FIRST LANGUAGE AND SECOND LANGUAGE ENGLISH EDITORIALISTS' USE OF INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE

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Abstract

This study explores the use of interactional[1] metadiscourse by first language (L1) and second language (L2) English editorialists. The study uses Hyland's (2019) model of metadiscourse to analyse 80 editorials published between 2020 and 2021 in *The Guardian* and *The Jordan Times* newspapers (40 from each newspaper). A mixed-method approach – adopting quantitative and qualitative measures – was used to analyse the data. The frequency of interactional metadiscourse resources was statistically examined to find similarities and differences (if any) between the two corpora. The analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in the use of interactional metadiscourse resources in the editorials of the two newspapers. For instance, L2 editorialists used fewer hedges in their editorials and more boosters than L1 editorialists. In addition, engagement markers were used the most by L1 editorialists. The study provides some implications for editorialists who write in English and recommendations for future research.

Keywords

interactional metadiscourse, newspaper editorials, journalistic writing, L1 and L2 English editorialists

1   Introduction

Media discourse – which is defined by O'Keeffe (2006: 1) as the "totality of how reality is represented in broadcast and printed media from television to newspaper" – is characterised by the careful selection of linguistic resources in order to convey the message and convince readers of the content of the text. Of the many text types in media discourse is the editorial article – broadly defined as a text which represents the opinion or voice of the newspaper on a certain issue or event. Existing research on media discourse has mainly been analysed using various approaches such as genre analysis, register and style, and corpus linguistics. The literature on media discourse abounds with studies which investigate the generic and schematic structures of the editorial and the lexico-grammatical resources used. However, the use of interactional metadiscourse resources in the editorial section is under-researched.

Many attempts have been made to define metadiscourse. Crismore (1983: 1) defined metadiscourse as "the author's discoursing about discourse". Lemke

(1990: 20) considered metadiscourse as a "kind of talk about talk". More recently, Hyland (2017: 16) uses metadiscourse to refer to "the commentary on a text made by its producer in the course of speaking or writing, and it is a widely used term in current discourse analysis and language teaching". Hyland (2019: 16) also argues that "metadiscourse is based on a view of writing (and speaking) as a social and communicative engagement, offering a means of understanding the ways we project ourselves into our texts to manage our communicative intentions". In spite of the opacity in the definition of metadiscourse, it is clear that metadiscourse performs two different missions in spoken and written messages: the organisation of the text and the presentation of the writer's voice. The text, spoken or written, is an interactive tool between the speaker/writer and listener/reader. This interaction is regularly led by means of metadiscourse resources.

The study of metadiscourse is important because it raises awareness of the nature of communication (whether this happens in writing or speaking), being a cooperative process whose ultimate objective is the expression of meaning. Vande Kopple (2012: 37) argues that the study of metadiscourse shows the intricacy of language, triggers "questions about ethics and language use", expands our understanding of the construction of text in different languages and explains why metadiscourse instruction is valuable. Indeed, being aware of how metadiscourse is used in texts influences readers' comprehension of the messages and the recalling of information. Metadiscourse impacts the persuasion of the reader, especially in journalistic genres, and how the reader interacts with the text. Metadiscourse also represents the position of the author in one way or another by using some linguistic elements. It also helps in guiding or signalling the overall text and in dividing the text into different sections and parts.

The use of metadiscourse resources has been examined in a spectrum of spoken and written discourses and genres, including academic discourse (e.g. Hyland 2007, Lee & Deakin 2016, Alghazo et al. 2021a, Alghazo et al. 2021b), political discourse (e.g. Sclafani 2017, Abusalim et al. 2022), media discourse (Le 2004), and classroom discourse (e.g. Hyland 1999) to discover the various patterns of language use. However, media discourse remains less researched for metadiscourse resources in the various genres. More so is the use of metadiscourse resources by first language (L1) and second language (L2) English writers. To this end, this study aims to compare L1 English writers with L2 English writers for the use of interactional metadiscourse in English newspaper editorials. Such a study is essential because it assists English as a Foreign Language (EFL) readers with different native languages and different cultural backgrounds in their understanding of foreign language texts. Metadiscourse markers not only aid the comprehension of the text for foreign language learners

but also enhance their writing skills after instructing them about these markers. Obviously, in journalistic texts, having some patterns of metadiscourse reflects something fundamental about the writing style of the L1 and L2 writers. For example, using more interactive markers in the text might indicate that the writer is concerned more about the reader's involvement in an argument than about the organisation of the text. Therefore, exploring how L1 and L2 writers interact with their readers is of value to both learners and teachers in EFL contexts, particularly those involved in English for Specific Purposes (ESP). The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the distributional patterns of interactional metadiscourse resources in editorials written by first language (L1) and second language (L2) English editorialists?
2. What are the similarities and/or differences in the use of interactional metadiscourse in editorials written by L1 and L2 English editorialists?

