8 A Corpus Study on Written Comments by Nonnative English-Speaking and Native English-Speaking Teachers of First-Year Writing

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Language diversity has received tremendous attention in writing studies since the early 2000s (e.g., Canagarajah, 2006; Guerra, 2016; Horner et al., 2011; Lu & Horner, 2013; Young, 2009), which Paul Matsuda (2013) calls "a linguistic turn" (p. 129). Surprisingly, within the linguistic turn, research on language-related topics seems to have mostly addressed the diverse language use and backgrounds of students, whereas the linguistic diversity of writing teachers has received little attention, although the number of writing teachers who speak English as a second or additional language keeps increasing in writing classrooms. Todd Ruecker and colleagues (2018) therefore in a recent article called for more research on writing teachers who are nonnative English speakers (NNES) in order to better understand the challenges they face in teaching and to provide them with more supportive working environments.[1]

While the authors throughout this collection are responding to that call, this chapter focuses particularly on NNES teachers of first-year writing (FYW) because there have been, so far, only very few studies that focus on this group (e.g., Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Shehi, 2017; Zheng, 2017). Although those previous studies have provided valuable insights into NNES teachers' general experiences in teaching FYW, such as challenges they have encountered, identities they bring to writing classrooms, and the level of con-

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[1] Research has problematized the dichotomy between nonnative English-speaking (NNES) and native English-speaking (NES) because it is often hard to define what counts as a native speaker of English and the dichotomy privileges NES and stigmatizes NNES (e.g., Braine, 1999; Canagarajah, 2006; Cook, 1999). The main reason this chapter draws upon the NNES-NES terms, as noted by Mariya Tseptsura and Todd Ruecker (this volume), is to connect and expand on the previous literature.

fidence and potential advantages they have in teaching, little research has explored how NNES teachers of FYW respond to students' papers through written comments.

However, examining written responses to students' writing is crucial to further our understanding of NNES teachers' experiences in teaching FYW for at least two reasons. First, Dana Ferris (1995) points out that responding to students' writing has always remained a crucial part of writing instruction. Therefore, the picture of NNES teachers' experiences in teaching FYW is incomplete without looking into how NNES teachers provide written feedback on students' writing. Second, according to Lynn Goldstein (2004) and Ken Hyland and Fiona Hyland (2006), how teachers respond to students' writing is affected by teachers' sociopolitical status and teacher-student relationship. Looking into NNES teachers' written comments on students' writing therefore can also provide some insights into NNES teachers' perceptions of their own authority and assumptions about their relationship with students.

To have a more comprehensive picture of NNES teachers' experiences in FYW classrooms, this study looks at written comments on students' graded papers by NNES teachers of FYW and compares them to those by their native English-speaking (NES) counterparts.[2] In addition, unlike previous research on NNES teachers of FYW that was conducted through self-reflection, case studies, questionnaires, and interviews (e.g., Chen, this volume; Hijazi, this volume; Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Shehi, 2017; Zheng, 2017), this study takes a different approach, exploring written comments on students' graded papers given by both NNES and NES teachers of FYW through a self-built, specialized corpus, with a goal of methodologically complementing the previous literature as well. Specifically, the overarching research question in this study is "Do written comments on students' graded papers by NNES teachers of FYW look different from those by their NES counterparts? If so, how and why?"

To carry out a productive comparison, this study focuses exclusively on linguistic elements that index teachers' sense of own authority and certainty and their relationship with students in written comments because it is partially through these elements that teachers position themselves as members of particular social groups and that potential differences between NNES teachers and NES teachers of FYW may be observed. These interpersonal elements, according to Ken Hyland (2005), can be systematically explored

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2   The main reason why graded papers were collected for this study as opposed to rough drafts was that some participants did not provide written comments on rough drafts.

through a metadiscourse model. For example, through the interpersonal model of metadiscourse developed by Hyland (2005), Polly Tse and Hyland (2008) have uncovered how male and female writers represent and position themselves in biology and philosophy book reviews.

