The Effect of Self-Construal and Argumentativeness on English Writing by Korean College Students

Hyun-Woo Lim
(Hankuk University of Foreign Studies)


This study investigated whether and how the interplay between independent-interdependent self-construal and argumentativeness tendency of Korean college students affects their behaviors of English argumentative writing. Participants were 71 undergraduate students who took English skills development courses at intermediate levels. The dependent variables included (a) the students’ choices of certain writing features that have been suggested as conceptually associated with individualist and collectivist values and (b) the overall argumentation quality in the students’ English argumentative essays. Correlation and ANOVA results revealed no substantial impact of the writers’ orientations in self-construal and levels of argumentativeness on the occurrences of certain writing features and the overall argumentation qualities in their writing. The study results suggested that for beginning/intermediate L2 writers, their psychological dispositions may not exert as significant influences on their English writing as might be expected. The study results were further discussed in reference to L2 writers’ developmental statuses and relevant situational constraints. Further research is warranted for assessing the proportional effects of developmental status, psychological disposition, and contextual constraints on L2 writing. Suggestions for further investigation are presented as well as study limitations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning to write in English as a second/foreign language (L2) is an arduous task. It requires much more than technical knowledge of English orthography, vocabulary, and syntax (Wu & Rubin, 2000). L2 writers also need to learn how to produce coherent prose and demonstrate persuasive arguments. Writing in English for an academic purpose can be even more difficult since constructing and critiquing arguments require a deeper cognitive
processing of content and sophisticated reasoning skills (Berthoff, 1984; Lunsford, 1979). Given that knowledge and reality are community-generated artifacts (Bizzell, 1982; Bruffee, 1986; Kress, 1989), learning L2 writing involves the understanding and achievement of pervasive cultural knowledge about what constitutes good writing.

The literature on L2 writing has also suggested that L2 writers’ difficulties lie in the existence of cross-cultural differences in writing styles (Chen, 1997; Yeonhee Choi, 1988; Fox, 1994; Hinds, 1987; Kaplan, 1966; Matalene, 1985; Scollon, 1991). These studies have suggested that individual writers possess culturally cultivated schemata regarding how to communicate with readers; the breakdown in written communication can happen when the cultural schemata between readers and writers mismatch each other. Thus, native English-speaking (NES) readers may perceive L2 writers’ texts as lacking coherence if they have a culturally different schema for coherence and integrity of a text (Connor, 1996; Hinds, 1987; Purves, 1988).

Yet, L2 writers’ choices of rhetorical patterns or certain writing features need a more sophisticated explanation than a broad notion of cultural differences (Atkinson, 2004; Mauranen, 2001). In providing a more substantial explanation for different writing styles across cultures, one frequently utilized conceptual frame connecting culture and individual communication styles is Triandis’ (1990) individualism-collectivism dimension. As an example, in her study on Chinese writing styles, Matalene (1985) reports certain writing features (e.g., use of proverbs or maxims) in student writing as conceptually linked to collectivist beliefs. Shen (1989) argues that L2 writers from collectivistic cultures have difficulties in expressing their authorial voices because they are caught in between their collectivistic and individualistic voices. These arguments are based on the premise that certain cultural values (e.g., individualist-collectivist values) underlie culturally unique rhetorical styles, and people who have internalized certain cultural values are inclined to adopt culture-specific rhetoric styles.

The link between cultural values and cultural writing styles sounds plausible. However, it should be noted that in many studies (e.g., Yeonhee Choi, 1988; Matalene, 1985; Shen, 1989), the associations between collectivist-individualist values and specific writing styles are made conceptually. Only a few studies (e.g., Wu & Rubin, 2000) have statistically tested whether and how individual writers’ cultural values influence their rhetorical choices. Despite the suggested conceptual links between collectivist beliefs and certain writing features (e.g., we, hedge), Wu and Rubin (2000) report no significant impact of writers’ endorsement of collectivist beliefs on their choices of the writing features associated with collectivist values. Thus, further research is needed to resolve this inconsistency.

In addition, an investigation of how the interplay between cultural predisposition and other cognitive variables influences L2 writing is also of necessity. For instance,
individuals’ tendencies to approach or avoid arguments have been reported to influence the
degree to which they engage in argumentative discourse (Levine & Boster, 1996;
Onyekwere, Rubin, & Infante, 1991; Semic & Canary, 1997). Individualistic and
collectivistic cultures are governed by differential cultural norms as to how people are
expected to argue with each other. Then, it is theoretically plausible that writers with
collectivist beliefs may exhibit different arguing behaviors from what those with
individualist beliefs do. Then, students’ endorsement in collectivistic and individualistic
values may influence their dispositions to approach or avoid arguments, and further their
arguing behaviors, which in writing can be manifested as certain rhetorical and linguistic
features.

However, little research has been conducted to examine whether and how the interplay
of cultural and cognitive variables influences the writers’ linguistic choices and the
argumentative quality of their writing. Thus, the current investigation aims to fill this gap
in L2 writing research. Specifically, this study examines Korean college students’ arguing
behaviors in English writing in reference to the impact of their cultural orientations in
individualism-collectivism and levels of argumentativeness tendency. The investigation
involves answering a series of questions: How do Korean students’ individualist-collectivist
values interact with their cognitive tendencies to approach or to avoid arguments? And
how do the interactions between the two variables affect the students’ behaviors in English
argumentative writing? If Korean students’ collectivist beliefs lead to their tendencies to
avoid arguments, this may also result in ambiguity in their English writing. Or it may be
the case that a collectivistic culture does not necessarily suppress ‘arguing’ in writing.
Then, we may need to further investigate the influences of other factors than psychological
disposition on Korean students’ difficulties in English argumentative writing.