2   Theoretical framework

This study adopts Hyland's (2019) framework of metadiscourse. In fact, metadiscourse is not a new concept. The study of metadiscourse resources is constantly developing. In the past four decades, several models and theoretical frameworks have emerged to categorise and analyse metadiscourse. For example, Sinclair (1981) proposed a model to study written texts based on two planes of discourse: interactive and autonomous. The former refers to how writers use language to interact and negotiate with readers, and the latter refers to the analysis of language itself. Thompson (2001) devised an interactive and interactional model to categorise metadiscourse. Ädel (2006) presented a metadiscourse model, which shows that the stance of the author can be displayed either explicitly or implicitly and that writers can represent their views explicitly by using personal pronouns or implicitly by using the passive voice. Hyland (2019) offered a new classification of metadiscourse resources based on a functional approach which he called the interpersonal model of metadiscourse. In his taxonomy, Hyland (ibid.) draws on Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), in which language is viewed as performing certain communicative functions. As Hyland (ibid.: 28) puts it, functional analysis in metadiscourse refers to "how language works to achieve certain communicative purposes for users".

SFL is one of the closely related approaches to the study of metadiscourse as it treats the three metafunctions of language: the ideational, the textual and the interpersonal. Halliday and Matthiessen (2013: 30-31) argued that the ideational metafunction deals with language as "a reflection of human experience", the

interpersonal metafunction deals with it as "a reflection of … personal and social relationships", and the textual metafunction as "another mode of meaning that relates to the construction of text". Hyland (2019: 31) argued that the key difference between the two models is that "while metadiscourse theorists tend to see textual, interpersonal and propositional (ideational) elements of the texts as discrete and separable, Halliday reminds us that texts have to be seen more holistically". This study adopts the interpersonal model of metadiscourse presented by Hyland (ibid.). In particular, the study focuses on the interactional metadiscourse resources used in English newspaper editorials written by L1 and L2 English writers. Table 1 below shows the interactional resources used in Hyland's model.

Category	Function	Examples
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	*Might; perhaps; possible; about*
Boosters	Emphasise certainty or close dialogue	*In fact; definitely; it is clear that*
Attitude markers	Express the writer's attitude to the proposition	*Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly*
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to the author(s)	*I; we; me; our*
Engagement markers	Explicitly build a relationship with the reader	*Consider; note; you can see that*

Table 1: The interactional metadiscourse resources (Hyland 2019: 58)

A key issue in the study of metadiscourse in editorials is the methods of convincing the reader of the position of the newspaper about a certain topic. The persuasive function of the editorial section of the newspaper reinforces the need to use some linguistic features in persuading the audience. The sense of subjectivity or the representation of 'self' is always present in the editorial section, which makes it hard for the editorialist to persuade audiences. Van Dijk (1988: 74), in his description of the "general constraints on news style", stated that "there is no 'you' in the news, except in quotations or sometimes in feature articles or editorials". In other words, editorials are written to communicate the newspaper's stance – through the editorialists' positioning of that stance – to the readership by means of argumentation and subjectivity. As Hyland (2019: 106) shows, "[t]he means of 'doing persuasion' … differ across genres". Persuasion is achieved through argumentation which is better constructed through metadiscourse tools. Here comes the importance of studying metadiscourse markers which play a vital role in expressing the writer's attitude and organizing the text.

3   Literature review

Metadiscourse as a field of inquiry has caught the attention of researchers since the 1980s (see Beauvais 1989). It has been investigated in different types of discourse and genres. In media discourse, Van Dijk's (1988) work emphasised how the study of metadiscourse and rhetoric is so appealing in media and news discourse. In particular, Van Dijk (1988) stressed the influential impact of metadiscourse or rhetoric in forming and steering the principal tenets of the public's belief which is shaped by the media. As a result, researchers examined metadiscourse markers in media discourse, focusing on the impact of metadiscourse on the text, the writer, and the readers. Of the many genres in media discourse is the editorial section, which is the focus of analysis in this study. According to Van Dijk (1995: 14), editorials can be defined as "a genre that may be characterized both as a special type of media discourse, as well as belonging to the large class of opinion discourses". Van Dijk (1995) also demonstrated that little attention has been paid to the study of editorials despite their significance in constructing opinions and social beliefs. Particularly under-researched is the use of metadiscourse markers by L1 and L2 English editorialists.

Several studies ascribed particular importance to the use of metadiscourse in editorials and how it can affect readers' reception of the communicative messages. For example, Homayounzadeh and Mehrpour (2013) conducted a contrastive analysis of American and Persian newspaper editorials in order to investigate the strategies used to express the editorialist's attitude. The researchers found that culture does not have a powerful impact on the strategies of writing the editorial as much as the editorialists' wish to promote specific ideologies. By culture, the researchers refer to the individualist and collectivist norms that govern societies. This view of editorials is compatible with Van Dijk's perspective about the functions the editorial section performs in a newspaper. Van Dijk (1995: 2) portrayed the editorials' tasks in a newspaper: "[T]hey play a role in the formation and change of public opinion, in setting the political agenda, and in influencing social debate, decision making and other forms of social and political action". Alghazo et al. (2023) examined the use of metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English editorials, using Hyland's (2019) model of metadiscourse. The study focused on the use and functions of the interactive devices of metadiscourse. The results showed that there was no significant difference in the use of interactive metadiscourse in the two sets of editorials. However, some variation in the functions of some interactive devices was cited, and this was discussed in relation to factors of genre and L1 of the writer.

