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التحقيق في تأثير علامات ما وراء الخطاب في نصوص الفهم القرائي في كتب اللغة الإنجليزية

للمرحلة الاعدادية في العراق

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المستخلص

برزت القراءة كمصدر له شأن جدي لمعلمي وعلماء اللغة خلال السنوات العشر الماضية. و لذلك، فقد ركز عدد من الدراسات على ما وراء الخطاب كمكون تفاعلي هام يُعتقد أنه يحسن عملية القراءة. أوجزت هذه الدراسة بالكشف عن تأثير ما وراء الخطاب او ما يعرف ب (Metadiscourse) لتسهيل عملية فهم و استيعاب النصوص القرائية . بوجيز العبارة، يُعتقد ان ما وراء الخطاب له أثر فعال إذا ما استعمل كوسيلة لتسهيل التواصل و تطوير الاتصال مع القارئ. كان الهدف من الدراسة الحالية هو تحديد اكثر انواع (metadiscourse) استعمالا في كتب المرحلة الاعدادية (English for Iraq) . أظهرت النتائج بناءً على نموذج Hyland (2005) المعتمد لهذه الدراسة ان كلا النوعين مما وراء الخطاب موجود في نصوص القرائية

لكتب المرحلة الاعدادية، مع ذلك فأن النوع الاول (التفاعلي) هو الأكثر استعمالاً

الكلمات المفتاحية: ما وراء الخطاب، النصوص القرائية، نموذج هايلاند ، الانكليزية للعراق

Investigating the effect of Metadiscourse Markers in Reading

Comprehension texts in Iraqi Preparatory English books.

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Abstract:



Reading has emerged as a serious concern for first and second language instructors and scholars during the past 10 years. Hence, a number of studies have concentrated on metadiscourse as a significant interactive component that is thought to improve the reading process. This paper has outlined exploratory study to learn more about how metadiscourse affects readers' comprehension. In a short, metadiscourse is seen as an important tool for facilitating communication, highlighting a writer's argument, and developing a connection with the reader. The goal of the current study was to determine the most often used type of metadiscourse markers in 'English for Iraq' textbooks as well as if reading comprehension texts in preparatory stage books contain enough metadiscourse markers. The model adopted for this study is Hyland (2005) taxonomy. Results revealed that the two kinds of metadiscourse markers are presented in the books for the three preparatory level. However, interactive category is the most used typed.

Key words: First and second language, metadiscourse, exploratory study, English for Iraq.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

In (2005, p. 6) Hyland clarified that "The analysis of discourse is the analysis of language in use, the ways linguistic forms are employed for social purposes - what language is used for". Nevertheless, researchers began to adopt a limited methodology on what these goals might have been. They showed a significant difference between interactional and transactional usages of language: the purpose for which language attends to specific 'content' and the aim used to express personal relations and perception (Brown and Yule, 1983).

1.1.1 Metadiscourse

The term "metadiscourse" was originally used by the linguist Zellig Harris (1959) to describe a means of understanding language in use and to denote writers' or speakers' attempts to shape readers' or listeners' perceptions of a work.

Hyland (2005, p. 37) categorised metadiscourse as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with



readers as members of a particular community". This definition essentially sees metadiscourse as a way for a set of unfinished language pieces to realise meanings. " Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse, that metadiscourse refers to aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions; and that metadiscourse refers only to relations which are internal to the discourse" (Hyland, 2005, p. 38).

Williams (1981, p. 226) stated that the metadiscourse is " whatever does not refer to the subject matter being addressed". Similarly, Crismore (1983, p2) stated that most writings contain some metadiscourse in order for the author to indicate that they are changing the topic or reaching the conclusion that what they are stating is more or less accurate, or that the thoughts are significant. Crismore added that it is the writer's or speaker's duty to make the proper transitions between ideas and to insert signals into the text so that the reader may understand how the writer's intended the text to work as a whole.

