that each judge submit a brief stating how they came to the conclusion. Yet, this does not change the **decision.**

Example 5.36: *Decision* as an Eventive noun in th-be-N in US

The content of *the decision* in Example 5.35 (JICLE) is a decision by a friend of the writer's grandfather, which is 'to move into the house of his daughter-in-law'. *Decision* in Example 5.36 (US) refers to a court verdict.

The two corpora diverge dramatically as regards to a Mental meaning of *decision*: Mental *decision* does not occur at all in JICLE. When it occurs in US, most of the instances of *decision*s are of Mental meaning, and its meaning tends to be recoverable from a long, or whole, preceding discourse. An example is shown in Example 5.37:

...Some people have little or no hope for their life as they have known it, and simply want to end it. They do not want life to be <*>. It is a personal decision; one that must be taken very seriously, for there's no turning back. If there is no hope for life as we know or want it, what decision would we make? Would we want someone else to make this decision without regarding our wish(es). It is not an easy decision to make. But, it is our choice to make: this is our life, our death that we are talking about. There's a lot to be considered. Ask questions, ask for advice, but ultimately, it is our very own **decision.** <*>. <text end>

Example 5.37: *Decision* as a Mental noun in th-be-N in US

This essay discusses where to draw the line between life and imminent death, and whether or not we should take our lives without using advanced technologies to prolong life. The subject *it* refers to the whole preceding segment with the deliberate two opposing sides of mental states, and the content is summarised as *decision*.

Discussion (Use of *decision* and essay topics)

Decision in **th-be-N** occurred only once. It was an Eventive meaning *decision*, and referred to a short and immediately preceding segment. In the US corpus too, an Eventive meaning *decision* occurred, but most cases of *decision* in US referred to a Mental meaning *decision*, which was lexicalised in the longer stretches of preceding discourse.

In one way, no occurrences of *decision* in **th-be-N** in the JICLE corpus seems to represent a general dispreference pattern in the corpus; that is to say, dispreference for lexicalisation of shell nouns in the whole, or paragraphs-long, preceding discourse in JICLE. This tendency was similarly identified with *issue* in the **th-N** pattern. *Issue* in US was lexicalised in the whole preceding discourse, but this lexicalisation did not occur in JICLE (see Section 5.3.4). *Problem* in the **th-N** pattern also showed that the JICLE students did not lexicalised it in the very long preceding discourse (Ante-4 type antecedent). (See Section 5.3.1.)

In another way, regarding the higher frequency of *decision* in US occurring as Mental *decision*, and the zero frequency of Mental *decision* in JICLE, the frequency difference of *decision* in the two corpora may be influenced by essay topics of each of the corpora. As discussed in Section 5.2.2, Mental meaning *decision* in US occurred in essays that dealt with such topics as whether or not abortions, assisted suicide, or life prolonging medical practices can be upheld from moral, or legal, viewpoints. In JICLE, this type of topic was not selected. Regarding topic differences in the two corpora, what affected the selection of topics by the two groups of students can be posed as a question. One answer could be influence of the EFL materials that the JICLE students used at the tertiary education level. The JICLE students ‘learned English under the 2002 and 2003 versions of the [Education] Ministry’s Course of Study’ (Ikegami & Kaneko, 2009: 188). The guidance emphasised communicative English to use English effectively in actual contexts amid the world-wide trend of globalisation. Textbooks published under such a goal of

English education often tried to ‘encourage respect for Japanese culture and awareness of Japan's place in the world’ (Hardy, 2007: 17 in Yuasa, 2010). Yuasa (ibid) analysed some junior and senior high school English textbooks, including *New Horizon English Course* 1, 2, 3 (Kasajima et al., 2008), *Unicorn English Course* (Ichikawa et al., 2006) and *Unicorn English Reading Course* (Ichikawa et al., 2008), and pointed out that nearly half of the content in the textbooks is comprised of such topics as foreign culture and society, Japanese culture and society, and comparisons between foreign and Japanese culture. Topics that require mental deliberation such as philosophy and ethics are dealt with in a very low proportion (Yuasa, 2010: 155-156). This being the case, it can be assumed that the JICLE students may not have been familiarised with the concepts and related vocabulary of these topics. This indicates the importance of topics in EFL materials.

5.4.5: Summary: Shell nouns in th-be-N

The overall frequencies of **th-be-N** were not significantly different in JICLE and US (N=36:29, LL score 1.25), but this section revealed that shell nouns functioned as metadiscursive devices with different lexicalisation patterns between JICLE and US.

Firstly the higher frequencies of analysed shell nouns in JICLE (i.e., *problem, thing, reason*) were realised without sufficiently explaining the meanings of shell nouns, specifically:

- *Problem* in **th-be-N** (N=8:3, LL score 4.61) (e.g., *This is a problem*) did not make clear that the referent is evaluated as problematic in JICLE. This indicates that the use of *problem* for **th-be-N** is not functioning for an explicit argument construction.
- *Reason* in **th-be-N** (e.g., *This is reason for…*) can express a clear Causal Relation between the referent and the referring segment. However, in JICLE *reason* occurred significantly more often than in US (N=8:3, LL score 4.61) without functioning to express a clear Causal Relation.
- *Thing* in **th-be-N** (e.g., *It is an scary thing*) occurred almost exclusively in JICLE (N=10:1, LL score 15.93), where it may have a stronger characterisation role occurring as an ‘evaluative adjective (e.g., *important, scary*) + *thing*’. However, the writers who

use *thing* in this pattern express their arguments with insufficient information relevant to the topic in question.

The vague meaning association of *problem, thing* and *reason* to the referent means that although a shell noun in **th-be-N** is proposed as having strong characterisation and linking roles in Schmid (2000), they seem to play a weaker linking role and a stronger characterisation role in JICLE than Schmid suggested.

The other shell noun, *decision,* in **th-be-N** (N=0:5, LL score 7.00) (e.g., *it was a good decision*) occurred mostly in US as a 'Mental' *decision.* For Mental *decision,* the meaning of the noun was often explained in the whole preceding text, and Mental *decision* did not occur in JICLE at all. This finding can support a broad claim of this thesis that the JICLE students dispreferred a lexicalisation pattern where the shell noun meaning was expressed in a long stretch of discourse. In addition, the use or non-use of Mental *decision* was related to the essay topics, which suggests an influence of the EFL materials that the students used in high school.

This thesis also proposed that many of these lexicalisation features in JICLE, summarised above, may be transferred from some Japanese cultural and writing conventions, as follows:

- The use of evaluative adjectives combined with *thing* may retain the Japanese argumentation style, in which the writer tries to impress the reader with some superficial words, rather than explaining the main point in detail, as Shinmura (1998, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004) proposed.
- Vague Causal Relations formed by *reason* in the *This is a reason* sentences in JICLE may be influenced by a *'Therefore'* thinking pattern of Japanese people (Murata, 2001). In contrast, Americans tend to have a *'Because'* thinking pattern and it may have helped to create explicit Causal Relations with the use of *This is a reason* in the US essays.

5.5: Summary: Chapter 5

Chapter 5 has investigated lexicalisation patterns of shell nouns in the respective host-syntactic patterns where shell nouns occur, using high frequency shell nouns (e.g.,

reason, thing, problem, idea, fact, decision) in the JICLE and the US corpora. The chapter also interpreted metadiscursive functions of the nouns in the discourse, based on the three types of metadiscursive roles (i.e., characterisation, temporary concept-forming, linking) as Schmid (2000) suggested.

Through the analysis, this chapter has suggested that the use of shell nouns is closely related to preferred argumentation and text construction patterns in each of the corpora. It has also proposed possible causes of different use of shell nouns from varied perspectives, such as L1 essay writing conventions, cultural differences, and EFL materials. All of the findings in this chapter will be discussed further in the next chapter, to suggest pedagogical implications.

6: Conclusion

This thesis has addressed the question of whether or not the use of shell nouns is a source of the different impressions which a reader might get from English essays written by Japanese students, compared to those written by American students, and if so, where the differences might lie. In an attempt to answer this question, this thesis has analysed the use of 33 shell nouns (Schmid, 2000), by looking at three specific research questions:

1. How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

2. How frequently do L1 Japanese student writers use shell noun host syntactic patterns in comparison to L1 English students?

3. In what ways do L1 Japanese student writers lexicalise shell nouns in comparison to L1 English students?

This chapter firstly answers each of these research questions (Section 6.1). In addition to the question results, through the investigation of shell noun roles, discourse and argument construction patterns in each of the corpora are made explicit, and this is explained in the succeeding section (Section 6.2). This final chapter also identifies causes of differences in the use of shell nouns in the two corpora (Section 6.3) and suggests pedagogical implications of the study (Section 6.4). After assessing the methodology of the research (Section 6.5) and proposing directions for future inquiries (Section 6.6), this chapter concludes the present study.

6.1: Results answering the research questions

In brief, an examination of the three questions has yielded the following results, firstly on singular shell nouns. Regarding Question 1, on noun frequency patterns, the total frequency of shell nouns in the Japanese corpus (JICLE) was not significantly different from that observed in the American corpus (US) with the frequency ratio standing at 277 and 271, in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 0.11). However, these similar frequencies were attained in different ways. The JICLE use of nouns was realised through repetitions of a small number of items (e.g., *problem*, *thing*, *reason*), whilst the US use incorporated a much wider range of items (see Section 4.2.1). These frequency results are similar to those in previous findings (e.g., L. Flowerdew, 2003; Mojica, 2006, Caldwell, 2009; J. Flowerdew, 2010), and no particular JICLE features were revealed. However, regarding whether or not other L1 students also use such nouns as *thing* and *reason* significantly more than NS writers, it is not clear from the comparison with the past studies.

In terms of the preferred host syntactic patterns (Question 2) and lexicalisation of shell nouns (Question 3), the use of shell nouns in **N-be-CL** and **Non-appositive N:CL** was not so different in JICLE and US; nouns occurred for these syntactic types in similar frequencies, and in similar lexicalisation patterns. Occurring notably less often among the JICLE students than the US students was the **Appositive N:CL** syntactic type. Although less frequent, lexicalisation of nouns in this syntactic type, such as *fact*, *decision* and *idea*, was similar in the two corpora. Therefore, in terms of lexicalisation, there were not major differences between JICLE and US for these three syntactic types (i.e., **N-be-CL**, **Non-appositive N:CL**, **Appositive N:CL**). The JICLE dispreference for **N:CL** seemed related to a JICLE dispreference for implicit discourse construction.