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Culture and Self-Construal

A substantial body of literature has disclosed cultural differences in communication
styles by utilizing a cultural dimension of Triandis’ (1990) individualism-collectivism.
Overall, individualistic cultures advocate an ‘I’ identity while collectivistic cultures value a
‘we’ identity. Despite the evidence supporting the impact of cultural orientation on
communication styles, such a broad concept of the individualism-collectivism dimension
has been suspected for its lack of an explanatory power (Kagitcibasi, 1987; Kim, Hunter,
Miyahara, & Horvath, 1996; Schwartz, 1990; Singelis, 1994; Singelis & Brown, 1995).
The concept has been also criticized for its insensitivity to individual differences within
one culture and generating a simplistic view of cultural dichotomy. Throughout a meta-analysis, Oyserman, Kemmelmeier, and Coon (2002) suggest that cultural differences measured by the individualism-collectivism dimension are not consistent across different studies. Triandis (1989) also suggests that the individualism-collectivism should be used to characterize cultures and societies, but not individual behaviors.

Instead of the individualism-collectivism dimension, cross-cultural research on self has suggested self-concept as an important mediator of cultural behavior patterns (Kim et al., 1996; Triandis, 1989). In this vein, Markus and Kitayama (1991) propose the concept of the independent-interdependent orientation to self-construal, each orientation corresponding to individualist and collectivist cultural values. Interdependent self-construal reflects the emphasis on connectedness and relations often found in ‘non-Western’ cultures while independent self-construal refers to the individual’s separateness and uniqueness. Multiple studies have suggested that individuals with interdependent self-construal are more dominant in collectivist countries while individuals with independent self-construal are more dominantly sampled in individualist countries (Edelmann & Iwawaki, 1987; Edelmann & Neto, 1989; Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994).

Kim, Sharkey, and Singelis (1994) report that the degrees of independent and interdependent self-construal systematically affect the perceived importance of conversational constraints within one culture: people with interdependent self-construal tend to avoid hurting the hearer’s feelings and negative evaluation, rather than pursuing the clarity or effectiveness in communicating. Kim et al. (1996) further advocate a mediational model where individual-level variables (e.g., interdependent self-construal versus independent self-construal) mediate the link between macro-level cultural influences and individual conversational styles. In sum, the independent-interdependent self-construal can serve as a mediating variable, allowing us to be more specific about how cultural variables operate within individual writers to regulate preferred rhetorical styles. This provides a rationale for the current investigation utilizing the independent-interdependent self-construal to evaluate the influences of writers’ cultural values on their writing behaviors.

2. Argumentativeness

Argumentativeness refers to “a generally stable trait which predisposes the individual in communication situations to advocate positions on controversial issues and to attack verbally the positions which other people take on these issues” (Infante & Rancer, 1982, p. 72). Infante and Rancer (1982) formulate one’s general argumentative tendency (AGRgt) in terms of the interplay between one’s tendency to approach to arguments (ARGap) and one’s tendency to avoid arguments (ARGav): AGRgt = ARGap – ARGav. Being
negatively associated, a highly argumentative person is high on ARGap and low on ARGav, while a low argumentative person is low on ARGap and high on ARGav. The highly argumentative person feels excitement, confidence in arguing over controversial issues, and considers it as an intellectual challenge. In contrast, the low argumentative person feels inhibited to arguing and avoids arguments. Another potential type of argumentativeness personality is a moderate argumentative person, who is either low on both ARGap and ARGav, or high on both ARGap and ARGav. The former, ‘an apathetic moderate’ does not particularly welcome or avoid arguments. On the other hand, the latter, ‘a conflicting feelings moderate’ has a strong inclination as well as a strong declination to arguments. This type of moderate argumentative individuals is likely to be more susceptible to situational variables when controlling their arguing behaviors.

Many studies have supported the connection between trait argumentativeness and arguing behavior (Anderson & Rancer, 2007; Levine & Boster, 1996; Onyekwere, Rubin, & Infante, 1991; Semic & Canary, 1997). Overall, the level of argumentativeness is reported being positively correlated with the proportion of argument development in debate. For example, Infante and Rancer (1993) suggest that individuals high on argumentativeness are engaged in a greater number of conversations and send more refutational messages than do those low on argumentativeness. Kazoleas (1993) suggests that trait argumentativeness also influences arguing in writing. He reports that highly argumentative individuals generate a greater number of written counter-arguments to persuasive messages than low argumentative people do. Yet, few studies have addressed the influence of trait argumentativeness on argumentative writing. The current investigation can contribute to fill this gap as well.

In regard to the cross-cultural validation of the argumentativeness, Sander and Gass (1992) suggest no ethnic difference in measured argumentativeness among Euro American, Hispanic American, and Asian American college students. Suzuki and Rancer (1994) further support the construct validity of the argumentativeness scale with Japanese population. Specifically, the factor structures, orthogonality, and the factorial invariance of the scale were equivalent between the U.S. and the Japanese samples. The positive correlation between ARGgt and the participants’ attitudes to ‘arguing’ indicates that argumentativeness is perceived as a positive communication predisposition by Japanese people as well. This result suggests that arguments may not be necessarily suppressed or denounced by collectivistic cultural norm of pursuing group harmony. The current study can serve to add insight to the interactional effects of the individualist-collectivist values and trait argumentativeness on arguing, particularly in writing.
3. Cultural Psychology vs. Developmental Differences

Among those studies that have associated culture-specific writing styles with underlying cultural values (Yeunhee Choi, 1988; Matalene, 1985; Shen, 1989), Yeunhee Choi (1988) suggests that the differences in the argument structures of expository essays written by Korean and American students are intertwined with each group’s differential conceptualization of argumentation. English argumentative writing has its origin in the classical rhetoric tradition. In this tradition, readers are viewed as opponents; an adequate level of refutation of their position is crucial to attaining the goal in writing; and a clear-cut argument from the very beginning is desired. In Korean students’ writing, on the other hand, the consideration of ‘to convince readers’ is less underscored. Instead, Korean writers tend to discuss all the possible positions to a given issue before revealing their own positions. Yeunhee Choi (1988) interprets this rhetorical style as reflecting Koreans’ collectivist values such as allowing readers to reach their own conclusions instead of maneuvering them into a certain position. However, this rhetorical style could generate for Western readers an impression that writers do not take one clear position.

