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Research Article

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Acquiring proficiency in academic writing is becoming increasingly important for academics, irrespective of the academic discipline, given that publications in highly rated, peer-reviewed international journals have a profound impact on how knowledge is constructed through the process of writing. In academic writing, the use of metadiscourse markers is fundamental since academic writers have to write in such a way that they are able to skilfully distinguish opinion from fact. At the same time, they have to assess their affirmations in suitable and convincing ways. Considering the afore-mentioned, this article examines the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing in which special attention is paid to the use of hedges and boosters. *It is a general analysis and mini-review of the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing*. One empirical research article, from the field of Applied Linguistics, is used for this purpose. An introduction is given about academic writing and the need to use metadiscourse markers. Literature review based on metadiscourse markers in academic writing, *with particular emphasis on hedges and boosters*, is presented and discussed. The methodology of the study is outlined. The results show that there is a greater use of interactives than interactionals: with regard to interactive markers, transitional/logical connectives were most used, followed by endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses; with respect to interactional markers, hedges and boosters were the most used in this category with more hedges used as compared to boosters. Finally, concluding remarks are made about the analysis conducted.

Keywords: metadiscourse markers, interactive(s), interactional(s), hedges, boosters, academic writing, research

INTRODUCTION

Writing can be an arduous and seemingly never-ending task. This process includes selecting a topic, formulating ideas to support that topic, using the right kind of language for a specific audience, and expressing information and statements of fact and opinion in a sequential and logical manner (Langer and Applebee, 2007; Bailey, 2011). This activity can be lengthy, given that many long hours are spent writing, rewriting, and rephrasing information so that the finished product reads naturally and easily. In other words, many drafts are written before arriving at the final version. This can be very frustrating for the writer. Then there may be specific rules that have to be followed such as formatting, sequencing of information, and the like. This is the situation which confronts all those individuals engaged in academic writing.

Conducting research in academia is very important to the longevity of the researcher or academic. Of even greater significance is the presentation of research work through

writing. Academic writing, as tedious as it may be, is considered to be one of the hallmarks of academic life. One of the main purposes of academic writing is "To report on a piece of research the writer has conducted" (Bailey, 2011: 3). It is a skill that is mastered over time. Irvin (2010: 3) espouses that "Your success with academic writing depends upon how well you understand what you are doing as you write, and then how you approach the writing task". This assertion is apt because for writing to be effective, it must be done correctly so that it has the desired effect on the readership. This suggests that writers must, at all times, take into consideration the potential and likely readers of the work, always finding ways to explain ideas effectively. Stemming from the position taken by Irvin (2010) is the central issue of the actual realisation of the writing task and the steps needed to present information as precisely and as concisely as possible. The presentation of research work through writing, whether theoretical or empirical, follows certain guidelines (Libra,

2001; Pinto, 2009; Murray, 2012). These vital procedures, if obeyed correctly, can contribute to the overall credibility, quality and effectiveness of the paper.

Many universities are stressing the need for academics to engage in research and publication. Academics are expected to submit manuscripts to academic journals for their review and consideration for publication. Academic writing is becoming increasingly important for academics, regardless of the academic discipline, since higher education institutions are making demands on them to publish. This is because publishing is important to the academic life of academics. Publishing has a profound impact on how knowledge is constructed through the process of writing. Some universities demand, or even threaten, that academics publish articles in highly rated peer-review international journals as a means of remaining at the institution and getting tenure. The phrase "publish or perish" has been specifically coined by institutions of higher learning to describe the pressure faced by academics to publish their work rapidly and continually, in order to sustain their academic career.

Becoming a proficient academic writer is no easy feat. Being proficient in writing is understood to mean that the writer can communicate ideas clearly and succinctly. In order to achieve clarity, writing strategies can be employed. In academic writing, the utilisation of *metadiscourse markers* (interactive and interactional markers) is considered to be critical to the writing process given that writers, in presenting information, are expected to make distinctions between what is opinion and what is fact competently and evaluate their assertions appropriately and substantially. Bearing the afore-mentioned in mind, the central focus of this paper is to *examine the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing*. The study conducted is a *general analysis* and *mini-review* of the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing. For this purpose, one research article, taken from the ambit of Applied Linguistics, is examined.