Metadiscourse is a word commonly developed in the analysis of standard talk and language education, for symbolizing the connections " between text producers and their texts and between text producers and users" (Hyland 2005, p.1). Adel (2006,p. 2) stated that

Metadiscourse is discourse about the evolving discourse, or the writer's explicit commentary on her own ongoing text. it includes reflexive linguistic items that refer to the text itself as text or as language. In a wider sense, it refers to linguistic items which reveal the writer's and reader's (or speaker's and hearer's) presence in the text, either by referring to the organization of the text or by commenting on the text in other ways.

Vande Kopple (1985 p.83) defined metadiscourse as "discoursing about discourse". Vande Kopple (1997, p. 2) also stated that people use metadiscourse "not to expand referential material but to help their readers connect, organize, interpret, evaluate, and develop attitudes toward that material". Nevertheless, Zellig Harris, Hyland and Williams all agreed that metadiscourse refers to a writer's attempt to influence a reader's consciousness of a book. Hence, the recognition of communication as



public involvement is based on metadiscourse. It examines certain aspects of how the writers introduce themselves into their writing by outlining how those writers view both the subject matter and the intended audience. Hyland (2005, p. 4) identified that “With the judicious addition of metadiscourse, a writer is able not only to transform what might otherwise be a dry or difficult text into coherent, reader-friendly prose but also to relate it to a given context and convey his or her personality, credibility, audience-sensitivity and relationship to the message”.

Alternatively, metadiscourse is also regarded by some linguists as a pragmatic theory. Hyland (1998, p. 437) argued that metadiscourse is “aspects of a text which explicitly organise the discourse, engage the audience, and signal the writer's attitude. Its use by writers to guide readers and display an appropriate professional persona is an important aspect of persuasive writing”. This indicates that there are two key levels to writing: the first level, or "prepositional level," is where the writers provide background information about the subject. That is, the writers assist our readers in organizing, comprehending, evaluating, and responding to such material on the second level, the level of metadiscourse.

2. classification of Metadiscourse

The classification presented is based on a functional method that deals with metadiscourse because of the ways in which writers refer to the reader and the text in their tools. Thompson (2001, p. 61) explained that these two aspects of metadiscourse, the interactive and the interactional, “are essentially the two sides of the same coin”. This is related to the idea that an overt attempt to elicit a response can also suggest “where the text is going next, and so function interactively as well... Interactive resources such as conjunctions not only create structural links which assist comprehension, but also serve important interactional functions by anticipating, and perhaps deflecting, possible reader objections or counterclaims” (Hyland ,2005, p.44). The interactional further subtly indicates the writer's overt performance in the text, while the interactional denotes it.

In Hyland's model, the interactive and interactional elements of interaction are considered as the two components of metadiscourse. The



interactive aspect relates to the writer's awareness of the audience; as a result, Hyland organises and displays the text to fulfill their needs while also conveying his preferred interpretations. In other words interactive markers are used to keep the material flowing and structure the assertions so that the reader would find the text cohesive and readable.

Transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentiary resources, and code glosses are interactive resources. The interactional component focuses on the manner in which authors provide feedback on their message and involve readers by allowing them to give feedback on the text. Here, the metadiscourse is critical and interesting, helping the authors build the text alongside the readers. Hedges, booster, attitude marker, self-mention, and engagement marker are examples of interactional resources (Hyland, 2005).

Table 1. Model of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005, p. 49)

Category	Function	Example
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	Resources
Transitions	express relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus
Frame markers	refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	finally; to conclude
Endophoric		noted above; see fig.
Evidentials	refer to information in other parts of the text	according to X
Code glosses	refer to information from other texts	e.g; such as; namely
	elaborate prepositional meanings	
Category	Function	Example
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges		might; perhaps
Boosters	withhold commitment and open dialogue	in fact; it is clear
	emphasize certainty or close dialogue	I agree; lovely
Attitude marker	express writer's attitude to proposition	I; we; my; me
Self-mention	explicit reference to the author	note; see that
	explicitly build relationship with readers	



Engagement marker		
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3.1. Reading

Language communication allows people to speak with one other from all over the world. English, which is regarded as the first international language, is used in every sector of the economy, as well as in official conferences, and education. Writing, reading, speaking, and listening are the four language skills that must be acquired.