Of particular interest is Wu and Rubin’s (2000) study that examines the influence of L2 writers’ cultural self-concepts on their behaviors in argumentative writing. In their cross-cultural comparisons with argumentative essays written by Taiwanese and American students, the researchers found the higher degree of endorsement of collectivism in Taiwanese students than in American students. The number of textual features associated with collectivist thought was also larger in Taiwanese students’ essays than in American students’ essays. Interestingly, however, Taiwanese students’ scores on the measured collectivism exerted no significant effect on their use of textual features associated with collectivist thought. These study results, the researchers argue, suggest that Taiwanese students’ tendency to use certain writing features may be more attributed to the influence of cultural convention or school instruction of preferred writing styles rather than the degree of the writers’ collectivist beliefs. These results refute the idea that individual writers’ endorsement in cultural values is directly reflected as their textual choices.

Wu and Rubin’s (2000) results lend support to Mohan and Lo’s (1985) emphasis on developmental differences in explaining L2 writers’ difficulties. Mohan and Lo (1985) argue that Chinese students’ difficulties with organization in English writing are due to their English writing instructions that overly emphasize the sentence-level accuracy than discourse organization. Particularly, for academic writing, the researchers suggest that its styles have become conventional across cultures, and thus L2 writers’ difficulties could be more attributed to developmental differences than cross-cultural ones. More recent studies such as Chien (2007) and Hoyeol Ryu (2006) also support Mohan and Lo’s (1985) assertion. Chien (2007) suggests that the teachers’ writing instruction exerted a greater
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influence on Chinese students’ rhetorical strategy use in their English expository writing than the traditional Chinese rhetorical styles did. Similarly, Hoyeol Ryu (2006) reports that Korean college students tended to follow Western rhetorical patterns in their expository writing. In his study, the majority of students structured their essays deductively with a clear thesis statement in the opening paragraph. The researcher argues that the students’ previous learning experiences of English writing led them to take a deductive approach in writing, yet due to their underdeveloped writing skills, their writing failed to show clear Western rhetorical patterns.

On the other hand, Wu and Rubin’s (2000) results conflict with those of some previous studies (e.g., Kim, Sharkey, & Singelis, 1994; Kim et al., 1996) that have suggested the link between the independent-interdependent self-construal and conversational styles. This may suggest the involvement of other variables in argumentative writing. The interaction between the writers’ levels of trait argumentativeness and their endorsements of independent-interdependent self-construal may have moderated the effects of the writers’ cultural beliefs on their linguistic choices. It is also possible that the interactional effects of cultural self-construal and trait argumentativeness are manifested as other writing variables (e.g., the quality of arguments) than the frequencies of certain textual features. The current investigation aims to provide some answers to this inquiry.

Overall, previous research findings suggest the possibility that L2 writers’ cultural predisposition variables (e.g., independent-interdependent self-construal) can interact with other cognitive variables (e.g., trait argumentativeness). Previous literature has also suggested that L2 writers’ developmental variables (e.g., previous learning experiences in English writing) and other contextual variables can influence their writing behaviors. For example, such variables as the rhetorical contexts, audiences, or writing genres can guide writers’ choices of discourse types, the extent of elaboration, clarity of ideas, and the organizational structure of a text (Berkenkotter, 1981; Flower & Hayes, 1980; Kroll, 1978). Thus, the results of the current investigation should be interpreted under a careful consideration of complex interplays among cultural, developmental, and contextual variables.

III. RESEARCH DESIGN

1. Research Questions

The present study aims to examine how Korean writers’ independent-interdependent self-construal (INDEP & INTERDEP) and their levels of argumentativeness (ARG) influence their English writing in terms of the following three focal aspects: (a) the amount
of textual indicators of individualist-collectivist beliefs, (b) the quality of argumentation in students’ essays (W-ARG), and (c) the overall quality of students’ essays (W-Quality).

Specifically, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Korean students’ levels of endorsement in the independent-interdependent self-construal affect the three focal aspects of their English argumentative essays?
2. How do Korean students’ levels of argumentativeness affect the three focal aspects of their English argumentative essays?
3. How do the interactions between Korean students’ endorsement in self-construal and their levels of argumentativeness affect the three focal aspects of their English argumentative essays?

2. Participants and Procedures

Participants included 71 undergraduate students who took English skills development courses at beginning/intermediate levels at a private university in Seoul, Korea. Ages ranged from 20 to 35 years ($M = 23.80$). The majority of them were female (78.9%) and the rest were male (21.2%). They majored in English education (69.00%) or other foreign languages education. The participants were asked to respond to the Independent-Interdependent Self Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994) and Argumentativeness Scale (Infante & Rancer, 1982). Upon their completion of questionnaire responses, the participants were given the following writing prompt:

Some people think that the choice of abortion should be up to the women and others think that abortion violates the child’s right to life. Which point of view do you agree with? Persuade your classmates and professor to agree with your position.