A Metadiscourse Model

Metadiscourse comprises the linguistic resources used by language users to organize texts or project their attitudes towards the texts or audiences (Hyland, 2005). For example, let us consider this sentence: "It is difficult to see, however, how metadiscourse can constitute a different level of meaning" (Hyland, 2005, p. 21). Here, *however* shows the logical connection between the clause shown and the previous information that the writer wants the audience to perceive in order to help the audience better interpret the text. *Difficult* indicates the writer's attitude towards the clause—*to see how metadiscourse can constitute a different level of meaning*. The writer attempts to have their audience share the same attitude with them or at least find their attitude valid.

Instead of simply being a stylistic choice, metadiscourse is a crucial part of communication. It is used based on writers' predictions of their audiences' knowledge in interpreting the text and audiences' potential reaction to the text. Such an audience prediction reveals something of how writers see themselves and their orientations towards their text and their audiences. As Tse and Hyland (2008) put it, "metadiscourse allows writers to use language to acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations, representing themselves, their views and their audience" (p. 1236). Studying metadiscourse, therefore, can provide some insights into how writers understand themselves and position themselves in relation to their audiences.

In spite of its usefulness and productivity, metadiscourse is also a fuzzy concept mainly because there are different conceptions of what counts as metadiscourse, which in turn have led to different frameworks of metadiscourse. For example, Annelie Ädel's (2006) reflexive model of metadiscourse sees metadiscourse as linguistic elements used to not only refer to the text itself but the writer and the audience in the text as well, whereas Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model views metadiscourse as interpersonal linguistic resources used by writers to organize the text itself or project their attitudes towards the text or audiences. However, instead of considering different conceptions of metadiscourse as opposed views, as Ken Hyland (2017) suggested, we can see those conceptions on a continuum, contributing different aspects to our understanding of discourse. In this study, Hyland's (2005) interperson-

al model of metadiscourse is used because this model enables us to explore how writers understand themselves and position themselves as members of particular social groups in relation to audiences (Hyland, 2005).

Hyland (2005), in his interpersonal model, divided metadiscourse into two categories— *interactive* resources and *interactional* resources. Interactive resources allow writers to make their texts more cohesive and coherent by anticipating audiences' expectations in order to make audiences reach writers' preferred interpretations. These resources include five sub-categories (Hyland, 2005, p. 49):

- **Transitions:** express the logical connection between two clauses (e.g., in addition, but, thus, and)
- **Frame markers**: refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages (e.g., finally, to conclude, in this section, my purpose is)
- **Endophoric makers**: help readers locate information in other parts of the text (e.g., noted above, see Fig., here)
- **Evidentials**: refer to sources from other texts (e.g., According to X, (Y, 2005), Z mentions)
- **Code glosses:** help readers better understand meanings of ideational material[3] (e.g., namely, e.g., such as, in other words)

Interactional resources focus on writer-audience interactions in a text, helping writers project themselves and signal their attitudes towards their texts and audiences. These resources also include five sub-categories (Hyland, 2005, p. 49):

- **Hedges**: withhold writers' full commitment to a proposition (e.g., might, perhaps, possible, about, suggest)
- **Boosters**: emphasize force or writers' certainty in a proposition (e.g., in fact, definitely, it is clear that, demonstrate)
- **Attitude**: express writers' attitudes towards a proposition (e.g., unfortunately, I agree, surprisingly)
- **Engagement**: explicitly refer to or build a relationship with readers (e.g., consider, note that, you can see that)
- **Self-mentions**: explicit reference to author(s) (e.g., I, we, my, our)

In short, metadiscourse is an important means writers use to facilitate communication and position themselves in relation to their audiences. In

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3   In systemic functional linguistics (SFL), language is viewed to simultaneously carry three metafunctions, including *the ideational function*, *the interpersonal function*, and *the textual function* (Halliday, 1994). *The ideational function* refers to the use of language to represent experience and ideas.

comparing the metadiscoursal features used in written comments on students' graded papers by NNES teachers of FYW to those by NES teachers, this study has the potential to reveal whether (and how) NNES and NES teachers understand and position themselves differently in their written comments.

Corpus and Method

The corpus in this study consists of 56 samples of written comments on students' graded papers of different projects in FYW courses from eight teachers, with seven samples of written comments from each individual teacher (see a detailed description of the teachers' background information below).[4] One sample of written comments includes both marginal and end comments on students' papers because both types of comments work holistically to help students improve their writing. The total word count of the corpus is 17,318. Despite being a small corpus, the data was sufficient for the study because previous research that explored metadiscourse in teachers' written comments indicates that the frequency of metadiscourse is exceptionally high (Ädel, 2017).