A notable divergence was found in the use of shell nouns in the **th-N** and the **th-be-N** patterns. More specifically, the JICLE students used the **th-N** pattern significantly more frequently than the US students did (N=100:78, LL score 4.19), but the usage of the JICLE students was typified by vagueness in lexicalisation, with vagueness mostly accounted for by insufficiently explained meaning of nouns, or lexicalisation with more than one meaning in the referent. Similarly, the **th-be-N** pattern occurred in similar frequencies in the two corpora (N=36:29, LL score 1.25), but the meaning link between N

and the referred content was weak in JICLE. This was not the case in US. Concerning this usage of shell nouns for anaphoric functions in JICLE that is indicated by marking of the discourse with vague lexicalisation, I argued in Chapter 5 that anaphoric functions of shell nouns in JICLE were formed with a much stronger characterisation role, but with a much weaker linking role, than expected with shell nouns in English essays (refer to Section 6.1.1. below).

Regarding plural shell nouns (Nplurals), the JICLE students used them significantly more often than the US students (N=107:76, LL score 9.40); the high frequencies of Nplurals in JICLE were mostly attributed to occurrences of Nplurals in **Nplural:CL** with *reasons* and *things*. Interesting was that **Nplural:CL** is typically a native L1 English-preferred pattern as a cataphoric signpost (Ivanic, 1991). In JICLE, the significantly higher frequency of **Nplural:CL** than in US was accounted for by a strong preference for **there-be-Nplural:C**L and **Np-be-Nplural:CL**. The JICLE students may have preferred **there-be-Nplural:C**L because it allows 'isolated topic shifts' without describing a new topic in a longer sentence (Huckin & Pesante, 1988: 383), and **Np-be-Nplural:CL** because it can function as a frame marker using *I/we* at the subject position (e.g., **I'll** state *three reasons* why I assent to the death penalty) (see Section 4.2).

From all of these findings, the usage of shell nouns that was most challenging for the JICLE students seems to have been anaphoric functions of shell nouns. I discuss this aspect of the shell noun functions in the JICLE essays, in comparison to in the US essays, in the next section.

6.1.1: Influence of Japanese referential systems

One of the reasons for the focus on metadiscursive nouns as target linguistic items in this thesis was out of my interest in different roles of anaphoric nouns in Japanese and English texts that were suggested in past studies. Some studies (e.g., Kinsui & Takubo, 1992; Watanabe, 2006) reported that Japanese and English have different referential systems, and a study in Iori (2007) suggested that perhaps influenced by different referential systems, Japanese anaphoric nouns, which he called *laberu bari* (*labelling*), have a different metadiscursive role than English anaphoric nouns; that is to say *laberu bari* (*labelling*) do

not function metadiscursively without a demonstrative combined with the nouns. For example, *kachi no tenkan* (*change of values*), a *laberu bari* noun phrase, cannot function metadiscursively as it is, but does function as such when occurring as *'**kono**' kachi no tenkan* (*'**this**' change of values*) (see Figure 1.3, Section 1.5). A question raised was whether or not such a difference in the two languages would affect the way Japanese students use metadiscursive nouns in L2 English writing.

Answering this question, in one respect, what I claimed was a 'much stronger characterisation, but with a much weaker linking role' of shell nouns occurring in **th-N** and **th-be-N**, in the JICLE essays, seems to somewhat overlap roles of *laberu bari*; that is to say, the linking role of *laberu bari* lies in the demonstrative attached to the nouns and thus, the noun has a weak linking role, whilst the role of *laberu bari* is to clearly characterise the referred content. This can suggest that features of the Japanese metadiscursive device have influenced the way the JICLE students used anaphoric functions of shell nouns. At the same time, however, this cannot be a strong claim, because vagueness of referred contents by referring items has been identified in student essays written by other L1s than Japanese (e.g., Zhang, 2000, Hinkel, 2001). In order to claim a negative effect of different referential systems of Japanese language from English on the use of anaphoric functions of shell nouns, it has to be shown that the referred content of the shell noun in L2 English essays by Japanese students is much more vague than that by students of other L1 types. The existing studies seem not to provide that information.

6.2: Features of shell noun use by the Japanese students

This section discusses the use of shell nouns that was different in JICLE from that in US. It firstly details the JICLE preferred shell noun use, in comparison to the US use below, and then describes the JICLE dispreferred use (Section 6.2.2).

6.2.1: Preferred use of shell nouns in JICLE

The JICLE student essays were constructed by using a small number of shell nouns, *problem, reason* and *thing*, in particular. These nouns were used to: a) form textual frames, b) mark the discourse with vague lexicalisation, c) mark the discourse with evaluative adjectives, and d) leave interpretations to the reader, as explained below.

Shell noun use to form textual frames

One of the JICLE strategies to use shell nouns as metadiscursive items was using shell nouns to form textual frames. A type of textual frames in the JICLE essays is the circular discourse pattern, which has the following discourse sequence:

Generalised statement - Explanation of the statement - Repetition of the generalised statement.

In the circular discourse pattern, shell nouns often occurred as same item repetitions in the repetition segment in the sequence, as shown with *problem* in Example 6.1 (JICLE) (reproduced from example 7 in Section 3.4):

There is also a cost **problem**. Students of online university have to pay as much as normal one. Actually the cost should be less than normal one … (omission of two long sentences)…// … (omission one paragraph)… //… Cost **problem** is still remain…

Example 6. 1. *Problem* as same item repetition functioning metadiscursively in the circular pattern in JICLE

In the extract, (*cost*) *problem* occurs at the start and the end of the segment. The second (*cost*) *problem* is appears to be a same item repetition, but it is a metadiscursive noun in this thesis, following the definition explained in Section 3.4.

Another type of textual frames that the JICLE students used is host syntactic patterns which were used in specific ways. This was shown particularly clearly with *reason* for **N-be-CL**. In this syntactic pattern *reason* occurred in combination with an ordinal adjective (e.g., *first, second*), and patterns occurred such as: *First reason is that…; Second reason is that*…; and *Third reason is that.…*, and these sentences occurred in a structured way in the text. In particular, these **N-be-CL** sentences often occurred embedded in the **Nplural:CL** syntactic type, where Nplural also occurred in combination with an ordinal adjective (e.g., *three reasons*), and the CL in **Nplural:CL** was comprised of several

N-be-CL syntactic patterns. This relations between **Nplural:CL** and **N-be-CL** in JICLE are shown below:

Three reasons (Ordinal adjective + **Nplural: CL**)

- Ordinal adjective (*first*) + *reason* - *be* - *that*-CL (**N-be-CL**)
- Ordinal adjective (*second*) + *reason* -*be* - *that*-CL (**N-be-CL**)
- Ordinal adjective (*third*) + *reason* - *be* - *that*-CL (**N-be-CL**)

In this way, this combination of **N-be-CL** and **Nplural:CL** formed a textual frame, explicitly showing where the new segments start in the discourse in JICLE. This use of shell nouns contrasts with that in US. *Reason* in **N-be-CL** in US was typically modified by a restrictive adjective (e.g., *one, main*) and the focused topic was developed in the discourse. In this way, the US essays were organised in an 'implicit' way.

Other syntactic patterns that the JICLE students used to form textual structure were **Np-v-th-N** and **Np-v-N:CL**, including the use of Nplural for these patterns. The JICLE students made these syntactic patterns a structural frame from which a discourse starts or a shift of discourse occurs, by placing *I* or *we* at the subject (Np) position in the sentences, as follows:

(1) If **we** overcome this serious ***problem***…
Np v th-N

(2) **I'll** state three ***reasons***.
Np v Nplural:CL

These sentences can function metadiscourse markers (MDMs), because they form statements elucidating the discourse which follows. In this way, the JICLE students used shell nouns as a strategy to form textual frames in the L2 English essays. A reason for the use of this strategy may be that textual frames allow the writer not to explain the in-between contents of frames, and can provide security in writing L2 essays, as will be discussed in more detail later.

Shell noun use with vague lexicalisation

Another way of shell noun use that JICLE preferred is using shell nouns as discourse markers without clearly explaining the meaning of the nouns in the referent. This strategy was mostly exhibited for anaphoric functions in the present study. Unclear lexicalisation had two major types: insufficient information about the meaning, and also an expression of the meaning with more than one element (see Example 5.14 and Example 5.15, respectively, using *problem* for **th-N**). Although vague in meaning, shell nouns occurred at a functional shift of the discourse, and functioned as a discourse marker in most of the occurrences.

To note, however, sometimes shell nouns in the JICLE essays seemed not to be functioning in their metadiscursive roles, as they did in the US essays, which was exhibited in less clear clause relations that shell nouns attempted to form in the text. For example, *reason* used for anaphoric functions (i.e., **th-N** and **th-be-N**), often failed to express clear Causal Relations in the JICLE essays; that is to say, *reason* for **Peripheral th-N** (e.g., *for this reason*) in English essays can normally function to create explicit Causal Relations between the referred and referring segments. However, *for this reason* in JICLE often could not function in this way, but functioned to express a temporal change, which functions similarly to *and, so*, or *therefore,* as shown below in Example 6.2 (reproduced from Example 5.23):

> Another was that France and Great Britain decided the boundary of the Bangkok Dynasty on their own, which became the boundary of Thailand; for that **reason**, many ethnic groups were left which were not Thai.

Example 6.2: An unclear Causal Relation created by *for that reason* in JICLE

Another example is *reason* in **th-be-N** (e.g., *This is a reason why…*). This semi-fixed *reason*-phrase was used for a clear and explicit claim of the writer in US (refer to Example 5.30). However, this was not usually the case in JICLE, as shown below, in Example 6.3 (reproduced from Example 5.31)*:*

> Our ancestors didn't need to learn second language because they have everything they needed inside Japan. They didn't need to import or export their product. This was the main **reason** why our ancestors didn't learn second language, including English.