Participants were asked to write an argumentative essay on the topic as much persuasively as they could. They wrote their essays within a 30-minute class period. The writing topic was selected on the assumption that the pro-choice versus pro-life debates were still current and could easily spark the students’ intellectual engagement with the topic. Given that the condition of timed writing as well as the focus of the current research being given to the students’ rhetorical choices and their expressed cultural values rather than critical thinking abilities, the students’ familiarity with the topic and its relating arguments was also an important criterion for topic selection. The condition of 30-minute timed, in-class writing was chosen on the assumption that the students’ cultural, psychological predispositions would be better expressed in writing when the students were not allowed much time to deliberate on their rhetorical styles and accessibility to other materials on the writing topic. Essays consisting of less than a paragraph or fewer than 40
words were excluded from the data set. The word count for the student essays ranged from 42 to 267 ($M = 127.21$, $SD = 50.91$). The students’ essays revealed that the students’ opinions toward abortion were almost evenly divided between pro-life position (46.5%) and pro-choice position (49.3%). Three students refrained from taking either position. The gender difference in opinions toward abortion was not found ($\chi^2 = 2.76, p > .05$).

3. Measurements

1) Independent-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale

The Independent-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale was developed by Singels (1994) following Markus and Kitayama’s (1991) conceptualization (refer to Appendix A). The scale includes 24 items with two subscales (i.e., independent and interdependent self-construal). Responses were indicated on a seven-point Likert-type scale with anchors of strongly disagree (1) and strongly agree (7). Singels and Brown (1995) report an internal consistency reliability of .73 for interdependent self-construal and .69 for independent self-construal. Its convergent validity was established with measures of collectivism (Singelis et al., 1995). The internal consistency reliability statistics measured with the current study sample were .71 for interdependent self-construal and .61 for independent self-construal, respectively.

2) Argumentativeness Scale

The Argumentativeness Scale (ARG) developed by Infante and Rancer (1982) consists of 20 items, such as “Arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves” and “I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge” (refer to Appendix B). Of the 20 items, ten measured the tendency to approach arguments (ARGap) and the rest ten measured the tendency to avoid them (ARGav). Responses to each item were scored on a five-point Likert-type scale with anchors of almost never true (1) and almost always true (5). Infante and Rancer (1982) report an internal consistency reliability of .91 for ARGap items and .86 for ARGav items. The internal consistency reliability statistics measured with the current study sample were .80 for ARGap and .54 for ARGav, respectively.

3) Textual Argumentation Quality and Overall Writing Quality

To assess the degree to which each student essay is argumentative (W-ARG), a set of criteria was adopted from Al-Haq and Ahmed’s (1994) checklist to evaluate argumentative writing (see Table 1). The criteria were composed of six sub-criteria including
development of argument, support of argument, organization of argument, degree of argumentativeness, logicality of argument, and degree of persuasion. The ESL Composition Profile (Jacobs, Zinkgraf, Wormuth, Hartfiel & Hughey, 1981) was also utilized to measure the overall quality of student essays (W-Quality). Along with the researcher, a NES teacher who had been teaching Korean students for approximately ten years scored the students’ essays independently on W-ARG and W-Quality. The inter-rater reliability statistics were .91 for W-ARG and .86 for W-Quality. The averaged scores of the two raters were entered into a SPSS data file for statistical analyses.

TABLE 1

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Ratings</th>
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<td>0 1 2 3 4</td>
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4) Textual Indicators of Individualist-Collectivist Beliefs

Based on previous literature (e.g., Matalene, 1985), Wu and Rubin (2000) summarize eight categories of textual features as associated with individualist and collectivist values. Among the eight categories, five categories of textual features were adopted for the present study (see Table 2). Two categories (Humaneness & Collectivist Value) from Wu and Rubin’s (2000) original set of variables were excluded due to the conceptual vagueness. Wu and Rubin (2000) define the category of Humaneness as “embracing all those moral qualities that guide a person in his relationship with each other” and the category of Collectivist Values as “appealing to virtues that uphold group solidarity” (p. 161). The researcher suspected that these operational definitions might put the analysis to the risk of subjectivity. It was also concerned that the writing topic (abortion) in this study might be more prone to the discussion on individuals’ right than on interpersonal relationships or group solidarity. The category of Indirectness was excluded because the researcher’s initial examination on the student essays suggested that more than 80% of the student samples utilized a more or less ‘direct’ organization style. Yet, the rest 20% were hardly counted as ‘indirect’ but rather ‘undeveloped.’ Because the given writing prompt resembled the conventional TOEFL essay test, it was suspected that the students followed the ‘ready-made’ format. Thus, the category of Indirectness was subjected to no further analysis. Each category of the textual features was measured by counting the occurrences of certain lexical items or phrases. Examples from the student samples are also presented.
in Table 2. The procedure was repeated more than twice to minimize the errors. The frequencies of the textual features per category were entered into a SPSS data file.

TABLE 2
Textual Features of Analysis (Modified from Wu & Rubin, 2000, p. 161)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Textual Features</th>
<th>Descriptive Definition</th>
<th>Operational Definition</th>
<th>Examples from the Present Study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individualist Features</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>First person singular pronouns</td>
<td>Cognition about personal attributes, that is independent from in-group</td>
<td>“I” “my” “me”</td>
<td>However, I have a different idea. I don’t believe that who bear babies become always good parents. For example, my grandmother was sick and it makes her choose abortion twice. A few weeks ago, I saw a popular American drama named “HOUSE.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal anecdotes</td>
<td>The revelation of personal experiences and stories</td>
<td>Personal experiences and stories</td>
<td>In that case, babies could possibly grow up insufficient circumstances. Maybe the child who was born but didn't receive the celebrity has a unfortunate life.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Expressing one’s opinions with certainty</td>
<td>Avoiding hedge words (e.g., might, perhaps)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Collectivist Features</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First person plural pronouns</td>
<td>Cognition about group social entity, that is interdependent with in-group</td>
<td>“We,” “our,” “us”</td>
<td>We are the same human as a baby. [T]o maintain human dignity and stable society, we should prohibit abortion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of proverbs</td>
<td>A short saying in frequent and widespread use</td>
<td>The number of proverbs</td>
<td>There is an old saying that a friend in this life is result from a thousand times karma.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Data Analysis