Systematic methodological comparisons between texts in the same language by different groups of writers within the same genre are necessary to clarify the

correlation between the writers' cultural background and the use of metadiscourse. The cultural background refers to the set of culture-specific norms that guide the way (including generic and rhetorical structures) the text is produced. These norms are referred to in the literature as 'intercultural rhetoric', which can be broadly defined as the influence of one's L1 on the second or foreign language writing. The usage of certain linguistic features depends upon users' L1s or cultures. Connor (2018: 1) argues that "patterns of language and writing are culture-specific". Consequently, the study of metadiscourse will definitely be influenced by different cultures and culture-specific rhetorical strategies. The comparison of metadiscourse in similar texts written by different groups of writers helps determine the similarities and/or differences in metadiscourse functions and in the frequency of metadiscourse markers across these texts. A study conducted by Noorian and Biria (2010) reported that cultural-driven preferences and genre-driven conventions are two different factors affecting the use of metadiscourse markers in journalism. Siddique et al. (2018) stated that the dominance of the interactive functions implies that these editorials are reader-friendly rather than writer-friendly. Such implications can only be elicited by comparing and contrasting the different texts, languages and writers.

Based on the foregoing, it is obvious that some uncertainties still exist about the relationship between linguacultural background and the use of metadiscourse. In the present study, a comparison is drawn between editorials in *The Guardian* and *The Jordan Times* regarding the use of metadiscourse. A corpus of editorials from the two newspapers is analysed based on Hyland's (2019) interpersonal model of metadiscourse to specifically investigate the use of metadiscoursal elements in this journalistic genre of editorials. The findings of this study are expected to enrich our understanding of journalistic writing in terms of the linguistic tools that editorialists can use to interact with their readership. They also contribute to filling a gap in the literature related to the use of metadiscourse resources by L1 and L2 English writers so as to inform media writing instruction in EFL contexts with conventional norms of writing for better production of texts.

4   Material and methods

4.1 Data collection

The corpus consists of 80 editorials selected randomly from *The Guardian* and *The Jordan Times* newspapers, covering the time span 2020–2021[2]. These newspapers were selected because they are popular ones in the UK and Jordan respectively and publish in L1 English (*The Guardian*) and L2 English (*The Jordan Times*), which serves the purpose of the study. The editorials were divided

into two sets, 40 from each newspaper. Information about the composition, the raw/absolute number of words and normalised/relative frequencies per 1,000 words is shown in Table 2 below. The data show no considerable variation in length: the editorials include a very similar number of words. The editorials discuss topics and issues related to the latest events, including social, economic, and health-related topics. We ensured that the editorials in the two data sets discuss similar topics. The editorials were retrieved from the archives of the two newspapers' websites. They were saved as plain text files. After that, each corpus was placed in a separate folder to prepare for the analysis. The two corpora totalled 42,029 words: 24,661 words in *The Guardian* corpus and 17,368 words in *The Jordan Times* one.

4.2 Data analysis

A mixed-method approach was adopted to analyse the data using both quantitative and qualitative measures. This approach was used in order to overcome the drawbacks of the single-method approach which neglects the contextual factors of the text. Another point to be noted here is that the qualitative analysis was conducted manually rather than automatically to apply a functional or more contextual method of analysis. In the quantitative part of the analysis, the metadiscoursal items were identified using a coding system in each editorial. We followed Hyland's (2019) coding framework and used the word as a unit of analysis. Frequencies and percentages of the metadiscoursal categories were calculated, and statistical analysis was conducted to extract the significant differences between the two corpora. In the qualitative part of the analysis, examples were presented, read in context, and interpreted accordingly. The analysis was also functional. Hyland (2019: 28) argues that, in the functional approach to metadiscourse, "the emphasis is … on meanings in context, how language is used, not what a dictionary says about it". With this in mind, the analysis started by reading the editorials and searching for metadiscoursal elements. Checking each word within its context was necessary to ensure that it performs a metadiscoursal function in this setting. Each researcher in this project checked the use of each marker independently, and upon completion, a group discussion was conducted to validate the analysis of each researcher. Each metadiscoursal marker was highlighted using the coding system designed for this purpose.

As for the statistical analysis, a list of words and expressions was created to represent the metadiscoursal items. The next step was identifying the metadiscoursal items in the editorials and calculating the frequencies of each category. The quantitative analysis of the data was done by running some statistical tests using SPSS. The significance threshold α was set at .05. The

initial step was obtaining the percentages and frequencies of each interactional metadiscourse resource in the editorials. The next step was to compare the use of metadiscourse resources in the two corpora. The final step was identifying the significant differences between the two sets of editorials in terms of their use of metadiscoursal categories. The data were analysed using paired samples t-test and independent t-test as appropriate. A paired samples t-test was chosen because it calculates the differences between the values of the two sets of editorials for each type of metadiscourse resources. On the other hand, an independent t-test was selected because it is particularly useful to test the statistical differences between the means of any two groups.