The study was carried out in fall 2018 at a Midwestern research university where most teachers and students in FYW classrooms were NESs. After seeking IRB approval, I sent a recruitment email to all teachers of FYW in the English department through the First-and-Second-Year English listserv. I was able to recruit 12 teachers, three NNESs and nine NESs, and all of them were graduate teaching assistants. Considering all the three NNES teachers are females, I decided to exclude four NES teachers who are males in this study in order to minimize the potential influence of gender on the results. The remaining eight teachers (three NNESs and five NESs) all had taught FYW at least once before contributing their written comments to the study. In addition, all the teachers had taken a one-semester mandatory composition theory course at the same time as they were teaching FYW for the first time. The goals of the theory course included supporting teachers of FYW by offering structured opportunities to reflect on their

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4   The corpus of the present study is a sub-corpus of a larger corpus project that examined how the use of metadiscourse in FYW teachers' written comments varies according to various extralinguistic factors, including location of comments (marginal or end), course context (ENGL 101 or ENGL 102), gender, race/ethnicity, disciplinary background (rhetoric and composition, literature, or creative writing), native language, and years of teaching experience. The representativeness of the larger corpus was met by following the criteria of building a specialized corpus (e.g., Biber, 1990, 1993; Flowerdew, 2004; Reppen, 2010).

teaching practices in dialogue with other teachers and familiarizing teachers of FYW with the scholarship in the field of composition studies and composition pedagogy, providing an overview of the theories and practices of composition instruction.

As for years of teaching experience, one of the NNES teachers (Iva) had had two years of teaching experience, with the rest of the two NNES teachers (Augie and AW) more than six years of teaching experience. On the other hand, only one NES teacher (Lillie) had had more than six years of teaching experience. Three of the NES teachers (Ann, Merc, Myers) had had three years of teaching experience, and the rest one (Fia) only one year of teaching experience.[5] In terms of disciplinary background, One NNES teacher (Iva) was pursuing a degree in creative writing, and the rest of the two (AW and Augie) in literature. Three of the NES teachers (Ann, Myers, and Merc) were also pursuing a degree in creative writing, the other two (Lillie and Fia) in rhetoric and composition. All the teachers were also asked to self-identify their race/ethnicity. One NNES teacher (Iva) self-identified as Asian, and the other two teachers (Augie and AW) self-identified as Black or African American and Arabic/Middle Eastern, respectively. Three NES teachers (Lillie, Fia, and Myers) self-identified as White, and the other two (Ann and Merc) self-identified as Asian and Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino, respectively. Table 8.1 summarizes the participants' background information.[6]

The method of the study involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus data. One difficulty in studying metadiscourse is that metadiscourse is an open category and can be realized in a variety of ways by units of varied length from individual words to whole clauses or sentences. Many previous studies did not cover all the metadiscoursal features (e.g., Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Tse & Hyland, 2008). Instead, they focused on some particular features that can be easily searched for through concordance software. Then the researchers manually excluded irrelevant instances. However, in the present study, all metadiscoursal features were manually searched for and coded in order to cover the full range of the use of metadiscourse in teachers' written comments.

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5   All the names are pseudonyms.

6   While this study focuses only on the impact of native language on feedback practices, some research has found that other socio-cultural factors, such as gender, teaching experience, and disciplinary background may also affect how teachers comment on students' writing (e.g., Johnson & Roen, 1992; Lang, 2018; Xin, 2021). Also, because the corpus is relatively small in size, the results of this study will be only suggestive.

Table 8.1. Teacher Background Information

Teacher	First Language	Gender	Teaching Experience	Disciplinary Background	Race/Ethnicity
Iva	Other	Female	2 years	Creative Writing	Asian
Augie	Other	Female	6 years	Literature	Black or African American
AW	Other	Female	6+ years	Literature	Arabic/Middle Eastern
Lillie	English	Female	6 years	Rhetoric and Composition	White
Ann	English	Female	3 years	Creative Writing	Asian
Fia	English	Female	1 year	Rhetoric and Composition	White
Merc	English	Female	3 years	Creative Writing	Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino
Myers	English	Female	3 years	Creative Writing	White

The coding includes the metadiscoursal element identified, its pragmatic function in the text based on the taxonomy of the interpersonal model, and the participant who used the element observed. The process of spotting metadiscoursal features followed three key principles for identifying metadiscourse developed by Ken Hyland and Polly Tse (2004). The key principles include (p. 159):

- Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse.
- The term "metadiscourse" refers to those aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions.
- Metadiscourse distinguishes relations which are external to the text from those that are internal.