To calculate the relative frequencies of textual features associated with individualist-collectivist thought, each case was divided by the total number of words in the writing sample. Primarily, the relative frequencies of the five categories and the other two writing variables (W-ARG & W-Quality) were subjected to a series of bivariate correlation analysis to examine their associations with the self-construal variables (INDEP & INTERDEP) and argumentativeness variables (ARGgt, ARGap, & ARGav).

Subsequently, to generate the four groups (2 X 2) based on the two cognitive constructs (argumentativeness and self-construal), two indices were used. First, the general
argumentativeness tendency (ARGgt) was calculated by subtracting the participants’ scores on ARGap from those on ARGav (i.e., \( \text{ARGgt} = \text{ARGav} - \text{ARGav} \)) with positive scores indicating a higher tendency to approach arguments. Likewise, the self-construal discrepancy (SELF_Dis) was calculated by subtracting the participants’ scores on INDEP from those on INTERDEP (i.e., \( \text{SELF_Dis} = \text{INDEP} - \text{INTERDEP} \)) with positive scores indicating a higher endorsement in independence over interdependence in self-construal. A median-split was used to determine the high and low ARGgt groups, so was for the high and low SELF_Dis. The median for ARGgt was .20 whereas the one for SELF_Dis was -.08. A series of Analysis of Variances (ANOVAs) with the four groups (i.e., the combination of the high-low ARGgt and the high-low SELF_Dis) as the independent variable were conducted to compare the mean differences among the four groups on five writing variables (W-ARG, W-Quality, 1st Sing., 1st Pl., & Hedge). To guard against a potential inflation in Type I error (i.e., mistakenly rejecting the null hypothesis when it is true) due to multiple tests, a Bonferroni-type adjustment was applied for a more conservative \( p \)-value (i.e., \( p < .01 = .05/5 \), the typical \( p \) value divided by the number of the dependent variables).

IV. RESULTS

1. Self-Construal, Argumentativeness, and Writing Variables

As shown in Table 3, the measured levels of the Korean students’ endorsements in INDEP and INTERDEP self-construal with a seven-point Likert-type scale were 4.70 (\( SD = .61 \)) and 4.80 (\( SD = .63 \)), respectively. This indicates that overall, the participants endorsed in both independent and interdependent self-construal to moderately higher levels. Given that the two orientations in self-construal coexist within an individual, these results should not be surprising. Yet, the result suggested that the Korean students seem to retain collectivist beliefs to somewhat higher degrees (4.80), yet also endorsed in no lower degrees of individualist beliefs (4.70). The mean scores of the Korean students’ levels of ARGap and ARGav with a five-point Likert-type scale were 3.17 (\( SD = .39 \)) and 2.96 (\( SD = .38 \)), respectively, indicating that the students are slightly high on approaching arguments and slightly low on avoiding arguments.

As for the writing variables, the mean score of W-ARG in the student essays was 12.86 out of 24.00 (\( SD = 5.38 \)), indicating that the students’ argumentative writing abilities were slightly high.

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1 The two textual indicators of Proverb and Anecdote were not subjected to the analysis because they appeared only a few times in the student essays.
rated as no higher than the intermediate level. The mean score of W-Quality in the student essays was 74.46 out of 100.00 \((SD = 8.46)\), indicating that the students’ overall levels of English writing proficiency ranged from Good to Average (the total score of 85–72) on the ESL Composition Profile. The mean scores of the relative frequencies of textual features are also presented in Table 3. As noted earlier, the calculation of the relative frequencies of textual features was conducted by dividing each case by the total number of words in the writing sample.

**TABLE 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Independent Variables</strong></td>
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<td>Self-Construal</td>
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<tr>
<td>INDEP</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTERDEP</td>
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<td>ARG</td>
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<td>ARGap</td>
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<tr>
<td>ARGav</td>
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<td>2.96</td>
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<td><strong>Dependent Variables</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>W-ARG</td>
<td>0-24</td>
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<td>5.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-Quality</td>
<td>0-100</td>
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<td>8.46</td>
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<td><strong>Textual Features</strong></td>
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<td>1st Sing.</td>
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<td>.0215</td>
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<td>.0061</td>
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<td>Proverb</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

*Note. na denotes that the SD for Proverb could not be calculated because the use of proverb appeared only one time in one student sample; the statistics for the textual features are presented to four decimal places; 1st Sing. = 1st Person Singular Pronouns, Anecdote = Personal Anecdotes, 1st Pl. = 1st Person Plural Pronouns, and Proverb = Proverbs.

2. Relationships between Writers’ Psychological Disposition and Their Writing Behaviors

In order to examine the relationships between the writers’ psychological dispositions (i.e., INDEP/INTERDEP and ARGap/ARGav) and their writing behaviors (i.e., W-ARG, W-Quality, and the relative frequencies of textual features), a series of bivariate correlation analysis was conducted. As shown in Table 4, the results suggested a weak negative association between INTERDEP and ARGap \((r = -.24; p < .05)\), indicating that individuals with interdependent self-construal tend to be less approaching to arguments. Yet, given the
no significant association between INTERDEP and ARGav ($r = .14; \text{not significant}$), individuals with interdependent self-construal do not necessarily have higher tendencies to avoid arguments. INDEP showed any significant association neither with ARGap nor ARGav. ARGap and ARGav showed a positive correlation with each other ($r = .35; p < .01$).