5   Findings

This section addresses the results obtained from data analysis. First, we present the results of the quantitative analysis in Table 2, which shows descriptive statistics and Table 3, which shows inferential statistics. The quantitative analysis of the data was particularly helpful in revealing the distributional patterns of metadiscourse markers throughout the two sets of editorials. On the other hand, the qualitative analysis of the data, accompanied by some examples and possible interpretations was indispensable for determining the factors that might contribute to exploring similarities and/or differences between the two corpora. In presenting the findings, frequencies are calculated per 1,000 words, which is a convention in metadiscourse studies (see Hyland 1998, 1999, Fu & Hyland 2014, Liu & Zhang 2021, Wu & Paltridge 2021). Table 2 below shows the frequencies and percentages of each interactional metadiscourse resource in each corpus and the frequency of each resource per 1,000 words.

Corpora	The Guardian Editorials			The Jordan Times Editorials			Totals
	N	%	Per 1,000 words	N	%	Per 1,000 words	
Interactional Metadiscourse	3,661	14.8%	148	1,903	11%	110	5,564
Hedges	916	3.7%	37	285	1.6%	16	1,201
Boosters	643	2.6%	26	404	2.3%	23	1,087
Attitude markers	711	2.9%	29	615	3.5%	35	1,326
Self-mention	1	0%	0	19	0.1%	1	20
Engagement	1,390	5.6%	56	580	3.3%	33	1,970
Wordcount		24,661			17,368		42,029

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of interactional metadiscourse resources

It is interesting to note, as Table 2 shows, that interactional metadiscourse markers were used more frequently by L1 English editorialists when compared to their L2 English counterparts. The table shows that there is a relatively high frequency of engagement markers, hedges and boosters in *The Guardian* corpus, and a relatively high frequency of attitude markers, engagement markers and boosters in *The Jordan Times* corpus. Table 2 also shows that engagement markers present the greatest difference between L1 and L2 editorials with 56 and 33 items per 1,000 words, respectively.

5.1 Hedges

As for each resource, we notice that hedges were used by L1 English editorialists 916 times and by L2 English editorialists 285 times. In *The Guardian* editorials, the frequency of hedges per 1,000 words was 37, compared to 16 in *The Jordan Times* editorials. Hedges were the second most frequent sub-category of interactional metadiscourse in *The Guardian* corpus, but the second least frequent sub-category of interactional metadiscourse in *The Jordan Times* corpus. Examples of hedging devices from the two newspapers are listed below:

(1)   *Some combination of these measures **seems likely to be** unveiled in the comprehensive spending review this autumn. But **perhaps** the time has come for a deeper rethink.* (*"The Guardian View on Funding Universities", The Guardian*, 2021).

(2)   *As of Wednesday, **almost** all economic sectors have begun resuming operations, barring a few, after **nearly** two months of work stoppage necessitated by the pandemic outbreak.* (*"Emerging from Lockdown", The Jordan Times*, 2020).

These examples of the hedging devices used in the editorial section of the two newspapers specify the writer's degree of commitment to the textual information. In Example (1), the modal lexical verb *seems* and the adverbs *likely* and *perhaps* are used to display some uncertainty and mitigation. In Example (2), the adverbs *almost* and *nearly* are used to express approximation in the viewpoint, and this might be a convenient area for the editorialist in opinion-related issues.

5.2 Boosters

Boosters, as explained by Camiciottoli (2003: 31), are used to "express communicative force or the writer's certainty". In this respect, boosters are associated with what Hyland and Tse (2004: 166) referred to as "the writer's logical inference about the likelihood of something". The results presented in Table 2 above show that L1 English editorialists used more boosters when

compared to L2 English editorialists. Boosters constituted 2.6 per cent of the total word count in *The Guardian* corpus and 2.3 per cent of the total word count in *The Jordan Times* corpus. The frequency of boosters per 1,000 words in *The Guardian* editorials was 26 which is higher than that of *The Jordan Times*, with 23 per 1,000 words only. An interesting finding from the comparative analysis is that hedges were used more than boosters in *The Guardian* corpus, and the opposite was true in *The Jordan Times* corpus. Examples from the editorials are provided below to illustrate the use of boosters in this journalistic genre:

(3)   *The challenges the new democracy faced were all **too evident**, but South Africa's recent history seemed a message of hope for us all.* (*"The Observer View on South Africa's Problem", The Guardian*, 2021).

(4)   *It is **indeed** disheartening to see, in the face of an unprecedented pandemic, that a considerable part of the population has flouted the government's preventive measures against the novel coronavirus and the guidelines to stay at home.* (*"A Small Sacrifice for", The Jordan Times*, 2020).

The above-mentioned examples show how boosters such as *too evident* and *indeed* are used to express the certainty of the author toward textual information. Abdi (2002) highlighted that the use of boosters as metadiscourse introduces further authoritative elements to the text. The adverb-adjective combination in the first sentence *too evident* was employed in the editorial to show that the writer was confident about the given statement. In addition, the second sentence included the adverb *indeed* as a booster to emphasise and confirm the following statement.