(1) I wish you had spoken about your first-hand experiences with coaches in high school. (Lillie, NES)

For example, in (1), *your first-hand experiences with coaches in high school* refers to experiences that happened in real-life and thus are propositional. As a result, the entire phrase does not count as metadiscourse. The phrase *I wish you had spoken about* refers to an explicit expectation or attitude the teacher has for the student, and *you* represents the student being commented on in

the text. Because the entire phrase *I wish you had spoken about* shows an interaction between the teacher and the student, the phrase counts as metadiscourse. As mentioned above, while the second person pronoun *you* counts as metadiscourse, the determiner *your* does not count mainly because *you* refers to someone in the world of discourse, whereas *your* refers to someone in the real world.

Results and Discussion

Do NNES Teachers Comment Differently than NES Teachers?

Table 8.2 shows the overall distributions of metadiscourse used by the NNES and NES teachers of FYW in the corpus.

Table 8.2. Normalized Distributions (per 10,000 words) of Metadiscourse across NNESs and NESs

Categories	Raw Frequency (rf)	Frequency(f)/10,000
NNES	1097	1664
NES	2134	1989
Sig (p-value)	LL=23.40, P<0.01	

Overall, the results indicate the prevalence of metadiscourse in both NNES and NES teachers' written comments, which is in line with Ädel's (2017) finding. It is also evident, from the results, that the NNES teachers use metadiscourse differently than their NES counterparts, with the NNES teachers using less metadiscourse than the NES teachers, and the Log-likelihood test shows that the difference is statistically significant.

Table 8.3 shows the overall distributions of both interactional and interactive met adiscourse in the corpus.

Table 8.3. Normalized Distributions (per 10,000 words) of Interactional and Interactive Metadiscourse across NNESs and NESs

Categories	Interactive		Interactional	
	rf	f/10,000	rf	f/10,000
NNES	427	648	670	1,016
NES	638	594	1,496	1,395
Sig (p-value)	LL=1.87, P>0.05		LL=47.93, P<0.0001	

In Table 8.3, we can see that the NNES teachers in this study use more interactive metadiscourse than the NES teachers, whereas the NES teachers prefer to use more interactional metadiscourse than the NNES teachers. However, a statistically significant difference is only observed in the use of interactional metadiscourse. Such findings, on the one hand, suggest that written comments by the NNES teachers are not statistically different from those by their NES counterparts in terms of the amount of guidance both groups of the teachers provide to help students better understand their written comments because interactive metadiscourse is mainly used to make the text more "reader-friendly" in order for the audience to reach the writer's intended interpretations, as I mentioned earlier. For example, in (2), the teacher, by using *the last page*, aims to make sure that the student knows where exactly the teacher is pointing to in the paper so that the student will have a better understanding of where some potential exists in the paper. In (3), the phrase *especially about what your journal looks like* in the parenthesis helps the student have a better sense of what is expected to be discussed more by the teacher.

(2) *The last page* had potential as it started to inquire into the issue of racial tensions in the US. (Iva, NNES)

(3) I would like to see some more descriptive language in your writing (*especially about what your journal look like*), but I was still able to mostly "see" your story. (Fia, NES)

On the other hand, the findings seem to suggest that the NES teachers, who use more interactional metadiscourse, focus more on engaging students in their written comments or offering evaluations on either students themselves or their papers, for interactional metadiscourse is essentially evaluative and engaging, as I discussed earlier. For example, in (4), by asking the student a question, the teacher attempts to explicitly engage the student into a conversation as if the question is being asked by an audience for the student while the audience is reading through the paper. In (5), using the word, *good*, the teacher gives a clear assessment on a particular point the student makes so that the student knows the point made has met the audience's expectation.

