

استعمال علامات ما وراء الخطاب في رسائل ماجستير علم اللغة: دراسة تداولية

The Use of Metadiscourse Markers in MA Linguistics Theses: A Pragmatic Study

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الملخص

من المعلوم واسعا أن النصوص المكتوبة تجسد التفاعل بين المؤلف والقارئ حيث يهدف هذا التفاعل إلى التأثير على القراء من خلال استراتيجيات مختلفة للتعامل مع الآخرين. على الرغم من إجراء الكثير من الأدبيات حول أدوات ما بعد الخطاب، إلا أن هناك عدد أقل من الدراسات في سياق اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية العراقية على المستوى الجامعي. يهدف البحث الحالي إلى معالجة الطريقة التي يتفاعل بها مؤلفو أطروحات ماجستير اللغويات مع نصوصهم وقرائهم لإقامة اتصال داخل مجتمع الخطاب. وتحقيقاً لهذه الغاية، تم جمع البيانات من عشر أطروحات ماجستير في اللغويات من جامعة الأنبار وجامعة تكريت. تم تحليل البيانات النوعية باستخدام نموذج (Hyland 2005a). وبناء على تحليل مقارن لتكرارات علامات الخطاب التعاوني والتفاعلي في رسائل الماجستير لكلتا الجامعتين فقد ثبت أن الأجهزة السائدة المستخدمة في الأطروحات هي التي حيث يستخدم المؤلفون علامات متميزة. يمكن تفسير النتيجة المرصودة من خلال التركيز المفرط على هذه الأدوات من قبل معلمي اللغة الإنجليزية في المستويين التعليمي المتوسط والثانوي تتضمن النتائج إعطاء دراسة متأنية لهذه المؤشرات، لاسيما في سياق الكتابة الأكاديمية المتقدمة، من أجل تعزيز القدرة البراغماتية للطلاب.

Abstract

It is now widely accepted that written texts embody the author and reader interaction. This interaction is intended to influence readers via various interpersonal and argumentative strategies. Though much literature has been conducted on metadiscourse devices, fewer studies were conducted in the Iraqi EFL context at the university level. The current research addresses how authors of MA linguistics theses engage with their texts and readers to establish a connection within the discourse community. To this end, the data were collected from ten MA linguistics theses from the University of Anbar and Tikrit University. The qualitative data was analysed using Hyland's (2005a) model. Based on a contrastive analysis of the frequencies of interactive and interactional Metadiscourse markers in the Master's theses of both universities. It has been shown that the predominant devices used in theses are Transitions as authors use distinct Metadiscourse markers. The observed results could be explained by the excessive focus put on these gadgets by English educators at the intermediate and secondary educational levels. The findings implicate giving careful consideration to these indicators, especially in the context of advanced academic writing, in order to enhance students' pragmatic ability.

1. Introduction

Metadiscourse (MD) is often defined as writing about writing or discourse about discourse (Williams, 1981), which shows the unique ability of human language to communicate about itself. Before it garnered a lot of interest in practical linguistics, this ability, known as reflexivity, was noticed and addressed by several notable linguists. This topic did not take the shape of MD until the 1980s when it started to garner significant interest among academics. Beyond metalanguage or reflexivity, Lyons (1977) proposed MD for language about language to promote interest in and understanding of language's interactive features.

Other linguists, like Mauranen (1993a, 1993b), limit MD to those components that make up the text's overall structure. The "reflexive model" is the name Mauranen (1993b) gives to the constrained approach to MD. Others prefer the "broad approach," where MD is defined in a broader meaning to include those interactional aspects that the writer uses to give comments and an assessment of the text as it develops. Hyland's (2005a) approach is comprehensive and takes into account two types of interaction: those between text creators and the texts they create and those between text creators and readers.

Thus, the purpose of the current study is to address an area of written communication that has received little attention, namely how authors engage with their writings and readers to forge connections with the discourse community. By establishing a dialogic space for the negotiation and assessment of the discourse participants' points of view, such a connection is built. The problem is how to apply the genre's linguistic and rhetorical characteristics as useful techniques in the students' respective fields. Novice and academic writers must be familiar with the methods and norms employed by experts in the discourse community in order to succeed in the academic world. One

must write correctly and adhere to established discourse conventions in order to be accepted by the readers of a discourse community.