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. INDEP</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. INTERDEP</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. ARGap</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>-.24*</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. ARGav</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.35*</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. W-ARG</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. W-Quality</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.90**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. 1st Sing.</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.00</td>
<td>-.2</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.26*</td>
<td>-.32**</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Hedge</td>
<td>-.19</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.1</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.34**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. 1st Pl.</td>
<td>.28*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The bivariate correlations for Proverb and Anecdote were not calculated because the uses of proverb and anecdote appeared only one time and seven times, respectively; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$. Neither the writers’ self-construal nor argumentativeness variables showed any association with W-ARG or W-Quality. This suggested no direct impact of the writers’ psychological variables on the textual argumentation quality and the overall quality of student essays. As for the textual features, 1st Sing. was negatively associated with W-ARG ($r = -.26; p < .05$) and W-Quality ($r = -.32; p < .01$). This indicates that L2 writers’ reliance on first person singular can suggest their less sophisticated writing skills. The results also revealed a moderate positive association between 1st Sing. and Hedge ($r = .34; p < .01$). It seems that these student writers modulated the degree of assertiveness by balancing the numbers of first person singular and hedges. That is, the writers utilized hedges when they wanted to express their opinions with caution. The positive correlation between INDEP and 1st Pl. ($r = .28; p < .05$) was an unexpected result because the use of 1st Pl. (e.g., we) was an indicator of collectivistic beliefs. Yet, these results suggest the possibility that the textual features such as ‘I’ or ‘we’ are associated with the writers’ considerations of audience responses or their stances on certain statements, rather than their endorsement of cultural values.
3. A Comparison among the Four Groups on Their Uses of Writing Variables

In order to examine how the four groups formed by the combination of the writers’ argumentativeness and self-construal (i.e., High ARGgt/High SELF_Dis, High ARGgt/Low SELF_Dis, Low ARGgt/High SELF_Dis, and Low ARGgt/Low SELF_Dis) influenced their uses of the textual features, five factorial ANOVAs were conducted with a more conservative \( p \) value (\( p < .01 \)). The mean scores of the four groups across the five dependent variables were presented in Table 5. The five dependent variables included W-ARG and W-Quality, and the relative frequencies of 1st Sing., 1st Pl., and Hedge.

### Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>High ARGgt/High SELF_Dis</th>
<th>High ARGgt/Low SELF_Dis</th>
<th>Low ARGgt/High SELF_Dis</th>
<th>Low ARGgt/Low SELF_Dis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-ARG</td>
<td>13.44 (5.93)</td>
<td>13.45 (4.30)</td>
<td>12.21 (4.08)</td>
<td>12.69 (6.30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-Quality</td>
<td>74.50 (10.24)</td>
<td>76.23 (4.14)</td>
<td>73.88 (7.09)</td>
<td>74.07 (9.64)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Sing.</td>
<td>.0171 (.0165)</td>
<td>.0133 (.0119)</td>
<td>.0183 (.0117)</td>
<td>.0267 (.0300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hedge</td>
<td>.0047 (.0064)</td>
<td>.0058 (.0070)</td>
<td>.0047 (.0066)</td>
<td>.0075 (.0102)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Pl.</td>
<td>.0071 (.0103)</td>
<td>.0057 (.0105)</td>
<td>.0113 (.0163)</td>
<td>.0039 (.0072)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* ARGgt = ARGap - ARGav, SELF_Dis = INDEP - INTERDEP; the statistics for the textual features are presented to four decimal places.

Table 6 presents the ANOVA results for the five dependent variables. The independent variables of ARGgt-m and SELF_dis-m indicate the High-Low group memberships based on the scores on ARGgt and SELF_Dis, respectively. The factorial ANOVA results showed no significant group differences on ANY of the five dependent variables. For example, the four groups (ARGgt-m x SELF_dis-m) did not differ on W-ARG, \( F(1, 67) = .041, p = .840; \) on W-Quality, \( F(1, 67) = .139, p = .711; \) and 1st Sing., \( F(1, 67) = 1.312, p = .256 (p > .01, not significant) \). Of note, the Levene’s tests of the homogeneity of variance were not significant for the five dependent variables, indicating that the variances across the four groups were homogeneous, and thus the ANOVA results were interpretable with no additional adjustment.

Of parenthesis, as a post-hoc analysis, another two groups were formed on the basis of the \( M \pm 1 SD \) split; for example, the high-high group on both ARGgt and SELF_Dis consisted of the participants whose scores were higher than \( M \pm 1 SD \) on both ARGgt and SELF_Dis, whereas the low-low group included people whose scores were lower than \( M \pm 1 SD \).
1 SD on both ARGgt and SELF_Dis. The two groups did not differ significantly on any of the five dependent variables, either.

### TABLE 6
Use of Writing Variables among the Four Groups (N = 71)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variables</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>MS</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>W-ARG</td>
<td>ARGgt-m</td>
<td>14.037</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14.037</td>
<td>.468</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.929</td>
<td>.031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARGgt-m × SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>1.236</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.236</td>
<td>.041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>2010.608</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>30.009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2026.592</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W-Quality</td>
<td>ARGgt-m</td>
<td>31.834</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31.834</td>
<td>.429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>16.748</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.748</td>
<td>.226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARGgt-m × SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>10.276</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.276</td>
<td>.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>4966.968</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74.134</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5011.873</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Sing.</td>
<td>ARGgt-m</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1.845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARGgt-m × SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>1.312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>.031</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>.000</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.032</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1st Pl.</td>
<td>ARGgt-m</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.259</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.764</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ARGgt-m × SELF_Dis-m</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td>.240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Error</td>
<td>.004</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>70</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. ARGgt-m = High-Low membership on ARGgt, SELF_Dis-m = High-Low membership on SELF_Dis.