(4) How is liberalism being defined here? (Lillie, NES)

(5) Good point! (Fia, NES)

Turning to the sub-categories, it is found that within interactive elements, the NNES teachers use more code glosses, endophoric markers, and eviden-

tials than the NES teachers, whereas the NES teachers use more frame markers and transitions than the NNES teachers, as shown in Figure 8.1. However, once the Log likelihood tests were applied to the difference in each sub-category, it turned out, as shown in Table 8.4, that only the divergence in the use of endophoric markers is statistically significant.[7]

As is shown earlier, endophoric markers point audiences' attention to particular parts of the text through which audiences will have a better understanding of what writers are currently discussing. For instance, in (6), the phrase *here between this intro and the second paragraph* helps the student have a clear sense of which sentence is *this sentence*. In (7), by employing the phrase *in the introduction paragraph*, the student knows where to look at in order to better understand the comment. Because endophoric markers are used more by the NNES than the NES teachers, the finding suggests that the NNES teachers in this study seem to be more concerned about the accuracy and readability of their written comments for students.
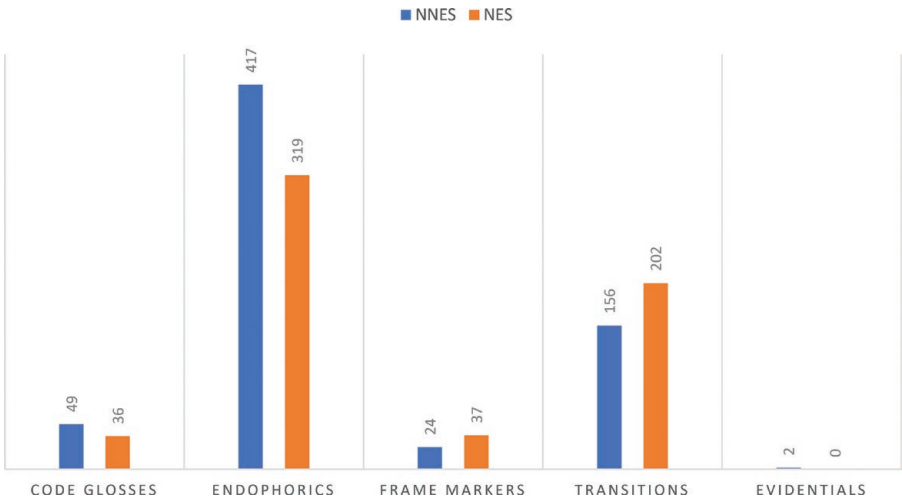

Figure 8.1. Normalized categorical distributions (per 10,000 words) of interactive metadiscourse across NNESTs and NESs.

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7   In applied linguistic research, where most studies of metadiscourse have emerged, Aek Phakiti (2015) indicates that p<0.05 (5 in 100 chances of being wrong) or p<0.01 (1 in 100 chances of being wrong) are commonly found or used. In my study, considering the size of my corpus, I set the p-value to be less than 0.01 in order to be statistically significant.
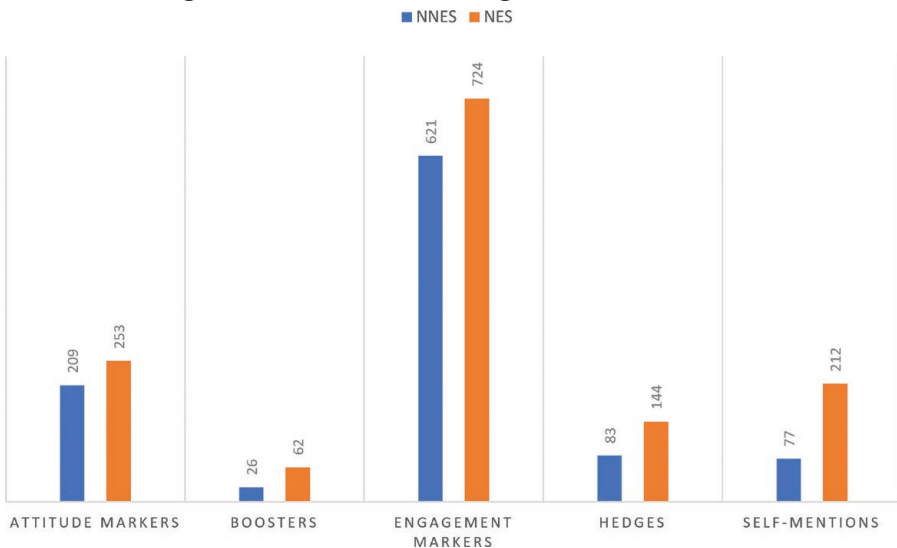
Table 8.4. Normalized Categorical Distributions (per 10,000 words) of Interactive Metadiscourse across NNESs and NESs

