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REVIEWS

METADISCOURSE PATTERNS IN ACADEMIC PROSE BY NON-NATIVE ENGLISH WRITERS: A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVE

Olga A. Boginskaya

Abstract

This article scrutinizes metadiscourse in English-medium academic prose by Russian writers from two different discourse communities focusing on the ways they interact with the reader and present themselves and their research results. It is assumed that the distribution of interactional metadiscourse elements varies across disciplines. The theoretical basis of the study is Hyland's (2005) model of interactional metadiscourse which offers a pragmatically-grounded method of studying metadiscourse in academic texts. The study was carried out on a corpus of 156 abstracts derived from two Russian journals in the field of linguistics and computer engineering. The study confirmed Hyland's findings about research article abstracts in the humanities and hard sciences, though it revealed some distinctive features of English-medium research article abstracts by Russian writers. The findings can enhance English L2 novice academic writers' familiarity with the academic writing conventions in the discipline.

Keywords

academic prose, research article abstract, metadiscourse, Hyland's taxonomy, interactional metadiscourse devices

1 Introduction

A large number of EAP studies deal with how English is used by non-native academic writers. The present paper focuses on the context of Russia, where English has been used as language of academic prose only since the last decade. To meet the requirements of the international academic community and publish their research findings in academic journals in English in order to get promoted in their disciplinary communities, researchers need to gain a good command of academic English. Knowledge of international genre conventions contributes to building up their confidence to present their research results. Being familiar with conventional metadiscourse markers and moves of a research article in the field empowers non-native English academic writers to comply with the existing writing conventions and raises their consciousness about the existing rhetorical norms (Supranont 2012).

Research article (RA) abstracts play a crucial role in settling the fate of academic articles since they serve as screening devices (Huckin 2005) that

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affect the decisions for accepting or rejecting the research article, and convince editors and reviewers of the relevance of the research and the competence of the author (Kozubíková Šandová 2021: 79). Being "significant carriers of discipline's epistemological and social assumptions, and therefore a rich source of interactional features", they are organized in a way "as to encourage further examination and draw the reader into the more detailed exposition" (Hyland 2004: 63-64).

To date, studies on the RA abstract have described their rhetorical organization following Swales's (1990) move analysis (e.g. Ji 2015, Gessesse 2016) or Hyland's (2004) five-move model (Saidi & Talebi 2021), examined their linguistic features (e.g. Kuhi & Mousavi 2015, Kozubíková Šandová 2021), cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural variations (e.g. Martín 2003, Lorés Sanz 2006, Van Bonn & Swales 2007, Hu & Cao 2011, Perales-Escudero & Swales 2011, Yang 2013, Alonso- Almeida 2014, Belyakova 2017), interpersonal features (e.g. Lorés Sanz et al. 2010), and subjectivity, evaluation and engagement elements (e.g. Stotesbury 2003, Biber 2006, Lyda & Warchal 2014). It has been revealed that rhetorical structures and linguistic features are not universal in RA abstracts from different disciplines (Hyland 2005, Hu & Cao 2011, Abarghooeinezhad & Simin 2015, Takimoto 2015, Belyakova 2017). However, there have not been sufficient studies on metadiscourse patterns in RA abstracts by non-native English writers representing different discourse communities. Producing English-medium abstracts by this type of writers deserves a more detailed investigation for the purposes of discourse analysis and teaching academic writing.

In an attempt to contribute to literature on the linguistic features of RA abstracts, the present study analyses English-language RA abstracts written by Russian researchers in the field of linguistics and computer engineering representing the soft and hard sciences respectively, seeking to achieve the following objectives:

(1) To reveal the cross-disciplinary distribution of interactional metadiscourse markers in Russian authors' English-medium RA abstracts from linguistics and engineering.

(2) To reveal the frequency of occurrence of interactional metadiscourse in Russian authors' English-medium RA abstracts.

(3) To compare metadiscourse patterns in the RA abstracts written by Russian authors and those revealed in the study on metadiscourse markers employed in articles published by international journals (Hyland 2005).

Thus, interactional linguistic devices used in English-language RA abstracts written by Russian writers, such as boosters, hedges, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions, are the main focus of research in the current study, which starts from two hypotheses: engineering sciences tend to produce more impersonal texts, and metadiscourse patterns reflect the knowledge domains; Russian writers follow the international academic writing conventions, including those on the use of metadiscourse markers. Metadiscourse interactional markers will be therefore described from a cross-disciplinary perspective. More specifically, the aim is to explore any variation in the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in the journals from two different disciplines. Even though Russian researchers follow generally accepted academic writing conventions when producing RA abstracts in English, cross-disciplinary variation in the distribution of interactional metadiscourse elements is expected.

The present study will focus on interactional metadiscourse markers following the taxonomy of metadiscourse proposed by Hyland (2005). The classification of interactional metadiscourse markers will be introduced in the Theoretical framework section. The Current study section will describe the methods employed to analyze the metadiscourse markers and the corpus. The analytical section will focus on the analysis of interactional metadiscourse markers found in the corpus. Finally, conclusions will be drawn and further research avenues will be outlined in the Conclusion section.

2 Theoretical framework

2.1 RA abstracts as an object of research

Research into RA abstracts has mainly focused on their rhetorical organization, linguistic features, discourse and metadiscourse patterns investigated from various perspectives. The first group of studies comprises those that deal with scientific abstracts in individual disciplines. Farjami (2013), for example, has investigated RA abstracts in the field of applied linguistics. Abarghooeinezhad and Simin (2015) have studied linguistic features in engineering RA abstracts. Nurhayati (2017) has dealt with EFL RA abstracts. Shabani and Emadi (2021) investigated the rhetorical move structure of English-medium dental sciences research article abstracts by Iranian scholars to find the frequency of rhetorical moves and steps. Hu and Cao (2011) have compared the use of hedges and boosters in applied linguistics RA abstracts by native English and Chinese writers. Wang and Pramoolsook (2021) have adopted a comparative approach to study stance expression in terms of the distribution of metadiscourse markers in translation studies abstracts. Gillaerts (2014) and Kuhi and Mousavi (2015) have adopted a diachronic perspective to examine linguistic features of RA abstracts in applied linguistics and biology, respectively. Kozubíková Šandová (2021) has explored linguistics RA abstracts from the same diachronic perspective.

Unlike research that focused on individual disciplines, an equally important line of research has been dedicated to the linguistic features of RA abstracts from a cross-disciplinary perspective (e.g. Graetz 1985, Stotesbury 2003, Muñoz 2013). Stotesbury (2003), for example, has revealed that humanities RA abstracts contained more citations, as compared with those in the social and natural sciences. He has also found that the writer's voice was most often heard in natural science abstracts, while in humanities abstracts the passive voice is typically employed. Bondi (2014) has explored self-mention and authorial voice in history, economics, and linguistics abstracts and revealed some diachronic changes in the metadiscourse patterns. Saeeaw (2014) has investigated the rhetorical moves in RA abstracts from environmental science and applied linguistics and revealed that in both groups of abstracts the Introduction-Method-Results-Discussion (IMRD) framework was similar. Khansari (2016) has investigated RA abstracts in applied linguistics and chemistry as representatives of soft and hard sciences in order to reveal cross disciplinary differences in terms of rhetorical moves and linguistic realizations. Belyakova (2017) has investigated RA abstracts written by Russian novice researchers and native English-speaking experts in geoscience from a cross-linguistic approach in order to explore discipline-specific and culturally determined linguistic and discourse features such as the use of personal pronouns, tense, articles, and sentence length. The cross-linguistic approach was also adopted in the study by Alonso-Almeida (2014), who compared linguistic features of English and Spanish RA abstracts from medicine, computing, and legal science.

Ren and Li (2011) adopted a different approach to compare the abstracts of Chinese Master's English theses and published RAs in applied linguistics with the aim to reveal stance-taking changes as researchers gain experience in academic writing. The findings revealed distinctions in the use of rhetorical patterns emerging between novice writers and advanced writers which indicates a clear developmental trajectory in terms of rhetorical moves. Kim and Na (2012) have compared linguistic features of master's theses abstracts of Korean graduate students with those of expert writers publishing their research articles in leading applied linguistics journals and found out differences in the tense distribution and the use of modal verbs. From the same perspective, Wang (2015) examined the rhetorical variation of abstracts written by Chinese experts and undergraduates by analyzing applied linguistics RA abstracts using Santos's (1996) model.

Thus, the review of previous studies has shown that abstracts have been examined from the intra-disciplinary, cross-disciplinary, cross-linguistic, diachronic and developmental perspectives. In terms of the linguistic features explored, the studies have focused on hedges and boosters, tenses, stance adverbs, self-mentions and writer's stances. However, little is known about metadiscourse patterns employed in English-medium RA abstracts written by non-native scholars from different disciplines. It was discovered that Russian academic discourse has less emphasis on achieving maximum structural clarity than English (Prozorova 1997), Russian writers tend to produce a highly objective academic style by disguising themselves through depersonalization devices and agentless passive constructions (Vassileva 1998), they prefer wordier sentences, tend to avoid personal pronouns and employ passive and impersonal structures instead (Pyankova 1994). However, it seems that English-language RA abstracts written by Russian researchers have not received their deserved attention in terms of metadiscourse markers. Furthermore, RA abstracts published in Russian journals have scarcely been analyzed from a cross-disciplinary perspective. To fill this void, the current study focused on metadiscourse employed in English-language RA abstracts published in two Russian journals from different disciplines in order to reveal interactional trends, which can serve as guidelines for novice researchers. In this regard, it seems that the next logical step should be to provide a definition of metadiscourse in general and focus on metadiscourse elements employed in academic texts.

2.2 Metadiscourse and metadiscourse elements

Until recently academic discourse has been regarded as impersonal. However, more research into research articles and other academic genres has changed this approach. Academic texts have started to be considered as a product of social interaction between the writer and the reader expressing writer's attitudes towards the propositional content and the audience. As a product of social interaction, academic texts contain various metadiscourse markers defined as "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" (Hyland 2005: 37). These linguistic devices "help relate a text to its context by assisting readers to connect, organise, and interpret material in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the understandings and values of a particular discourse community" (Hyland & Tse 2004: 157).

Hyland (2005) defines metadiscourse as an open functional category expressed by various linguistic means which can be supplemented by new ones. Metadiscourse is "self-reflective linguistic material referring to the evolving text and to the writer and the imagined reader of that text" (Hyland & Tse 2004: 156). What is important, "metadiscourse cannot be regarded as a strictly linguistic phenomenon at all, but must be seen as a rhetorical and pragmatic one" (Hyland

2005: 25). It includes both linguistic features and strategies that writers use in producing those linguistic features in their discourse.

Over the last decades, there have been several taxonomies developed for metadiscourse elements (Crismore 1984, Vande Kopple 1985, Beauvais 1989, Hyland 2005). Most of them divide the linguistic markers into two types: textual and interpersonal. Vande Kopple's (1985: 87) taxonomy is one of them. The textual markers, according to Vande Kopple, include illocution markers, attitude markers and commentaries. The interpersonal ones include text connectives, code glosses, validity markers, and narrators. Textual metadiscourse markers show "how we link and relate individual propositions so that they form a cohesive and coherent text and how individual elements of those propositions make sense in conjunction with other elements of the text" (ibid.). Interpersonal metadiscourse markers "can help us express our personalities and our reactions to the propositional content of our texts and characterize the interaction we would like to have with our readers about that content" (ibid.).

Crismore et al. (1993) have refined Vande Kopple's taxonomy and divided textual metadiscourse markers into interpretive (code glosses illocution markers, and announcements) and textual (logical connectives, sequencers reminders, and topicalizers) ones. The group of interpersonal metadiscourse markers has been expanded. The researchers have included hedges, certainty markers and attributors into this group.

Thompson and Thetela (1995) have revised this taxonomy and classified metadiscourse markers into interactional and interactive. The latter ones are used to manage the information flow to guide readers through the text, and interactional markers are used to comment on and evaluate material.

Ten years later, Hyland (2005: 48) developed a model of metadiscourse, "encompassing the interactional aspects of discourse, using the criteria of external and internal relations". It is this taxonomy I turn to in the next sub-section.

2.3 Hyland's taxonomy of metadiscourse markers

Viewing metadiscourse as an explicit set of language items, Hyland (2005) has argued that metadiscourse markers can only be recognized through analysis of the text and described metadiscourse elements as facets of the text that signify writer-reader interactions. Interactive metadiscourse markers are employed to interact with the reader, explicitly convey views and attitudes, and involve the audience by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text, anticipating their objections and responding to an imagined dialogue with readers (ibid.: 49-50).

Hyland (2005) has distinguished between five types of interactional metadiscourse markers: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. Let us examine these categories of interactional metadiscourse markers more closely.

Hedges and boosters are "communicative strategies for recognizing contingency and indicating the room the writer is willing to offer for negotiation" (Hyland 2005: 144). Hedges are used to acknowledge alternative viewpoints, to withhold commitment to the proposition, and to steer the reader to the conclusion or reasoning of the writer's choice.

(1) *The paper contends that "Basic Human"* ***may*** *provide a secure basis for a non-Anglocentric global discourse about questions that concern us all, such as global ethics, the earth and its future, and the health and well-being of all people on earth.* (SC1)

The hedge employed by the writer casts a proposition as contingent by highlighting its subjectivity. According to Hyland (2005: 145), this expresses the writer's willingness to negotiate a claim thereby reducing commitment and conveying respect for alternative views.

Boosters are used to "suppress alternatives, presenting the proposition with conviction while marking involvement, solidarity and engagement with readers" (ibid.). Boosters can also be employed to strengthen an argument by suggesting the reader draw the same conclusions as the writer.

(2) *It* ***argues*** *that the shift can and will be a key factor, challenge and opportunity in the onward development of applied translation studies as it seeks to adequately address the situated realities of professional translation.* (SC1)

The writer is steering the reader to draw the same conclusion that the writer has chosen by using the verb *to argue* as a booster metadiscourse marker.

According to Hyland (2005: 53), "the balance of hedges and boosters in a text thus indicates to what extent the writer is willing to entertain alternatives and so plays an important role in conveying commitment to text content and respect for readers".

Attitude markers are employed to express the influence on the information by the presence of attitude verbs (*agree*, *disagree*, *prefer*), adverbs (*unfortunately*, *hopefully*, *fruitfully*) and adjectives (*logical*, *amazing*, *appropriate*, *important*). They demonstrate importance, surprise, agreement, frustration, obligation and help the writer create a convincing discourse and establish disciplinary competence.

(3) *There are several* ***important*** *humanitarian and scientific reasons for engaging in language preservation.* (SC1)

As Hyland (2005: 148) puts it, self-mentions send "a clear indication to the reader of the perspective from which their statements should be interpreted, distinguishing their own work from that of others". The degree of authorial presence in the text is signaled explicitly by the first person singular or plural pronouns and corresponding possessives.

(4) *A few years later it was taken up in* ***my*** *own work and in 1972 in my book "Semantic Primitives" a first hypothetical set of "universal semantic primitives" was actually proposed.* (SC1)

The writer uses the first person possessive *my* as a self-mention marker to draw the reader into the text and influence the reader's position.

Engagement markers are used to focus readers' attention or include them as discourse participants (ibid.: 53). They can also involve rhetorical positioning of readers, guiding them to interpretations. These are reader pronouns (*you* and *your*), personal asides, questions, and directives.

(5) *We have a historic opportunity to preserve languages spoken in Russia, and this is an opportunity that* ***one should use****.* (SC1)

The author uses the engagement marker to instruct the reader how to perform actions in the real world.

In the following section, the corpus compiled for the present study of interactional metadiscourse markers, together with the method employed, will be described.

3 The current study

3.1 Corpus design

The present study was carried out on a corpus of abstracts taken from two prestigious Russian journals in the field of linguistics and computer engineering: *Russian Journal of Linguistics* (four issues per year) and *Computer Optics* (six issues per year). Linguistics and computer engineering are members of two different categories of the soft and hard sciences. They were selected based on the assumption that these disciplines would be maximally different in terms of metadiscourse patterns.

One hundred and fifty-six abstracts were selected from the recent issues of *Russian Journal of Linguistics* and *Computer Optics* and divided into two parts by the journal they have been taken from. The number of tokens in each sub-corpus was 18,976 and 10,163, respectively, which made 29,139 tokens altogether. To prevent the corpus being contaminated by the influence of time of publication, only recent RA abstracts published over the last three years were selected for the analysis.