The remaining sections of this paper comprise the *literature review* (which focuses on metadiscourse markers in the writing process, with special emphasis on hedges and boosters); the *methodology* of the study (which delineates the research aim, research objective, the research sample, a summary of the chosen research article examined, and the data analysis procedure); the *results and discussion* (which present an analysis of the writing strategies in which their use in the empirical article studied is observed), and the *concluding remarks* (which present some final thoughts about the analysis carried out).

LITERATURE REVIEW: METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN ACADEMIC WRITING

One of the primary purposes of writing is to communicate a message. Communication is seen as social engagement since it seeks to engage readers in particular ways. In order to engage readers, writers are required to use different kinds of writing strategies in their writing. This means that writing strategies are inextricably intertwined with the writing process. In other words, the one cannot do without the other. From the late 1980s, the development of language skills for professional communication has been gaining traction (Swales, 2004). Researchers in the field of Language and Communication have acknowledged the fact that it is critical for writers to obtain proficiency in writing, especially considering the diversity of the readership, and in view of the fact that language is the principal means by which human beings communicate.

Metadiscourse Markers

In academic writing, message communication is of paramount importance, since it "reveals the ways writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their understandings of their material and their audience" (Hyland 2010: 1). Hyland (2000, 2010), a specialist in written discourse analysis, particularly in academic contexts, refers to this as '*Metadiscourse*'. Hyland (2005: 16) emphasises that "Metadiscourse is an umbrella term used to include an apparently heterogeneous array of cohesive and interpersonal features which help to relate a text to its content". Metadiscourse encompasses a wide array of language markers which are used to describe how writers organise their discourse and the ways in which they relate to their readers (or the readership). For applied linguists and language specialists, for example, metadiscourse is understood to be "the various linguistic tokens employed to guide or direct a reader through a text so both the text and the writer's stance is understood (Hyland 2005: 18)". Since it addresses language and language use in writing, it is not unfair to refer to metadiscourse in this manner. Hyland (2005: 37) arrives at a more holistic definition of metadiscourse in the following way: "Metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflexive expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers and members of a particular community". This is an important definition of the term because it stresses the three-way relationship or association among the writer, the readership, and the interactive and interactional markers used to communicate information.

According to Hyland (2010), borrowing some useful terms from Thompson (2001), metadiscourse markers in writing can be divided into two broad categories: **interactive** and **interactional**. The objective of **interactive** markers is to assist the readers to navigate through the written text. These are *transitions or logical connectives*, *frame markers*, *endophoric markers*, *evidentials* and *code glosses*. The aim of **interactional** markers is to get the readers involved in the text. These are *hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers*, *engagement markers*, and *self-mentions*. These interactive and interactional language markers

serve a valuable purpose in the writing process. Table 1 below, taken from Hyland (2010, p. 4-5), presents these interactive and interactional markers, their functions, and some examples of each of them. A more detailed list of each of these categories can be found in Hyland (2000).

Table 1: A Model of Metadiscourse Markers in Academic Texts

CATEGORY	FUNCTION	EXAMPLES
Interactive	***Help to guide reader through text***	***Resources***
Transitions	express semantic relation between main clauses	*in addition / but / thus / and*
Frame markers	refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	*finally / to conclude / my purpose is*
Endophoric markers	refer to information in other parts of the text	*noted above / see Fig / in section 2*
Evidentials	refer to source of information from other texts	*according to X / (Y, 1990) / Z states*
Code glosses	help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	*namely /e.g. / such as / in other words*
Interactional	***Involve the reader in the argument***	***Resources***
Hedges	withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	*might / perhaps / possible / about*
Boosters	emphasise force or writer's certainty in proposition	*in fact / definitely / it is clear that*
Attitude markers	express writer's attitude to pro-position	*unfortunately / I agree / surprisingly*
Engagement markers	explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	*consider / note that / you can see that*
Self-mentions	explicit reference to author(s)	*I / we / my / our*