5.3 Attitude markers

Simply put, attitude markers are the words and expressions used by the writer to express his/her own attitude towards any statement. Crismore et al. (1993: 46) asserted that attitude markers are used to "reveal the writer's attitude toward propositional content". Depending on the statistical analysis of the data, attitude markers were the most commonly used sub-category of interactional metadiscourse in *The Jordan Times* corpus and the third most frequently used sub-category of interactional metadiscourse in *The Guardian* corpus. Attitude markers occurred 711 times in *The Guardian* editorials (29 per 1,000 words) compared to 615 times in *The Jordan Times* ones (35 per 1,000 words). Attitude markers occurred less frequently in the editorials written by L1 English editorialists than L2 English editorialists. Examples of attitude markers in the two sets of editorials include the following:

(5)   *Politicians' next chance will occur in October when heads of state and leaders of the G20 nations are scheduled to meet and,* **hopefully***, ensure the final run-up to Cop26 is put back on track.* (*"The Observer View on the Urgency of", The Guardian*, 2021)

(6)   *And* **it comes as no surprise** *that the government has been forced to impose a curfew after authorities' clarion call to the public has been disregarded by many.* (*"A Small Sacrifice for", The Jordan Times*, 2020).

These examples clearly illustrate that attitude markers are used to reveal how the writer feels or thinks about the stated utterance. The attitude of the writer can be conveyed using an adverb such as *hopefully* in Example (5) or using a linguistic expression such as *it comes as no surprise* in Example (6).

5.4 Self-mentions

Self-mention can be described as the method of representing or referring to the author of the text. It is used by Hyland (2019: 62) to refer to "the degree of explicit author presence in the text". The analysis shows that self-mention was used only once by L1 English editorialists and 19 times by L2 English editorialists, representing 0.1 per cent of the total number of words. This means that the frequency of self-mentions per 1,000 words was only one in *The Jordan Times* corpus. The low frequency of self-mentions in editorials might again be attributed to the nature of this journalistic genre. Fu and Hyland (2014: 124) argued that "editorials offer 'institutional perspectives' of the newspaper". Therefore, self-mentions have an extremely low incidence in the two corpora because editorialists are interested in representing the newspaper's voice rather than the author's voice. Below are some examples of self-mentions from the two corpora:

(7)   **We** *need to rethink the idea that the hunger for new clothes ought to be sated immediately.* (*"The Guardian view on fast fashion", The Guardian*, 2020).

(8)   **We** *wish* **our** *readers a joyous Ramadan and a strengthened sense of brotherhood in this time of pandemic.* (*"Extending a helping hand", The Jordan times*, 2020)

The first example represents the one and only time of self-mentions' use in The Guardian's collection of editorials. The pronoun *we* in Example (7) was utilised to explicitly show the writer's presence in the text (Hyland 2019). As for Example (8), the editorialist used the first-person plural pronouns *we* and *our* to participate in and contribute to the ongoing debate.

5.5 Engagement markers

Engagement markers are generally understood as the linguistic item used to construct a relationship between the writer and the reader. Hyland (2019: 63) notes that "engagement markers are devices that explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants". The comparison between *The Guardian* and *The Jordan Times* editorials revealed that L1 English editorialists used engagement markers 1,390 times. In contrast, L2 English editorialists used 580 engagement markers in their editorials. Engagement markers represent 5.6 per cent of the total word count in *The Guardian* corpus and 3.3 per cent of the total word count in *The Jordan Times* corpus. The frequency of engagement markers per 1,000 words in *The Guardian* editorials was 56, and 33 per 1,000 words in *The Jordan Times* editorials. Examples of engagement markers' usage from the two corpora:

(9)   *In 2011 a repressive, authoritarian government collapsed because it proved unable to meet people's demands.* **Why would its return solve anything?** *(The Guardian View on Tunisia Coup", The Guardian, 2021).*

(10)   **Let us** *rise to the occasion by upholding good citizenship,* **let us** *rise above these difficult times. ("Time to Count on Civic", The Jordan Times, 2020).*

The examples above are just a small sample of engagement markers used in the editorials from the two newspapers. In Example (9), the interrogative sentence *Why would its return solve anything?* was used to engage with the readers and to establish a relationship with them. In Example (10), the editorialist used the first-person plural imperative *let us* to strongly encourage the readers to join the discussion.

The second question in this study sought to identify significant differences in the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in several editorials written by L1 English writers and L2 English writers. To answer this research question, a statistical analysis was conducted to compare the use of interactional metadiscourse in the two sets of editorials. The means and standard deviations of the frequencies were calculated for each set of editorials independently. An independent t-test was used to explore the significant differences between the two corpora in terms of their use of interactional metadiscourse categories. Table 3 below, which shows inferential statistics on the findings, illustrates the two corpora's means, standard deviations, and statistically significant differences.