Reading competence is highly valued by students learning English as a second language in educational settings since it is usually the main way that a learner is exposed to the target language. (Kibui, 2012).

Reading has a straight influence on one's ability to understand what they have read. As stated by Nuttal (1982), reading is the elucidation of spoken or written indications that have been given further importance. The reader holds definite reading features that are associated to it. What a reader can read depends on a combination of language and cognitive skills, as well as general knowledge and the capacity to comprehend visual information. The readers use this technique to try to capture the writer's meaning as accurately as possible. The reader must comprehend the material as they read it in order to fully internalize it. Being able to grasp what has been read is being able to make sense of or comprehend previously read material. Just understanding individual words, sentences, or documents does not constitute full language comprehension.

Students work hard to grasp written words by memorizing full sentences, phrases, and paragraphs in order to comprehend the general substance of a document. It helps students since it allows them to speak and read in perfect English and allows them to utilize their own voices. The main goal of English learning in Iraqi classrooms is to improve pupils' abilities to communicate



with others. All students are urged to improve their reading abilities. According to Ali, Al-Rifa, and Hamad, (2019) reading is a collaborative creative activity that readers participate in when they understand, respond to, and interact with a text . A man can learn and practice to improve his reading comprehension. When comprehension is the aim of reading, the relationship between the text and the reader shifts to one that is participatory in nature. Because of this, the Ministry of Education of Iraq has adopted a curriculum that aims to improve students' reading comprehension abilities in addition to other linguistic skills. Many reading passages are offered for this purpose, but many students have problems comprehending them. As students graduate from high school, they don't always demonstrate these talents as having improved.

The reading comprehension texts has been highly studied for the existence of metadiscourse markers as one of the factors resulting in reader-friendly texts, and its absence would result in a work that is rather tough to grasp (Crismore, 1983). The existence or absence of metadiscourse markers in reading comprehension texts is particularly important for non-native English speakers since they are looking for any hints that can help them comprehend the author's intended meaning.

Textbooks, especially for undergraduate students, are an essential and fundamental component of their students' career and have a big impact on how they learn languages (Hyland, 2009, p.112). The lack of study into preparatory textbooks is more obvious when it comes to rhetorical patterns, despite the fact that there hasn't been much of it. Few research, notably in textbooks, have looked at metadiscourse from a pedagogical perspective.

3.2.The English Iraqi Curriculum

A curriculum is a web of connected, related activities that come together to accomplish specific learning objectives, according to Kolomito et al. (2017, p.6). Therefore, Stutt (2018, p. 1) pointed out that curriculum design is a process used to improve the courses offered by a certain school, institution, or university. Because the world is always evolving, modern discoveries must be incorporated into school curricula. As a result,



innovative teaching strategies and projects are routinely used to improve students' educational experiences.

Via the release of a new series for teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL, for short) named English for Iraq for primary and secondary schools since 2013, a turning point in designs and methodologies happened. The first Iraqi series to be taught from first grade through sixth preparatory is regarded as being English for Iraq. The process of creating new textbooks and modifying the EFL curriculum is ongoing. Therefore, ongoing research is necessary to show how effectively the new EFL textbooks achieve their intended objectives and goals in addition to provide meaningful information that identifies both their strengths and potential areas for development. Iraq implemented educational reforms in 2003 in an effort to keep up with global changes and to allay complaints resulting from disliking the textbooks that were in use at the time.

Secondary English textbooks must be revised frequently to reflect the shifting demands of English Language Teaching (ELT) in Iraq and to keep up with new advancements in ELT theories and practice around the world. The growth of uniqueness and specialization are the main objectives of secondary ELT. ELT has a variety of extra-linguistic objectives. The objectives of secondary ELT include developing students' enthusiasm in English as well as assisting them in acquiring fundamental understanding of English by teaching them the four language abilities (listening, speaking, writing, and reading).