Example 6.3: *Reason* in th-be-N, which does not express a clear claim of the writer in JICLE

Reason above is used for a similar function to *so*, or *therefore*, and thus it is not functioning to lead to a clear claim by the writer.

Similarly, *problem* for anaphoric functions, particularly for **th-be-N** (e.g., *This is a problem*), in JICLE exhibited a weak metadiscursive role to form a phenomenon-reason clause sequence. *Problem* did not show a clear phenomenon-reason relation in JICLE, because the noun was not clearly explained and had a weak meaning association to the content expressed in the referent. In other words, the referred content was not easily identified as a 'problem'. This is as shown with *problem* in Example 6.4 (reproduced from Example 5.29):

<text initial> In Japanese class, teachers take too much time to teach English grammar. I think that it is too enough. However, students aim an entrance examination of Japanese university. It is a big **problem**. In order to increase the number of children who can speak English well, the government has to change the educational system.

Example 6.4: *Problem* for th-be-N, with a weak meaning association to the referent in JICLE

In contrast, the clause relation was usually clear in the US essays. Particularly, if an association between the noun label and the content was not clear in the US essays, it was made clear by adding a Reason segment, as shown below in Example 6.5 (reproduced from Example 5.28), where a clause starting with *since* functions as such:

However, most of the traditional household roles formerly performed by women exclusively (but now handled by people of both sexes) have never been compensated by the dollar. This poses a **problem**, **since** undoubtedly those at-home tasks contribute services to society equally valuable in comparison to marketplace "jobs". Therefore, in order for society to fully acknowledge the value of both types of jobs--in the home and outside the home, some sort of compensation should be made for "home-making service" as well as for he or she who works outside the home. //

Example 6.5: Clearly signalled 'problem' segment, that is followed by Reason segment in US

Thus, in JICLE, shell nouns for anaphoric functions often functioned as metadiscursive items, occurring at the shift of functional patterns despite vague lexicalisation. This is why this thesis argues that shell nouns in JICLE were functioning as abrupt discourse markers. This type of metadiscursive function of shell nouns is considered to be formed, in view of Schmid's (2000) three types of metadiscursive roles of shell nouns (i.e., characterisation, temporary concept-forming, linking), because nouns played a very weak linking role but a very strong characterisation role, when shell nouns for **th-N** and **th-be-N** can normally function metadiscursively with strong linking and characterisation

roles. Maybe because of this unbalanced use of metadiscursive roles, shell nouns in JICLE did not perform clear rhetorical functions.

Shell noun use with evaluative adjectives

Another shell noun use that the JICLE students preferred was using *thing* with evaluative adjectives. They used *thing* much more than the US students did. The higher frequency of *thing* occurred with vague lexicalisation of the noun, and also by use of *thing* in combination with an evaluative adjective, as in *wonderful thing, important thing,* or *sad thing.* These *thing* phrases functioned to terminate the discourse, occurring in **th-be-N** (N=10:1, LL score 15.93) and **N-be-CL** (N=14:5, LL score 6.65).

The **th-be-N** syntactic patterns occurred, as in *This is an* 'adjective + *thing'*. An example in JICLE is shown below in Example 6.6 (reproduced from Example 5.32), where *thing* is modified by the adjective *proper*:

They should make the murderers pay the expense by making them suffer for their horrible acts and doing something good for the society. The murderers should have to live with the guilty feeling of taking another person's life away. It is a more **proper thing** to do.//Third, would less people commit a crime if there is the death penalty?

Example 6.6: *Thing* modified by an evaluative adjective (*proper*), summarising the discourse in JICLE

Features of 'adjective + *thing*' included cases when an adjective was used to evaluate the content but which did not sufficiently describe what the *thing* is, and also when evaluation provided by an adjective was used mostly to express the writer' personal and subjective feeling about the content, as opposed to an objective evaluation of the content. With vague content in the referent, and subjective evaluation, *thing* in JICLE marked the discourse by terminating it.

Regarding an 'evaluative adjective + *thing*' for **N-be-CL**, the evaluative adjective in JICLE was almost always *important*, as occurring in: *The most important thing is that…* In **N-be-CL**, the lexicalisation is a grammatical requirement and the meaning of N is expressed in the CL. Lexicalisation was conducted properly in JICLE, similar to that in the US corpus. However very unique about the lexicalisation of *thing* for **N-be-CL** in JICLE was that the lexicalized content in the *that*-clause was not clearly relevant to the preceding argument, but a generalised and uncontested comment. Without having a logical

connection to the argument in the preceding discourse, the sentence *The most important thing is that…* was functioning to conclude the discourse. This is exhibited in (*the most important*) *thing* in Example 6.7 (reproduced from Example 5.1), shown below:

> Finally, in the future, for we flourish not only in Japan, but also in foreign country, Japanese students need to master English as a second language. It is never easy, but someday our efforts will be paid off. The most important **thing** is enjoy to learn English. I think it is good for Japanese to use English as a second language. I want to let foreigners know about Japan. <text end>

Example 6.7: *Thing* with its meaning having little relevance to the preceding discourse in JICLE

Evaluation can play a discourse terminating role (Hunston, 1994). Probably due to this function, evaluative adjectives combined with *thing* functioned to terminate the discourse. It seems very convenient for the JICLE to use 'evaluative adjective + *thing*', because it allows the writer to mark the discourse without clearly lexicalising the noun, or explaining the proposition. This is a JICLE-specific strategy, very rarely used in the US corpus. (The generalised content introduced by *The most important thing is that…* seems to be related to the discourse construction type of the preceding discourse, which does not have one focused topic to be developed in the argument, as will be discussed more fully later.)

Shell noun use by leaving interpretations to the reader

The JICLE students also indicated a tendency to leave interpretation of the meaning of shell nouns to the reader, with the writer offering little explanation. This feature was clearly exhibited with the use of *the same thing*, as well as *such a thing* (the use of *thing* for **th-N**). The US students rarely use these *thing* phrases in **th-N**, as the frequency ratio of *thing* for **th-N** stands at 17:3, in JICLE and US (LL score 17.34). The use of *the same thing* was particularly higher in JICLE, and the students used the phrase without explaining 'how same' the referred and the referring contents are. The JICLE preference for these phrases may be accounted for by the high-context culture (Hall, 1976) which characterises Japanese society, as will be discussed more in the next section.

Summary

The JICLE preferred patterns of use of shell nouns, detailed above, commonly suggest a distinct feature in JICLE; that is to say, shell nouns in JICLE were to form textual frames. Also, they were used as abrupt discourse markers, in the sense that they functioned as discourse markers without clearly lexicalising the meanings of shell nouns.

6.2.2: Dispreferred use of shell nouns in JICLE

We now focus on dispreferred shell noun use by the JICLE students. Dispreferred was using shell nouns for: a) an implicit discourse construction and b) cataphoric signposting of the discourse. These features were exhibited with such nouns as *fact, decision, idea, aspect*, and *difference*, which occurred significantly more in US.

Shell noun use for implicit discourse

Dispreference for implicit discourse construction was exhibited in the significantly less frequent use of appositive type **N:CL**, where CL is adjacent to the shell noun. Shell nouns for **Appositive N:CL** can function as a strong rhetorical gambit and shift the discourse in a subtle, implicit way. The JICLE students used this syntactic pattern significantly less frequently than the US students did, as evidenced most clearly by the use of *fact*. Dispreference for implicit discourse construction by the JICLE students was also revealed because the students did not use restrictive adjectives (e.g., *one, main*). They instead used ordinal adjectives (e.g., *first, second*), which can explicitly mark the structures of the text.

Shell noun use for signposting

Regarding dispreference for the cataphoric signposting function of shell nouns, this function occurred for a type of **Non-appositive N:CL**, where the meaning of a shell noun was expressed in a long succeeding segment across the sentence boundary (refer to Section 3.5.1). Shell nouns' signposting functions were observed only in the US corpus in the present study, with *aspect* and *difference* (refer to Examples 5.9 and 5.10, respectively).

The JICLE students used text- or owner-less nouns (Francis, 1986) that do not require a long lexicalisation of the meanings as much as the US students did. The JICLE students may not have used the signposting function because it requires detailed information that can explain the meanings of the nouns.

We have identified preferred and dispreferred shell noun use patterns in JICLE, in comparison to that in US. What factors may have caused the featured use in the JICLE essays are discussed in the next section.

6.3: Causes of different shell noun use strategies

As discussed in Chapter 5, this thesis proposes the following factors as causes that influenced the featured use of shell nouns in JICLE: a) Insecurity in writing L2 essays, b) transfer of L1 essay writing patterns to L2 writing, c) transfer of L1 social and cultural values, and d) effects of English teaching materials.

Insecurity in writing L2 essays

A feature of the JICLE students' use of shell nouns was that they were used to mark the structures of the text in an explicit way. Textual structures marked included the circular pattern, and some syntactic patterns that were functioning as MDMs, and **N-be-CL** with ordinal adjectives (see JICLE preferred strategy, above). An explicit marking of the text structure may be accounted for by the students' feelings of insecurity in writing L2 English essays because they may be feeling that they do not have good enough English skills to write a proposition with detailed information. The use of an explicit textual structure allows the JICLE students to navigate the discourse without clearly lexicalising the proposition; that is to say, once a textual structure is formed, the linkages of the content between structural frames can be allowed to remain vague.

Transfer of L1 essay writing conventions

L1 Japanese essay writing conventions may also have influenced the shell noun use by the JICLE students. This was suggested in varied patterns. In one way, the JICLE strategy of using some host syntactic patterns (e.g., **Np-v-th-N**, **Np-be-Nplural:CL**) as MDMs may reflect a Japanese essay convention, although it was also discussed as a way of providing security in L2 English essays in the above paragraph. Regarding the preference for frame markers in Japanese essays, Saijo (1999, in Maynard, 2005: 325) points to an important function of frame markers in Japanese essays to make the reader understand the message. Japanese essays written without frame markers were found to exhibit difficulty conveying the message in the study by Saijo (1999).