### V. DISCUSSION

This study examined whether and how Korean student writers’ psychological disposition variables (i.e., INDEP/INTERDEP and ARGap/ARGav) affect their actual behaviors in English argumentative writing. The dependent variables included W-ARG, W-Quality, and the relative frequencies of textual indicators of individualist-collectivist beliefs (e.g., 1st Sing., 1st Pl., & Hedge).

Overall, the participants endorsed in both INDEP and INTERDEP to moderately high levels. As for their argumentativeness tendencies, they were slightly high on ARGap and slightly low on ARGav. The results of correlation analysis showed a weak, negative association between the participants’ levels of INTERDEP and ARGap. The participants’
levels of INTERDEP, however, showed no association with their levels of ARGap. Taken together, these results suggest that people with collectivistic orientations do not deliberately pursue arguing but do not particularly avoid arguments. This suggests that a collectivistic culture does not necessarily suppress arguing itself but there may be certain situational constraints governing people’s willingness to approach to arguing. This further suggests that unlike Shen’s (1989) report on L2 writers’ conflicts in cultural identity, Korean students do not necessarily feel resistant to being assertive in their English writing when they know it is appropriate. Future research needs to examine how Korean students differ in taking on an assertive voice in various writing situations (e.g., L1 versus L2 writing, different types of genres, or differential audiences).

As for the participants’ choices of textual features, the results revealed a moderate positive association between the occurrences of 1st Sing. and Hedge. The student writers seemed to modulate the degree of assertiveness by balancing the numbers of the first person singular pronouns and hedges. The moderate negative associations between 1st Sing. and both W-ARG and W-Quality indicated that less skilled L2 writers tend to rely more on first person singular. The positive correlation between INDEP and 1st Pl. was an unexpected result because the use of 1st Pl. (e.g., we) was an indicator of collectivistic beliefs. A careful review on the participants’ essays suggested that the participants’ use of the textual features such as ‘I’ or ‘we’ are not necessarily associated with the writers’ individualistic or collectivistic values, but rather with the writers’ stances on certain propositions. This may support Wu and Rubin’s (2000) contention that the degree of the writers’ endorsement of cultural values is not directly manifested as their textual choices. Further research is needed to examine the reasons underlying writers’ choices of certain textual features.

Neither the writers’ self-construal nor argumentativeness variables showed any association with W-ARG or W-Quality. In addition, the four groups formed by the combination of the writers’ levels of argumentativeness and self-construal did not differ in their uses of certain textual features, W-ARG and W-Quality. These results suggest that the interactions between INDEP/INTERDEP and ARGap/ARBav have no substantial impact on the ways that they write in English. No evidence suggests that the writers’ collectivist beliefs lead to their ambiguities in taking a position in English argumentative essays. The writers’ higher levels of argumentativeness do not seem to result in better qualities of textual argumentation in their English essays.

In short, the results of the study suggested no direct impact of Korean students’ orientations to independent-interdependent self-construal and levels of argumentativeness on their English argumentative writing. Yet, caution should be raised against interpreting these results as negating any potential influences of cultural, psychological dispositions on L2 writing. The results of this study need to be assessed carefully in reference to the
influences of the participants’ developmental statuses and other relevant contextual variables. Given that the focus of the current investigation was to assess the impact of psychological disposition on writing behavior, there is not much information available on the participants’ developmental statuses such as their English proficiency levels and prior experiences with English writing instruction. Yet, there are a few clues that inform the participants’ developmental statuses: 1) The participants were undergraduate students who were taking language skills courses at beginning/intermediate levels; 2) The median score of the total number of the words in the student essays was 124 words for 30 minutes; and 3) The mean scores of both W-ARG and W-Quality indicated that the students’ overall abilities of English argumentative writing were rated as no higher than intermediate levels.

Considering all this information, the majority of the participants in the present study are not likely to have reached the statuses where they could fully express their own cultural values or personal styles in their English argumentative writing. Rather, they are likely to have struggled with limited control of linguistic resources. Bakhtin (1986) suggests that individuals with a better command of a certain speech genre are better able to express their own subjectivities. It would be burdensome for unskilled L2 writers to translate their personal values or preferred rhetorical styles into their L2 writing. In addition, the experimental conditions in this study possibly affected the study results. A timed in-class essay task and the topic of abortion could have more guiding influence on the students’ ways of writing than their psychological dispositions. Their previous experiences with English writing instruction on a TOEFL writing essay or a five-paragraph essay may also have guided them to follow a formulaic pattern of writing.