The Ministry plans to improve English instruction in Iraq while taking into consideration the recent advancements in language teaching methodologies over the past few years. Grammar Translation and Audio-lingual Techniques were the primary methods for studying English in all Iraqi textbooks during and after the previous rule. Grammar was emphasized primarily, and vocabulary was taught either by memorizing dialogue or by employing Arabic translations. Under the title "English for Iraq," the Ministry of Education implemented a new series for the preparatory stage in 2013–2014, and for the intermediate stage in the years that followed. The Educational Research Center in Lebanon and York Press and Pearson



Education Ltd. in the United Kingdom jointly created it. Since 2013, this series has been used in Iraqi schools. The textbooks in this series advance Iraqi pupils from beginning to more complex levels. The English for Iraq series adopted communicative language teaching, a contemporary method for teaching and learning English that emphasizes practice as a strategy to improve communication skills in the target language.

3.3.Previous Studies

Metadiscourse markers in textbooks have been the subject of several research.

A research by Bagherfard and Simin (2016) sought to determine how the American English File series and two popular ELT textbooks in Iran— Iranian high school English textbooks used interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers differently.

The results demonstrated that the code glosses and evidentials in the two textbook series differed significantly.

A research by Celiešienė and Vaičienė (2023) looked at how authors communicate their attitude in academic papers using text-organizing metadiscourse markers from a cross-linguistic and cross-disciplinary standpoint. The results of the cross-disciplinary study showed that authors of economics scientific publications employ text-organizing markers more frequently than authors of academic.

Literature about technology.

The purpose of Banaruee, Mohammadian, and Zare-Behtash's (2017) study was to look at how metadiscourse markers are used in math textbooks. Interactive markers were more common than interactional markers, according to the data.

4.Methodology

This study is a mix of qualitative as well as quantitative approach to analyse preparatory English textbooks named "English for Iraq" which has been used in Iraqi schools since 2014. Ary, Jacobs and Sorensen (2010, p. 559) stated that mixed methods research “combines quantitative and qualitative research methods in different ways, with each approach adding something to the understanding of the phenomenon. If mixing methods offer



a better understanding of the research problem than a single method design, then it is worth considering". The aim of using a quantitative approach was to compare the frequency of occurring of metadiscourse markers in the selected English text books. Moreover, using a qualitative approach was to discover which type of metadiscourse used in these texts and if there are enough markers that help students to understand the texts. The reading sections of three textbooks (fourth, fifth, and sixth preparatory) were carefully read (using textbook analysis) word by word in order to achieve the study's objectives (that is to pinpoint which metadiscourse types dominate in the textbook discourse). Special attention was paid to the words' functions and meanings to identify the interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers based on Hyland's (2005) model. 50 texts from the preparatory stages have been chosen as data for this study. All the texts are mainly from the student book.

First, with the quantitative analysis, the researcher specified how many types of metadiscourse markers are found in all the text. With the qualitative analysis, the researcher determined whether there were enough markers that help students comprehend the texts.

5.1. Data Analysis

The analysis of the data revealed that both types of metadiscourse markers occurred in the books of preparatory stage; however interactive markers were occupied the most compared with interactional markers.

Table 2.

Interactive Metadiscourse	Occurrence	Frequency	Interactional Metadiscourse	Occurrence	Frequency



Transition	400	80 %	Hedge	40	15 %
Frame markers	20	4 %	Booster	43	16.5 %
Endophoric	0	0 %	Attitude	22	8 %
Evidentials	19	3 %	Self-mention	130	50 %
Code glosses	59	11.8 %	Engagement	22	8 %
Total	498		Total	260	

Note: The quantity of each source of markers is multiplied by 100 to get the frequency of occurrence, which is then divided by the total number of markers, using the "AntConc" software programme for text analysis.

The most frequent indicators in the data for the subcategories of interactive metadiscourse were "Transitions and Code glosses". While 'Self-mention, Hedges, and Boosters' were statistically judged to be the interactional marker subtypes that were most prevalent across all data sets.

The data contain four different sources of interactive metadiscourse. This type relates to the writer's awareness of the audience and his efforts to shape it in terms of knowledge, interests, and rhetorical possibilities. Thus, the writer's objective is to modify and constrain text to meet the needs of particular readers. Transitions, for instance, aid readers in understanding the practical connections between an argument's steps. They must play a role that is internal to the text rather than external, supporting readers in making connections between concepts.