Explaining the meaning of a shell noun with more than one aspect of the noun label in the JICLE essays, as exemplified with *problem* for **th-N** (See Example 5.15), may also be an L1 transfer phenomena. The convention that was transferred is the *danraku* paragraph writing style. The *danraku* is different from the English paragraph. A main difference is that whilst in the English paragraph, the topic sentence is explained in supporting sentences with details about the topic (Oshima & Hogue, 1991: 26, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004), a topic sentence is not expanded in Japanese *danraku.* Instead, the *danraku* paragraph is comprised of a group of parallel content sentences which are not tightly connected, and there is not one focused comment that is developed in a *danraku* paragraph (Matsumura, 1999, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004). Moreover, the Japanese *danraku* is a flexible chunk of segments and it can include topics until 'the writers think they have written a lot [about the topic] in a paragraph' (Kinoshita, 1981: 61, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004: 10). Perhaps in parallel to this argumentation pattern in the *danraku* paragraph, a shell noun in JICLE was lexicalised by listing several elements of the meaning of the shell noun.

A consequence of the lexicalisation of a shell noun with multiple aspects of the noun meaning in the JICLE was that in *The most important thing is that…* (*thing* for **N-be-CL**), which functioned to terminate the discourse, the content of the *that*-clause, or the CL, was an uncontested generalised summary, which was not derived from the argument in the preceding segment. In other words, because of multiple focuses expressed in the preceding segment, it seems difficult to draw a conclusion from the preceding

argument (see Section 5.1.3). This points to the importance of Japanese students learning how to write an English paragraph by incorporating the use of shell nouns.

Another Japanese writing convention transferred to the L2 English writing seems to involve a preferred use of evaluative adjectives which occurred in combination with *thing* for **th-be-N** (e.g., *It is* an *important/proper/wonderful thing*) (see Section 5.4.3, Section 6.2.1). The use of evaluative adjective in the JICLE essays may reflect a Japanese writing convention, which emphasises trying to impress the reader with a skillful use of modifiers to emotionally move readers (Shinmura, 1998, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004). This is different from the way L1 English writers value convincing the listener/reader by explaining one's proposition in detail.

Transfer of L1 social and cultural values

Another factor of different use of shell nouns in JICLE, in comparison to in US, may be Japanese social and cultural values. A case of social and cultural transfer was straightforward with the strong preference for *the same thing* and *such a thing* in JICLE, which may be influenced by the Japanese 'high-context' culture (Hall, 1976), where opinions and ideas are left unsaid or not spelled out, and an interpretation is left to the reader.

Other social and cultural effects on the use of shell nouns were more indirect, but the Japanese *danraku* practice, where a topic is discussed from varied viewpoints without developing one focused topic, itself seems to be a product that was influenced by Japanese social and cultural values. The phenomenon of listing multiple topics can be a part of politeness strategies, particularly in spoken discourse. This means that the speaker is trying to look for a topic that the interlocutor is interested in by bringing up several topics in succession, to focus on one topic once a topic that the listener is interested in is identified (Murata, 2001: 65). (See *reason*, in Section 5.3.3.)

An influence of the students' L1 cultural and social values was also exhibited in the students' 'bi-directional' argumentation pattern (Oi & Kamimura, 1997), which serves to avoid clearly expressing their position toward the proposition. This was shown in labelling *gakubatsu*, academic clique practice at the companies, as a *problem* (see Example

5.14). The JICLE students lexicalised the *gakubatsu* both as a common and acceptable practice and bad practice that should be abolished.

Cultural influence on the use of shell nouns in JICLE was also exhibited clearly with the use of *reason* for **th-N** (e.g., *for this reason*) and **th-be-N** (e.g., *this is a reason for…*). The JICLE students were not good at using *reason* for metadiscursive functions, and *reason* in JICLE did not clearly function for Causal Relations. A cultural factor underlying this tendency may be what is referred to as the *'Therefore'* thinking pattern of Japanese people. In a '*Therefore*' thinking pattern, a topic is presented, to be followed by another topic, and each topic is connected by *and* or *for* (Murata, 2001). (see *reason* for **th-N**, Section 5.3.3). English speaking people generally have a *'Because'* thinking pattern and they tend to be good at expressing a Causal Relation (ibid.). This seems to suggest that Causal Relations should be taught explicitly to Japanese students, as they may potentially avoid expressing clear causal reasoning in the discourse.

Effect of English teaching materials

English teaching materials that the JICLE students used may also have influenced preferred/dispreferred vocabulary. Notable frequency differences of vocabulary in the two corpora were shown in such nouns as *reason* (N=62:31) and *thing* (N=47:11), which occurred significantly more in JICLE; and *fact* (N=29:59), *decision* (N=2:19) and *issue* (N=4:15), which occurred significantly more in US (see Tables 4.2 and 4.3). Of these nouns, the JICLE preference for *thing*, and JICLE dispreference for *decision* may be strongly influenced by English teaching policies and teaching materials with which the JICLE students studied English. In other words, influences may have come from EFL materials that the JICLE students used, which seem to have been mostly published under the 2002 and 2003 versions of the Education Ministry's Course of Study (Ikegami & Kaneko, 2009: 187). These EFL materials emphasised communicative English for an 'effective use of English in actual context' at the time of a growing interest in globalisation, intercultural communication, and international understanding. However, a down side of communicative English is that it tends to emphasise basic nouns and verbs, which include *thing*. It is often used for spoken communication, but is not suited for academic writing. A

higher frequency of *thing* in JICLE than in US seems to have been influenced in part by the EFL materials the students used (see also Section 5.4.3, *Thing* in **th-be-N**).

Regarding *decision*, which occurred significantly less in JICLE than in US (N=2:19), it may have been influenced by topics that were included in these EFL materials. A majority of the topics in them were related to foreign/Japanese culture and society and also studying English (Hardy, 2007; Yuasa, 2010). These topics seem not to be well suited to academic writing. This is because with these topics, the students may be trained to write about subjective experiences and personal views based on their personal experiences and interests, but they may not be trained to logically explaining the writer's proposition. Topics that are more suited for academic writing would include 'ethical topics' (e.g., abortions, assisted suicide, life-prolonging medical practice, which the US students addressed in their essays), 'peace and human rights', 'science' and 'environment'. In the study by Yuasa (2010), these topics accounted for only a small percentage of the overall topics in junior/senior high school EFL materials in Japan.

Summary

This section discussed causes of differences in the use of shell nouns in JICLE and US, from varied perspectives. A general feature that can underlie these causes is social, cultural, and linguistic transfer of L1 conventions. This indicates that 'learners [of English] depend heavily on the familiar, either by choosing words and phrases closely resembling their first language or those learnt early or widely used', which Hasselgren (1994: 237) calls the 'lexical teddy bear' phenomenon. It occurs when we are 'stripped of the confidence and ease we take for granted in our first language flow'. This seems to clearly explain shell nouns strategies featured in the JICLE essays.

6.4: Implications for the teaching of English argumentative essays

The previous section indicated a strong influence of L1 transfer phenomena in the use of shell nouns in writing L2 English essays. It may not be easy for the learners of English to part from the familiarity of their L1 usage. Nevertheless the main areas of Japanese

students' weakness in the use of shell nouns, identified earlier, point to some clear pedagogical implications. This section proposes how their usage of shell nouns can be improved by teaching in the EFL classroom in Japan. Suggested areas for explicit instruction are as follows:

1. Using fewer *thing*-phrases
2. Explaining the shell noun meaning by a focused aspect
3. Lexicalising a shell noun in a long succeeding discourse
4. Summarising a long proceeding discourse with a shell noun
5. Constructing implicit discourse

Using fewer *thing*-phrases

Thing occurred significantly more in JICLE than in US (N=47:11). Firstly, Japanese students should be taught that *thing* is more appropriate for conversation and it would be better not to use it in academic essays. Then, when using this noun, students should know that *thing*-phrases are better avoided. Two such *thing*-phrases are *the same thing* and *such a thing*, because they allow the writer not to explain the meaning of the referent of *thing*, and rather leave the interpretation of the meaning of the referent to the reader.

A teaching strategy for Japanese students to avoid using *the same thing* and *such a thing* might be to show Japanese students how rarely *thing*-phrases occurred in the NS essays, and how frequently they occurred in the JICLE essays. In addition, *the same thing*, or *such a thing* used in JICLE may provide a good starting point to teach the use of shell nouns in English essays. One instructional activity could be to have the students find alternatives to *the same thing*; see Example 6.8 from JICLE, below:

So, many people now think that Juvenile Crime Law should be changed. If we have a stricter law for juvenile crimes, I'm sure that crimes will decrease. **The same thing** will apply to the adults. Those who are going to commit a crime will abandon the thought when they think about the death penalty.//

Example 6.8: *The same thing*, which can be replaced with an anaphoric noun in JICLE

The same thing refers to '*having* a *stricter law will reduce crimes for juveniles*'. The students can find an alternative such as *method, approach* or *idea.* Or, the students could

learn to produce a variety of ‘verb + shell noun’ collocations by using ‘*do the same thing*’ as in Example 6.9 (also from JICLE):

> In the past, the European countries invaded so-called "developing countries" under the name of civilization and colonized them. Then, they forced the Christianity which has ruling influence then in Europe and words in their own countries on the people of "developing countries."// Japan, in the World War II, too, **did the same thing** as the European countries.

Example 6.9: *The same thing*, which can be replaced with a verb (*did*) + anaphoric nouns in JICLE

The same thing refers to a situation in which ‘European countries have invaded developing countries and placed them under their control’, described in the preceding paragraph. Alternative phrases to *did the same thing* could be *committed grave injustices*, or *engaged in brutal acts*. In cases like these, the teacher could encourage students to practice finding an appropriate shell noun to replace *thing*, and also to come up with an appropriate ‘verb + shell noun’ combination when applicable.