Different studies have been conducted concerning MD. However, this is such a big topic that no one could ever address all of its aspects. As a result, several researchers have addressed it, including Khedri and Chan (2013), Capar and Turan (2019), Gezezin and Bas (2020), and Alharbi (2021). For instance, Khedri and Chan aimed to find interactional MD markers in the result and discussion section. The researcher adopted Grabe's (1987) and Paltridge's (1996) models of analysis and the data were chosen from four fields. They found that in terms of boosters, the only area where there was statistically significant variation in the usage of interactional MD markers between fields was in the area of emphasis. Concerning Capar and Turan's study, they aimed to compare the usage of MD markers by native English speakers and Turkish speakers who are not fluent in English in academic works. The researchers adopted the binomial test in which it was found that the two groups do not employ the same interactional MD markers. Gezezin and Bas's study aimed to examine the use of interactional MD elements in two academic genres.

According to the results, reviewers who used a wide range of emotional cues in their writing were more likely to draw objective judgements about the books they discussed. Nonetheless, writers might seem more tentative in their support for the arguments when they use more hedges in research publications. Finally, Alharbi's study aimed to compare the use of MD items in 40 post-method sections/chapters from Applied Linguistics research publications and master's theses in Saudi Arabia. The findings showed that research papers and master's theses were found to employ transitions more than any other kind of MD,

while hedges were found to be the most common type of interactional MD in both sub-corporations.

Accordingly, the current study aims at A. examining the characteristics of academic writing as a distinct discourse that has typically been thought of as an example of an objective, logical, and impersonal academic work. B. demonstrating a further aspect of academic writing, namely the social exchange between the author and the reader. defining and outlining the roles that MD performs in a text that is cohesive. In other words, there is a connection between properly appreciating the use and purpose of the text-linguistic characteristics of academic writing and their roles in enhancing genre-based writing.

RQ1: Are there any differences between the University of Anbar and Tikrit University writers in the use of MD markers in the discussion and conclusion sections of MA theses?

RQ2: Is there a certain sort of interactive or interactional MD that occurs more or less frequently in the data?

2. Literature Review

In 1959, Zelling Harris used the word MD to denote a method of understanding language in use, signifying a speaker's or writer's approach to assisting readers in organizing, interpreting, and evaluating information. Writers like Williams (1981) and Vande Kopple have developed the idea further (1985a). According to descriptions of MD, specific language categories are important for the structure of conversation and the expression of interpersonal values. The degree to which authors should make their presence known to their readers by making references to themselves in the text is one of these linguistic categories that are of interest (Dafouz, 2003:31). Dahl (2004:1820) also points out that academic authors leave behind traces of themselves in their work that may be connected to their national cultures utilized to identify and classify MD.

The possibilities of self-hood and the subject positions that are open to them in the social and cultural setting are how writing socially projects identities. In this view, the importance of MD is acknowledged as a component of written communication's rhetorical structure and as language resources intimately linked to the authors' identities. The traditional idea that academic writing should be impersonal and impartial has been challenged by the study of MD from various perspectives and for various purposes. According to researchers like Thetela (1997), Hoey (2001), and Hyland (2005a), interaction in written texts can be done similarly to that in spoken texts. This perspective has steadily reflected the idea that academic writing involves social involvement with readers and authors. According to Hyland (2005a), a writer is able to transmit his or her personality, trustworthiness, audience sensitivity, and closeness to the message in

addition to turning dry or difficult material into intelligible reader-friendly writing and relating it to a specific context.

Accordingly, MD stands for the notion that language is more than just a way of communicating from one person to another. Also, it is a mechanism for individuals speaking to interact with one another's attitudes and presumptions, and MD choices are how we describe and create these relationships. The paragraph would become considerably less fascinating, personable, and simple to digest if these MD aspects were removed. By exposing the author's individuality and personality as well as how they want their readers to react to the ideational content, MD also contains an important social value (Hyland, 2005a).

MD is a component of spoken or written discourse that adds nothing to the propositional content but is instead meant to assist the listener or reader in organising, comprehending, and evaluating the information provided, according to modern applied linguistics (Blagojevic, 2004:60). This definition and that of Williams (1981) and Vande Kopple are quite similar (1980). According to Schiffrin (1987), who views DMs as a component of a more comprehensive explanation of discourse coherence, the overall sense of what is said is created by the integration of form, meaning, and action on the parts of the speaker and hearer. Such a wide perspective is shown in Taboada's (2006) suggestion that it is the responsibility of DMs to establish coherence links and rhetorical interactions.