" **Then**, one of the residents saw a local news report about the escape".

" My wife came to look **and** she was very frightened".

" People in six other flats in the building **also** saw the snake, **but** they were all too frightened to catch it".



Readers can understand the pragmatic connections between steps in an argument by using transition markers, which are mostly conjunctions. They express connections between speech lengths and indicate additive, causal, and contrastive connections in the writer's thinking. Whether these things aid in syntactic coordination or subordination is irrelevant; nonetheless, for something to qualify as metadiscourse, it must serve a purpose that is internal to the discourse rather than one that is external, such as assisting the reader in understanding how ideas are connected.

The second most occurred type of 'Interactive markers' is **code glosses** with **59** markers.

*"There were sports **like** basketball, cycling, and football"*

*" These volunteers did various things, **such as** taking spectators to their seats, checking their tickets"*

*" My holiday is a bit exhausting, because you have to row a canoe (**mashhoof**) to go from one house to another".*

Code glosses provide more information by restating, clarifying, or expanding on what has been said in order to help the reader understand the writer's intended meaning. They are introduced with words like this is termed, in other words, that is, this can be defined as, for instance, etc., and they represent the writer's assumptions about the reader's background knowledge. As an alternative, parenthesis are used to separate them.

Frame markers occurs only **20** times in the data. Text borders or components of the schematic text structure are shown by frame markers. Things presented here serve to order, categorize, anticipate, and change arguments so that readers or listeners can understand the discourse. Frame markers can consequently be used to organize an argument internally or to sequence different parts of the text, frequently acting as more explicit additive relations (first, next). Text phases can be specifically labeled (to summarize, in sum). They present the discourse objectives (argue here, my purpose is, the paper proposes). They might also signal topic changes (well, right). Hence, the items in this category offer framing details on discourse aspects.



" *Being a banker requires many different skills. To begin with, you have to be good*

at math".

" *Finally, a banker needs to be a good communicator".*

In order to direct the reader's interpretation and demonstrate the author's grasp of the subject, evidentials are metalinguistic representations of a notion from another source. In some genres, this could entail hearsay or the attribution of information to a trustworthy source; in academic writing, it refers to literature from the local area and serves as crucial evidence for claims. While identifying the individual responsible for a position may help with a persuasive purpose, it is important to distinguish this from the writer's perspective on the issue, which is regarded as an interpersonal aspect.

" *'I got up in the night to go to the bathroom,' Mr Andrews told reporter".*

" *'I was praying to God to save me' he said".*

On the other hand, interactional metadiscourse has its own share in the reading comprehension texts in the preparatory books. **Self-mention** markers has the largest share among the five types with **130** markers.

"*I'm having a great time at the moment. We 've got the Babylon festival".*

"*When we start work, we are encouraged to put money into pension plans to save for our retirement so that we can continue to enjoy a good standard of living when we are older"*

The frequency of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives in a text is a measure of the author's explicit presence, which is known as self-mention (me, mine, exclusive we, our, ours). The norm of personal projection through first person pronouns is likely the most effective way to portray oneself in writing, however all writing contains information about the writer. It is impossible for writers to avoid conveying a sense of who they are and where they stand in respect to their audience, their community, and their arguments. The decision to adopt a specific stance and a contextually positioned authorial identity can be seen in the presence or lack of explicit author reference.



Concerning **boosters**, the analysis showed that there are **43** markers that denote boosters. Words like "clearly," "obviously," and "demonstrate" enable writers to rule out alternatives, dispel competing viewpoints, and convey their conviction in their arguments. Supporters claim that while the author is aware of the potential range of viewpoints, he has decided to focus on fewer rather than more, presenting choices in a clear-cut manner. Boosters emphasize certainty and build rapport by eliminating all other alternatives. They also demonstrate audience engagement and togetherness by taking a unified stance against opposing viewpoints. By highlighting the shared experiences required to reach the same conclusions as the author, their utilization strengthens an argument. So, the number of hedges to boosters in a document reveals how open the author is to considering other possibilities.