Categories	Corpus	Mean	Standard Deviation	T- Value	Degree of Freedom	Statistical Significance
Hedges	*The Guardian*	22.90	9.22	9.827	78	p < .001
	The Jordan Times	7.13	4.26			
Boosters	*The Guardian*	16.08	7.84	3.694	78	p < .001
	The Jordan Times	10.10	6.58			
Attitude Markers	*The Guardian*	17.78	8.30	1.450	78	0.151
	The Jordan Times	15.38	6.38			
Self-mentions	*The Guardian*	0.03	0.16	-1.658	78	0.101
	The Jordan Times	0.48	1.71			
Engagement Markers	*The Guardian*	34.75	29.97	3.733	78	p < .001
	The Jordan Times	14.50	16.71			
Total of Markers	*The Guardian*	91.53	33.52	6.655	78	p < .001
	The Jordan Times	47.58	24.93			

Table 3: The means, standard deviations, and statistically significant differences between the two sets of editorials

What stands out in Table 3 is that there are statistically significant differences between *The Guardian* corpus and *The Jordan Times* one in terms of using interactional metadiscourse categories at the level 0.05. In particular, the table shows that there is a significant difference between the two sets of editorials in their utilisation of interactional resources. The average interactional metadiscourse usage in *The Guardian* corpus was 91.53, which is far higher than that of *The Jordan Times* corpus, with an average of 47.58. The t-value of the interactional resources at the level 0.000 was 6.655, which represents a significant difference between the two sets at the level p = 0.05. Firstly, engagement markers dominated the interactional resources in T*he Guardian* editorials, and attitude markers dominated these resources in *The Jordan Times* editorials. Statistical analyses showed a significant difference in the use of hedges between the two sets of editorials. The average frequency of hedges in *The Guardian* was 22.90, which is a higher frequency than that of *The Jordan Times,* with an average of 7.13. The t-value of hedges constitutes 9.827 at the level of 0.000, suggesting a statistically significant difference between the two sets. Secondly, the two sets of editorials demonstrated a statistically significant difference in using boosters. The average

frequency of boosters in *The Guardian* corpus was 16.08, while the average in *The Jordan Times* corpus was 10.10. The t-value of boosters at the level of 0.000 was 3.694, which implies a significant difference at the level (p = 0.05). Thirdly, attitude markers were the most frequent sub-category in *The Jordan Times* corpus and the third most frequent in *The Guardian*. No significant differences were discovered between the two sets of editorials in terms of attitude marker use. The t-value of attitude markers was 1.450 at the level 0.151, which is not considered a statistically significant difference. Fourthly, there were no statistically significant differences between the two corpora in the usage of self-mentions, which were used minimally in the two sets of editorials as the least frequent sub-category of interactional metadiscourse in both corpora. The t-value was -1.658 at the level of 0.101, which is not a statistically significant difference. The mean of self-mentions constitutes only 0.03 in *The Guardian* editorials and 0.48 in *The Jordan Times*. Finally, a statistically significant difference was revealed between the two sets of editorials in engagement markers' usage. The mean of engagement markers in *The Guardian* accounts for 34.75 which is higher than the mean in *The Jordan Times*, which accounts for 14.50. The t-value of engagement markers was 3.733 at the level 0.000, which indicates a statistically significant difference between the two corpora in the use of engagement markers.

6   Discussion

This study aimed to answer two research questions: 'What are the distributional patterns of interactional metadiscourse resources in editorials written by L1 and L2 English editorialists?' and 'What are the similarities and/ or differences in the use of interactional metadiscourse in editorials written by L1 and L2 English editorialists?' To answer the first question, a quantitative analysis was conducted to compare the two sets of data in the use of interactional metadiscourse devices. According to Hyland's (2019) model of metadiscourse, the interactional dimension of metadiscourse consists of five sub-categories which are: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mention, and engagement markers. These tools are important to the discourse as they aid in establishing a bond with the audience, and – as Hyland (2019: 9) argues – they contribute to achieving the communicative purpose of discourse because they deal with "the ways language is used to negotiate relationships and scaffold interaction". In the process of writing any text, the interactional aspects of language should be taken into account. Nevertheless, the interactional dialogue between the writer and the audience can only take place on the ground through the utilization of appropriate interactional features in the texts. Therefore, the interactional features of metadiscourse have become highly relevant in the study of texts of

an argumentative nature such as editorials. Fu and Hyland (2014: 124) argued that "opinion pieces take a more personal interactional position, adopting a clear perspective towards both their topics and their readers by establishing a stance early on in the piece and supporting this with a range of warrants for their opinions". To recapitulate the key findings in the current study, there was a patchwork of similarities and differences between the two corpora. The findings showed a statistically significant difference in terms of the amount of interactional metadiscourse used in each corpus. The findings of this study are attributed to a variety of factors affecting the use of interactional metadiscourse. In fact, similarities and differences could potentially occur between L1 and L2 writers in their use of metadiscoursal elements for several reasons (e.g. genre, culture, L1 background, personal preferences, writing style and L2 proficiency level). The various aspects that might affect the use of metadiscourse in texts written by L1 and L2 writers were discussed in numerous studies (for example, Kaplan 1966, Dahl 2004, Hyland 2005b, Dafouz-Milne 2008, Lee 2011, Zhao 2017, Yoon 2021). Liao (2020: 1) stated that "writing in an L2 involves not only an effort to monitor linguistic quality, such as linguistic accuracy or complexity but also an effort to make metadiscourse choices that will result in cohesive written discourse". What Liao (2020) referred to is that metadiscourse choices require special attention from L2 writers because they reflect the cohesiveness of L2 texts. Due to the importance of metadiscourse in achieving cohesiveness and a bunch of other linguistic targets in the text, the factors influencing the use of metadiscourse need to be further considered and elaborated on.