Hedges and Boosters

In academic writing, expressing doubt and certainty can be considered to be one of the most significant skills of professional communication. To support this claim, Hyland (1998) contends that the expression of doubt and certainty cannot be divorced from academic writing because of the centrality of their interactive and interactional character in the writing process. The significance of these writing strategies is attributed to the fact that when academics balance conviction with caution the claims that they make in their research writing usually gain acceptance from the academic community. This is to say that they either present statements supported by reliable knowledge to reflect certainty, or they produce information with a certain

degree of apprehension to reflect uncertainty (Holmes 1984, 1990). These writing strategies which express doubt and certainty are known as *hedges* and *boosters*. These communication strategies either reduce or increase the force of written utterances, and the research literature emphasises the criticality of these strategies in academic contexts (Salager-Meyer, 1994; Hyland 1996a, 1996b; Skelton, 1997). Current research literature on academic writing presents empirical evidence of the use of hedges and boosters in academic writing (Farrokhi and Emami, 2008; Serholt, 2012; Takimoto, 2015; Hryniuk, 2018). Since these writing strategies are inevitable in the writing process, it is the responsibility of academic writers to ensure that they are considered. The use of both of them is required in order to produce a convincing argument.

Hedges

In the field of Language and Linguistics, a hedge is a device which is used to reduce the intensity of an utterance and temper the impact of a declaration. Lyons (1977: 797) defines a hedge as "an item of language which a speaker uses to explicitly qualify his/her lack of commitment to the truth of a proposition he/she utters". This definition encapsulates what a hedge is, and it seems most adequate. There have been different labels and considerations for hedges, some of which include "downgraders", (House & Kasper, 1981), "compromisers" (James, 1983), "softeners" (Crystal and Davy, 1975), "downtoners" (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech and Starvik, 1985), and "weakeners" and "politeness markers" (Brown and Levinson, 1987).Hedges can be used to facilitate the addressee or to put emphasis on the accurateness of the information presented (Talbot, 2010). This same author goes on to assert that since hedges have complex functions and multifunctional purposes, the writing context ought to be carefully considered when using them.

Boosters

A booster is a linguistic device which intensifies or increases the force of an utterance; in other words, it makes a statement more powerful. Hyland (1998: 350), in defining boosters, states that they "express conviction and assert a proposition with confidence, representing a strong claim about a state of affairs … [they] mark involvement and solidarity with an influence, stressing shared information, group membership, and direct engagement with readers". Important phrases stemming from that definition - such as 'expressing conviction', 'asserting propositions', 'representing strong claims' 'stressing information' - attest to the fact that boosters help the writer to be very direct. Boosters have also been labelled differently by different researchers. They are referred to as "strengtheners" (Brown and Levinson, 1987), "intensifiers" (Quirk et al., 1985), and "upgraders" (House and Kasper, 1981). Similar to hedges, these lexical devices (boosters) are equally important in the writing process; as such, they should never be disregarded.

METHODOLOGY

A *case study* approach (Thomas, 2011) and a *mixed methods* approach (Creswell, 2009) were selected as the research paradigm of this study. These methodological approaches were selected as the best means to respond to the research objective, especially considering that quality research is derived when a mixture of methods is used to address a particular case.

Research Aim

The aim of this research is to conduct a mini-review of the use of metadiscourse items in a research/empirical article. It is necessary to point out that a *general analysis* of the use of these linguistic/lexical devices in the research sample has been conducted and *not* an in-depth or exhaustive analysis.

The purpose of this research is not to try to find gaps in the literature, but rather to complement the literature with another study which underscores the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing. Additionally, this study does not set out to conduct a comparative or contrastive study with other research conducted in the field; instead, reference to similar research conducted is made in the Results and Discussion section.

Research Objective

The principal objective of this study is to *examine the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing.*

While attention is paid to the different kinds of metadiscourse markers employed in the empirical article studied, special emphasis is placed on the use of hedges and boosters.

Research Sample

The sample for this research consists of one empirical article in the field of Applied Linguistics, and within the subfield of Language Learning (the acquisition of adjectives). It is written in English, and whose author is Rayas Tanaka (2014). This sample was selected randomly. Since the sample was *not* selected purposively, the only criterion for selecting it was that it had to be an empirical article with all of the required sections (as contained in academic research articles).