"Perhaps I'll write again before we come home. If not, I'll **definitely** call you as soon as possible".

"**Surly** this project can't go ahead".

"This is not just an ordinary camel, **of course**".

Lakoff (1972) coined the term "**hedge**" to describe the logical characteristic of some words and phrases and their capacity "to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". Hedges are "devices that signal the writer's decision to withhold entire commitment to a notion, allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than accredited fact" (Hyland as cited in Macintyre, 2017, p. 58). Hedges emphasizes the subjectivity of a stance and makes it amenable to negotiation. Writers must determine the amount of weight to give an assertion, taking into account the level of accuracy or dependability they wish it to have. With **40** markers, hedge occurred in the data

" You **probably** know that the petrol people put in their cars come from petroleum".

" It is **possible** to breed gorillas in zoos".

" Without help, she **could** have died in a few hours".

The fourth type of interactional metadiscourse is '**Attitude markers**'. This type has a low occurrence percentage with only **22** markers. A persuasive techniques called attitude metadiscourse markers are used to show how writers feel about the subject matter. They serve a variety of purposes as



"expressions of surprise and thinking that something is important, or of concession, agreement, disagreement, and so on, among other things" (Crismore, Markkanen, & Steffensen 1993, p. 53). Affective rather than epistemic attitudes toward claims are indicated through attitude markers. Attitude can be expressed through the use of comparatives, progressive particles, punctuation, text location, and other devices. Attitude verbs (such as "agree," "prefer," and "preferred"), sentence adverbs (such as "unfortunately," "hopefully," and others), are the metadiscourse devices that signal it most explicitly (appropriate, logical, remarkable).

"**Unfortunately**, my little brother Faisal heard about the picnic".

"**Luckily**, his grandmother had taught him how to do that just the previous week".

"**Fortunately**, Paul had a mobile phone in his pocket and he called the police".

Last but not least, **engagement markers** are tools that directly contact readers, either to draw their attention or to include them as participants in the conversation. In addition to choosing hedges, boosters, self-mention, and attitude to convey authority, integrity, and credibility, authors can emphasize or minimize the role of their readers in the text by utilizing engagement markers.

"**You can see** flares and smokes around sites like Burjussia in Basra".

"It is a very nice building and **you feel** calm there".

In conclusion, metadiscourse is recognized here as important to language's overall goal. It is a particular kind of discourse that conveys the communicative and referential meanings without which readers could find it difficult to explore a text and editors might find it difficult to get their work accepted. Hence, metadiscourse is not a specific style issue but rather a method used by writers to demonstrate a disciplined awareness of how to best represent oneself.

Conclusion

According to the study's findings, the interactive category of metadiscourse markers was employed more frequently than the interactional category in reading comprehension texts of the preparatory level. Given the



type of writing being studied, it is not surprising that transition markers are the most common metadiscourse approach in this study. Maintaining coherence is one of the most important things to take into account when writing an academic paper. Transitional marker words like "and" and "but" are more common to Iraqi EFL students than other words. A dynamic text and a vivid written interaction require metadiscourse. It can be given negatively or pleasantly, stressed or softened, briefed or expanded. The writer decided the path in which he wants to take the argument, keeping the reader in mind.

Teachers, students, beginning readers and writers must take into account a variety of elements that affect the use and spread of metadiscourse, such as genre, discourse community, and culture. Despite an enormous amount of literature, teachers and applied linguists have not given metadiscourse much attention or interest. Up until recently, teachers spent much of their time teaching and analysing individual linguistic components and grammatical rules to their pupils and less time focusing on the rhetorical qualities of speech and texts.

Applying these findings to pedagogy, it is thought that there is a clear need for interactional metadiscourse indicators to be included in L2 courses. Only a small number of interactional metadiscourse markers have been used in EFL texts or regularly taught, and they are rarely depicted as having a practical and persuasive function in the interaction between the writer, the reader, and the text. While experienced readers and writers may recognize that reading and writing are both context-rich, situational, constructive behaviors, many learners mistakenly believe that reading and writing are just ways of exchanging information. Teaching should therefore focus on assisting students in moving past this straightforward, ideational viewpoint.

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