Categories	NNES	NES	Sig (p-value)
Code Glosses	49	36	LL=1.45, P>0.05
Endophorics	417	319	LL=10.91, P<0.01
Frame Markers	24	37	LL=2.22, P>0.05
Transitions	156	202	LL=4.78, 0.01<P<0.05
Evidentials	2	0	LL=1.93, P>0.05
Total	648	594	LL=1.87, P>0.05

(6) *This sentence* causes an abrupt transition here *between this intro and the second paragraph.* (AW, NNES)

(7) As a reader, I think there is not enough grounding in your "negative" experiences *in the introduction paragraph. (Ann, NES)*

Unlike the categorical distributions of interactive metadiscourse where several sub-categories are used more by the NNES but several more by the NES teachers, the categorical distributions of interactional metadiscourse look more straightforward, as shown in Figure 8.2.

Figure 8.2. Normalized categorical distributions (per 10,000 words) of interactional metadiscourse across NNESTs and NESs.

The results show that each sub-category of interactional metadiscourse is used more by the NES than NNES teachers in their written comments. Again, the Log likelihood tests showed that only the differences in the use of boosters, hedges, and self-mentions are statistically significant, as shown in Table 8.5.

The pragmatic function of boosters, as is shown earlier, is to emphasize force or writers' certainty. In written comments, boosters often serve to re-inforce teachers' evaluations on students' writing, as *do* in (8) and *very* in (9).

Table 8.5. Normalized Categorical Distributions (per 10,000 words) of Interactional Metadiscourse across NNESTs and NESs

Categories	NNES	NES	Sig (p-value)
Attitude Markers	209	253	LL=3.28, P>0.05
Boosters	26	62	LL=11.90, P<0.001
Engagement Markers	621	724	LL=6.49, 0.01<P<0.05
Hedges	83	144	LL=13.22, P<0.001
Self-mentions	77	212	LL=50.98, P<0.0001
Total	1016	1395	LL=47.93, P<0.0001

(8) I *do* think you could improve some of your transitions throughout. (Merc, NES)

(9) Your language is *very* engaging. (Fia, NES)

The fewer use of boosters suggests that the NNES teachers are less likely to reinforce their evaluations on students' papers than their NES counter-parts.

In contrast to boosters, hedges are used to withhold writers' full commit-ment. In written comments particularly, hedges are often used to mitigate the critical force by teachers when they provide negative comments to students' papers, as *a little* in (10) and *perhaps* and *a bit* in (11).

(10) As a reader, the essay is *a little* confusing because the essay does not flow in a coherent order. (Augie, NNES)

(11) You could have *perhaps* gone into *a bit* more depth in analyzing your rhetorical choices/strategies, especially with regard to image-text relationships. (Myers, NES)

The lower use of hedges suggests that the NNES teachers either provide fewer negative comments to students or pay less attention to the threat their

negative comments have on the "face" or self-image of students.[8]

Self-mentions are features used to show the explicit presence of the writer in texts and are often realized through first-person pronouns. In written comments, self-mentions, which refer to an explicit intrusion of teachers' identity, are often employed to show teachers' responsibility for their comments and an intimate relationship teachers attempt to establish with their students. As shown in (12), *I* refers to the teacher who gives the comment on the student's paper. The use of the phrase *I think* indicates the teacher's willingness to be accountable for the comment given to the student. In addition, *I think* also makes the comment sound less formal but more personal and conversational, therefore aiding the teacher in building an intimate relationship with the student.

> (12) *I think* this is a really effective build up to this guiding goal for *your paper.* (Lillie, NES)

According to Hyland (2002), self-mentions help writers to show the commitment to their words and therefore set up a credible identity and a relationship with their audiences (p. 1093). The fewer use of self-mentions, then, suggest that the NNES teachers are less comfortable with making commitments to their comments and building an intimate relationship with their students compared to their NES counterparts.