Both journals have a large readership and high prestige in their fields (Q1 in 2020). Sub-corpus 1 (SC1) (abstracts taken from *Russian Journal of Linguistics*) consisted of 78 English-language abstracts written by Russian experts in linguistics in the last three years. The judgements on the origin of the authors were made according to their names and affiliation. Articles published in the journal cover a wide range of linguistics sub-disciplines, such as semantics, cross-cultural studies, translation studies, discourse studies, genre studies, sociolinguistics, etc. The journal "covers functional and socio-cognitive aspects of different languages and publishes a wide range of interdisciplinary studies that focus on the effect of sociocultural contexts on language development and use" (http://journals.rudn.ru/linguistics).

Sub-corpus 2 (SC2) (abstracts taken from *Computer Optics*) also consisted of 78 English-language abstracts written by Russian experts in computer engineering in the last three years. The articles published by *Computer Optics* cover a wide range of sub-disciplines, such as diffractive optics, information optical technology, nanophotonics and optics of nanostructures, digital processing of signals and images, intelligent video analysis, etc.

Abstracts are an integral part of RAs published in these two journals. The journals impose strict requirements on the quality of English language in the abstracts, which is not always the case with other Russian journals in these fields. This is the reason why these journals were chosen as a source of abstracts for the current study. Furthermore, despite national academic conventions, the international academic tradition remains dominant in these international journals.

3.2 Method

In order to investigate interactional metadiscourse markers in RA abstracts, this study adopted corpus-based and computational techniques together with multidimensional quantitative and qualitative analysis. Since the interactional metadiscourse markers are diverse, and the context of their occurrence is crucial for their classification, the corpus was tagged manually. In order to reveal the frequency of metadiscourse markers in RA abstracts selected to build the corpus, the quantitative analysis was assisted with WordSmith Tools 5. The frequency of each category of interactional metadiscourse in the sub-corpora was calculated both in percentages of the total number of metadiscourse devices in each sub-corpus[1] and per 1,000 words since the average length of RA abstracts selected to build each sub-corpus was different: the computer engineering RA abstracts were usually 1.5 or 2 times as short as the linguistics ones. The frequency of different types of interactional metadiscourse devices in each category was calculated as a percentage of the total number of these devices separately for each sub-corpus.

Hyland's (2005) classification of metadiscourse markers was utilized to analyze RA abstracts. According to this classification, the markers were divided into five groups: boosters, hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. The frequency of occurrence of each category was identified and calculated for each sub-corpus.

A qualitative analysis was conducted to interpret the findings of the quantitative analysis. According to Creswell (2012), a qualitative analysis is helpful when you do not know the variables and need to explore the data. It does not use statistical data concerning the quality of data. A combination of the qualitative and quantitative methods contributed to more explanatory findings on potential disciplinary differences in the use of metadiscourse devices in the corpus. The quantitative analysis identified the frequency of occurrence of interactional metadiscourse markers in the two sub-corpora. The frequency of occurrence of these markers in the two sub-corpora was summarized in a table format.

4 Results and discussion

To investigate the possibility of disciplinary variation in the use of metadiscourse devices, let us now turn to the corpus for results. Table 1 summarizes the results of a comparative analysis of interactional metadiscourse markers occurring in the linguistics and engineering RA abstracts.

Interactional metadiscourse markers	**Linguistics**		**Engineering**	
	Per 1,000 words	**% of the total number**	**Per 1,000 words**	**% of the total number**
Hedges	17.0	39.5	2.1	15.1
Boosters	7.2	16.7	7.0	50.0
Attitude markers	10.3	24.0	3.6	25.9
Self-mentions	7.5	17.4	1.2	8.6
Engagement markers	1.0	2.4	0	0
Total	**43.0**	**100.0**	**13.9**	**100.0**

Table 1: The frequency of interactional metadiscourse markers in the two sub-corpora

Table 1 shows that that the overall frequency of metadiscourse, both raw and normalized to 1,000 words, was different across the disciplines. More than two-thirds of all interactional markers occurred in the linguistics sub-corpus. The most striking aspect of these frequencies is the far heavier use of self-mentions in the humanities abstracts. In the linguistics sub-corpus, the most frequent interactional devices were hedges and attitude markers comprising 39.5 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively. In engineering, boosters (50.4%) were employed more frequently than the other types. The difference between engagement markers in the two disciplines was not striking. Thus, it is clear that writers in linguistics and engineering represent themselves, their work and their readers in different ways. Our observation is congruent with Hyland's (2005: 145) conclusion about the occurrence of hedges in the two fields of knowledge: hedges tend to be more common in humanities and social science articles because the soft sciences are "typically more interpretive and less abstract than the hard sciences and their forms of argument rely more on a dialogic engagement and more explicit recognition of alternative voices". Since attitude markers foreground the writer, they are found more frequently in the humanities RA abstracts where they establish a link with the scientific community. Engagement markers rarely appeared in both sub-corpora since they are not typical of this genre.

The study confirmed Hyland's (2005) findings about abstracts in the humanities and engineering sciences, though it revealed some distinctive features of English-language abstracts written by Russian researchers: the less frequent use of hedges and self-mentions and the more frequent use of boosters by Russian researchers in the field of engineering and the more frequent use of attitude markers by Russian linguists. Now let us examine the five categories of interactional metadiscourse markers more closely.

4.1 Hedges

As regards the distribution of hedges across the two disciplines, their share in the total number of occurrences in each of the sub-corpora was different: 39.5 per cent in linguistics vs 15.1 per cent in engineering. The number of occurrences per 1,000 words also differed considerably (more than eight times). It might be due to the fact that using hedges the writer weakens the propositional content of knowledge claims and reduces the degree of reliability for authorial statements, which is more typical of the humanities rather than hard sciences. Furthermore, due to the fact that research results in linguistics are more variable, writers need more space for their interpretation (Kozubíková Šandová 2021). Engineering writers deal with numerical data and are more likely to generate a more precise picture of their findings. The use of hedges can distort facts from the empirical evidence (Takimoto 2015). It is interesting to note that in Hyland's (2005) study, hedges were the most frequent metadiscourse devices both in hard sciences and humanities papers. In the latter, their number per 1,000 words was twice as many. Here are some examples of hedges from the corpus under consideration.

(6) *Superpixel-based image processing and analysis methods* ***usually*** *use a small set of superpixel features.* (SC2)

(7) *In doing so, it considers approaches from cognitive translatology, based* ***largely*** *on a 4EA cognitive paradigm, and translatorial linguistic ethnography, where researchers are gradually but progressively going out into the field to explore and describe the complex socio-cognitive, socio-technical activity of translation in situ.* (SC1)

The hedges employed in Examples (6) and (7) cast the propositions as contingent by highlighting their subjectivity and expressing the authors' willingness to negotiate a claim thereby conveying respect for alternative views, because "it is generally accepted that members of academia cannot make categorical statements about their own hypotheses or findings" (Lafuente Millán 2008: 68).

In the following example, the hedge is used as the writers' invitation to the reader to get involved in an open discussion about the nature of the writers' view.

(8) *The results show that being polite* ***seems*** *to be the norm (hence being politic), while being rude or offensive is the exception.* (SC1)

In Examples (9) and (10), hedging might be connected with authorial modesty:

(9) *I* ***seek*** *to elaborate and refine the analysis given in some earlier publications.* (SC1)

(10) *The authors* ***make an attempt*** *to define which tools contribute to the implicit or explicit nature of the utterances.* (SC1)

Using hedging markers, the writer can also distinguish between information as a fact and information as an opinion. The following sample provides an example of this:

(11) *The analysis of grammar in the ethnocultural aspect enables us to reveal the ethnocultural factors which* ***might*** *have served as the backbone of certain grammatical categories or* ***might*** *explain the grammatical changes happening here and now.* (SC1)

The above example contains the marker of evidential modality *might* which enables the writer to produce more interpersonal signals to the reader and present the information as an assumption.

Hedging markers in the corpus of RA abstracts were mainly expressed by the modal verbs *can*, *may*, *might*, the adjectives *possible*, *apparent*, the verbs *to seem*, *to try*, *to seek*, the adverbs and adverbial expressions *possibly*, *probably*, *rather*, *supposedly*, *somewhat*, and *apparently*. The most frequent linguistic devices used as hedges are the modal verb *may* (42% of all hedging devices found in the linguistics sub-corpus and 37.8% of all hedges in the engineering RA abstracts) and the adjective *possible* (24.3% of all hedges found in the linguistics sub-corpus and 17.2% of all hedges in the engineering RA abstracts) (see Table 2).

Hedging device	Linguistics	Engineering
may	42.0	37.8
possible	24.3	17.2
can	15.6	9.4
rather	11.2	11.2
probably, possibly	4.1	15.5
seem, try, seek	1.5	1.2
other	1.3	7.7

Table 2: Distribution of hedging devices in the sub-corpora (% of the total number of hedging devices)

4.2 Boosters

It was revealed that boosters were less frequent in linguistics abstracts. This result does not coincide with those reported in Hyland (2005), in which boosters were almost evenly distributed across the humanities and hard sciences.

In the corpus, writers used boosters to emphasize their assertions and to produce persuasive arguments.

(12) *The authors examine the dictionaries' coverage of non-Inner Circle varieties of English and,* ***in particular****, analyze culture-loaded borrowings from Northeast Asian countries.* (SC1)

Boosters were also employed to suppress alternatives. Authors anticipate possible responses from the reader but choose to prevent them. The following sentence gives an example of this:

(13) *The results* ***show*** *a possibility for the recognition of a large variety of vegetation types, including the narcotic plants.* (SC2)

The boosting device is used to express conviction with which the author communicates his research results, constructs “rapport by marking involvement with the topic and solidarity with an audience, taking a joint position against their voices” (Hyland 2005: 53).

Boosters such as discourse-oriented verbs (e.g. *to indicate*, *to show*) were often employed to emphasize author invisibility and produce more accurate description of findings, as for instance, in Example (14).

(14) *The research* ***indicates*** *that during its long and contradictory history, the term ‘political correctness’ had both positive and negative connotations.* (SC1)

Boosting devices such as *obvious(ly)* and *clear(ly)* were employed to indicate a mutual understanding between the writer and the reader based on shared community membership (Takimoto 2015). The use of the booster contributes to a strong tone of confidence.

(15) *The two areas where the speaker’s decision is most* ***clearly*** *visible are the choice of sentence-enders, modulated up to six levels, and the choice of personal reference, e.g. pronouns and address terms.* (SC1)

In the above example, the author adopts a metadiscourse strategy to close off possible alternative views.

In the corpus, boosting devices were expressed by the modals *must*, *have to*, the verbs *to show* and *to demonstrate*, the adverbs and adverbial expressions *definitely*, *mainly*, *very*, *especially*, *particularly*, *indeed*, *in general*. The most frequent boosting device in the linguistics sub-corpus was the expression *in particular* (36% of all boosters found). In the engineering sub-corpus, the boosting verb *to show* was the most frequent (23.6%) (see Table 3).

Boosting device	**Linguistics**	**Engineering**
in particular	36.0	20.5
to show, to indicate	20.3	23.6
in general	16.6	13.4
mainly	11.2	12.2
definite(ly), clearl(ly), obvious(ly)	6.5	17.1
must/have to	5.5	6.6
other	3.9	4.7

Table 3: Distribution of boosting devices in the sub-corpora (% of the total number of boosting devices)

4.3 Attitude markers

The attitude markers rank second in both sub-corpora. This finding is in line with the result obtained by Hyland (2005) for the humanities sub-corpus. As for the hard sciences sub-corpus compiled by Hyland (2005), the frequency of occurrence of attitude markers was lower.

Attitude markers convey explicit opinions of writers, they "create a research space and bring into being a linkage with the disciplinary community" (Khedri et al. 2015: 311). They explicitly indicate authorial judgements and convey different types of assessment. The following samples provide an example of this:

(16) *Main characteristics of the presented algorithm are calculated and discussed, confirming its* ***effectiveness*** *in comparison with the current approaches for person tracking in an indoor environment.* (SC2)

(17) *Besides, some light will be thrown on the advancements and* ***debatable*** *questions arising within discourse theory as reflected in its methodology.* (SC1)

As Hyland (2005: 53) puts it, "attitude markers indicate the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions". In the following example, instead of commenting on the relevance and reliability of the algorithm, the authors use the attitude marker that conveys subjective evaluation of the research result.

(18) *The authors designed and* ***successfully*** *implemented an innovative 11 stage-algorithm of revealing patterns of a printed text comprehension.* (SC1)

As can be seen from the examples, attitudinal statements foreground the author, contribute to an author's persona and establish a link with the academic community. Therefore, they were more frequently found in the linguistics abstracts rather than in the engineering sub-corpus (cf. 10.3 attitude markers per 1,000 words in the linguistics sub-corpus vs 3.6 attitude markers per 1,000 words in the engineering sub-corpus). Humanities writers are less able to rely on quantitative methods to establish their claims and this enhances the need for more explicit evaluation through the use of attitude markers.

In the corpus, attitude markers were expressed by adjectives, adverbs and nouns showing author's attitudes and encoding positive or negative values: *important/importance*, *interesting*, *useful*, *fruitful*, *effective/effectiveness*, *correctly/correctness*, *persuasively*, *problematically*. The adjectives *important* and *efficient*, comprising 33.2 per cent and 34.6 per cent, respectively, were the most frequent attitude markers in the linguistics sub-corpus. The adverb *correctly* and the adjectives *efficient* and *effective* were most frequently used in the engineering RA abstracts (see Table 4).

Attitude marker	Linguistic	Engineering
important / importance	33.2	17.8
efficient	34.6	26.7
effective / effectiveness	9.1	29.2
useful	8.2	10.2
correctly / correctness	9.1	9.5
other	5.8	7.1

Table 4: Distribution of attitude markers in the sub-corpora (% of the total number of attitude markers)

4.4 Self-mentions

Table 1 shows that writers from both disciplines used personal pronouns to construe their authorial presence, although the distribution of this group of interactional markers across the two disciplines was uneven. The largest number of all cases of self-mention were in the linguistics RA abstracts, with an average of 7.5 per 1,000 words, compared with only 1.2 per 1,000 words in the engineering sub-corpus. It appears that computer engineering writers tended to adhere to the traditional recipe for objective and impersonal presentation and downplayed their personal role in the research to highlight the phenomena under study. By choosing an impersonal style, they suggested that research findings are unaffected by individuals, which strengthens the objectivity of results. In contrast, in linguistics, the first person singular and plural pronouns helped writers make a personal standing and demarcate their own studies from those of other researchers. In 61 per cent of all linguistics RA abstracts, one or more occurrences[2] of self-mention were found. The findings may show that linguistics writers have a higher level of confidence in the claim they have made in their research, since self-mention is a powerful rhetorical strategy in claiming a writer's contributions (Hyland 2001). It is interesting to note that in Hyland's (2005) study, self-mentions were used more frequently in hard science RA abstracts than in the humanities sub-corpus.

In the linguistics sub-corpus, self-mentions were signaled by the use of the first person singular and plural pronouns *I* and *we*, and the corresponding possessive forms *my* and *our*.

(19) *In this essay,* ***I*** *report what* ***I*** *had to do to carry out this complex and ambitious project, what forms and kinds of linguistic and cultural competence* ***I*** *had to acquire ...* (SC1)

What is interesting is that in both sub-corpora the first person plural pronouns were used both in single- and co-authored RA abstracts. Here are examples from the single-authored RA abstract:

(20) ***We*** *apply corpus methods to the data from the Russian National Corpus, RuTenTen Corpus on Sketch Engine and RuSkell corpus.* ***We*** *analyze absolute corpus frequencies and collocation patterns of Russian non-reduplicated colour terms … Drawing on this data,* ***we*** *establish that absolute frequencies of non-reduplicated colour terms in Russian reflect both Anna Wierzbicka's "universals of visual semantics" …* ***We*** *also argue that the Russian reduplication construction with a hyphen (belyj-belyj 'white-white') is semantically and prosodically different from the construction of repetition with a comma*. (SC1)

(21) *In this paper,* ***we*** *address this task using the following three-step procedure. First,* ***we*** *reduce the dimensionality of the hyperspectral images. Then,* ***we*** *apply one of classical segmentation algorithms (segmentation via clustering, region growing, or watershed transform). Finally, to overcome the problem of over-segmentation,* ***we*** *use a region merging procedure based on priority queues. To find the parameters of the algorithms and to compare the segmentation approaches,* ***we*** *use known measures of the segmentation quality (global consistency error and rand index) and well-known hyperspectral images.* (SC2)

The use of *we* instead of *I* in Russian writers' academic prose might be rooted in sociocentrism and totalitarism of the former Soviet regime as well as unconscious fear of manifesting writer's individual contributions to the field (Krapivkina 2014). Collectivism as one of the most evident features in the mentality of the Russian people makes scholars write on behalf of a larger academic community and hide their authorial ego.