In essence, the study results could suggest that for developing L2 writers, their psychological dispositions may not exert as much significant influences on their English argumentative writing as might be expected. In this vein, these results lay emphasis on the influences of developmental and situational variables on beginning/intermediate L2 writers. Future research is called for assessing the proportional effects of developmental status, psychological disposition, and specific writing tasks on L2 writing. It would be instructive to note that the term of developmental status should not be understood as suggesting L2 writers’ cognitive immaturity. The term refers to the necessity for L2 writers to be more assimilated to the ways of writing in a given L2 rhetorical context. As Wu and Rubin (2000) aptly expressed, L2 writers need to acquire “far more subtle and yet pervasive cultural knowledge about ways of arguing, ways of addressing an audience, ways of expressing authority and much more” (p. 149). L2 writers should acquire such cultural knowledge through writing practices with adequate instructional assistance.
VI. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Several limitations of the current study warrant noting. First, insufficient information on the writers’ developmental statuses was collected, which limits the generalizability of the study results. Future researchers are advised to utilize multiple raters or reliable instruments to measure participants’ current linguistic developmental statuses. Second, the use of the discrepancy scores without considering their distribution could limit the interpretation since two same differences observed may reflect different scenarios; for example, the same score on ARGgt can be drawn from either a situation where students are high on both ARGap and ARGav or a situation where they are low on both. In addition, from a statistical stance, multiple missing values on some of the dependent variables (e.g., Proverb, Anecdote) added difficulties in using ANOVAs. Lastly, as for the writing task, the use of students’ untimed writing samples might yield different results from the use of their timed in-class essays. Under an untimed condition, students may have felt more comfortable to express their unique styles in writing. It is also possible that the topic of the writing task exerted some influence on the writers’ choices of the textual features of interest (e.g., 1st Pl., Hedge). Multiple topics or students’ familiarities with the given topic may lead to a different study result. Future research should give careful consideration to the administration of writing task in terms of the time limit for writing, the number of writing task, the writer’s familiarity with the writing topic, and possible gender bias toward the writing topic.

VII. CONCLUSION

Despite such limitations, the current study can serve as a meaningful attempt to answer whether and how the interplay between cultural and cognitive variables influences Korean students’ English argumentative writing. In sum, the study results revealed no substantial impact of the writers’ orientations in self-construal and levels of argumentativeness on their choices of certain writing features and the quality of their argumentative writing. These results suggested that for beginning/intermediate L2 writers, their psychological dispositions may not exert as much significant influences on their English argumentative writing as might be expected. The study results further suggested that L2 writers’ endorsement of collectivistic beliefs does not necessarily suppress their willingness to arguing and the overall quality of arguments in their argumentative writing. In addition, the textual features that have been suggested as conceptually linked with collectivistic beliefs warrant reexamination for writers’ motivations for their choice.
Overall, the present study suggested the necessity for examining L2 writing behaviors from the multiple angles including psychological, developmental, and contextual ones. It also called for further investigation on the interactional effects among psychological dispositions, developmental statuses, and specific writing tasks on L2 writing behaviors. Such knowledge can help English writing teachers provide their students with better-tuned instructional assistance for their students.

REFERENCES


The Effect of Self-Construal and Argumentativeness on English Writing


**APPENDIX A**

Independent-Interdependent Self-Construal Scale

Using the 7-point scale provided, please indicate to what extent you agree with each statement by marking the appropriate number to the left of the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither agree nor disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
2. I’d rather say “No” directly, than risk being misunderstood. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. It is important for me to maintain harmony within my group. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
4. Speaking up during a class is not a problem for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. My happiness depends on the happiness of those around me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
6. Having a lively imagination is important to me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
7. I would offer my seat in a bus to my professor. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. I am comfortable with being singled out for praise or rewards. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I respect people who are modest about themselves. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. I am the same person at home that I am at school. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of the group I am in. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. Being able to take care of myself is a primary concern for me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I often have the feeling that my relationships with others are more important than my own accomplishments. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. I feel comfortable using someone’s first name soon after I meet them (foreign people), even when they are much older than I am.

15. I should take into consideration my parents’ advice when making education/career plans.

16. I prefer to be direct and forthright when dealing with people I’ve just met.

17. It is important to me to respect decisions made by the group.

18. I act the same way no matter who I am with.

19. If my brother or sister fails, I feel responsible.

20. I enjoy being unique and different from others in many respects.

21. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I am not happy with the group.

22. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

23. Even when I strongly disagree with group members, I avoid an argument.

24. I value being in good health above everything.

APPENDIX B

Argumentativeness Scale

Using the 5-point scale provided, please indicate how often each statement is true for you personally by marking the appropriate number to the left of the statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>almost never</td>
<td>rarely true</td>
<td>occasionally true</td>
<td>often true</td>
<td>almost always true</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1. While in an argument, I worry that the person I am arguing with will form a negative impression on me.

2. Arguing over controversial issues improves my intelligence.

3. I enjoy avoiding arguments.

4. I am energetic and enthusiastic when I argue.

5. Once I finish an argument I promise myself that I will not get into another.

6. Arguing with a person creates more problems for me than it solves.

7. I have a pleasant, good feeling when I win a point in an argument.

2 The parenthesis was added by the researcher under the consideration of cultural differences in addressing.
8. When I finish arguing with someone I feel nervous and upset. 1 2 3 4
9. I enjoy a good argument over a controversial issue. 1 2 3 4
10. I get an unpleasant feeling when I realize I am about to get into an argument. 1 2 3 4
11. I enjoy defending my point of view on an issue. 1 2 3 4
12. I am happy when I keep an argument from happening. 1 2 3 4
13. I do not like to miss the opportunity to argue a controversial issue. 1 2 3 4
14. I prefer being with people who rarely disagree with me. 1 2 3 4
15. I consider an argument an exciting intellectual challenge. 1 2 3 4
16. I find myself unable to think of effective points during an argument. 1 2 3 4
17. I feel refreshed and satisfied after an argument on a controversial issue. 1 2 3 4
18. I have the ability to do well in an argument. 1 2 3 4
19. I try to avoid getting into arguments. 1 2 3 4
20. I feel excitement when I expect that a conversation I am in is leading to an argument. 1 2 3 4

Applicable levels: tertiary education  
Key words: English writing, self-construal, argumentativeness  

Hyun-Woo Lim  
Dept. of English Education, Graduate School of Education  
Hankuk University of Foreign Studies  
270 Imun-Dong, Dongdaemun-Gu  
Seoul 130-791, Korea  
Tel: (02) 2173-2913  
Email: hlim@hufs.ac.kr  

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