Summary of the Chosen Research Article

The basis of the experimental study by Rayas Tanaka (2014) has its origins in research conducted by Waxman, Senghas and Benveniste (1997) and Waxman and Gausti

(2009). According to these authors, there are cross-linguistic differences in the way that Spanish, French, English and Italian monolingual children interpret adjectives. The sample consists of three year old and four year old children who speak either Spanish or English as their native language. In other words, they are English-speaking monolinguals and Spanish-speaking monolinguals. An experiment was carried out, through the use of tasks in four linguistic contexts, to find out how well these children were able to refer to adjectives as properties of objects, and not directly to the objects themselves. The role of syntax and morphology, through the use of morphological and syntactic cues in the production of these adjectives, was also explored. Through the use of the ANOVA test, the results highlighted that both English- and Spanish-speaking monolingual children do understand that adjectives refer to properties of objects.

Data Analysis

The empirical article by Rayas Tanaka (2014), from the title to the appendix, has approximately 7,683 words. For the purpose of this general analysis of metadiscourse markers, the 'Reference' and 'Appendix' sections of the article, equivalent to 1,534 words, have been omitted. Therefore, the new word count examined is **6, 149** words.

The research article was thoroughly read two times. During the third read, the author of this paper compiled the list of different interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers used throughout the paper, as presented by Hyland (2000: 188-191). Hyland's list was used as a guide to determine which markers actually appeared in the research article examined. A general analysis was performed on the data to highlight not only the quantity of interactive and interactional markers used through the paper, but also their frequency of use and total frequency. The results of the analysis are presented by means of tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION: METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN THE EMPIRICAL ARTICLE

In accordance with the research aim and research objective of this study, the empirical article by Rayas Tanaka (2014) was analysed in order to elucidate the use of metadiscourse markers in the empirical article. The findings are presented and discussed. Considering the afore-mentioned, Table 2 below presents the types of interactive and interactional markers in the article by Rayas Tanaka (2014), the specific types used, the frequency of their use, and the total frequency of their occurrence.

Table 2: Types of Interactives and Interactionals and Frequency of Use

CATEGORY			
INTERACTIVE	Specific Interactives Used	Frequency of Use	Total Frequency
Transitions/ Logical Connectives	And	198	
	But	24	
	Therefore	7	
	So	1	
	In contrast	1	
	Since	4	
	Because	6	
	On the other hand	1	
	Also	11	
	However	3	
	Whereas	2	
	While	3	
	Even though	1	
	Though	1	
	Yet	3	
	Nevertheless	2	**Total = 268**
Frame markers	First of all	1	
	Finally	1	
	Numbering (1, 2, 3, i, ii, iii, etc)	9	
	Now	1	
	To look more closely	1	**Total = 13**
Endophoric markers	Figure (1, 2, etc)	4	
	Table (1, 2, etc)	2	
	Example	7	
	Page (1, 2, etc)	5	
	( )	98	**Total = 116**
Evidentials	(date)	39	
	According to	9	
	Established	1	
	Said	4	
	Say	6	
	X suggests	2	
	X shows	27	
	X demonstrates	1	
	X found that	3	
	Studies	21	**Total = 113**
Code glosses	Say	1	
	E.g.	19	
	That is	3	
	Specifically	3	
	Such as	8	
	Or	32	**Total = 66**
			GRAND TOTAL = 576

Table 2 *Continued*: Types of Interactives and Interactionals and Frequency of Use

INTERACTIONAL	Specific Interactionals Used	Frequency of Use	Total
Boosters	Always	1	
	Clearly	1	
	Conclude	2	
	Confirm	5	
	Demonstrate	1	
	Expect	4	
	The fact that	1	
	Indeed	1	
	We know	1	
	At least	1	
	Must	1	
	Never	2	
	Precise(ly)	2	
	Show	27	
	Will	9	**Total = 59**
Hedges	Always	1	
	About	4	
	Appear	6	
	Around	1	
	Could	9	
	Frequently	2	
	Generally	1	
	Implication	1	
	Imply	1	
	Interpret	14	
	Likely	2	
	May	3	
	Most	3	
	Possibility	1	
	Possible	4	
	Predict	3	
	Presumably	1	
	Propose	2	
	Rather	1	
	Relative(ly)	1	
	Should	1	
	Suggest	2	
	Suppose	1	
	Typically	1	
	Would	7	**Total = 72**
Attitude markers	!	1	
	Even	4	
	Important	1	**Total = 6**
Engagement markers	Consider	1	
	Note that	1	**Total = 2**
Self-mentions	I	4	
	We	4	
	Me	1	**Total = 9**
			GRAND TOTAL = 148