In the computer engineering RA abstracts, no occurrences of the singular personal and possessive pronouns were found (see Table 5). The possessive pronoun *our* did not appear very commonly (0.26 per 1,000 words). The following sentence gives an example of this:

(22) ***Our*** *algorithm performs real time processing for object detection and tracking using CUDA technology and a graphics card NVIDIA GTX 1060.* (SC2)

Self-mention	Linguistic	Engineering
I	13.4	0
we	41.3	78.2
my	8.2	0
our	29.5	21.3
us	5.9	0.5
me	1.8	0

Table 5: Distribution of self-mentions in the sub-corpora (% of the total number of self-mentions)

4.5 Engagement markers

As can be seen from Table 1, engagement markers are the least frequently used interactional metadiscourse markers in both sub-corpora. These showed disciplinary variation: while in the linguistics sub-corpus they were rare, but appeared, in the engineering RA abstracts, no instances of these devices were found.

(23) *When* ***we*** *are looking at the books displayed in the window of a bookshop, what first catches the eye is the title.* (SC1)

The inclusive *we*-pronoun was one of the two engagement devices found in the linguistics sub-corpus. As Hyland (2005: 151) puts it, "reader pronouns are the most explicit way that readers are brought into a discourse". The following case of *we* in the linguistics sub-corpus works to construct readers as members of the disciplinary discourse community:

(24) *This strategy is in contrast to what* ***we*** *call "empathy" strategy.* (SC1)

One more engagement marker employed in this sub-corpus was the modal of obligation *should* which direct readers to particular lines of thought or action:

(25) *When translating notices in national parks into English, translators* ***should*** *predominantly consider the function of the TT ...* (SC1)

Surprisingly, no occurrences of engagement markers, the functions of which are to enhance dialogicity, were found in the computer engineering sub-corpus, which indicates that the engineering writers avoided positioning themselves as members of a larger community or chose not to make efforts to involve the readers in their argumentation and to seek agreement for their contribution to the field. Explicit engagement is a feature of the RA as an academic genre, where authors "bring readers into the discourse to relate to them and anticipate their possible objections" (Hyland 2005: 151). Even in the linguistics RA abstracts, whose writers rely less on accepted procedures, the occurrence of engagement markers was extremely low (2.4% of all the metadiscourse devices found in the sub-corpus). These findings are congruent with Hyland's (2005) results for the humanities and hard science sub-corpora.

5 Conclusions and limitations

This study revealed several important cross-disciplinary differences in the use of metadiscourse markers in the RA abstracts from the fields of applied linguistics and engineering. It was found that writers in the soft sciences take far more explicitly involved positions than those in the hard sciences. These differences are the proof of the existence of disciplinary writing conventions, which should be taught to novice writers in order for them to gain a good command of academic English for performing various academic tasks and to build up confidence to present their research results. Being familiar with conventional metadiscourse markers of a research article in the field empowers novice academic writers to comply with the existing writing conventions. Teaching of metadiscourse to EAP learners can, therefore, improve their academic writing skills and help construct appropriate stance when arguing own views.

The findings contribute to a better understanding of disciplinary variation in the metadiscourse features of research article writing and carry pedagogical implications for the academic writing course designers and instructors. They can also help novice writers from non-English backgrounds facilitate their acculturation into the international academic community.

It should be admitted that the research results presented in the article are limited due to a small extent of the corpus and should be understood as trends in the two disciplines belonging to two different categories of the soft and hard sciences. The results can be confirmed or disproved by a large-scale comparative research. Further research involving more disciplines would be required to verify findings on cross-disciplinary variation in the metadiscourse patterns. Interactional metadiscourse devices could be also investigated from other perspectives. It would be interesting to compare the distribution of metadiscourse markers in English-medium RA abstracts by Russian scholars and the ones from other cultural backgrounds, including native English speakers. In this way, we will be able to reveal differences in the employment of metadiscourse devices by native and non-native English writers and provide EAP learners with guiding principles regarding the use of metadiscourse in academic prose. Diachronic variation in the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in RA abstracts could be also of interest. Last but not least, future research could involve interviews of non-native academic writers to analyze considerations they take into account when using metadiscourse in their research articles. Thus, despite the above-mentioned limitations, this study could be taken as a starting point for future studies of metadiscourse in academic prose from cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural or diachronic perspectives.

Notes

1 In order to estimate the relative values of interactional metadiscourse devices, they were taken separately as 100 per cent each for both sub-corpora. This methodology made it possible to establish the correlations between the five types of metadiscourse devices within each discipline under study.

2 Up to six occurrences per RA abstract.

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INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY STUDENTS' INVOLVEMENT IN IN-CLASS DEBATES: SPEECH ACTS AND MODIFICATION OF THE ILLOCUTIONARY FORCE

Eva Ellederová

Abstract

Information technology (IT) professionals are a specific discourse community whose oral communication in English as a second language (ESL) predominates at all levels of workplace activities in the multinational IT sector. Since IT students' pragmatic competence in performing communicative functions is essential for their effective communication in an academic setting and a global work environment, it is important to investigate this aspect of their language systematically and carefully. This paper focuses on IT students' speech acts and the ways they modify the illocutionary force while participating in in-class debates. The analysis revealed that students used a wide range of speech acts and different metadiscourse markers for both increasing and reducing the illocutionary force. The ways IT students used boosters and hedges also reflect how they assume and share their professional knowledge and experience in their discourse community.

Keywords

in-class debates, ESP learners, pragmatic competence, speech acts, illocutionary force, boosters, hedges

1 Introduction

In-class competitive debates between two opposing teams who discuss controversial topics related to their field of study enable English for specific purposes (ESP) learners to develop the ability to collect, organize and critically evaluate information from different sources, clearly communicate ideas, examine and evaluate evidence, and effectively present, consider and refute arguments. Several studies have revealed educational benefits of debates, such as improving communication skills, critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Colbert & Biggers 1985, Freeley & Steinberg 2009, Ginganotto 2019), enhancing disciplinary (el Majidi et al. 2018) and interdisciplinary learning (Freeley & Steinberg 2009), providing a very unique educational experience, and offering excellent pre-professional training (Colbert & Biggers 1985, Freeley & Steinberg 2009). In an ESP language teaching and learning context, in-class debating is consistent with a learner-centred approach since it encourages authentic interaction between learners as active agents who share their own

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knowledge, experience, skills and ideas. Moreover, it facilitates the integration and development of four language skills (el Majidi et al. 2018, Ginganotto 2019). Besides, the communicative demands of debating tasks help learners to produce output of greater syntactic complexity (Duff 1986), accuracy (Duff 1986, Bygate 1987, Long 2014), automate their procedural knowledge and achieve greater fluency (Thornbury 2005, Goh & Burns 2012, Long 2014). Debating controversial issues allows ESP learners to acquire and broaden their disciplinary discourse knowledge, develop rhetorical strategies and a wide range of communicative functions or speech acts, such as asserting, agreeing, disagreeing, reasoning, suggesting, predicting, expressing an opinion and asking for clarification.

Despite the intensive research into speech acts and metadiscourse markers used by native speakers of English (e.g. Bach & Harnish 1979, Van Eemeren & Grootendorst 1984, Holmes 1984, Searle & Vanderveken 1985, Urbanová 1996, Hyland 1998a, 1998b, 2005, Ajimer 2013, Beeching 2016), there is still a lack of analysis of speech acts of learners of spoken ESL. Most studies focus on individual speech acts, such as requesting, offering and apologizing (e.g. Trosborg 1987, Fukushima 1991, Bergman & Kasper 1993, Cohen & Olshtain 1993, Istifçi 2009), but a comprehensive corpus-based analysis of speech acts of learners of spoken English in university settings is still relatively rare. Empirical research into metadiscourse markers in ESL learners' spoken discourse is even rarer. Müller (2005) and Buysse (2012, 2015, 2017) analyse and compare how native and non-native (German, Dutch, French, Spanish and Chinese) speakers of English use metadiscourse markers *so*, *well*, *you know* and *like*. Gilquin's (2008) study on hesitation markers reveals that, while advanced French-speaking learners of English overuse pauses and other non-lexical devices, they tend to underuse *like*, *I mean*, or *you know* that are important for maintaining fluency. Aijmer's (2011) analysis of similarities and differences between native and non-native speakers of English showed that Swedish learners overused *well* as a fluency device to cope with speech management problems, but they underused it for attitudinal purposes.

While most empirical studies focus on either a particular speech act or metadiscourse marker used by ESL learners in a general academic English context, a more complex and systematic analysis of ESP learners' spoken technical discourse focused on speech acts performance and modification of the illocutionary force is still missing. For this reason, the present paper deals with ESP learners' realization of speech acts and modification of the illocutionary force in online debates related to the field of IT. The research findings might be used for reference for future comparison with similar debates by native speakers. The following research questions were addressed:

1) What types of speech acts do IT students use in online debates?
2) What communicative functions do the individual speech acts serve in selected stages of the debate?
3) How do IT students modify the illocutionary force?

2 Speech acts in argumentative discussions and modification of the illocutionary force

Argumentative discourse is conceived as a social activity, and how the argumentation is analysed depends on the kind of verbal interaction that takes place between the interlocutors in this communication process. Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (2004: 53) present a model of an argumentative discussion grounded in their pragma-dialectical theory of argumentation that views argumentation as a complex speech act occurring as part of natural language activities and focusing "on the way in which language is used, or should be used, in argumentative practice to achieve communicational and interactional goals". The model of an argumentative discussion is based on the premise that a difference of opinion is only resolved when the opposing parties reach agreement on the question of whether the standpoints at issue are acceptable or not, which means that one party must be convinced by the argumentation of the other party. In argumentative discussions or online debates, the two parties involved in a difference of opinion attempt to resolve this difference by achieving agreement on the acceptability or unacceptability of the standpoints involved through the conduct of a regulated exchange of views.

Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (1984, 2004) regard Searle's speech act theory as the best analytical instrument for dealing with verbal communication involved in argumentative discussions following the pragma-dialectical principles of functionalization, externalization, socialization and dialectification. Functionalization is achieved by treating every language activity as a purposive act. Socialization is achieved by extending the speech act perspective to the level of interaction. Externalization is achieved by capturing the propositional and interactional commitments created by the speech acts performed. And finally, dialectification is achieved by regimenting the exchange of speech acts to an ideal model of an argumentative discussion (for further details, cf. Van Eemeren et al. 2007).

Following Searle's (1975) taxonomy, Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (1984, 2004) indicate which types of speech acts can contribute to the resolution of a difference of opinion in the various stages of an argumentative discussion (see Table 1). Assertives may not only serve to express the standpoint that is under discussion, but they also form a part of the argumentation that is advanced to defend that standpoint, or they can be used to establish the result of the discussion. Directives may serve to challenge the party that has advanced a standpoint to defend that standpoint, to request this party to provide argumentation in support of the standpoint or to request a party to provide a definition or an explanation. Directives such as orders and prohibitions, if they are intended literally, are taboo in a critical discussion. As Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (2004: 64) explain, "neither can the party that has advanced a standpoint be challenged to do anything else other than provide argumentation for that standpoint – a challenge to a fight, for example, is not allowed in a critical discussion". Commissives can play different roles in a critical discussion, such as accepting or not accepting a standpoint, accepting the challenge to defend a standpoint, deciding to start a discussion, agreeing to assume the role of protagonist or antagonist, agreeing to the discussion rules, accepting or not accepting argumentation and, when relevant, deciding to start a new discussion. Even though expressives do not play a direct role in a critical discussion because the mere expressing of emotions does not create any commitments for the speaker that are directly relevant to the resolution of a difference of opinion, they may strongly affect the further course of events.

As Table 1 indicates, Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (1984: 109) introduce the term 'usage declaratives' (UDs) as a subtype of declaratives that is not linked to a specific institutional context. These acts may occur in any stage of an argumentative discussion, and they contribute to the resolution of a dispute since they enhance the understanding of other relevant speech acts. The purpose of UDs is to ensure mutual comprehension of the interlocutor's speech acts, e.g. *In my view women have a logic of their own for they solve problems by a totally different methods than men. Of course I'm talking now about women in present-day western societies – things were quite different in the past* (ibid.: 116). In order to achieve a perlocutionary act in an argumentative discussion, the illocutionary act must occur so that the listener understands the speaker's speech act. UDs such as definitions, specifications, amplification, and explanations may help this illocutionary act to be achieved. Even though Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt regard UDs as a subtype of declaratives, the communicative functions of explaining, specifying and exemplifying they perform place them in the category of Searle's representatives.

Stage	Type of speech act and its role in the resolution
I	**Confrontation**
Assertive	Expressing a standpoint
Commissive	Acceptance or non-acceptance of a standpoint Maintaining non-acceptance of a standpoint
(Directive	Requesting a usage declarative)
(Usage declarative	Definition, specification, explanation, clarification, amplification, etc.)
II	**Opening**
Directive	Challenge to defend the standpoint
Commissive	Acceptance of the challenge to defend the standpoint Agreement on premises and the discussion rules Decision to start a discussion
(Directive	Requesting a usage declarative)
(Usage declarative	Definition, specification, explanation, clarification, amplification, etc.)
III	**Argumentation**
Directive	Requesting argumentation
Assertive	Advancing argumentation
Commissive	Acceptance or non-acceptance of argumentation
(Directive	Requesting a usage declarative)
(Usage declarative	Definition, specification, explanation, clarification, amplification, etc.)
IV	**Concluding**
Commissive	Acceptance or non-acceptance of the standpoint
Assertive	Maintaining or retracting a standpoint Establishing the result of the discussion
(Directive	Requesting a usage declarative)
(Usage declarative	Definition, specification, explanation, clarification, amplification, etc.)

Table 1: Distribution of speech acts in an argumentative discussion; adapted from Van Eemeren Grootendorsrt (2004: 68) and Van Eemeren et al. (2007: 16)

Communicative strategies used for increasing or reducing the illocutionary force are boosting and hedging. Boosters and hedges are considered as complementary devices, so their role in argumentative discussions is to maintain stability between conflictive objectives. Their use can tell us something about the force the speaker uses to make their assertion, and their estimation of the situation. Through hedges, the speaker implies that a statement is based on plausible reasoning rather than on certain knowledge, and it allows the audience certain freedom to dispute it, whereas boosters allow the speaker to negotiate the status of their information, help them to establish its perceived truth by strategically presenting it as consensually given (cf. Holmes 1984, Myers 1989, Hyland 1998a). Hyland (1998a: 354) observes that "both hedges and boosters work to balance objective information, subjective evaluation and interpersonal negotiation", which can be a "powerful persuasive factor in gaining acceptance for claims". Van Eemeren et al. (2007) use the alternative terms "propositional attitude indicators" for boosters and "force modifying expressions" for hedges, and they classify them as "indicators of standpoints". In argumentative discussions, the following criterion must be adopted for considering the performance of an assertive speech act as advancing a standpoint: "An assertive may be considered a standpoint if it is clear that the speaker supposes (or may be expected to suppose on the basis of the listener's response) that the assertive is not immediately acceptable to the listener" (ibid.: 29).

3 Methodology and data

3.1 In-class debates in the course 'English for Information Technology'

The present paper is based on the analysis of in-class debates in the course 'English for IT' taught at the Department of Foreign Languages at Brno University of Technology. Students are always divided into two teams (the affirmative team and the negative team) who discuss a particular proposition related to IT. Prior to a debate, a coin is tossed and the team that wins the toss may choose which side of the proposition they wish to defend. Students have two weeks to prepare for the debate, which includes defining their roles within each team, conducting a literature review, collecting evidence and examples, critically evaluating different sources and establishing an argumentative framework. The affirmative team starts the debate and must advocate everything required by the proposition itself. The role of the negative team is to oppose the idea presented in the proposition. The main stages of the debate are the following: 1) affirmative team's speech (team members should choose one main speaker or two main speakers who take turns); 2) cross-questioning when the negative team tries to rebut or cast doubts upon the affirmative team's argumentation and the affirmative team defends, deepens and completes their arguments; 3) negative team's speech when the debaters present, rebuild and complete their counterarguments; 4) cross-questioning where the affirmative team tries to rebut or cast doubts upon the negative team's argumentation and the negative team defends, deepens and completes their arguments; 5) affirmative team's conclusion, and 6) negative team's conclusion.