2.1 Discourse and Metadiscourse Markers

Metatext' is the most prominent term proposed by Mauraanen (1993 a) who restricts this term to textual MD. She states that "...metatext is essentially text about the text itself, it comprises those elements in text which at least in their primary function go beyond the propositional content" (p.7-8).

Another term used for non-propositional material, the author's existence, and the connections the author develops with readers is "signalling". Meyer (1975) stated that it is "a non-content aspect of prose" that highlights specific semantic and structural aspects of the content as well as the author's perspective on the relative weight of the content (p.313). As a result, these particular devices assist readers in managing the logical connections between ideas and reduce the cognitive load that may be brought on by the readers' intense efforts to decipher and understand the text structure.

Discourse markers are one of the words that are similar to MD but are the most misunderstood. These two dimensions of coherence overlap to some extent. Different linguistic concepts, including interactional signals, connectives, pragmatic expressions, and pragmatic markers, are used to describe DMs. Fraser (1990) showed that these markers as those words and phrases "that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse ". In this sense, such markers serve just the textual function. (p.384)

According to Schiffrin (1987), who viewed DMs as a component of a more comprehensive explanation of discourse coherence, the overall meaning of what is said is created by the integration of form, meaning, and action on the parts of the speaker and hearer. Such a broad perspective is shown in Taboada's (2006) suggestion that it is the responsibility of DMs to establish coherence links and rhetorical interactions. Hyland(2004a), furthermore, claimed that the development of MD served as a refutation of prior theories that saw language as a tool for associating words with concepts, demonstrating a propositional and explanatory style of representation. MD reacts to an increase in interest in academic writing's interactive and interpersonal nature.

2.2 Metadiscourse and Metalanguage

A distinguishing feature of human language known as "reflexivity" allows us to consider our own experiences and behavior, or to use language to converse about the process of using language. There are two main categories of reflexive language use. Language codes are the name of the first one (e.g., a comment in English about Chinese). The second type that occurs inside a single such code is reflexivity, in which the same language functions as both an object and a channel of communication (for example, a comment in English about English) (Lucy, 1993).

Reflexivity of this kind refers to anything outside of a notion or object. If we use a language, such as an object language, to describe the world, then another language, known as metalanguage (ML), will also emerge. This language would be a unique way to discuss that language. For instance, when we discuss formal linguistic analysis as the metalanguage of natural language, we may discuss broad regularities and irregularities in the structure or functioning of language usage (e.g., "Get is an irregular verb"); similarly, when we use English as an ML to discuss mathematics (Lucy, 1993). To distinguish MD from ML, it may be claimed that the former is a label for utilizing a language to provide a believable representation of oneself and negotiate social interactions with readers rather than a distinct system used to debate discourse (Hyland, 2004a).

3. Methodology

The study has adopted a mixed mode analysis, that is, a qualitative and quantitative analysis. Firstly, the researcher uses a qualitative descriptive analysis. Secondly, the quantitative aspects are to be applied in terms of numbers and percentages.

3.1 Data Collection

Twenty MA theses in social sciences (linguistics) from the University of Anbar students make up the data under investigation. The selection of MA theses is dependent on a few factors. The first issue is that there hasn't been much research done to look into MD in MA theses. In research papers and publications, the examination of MD is the subject of the majority of investigations. The second is that this particular genre is characterized by its target audience, the discourse community for which it is written, and the discursive practices that it employs. These practices have an impact on the interaction between the author and the reader within the discourse community. The third is that the genre's difficult components on which our study is based are the discussion and conclusions. These chapters and portions were picked for their difficulty, rhetorical impact, and dialogic style. They play a crucial part in inspiring the study and influencing its audience.

3.2 Data Analysis

Examining the use of MD and two rhetorical chapters and parts, discussion and conclusion is one of the study's key goals. This objective is to determine how differently postgraduate students utilize MD. The content of quotes, citations (including summaries when the original author uses the stance marker), and examples have been left out of the analysis since it only considers language that was authored by the students for their theses. The most popular MD features are made clear. The total number of words used in each chapter or section

as well as the number of items in each category are counted and their percentages are also computed in each discipline after determining the frequency of Interpersonal MD in three rhetorical sections and categorizing them into categories of analysis. The "interpersonal model" proposed by Hyland (2005a) is the model that was utilized to analyze MD. Crismore (1983) and Crismore and Farnsworth (1989) believed that MD contributed to either propositional or interpersonal function. Hyland and Tse (2004) contend that MD has to be regarded as an interpersonal component of communication.