In this study, there appeared to be a heavy use of interactional metadiscourse by L1 and L2 editorialists which might be caused by the need for what Hyland (2005b) called 'the construction of voice' and 'the positioning of writer's views' in editorials. Editorials, in general, are known to be argumentative and persuasive. Charteris-Black (2005: 10) stated that "persuasion either seeks to confirm or to challenge existing beliefs, attitudes and behaviors – persuasion is never devoid of intention". The high frequency of interactional features may partly be explained by reference to the persuasive nature of the editorial section in newspapers. Halmari and Virtanen (2005: 15) indicated that "editorial writing is … generally related to the notion of argumentation". In general, as proposed earlier in this work, the function of the editorial section is to persuade and convince the reader of a certain perspective through the use of certain linguistic devices. Van Dijk (1995: 14) described the effect of editorials on readers' views by stating that "for those people who read them, they help to make up their mind about events of the world, even if often by critical opposition". Therefore, the interactional resources are highly intense in the editorial section of a newspaper for the sake

of informing the reader regarding the writer's intended beliefs and viewpoints. Ansary and Babaii (2009: 229) pointed out that "an argumentation process begins with a series of arguments and ends with the articulation of a position". In most cases, interactional metadiscourse elements are tools for arguing and debating ongoing issues in the editorial section of a newspaper. Frequency counts showed a significant difference in the use of interactional resources among the two groups of editorials. L1 English editorialists used nearly twice the amount of interactional metadiscourse markers used by L2 English editorialists. Hyland (2004: 139), in his depiction of the interactional resources' functions, stated that these resources "seek to display the writer's persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the disciplinary community". Hyland's (ibid.) comment on the function of interactional resources might offer a possible explanation for the extensive use of interactional elements by L1 English editorialists in *The Guardian* corpus.

In particular, the findings showed that hedges were used more in the L1 English authors' editorials. This divergence might be ascribed to the different cultural preferences of the writers. Nguyen Thi Thuy (2018: 7) stated that "native English-speaking writers have the tendency to use hedges to avoid imposing on readers and also to save more room for readers to interact and negotiate with the texts". Brown and Levinson (1987) considered the use of hedging devices by native English speakers as a politeness strategy. They stated that this politeness strategy is taken from Western culture that paves the way for alternative views and different background considerations. Upon comparing native English and Vietnamese writers' use of hedging devices, Nguyen Thi Thuy (2018) stated that the minimal use of hedges is due to the cultural conventions of Vietnamese writers in which exaggeration of the commitment to a proposition is favoured and preferred. In addition, the L1 editorialists used more boosters than the L2 editorialists. A plausible explanation could be related to the fears that L2 English writers have concerning the use of hedges and its impact on the persuasiveness of their writings (see Yoon 2021). Therefore, L2 editorialists might fear using hedges in their editorials and tend to use more boosters to convince their audience with their arguments. In contrast, L1 English editorialists in *The Guardian* newspaper employed hedges more than boosters in their editorials.

The results also showed that attitude markers were used more in the L2 English editorials. Hyland (1999: 8) illustrated the function of attitude markers as metadiscourse by stating that "attitude markers indicate the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to textual information, expressing surprise, importance, obligation, and so on". This might indicate that the L2 editorialists are more emotionally driven than the L1 editorialists who are more realistic

and epistemic. In contrast, the results revealed that the L1 English editorialists used more engagement markers than the L2 editorialists. The significance of engagement markers stems from the role that engagement devices play in engaging, involving, and letting readers take part in the discourse. Hyland (2005a: 188) argues that "writers are able to either highlight or downplay the presence of their readers in the text" by means of engagement devices. Given the high number of engagement markers in English newspaper editorials, Lee (2011: 59) stated that "English journalistic writing is characterized by frequent use of engagement expressions". The low frequency of self-mentions in editorials might be attributed to the nature of this journalistic genre. Fu and Hyland (2014: 124) argued that "editorials offer 'institutional perspectives' of the newspaper". Self-mentions have an extremely low incidence in the two corpora because editorialists are perhaps interested in representing the newspaper's voice rather than the author's voice. As Lee (2019: 184) has put it, "self-mentions display [the] writer's authorial voice", and the newspaper's voice is the focus of attention in the editorial section. This conclusion further supports the idea of Salahshoor and Tofigh (2014: 100) that "editorial writers can … go for passive voices to disguise their projection into texts".

The first reason behind the differences between the two corpora in the present study is what Vande Kopple (2012) referred to as the cultural-linguistic background. Vande Kopple pointed out that people from different cultural-linguistic backgrounds face some challenges in understanding metadiscourse, which might lead to the overuse or underuse of certain metadiscoursal features. In this study, similarly, one factor suggested to affect the amount of interactional metadiscourse usage in editorials is the cultural background of the editorialist. Dafouz-Milne (2003: 29) reported that "two major variables interact in the choice of metadiscourse categories in newspaper opinion articles: culture-driven preferences and genre-driven conventions". Lee and Casal (2014: 50) offered a nearly identical interpretation stating that "although language and culture appear to profoundly influence writers' use of metadiscourse, other factors, such as discipline, part-genre, and writer status, also seem to interact with culture in inextricably complex ways". Although it is indeed difficult to explain the differences between the L1 English authors and the L2 English authors regarding the use of metadiscourse markers, justifications might be related to the persuasive and argumentative nature of the editorial section of the newspaper. The editorialists maximised the use of certain metadiscoursal features and minimised the use of others. For instance, engagement markers were the most used in *The Guardian* editorials, and most of these editorials were concluded using engagement markers. In their discussion of newspaper editorials, Tarrayo