Either debater may question and/or answer at will during the cross-questioning stage. During the concluding stage, one speaker from each team signposts and analyses the key clashes of the debate from the viewpoint of their team and tries to persuade the audience that their team has defended the motion with its case. The time allocated for the affirmative/negative team's speech is two minutes, one cross-questioning stage should last four minutes, and each team has one minute to conclude the debate.

3.2 Participants' background and learner corpus

A total of 34 students (16 Czechs, 18 Slovaks) in the first year of a bachelor's study programme at the Faculty of Information Technology at Brno University of Technology participated in eight debates that lasted 131 minutes in total. The students' English language level is B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR). The debates were recorded in Microsoft Teams during the summer semester of 2021 when all university courses were taught online due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An advantage of recording students' debates online is the high sound quality of the recordings since the recording of in-class debates is often adversely affected by a lot of background noise. Moreover, students are used to communicating face-to-face online via Skype, FB Messenger, WhatsApp Messenger or Google Duo in their everyday life, so they act more naturally than with a video camera in the classroom, which seems to be rather intrusive due to students' intense awareness of its presence.

Students discussed the following propositions related to their study programme focused on IT:

1) Human labour should be replaced with artificial intelligence,
2) The Dark Net should be regulated like the rest of the Internet,
3) Closed platform (iOS) is better than open platform,
4) Firefox is better than Google Chrome.

Each of the above-mentioned propositions was discussed twice by two different teams, so the learner corpus consists of eight debates in total. Transcripts of all debates were uploaded and analysed in the corpus manager and text analysis software *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff et al. 2004). The whole corpus of IT students' online debates includes eight transcribed debates, 20,052 tokens comprising 17,016 words, and I as a transcriber identified some 1,110 sentences.

3.3 Identification and analysis of speech acts and metadiscourse markers

Two methodological approaches were used to identify and analyse speech acts and modification of the illocutionary force: a corpus analysis and a manual analysis. The corpus analysis of transcribed texts was mainly used for the identification and analysis of metadiscourse markers. The aim was to examine boosters and hedges which contribute to the modification of the illocutionary force and their functional and distributional patterns in the data under investigation. In some cases, there were also different meanings of boosters and hedges (e.g. *just*, *like*, *I think*, *of course*, *you know*, *kind of*) which had to be assessed manually.

The manual analysis was primarily used for the identification of speech acts since some of the identified forms found through *Sketch Engine* can perform more than one speech act.

In order to identify different kinds of speech act expressions in the corpus, it was necessary to determine a taxonomy as an organizing principle according to which speech acts will be classified. The approach was mainly grounded in Searle's (1975) speech act theory, focused primarily on the cognitive state of the speaker, combined with some elements from Bach and Harnish's (1979) more refined taxonomy, based on the speaker-listener relationship, and adapted for the context of online debates based on Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt's (2004) model of argumentative discussions. The analysis focused on four categories of speech acts: representatives (including UDs), directives, commissives and expressives.

4 Results and discussion

4.1 Occurrence of speech acts in IT students' debates

In this section, the speech acts performed by IT students will be examined with regard to their basic linguistic features. Besides, different metadiscourse markers employed to modify the illocutionary force will be discussed. To answer the first research question, I analysed and classified 1,105 speech acts. The statistical outline of different speech acts in all eight debates is presented in Table 2.

Speech acts	**Frequency**	**Relative frequency**
Representatives	872	78.91
Directives	165	14.93
Commissives	10	0.91
Expressives	58	5.25
Total	1,105	100.00%

Table 2: Frequency of different speech acts in debates

Table 2 shows that the most frequent speech acts were representatives (78.91%), which is obvious since students committed themselves more strongly or less strongly to the acceptability of a proposition, i.e. a statement that asserts the value or worth of something or that some course of action should be followed. Representatives occurred mainly in the stages of debates where both teams (affirmative and negative) delivered their opening speeches that made a case for adopting the resolution and their closing speeches to establish the result of the debate.

When defending one approach to the debate proposition – whether the negative or affirmative side – students undertook to act as advocates of only one point of view in all stages of the debate. For this reason, they used representative speech acts to perform different communicative functions, such as asserting, reasoning, agreeing, disagreeing, confirming, explaining, reporting, stating and hypothesizing. As Table 3 demonstrates, the most frequent communicative function was asserting (41.86%) where different boosters served as propositional attitude indicators of standpoints in the debate (see Example 1).

(1) *Oh well yes* ***we do believe*** *that many people can become better with this system.*

Using a speaker-oriented attitudinal booster *I/we believe*, a speaker not only makes it obvious that they believe in the information they are providing, but they also assume that their opponents need this extra information to understand that the assertion involves their subjective notion (cf. Van Eemeren et al. 2007). A highly assertive booster *really* signals the speaker's certainty and conviction. An inclusive first-person plural pronoun *we do believe* and *we all know* implies respect and open-mindedness toward the audience and acts as a positive politeness device because it links the speaker and the audience as members of the same discourse community (cf. Hyland 2005, Fahnestock 2011, Dontcheva-Navratilova et al. 2020). In Example 1, students use inclusive *we* when referring to shared knowledge related to their field of study (Android operating system), thus stressing the common ground and suggesting the need to adequately meet the audience's expectations of inclusion and disciplinary solidarity. A discourse-organizing booster *the more… the quicker* emphasizes the content of the message, thus helping the listeners to focus on the parts of the message which are important.

A special type of representative speech acts that can be found in some debates are rhetorical questions. Chen (2011: 611) points out that rhetorical questions "can perform a wide range of indirect assertives including asserting, blaming, protesting and complaining, etc. and indirect directives such as advising, requesting, commanding, and warning". On the other hand, Weigand (2010: 183) claims that the rhetorical questions are "virtually representative speech acts" since the potential reply would have to be based on arguments. The rhetorical questions that occurred in the opening speeches of the debates fulfil the communicative function of asserting because, as illustrated in Example 2, the speaker does not expect the opposing team to answer his sequence of rhetorical questions directly, but he wants to engage the listeners and persuade them to agree with his proposition. The opening speech ends with a commissive speech act of promising which indicates the acceptance of the challenge to defend the standpoint.

(2) *... So should we replace human labour with machinery AIs and robots? What are the consequences of such a decisive action? What are the advantages and disadvantages? Are there any risks involved? Today we will be discussing that and much... much more.*

The second most common communicative function of representative speech acts was reasoning (13.19%). By a process of reasoning, students tried to reach a conclusion they wanted their opponents to accept. Reasoning enabled them to establish their grounds, support their claims, weaken their opponents' claims and produce new conclusions. The most common linking devices were *because* (see Example 3), *because of* and *as*.

(3) *And um... this is* ***because*** *closed platforms forbid third-party products.*

The communicative function of confirming (9.98%) was mainly used in the passages with frequent turn-taking, characteristic of minimal response times or no overlaps, where students confirmed that they can hear or see each other, are ready to start listening and asking questions, or indicated that they understand the meaning of what was communicated. The common expressions they used for this purpose were *okay*, *yes*, *yeah*, *yep*, *uh-huh*, *exactly*, and *right*.

Reporting (5.73%) was the fourth most frequent communicative function of the representative speech acts. In their opening and closing speeches, students reported and quoted (Example 4) to enhance their credibility and sound persuasive.

(4) ***As Mark Hughes a former United States senator once said*** *the balance between freedom and security is a delicate one.*

In the cross-questioning stages, they often paraphrased what was said by the other participants in the debate in order to support their arguments and claims (Example 5), rebut their opponents' standpoints or disagree.

(5) *But you don't have to use it and* ***as you just said*** *there are apps that are that encrypt your data and so that even the app itself can't read it.*

Stating (4.01%) was the fifth most frequent representative speech act performed by students to declare something as a fact (Example 6). It often occurred as a series of statements following one another in opening speeches.

(6) *Automatization is a process which won't happen overnight.*

Students explained (3.78%) when they wanted to make their standpoints clear, describe the issues in more detail and reveal relevant facts (Example 7). Frequent expressions used for introducing an explanation included *I mean*, *that/it means*, *the thing is*, *my point is* and *in other words*.

(7) *Well* ***the thing is*** *that all the social media already monitors all of your conversations.*

Agreeing (3.67%) often occurred as a response to what had been said in the cross-questioning stages of the debates. The most common expressions were *yes I agree*, *yeah sure* and *okay*. The purpose of agreeing was either to support the arguments of a team member (Example 8) or to express that the opposing team's argumentation was at least partially acceptable (Example 9).

(8) *That's what I wanted to say…*

(9) *Well yeah that's true to a certain extent…*

A speech act of predicting (2.75%) was used to express students' full beliefs in the truth of their claims about the future (Example 10).

(10) *Surely there will be new jobs created to manage this automation process.*

Students most frequently performed the speech act of hypothesizing (2.64%) when they discussed the propositions 'Human labour should be replaced with artificial intelligence' (12 speech acts out of 23) and 'The Dark Net should be regulated like the rest of the Internet' (10 speech acts out of 23), as illustrated in Example 11. This can probably be explained by the scientific, economic, social, and moral issues arising from these propositions which offer a wide field for hypothesizing, speculating, and contemplating.

(11) *…if the current technologies didn't exist and it wasn't possible to use them such as encryption and Tor people would just find different ways to be anonymous while using their computers.*

Representatives	Frequency	Relative frequency
Accepting	8	0.92
Admitting	1	0.11
Agreeing	32	3.67
Announcing	2	0.23
Asserting	365	41.86
Assuming	7	0.80
Assuring	1	0.11
Concluding	12	1.38
Confirming	87	9.98
Deducing	5	0.57
Describing	6	0.69
Disagreeing	18	2.06
Exemplifying	19	2.18
Explaining	33	3.78
Hypothesizing	23	2.64
Informing	21	2.41
Predicting	24	2.75
Reasoning	115	13.19
Rebutting	3	0.46
Reminding	4	0.46
Reporting	50	5.73
Stating	35	4.01
Total	872	100.00%

Table 3: Frequency of different types of representative speech acts in debates

Directives (14.93%) were mostly used in the cross-questioning stages of the debates. Table 4 shows that asking for opinion (43.03%) was the most frequently used directive speech act (Example 12).

(12) *But… er… what about VPN and other alternatives?*

Requests (26.67%) were the second most frequent speech acts belonging to the group of directives. They usually occurred in the form of indirect speech acts (Example 13), the purpose of which was to convey politeness.

(13) *Let me explain that.*

While the benefits obtained by performing requests, which belong to the impositive speech acts, are exclusively for the speaker, the benefits of suggestions as the non-impositive speech acts are for the hearer (cf. Haverkate 1984). Suggesting (9.70%) was the third most frequent directive speech act. The most frequent forms of suggestions were using a semi-modal *should* (Example 14), a performative *I suggest* and questions.

(14) *Meanwhile* ***we should not take*** *AI as something that can outperform us at work but instead* ***we should cooperate*** *together and bring out the best of both humans and AI.*

Directives	Frequency	Relative frequency
Asking for opinions	71	43.03
Asking for confirmation	13	7.88
Challenging	2	1.21
Commanding	5	3.03
Inviting	13	7.88
Permitting	1	0.61
Requesting	44	26.67
Suggesting	16	9.70
Total	165	100.00%

Table 4: Frequency of different types of directive speech acts in debates

As Table 5 shows, expressives (5.25%) were mostly used for thanking (48.28%), especially in closing speeches where speakers thanked all participants for their involvement and attention, apologizing (12.07%) when speakers apologised for their misunderstanding (Example 15) or interrupting the other speaker's speech, complimenting (12.07%) when they expressed approval of the other speaker's arguments (Example 16), greeting (8.62%), expressing pleasure (8.62%) and amusement (6.90%), welcoming (1.72%), and wishing (1.72%).

(15) *Er… sorry I didn't get that.*

(16) *Mm good answer.*

Expressives	Frequency	Relative frequency
Apologizing	7	12.07
Complimenting	7	12.07
Expressing amusement	4	6.90
Expressing pleasure	5	8.62
Greeting	5	8.62
Thanking	28	48.28
Welcoming	1	1.72
Wishing	1	1.72
Total	58	100.00%

Table 5: Frequency of different types of expressive speech acts in debates

As regards the commissive speech acts (0.91%), students usually used them in their opening and closing speeches to make a promise or commitment related to the content of their speeches (see Example 17).

(17) *My name is Tomáš and I'm going to tell you why I think that closed platform is better than open platform.*

4.2 Modification of the illocutionary force in selected stages of the debates

This section will focus on the analysis of two stages of the debates, in particular the affirmative team's opening speech and one cross-questioning stage, with regard to the speech acts and modification of the illocutionary force. Example 18 shows the occurrence of speech acts including metadiscourse markers used to modify the illocutionary force (boosters are in bold, hedges are underlined) in an affirmative team's opening speech of the debate's proposition 'The Dark Net should be regulated like the rest of the Internet'.

(18) *Good afternoon everyone. (Expressive: greeting) We've come here to discuss a* ***really controversial*** *topic which is the Dark Net. (Representative: informing) So let me start then. (Directive: requesting)* ***Even though*** *Dark Net itself isn't illegal the activity going on there can be* ***pretty disturbing*** *and it's not* ***entirely legal****. (Representative: asserting) Er… most of the sites* ***do offer*** *drugs people guns stolen items child porn… child pornography and* ***even worse*** *murders and contract killings. (Representative: stating, UD) Therefore* ***I think there are reasons why*** *this part of the internet should be regulated. (Representative: asserting) Thanks to sites like Silk Road drugs are easily accessible to everyone. (Representative: reasoning, UD)* ***You just have to pay*** *with bitcoin and in a few weeks you'll receive a package. (Representative: describing, UD) It* ***really*** *is as simple as it sounds therefore it's* ***really dangerous*** *and* ***this all*** *comes with*

> *a big risk as well because you might* ***just*** *get scams and not get anything at all. (Representative: reasoning, UD) The* ***entire concept*** *of Dark Net… er… is a* ***pure anonymity*** *and thanks to bitcoin and* ***basically*** *all the cryptocurrencies in general you can anonymously pay for such things without the worry of being tracked. (Representative: reasoning, UD) Er… the same goes with guns and stolen items. (Representative: stating, UD) Selling and buying stolen or lost credit cards is a* ***big thing too****. (Representative: asserting) You get an information about a credit card clone it onto an empty one and use it in ATM. (Representative: describing, UD) But these things are* ***still*** *not as bad in comparison with pornography murders or streams where they torture people rape them and some individuals watch these as an entertainment which is* ***really disgusting****. (Representative: asserting)* ***Not only*** *streams* ***but also*** *forums where these monsters share how they killed someone what they did and so on. (Representative: asserting) It's* ***not only*** *with people* ***but also*** *animals and it should be stopped* ***as soon as possible****. (Representative: asserting) The FBI has already taken down dozens of sites but it's* ***still*** *not enough. (Representative: asserting) There are* ***still*** *new ones being created and I would compare it to hydra. (Representative: asserting) You cut a hatch and tomorrow two more will grow in its place (Representative: describing, UD) so I suggest there should be made a much bigger precaution.* (Directive: suggesting)

As illustrated in Example 18, the affirmative team's speaker first uses the expressive speech act of greeting, then introduces the topic they are going to discuss, requests permission to begin their speech, and afterwards develops their affirmative case area, providing positive support for the proposition through asserting, stating, reasoning and describing. The speech acts of stating, describing and reasoning performed in the opening speech can be considered as UDs which, as Van Eemeren and Grootendorsrt (1984, 2004) note, contribute to explicitization and amplification. UDs also occur in the cross-questioning stage (see Example 23) where their function is definition, precization and explication. Students probably used them to frame the fundamental concepts, develop their arguments, particularize information, and explain and clarify complex issues that arouse from this stage.

In the final speech act of the opening speech, the affirmative team's speaker tries to appeal to the negative team to accept their proposition using the direct speech act of suggesting performed through a performative verb *I suggest*. Using the hedge *suggest* expresses the speaker's willingness to negotiate a claim thereby reducing commitment and conveying respect for the negative team's alternative views (cf. Hyland 1998b, 2005, Myers 1989).

The affirmative speaker (see Example 18) increases the illocutionary force through the emphasizers *really* (one of the most frequent boosters, 55 occurrences), *even* and *do* to sound persuasive, an assurance *It really is as simple as…* to express certainty and confidence, a hearer-oriented booster

You just have to… to stress the relevance of his utterance, the speaker-oriented attitudinal boosters *pretty* (10 occurrences), *entire*, *entirely*, *pure* and *big thing* to express the degree of a certain quality, and *I think* to show involvement. The opening speech also includes the discourse-organizing boosters *even though*, *reasons why*, *just*, *not only… but also*, *this all*, *basically*, *still* and *as soon as possible* to emphasize parts of the utterance and make them more prominent in the context of the opening speech.