3.3 Procedures for Data Analysis

Examining the occurrence of interactional MD and interactive MD in the data selected the analysis was based on the following procedures:

1. Collecting randomly 20 theses with the two main parts (Discussion, and Conclusion) from universities' libraries.
2. Coding the theses selected for analysis.
3. Analyzing data based on Hyland's (2005a) model of discourse markers.
4. Tabulating the findings of frequencies and percentages of the main categories and sub-categories of MD markers used in the data.

3.4 The Model Adopted

Hyland's model(2005a) incorporates posture and engagement aspects for a broader perspective. In his own work, he uses this broader definition to argue that demonstrating textual awareness is inherently reader-oriented since it "reveals the writer's awareness of the reader and his/her desire for elaboration, clarification, guidance, and interaction" (P.17). Thus, it is very important for MD to have interactive features.

Although there are overlaps between the systemic functional model and the concept of MD, such as Halliday's linguistic categories of conjunctive relations and modality on the one hand, and transitions and hedges on the other, Hyland (2005a) states that the concept of MD is

not part of the systemic functional model. The definitions of textual and interpersonal purposes are inconsistent with one another. Adel, (2006) states that the 'textual' function in MD refers to textual components, whereas in SFG it refers to "generic text-creating strategies" such as "theme/rheme structure," "old/new information," and "the broad area of cohesion," which includes anaphora and references (p.17). This model, therefore, acknowledges that MD has two interaction dimensions (Hyland, 2005a). Both of the sections below provide examples of such dimensions:

1. The Interactive Dimension

The writer's responsiveness to the readers' requirements in terms of understanding the text and regaining the chosen meanings and aims is fundamental to the interactive dimension (IV, hereinafter). Authorial intent is shown in this kind of MD via the use of strategic direction to elucidate meaning through narrowly tailored mechanisms for regulating data transmission. This category encompasses a wide variety of rhetorical devices that serve specialised purposes:

a. Transition Markers: The conjunctions and adverbial phrases known as transition markers (Ts. hereafter) tell the reader what type of semantic relationship exists between two sentences. According to Hyland (2005a:50), only transitions that connect concepts and convey ties across stretches of discourse qualify as MD since MD consists of interactions inside the discourse rather than in the actual world. Connections between other types of real-world elements, such as actions, objects, and events, are not metadiscoursal. Some of these indicators are:

1- Addition which introduces additional arguments, such as (and, furthermore...etc).

2- Comparison Markers, either a comparison between similar arguments (e.g., similarly, likewise, equally ...etc) or a contrast between different arguments or claims (e.g., in contrast, however, but ...).

3- Consequence Markers perform the role of drawing conclusions, providing justification for claims and countering arguments (e.g., thus, therefore, consequently, ...).

b. Frame Markers: Henceforth, researchers refer to Fs as "explicit references to text borders or aspects of schematic text structure, either establishing changes in the discourse or preparing for the next step in the argument" (Hyland, 1998, p.443). Frame markers, such as (first, then...), are used to establish a hierarchical or sequential order in a discourse. They may also be used to signal a change in subject (for example, well, right, now...), as well as to designate text phases (for example, to summarise, in sum) (Hyland, 2005a, p.51).

c. Endophoric Markers: The English National Dictionary defines them as "expressions relating to other parts of the text" (Hyland, 2004a, p.139). Markers like this help readers understand and remember what they've read, and they draw attention to and allow access to relevant new information.

d. Evidentials: they are citations that either direct readers to information outside of a specific section or identify the context and methodology of the author's current work. "Citation in academic writing refers to a community-based literature and offers important support for arguments and establishes authorial command of the subject," as mentioned by Hyland (2005a, p.51). So, by drawing attention to the credibility of the source, evidence lends credence to the present information.

e. Code glosses: they are used to assist the reader in understanding the author's intended meaning by redefining, rephrasing, explaining, or

commenting on the semantic content of a given code snippet. They indicate the writer's assumptions about the reader's background knowledge and the level of background information necessary to fully grasp the text (Hyland, 2007).