In Table 2 above, the distribution of the kinds of interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers used in the research article by Rayas Tanaka (2014), their frequency of use, and their total frequency of use are observed. As can be seen also, each of the five types of interactives and interactionals are considered in the empirical article, some with greater frequency, and others with lesser frequency. By this demonstration, it is not unfair to suggest that using all of them helps to engage the readership in one way or another. From the total article corpus of **6, 149** words, the following results are appreciated in Table 3 below:

Table 3: Distribution of Interactives and Interactionals in Rayas Tanaka (2014)

CATEGORY	Total Corpus (6, 149 words)	
INTERACTIVE	**Frequency of Use**	**% Frequency**
Transitions/Logical Connectives	268	*4.35%*
Frame markers	13	*0.21%*
Endophoric markers	116	*1.88%*
Evidentials	113	*1.83%*
Code glosses	66	*1.07%*
TOTAL	**576**	**9.36%**
INTERACTIONAL		
Boosters	59	*0.95%*
Hedges	72	*1.17%*
Attitude markers	6	*0.09%*
Engagement markers	2	*0.03%*
Self-mentions	9	*0.14%*
TOTAL	**148**	**2.40%**
GRAND TOTAL (INTERACTIVE & INTERACTIONAL MARKERS)	**724**	**11.76%**

As can be seen in Table 3, interactives have a greater frequency of use than interactionals. **9.36%** of the corpus, **576** words, is comprised of **interactive** metadiscourse markers, with the greatest number of these being *transitions/logical connectives*, followed by *endophoric markers*, *evidentials*, *code glosses*, and finally by *frame markers*. This suggests that the writer is assisting the reader to navigate through the text. Helping the reader to manoeuvre through the text is also essential to the effectiveness of the written work, in that readers should have very little to no difficulty with the text (Holmes, 1984; Thompson, 2001; Hyland, 2010).

In terms of interactives, as seen in in Table 2, the most frequently used devices in each sub-category are "and" and "but" (transitional/logical connectives), "the bracket ( )" (endophoric markers), "the date [as in July 26, 2019]" (evidentials), "or" (code glosses), and "numbering [as in 1, 2, 3]" (frame markers). In language, "and" and "but" are also referred to as conjunctions or connectors or joining words because they connect one part of a statement with another. The use of these different kinds of interactive markers is warranted, especially when obtaining empirical evidence. The study conducted by Hryniuk (2018) also indicates the use of these and other kinds of interactives. This tendency is evident in empirical articles in different knowledge fields, and it is very difficult, and perhaps impossible, to remove them from academic writing.

The results show that **interactional** metadiscourse markers make up **2.40%** of the corpus, **148** words, with the highest being *hedges*, followed by *boosters*, *self-mentions*, *attitude markers*, and finally by *engagement markers*. The presence of these lexical devices in the research article

corroborate that the intention of the author is to involve or engage the reader actively in the written work. Engaging the reader in the work is one important feature in academic writing (Holmes, 1990; Hyland, 2005; Weigle, 2005). When the reader is engaged, it could then be said that the written text is effective. When the written work is effective, or it has achieved the desired effect, it can therefore be categorised as being a quality paper.

With regard to interactionals, as observed in Table 2, the most constantly used communication strategies are "interpret" (hedges), "show" (boosters), "I" and "We" (self-mentions), and "even" (attitude markers); only two engagement markers are used, and each of them has been utilised only once in the entire research article. The preference of one type of device over another depends on the author's intention and the specific message which is to be communicated to a particular audience. This trend is identified in the research carried out by Granqvist (2013). This is to say that an academic writer cannot use every conceivable linguistic device in academic writing. That is not possible. Such a move can obscure the clarity of the paper, reduce its effectiveness, and imperil its credibility. The tendency to want to use all of these devices should be avoided.