Why do NNES Teachers Comment Differently than NES Teachers?

The findings presented above show that the NNES teachers of FYW in this study do use metadiscourse differently than their NES counterparts, and the difference is manifested mainly through the use of endophoric markers, boosters, hedges, and self-mentions. Specifically, the NNES teachers use more endophoric markers than the NES teachers, whereas the NES teachers utilize more boosters, hedges, and self-mentions that the NNES teachers to a statistically significant degree.

A possible explanation for the NNES using more endophoric markers than the NES teachers could be that the NNES teachers work harder to assure that the comments given are comprehensible and accurate to students because NNES teachers often face more doubts from students than NES teachers. Monika Shehi (2017) has pointed out that NNES teachers of FYW sometimes have difficulties in building their authority in writing classrooms

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8   See more details about the concept of face in relation to politeness in Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson (1987).

because NNES teachers are often treated as an "outsider" or "unknowing new-comer" due to social prejudices and therefore are less trustworthy by students in composition instruction (pp. 263-264). Also, previous studies on NNES teachers almost all have indicated that students have doubts about NNES teachers' linguistic competence in teaching FYW (e.g., Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Shehi, 2017; Zheng, 2017). Because of those doubts NNES teachers have encountered, it seems not too surprising that the NNES teachers in this study work harder to ensure that their written comments are accessible to students in order to mediate the distrust they have to face.

Alternatively, it is also possible that the NNES teachers do not have enough confidence as composing their written comments, therefore priori-tizing the clarity and comprehensibility of their comments through the use of more endophoric markers, although they have been pretty fluent in English and have gone through several training sessions with their NES counterparts before teaching FYW. In fact, in an interview with a NNES teacher of FYW conducted by Ruecker et al. (2018), they found that the teacher admitted that it perhaps took her longer than her NES counterparts to build confidence in grading, and she also acknowledged that "I feel like I revise my comments a lot more and edit more comments a lot more than a NES" (pp. 626-627).

Similarly, the fewer use of boosters by the NNES teachers could also be explained by the fact the NNES teachers lack confidence in this study. As I discussed earlier, boosters often serve to reinforce teachers' evaluations on students' writing. If the NNES teachers do not have enough confidence in playing their primary role as expert and gatekeeper, it is understandable that they will use fewer boosters that essentially highlight the certainty of their evaluations on students' paper. The NNES teachers' possible lack of confi-dence, on the one hand, could derive from their self-doubt in their role as expert who is qualified to provide students with feedback, as what Ruecker et al. (2018) found out in their study above. On the other hand, it could also come from students' distrust in teachers who are from a non-English-speak-ing country, as Xuan Zheng (2017) discovered in her case study.

The fewer use of hedges by the NNES teachers, as I mentioned above, suggests that the NNES teachers either provide fewer negative comments to students or pay less attention to the threat their negative comments have on the "face" or self-image of students. While it could be possible that the NNES care less about alleviating the negativity in their comments on stu-dents' papers, given the fact that the NNES teachers are often fluent in En-glish, especially English in academic contexts, and have gone through some mandatory training sessions, it seems more tenable that their fewer use of hedges is the result of fewer negative comments offered to students' writing.

Previous research has all indicated that NNES teachers have less credibility than their NES counterparts in FYW classrooms (Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Shehi, 2017; Zheng, 2017), which could put NNES teachers at a vulnerable position where their authority is more likely to be challenged, and the NNES teachers in this study may attempt to mediate the potential challenges they may have to face through providing fewer negative comments on students' writing (which in turn leads to the fewer use of hedges). In fact, NNES teachers' credibility can not only be questioned in FYW classrooms but ESL or EFL classrooms as well, according to Sibel Tatar and Senem Yildiz (2010).