2. Interactional dimension: It refers to the writers' subtle use of certain metadiscoursal devices, such as modalisation and other forms of linguistic politeness, to conduct an interaction by intruding and commenting on their message and inviting the readers to respond to the unfolding text. Thus, MD is evaluative, interactive, and expressive of solidarity since it invites readers to steer the conversation by revealing the author's hopes for the propositional content and for the readers themselves (Hyland 2005a). Hyland classifies interpersonal MD as a whole, then separates it into five resources:

a. Hedges: these are epistemic techniques that authors use to signal certainty and subjectivity by couching information in terms of opinion rather than truth, allowing the reader to engage in a process of meaning-making. They relieve the writer of some of the burden of delivering unambiguous assertions by showing that he or she is open to the idea that the reader may have views contrary to the author's (Hyland, 1998 a) referred to as "hedges" These are epistemic techniques that authors use to signal certainty and subjectivity by couching information in terms of opinion rather than truth, so allowing the reader to engage in a process of meaning-making. They relieve the writer of some of the burden of delivering unambiguous assertions by showing that he or she is open to the idea that the reader may have views contrary to the author's (Hyland, 1998 a).

b. Boosters: Writers often employ a device called a "booster" to signal an extreme level of confidence or positivity and to shut down any reader-proposed alternatives. They may be verbs like "show" or "show

off" but they are most often seen in adverbs and adjectives like "obvious" or "obviously" (Hyland, 2005a, p.52). Hyland (1999) argues that writers use such techniques when they anticipate conflicting perspectives and want to minimise rather than magnify such variety. By limiting the reader's options, the writer hopes to demonstrate the veracity of his or her claims and to draw the reader into the discussion by indicating that he or she shares the reader's perspective.

c. Attitude markers: they play the role of conveying approval or disapproval of a given proposal. Markers of attitude reveal the speaker's emotional rather than logical stance towards the topic being discussed (Hyland, 2004b). These indicators exhibit a broad variety of emotive aspects, including evaluation and estimating angles, emphasis, obligation, and attractiveness. Attitudes are communicated openly via the use of attitude verbs (agree, prefer) and adverbs (sadly, optimistically) as well as adjectives (logical, critical, shocking) that directly describe the speaker's state of mind (Hyland, 2005a).

d. Self-mention markers: they refer to the author's portrayal of herself or herself in the text, are used to describe this phenomenon. Because of these indicators, authors might promote a certain identity or perspective within their discourse communities. Self-reference in writing is mostly accomplished via the use of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (Hyland, 2005a).

e. Engagement marker: It refers to a kind of rhetorical technique that encourages the reader to actively engage with a text. In order to do this, authors may either assume certain attitudes and interpretations about their readers by utilising questions, directions, and references to already established information, or they can address the readers directly by employing inclusive or second-person pronouns (Hyland, 2004b). The first, according to Hyland (2005a:54), is interpersonal and proclaims

the necessity to fulfil the interests, and expectations of inclusion of possible readers.

By the use of second-person pronouns and interjections such as "you may notice," the reader is invited to actively participate in the discussion rather than just be an objective bystander. The second goal is to put the reader in a more advantageous rhetorical position, to acknowledge that they are critics of the disciplinary processes, and to give them the opportunity to bring up any additional problems and counter any conceivable objections or other interpretations. The text includes questions, commands, and allusions to previously established information to draw the reader into the conversation at key and contentious junctures in order to steer them towards a certain interpretation. The following table illustrates this:

Table (1)

Interpersonal Model of MD Adopted from Hyland (2005a, p. 49)

Categories	Functions	Examples
1. Interactives	Help to guide the reader through the text by:	
a. Transitions	Expressing the relations between the main clause	In addition, but, thus
b. Frame markers	Referring to discourse acts sequences or stages	Finally, to conclude, my purpose is
c. Endophorics	Referring to information in other texts.	Noted above, see fig., in section (2)

Categories	Functions	Examples
d. Evidentials	Referring to information from other texts.	According to x, z states
e. Code glosses	Elaborating propositional meanings.	Namely, e.g., such as
2. Interactional	Involve the reader through intruding and commenting on the text by:	
a. Hedges	Withholding commitment and opening dialogue.	Might, perhaps, possibly
b. Boosters	Emphasizing certainty or closing off dialogue.	In fact, definitely, it is clear that
c. Attitude markers	Expressing the writer's attitudes to a proposition.	Unfortunately, I argue, surprisingly
d. Self-mention	Explicit reference to author (s).	I, we, my, our
e. Engagement markers	Explicitly to build a relationship with the reader.	Consider, note, you can see