The metadiscourse marker *I think* belongs to context-sensitive markers that can have different functions in different contexts (cf. Holmes 1986, 1990, Urbanová 2003). The affirmative team's speaker uses a 'deliberative' booster *I think* (35 occurrences out of 492 analysed boosters in the corpus) in the initial position with level stress to add weight to his statement and express certainty and reassurance. *I think* as a 'tentative' hedge occurred more frequently in the corpus (53 instances out of 645 analysed hedges). In Examples 19 and 20 from the other debates *I think* occurs in final position pronounced with falling intonation, which expresses uncertainty and tentativeness (cf. Holmes 1986) and acts as a softener or negative politeness marker, expressing primarily affective meaning.

(19) *It automatically offers you to translate this page* ***I think****.*

(20) *That is* ***kinda you know… I think*** *that browser should have nowadays* ***I think****.*

Example 20 illustrates a cluster of hedges *kinda* and *you know*. Students used markers of unspecified reference or vagueness such as *kinda* (1 occurence), *kind of* (5 occurences) and *something like that* or *stuff like that* (5 hits) in the parts of the debates when they felt it was unnecessary to provide a detailed explanation and make explicit references to the extralinguistic reality. A context-sensitive marker *you know* as a hedge (14 occurences) expresses both addressee-oriented uncertainty and message-oriented uncertainty. According to Holmes (1990: 189), "the former relates to the speaker's uncertainty concerning the addressee's attitudes or likely response in the interaction; the latter reflects uncertainty regarding the linguistic encoding of the message". In Example 20, *you know* functions as a word-search marker – the speaker is struggling to find a way to express himself, but at the same time he is appealing to common knowledge of Google Chrome's features. *You know*, as a booster (4 occurences), expresses the speaker's confidence concerning the addressee's relevant background knowledge and experience, attitudes and anticipated response. Example 21 from another debate illustrates its emphatic function to reassure the opposing team of the validity of the proposition.

(21) ***You know*** *monetary barriers for entry to the App Store are not only for the developers…*

Another context-sensitive marker in Example 18 is *just* which was one of the most frequent markers occurring in debates (61 occurrences as boosters and 24 as hedges). A possible reason might be the students' enthusiastic involvement with the content of the discussed topics related to their field of study since *just*, as Holmes (1984) notes, belongs to content-oriented boosters and hedges. Despite Brown and Levinson's (1987) and Wierzbicka's (1991) claim that *just* reduces the illocutionary force, Aijmer (2002) and Beeching (2016) argue that *just* can either reduce or increase the illocutionary force. In the minimising contexts, Beeching (2016) relates *just* to the conventional implicature of 'merely', which applies at the speech act level, rather than at the word level. *Just* as a hedge delimits the extent of a face-threatening act and thus functions as a negative politeness device. Erman (1997, as quoted in Beeching 2016: 76) observes that in particular young people often use *just* to maximise the effect of their utterance, which corresponds to the prevalence of *just* used as a booster in the analysed debates. Aijmer (2002) points out that *just* as a booster occurs in collocations with attenuating markers (such as *might just get* in Example 18 and *just a bit* in Example 23), gradable adjectives, exaggerative prosody, and in negated sentences when the speaker wants to dispute a point, while *just* as a hedge often occurs in requests and reflects negative politeness (see Example 22 from another debate).

(22) *If I may* ***just*** *step in…*

Boosters in the affirmative team's opening speech (Example 18) are obviously used to assert a proposition with confidence, stress students' shared concerns and goals and to enhance the desirability of their proposal; however, in some parts of the opening speech, the speaker uses hedges in the form of modal verbs *would* (102 occurences, the most frequent hedge in the corpus), *should* (54 occurences) and *might* (15 occurences) and an epistemic verb *suggest* (2 occurences), which reflects his uncertainty and attenuates the force of the proposition. A content-oriented hedge *in general* (2 occurences) is used to present a situation in terms of how far it varies from the ways the discourse community of IT students conventionally sees the world. The majority of boosters in the opening speech are associated with positive politeness since the speaker aims to express solidarity through intensification of meaning.

Example 23 shows the occurrence of speech acts in the first cross-questioning stage of the debate that followed the affirmative team's opening speech.

(23) S1N: *If you don't mind* ***I'll start*** *the questions.* (Directive: requesting) *You mentioned all the negatives* (Representative: reporting) *but what would happen if people were being oppressed by their government and the entirety of the internet was monitored by their sacred services?* (Directive: asking for an opinion) *There would be no anonymity anymore no place for free speech.* (Representative: hypothesizing)

S2A: ***I believe*** *that those people should be looking more into VPNs.* (Representative: asserting) ***Even though*** *Dark Net should be perfect there's* ***still too much*** *crime to outweigh the free speech.* (Representative: asserting) *In China for example they have something called the Great Firewall and government monitors everything going in or out but thanks to VPNs you can easily bypass it.* (Representative: exemplifying, UD)

S1N: *Yes that could be* ***true*** *that a VPN would help.* (Representative: agreeing) *But can you be certain that the company itself won't share your information once it is under a corrupted power-hungry government?* (Directive: asking for an opinion)

S1A: *Well* ***I do get your argue… argument*** (Representative: accepting) *but these VPNs operate from the most for free speech countries in the world like Switzerland in Europe or America.* (Representative: rebutting) *And if America or Europe succumbs to the totalitarian powers then* ***it's doomed anyway*** *and* ***it doesn't even matter*** *honestly.* (Representative: asserting)

S2A: *I'm curious about your stance on drug trafficking and other similar illegal things that are only possible thanks to the Dark Net anonymity.* (Directive: challenging)

S2N: ***No one is saying*** *that these things are okay but it's not possible* ***just*** *because of the Dark Net.* (Representative: asserting) *You can do most of these things on the normal internet that most people use every day.* (Representative: reasoning, UD) *It is* ***just*** *a bit easier to track down the users who are participating in these activities but you can* ***still*** *do a lot with more conventional tools like for example the VPNs you mentioned which also help to conceal your identity.* (Representative: reasoning, UD)

S1N: ***On the other hand*** *how do you imagine they would censor the Dark Net?* (Directive: asking about an opinion) *I mean it's not like they're letting it be free and do all those things that are illegal.* (Representative: explaining, UD) *FBI and other officials are hard working on busting these drug sellers paedophiles money launchers and so on.* (Representative: stating, UD)

S2A: ***I think*** *they would probably start at the ISP level and then move on onto the DNS level.* (Representative: hypothesizing)

S2N: *Well* ***you don't really need*** *DNS if you want to connect to a server so that wouldn't* ***really*** *make that big of a difference.* (Representative: rebutting) *So it is way harder if you… if you want to* ***just*** *use the IP but it's not impossible.* (Representative: reasoning, UD) ***And that is when*** *you are on the normal internet.* (Representative: explaining, UD) *If you use Tor for example and* *connect to a dot onion address the* ***entire*** *connection is handled through the Tor network which doesn't do any DNS lookups.* (Representative: describing) ***And when it comes to*** *ISPs in a lot* *probably* *most* *countries they already… they are already required to provide data to law enforcement.* (Representative: asserting) *So and ISPs do a lot of surveillance* ***even if*** *it's not for the government…. er…* ***and yet crime still happens*** *on the internet.* (Representative: asserting) *So just monitoring the traffic like this* ***will not really fix anything****.* (Representative: asserting)

(Note: S1A – Speaker 1 Affirmative, S2A – Speaker 2 Affirmative, S1N – Speaker 1 Negative, S2N – Speaker 2 Negative)

While boosters were typically prevalent in opening speeches since students wanted to sound confident and persuasive, cross-questioning stages demonstrated a balance between boosters and hedges. This was probably because students had to consider all the arguments that were put forward in the opening speeches and they were more tentative when expressing their propositions. Another reason might be the fact that while students could prepare their opening speeches in advance, they had to respond spontaneously in the cross-questioning stages. Urbanová (2003: 68) and Hyland (1998a: 354) note that the co-existence of boosters and hedges reflects the constant need for balancing objective information, subjective evaluation and interpersonal negotiation. As Example 23 shows, students often used the combination of boosters and hedges (e.g. ***I believe*** *that those people should be looking…*; ***Even though*** *Dark Net should be perfect there's* ***still too much*** *crime…*; *It is* ***just*** *a bit easier…*) in their utterances to head off possible objections while leaving their opponents in no doubt of their views, which helped them gain acceptance for their claims. Such combinations can also have a "polite downtoning function" (cf. Aijmer 2002: 189).

Speaker-oriented attitudinal boosters *I believe* (31 occurences) and *I think* (35 occurences) emphasize the subjective attitude of S2A and make his utterance more assertive. Clusters of boosters *I do get…*, *it's doomed anyway*, *it doesn't even matter…*, *even if…*, and *yet…*, *still*, *just* and *will not really fix anything* in S1A's and S2N's sequences of utterances and several discourse-organizing boosters, such as *No one is saying…*, *On the other hand…*, *And that is when…*, pinpoint parts of the speakers' messages and foreground specific pieces of information. Boosters increase the illocutionary force of propositions and demonstrate commitment to statements, thereby asserting the speakers' conviction and restricting the negotiating space available to their opponents. However, they can also serve the ends of positive politeness because they reflect respect for the listeners' views and the assumed background professional knowledge in the discourse community of IT students. For example, S2N uses a hearer-oriented booster *Well you don't really need…* to show S2A that he respects his knowledge and experience and wants him to engage with the discourse community of IT students, thus "effecting interpersonal solidarity and membership of a disciplinary in-group" (cf. Hyland 1998a: 353).

As already mentioned, directives occurred in cross-questioning stages quite frequently. The cross-questioning stage in Example 23 begins with an indirect speech act of requesting *If you don't mind…*, performed by S1N, which makes a request less infringing and reflects a negative politeness strategy. S2A performs another indirect speech act *I'm curious about your stance on drug trafficking…* to challenge the negative team and suggest that he disagrees with their standpoints. The negative politeness strategy employed through hedges, such as *would probably*, *could be* and *should be*, also reflects the need to avoid face-threatening acts when discussing the controversial and to a certain extent sensitive topic related to the Dark Net. Besides, the use of *would* and *could* (20 occurences) and *probably* (19 occurences) by all speakers involved in the cross-questioning stage demonstrates their need to signal the lack of relevant information when making their judgements.

The expression *I'm curious about…* functions as a conversational gambit opening a new topic. Another conversational gambit is performed through the speaker-oriented hedge *I mean* (19 occurences in the analysed corpus) used by S1N to clarify the content of his preceding question (cf. Urbanová 2003, Beeching 2016). Similarly, *well* signals a "change of topic or speech act according to an agenda or an 'interpretative frame'" (Aijmer 2013: 35), so in Example 23, the function of *well* can be explained concerning the rules of the structured debate. S1A and S2N use *well* to raise an objection to what has been said by their opponents, which suggests that both speakers act according to their roles in the debate. While S1A uses *well* for agreement with some reservation (representative speech act of accepting), S2N's combination of *well* with the booster *really* emphasizes and qualifies the following rebuttal.

5 Conclusion

This paper examined the concept of speech acts and modification of illocutionary force in a genre of ESP learners' spoken discourse, namely IT students' in-class debates, which previously has not attracted much attention of researchers. Oral communication either interpersonal, in small groups or teams, predominates at all levels of workplace activities in the engineering and IT sector (e.g. Crosling & Ward 2002, Darling & Dannels 2003). IT students as a specific discourse community are a very complex group encompassing many specializations whose goals may vary with the rapid developments in their field. Members of this community communicate with each other by attending lectures, seminars, meetings, workshops and conferences within an international environment. Their pragmatic competence is therefore indispensable for achieving success in both academic and future professional settings. Participating in in-class debates encourages students to stay focused on meaningful communication while simultaneously using targeted linguistic forms. Besides, it also provides them with an opportunity to use the target language to achieve their communication goals through the appropriate modification of the illocutionary force. Since knowing how to express and interpret speech acts is an important part of ESP learners' pragmatic competence (Goh & Burns 2012, Taguchi 2019), the examined debates may be viewed as manifestations of IT students' pragmatic competence vital for communication success. Even though the in-class debates have a certain fixed structure that might predetermine the range and sequence of speech acts, they allowed me to analyse the speech act data across the interaction. Moreover, speech act performance in particular in cross-questioning stages of the debates can be considered as the result of naturally occurring language use.

The analysis revealed that the most frequent speech acts were representatives, which IT students used mainly for the purpose of asserting (including rhetorical questions), reasoning, confirming, reporting, stating, explaining, agreeing, predicting and hypothesizing. While representatives occurred in all stages of the debates, directives were more frequent in cross-questioning stages where students asked for opinions, made requests and suggestions, and asked for confirmations. Expressive speech acts were performed to thank and greet the audience, apologise for misunderstanding or interrupting the other speaker's speech, compliment the other speaker on their convincing and valid arguments, and express pleasure. The least frequent were commissive speech acts used especially in opening and closing speeches when students made a commitment or promise related to the discussed issues.

Despite the number of studies claiming that pragmatic competence of ESL learners is insufficient (e.g. Bardovi-Harlig 1996, Kasper 1996, Jiang 2006) and spoken production and interaction are particularly difficult for university students of technical study programmes (e.g. Laroche 2003, Myles 2009, Hossain 2013, Jindathai 2015, Magauina et al. 2017), the analysis of IT students' speech acts performed in debates revealed that they were able to interact and communicate their ideas through a wide range of speech acts. Their frequent combination of pre-expansion (e.g. reasoning, explaining, exemplifying) and post-expansion (requesting, asking for opinions) reflects their upper-proficiency level (cf. Pekarek Doehler & Pochon-Berger 2011, Lee 2017).

Increasing the illocutionary force functioned as a positive politeness device and indicated that students assumed shared ground and stressed their discourse community membership. Boosters, such as *I/we believe*, *I/we know, really, pretty, entirely, basically, even, still* and *just*, thus allowed students to negotiate the importance of their information and establish its perceived truth by strategically presenting it as something consensually given. Asserting, disagreeing and rebutting during a debate also constitute face-threatening acts or impositions on the self-image of their opponents which students mitigated by using different types of hedges. In cross-questioning stages in particular, students tended to soften and reduce the assertiveness of some speech acts using the hedges *I suggest*, *you know*, *I mean* and *kind of*, which made the discussion more interactive.

This paper might be regarded as a contribution to the studies of ESP learner language. Its results show that focusing on communicative functions is a crucial aspect of ESP learning and teaching and should not be neglected and that research of learner spoken language might provide interesting and valuable insights for ESP teachers. Even though ESP coursebooks and learning materials usually include sections with linguistic means to express different communicative functions or speech acts, analysing ESP students' performance of speech acts in in-class debates might help teachers to identify both frequent and rare speech acts and metadiscourse markers and adapt the learning materials accordingly. Moreover, by engaging in a variety of different speaking activities (debates, role plays, simulations, etc.) with different purposes, students can develop and improve their pragmatic competence.

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GENDER STEREOTYPES IN EDUCATIONAL TEXTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INDONESIAN AND INTERNATIONAL PRIMARY ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

Rahmah Fithriani

Abstract

Despite the claim that the world is progressing toward gender parity, gender stereotyping continues to be a challenge for many countries, including Indonesia. This critical discourse study sought to investigate if gender stereotypes (still) exist in English language textbooks (ELTs) utilized in international and local (Indonesian) contexts. To this end, this study analysed visual texts portraying male and female characters from the student books of *English Chest 6* and *Let's Go 6* from a Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) perspective. In terms of gender representation and responsiveness, both quantitative and qualitative analyses revealed that both ELTs depict unequal portrayals. Furthermore, gender stereotypes were identified in both educational documents under investigation in two social settings, namely family and occupation/profession. This empirical research implies that, in order to achieve more equality in education, both textbook authors and schoolteachers around the world should be fully aware of gender issues encapsulated in educational documents.

Keywords

feminist critical discourse analysis, gender representation, gender stereotype, Indonesia, language textbook, visual grammar theory

1 Introduction

In the educational context, textbooks not only teach content knowledge and skills, but also instil sociocultural norms and value-laden ideologies into learners (Lee 2014, Widodo & Elyas 2020). This suggests that, as a teacher's silent partner that helps shape learners' "ways of thinking, behaving, doing, valuing, and being in the world" (Widodo 2018: 132), a textbook conveys different moral, cultural, and ideological values. To put it another way, textbooks are overtly or covertly loaded with norms and beliefs which are appropriate and accepted by society. Therefore, critical pedagogy needs to be introduced at all levels of education in order to empower both educators and learners to deal with such value-laden texts, particularly those loaded with gender issues.