When comparing the figures in Table 3 above, it is safe to say that **interactive** markers surpass **interactional** markers by **6.96%**, or **428** words. This is a considerable difference which clearly indicates that academic papers are written in different ways to achieve different purposes. Important to point out is that hedges and boosters are not used as frequently as some other metadiscourse markers. This is to say that the use of other lexical devices – such as transitions/logical connectives, endophoric markers and evidentials – is higher than both hedges and boosters. Code glosses are higher than boosters, but lower than hedges. The use of hedges is higher than the use of boosters. Existing research shows that generally there have been higher incidences of the use of hedges and boosters in (some) research papers (Peacock, 2006; Farrokhi and Emami, 2008; Takimoto, 2015). In order to achieve proficiency in academic writing, a developed knowledge of hedging and boosting should be acquired.

Based on the figures in Table 3, it can be posited that **11.76%** of the corpus, or **724** words, is metadiscourse markers. That figure is significant since it shows an intertwined writer-reader relationship. These figures establish the importance of not only guiding the readers through the text, but also involving them in it. Considering the analysis conducted, it is not unfair to assume that the low incidence of hedges and boosters in the entire research paper could be attributed to the fact that the author of the research is not a native speaker of English (which adds another dimension, that of second language writing, which has not been explored in this study). Perhaps it could even be suggested that the author used other metadiscourse markers because the author felt more

comfortable using those to communicate the intended message. Experts in the field have highlighted that it is not an easy task for second language learners to use boosters and hedges (Holmes 1982, 1988; Hyland and Milton, 1997; Hyland and Tse, 2004). In another study of the use of these linguistic devices in scientific research articles written by second language writers, Hyland (1996a) arrives at the conclusion that English as a foreign language learners have great difficulty in using hedges correctly; they find it "extremely troublesome" (p. 278), and not being able to dominate the use of these lexical devices could hinder their involvement in a research world which is dominated by English language. A simple check of research literature in any field will reveal that most of it is written in English. Facing this challenge, it therefore becomes necessary for second language writers to improve their writing proficiency considerably.

With reference to those instances of hedges and boosters used within the research article examined, it could be suggested that these were used mostly in the Discussion and Conclusion sections, and to a lesser extent in the Introduction section of the article examined. The introduction of any research has the objective of introducing the topic to the reader and justifying the problem. This is the section in which the author seeks to locate the study, by reviewing previous research in the field, while at the same time trying to identify gaps in the literature (West, 1980; Swales, 1990). As such, there is very little use of hedging and boosting (Hyland, 1996a). The discussion and conclusion of any research, as the names suggest, discuss the research carried out and arrive at conclusions based on the study conducted. It is in these sections that the likelihood of the use of hedges and boosters is extremely high, considering that this is where the data analysed is discussed as comprehensively as possible, where results are summarised, where the author makes claims and uses these lexical devices to either strengthen or weaken the force of those assertions, and where the author presents limitations and recommendations, and offers future directions of the research. This is consistent with what Hyland (1996a) observed in his study, revealing that academic writers in these sections should be "going beyond the data to offer more general interpretations" (p. 275).In the entire research article studied, it can be appreciated that the author made use of different kinds of communication and writing strategies which helped to improve its overall quality.

In light of the above discussion of the results of this study, it is necessary to underscore that the presentation of information in professional communication, as much as it is a rewarding task, is not (always) an easy feat. In academic writing, it is a tedious activity to arrange information and ideas coherently. It is clear, though, as arduous as it might be, that it has to be done because the prime responsibility of writers is to engage (with) their readers. It therefore follows that academic writers have to develop the skill of professional communication if their academic writing is expected to be taken seriously and attain international reach. There is no other choice. This is the only way forward. This goal can be achieved by possessing an advanced knowledge of metadiscourse markers and their use in writing.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

As has been highlighted in this paper, *academic writing and (the use of) metadiscourse markers are inseparably entwined*: the one cannot do without the other. In other words, metadiscourse markers are synonymous with (effective) academic writing. This paper has centred its attention on the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing, in conjunction with the research aim, research objective and the research methodology. Different kinds of lexical devices, from each of the two mains types (*interactives* and *interactionals*), were examined. The results have shown that there is a considerable number of linguistic devices and writing strategies used to communicate information to the readership. This evidence highlights that research information must be presented in a logical sequence, allowing for an easy and natural reading of the completed work.