4. Findings and Discussion

Two groups of theses, the University of Anbar theses, and Tikrit University, were included in the findings of the manual process of tagging and measuring meta-discourse markers across the entire data. The model adopted was utilized to look into how different meta-discourse conventions were used in the two parts, discussion and conclusion sections, written in MA theses. The frequency of each type of meta-discourse marker occurring in the two universities selected in relation to the research questions.

4.1 Frequency of MD markers in the University of Anbar theses

Table (1)

Interactive MD markers

MDs	Frequency	Percentage
Transitions	501	61.17%
Frame markers	192	23.44%
Endophorics	49	5.98%
Evidentials	12	1.46%
Code glosses	65	7.93%
Total	819	100%

The table above shows the total number of interactive metadiscourse markers in the two sections, the discussion and conclusion sections. The percentages written were all based on the total number of MD items found in relation to the total number of words in each section.

In addition, the total number of interactive metadiscoursal markers was (819) items in the two sections of the University of Anbar theses. Transitions scored the highest percentage (61.17 %). Frame markers were in the second position which scored (23.44%). From the highest to the lowest frequencies, code glosses (7.93%), endophytic

(5.98%), and evidential (1.46%) are the other commonly used markers.

The following table illustrates these findings.

Table (2)

Interactional MD markers of the University of Anbar theses

MDs	Frequency	Percentage
Hedges	371	51.96%
Boosters	188	26.33%
Attitude markers	81	11.34%
Self mentions	21	2.94%
Engagement markers	53	7.42%
Total	714	100%

This table clarifies that there are (714 total) interactional MD markers. Hedges scored the highest percentage in the two sections (51.96%) with 371 times. According to the variation in the distribution of the six Interactional MD marker subcategories. The two sections of the University of Anbar theses, perhaps surprise, show a high frequency of hedges. The second place is taken by boosters (26.33%) with 188 times. According to the percentages (11.34% and 7.42%), there is only a little use of attitude markers and involvement markers. Self-mentions are occasionally used along with the percentage (2.94%).

4.2 Metadiscourse markers in the University of Tikrit theses

Table (3)

Interactive MD markers

MDs	Frequency	Percentage
Transitions	322	31.35%
Frame markers	224	21.81%
Endophorics	280	27.26%
Evidentials	13	1.26%
Code glosses	188	18.30%
Total	1027	100%

The total amount of data in the theses from Tikrit University is shown in table (3). There are 1027 interactive markers in total across the two sections. Additionally, it displays how the five interactive MD subcategories are distributed throughout the two sections' chosen theses. It has been observed that transitions scored the highest percentage (31.35) with 322 times of occurrence. Endophorics were in the second place in which they scored (27%) with 280 times. Concerning frame markers and code glosses, they scored (21.81%), (18.30%) respectively. Evidentials scored the lowest percentage (1.26%) with 13 times only.

Table (4)

Interactional MD markers of Tikrit University theses

MDs	Frequency	Percentage
Hedges	282	55.73%
Boosters	42	8.30%
Attitude markers	102	20.15%
Self-mentions	22	4.34%
Engagement markers	58	11.46%
Total	506	100%

The total number of interactional MD, along with their distributions and percentages in the two parts, are displayed in Table (4). There are (506) interactional MD in total. The table also demonstrates that both parts scored highly (55.73%), with a high percentage of hedges with 282 times. In the second place, the attitude markers scored (20.15%) with 102 times. Both engagement markers and boosters scored (11.46%), (8.30%) respectively. In the last place, it has been shown that self-mentions scored the lowest percentage (4.34%) with 22 times only.

Based on these findings, the study attempts to examine and define the disciplinary-sensitive writing habits in two universities. The purpose of the study is to better understand how MA students experience a change from an impersonal to a social and dialogic writing process. Concerning interactive markers in this study, the use of transitions in the data is rather evenly distributed between the two universities. Also, the most common devices at the University of Anbar and Tikrit University are Transitions according to a repeated comparison of the frequencies of interactive and interactional MD markers in the MA theses at the two universities. This outcome may be explained by the overemphasis placed on these devices by English teachers at the intermediate and secondary levels, especially the connectors that convey consequence and addition, or by the overemphasis placed on them in English coursebooks. This result confirms Hyland's (2004a) study since he discovered that transitions tend to be more heavily marked in the humanities (soft) fields simply because these disciplines require developing a cohesive and convincing discourse due to their wide-ranging nature.