Another type of *thing*-phrases that should be avoided is ‘evaluative adjective (e.g. *good, scary, wonderful*) + *thing’* phrases. The use of *thing*-phrases was strongly preferred by the JICLE students, probably because it was very convenient for them, as evaluative adjectives served to terminate the discourse and mark the textual structure without clearly explaining the proposition. Moreover, adjectives that the JICLE used were basic and simple ones, which the students could easily use to express subjective and personal feelings. It seems that Japanese essays allow using evaluative adjectives so as to impress the reader with a skillful use of modifiers as noted by Shinmura (1998, in Kimura & Kondo, 2004). However, in English argumentative essays, it is expected that the writer will try to logically convince the reader by clearly explaining ideas and opinions (ibid.). Therefore, Japanese students should be taught to avoid using ‘evaluative adjective + *thing’* to modify insufficiently described content. Instead, they need to practice explaining their propositions with detailed description.

Explaining the shell noun meaning by a focused aspect

A feature of the use of shell nouns in JICLE was vague lexicalisation of the nouns. This was particularly exhibited with the use of nouns for anaphoric functions (e.g., **th-N**, **th-be-N**). One type of vague lexicalisation was having more than one meaning of a shell

noun in the referent, and this seems to be a transfer phenomenon from the Japanese *danraku* paragraph practice. As discussed in the above section, the ideal English paragraph has specific principles to adhere to: It is made up of a topic sentence, supporting sentences and a concluding sentence (Kimura & Kondo, 2004), where a general statement in the topic sentence is explained in supporting sentences with details about the topic, and, the main points of the paragraph is summarised as a concluding segment (Oshima & Hogue, 1991: 26; Kimura & Kondo, 2004). Unlike the English paragraph, the *danraku* paragraph in Japanese essays is comprised of a collection of sentences related to a common topic, with each of the sentences often not elaborately explained and not very tightly connected with each other (Matsumura, 1999 in Kimura & Kondo, 2004: 10). This *danraku* paragraph construction pattern seems to constitute a parallel phenomenon to the lexicalisation of a shell noun in the referent in JICLE essays, because the meaning of a shell noun was explained with multiple elements of the noun. Therefore, teaching of English paragraph writing could be a way to teach Japanese learners of English how to lexicalise a shell noun in the succeeding discourse, focusing on one meaning of the noun.

One specific instructional strategy to let the students focus on one meaning could be to encourage them to use restrictive adjectives (e.g., *main*, *one*, *only*). This strategy was often used by the US students to focus on a main point of discussion and develop it in the succeeding discourse, and such a strategy could also provide Japanese students a way to describe a focused aspect in a longer discourse.

Lexicalising a shell noun in a long succeeding discourse

This strategy overlaps with the elaboration of the focused meaning of a shell noun, discussed above, but more specifically, long cataphoric lexicalisation should be taught for signposting functions of nouns. In the present study, the shell noun use for such a function was identified only in US with *aspect* and *different* (see Examples 5.9 and 5.10, respectively), but not in JICLE. Shell nouns working as signposts often occur at a paragraph initial and can serve an important text organising function (Schmid, 2000: 350). Learning such a use of nouns could benefit advanced students when writing longer English essays, in particular.

One point to be included in the instruction would be not to insert a short generalised comment before a full lexicalisation of a shell noun. Such an insertion was often identified in JICLE, like *It's the score of TOEFL*, in Example 6.10 shown below (reproduced from example 11 in Section 3.4):

> Recently, a serious **problem** has come up in Japan. It's the score of TOEFL. Japanese scored low on the TOEFL. It's clear that Japan is near the bottom among Asian countries …

Example 6.10: Insertion of a summary before a longer lexicalisation of a shell noun *problem* in JICLE

Drawing the students' attention to this aspect is important, because although this thesis identified the cataphoric lexicalisation of a noun after a short summary as a metadiscursive use of the noun, the inserted comment weakens the metadiscursive role of the noun.

Summarising a long proceeding discourse with a shell noun

Along with cataphoric lexicalisation of shell nouns in a longer segment, Japanese students need to learn to summarise a long preceding discourse with a shell noun. Just as they did not lexicalise shell nouns in a longer stretch of succeeding discourse, the JICLE students did not use a type of shell nouns that labels the content that was expressed in a long preceding discourse, as exhibited with the use of *issue* and mental meaning *decision* for **th-N** only in US, but not in JICLE. In one way, Japanese students need to practice cataphoric lexicalisation as discussed in the above paragraph, but at the same time, they should practice summarising a longer preceding discourse, by finding a proper noun that can match the content of the referred segment. This could be practiced by providing the students with a list of core metadiscursive nouns that are proposed in the past databases, such as carrier nouns (Ivanic, 1991) or anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986).

Constructing implicit discourse

A difference between the English essays in JICLE and US was seen in their preferred discourse construction types. The JICLE students constructed their L2 essay discourse by creating textual frames that can mark a shift of discourse. For example shell nouns were often used to form the circular discourse pattern, and frame markers (a type of MDMs)

were formed with particular syntactic patterns (e.g., **Np-v-th-N**, **Np-v-Nplural:CL**). Also, N in such a syntactic pattern as **N-be-CL** was used in combination with ordinal adjectives so that the sentence can function to mark a clear discourse shift (e.g., *first* + **N-be-CL**). In contrast, the US students constructed the discourse in a more implicit way. The US essays that were structured in an implicit way had an argumentation style in which one main topic was focused on and developed in the discourse. It is considered essential in English essays to have a focused topic and try to convince the reader by explaining one's proposition in detail. To develop such an argumentation style, more implicit discourse construction should be encouraged in the teaching of English essay writing.

For implicit discourse construction, some specific strategies that the US students used in their essays could be taught to Japanese learners of English. One strategy is the use of restrictive adjectives. It allows the writer to focus on one main topic and manoeuvre the discourse in an intended way. Another strategy is the use of shell nouns in an **Appositive N:CL** complex, in which *new* information about the meaning of the shell noun is presented as *given* and the shell noun can function as a rhetorical gambit. The JICLE students used these linguistic devices much less than the US students, but they could use them in an appropriate way when they did them. Therefore, more use should be encouraged in the writing of academic essays.

Another implicit discourse forming strategy that should be taught is appropriate use of English rhetorical patterns. Rhetorical patterns are subtle and implicit discourse organising patterns that are 'deeply ingrained as part of our cultural knowledge' as native speakers (McCarthy, 1991: 28). The JICLE students attempted to use some rhetorical patterns, but they used them in a random way, or they may not have been aware of these patterns. The present study revealed what text patterns and clause sequence patterns the JICLE students did not use properly or in a conventional way.

These problematic patterns are listed below, so as to be included when teaching Japanese students how to write English argumentative essays:

- Problem-Solution text pattern: The JICLE students used a pattern similar to a Problem-Solution pattern. However due to such factors as multiple meanings of *problem* in the referent, and an abrupt shift to a new Problem segment (see Example 5.16), the structural sequence of the pattern was different from the conventional

Problem-Solution pattern. This text pattern should be taught to Japanese students with lexicalisation of *problem.*

- General-Specific text pattern: What this thesis called the 'circular discours*e patte*rn' is, in a way, a randomly used General-Specific text pattern. The 'circular discourse pattern' functioned to formulate a structural frame, which allows a vague lexicalisation of a shell noun that students should be taught not to use. Instead, how to construct the General-Specific text pattern should be taught. An instructional strategy to teach this pattern would be to let the students connect a proposition to specific explanations by using cohesive lexical ties, including synonyms, superordinates, antonyms, and hyponyms.
- Causal Relations: Causal Relations can be used to clearly express the writer's claim. However, the JICLE students often failed to use *reason* for such a purpose. Previous studies suggest that Japanese speakers tend not to have a *'Because'* pattern but a *'Therefore'* pattern (Murata, 2001). This indicates an inherent weakness of Japanese students in clearly expressing Causal Relations, and therefore, a need for explicit instruction of this clause relations with *reason*.
- Phenomenon-reason logical sequence: The use of *problem* for **th-be-N** (e.g., *This is a problem*) in JICLE showed a weak association between the 'problem' content and the noun label, and a phenomenon-reason rhetorical effect was not formed. The use of phenomenon-reason should be taught by clearly lexicalising *problem* as a 'problem' phenomenon, through provision of a reason why the phenomenon can be perceived as a problem.

Summary

This chapter has proposed what aspects of metadiscursive nouns should be taught to Japanese students, in order to write effective English argumentative essays. We now turn our attention back to the methodology of the study itself in the next section.

6.5: Assessment of the methodology

This thesis analysed the use of shell nouns in the JICLE and US corpora by applying Schmid's (2000) theory, which emphasises lexico-grammatical patterns and the lexicalisation of shell nouns. This approach was effective and revealed discourse construction types and features of shell noun use in each of the corpora. Regarding the methodology, however, this thesis acknowledges some contentious points, mainly in regard to the sub-categorisation of Schmid's four syntactic patterns and the merger of different types of **N:CL** as a single type. Each of these issues is assessed below.

Reclassification of syntactic patterns

This thesis reclassified Schmid's (2000) syntactic patterns and/or sub-categorised **th-N** and **N:CL** in the hope of identifying some particular sub-syntactic types which may exhibit specific features of shell noun use in JICLE compared to US. This reclassification required the simplification of varied complex linguistic features (see Section 3.5), and the subsequent increase in syntactic typologies made the lexicalisation analysis more difficult than it would have been if it had been carried out only using Schmid's four syntactic types. The question to consider here, then, concerns whether and to what extent this sub-categorisation was worth doing.

On one hand, the reclassification did not yield any major results. For example, **CL-be-N** (Pattern 2) was identified as another host syntactic pattern, but it occurred in too small a frequency to be used in the lexicalisation analysis. Also, a strong preference for *it*-cleft pattern (**It-be-N:CL**) was revealed in JICLE, but not in US, and this syntactic pattern was not a shell host syntactic pattern (see Section 3.4). Therefore, the reclassification supported Schmid's (2000) selection of four major host syntactic patterns. In addition, it was found that across different sub-syntactic patterns, lexicalisation patterns of a shell noun were not very different, but rather they were decided by individual shell nouns, and in each of the corpora: For example, the lexicalisation of *fact* for **N:CL** was in the adjacent clause, and this lexicalisation was seen across the varied sub-types in both of the corpora; *Issue* for **th-N** was lexicalised in the long stretch of preceding discourse in US, but in JICLE it was lexicalised in a short summary statement, and each of the lexicalisation

types in JICLE and US was not very changed in individual sub-syntactic types of **th-N** – so in this sense one could argue that the sub-categorisations were not fine-grained enough.