Last, as I mentioned earlier, while self-mentions have a potential to help teachers set up their credibility and build an intimate relationship with students by showing their willingness to make commitments to their written comments and making their comments more personal and conversational, they also put teachers at a risky position because of an explicit connection between their comments and themselves. Hyland (2002) also confirms that despite its rhetorical usefulness, applying self-mentions sometimes is also a risky strategy and is vulnerable to criticism (p. 1104). Therefore, if the NNES teachers in this study have insufficient credibility, it makes sense that they tend to use fewer self-mentions in their written comments so that they can stay distant from explicit responsibilities for their comments, which could potentially make them face fewer criticisms and risks of their authority being challenged. In fact, previous research also has found that NNES teachers' credibility in teaching FYW is sometimes questioned by students because of their nonnative status (e.g., Liu, 2005; Ruecker et al., 2018; Shehi, 2017; Wang-Hiles, this volume; Zheng, 2017). Alternatively, it could also be possible that instead of being doubted by students, the NNES teachers are self-questioned because they are unconfident in playing the role as experts and therefore use fewer self-mentions through which to potentially avoid responsibilities for their comments.

Conclusion and Implications

Through the interpersonal model of metadiscourse, this study found that written comments on students' graded papers by the NNES teachers of FYW do look different from those by their NES counterparts, and the divergence is mainly manifested via the use of endophoric markers, boosters, hedges, and self-mentions.[9] The possible reasons for the NNES responding to students'

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9   In a larger corpus study where I examined the correlation between metadiscourse and six extralinguistic factors, including location of comments (marginal or end), course con-

writing differently than the NES teachers, generally speaking, are twofold. On the one hand, the NNES teachers in this study may lack confidence in playing the primary role as experts when commenting on students' writing. While, from a quantitative survey conducted among 78 NNES teachers of FYW, Ruecker et al. (2018) found that NNES teachers overall do not lack confidence in teaching FYW and do not see their NNES status as an issue, it seems that, from the results of this study, the NNESTs may still feel less comfortable as interacting with their students through written comments compared to their NES counterparts.

Such a possibility suggests that NNES teachers, at least those in this study, perhaps need more supports from writing programs. In addition to current resources provided to NNES teachers, writing program administrators can offer workshops that focus particularly on helping NNES teachers with providing comments on students' papers and with how to deal with students' doubt or pushback in teaching. In addition, writing program administrators can help NNES teachers raise their confidence by cultivating "translingual teachers" who are able to view their multiple linguistic identities as resources and draw upon their translingual identities as pedagogy in writing classrooms (Zheng, 2017, p. 32).

On the other hand, a second possible reason for the NNES commenting differently than the NNES teachers is that NNES teachers are more likely to be questioned and challenged by students due to their "nonnative English-speaking" status. This possibility seems to suggest that in addition to helping NNES teachers raise their confidence, writing program administrators should cultivate a translingual environment for NNES teachers where students are open to language diversity and various backgrounds of composition teachers. To make this happen, writing courses can engage students in material that challenges their monolingual ideology and develop their translingual disposition, as Jerry Won Lee and Christopher Jenks (2016) suggest. In addition to changes at the classroom level, according to Chris Gallagher and Matt Noonan (2017), it is important for writing program administrators to create a translingual environment at the institutional and programmatic levels as well.

In the end, it must be noted that the findings and their explanations in this study are suggestive rather than conclusive due to a small corpus in size.

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text (ENGL 101 or ENGL 102), gender, disciplinary background (rhetoric and composition, creative writing, or literature), native language, and years of teaching experience, in FYW teachers' written comments through multivariate analysis (mixed-effects model), I found that in addition to native language, all the rest of the factors also affect the use of metadiscourse (Xin, 2021).

Future work could reproduce the study with a larger corpus and with more teachers across institutions. Future studies could also explore from whose written comments, NNES or NES teachers, students benefit more to complement the present study because commenting differently than NES teachers does not necessarily make NNES teachers' responses less effective. It might be possible that students prefer the NNES teachers' written comments because they are easier to process or that comments by both NNES and NES teachers are helpful for students' writing development although the focus of the two groups in written feedback is different in some aspect. Since the practices of written comments often take place behind closed office doors, teachers, as Summer Smith (1997) point out, often have limited opportunities to look at how other teachers respond to students' writing in practice. It would be a good idea for writing program administrators to provide opportunities for NNES and NES teachers to read each other's written comments. Doing so would not only raise both their awareness that written comments can vary according to socio-cultural factors, such as native language, but it would also be a good way for them to learn new or alternative methods of responding to students' writing.

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