and Duque (2011: 21) stated that "the concluding paragraph must present the strongest analytical point of the essay by giving a judgement, an opinion, or an evaluation". Therefore, the maximised use of engagement features or any other metadiscoursal feature can be explained in terms of the argumentative state of the editorial section of the newspaper. This would give a greater chance for the phenomenon of register awareness as a possible reason affecting the use of metadiscourse in editorials. Register here refers to "a cover term for any variety associated with a particular configuration of situational characteristics and purposes" (Biber & Conrad 2001: 175). Similarly, Ädel (2008) noted that register awareness might cause some variations in the use of metadiscourse by native and L2 writers.

It is also plausible to assume that the significant differences in the corpora could be related to the writing experience of the author. Zhao (2017) pointed out that the writer experience overweighs the native-speaker status in academic writing. From this perspective, Zhao's explanation could be relevant in the context of journalistic and argumentative texts although such a claim needs further verification based on empirical analyses. From another perspective, second language identity might have an impact on the use of metadiscourse and the expression of attitude in written texts. Benson et al. (2013: 17) defined the concept of second language identity as "any aspect of a person's identity that is related to their knowledge and use of a second language". In other words, L2 writers' linguistic choices might be affected by their second language identity gained throughout their L2 learning. Norton and McKinney (2011: 77) outlined the relationship between language and identity as they argued that "[L]anguage learning engages the identities of learners because language itself is not only a linguistic system of signs and symbols, but also a complex social practice through which relationships are defined, negotiated, and resisted". In the contrastive analysis of metadiscoursal features, language is a tool for expressing the identity of the author, and this expression of identity might be influenced, directly or indirectly, by mastering a second language. In this study, there were no significant differences between the two groups of editorialists in the use of certain metadiscoursal categories. Such a result might be attributed to the second language identity in which discourse, social practices and power relations are intertwined and may be addressed through a holistic approach (Norton & McKinney 2011).

Another related factor to be mentioned here is the personal preferences of the writer, which might influence the writer's decisions about the use of metadiscourse. Pérez-Llantada (2010: 41) argued that personal preferences might affect the use of metadiscourse and the "culture- and language-specific traits". One should not

also forget that the use of metadiscourse has something to do with the personal choices of the author. The evidence for this would be the idea that there are differences even among the native speakers in their use of metadiscourse. Ädel (2008) compared American, British, and advanced-learner English in terms of their use of metadiscourse. She found considerable differences between the British and American writers. This makes the interpretation of *writing styles* and *personal preferences* more appropriate for explaining the differences between the two sets.

7   Conclusion

This study was designed to determine the distributional patterns and the similarities and differences in the use of interactional metadiscourse in editorials written by L1 English and L2 English editorialists. The analysis has expanded our understanding of the practices of L1 and L2 English editorialists regarding their use of metadiscourse in English editorials. This genre might have affected the use of a certain metadiscoursal element or the use of a certain type of metadiscourse. The findings of this study complement those of earlier studies in the sense that they help recognise the role of metadiscourse as a powerful tool of persuasion. Metadiscourse impacts not only the persuasive power of a text but also the comprehension or understanding of that text. The means, modes, or tactics through which metadiscourse might affect the comprehension of a text are also of particular importance to foreign language learning and teaching. Researchers have attempted to evaluate the impact of metadiscourse on foreign language reading comprehension (e.g. Camiciottoli 2003, Jalilifar & Alipour 2007, Tavakoli et al. 2010, Zarrati et al. 2014). The findings of the present study contribute to the understanding of how the study of metadiscourse and contrastive rhetoric are known to affect the writing of a specialist section of a newspaper. The reading and writing process of both sides (the writer and the audience) will be affected by the use of metadiscourse in these journalistic texts. The writer who shows an awareness of the significance of metadiscourse is expected to be somewhat considerate of the reader's needs. Therefore, training early-career journalists on the use of metadiscourse might become their own path to the mastery of the persuasive force that flows in the text through all metadiscoursal categories. In this context, Hyland (2019) confirmed that the use of metadiscourse reinforces the sense of persuasiveness in the texts. Although this study focuses on the editorial section of the newspaper, the findings may have some implications for ESP teaching, especially for English for Journalism teaching. Hyland (2019: 211) highlighted the significance of metadiscourse for foreign language teaching and stated that the understanding of metadiscourse has

its "pedagogical payoffs". One of the pedagogical payoffs advocated by Hyland is the design of ESP materials that incorporate activities to raise awareness about the use and functions of metadiscourse.

Notes
[1] We restrict the analysis in this paper to interactional devices so as to understand how editorialists involve the readers in their texts and to provide a deeper analysis of the use of various interactional devices. We leave the study of interactive devices to future research.
[2] We acknowledge the limitation that only one newspaper does not truly represent the practice of an entire language community, but we assume that analysing 80 editorials would give readers insights into how this genre is constructed by the two groups of writers.

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