However, the sub-categorisations did reveal JICLE-specific sub-syntactic patterns, which indicated the discourse construction and argumentation features of the essays, as follows:

- The JICLE students preferred the existential-*there* construction (**there-be-N:CL**) in comparison to US, particularly **there-be-Nplural:CL** (Pattern 3) (see Sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.3). This may be due to the fact that the existential-*there* construction allows for 'isolated topic shifts' (Huckin & Pesante, 1988: 383), where the writer does not need to discuss the topic beyond the single sentence in which *there* occurs, and this matches the JICLE lexicalisation style which lacked detailed explanation.
- The sub-categorisation made explicit that the JICLE students used such sub-syntactic patterns as **Np-v-Nplural:CL** and **Np-v-th-N** as frame markers to organise the discourse in an explicit way. It was achieved by using *I/we* at the subject position of these patterns.
- The use of *idea* for **N:CL** showed that the JICLE students preferred using this nouns for the Theme position, than the Rheme position. This pattern of use was very rare in US, and also in English professional writing, as previous studies suggested (see *idea* in Section 5.2.2). This JICLE preference for the Theme position was made explicit, because **N:CL** was reformulated into several types.
- The sub-categorisation also clarified the use of rhetorical functions of shell nouns that were particularly shown only for some syntactic types. For example, Causal Relations of *reason* were made explicit for **Peripheral th-N** (Pattern 9), and improper flow of sequence of the Problem-Solution functional segments was only revealed with *problem* when focusing on Pattern 7 (**th-N-Pv**).

In sum, we can say that the sub-categorisation of syntactic patterns in this thesis was worthwhile overall, as it facilitated the recognition of varied types of features in the use of shell nouns in JICLE, which may not have been revealed otherwise.

Handling of N:CL

The **N:CL** pattern comprised several types, identified based on where the CL expressing the meaning of N is placed in relation to N (refer to Section 3.5.1). One type was **Appositive N:CL**. It had the referent CL placed adjacent to N, as shown below (type a):

(3) This is proved **by the fact** that English is the language most commonly used. (JICLE)
N:CL

The other type was **Non-appositive N:CL**. It had three variations. One variation was that the post-nominal *that*-clause (CL) was not adjacent but was within the same sentence (type b).

(4) The **idea** is not correct that the strong countries rule the weak countries. (JICLE)
CL

In another variation, the CL was a 'clause' right after a period/colon/semi-colon (type c);

(5) The real **problem** lies deeper than this. The parents are expressing the conflict that happened before the divorce. (US)
CL

In another variation, the CL was a longer stretch of discourse than a clause (type d):

CL
(6) We often hear the **problem** about TV. In dinner table, each of members of family is absorbed into TV. They are laughing… (JICLE)

A shell noun in adjacent **N:CL** type a) can function as a rhetorical gambit by presenting *new* information as *given*; but the shell nouns in the b), and the c) types are considered to function similarly to a Predictive and Predicted relation (Tadros, 1985). The shell nouns in type d) function in cataphoric signposting roles (Schmid, 2000). Regarding these **Non-appositive N:CL** type lexicalisations (i.e., types b, c, d), it would be impossible to draw clear borders between them, and there is an overlap of theoretical concepts. This thesis handled b), c) and d) types as one group of **N:CL** (non-appositive type **N:CL**) as opposed to appositive type **N:CL**. This seemed a plausible decision, as shell nouns that occurred for the appositive type (e.g., *fact, idea, opinion*) and the non-appositive type (e.g.,

question, problem, example) were clearly separable, as shown in Table 5.1 and Table 5.2, respectively.

More importantly, however, an issue that emerged more as a question is whether or not shell nouns for **Non-appositive N:CL** could have been discussed in relation to the syntactic patterns. Regarding the type d) of **N:CL**, Schmid (2000: 149) implies that the metadiscursive function of N occurs independently from lexico-grammatical patterns. Yet, he does not clearly explain where to draw the line between shell nouns whose metadiscursive roles depend on lexico-grammatical patterns and those that do not. It leaves us the question of whether the use of shell nouns in the types b), c) and d) of **N:CL** cannot be analysed under Schmid's (2000) theoretical concept, and thus should have been analysed separately not confining them to syntactic patterns. What alternative approaches might have been more effective is a question to be addressed by future research. However, an advantage of the methodology was that a JICLE preference for **Non-appositive N:CL** was made explicit in comparison to **Appositive N:CL**. Also, the decision to include **Non-appositive N:CL** illustrated, albeit inadvertently, where overlapping occurs in the concept of varied types of cataphoric referring nouns.

6.6: Directions for further inquiry

This thesis investigated reasons for the different textual impressions readers get from L2 English argumentative essays written by Japanese students in comparison to L1 English essays. It was addressed from the viewpoint of the use of shell nouns, a sub-type of metadiscursive nouns. Inevitably, the study had some limitations: The size of the two corpora analysed may not be large enough for generalisation of the findings (JICLE has a word count of 198,241, and US has 149,574); the lengths of the texts were different (the JICLE text average is 542 words, and the US average is 850), and this difference may have affected frequencies and types of metadiscursive functions of shell nouns. Furthermore, many topics in the essays of the two student groups were only dealt with in one corpus, and topic differences may have influenced frequencies of some noun items. For example, significantly more use of *decision* in US (N=2:19 in JICLE and US, refer to Tables 4.2, 4.3) occurred in essays whose topics dealt with ethical issues, such as abortion or

life-sustaining treatment. However such topics were rarely addressed in the JICLE essays, as discussed in Section 5.4.4 (*decision* for **th-be-N**).

Despite these limitations, the study has identified a number of major features of the JICLE use of shell nouns, and suggested that the different use of shell nouns is closely connected to preferred discourse construction types and preferred argumentative patterns. The findings confirm that the difference in the use of metadiscursive nouns contributed to different impressions of NNS and NS English writing. This points to the importance of pursuing this line of inquiry for the study of cohesion of student writing in future studies. In addition, the present study proved the usefulness of the Hallidayan concept of cohesion for discourse analysis of student writing. Linguists who criticise the Hallidayan theory argue that textual unity cannot be realised by surface linguistic forms. However, the results of the present study illustrated that the concept provided the researcher a tool to describe the use of shell nouns, and revealed how the writers constructed discourse and what argumentation patterns they used in the text. The model was very helpful in identifying which aspects of shell noun use should be taught in classes in the Japanese English teaching context. Thus, the Hallidayan cohesion model is a promising direction for the study of the discourse of student writing.

A subsequent inquiry could be conducted by reclassifying types of metadiscursive nouns. The target shell noun items in this thesis were selected from Ivanic's (1991) list of carrier nouns, as the concept of carrier nouns is considered to be subsumed within that of shell nouns. Carrier nouns could be replaced with anaphoric nouns (Francis, 1986) or enumeration (Tadros, 1994), which also fall under the general rubric of shell nouns for a confirmation, or negation of some features identified in the present study. In addition, while the present study examined the L2 English writing of Japanese students, the study could be replicated by comparing the L2 English writing of other language speakers to L1 English writing. A particular focus in the comparison of L1 English and L2 English writing could be the multiple meanings in the referent of a shell noun, or the use of *thing* in combination with evaluative adjectives. These were found to be JICLE-specific features, in comparison to US, and this thesis pointed out the possibility of an L1 transfer effect in operation here. Whether it is strongly an L1 Japanese feature or not could be explored through comparison with other L1s. Further studies could also be developed by focusing on the positions of metadiscursive nouns. Hoey's (2005) theory of 'lexical priming'

proposes that ‘every lexical item… is capable of being primed… to occur at the beginning or end of an independently recognised “chunk” of text’ (p. 129). One clearly defined type of textual chunk is the sentence, in which lexis occurs either as a Theme or Rheme. This thesis identified a JICLE preference for the Theme position of *idea* in comparison to US. This suggests that Theme-Rheme text positions of metadiscursive nouns may be a fruitful area for future inquiry. By focusing on the paragraph as a textual chunk, signposting roles of nouns could be explored, particularly those which occur at the start of a new paragraph and work as explicit organisational signals.

Finally, there is a need for further research related to the teaching of English academic writing to non-native speakers. Studies that apply the theory of metadiscursive nouns to textual data can make a valuable contribution to the investigation of student writing; thus they should be carried out more extensively in the future.

6.7: Final thoughts

This thesis addressed the issue of different impressions which the reader can receive from NNS English essays, in comparison to that from NS English essays. It was conducted by focusing on the use of shell nouns as a potential source of difference. The findings confirm that different use of shell nouns can contribute to a perception of difference in NNS English writing. Although naturalness in English (or any other language) is also formed by such linguistic factors as ‘choice of collocations and grammatical pattern’ (Hoey & O’Donnell, 2010: 307), this thesis points to the importance of metadiscursive nouns as equally important elements of naturalness in English writing. The present study also demonstrated the value of the Hallidayan model of cohesion, where the theoretical roots of metadiscursive nouns lie. It was very effective to describe the discourse of English essays incorporating preferred argumentation styles, thus suggestive of a productive direction to follow in future research.