It is widely acknowledged that all educational artifacts are ideologically and institutionally gender laden. As a consequence, the inclusion of gender-related

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values, such as gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and gender responsiveness has been the central focus of discussion and research among scholars in the areas of language education and applied linguistics, particularly since the seminal work of Jane Sunderland (2000). Since then, researchers' interests in this topic have proliferated in inner, outer, and expanded circle countries (Kachru 1985), with special attention given to gender portrayal in educational textbooks. In line with the escalation of the feminist movement in the last decades, one topic that has attracted applied linguists' attention is the substantiation of gender stereotypes, segregations, and asymmetries which are either materially or symbolically enacted in school textbooks through a feminist perspective of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The focal point for Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) is "discourses which sustain a patriarchal social order, that is, relations of power that systematically privilege men as a social group and disadvantage, exclude and disempower women as a social group" (Lazar 2005: 5).

During the last five years, gender (in)equality, gender (a)symmetry, and gender stereotypes in educational textbooks in general and language textbooks in particular have been well-documented. Despite some demonstrable pro-women proclivities (Yang 2011, Gebregeorgis 2016, Ghajarieh & Salami 2016), overall, the findings of these studies indicate gender inequality remains in favour of males (Clark 2016, Lee & Chin 2019, Curaming & Curaming 2020) and the presence of stereotyped gender roles (Yang 2016, Namatande-Sakwa 2018, Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei 2020) and gender-exclusive language (Lee & Collins 2010, Lee 2019) in English language textbooks across the world.

While in the international context a burgeoning interest in gender issues depicted in ELTs occurred as early as about three decades ago, it was not until recent years that a comparable development occurred in Indonesia. The findings of previous research essentially yielded similar themes emphasizing the prevalence of inequal (Damayanti 2014, Saputra 2019, Lestariyana et al. 2020) and stereotypical (Damayanti 2014, Ariyanto 2018, Setyono 2018, Lestariyana et al. 2020) representations of male and female genders in textbooks. A plethora of studies on male and female representations in English language textbooks (ELTs) have been conducted around the globe, with the vast majority employing a CDA analytical lens. Furthermore, relatively little empirical evidence focuses on the comparison of gender stereotypes in ELTs published for Indonesian and international usage. In addition, the existing work on gender representation in the Indonesian context has focused mainly on ELTs for adolescent learners in secondary education. Hence, there is a paucity of studies on ELTs for primary students. Since children at primary schools spend a great deal of their school time on reading textbooks (Sadker & Zittleman 2007) through which socially acceptable or socially desirable viewpoints are instilled, such research is deemed necessary to further demonstrate the danger of gender-laden devaluation and the paramount role of educational textbooks as a silent agent in children's gender development.

In order to fill the aforementioned research void, the present study aims to explore how males and females are portrayed in local and international ELTs for primary education, specifically in two social context parameters, namely familial and professional contexts to find out if gender stereotyping is still an issue. The following research questions guided this investigation:

1. What are the ratios of female to male characters in local and international ELTs?
2. How do local and international ELTs portray males and females in familial contexts?
3. How do local and international ELTs portray males and females in professional contexts?

2 English language teaching in global and Indonesian contexts

The continued domination of English as an international or global language is underpinned by its widespread use in a variety of disciplines such as politics, economics, science and technology, media and communication, and education. As a result, an ever-increasing number of people in what Kachru (1985) mentions as the three concentric circles – the inner, the outer, and the expanding circle countries – are speaking and/or learning the language either as a first/native language, a second language, or a foreign language. Interestingly, the highest number of English speakers, estimated at 500 million to a billion, live in the expanding circle countries such as Japan, Iran, and Indonesia, where English has no official status but is recognized as the lingua franca (Crystal 2003). Reflecting the importance of English as the world's lingua franca, these countries have adopted English language instruction in their educational system, and many begin at the primary level so their students can learn the language at younger and younger ages. For them, English proficiency has been perceived as an essential resource to be able to compete successfully globally. Overall, English has become the de facto standard means of communication around the world and thus most, if not all, countries consider English language instruction to be an integral part of their educational system, and Indonesia is no exception.

English has been the most prominent foreign language taught at Indonesian schools for the past seven decades. Alongside the importance of English as a global language, Indonesia's English language teaching and learning (ELTL) curriculum has undergone more than five changes since the country obtained its independence in 1945, with the 2013 curriculum now in use. This current curriculum focuses on improving students' oral and written communication skills, as well as raising their awareness of the nature and importance of English in order to improve the country's competitiveness in a global society (Astuti & Lukman 2019). To that purpose, English textbooks in Indonesia should cover a wide range of themes that are relevant to daily life in school, at home, and in the community.

In the earlier ELTL policy, the Indonesian government imposed English as a mandatory subject from primary to upper secondary education. However, since 2012, the government has changed their policy, stating that English is only mandatory for students in lower and upper secondary schools while those in primary schools may receive it as a local content. This means that the practice of primary English is regulated by the local government (provinces, cities, or regencies), and that schools are permitted to offer English subjects as an elective course to their students as long as they can manage the pedagogical practice. As a result, many Indonesian primary schools offer English classes to their students without necessarily constructing a proper curriculum or having certified instructors to teach it (Jazuly et al. 2019). Furthermore, because it is merely a local matter, the service does not require any specific approach, techniques, or materials and media. There has been no standard in how English teaching and learning should be handled and thus what to bring into the classroom is at the absolute discretion of the individual school, including designing curriculum documents and choosing the appropriate textbooks to use with their students. Since textbooks are a curriculum tool that helps both instructors and students perceive and understand social values (Widodo 2018), it is paramount for both school decision makers and teachers to have a critical awareness of any moral, cultural, and gender-related values instilled in the chosen educational literature.

3 Previous studies on gender stereotypes in ELTs

Over the last ten years, numerous studies have reported the existence of gender inequality and asymmetries in ELTs across the globe, with stereotyping emerging as one of the most pervasive manifestations of this problem. To begin with, Yang (2011) investigated how gender is represented in a Hong Kong government-endorsed English language textbook series for grade one primary students. The results, showing equal representation and portrayals of males and females in a similar range of activities, indicate a promising future moving towards gender equality and parity, which is consistent with the country's relatively recent policy.

However, in another study conducted in the same country about five years later, Yang (2016) reported contrasting findings of the visualized gender representation in two popular English language textbook series for primary education in Hong Kong. Employing a qualitative approach, she thoroughly reviewed the selected illustrations of male and female characters with a particular focus on their hair and apparel. Results indicate a continuation of gender stereotyping distinguishing the commonly-acceptable physical characteristics of the two genders. In many cases, females were characterized as having long hair and wearing skirts rather than short hair and pants. However, the colour of gender stereotyping where females tend to be associated with pink and males with blue was not evident.

A similar result indicating the entrenched institutionalised patriarchy and gender stereotyping was also reported by Barton and Sakwa (2012), who analysed Ugandan English textbooks for students aged 14-15. Framing their study through the lens of CDA, they revealed female under-representation and negative portrayals in occupational and emotional spheres, which was further enhanced by the teachers' ignorance towards this gender inequity and exclusion.

In a more recent study, Curaming and Curaming (2020) explored the prevalence of gender inequality in primary English textbooks in the Philippines. Using critical discourse analysis, this study reports the perpetuation of gender stereotyping favouring male dominance. These findings indicate the existence of gender disparity, even in a highly-ranked country in global gender equality indices like the Philippines.

In the same year, Lee and Mahmoudi-Gahrouei (2020) delved into three newly published English for school textbooks from the series *Prospect* for Iranian students of Grade VII, VIII and IX in search for the perpetuation of gender and conformation of Islamic gender ideology of male predominance. Combining manual and computational analyses as the data analytical technique, they pointed to the efforts that the authors made in reducing gender bias through the use of gender-neutral dictions and an equitable distribution of male and female dialogues. However, a perpetuation of gender stereotyping and a repetition of Islamic culture were still evident through the delineation of women predominantly doing traditional stereotypical activities in familial and educational domains.

Conducted in the Indonesian EFL context, a number of studies probed gender representation in diverse primary and secondary English textbooks. Damayanti (2014) analysed visual images accompanying written texts in four primary English textbooks. Using Visual Grammar as the analytical framework, she exposed the stereotyped portrayal of women as being dependent on men in doing activities. Furthermore, male characters were predominantly related with professional activities, whereas female characters were strongly associated with physical attributes.

In a different study, Ariyanto (2018) examined gender representation in a government-endorsed EFL textbook for lower secondary education in Indonesia through the lens of CDA. With one textbook, namely *When English Rings the Bell* for the seventh grade, as the data source, the results revealed the presence of gender stereotyping in both visual and textual artifacts, where women were portrayed predominantly in familial roles and men in occupational roles. Utilizing the same data source with an additional volume (*When English Rings a Bell* textbooks for Grade VII and Grade VIII), Lestariyana et al. (2020) scrutinized the selected English textbooks to investigate how female characters were represented in both verbal and visual texts in four social contexts, namely family, occupations, school participation and achievement, and hobbies and interests. The findings indicated a slightly better gender construction in favour of females, who were portrayed in a wider range of social roles and associated with positive traits such as competence, rationality and professionalism. However, in spite of the constructive images depicted in the textbooks, gender stereotypes were still persistent in some discourses.

All in all, although the world is reported to have made progress in achieving gender parity, particularly in education (Peace Corps n.d.), empirical evidence seems to substantiate that gender stereotyping remains a challenge for many countries and Indonesia is no exception. Thus, more studies on the topic of gender representation in educational textbooks need to be conducted to validate these findings. Furthermore, despite a multitude of empirical evidence having documented the pervasiveness of gender stereotyping in EFL textbooks around the globe, relatively few studies have compared the persistence of gender stereotyping in locally- and internationally-distributed ELTs, which are analysed through a feminist CDA and a Visual Grammar Theory lens. Thus, this current research intends to contribute to the burgeoning research on gender stereotyping in ELTs, particularly in the Indonesian EFL context.

4 The present study

4.1 Research context

Indonesia is the world's fourth most populous country, in which women make up slightly over half (50.1%) of its population (Countrymeters n.d.). With a population roughly balanced between men and women, gender equality enshrining the principle of equal rights between the two genders is officially incorporated in the country's fundamental principles through the 1945 Indonesian Constitution (Lestariyana et al. 2020). Nevertheless, rhetorical support for gender equality from the government has yet to be converted into substantial policy drives which should be aimed at addressing inequality issues in Indonesia. As a consequence, Indonesian women continue to suffer from gender disparity, particularly in terms of women's participation in legislative decision-making (Tarahita & Rakhmat 2018). In line with this inauspicious state and in spite of the steadily increasing awareness of gender parity worldwide, Indonesia ranks 85th out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Report 2020, the same position it has held for the past three years due to low scores gained in the areas of political empowerment and education (World Economic Forum 2019).

The stagnant ranking that Indonesia attained indicates that the country is still a long way from accomplishing social and political gender equality. Given the importance of education in raising younger generations' awareness of gender parity and equality (Foroutan 2012, Lee 2018), it is worth investigating whether differences in gender awareness in global and Indonesian contexts are reflected in stereotypical representations of gender in written materials, specifically school textbooks. The findings of this study can sensitize textbook writers, teachers, and teacher educators to the importance of identifying gender stereotypes and developing strategies to address gender inequality in textbooks in order to cultivate a gender-aware generation.

4.2 The corpus data

There are two ELT textbooks being evaluated in this study: the student book of *English Chest 6*, which is widely used in private primary schools throughout Indonesia, and the student book of *Let's Go 6*, which is used to teach English to students in over 160 countries. These two textbooks were selected due to their similarity in terms of the quantity and types of visual texts they contain. *English Chest 6*, as the locally-published ELT textbook, is one volume of the six-level English language learning series authored by Liana Robinson, edited by David Paul, and published by Compass Publishing in 2012. This series was specifically designed to cater for the Indonesian syllabus of General English for primary students while still following two international standards Cambridge Assessment English and the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). The book consists of three units with four lessons in each unit. Each lesson contains a wide variety of activities in the forms of conversations, stories, language builders, songs, games, etc. which were specifically developed to improve learners' reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. Like all other volumes in this series, this book is enriched with full-colour illustrations and photographs, which make it a rich data source for this study.

Let's Go 6, as the internationally-published ELT textbook, is the last volume of the seven-level American English course aimed at children aged five to thirteen years old (levels beginner to pre-intermediate). This series is authored by Ritsuko Nakata, Karen Frazier, Barbara Hoskins, and Carolyn Graham and was published by Oxford University Press in 2006. While its origins are in English as a second language (ESL) teaching in the US, the series is now in widespread use with English-language learners in over 160 countries worldwide. The book has eight units containing authentic material from a variety of sources with communicative settings to assist the student in learning how to use language rather than just how to say words or sentences. Each lesson offers diverse activities which are initially oriented toward listening and speaking through dialogues, pair work and communicative games, with reading and writing activities delayed until the later part of each unit.

4.3 Data analysis

Language textbooks are educational literature that depict a wide range of social practices. Because the aim of this study is to find out whether there are gender stereotypes in educational texts, the Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as an adaptation of CDA from a feminist viewpoint is deemed an appropriate analytical framework to critically evaluate how gender is constructed and depicted in the selected textbooks' discourse. I used two social context parameters: family and profession/occupation, in which female characters are usually stereotypically portrayed in educational textbooks (Lestariyana et al. 2020). Furthermore, since the data includes images or pictorials depicting human characters only, the FCDA is combined with Visual Grammar Theory (VGT). VGT considers language as a social semiotic form, which can be combined with other semiotic forms such as images to make a discourse meaningful and colourful to the readers (Kress & van Leeuwen 2006).

To operationalise this analysis, I adopted Giaschi's (2000) framework for a critical image evaluation of gender stereotypes in ESL textbooks, using the following criteria to guide my analysis:

1. The number of images including females/males only;
2. The number of images with the figure(s) visualized in a familial or professional context;
3. The activity(es) shown in the image(s);
4. The active figure(s) shown in the images;
5. The passive figure(s) shown in the image(s);
6. The way female and male characters are represented; and
7. The suggested relationships between the characters.

To answer the first research question, I began by identifying visual (pictorial) texts portraying the presence of both gendered characters found in the two textbooks. For the general quantitative analysis (percentage), I calculated the number of gendered characters found in each lesson unit manually and tabulated the data in Excel worksheets. Using the two aforementioned social context parameters, I calculated the frequency of each social context represented in the textbooks. Qualitatively, as seen in Table 1, Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) ideational, interpersonal, and textual parameters were employed to analyse the images in capturing how males and females are represented engaging in social encounters within the two parameters. I connected these metafunctional discourses to Barnard's (2002) interpretations of fashions and physical appearances to further elucidate how gender is represented in the language textbooks.

Table 1 demonstrates how I applied the two theories for textual analysis.

Theory	Analysis	Sources
Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) Visual Grammar Theory	• Ideational/ Representational Meaning: There is interaction in the context of 'payment activity' between the two characters	Fig 3. *English Chest 6*
	• Interpersonal/Interactive Meaning ✓ The gaze is 'offer' as the characters do not make eye contact with the readers ✓ The frame is in medium shot, drawing attention to both the characters by giving them equal space in the frame. ✓ The eye-level horizontal angle which appears to have been taken slightly to the left or right of the nearby characters most likely produces the same psychological effect to the readers.	
	• Textual/ Compositional Meaning The man is in the right vector, as the 'given structure'. This vector represents him as the centre of attention, signalling male visibility over female one.	
Barnard's (2002) Fashion for Communication	• The man dresses more formally signified with the shirt worn as a formal menswear, which has a collar and necktie. Meanwhile the woman wears a T-shirt, which is usually worn at home or during any causal event.	Fig 3. *English Chest 6*

Table 1: Sample data analysis

For the purpose of the study reliability, inter-rater agreement and peer debriefing were utilized to test the interpretive and factual accuracy of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses and to offer evidence of their credibility. A fellow researcher with expertise in gendering in educational documents was invited to serve as the rater and peer assess whether or not a key point was missing, a minor one was overemphasized, or one or more points were repeated in my analysis. To this end, I scheduled multiple sessions with the rater/debriefer throughout the data analysis process. In addition, the peer debriefer acted as a sort of critical detective to review and evaluate the aspects that required a more in-depth analysis.