It is clear that in both universities, Frame Markers hold the second-place position. This might be a result of the information's nature, which calls for a clear audience focus and attempts to arrange the discourse in a way that makes it simple for readers to understand and control. However, the primary purpose of these markers in these two sections is to announce the discourse goals and findings. According to the findings, Tikrit University comes in second for Endophorics while the University of Anbar comes in fourth. The overuse of these markers to make allusions to other textual passages rather than to figures reflects the necessity of explicitly stating connections between different sections of a text. This may be attributed to the nature of this kind of knowledge, which calls for the recovery of presented elements

and the creation of relationships among them in order to make an explicit manipulation of the discourse as a whole. Endophorics have generally been observed to be common practices in this discourse, which frequently refers to tables, figures, sections, and other resources.

There is more variety in the use of linguistics tools when it comes to code glosses. The most frequent form that expresses the writers' attempts to address their audience in understandable and credible ways to provide the necessary background for members of the discourse community is reformulation or version of an idea in different words in the form of expansion, particularly explanation. Regardless of the format, these markers, like others, provide a sense of interpersonal interaction since they show the writers' desire to interact with the readers as peers who have common expert knowledge and comprehension of the topic.

To sum up, these findings are consistent with a study by Hyland and Tse (2004) that investigated the utilization of MD in graduate research writing. They assert that in academic writing, interactive MetaDiscourse occurs more frequently than interactional MetaDiscourse. This could be explained by the discursive character of soft disciplines, which necessitates the broad use of such markers to create a coherent and convincing narrative. Our findings correspond with Garcia's (2002) analysis of (80) abstracts in the fields of linguistics and biology. Based on the classification of MD put forward by Crismore et al. (1993), the texts were analyzed. He claims that linguistics authors employ hedges in linguistics than bioscience writers do. One of his defences for this outcome is that the human sciences deal with views rather than facts.

A high degree of use of Attitude markers is observed in Tikrit university data while there is little use of them in the University of

Anbar data. It may imply that whenever a little use they demand the highest level of objectivity and neutrality to convey the writers' enthusiasm for their subjects and commitment to their audience. Concerning self- mentions which scored a little use in the data. This result is presented already by Hyland (2004a) who claims that (As.) and (Sms.) "play a greater role in expressing personal interpretation in social sciences where interpretations are typically more explicit and the principles for establishing proof less reliable" (Hyland, 2004a, p.144). The sparing use of Engagement markers is consistent with Hyland's (2008), but there are differences in the kinds of techniques used to pique readers' interest.

5. Conclusions

The study revealed that by using metadiscourse analysis, the rhetorical preferences of various discourse groups can be investigated and contrasted. In this way, MD presents a useful method for textbook creators to help the students gain control over writing practices that are sensitive to discipline while also giving them the means to express their attitudes and interact with readers. MD is seen as a significant tool for enhancing communication since, on the one hand, it helps establish rapport with an audience and, on the other, it provides helpful possibilities for elaborating an interpretive context. It influences how well readers comprehend the material and aids with their ability to separate fact from opinion or primary ideas from supporting ones. The language use patterns used by the MA students in the two universities demonstrate how important context, discussion, and conclusions, are in guiding how they shape and express their arguments and research findings. In other words, the intent and function of each context play a role in the selection of these indicators. Therefore, MD's significance as an analytical tool stem from its tight relationship to the environments in which it happens. Therefore, the Discussion section, where the argument is stressed and conclusions, claims, and justifications are typically found, is characterized by higher writer interference.

It is not unexpected to notice how the discipline specificity reinforces the fact that academic discourse exhibits autonomous disciplinary visions given how tightly the usage of MD is tied to its socio-rhetorical setting. In order to accomplish certain academic goals, it develops and uses some unique rhetorical forms in relation to the circumstances, convictions, and expectations of discursal groups. The application of this study implies that the researchers would benefit from instruction in writing techniques that incorporate the use of MD, which cannot be obtained from writing guides or textbooks published in English.

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