Teaching the proper use of metadiscursive nouns could serve to reduce the perceived ‘difference’ in non-native speaker writing. This thesis identified specific areas where the NNS students used such nouns differently from the way the NS students did, and where pedagogical interventions are particularly required in the foreign language

classroom. The type of research that this thesis has presented has a potential to inform not only the work of the teachers, but also textbook writers and curriculum developers.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Problem in N-be-CL: Forms of complement CL

N=9:9 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 0.01)

JICLE

including non-English-spoken countries. The **problem** of introducing English education into elementaryis that
and support movement is being done in Japan. The **problem** is that human rights and land rights of indigenou
considered very unnecessary for households. The **problem** was that the faster and more reliable the compute
That is one of the important exercise. But the **problem** is that we converse from Japanese to English. Tha
as we smokers and we cannot invade that. But the **problem** is we smokers never had or have the thought to fi
he politics. He came to Japan as a man. Here the **problem** is the existence of the Chinese government's pres
they need to. It might be safe for kids, but the **problem** is how to use the cell phone. Kids can use whatev
phone. (We are already being like this.) So, the **problem** is, how we use cellular phone cleverly. It is nat
t, it is very important. As a matter of fact, the **problem** for them is whether or not both of them can live
controversies concerning capital punishment. The **problem** is whether capital punishment is necessary, wheth
rabbits are killed like that. Here, the important **problem** is that the dories test it not correctly scientif
environment will be complicated. And more serious **problem** is that, according to the report of newspaper, th
t recession of publishing industry. I think a big **problem** is how to offer readers the opportunity to find b
sh. It is not the time that matters, but the real **problem** is how well you consentrate on your second langua
s obviously in danger. As for children, the first **problem** is to select which name to let them use. Second,
at it obstructs conversation for dinner. The most **problem** is to put too much confidence in computer technol
rial robots work instead of human beings. Another **problem** is that people are coming not to use their brains
and their family. On the other hand, the another **problem** is whether there is any substitute of capital pun

US

of them have obtained riches illegally, but the **problem** is, as the title of this essay states<*>. Crime
pular models especially when they pose nude. The **problem** hear is that we look up to the super athlete but
nst Hooters recently for job discrimination. The **problem** here is that Hooters is setting it's self apart f
is statement seems to be more than rational. The **problem** here is that people don't realize the big picture
ment is beneficial or not. Many believe that the **problem** with television is people become yonkies (with ey
atter what gender. There is a problem though, the **problem** is that one can see why the statement this essay
rn world what women in the work place can do. The **problem** is that these feminists have not looked at all wo
ually prevent murders, rapes and burglaries. The **problem** with this argument is that it lacks statistical v
hey've done good or what's most appreciated. The **problem** with this is that students tease other students a
eapons in war and for generating electricity. The **problem** is how most of the population is receiving its kn
money was the "root of all evil". As stated, the **problem** is how these two desires are to be reconciled, ca
ere many faults in the court's decision. The main **problem** was that it seemed to be made in haste. The judge
r local swimming pool floods your head. your only **problem** now is that you do not know how to swim. This is
and the ambivalence of suicide are good. The only **problem** is that they do not give any data that provides e

Appendix 2. Thing in N-be-CL: Evaluative/restrictive adjectives

N=14:1 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 6.50)

JICLE

Evaluative adjectives

can say is only one, that is, the most dangerous **thing** is people have no concern ‘bout it and make coll
pe of the textbook in English, and most important **thing** is English teacher should elicit an English from
our efforts will be paid off. The most important **thing** is enjoy to learn English. I think it is good for
rth becomes warmer and warmer. The most important **thing** in greening the earth is to save the earth to our
ally when they use in English. The most important **thing** is having a lot of opportunities to use English.
he high level school. However, the most important **thing** about receiving the education was that students h
rn what to wear in each place. The most important **thing** which students have to learn in school age is to
n to English. Second, I think that most important **thing** is teaching English enjoyably. I think that stude
interests, and English level. And most important **thing** is that students can experience success. So Engli
lk at the same time. However, the most important **thing** is, "We should have own computer" I think. I don’
t want none of them forever. The most important **thing** for us is to prepare for them. If we prepare enou
ll disobey teachers instead. The most important **thing** for young students is to trust them. Students are
ant skill is. But I reckon the most important **thing** is speaking in English. Japanese people haven’t g
me easy vocabulary and greetings. The important **thing** is to use English so that it will not be disliked
ve many mistakes during communication. Important **thing** is how we can solve the problems. Failures will l
re bright as diamond. I think that the important **thing** is learners feel learning English is pleasure. I
we should teach every section and the important **thing** is that the teacher should motivate their student
rranged marriage is not an issue. The important **thing** is that whether you can rely each other. Whether
nglish. This fact indicates that an important **thing** is not to be able to speak English but to think c
fe without cellular phones. I think **an** important **thin**g is to think about the risk and the good usage, an
once are owned by another people now. **T**he worst **thing** is to repeat unreasonable history. How about in J
vie is acted by English. I think that wonderful **thing** is I could see the movie without Japanese subtitle

Restrictive *adjectives*

but I depend on some of them very much. Another **thing** is that I live in a dormitory, but I don’t have m
yone to have a small computer all the time. One **thing** we need to keep in mind is that communication onl
ntellectual interest in any field, and the only **thing** he is interested in is that how he can enjoy hims
some points, students have to be diligent. One **thing** is to call the roll. Another one is to make class
omen’s role in society. Long time ago, the only **thing** that women have to do was having babies. It was n
buy all the stocks of Nippon Broadcasting. **The thing** is that Live Door is also planning to share the i

US

Evaluative adjectives

eaning our house and driving us around. The scary **thing** is that it’ s just around the corner! <ICLE-US-
operation throughout our streets. The interesting **thing** is that this activity will continue until the end
t institution in society" (Janus 56), the natural **thing** to infer is that the idea of what the family is h

Restrictive adjectives

otball teams in Colorado and Oklahoma. Another **thin**g that Nebraska had for its advantage that West Vir
n zip-lock bag, and not get freezer burn. Another **thing** that zip-lock bags are good for is keeping certai
at <*>. Mr Rauscher hopes to convey that the only **thing** that people who commit suicide do is think about
I hope we don’t regret future changes. The only **thing** I have decided , to this date, to do is achieve s
tart the annoucements before the race, the first **thing** we say is that the gas is on the right and the br

Appendix 3. Fact in Peripheral N:CL: Variety of semi-fixed phrases

N=7:24 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 17.58)

JICLE

Less variety of *fact*-containing semi-fixed phrases

e live with rhythm. That fact leads us to another **fact** that the music, which exists by the most importan
se the misunderstanding. Moreover in terms of the **fact** we cannot listen again, the paper may be better t
it comes almost anywhere with you. Admitting the **fac**t that cell phones are now always close to most of
coma made miraculous recoveries. Considering the **fact** that diabetes is a very common disease, the estab
ouch something new. It is significant to know the **fact** there are a lot of languages and cultures in the
ay's international society. This is proved by the **fact** that English is the language most commonly used i
the border. Also from the **fact** Japanese government stated English as a official
t speak or use English very well, in spite of the **fact** that is taught as a compulsory subject in junior
y some important and historical incidents and the **fact** that people in the south of Thailand refuse to ac
net. And most of those problems are caused by the **fact** enormous people use it. It is a strong point of I
e United states used atomic bombs in spite of the **fact** that they could finish the war without the atomic
Thai rapidly in the whole area, regardless of the **fact** that they do not understand the background of oth
re. If we speak in a formal style in spite of the **fact** that we are familiar with each other, it seems st
nformation that Japan is winning, hiding the very **fact** that there were a great number of sacrifices. But

US

More variety of *fact*-containing semi-fixed phrases

eople who are very interested in clothes and the **fact** that this type of person is highly socially orien
nt to stop you if not slow you down. Besides the **fact** that you will eventually get caught doing a crime
ves, but it is most important to be aware of the **fact** that it is a manipulator. We must watch what we
ile their main claim continues to lie in the mere **fact** that the morality behind the procedure itself is
e before and over heard women gossiping about the **fact** that all that one lady does is stay home watch th
the personalities of the adoptive family and the **fact** that they were the ones caring for this child sin
se of realism to their warning. By presenting the **fact** that a man from church can even grow numb to the
d use <R>. This is simply amazing considering the **fact** that alcohol and over-the-counter medications are
separate gender identity. This is evident by the **fact** that each writer even bothered to bring these pro
id who should have answered the call. Besides the **fact** that Fuhrman contradicted himself by initially cl
al punishment often stand by its use based on the **fact** that it is provided for in the constitution shoul
, then how can one argue for its use based on the **fact** that it is the law? The most well known dispute
the existing one. this goes right along with the **fact** that many adolescents who attempt suicide are pro
e murder, but his charge was dismissed due to the **fact** that Michigan has no law against assisted suicide
t allowing the filming of executions. Besides the **fact** that no prison has ever allowed photographs or fi
eatment at all. This problem is compounded by the **fact** that not all illnesses that Doctors prescribe ant
ight this evidence as being illegal. Besides the **fact** that O.J.'s 4th Amendment rights were disregarded
ny times the mother may feel left out. Due to the **fact** that she did not bear the child the mother may fe
proponent might rebuttal that statement with the **fact** that some parents use the television as the baby
he does not deserve to "care" for it. Due to the **fact** that the child is biologically only the fathers,
. On the other hand, maybe it's simply due to the **fact** that the crucial task of raising children has no
mer writes, <*>. This is somewhat true due to the **fact** that the limited genetic knowledge already known
seventh and eighth grade years partly due to the **fact** that the number of black students compared to the
end the cycle of teenage pregnancies. Beside the **fact** that the opponents make unfair generalizations, t
use she chooses to, it's important to address the **fact** that in many of the cases the wife is able to sta
permitted the objective study of religion and the **fact** that in some states, like Mississippi, it is agai
t Georgetown University, <*>. Also supporting the **fact** that the unborn child is in fact separate from th
e been entered into. In some marriages due to the **fact** that the wife does not work, she is viewed as inf
band should have to do more than simply state the **fact** that their possessions are theirs. He should als
o go on living. This idea is held together by the **fact** that there is too much gray areas within ethics a
atients they serve. This is disgraceful given the **fact** that these counselors observe the results of thei

eople are looking for an easy solution due to the **fact** that they are af raid of death, and they don't kn
Nebraska still won the title outright due to the **fact** that they played a higher ranked team in a bowl.
r hand, opponents have a definite strength in the **fact** that they present the probable consequences, allo
to prepare intra venous prescriptions due to the **fact** that they thought he could pass the disease to th

Appendix 4. Thing in Np-v-th-N: Use of 'the same thing'

N=10:1 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 16.95)