5 Findings and discussion

5.1 Male-to-female appearances

The first result of the data analysis is the quantification of female and male visibility in both locally- and internationally-distributed ELTs entitled *English Chest 6* and *Let's Go 6*. A general quantification of gender representation was conducted by enumerating the number of images with male and female characters in the textbooks. Overall, it was discovered that male characters are depicted more frequently in the two textbooks as a whole than their female counterparts. As shown in Table 2, of the 465 images depicting humans in the ELTs, 154 images (33.1%) depict males only and 148 images (31.8%) depict females only. In other words, male characters were slightly more predominant than female ones.

ELTs	Images with Gendered Characters				Total of Images
	Male	Female	Mixed-Sex	Unidentified	
English Chest 6	69 (35.5%)	57 (29.4%)	63 (32.5)	5 (2.5%)	194 (41.7%)
Let's Go 6	85 (31.4%)	91 (33.6%)	90 (33.2%)	5 (1.8%)	271 (58.3%)
Total	154 (33.1%)	148 (31.8%)	153 (32.9%)	10 (2.2%)	465 (100%)

Table 2: Images with gendered characters

A closer look at the figures in Table 2 reveals that the two ELTs showcase contrasting depictions of male to female representation. Despite the fact that female representation is embroidered in all units throughout the book, *English Chest 6*, in general, shows an imbalanced visibility of the two opposite genders. Male predominance over females in this book is evident through a more frequent representation with the ratio of 1.2:1. This finding affirms the prevalently numerical dominance of male representation in ELTs as reported in a myriad of studies conducted in many parts of the world (Barton & Sakwa 2012, Curaming & Curaming 2020, Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei 2020, Lestariyana et al. 2020) indicating that the dominance of males persists in educational artifacts despite a prolonged endeavour to promote gender equality and some progress achieved (Lee & Collins 2010, Lee & Chin 2019). On the contrary, *Let's Go 6* depicts a relatively balanced distribution of male and female characters, with a ratio of

1:1.1 favouring female characters over male ones. This finding is consistent with some earlier studies (Yang 2011, Yang & Yan 2020) indicating females are no longer invisible in some ELTs, which could help promote the UNESCO gender parity campaign emphasizing “equal opportunities, choices, capabilities, power and knowledge” (UNESCO n.d.) for women and men.

Table 3 summarizes the findings related to the portrayals of male and female characters in the two sociocultural contexts used as the parameter in this study. Interestingly, the lower visibility of females in *English Chest 6* is not coupled with their quantitative representation in the activities in the two social contexts with a ratio of 1.5:1. In 44 activities involving human characters, the appearance of females is significantly more dominant than their male counterparts with 60.9 per cent to 39.6 per cent. *Let's Go 6*, on the contrary, portrays females in a lower frequency with a ratio of 1:1.3. In total, 38 female characters compared to 49 male characters are depicted engaging in various activities in the two sociocultural contexts.

ELTs	**Social Context**	**Total of Actors**	**Gender of Actor**		**Total of Activities**
			Male	Female	
English Chest 6	Family	20 (41.7%)	4 (20.0%)	16 (80.0%)	18
	Profession	28 (58.3%)	15 (53.6%)	13 (46.4%)	26
	Total of Gendered-specific Actors		19 (39.6%)	29 (60.4%)	
	Total of All Activities				44
Let's Go 6	Family	18 (20.7%)	9 (50.0%)	9 (50.0%)	15
	Profession	69 (79.3%)	40 (58.0%)	29 (42.0%)	23
	Total of Gendered-specific Actors		49 (56.3%)	38 (43.7%)	
	Total of All Activities				38

Table 3: Male and female representation in the two social contexts

However, when the analysis of gender representation is limited to each sociocultural context, the two ELTs delineate different gender portrayal in gendered-stereotyped domains. The local ELT portrays females more dominantly in doing activities within the domestic sphere with a ratio of 4:1, while males are seen to be visible in professional-related activities with a ratio of 1.9:1. Meanwhile, in spite of men's higher visibility in the workplace with 58 per cent presentation compared to 42 per cent, the international ELT represents both genders equally in the familial domain in which each gender is portrayed nine times doing domestic chores. These findings suggest that both local and international ELT textbooks perpetuate the stereotypical depiction of gender inequalities in specific social areas. Women are underrepresented in the professional sector in this instance. However, when it comes to gender representation in familial settings, the two ELTs produce very different results. While the local ELT retains the conventional depiction of women dominating home activities, the international ELT depicts strong male participation in a variety of domestic tasks. This fairly proportional presence of both genders in this sphere promotes a positive image of domestic responsibilities that men and women in the modern era can share.

5.2 Gender portrayals in familial context

Social roles are inevitably gender-based, which becomes the foremost impetus for the traditional dichotomy between males and females. In diverse sociocultural contexts, gender roles become the norms for how one is expected to act and behave based upon their assigned sex, which in turns contributes to gender stereotypes. One sociocultural context in which gender stereotyping is often found is the home sphere.

Figure 1 depicts the portrayal of two women doing childrearing activities with two baby girls as found in the national ELT. This portrayal in a glance shares same points of similarities. First, both of the women position their infants on their left sides so they can keep their right hand free for other tasks. Second, they seem to enjoy their activities which can be proven through the presence of smiles on their faces while interacting with the babies they are taking care of. Third, since babies usually cry when being left with people they are not familiar with, it could be assumed that they (the women and the babies) have a personal relationship, most likely mother and daughter.

Figure 1: Two female characters doing childrearing activities (Source: *English Chest 6*, p. 70 & p. 38)

A closer look at the data reveals detailed information regarding the babies' ages and the parenting behaviour the two women demonstrate. In the first picture (on the left), the woman is holding the baby, placing her on her left leg with her hands around her body. From the way the woman places her left hand around her waist and the right hand on her tummy, she is trying to support her sitting position to prevent a possible fall. As shown by typical baby milestones that a baby nearing the independent sitting stage ages from seven to nine months (Dewar 2019), it could be hypothesized that the baby in the picture is one year old or younger and the activity is likely to be done regularly as the mother helps her baby practice to sit independently.

In the second picture (on the right), the woman is taking care of the baby who seems to be at the milestone of learning to stand and walk independently. Thus, it could be predicted that the baby is between one to one and half years old. Similar to the woman in the left picture, this woman also seems to do this regular activity to make the baby practice standing independently while showing her natural nurturing and protective instincts which could be presumed from her hand gestures. As we can see, the right hand is holding a baby rattle to grab the baby's attention so she will think that it is playtime instead of independently standing practice time, while the other hand is positioned on the baby's upper back to support her standing position as well to protect her from falling backwards. Furthermore, her protective instinct is also manifested in her sitting position.

The woman sits on the right side because there is no safety cushion that could protect the baby if it fell on that side, while there is a sofa back behind her and the arm of the sofa on her left side. Furthermore, the woman positions her legs to the right side towards the baby indicating that she is ready to use them as a barrier if the baby falls forwards.

These two portrayals of women doing domestic chores convey a stereotypical message that women are responsible for child rearing and every mother is supposed to have maternal responses and thus she should automatically be ready to nurture her offspring, Furthermore, this visual representation indicates the existence of a subtle, persistent inequality in domestic chores, especially in nurturing, and highlights male and female dichotomy in terms of domestic responsibilities, in which women (mothers) are expected to hold child rearing obligations and accept them as legitimate while men (fathers) do neither. This finding echoes some previous studies (Lee & Collins 2010, Barton & Sakwa 2012, Gebregeorgis 2016, Lee & Mahmoudi-Gahrouei 2020), which perpetuates traditional stereotypes associated with women's and men's gender roles in household settings, and shows that women are still confined to their traditionally 'female' roles, ranging from nurturing to home making.

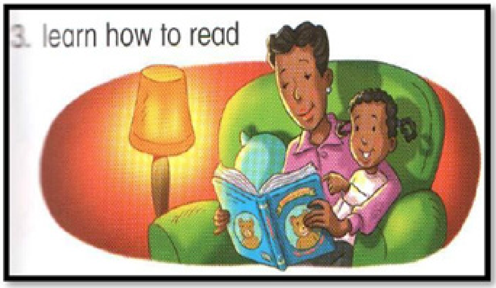

Figure 2: Male and female characters doing childrearing activities (Source: *Let's Go 6*, p. 27 & p. 57)

A different gender visualization in the domestic domain is found in the international ELT in which childrearing activities are performed by male and female characters as shown in Figure 2. The first picture on the left and the second picture on the right seem to share similar portrayals of male and female parents enjoying reading time activities with their daughters. These depictions may introduce the concept of shared emancipation, which emphasizes the equitable responsibilities of men and women within the context of familial tasks (Feldman 2000, Lestariyana et al. 2020). However, a deeper analysis of the data reveals at least two substantial differences leading to subtly stereotypical portrayals of the two genders, namely the sitting and reading position, and the parents' attire. From the sitting position perspective, the first picture depicts a father with his little girl siting on a couch during a reading time activity. The girl is seated on the edge of the couch between him and the couch arm which implies the father's protective act to keep her safe and give her protection from falling. A further analysis of the girl's gesture provides deeper information related to the girl's age. Since she leans her left elbow on the couch arm indicating that she is able to sit by herself and dangles her legs above the floor indicating her small stature, it could be predicted that the girl is about two to four years old. A similar protective instinct is also implied by the parent character in the second picture. The mother puts her daughter on the left side of her lap while her left arm wraps around her tiny body. This sitting position does not only provide protection from falling but also a comfortable and warm backrest.

Focusing the analysis on the reading position, it could also be concluded that the two pictures reveal a stereotypical portrayal of male and female parents childrearing, In the first picture, the father sits in the middle of the couch while holding a book precisely in line with his line of sight, while the daughter is seated on his left side with some space left between them. The daughter, who seems interested in what the father is reading, tries to lean her small body towards the book to have a better view. This portrayal suggests that this is not a reading time activity when parents read a story book to their children, but rather a regular portrayal of a father spending some leisure time by reading a book with a daughter who happens to sit next to him. The second picture suggests the opposite where the mother seems immensely involved in the mother-daughter reading time activity. This reading time activity between the mother and the daughter can be observed through the selection of the book with kid-theme cover and its placement in the line of sight of both characters. These two portrayals delineate the different sitting and reading positions of male and female parents when doing reading time activities with their children, covertly sending the stereotypical message that females make better parents than males, particularly in childrearing-related tasks. In this case, mothers are portrayed as providing better protection and comfort when taking care of their offspring, while fathers always act aloof and are often detached from their children. As a result, mothers are believed to have a stronger bond with their children during pregnancy, while fathers appear to have a weak bond with their children and are more likely to abandon them.

Regarding the way the male and female characters dress, the two pictures send underlying messages differentiating the two genders' domestic roles and responsibilities. In the first picture, the man is visualized wearing casual dress which may indicate that this activity is done on either weekdays (before or after office hours) or at weekends. On the contrary, the woman in the second picture is more well-dressed and wearing make-up and accessories suggesting she is either dressing up for an event or has just arrived home from her daytime activities. However, since the light behind is on, it is more likely that this activity is done in the evening or after office hours when the mother comes home from work. These two portrayals of the characters' appearance suggest that male and female parents have different responsibilities in terms of childrearing. For male parents, reading time with children is only done when they have spare time and are not busy with their work as the family breadwinners, while for female parents childrearing is viewed to be their main obligation, including those who have professional careers.

The two figures found in local and international ELTs subtly assert a mother's social role in the domestic sphere regardless of her socioeconomic status and educational and professional choices. From a cultural perspective, taking care of domestic chores and children becomes a cultural standard and tradition for all women, whether they choose to work or stay at home as full-time housewives (Eagly et al. 2020, Lestariyana et al. 2020). Although numerous studies have documented men's changing attitudes toward women in recent years, indicating universal support for women to pursue careers and a greater acceptance of the concept of gender equality, traditional values still reign supreme in the home (Donner 2020). In other words, while it is true that men of modern generations have become more open-minded and egalitarian over time in regard to the sexual division of labour, this is not the case in the home. Furthermore, these portrayals in Figures 1 and 2 reinforce the lay beliefs that women have better childrearing skills than men. In the Indonesian context, homemaking which includes childrearing duty is considered a traditionally feminine role that should be maintained by fulltime housewives and working women. Most Indonesian parents assign their daughters roles that involve caring and nurturing. They grow up practicing it by engaging in motherly activities like caring for their dolls or younger siblings. Therefore, by the time they become adults, they have perfected these skills.

5.3 Gender portrayals in professional context

There is a general consensus that occupations are socially gendered (Lestariyana et al. 2020), resulting in the existence of gender-stereotyped jobs, which are shaped by social expectations about whether particular jobs are a better fit for men or women (e.g. dealing with machinery is perceived as a man's job, whereas cooking a woman's job). Within the gender-role stereotyping framework, a series of empirical studies have reported diverse stereotypes and misconceptions of gender roles and abilities at work, which become influential attributions to discrimination against women in recruitment, pay, and career development prospects (Mihail 2006). Consequently, the workplace becomes the very sociocultural context where multiple forms of gender inequalities are present.

The data in Figure 3 shows stereotyped portrayals of males and females in the working sphere as found in the national ELT. The picture portrays the interaction of a woman and a man in a workplace as a sociocultural space. In this situation, the woman is receiving some money, probably her wage from the man because there is the word 'pay' written on the paper handed over. Since the woman's hands are pictured in a lower position than the man's, it could be further assumed that the female character works as an employee and the man plays the role of an employer. This assumption can also be strengthened by the analysis based on the perspective of the outfits worn by the two characters. It could be presumed that the man holds a higher professional position compared to the woman since he dresses more formally which can be observed from the presence of a tie as part of his apparel.

Figure 3: Male and female characters in a professional context (Source: *Let's Go* 6, p. 70)

This particular illustration contains some hidden gender stereotypes that deserve attention. When females are depicted in the work sphere, they tend to be positioned as a subordinate instead of a superior or a coordinate. In other words, this portrayal ratifies female inferiority in the occupational domain, which perpetuates society's stereotypes and prejudices against women in positions of power (Catalyst 2002, 2005). Women are perceived to be less skilful and motivated to take on managerial responsibilities effectively in organizational settings, whereas men are believed to be more skilled and are therefore frequently connected with higher-paying positions (Damayanti 2014). As a consequence, despite the fact that gender-related barriers and biases have decreased over the past year, gender stereotypes continue to impede women's career advancement. This finding shows a concordance with previous studies (Clark 2016, Lee 2018, Lee & Chin 2019), which indicates that gender inequality exists in the occupational context. In line with the current reality, women's attainment in the corporate world has made limited progress with only 29 per cent of women in senior management positions worldwide (IBR 2020).

In association with the findings related to gender portrayal in the domestic domain, it could also be presumed that negative beliefs about women's competence to perform management roles are affected by their primary responsibility for homemaking and childrearing hence they would need more breaks from work and, as a result, they would be given fewer working hours compared to their male co-workers. From this viewpoint, women are associated with behaviours and attitudes that contradict the demands of a successful managerial position (Schein 1973, 1975, Terborg 1977).

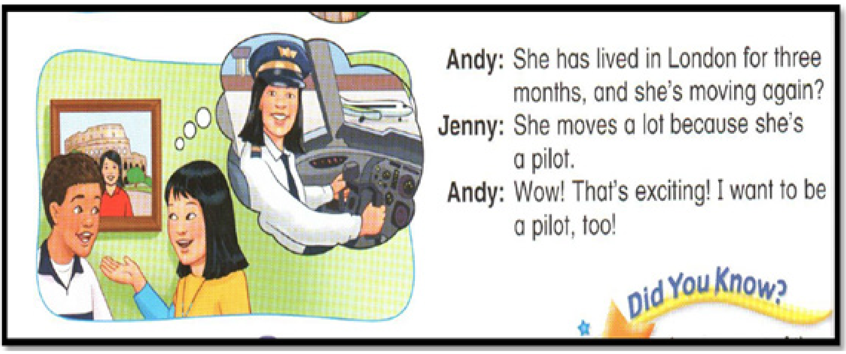

Figure 4: The stereotypical gender portrayal in professional context in *Let's Go 6* (p. 57)

On the contrary, the data from the international ELT portraying a woman as a pilot (Figure 4) depicts a challenge to gender stereotype in the professional domain at least in two aspects. Firstly, a pilot is a job which requires both skills and high academic achievement, two attributes which are rarely associated with women. Secondly, a pilot is also perceived to be a traditionally masculine job. Thus, this portrayal of a woman pursuing a career as a pilot promotes the movement of equality in a labour-force position (Penner 2008).