Summary of Results

From the total article corpus of **6, 149** words, interactives have a greater frequency of use than interactionals.

9.36% of the corpus, **576** words, is comprised of **interactive** metadiscourse markers, with the greatest number of these being *transitions/logical connectives*, followed by *endophoric markers*, then by *evidentials*, then *code glosses*, and finally by *frame markers*.

Interactional metadiscourse markers make up **2.40%** of the corpus, **148** words, with the highest number of these being *hedges*, followed by *boosters*, by *self-mentions*, then by *attitude markers*, and finally by *engagement markers*.

By way of comparison, **interactive** markers surpass **interactional** markers by **6.96%**, or **428** words. Overall, **11.76%** of the corpus, or **724** words, are metadiscourse markers (both interactive and interactional markers).

Limitation of the Study

The limitation of this study was that the use of these linguistic/lexical devices was not examined on a section by section basis in the article investigated. Were this done, it could have contributed to the richness of the analysis and the study as a whole.

Future/Further Research

Some of the areas for future/further research could be as follows:

(1) Examine the use of these lexical devices in each section in the research article; that is, in the introduction, the literature review, the methodology, the results and discussion, and in the conclusion in order to obtain a more panoramic view of the use of these writing strategies. It would be interesting to see how these devices are spread across the various sections of the research paper.

(2) Carry out different (comparative) research of metadiscourse markers in (i) English academic articles, (ii) articles written by native speakers and non-native speakers of English (or second language writers of English), (iii) articles written in English in the fields of Applied Linguistics, Education, Social Sciences, and others and, (iv) articles written in English by different genders and ethnicities. These devices can also be examined in research articles written in a different language (for example, Spanish and Portuguese). Additionally, comparative studies could be carried out of research articles written in two languages (for example, English and Spanish).

Implications of the Study

This exercise of doing a general analysis of the research paper by Rayas Tanaka (2014) has been very productive and eye-opening. It has allowed for the serious contemplation of research and how it is to be presented. The purpose of writing about research experiences is to transmit a message to an intended audience. Academic writing, as tiresome as it may be, is regarded as one of the hallmarks of academic life. It is a skill that should be mastered over time. It is essential to indicate that metadiscourse markers are complex linguistic devices which possess a myriad of functions. In other words, they are multifunctional communication strategies. They are central in the writing process, given that academic writers are expected to present information skilfully and differentiate between opinion and fact. Simultaneously, they have to appraise their affirmations in appropriate and persuasive ways.

The research conducted has revealed that these lexical devices (metadiscourse markers) are critical to the negotiation of assertions and effective argumentation. The study has highlighted that both interactive and interactional markers are utilised (even though interactive markers are more frequently used than interactional markers). Using these devices, however, is not to be done haphazardly. Rather, their use in academic discourse should be regulated by general communication rules and by standards and practices established by specific disciplines. Not having the skill to identify and use these language features in academic writing can be disadvantageous to academic and professional opportunities of writers. This means that lack of familiarity with these linguistic devices can have a profound impact on the argument being presented, and on how the academic competence of academic writers is assessed by the readership.

Since the quality of information presentation is crucial to its readability and potential impact on its audience, it should therefore be handled with extreme care. In order to avoid this embarrassing and potentially crippling situation, special consideration should be given to teaching these devices, and their use, to all higher education learners and all interested parties within academia, in order to improve overall writing quality. In this way, the path would be paved for them to become proficient academic writers who are able to present their research and professional writing clearly and effectively.

This research is significant since it can form part of the already existing body of empirical evidence about the use of metadiscourse markers in academic writing. It can be used as a guide for all those individuals who are considering a life in academia, and even for those persons who are considering getting involved in any field in which the communication of information and ideas is paramount. Academic writing is a permanent reality and it should be confronted confidently.

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