JICLE

Preference of *the same thing*

the summit or a meeting is held. We can say same **thing** about commerce. Now a lot of companies have branc
illing him, the government is just doing the same **thing**. What does executing someone really accomplish?
food. Possibly the case of Koro was also the same **thing**. If I kept Koro with my selfish convenience that
s." Japan, in the World War II, too, did the same **thing** as the European countries. Japan invaded the vari
le women who were in their thirties said the same **thing**. Moreover, even though they had never thought abo
hey come out in years, they would repeat the same **thing** over and over again. Thus, under the present situ
bad as the murderer. They would be doing the same **thing** as he or she did. Killing someone for being a kil
th us. Maybe someone say that we can say the same **thing** about other animals. But I think a dog is the bes
do you think? Can you stand? They think the same **thing** you thought. They want your help. Do you have a p
are afraid if the ex-criminals would do the same **thing** again or they would hurt the neighbors as they di
y death penalty, other criminals will do the same **thing** if we don't try to solve the problem from the bot
ur society because many criminals repeat the same **thing** after they come out of jail. Finally, we don't re
why I think that a government must not do such a **thing**. The first reason is from a position of native pe
only one crow in the world, does people do such a **thing**? It is natural that animals increase if we protec
think that hewould not have done such a kind of **thing** if he were loved by his family and his friends or
So when I am student, I will do such a reckless **thing** easily. Some other in university there is a lot o
land. How come we can allow such an unreasonable **thing**? Even if the government take lands from European
what a fool! With manual, everyone can do such a **thing**.) If the governments can ban anything on the Inte
5nderstand about this sex. If one understands this **thing**, one ought to experience many sexes. Perhaps each
one thing. Second, when the rich country do that **thing**, what happen to the next? Look the history. Can w
n't it? But people sometimes forge this important **thing**. Don't forget his things. We should establish a p

US

his is the first time I have ever even heard such a **thing**. How much is the university

Appendix 5. Thing in th-be-N: Evaluative noun-modifying adjectives

N=10:1 in JICLE and US, respectively (LL score 15.93)

JICLE

Preference of evaluative noun-modifying adjectives

connect one through it fact. It is very important **thing** and good chance for us. So we will study harder a
t of students who are not. This is also important **thing** to teach student English. In fact, however, it co
ish has only in the school, so it is an important **thing**. Teacher should make the chance for students to t
class. I also think that this is a very important **thing** for students. Then I want to advance their eagern
I think that this problem is the most important **thing** in the Internet. I think that this problem is the
master English is decided, It become compulsary **thing** and I feel great resistance to it. I think there
he way to communicate with them, it's so disgost **thing** for both. If Japanese students really hope to con
not have experiences. This is the most dangerous **thing**. Recently there was a big earthquake in Indonesia
grant visas to Lee Teng-hui. It was very foolish **thing,** I think. Why does such a correspondence occur? I
k business or capitalism and I think it is a good **thing.** We don't know, I'm sure, much about capitalism o
very happy with it. However, is it really a happy **thing?** My friend and I talk each other through the mobi
n't understand what someone say it is meaningful **thing**. English speakers' baby of course can't understand
slate Japanese into some language. It is natura**l thing** but I think it is not good. I think they use comm
al citizens. I think it is so hard but possible **thing**. I think that Japanese people need to master Engl
another person's life away. It is a more proper **thing** to do. Third, would less people commit a crime if
can take care of it well. This is not a special **thing** but many people are forgetting about this point.
e who mastered English. I think it is wonderful **thing.** These days in Japan, speaking English is not esp
ay disappeare in the future. It is a wonderful **thing.** But mastering English is very hard. Unless we co
still need to drink, that would be wrong and a **thing** of the past. "Kompa" and "ikki ikki" forced drink
our will, may be we have no effect. That is same **thing** on master English. Ceratinly master v is very imp

US

Dispreference of evaluative noun-modifying adjectives

s is the first time I have ever even heard such a **thing**. How much is the university going to gain from su

Glossary

Anaphoric nouns. Anaphoric nouns are a sub-type of metadiscursive nouns. They emphasise summarising and evaluating roles of a referred content of a long stretch of preceding discourse. Anaphoric nouns can also play a text-forming role by attitudinally marking the on-going argument in the preceding discourse and forwarding it to the succeeding discourse.

Carrier nouns. Carrier nouns are a sub-type of metadiscursive nouns. They emphasise countable and abstract aspects of nouns, and focus on meaning lexicalisation of nouns in the complement of the clause where the nouns occur.

Coherence. Coherence refers to a state where a stretch of text is perceived as a unity and makes sense. In contrast to cohesion, explained below, coherence can be formed without explicit grammatical and lexical links, through inference of the meaning using world knowledge, or the cultural and situational context in which the text is embedded.

Cohesion. Cohesion is unity in a written text, or a spoken discourse, formed by surface linguistic links that connect two segments, either a word, a phrase, a clause, or a longer stretch of the text.

Connectives. Connectives are vocabulary items that connect and relate sentences and paragraphs. They include inter-sentential markers that that connect only two sentences (e.g., *and, then, but*), and partial metadiscourse markers that connect paragraphs, or multi-sentential chunks within a paragraph (e.g., *firstly, therefore, consequently*).

Contrastive rhetoric analysis. Contrastive rhetoric analysis aims to analyse the effects of the transfer of cultural rhetorical patterns from L1 to L2. It is based on the theoretical position that each language and culture has unique rhetorical conventions that may negatively interfere with or positively influence L2 language use.

Core nouns. Core nouns are not subject-specific nouns. They take a bulk of their meanings from the context where they occur.

Enumeration. Enumeration is one of six categories of Prediction type metadiscursive nouns, proposed by Tadros (1985, 1994). Prediction categories emphasise the predictive and the predicted relations: A predictive member predicts information will follow, and the predicted member meets the expectation and fills in the information. Of six categories of Predictions (Tadros, ibid.) enumeration is only category that refers to nouns as predictive members.

Enumerative/enumerative nouns. Enumeratives are a type of metadiscursive nouns that emphasises the function of marking the main points of the discourse. By marking the elaboration and clarification which is to follow, they can create the discourse in an explicit way.

Frame markers. Frame markers are one type of metadiscourse markers. They are metadiscourse statement than connectives that can mark the discourse very explicitly, by forming sequence, labelling text stages, announcing discourse goals, and indicating topic shifts (e.g., *to conclude*, *my goal is …*, *my purpose is…*, *here I do this*).

General meaning nouns. *General meaning noun* is an umbrella term that can cover varied types of nouns, such as superordinates, general nouns, and vague nouns.

General nouns. General nouns have both grammatical and lexical roles as referring items. General nouns are the superordinate members of major lexical sets and they can operate anaphorically as a kind of synonym. Also because general nouns are grammatical items, they function similarly to pronouns.

Given/New information. Given and New refers to information structure that forms a clause. Given information is information that is previously established in the discourse and New information is information used for the first time in the discourse, and the two elements together make up an information unit. A parallel and interrelated system is Theme

and Rheme (see Theme/Rheme). Although Given-New and Theme-Rheme are separate structures, there is a parallel equivalence in some ways between Theme and Given on the one hand and Rheme and New on the other (see Theme/Rheme).

Host syntactic patterns. Host syntactic patterns are syntactic patterns in which metadiscursive functions of shell nouns can be triggered by referring to the nouns' meanings in the texts where shell nouns occur.

Key words. Key words are unusually high frequency nouns, in comparison to a reference corpus. Key words can function similarly to Vocabulary 3, explained below, in function, and indicate functional segments of the Problem-Solution pattern (e.g., Problem segment, Response segment, Solution segment).

Metadiscourse markers (MDMs). Metadiscourse markers are explicit text organisational devices that can bracket the discourse organisation and can clearly indicate what is said in the discourse.

Metadiscursive nouns. Metadiscursive nouns constitute a type of nouns that have general and unspecific meanings which are only recoverable by referring backwards, or forwards, to other parts of the text in which they occur. In doing so, metadiscursive nouns can mark, comment on or help construct the discourse in some ways; hence they are 'metadiscursive'.

Naturalness of language use. Naturalness of language use refers to the language used in so-called model English texts written/spoken by professional native speakers. Underlying the theoretical stance behind the use of the term 'naturalness' is that native speaker norms are a valid benchmark for evaluating the quality of NNS writing.

Resultative nouns. Resultative nouns are a type of metadiscursive nouns. They refer to metadiscursive nouns of a summative cohesive function (e.g., *result, outcome*).

Shell nouns. Shell nouns are a sub-type of metadiscursive nouns. They emphasise lexico-grammatical patterns where shell nouns can play metadiscursive roles providing a link between a shell noun, its content and the meaning.

Signposting roles. Signposting roles refer to a type of metadiscursive role that faces both anaphorically and cataphorically and marks a major text division. Signposting roles are the same as one function of anaphoric nouns.

Superordinate nouns. Superordinate nouns are immediate superordinates in the family tree of a particular word (e.g., *fruit* is superordinate to *apple*).

Theme/Rheme. Theme (and Rheme) concerns the structure of the clause, and refers to a text organization of Thematic structure. Theme is the idea represented by the constituent at the starting point of the clause, whilst the Rheme is the rest of the message. Given and New is a parallel and interrelated system that concerns information structure that comprises a clause (see Given/New).

Topic. Topic is a subject that is written or talked about. Some linguists conflate Topic with Theme of Theme-Rheme thematic structure. However, Topic and Theme have separate meanings in this thesis (see Theme).

Vagueness (of meanings). Vagueness means linguistic vagueness that is probably not intended by the writer, and is perceived as difficult or impossible to interpret by the reader.

Vague nouns. Vague nouns are general meaning nouns. They are more often used in conversational and informal discourse than in written academic texts. They include both abstract (e.g., *creativity, maturity, learning*) and non-abstract nouns (e.g., *student*, *class*).

Vocabulary 3. Vocabulary 3 comprise varied classes of lexical items, including verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and adverbial phrases, which can commonly serve to indicate a functional segment in major English text patterns (e.g., Problem-Solution, Argument-Counterargument, General-Specific, Hypothetical-Real).

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