Another positive message reinforcing the contribution of females in professional contexts can also be observed in the text accompaniment. It depicts a conversation between the female character, Jenny, and the male character, Andy, who confirms Jenny's sister's nomadic lifestyle as a result of her career choice as a pilot. At the end of the talk, Andy shows his excitement at following in Jenny's sister's footsteps as a pilot regardless of whether his desire is motivated by the profession itself or the lifestyle the pilot leads. This example provides a positive portrayal of a woman as a role model, even to the opposite gender. The data also reveals the authors' level of commitment to promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (Curaming & Curaming 2020). This could indicate that the textbook authors are aware that the gender equality movement has resulted in more women choosing to pursue a career nowadays. The portrayals of women in their professions convey a positive message that women, too, can pursue an excellent career, such as being a pilot.

However, the positive messages of the female characters in professional domains depicted in Figure 4 do not readily mean that this image is gender stereotype free. As seen in the data, the female pilot is visualized to have visited the Colosseum in Italy. This indicates that the female character spends her spare time traveling to popular places in the world as the benefit of being a pilot. It is important to note that the woman is portrayed to have her touristy activities by herself, which suggests that she is a single woman. Given the previous discussion implicating that it is quite common to assume professional women who have family would prioritize their maternal responsibilities over professional ones, it could be concluded that the woman in the picture can pursue her career as a pilot because she is a single woman with no familial responsibilities. Young women with good careers may be self-sufficient, confident, and completely dedicated to their professional roles, but when they have family to care for, these qualities are often overlooked. Meanwhile, as part of their multiple responsibilities as wives and mothers, married women who have paid employment due to a necessity to support their families financially or a desire to harness their professional potential and capacity must nevertheless perform domestic tasks (Lestariyana et al. 2020). In conclusion, this portrayal may perpetuate the stereotype that women's career opportunities are frequently hampered by motherhood responsibilities.

6 Conclusion

The goal of the present study was to evaluate how gender is portrayed in two ELTs for primary schooling distributed in Indonesian and international contexts in a quest to determine if gender stereotypes are still perpetuated in the currently-used educational documents. It is worth noting that the focus of this study was limited to visual texts with male and/or female characters. The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding and to provide some evidence of gender stereotypes in two social contexts, namely family and occupation/profession. The results show that in terms of gender representation and responsiveness, both ELTs depict inequal portrayals of both genders, in which females are more visible in the local ELT while males are more visible in the international one. Furthermore, both genders are also portrayed stereotypically where females are stereotyped as performing very well in the domestic domain while males in the professional sphere. Thus, it is reasonable to conclude gender stereotypes still exist in educational texts.

Despite textbook authors' efforts to promote gender equality, this empirical research reveals that there is still a long way to go in terms of reforming schoolbooks to build global and Indonesian egalitarian norms. To achieve gender parity, a joint effort of all stakeholders is needed, notably textbook authors and school instructors around the world who can act as agents of change to ensure that the next generation has mutual respect and may reach their full potential regardless of gender. Textbook authors must be completely aware of gender stereotyping and sensitivity in order to present balanced gender roles in language textbooks. Teachers can assume a more dynamic part in promoting gender equality among young learners through the utilization of supplementary teaching materials with balanced portrayals of males and females doing similar activities.

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INTERACTIVE METADISCOURSE IN DENTISTRY RESEARCH ARTICLES: IRANIAN VS NON-IRANIAN ACADEMIC WRITERS

Mohsen Khedri and Elham Basirat

Abstract

Linguistically, interactive metadiscourse devices are responsible for creating an unfolding and persuasive piece of writing. They help writers come up with a cohesive and reader-friendly text and highlight how they control the interactive meaning. This corpus-driven study is an attempt to explore the use of interactive metadiscourse markers in English dentistry research articles published in International ISI-indexed and Iranian local research-based journals. The aim was to see if interactive resources, as realized by rhetorical options, such as transitions, code glosses, endophoric markers, evidentials, and frame markers, are predisposed to discipline-specific rhetorical conventions. To this end, fourty dentistry research articles were analyzed using Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse. The results disclosed similarities and differences in both the frequency and use of interactive resources between the two sets of research articles. The present results are expected to extend our understanding of authorial preferences for the use of metadiscourse markers in tandem with discourse functions in research articles in the selected discipline. The results of such studies may also improve different features of language pedagogy, such as teaching and learning academic writing, namely research articles.

Keywords

research articles, rhetorical variations, linguistic features, interactive metadiscourse markers, discourse functions

1 Introduction

Regardless of culture, language, and the disciplinary community, academics are expected to contribute their knowledge and new findings through communicative academic genres, including the research article (hereafter RA). As opined by Abdollahzadeh (2011), effective writing needs writers to equip themselves with the knowledge of community-oriented employment of the proper linguistic features to produce a cohesive and reader-friendly text. Among the features is metadiscourse. The basis of metadiscourse is the view of writing as a socially engaging act. Metadiscourse highlights how writers control the interactive meaning, and at the same time, express their commitments and perspectives. Research has shown that the appropriate deployment of metadiscourse in text

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is an indispensable part of constructing a cohesive and persuasive discourse (cf. Intaraprawat & Steffensen 1995). Writers' unfamiliarity with preset rhetorical norms in a particular community leads to improper employment of textual and interpersonal linguistic features. The outcome is a substandard text in which the ideational meanings are not effectively interpreted, thus not proper for publication.

The term metadiscourse was first introduced by Zellig Harris in 1959 (as quoted in Hyland 2005: 3) to offer a method for "understanding language in use, representing the writer or speaker's attempt to guide a receiver's perception of a text". Drawing on Hallidayan meta-functions of language (Halliday 1973), some scholars refer to metadiscourse as 'discourse about discourse', 'writing about writing', or 'communication about communication' (cf. Williams 1981, Vande Kopple 1985, Crismore et al. 1993, Mauranen 1993a). They view metadiscourse as linguistic elements that add nothing to propositional content, but that signal an author's intrusion into the discourse, either explicitly or non-explicitly, to direct rather than inform, guiding the reader or listener to organise, interpret, and evaluate what is said and meant in the primary discourse and how to 'take' the author or speaker.

However, Hyland and Tse (2004) believe that metadiscourse is not just the 'glue' that puts the more essential segments of the discourse together. Instead, it is an integral feature of the discourse that has rhetorical and pragmatic functions at its disposal, and that facilitates setting out arguments and recovering the writer's preferred interpretations and goals. They argue that all metadiscourse is interpersonal "in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and that it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this" (ibid.: 41). Therefore, Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005) depart from the Hallidayan duality of textual and interpersonal properties of discourse and adopt Thompson and Thetela's (1995) and Thompson's (2001: 61) description of interactive and interactional resources, which are regarded as "two sides of the same coin". Accordingly, Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005: 37) contribute their pragmatically developed model, which views metadiscourse as "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". The model divides metadiscourse into the two broad categories of interactive and interactional resources. Interactive metadiscourse "primarily involves the management of information flow" (Hyland 2005: 44) that, by anticipating the likely needs and reactions of the target audience, leads them to the writer's intended goals and interpretations. Interactional metadiscourse, by contrast, is "more personal" (ibid.) and alludes to the authorial epistemic stance on ideational material and their attitude towards readers to involve them in the mutual creation of the discourse. Included here are rhetorical options that are "evaluative and engaging", "expressing solidarity", "anticipating objections", and "responding to an imagined dialogue with others" (ibid.: 49-50).

Metadiscourse has been studied across different genres (Hyland 2002, 2003) as well as within and between disciplines from both the soft and hard ends of the academic continuum (e.g. Harwood 2005, Hyland 2005, Khedri et al. 2013, Cao & Hu 2014, Salas 2015, Khedri 2016, McGrath 2016, Khedri & Kritsis 2018, 2020). Another important line of inquiry has been the cross-cultural and cross-linguistic study of metadiscourse markers (e.g. Vassileva 2000, Breivega et al. 2002, Dahl 2004, Fløttum et al. 2006, Yakhontova 2006, Mur-Dueñas 2007, Sheldon 2009, Molino 2010, Abdollahzadeh 2011, Hu & Cao 2011, Loi & Lim 2013), which have been found to vary across rhetorical cultures in terms of both their frequency and range of uses. Therefore, metadiscourse seems to be an important focus of analysis for the study of cultural orientations in academic writing, including RAs.

Although the two sets of interactive and interactional metadiscourse play an important role in successful academic communication, most previous studies have given a great deal of insight into the use of interactional features in RAs (e.g. Mur-Dueñas 2007, Gillaerts & Velde 2010, Abdollahzadeh 2011). In addition, with notable exceptions (e.g. Khedri et al. 2013, Cao & Hu 2014), the small number of investigations into interactive resources (e.g. Bunton 1999, Dahl 2004, Peterlin 2005, Hyland 2007, Murillo 2012, 2019, Guziurová 2020, Barabadi et al. 2021) typically scrutinized only a subset of interactive metadiscourse markers (henceforth IMMs) each time, which arguably made it difficult to identify common mechanisms shaping the use of interactive resources as a whole (cf. Cao & Hu 2014). The gap seems to be more critical when it comes to the use of IMMs in English RAs in specific fields, such as dentistry, published in international and local journals. Taking metadiscourse as the theoretical framework, this piece of research, then, aims at providing a comprehensive analysis of features realizing the interaction between writers and readers in a corpus of English dentistry RAs published in International ISI-indexed and Iranian local research-based journals. The study seeks to shed some light on the similarities and differences between Iranian and non-Iranian writers in using IMMs in their RAs. More specifically, the research questions to be addressed in this article are: (1) What are the similarities and differences in the use of IMMs between English dentistry RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian scholars?; (2) Is there any statistically meaningful difference between Iranian and non-Iranian dentistry RA writers in their use of IMMs?; (3) What use do Iranian scholars make of IMMs in English dentistry RAs in a national context within a particular disciplinary community?; and (4) What use do non-Iranian scholars make of IMMs in English dentistry RAs in an international context within the same disciplinary community?

2 Method

2.1 The corpus

The corpus of this study consisted of 40 English dentistry articles written by the two groups of Iranian and non-Iranian academic writers (20 per each group), totaling 113,840 words (see Table 1). The data size was justified by adopting a mixed-methods research approach embracing frequency and functional analyses of IMMs. The observations here were limited to the present dataset and no attempt was made to allow generalizations about the use and nature of IMMs in RA writing.

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus	Iranian sub-corpus
No. of RAs	20	20
No. of journals	2	3
Length of RAs (range of words)	1,829-5,102	1,400-3,826
Corpus size per context	66,312	47,528
Total corpus size	113,840	

Table 1: Data description

Regarding article selection, it was mainly done using a stratified random sampling method. The following external criteria (Biber 2004) were also preferred to ensure tertium comparationis, that is "a common platform of comparison or shared similarity between texts" (Connor 2004: 292). All the RAs selected were:

a) full-length empirical research studies conforming to an Introduction, Method, Results and Discussion (IMRD) layout – a widely accepted conventional format proposed by Swales (1990); and
b) published during the period 2011-2020.

The RAs were selected from a pool of representative International ISI-indexed and Iranian local research-based dentistry journals to increase the validity of the study. To select the journals to be taken within each context, a preliminary survey was run. First, two insider-specialists from the departments of dentistry at two highly ranked Iranian universities were recruited. They were then asked to independently provide examples of English-medium local and international journals of prestige in their field which they often read and/or target for publication. Following their nominations, the articles written by non-Iranians were sourced from the internationally reputed journals of *Clinical Oral Implants Research* and *Clinical Implant Dentistry and Related Research* (Wiley Online Library). The two journals are indexed in the ISI Web of Science (2011) and have a high impact factor. The articles written by Iranian academic writers were taken from the leading local journals in the field of dentistry published in Iran. They were selected from *Journal of Dentistry* (Shiraz University Press), *Frontiers in Dentistry* (Tehran University of Medical Sciences Press), and *Journal of Dental Research*, *Dental Clinics*, *Dental Prospects* (Tabriz University of Medical Sciences Press). These local journals' policies for submission and acceptance are highly similar to the above international journals. They are research-based, quality journals ranked by the Ministry of Sciences, Research, and Technology of Iran. They have chief, associate/deputy editors and high rates of submission, and thus systematic and rigorous editorial policies. In general, the selected international and local journals are comparable in terms of the outsized discourse community in which they function, cover a large scope of topics within each discipline, and following Bazerman (1994: 131), are considered to have "expert performance" and be "situationally effective" in their message delivery.

As mentioned earlier, this corpus-driven study sets out to examine disciplinary rhetorical variation, not cultural variation in RAs written in English. Therefore, with reference to the international ISI-indexed journals and the authors who published in them, it must be acknowledged that they come from different cultural backgrounds. No attempt was made to choose native-speaker authors, which in any case cannot be identified by merely looking at their name or the name of the institution where they work. Consequently, the nationality of the scholars was not tracked nor considered in the analysis.

2.2 Analytical categories

Hyland's (2005) categorization of interactive resources was adopted and the five IMMs *transitions*, *code glosses*, *endophoric markers*, *evidentials*, and *frame markers* comprise the categories for analysis. These categories, albeit non-exhaustive, take account of the inclusive spectrum of metadiscoursal features materialized by a variety of lexico-grammatical constructions. Each category is explained below accompanied by actual uses taken from the corpus at hand. Illustrations of the IMMs are in bold.

Transitions include conjunctions and adverbial phrases that encode ideational information on inferential procedures or processes, thus helping readers make pragmatic connections between different stages of the text. In this study, transitions were limited to inter-sentential devices since intra-sentential connectors like *because*, *although*, and *since* are about “the outside world” (Hyland 2005: 50), thus serving syntactic roles (cf. Gardezi & Nesi 2009, Mur-Dueñas 2011, Cao & Hu 2014). Semantically, transitional markers could project additive (e.g. *and*, *moreover*), comparative (e.g. *likewise*, *however*) or consequential (e.g. *in conclusion*, *thus*) connections between ideas. Text examples are:

(1a) ***On the contrary****, fixed prostheses in the maxilla are more successful than removable dentures.* [Int1]

(1b) ***Furthermore****, these procedures are less time-consuming.* [Ir3]

Another central category refers to code glosses. According to Hyland (2005, 2007), they supply additional information, by elaborating, explaining, or rephrasing what has been mentioned, to reduce any potential communicative defects of a text, as well as to ensure the reader is able to recover the writer’s preferred meaning. Code glosses reflect the writer’s predictions about the reader’s knowledge base. Illustrations of code glosses are expressions, such as *that is*, *for example* or *simply put*. Alternatively, they are marked off by punctuation marks, such as parentheses and a comma. Some actual uses are as follows:

(2a) *Today, although synthetic bone substitute materials* **such as** *hydroxyapatite (HA) or beta-tricalcium phosphate (b- TCP) have been [...].* [Int2]

(2b) *The castings and abutments were immersed in ultrasonic cleaner containing cement removal agent* ***(Removal on-I, Premier Dental products Co, Norriston, PA)*** *for 30 and 15 minutes, respectively.* [Ir4]

Endophoric markers (e.g. *see Figure 3*, *as listed in Table X*, *as explained earlier*), also called ‘text references’ (Bunton 1999) or ‘locational metatext’ (Dahl 2004), refer to reflexive linguistic items deployed to draw attention to propositions presented elsewhere in the same text. These markers equip readers with extra propositional content to assist them to better grasp writers’ preferred meanings. Below are some text examples:

(3a) *The objective of* **this study** *was to assess if the nonremoval of abutments placed at the time of the surgery …* [Int7]

(3b) *There were no statistically significant differences between groups 1 and 2* ***(Table 3)****.* [Ir6]

As regards evidentials, they refer to linguistic expressions that represent ideas taken from sources out of the text, thus enabling the writer to stress his/her own credibility. In other words, evidentials help writers build up the authorial command of the subject and support their positioning. Expressions such as *X states that* and *according to* are illustrations of evidentials (Hyland 2005: 51-52). The following are examples from the corpus:

(4a) *In **our previous publications** [...], the implant 10-year survival rate varied from [...].* [Int8]

(4b) *The difference between the experimental and the control groups at the 7-day interval were significant, consistent with **the results of other studies**.* [Ir5]

The final category is frame markers. This type of IMMs, also known as 'rhetorical metatext' (Dahl 2004) or 'organizational metadiscourse markers' (Hempel & Degand 2008), refer to reflexive text language used to package the information and mark out text organization and boundaries through sequencing (e.g. *first*, *second*, *1/2*, *a/b*), labeling (e.g. *to summarize*, *in sum*), announcing (e.g. *I argue here*, *this study aims to*), and shifting the direction of arguments (e.g. *regarding*, *with reference to*, *now*). Consider the following examples:

(5a) ***Overall**, the output torque of a surgical motor decreases gradually [...].* [Int10]

(5b) *In light of the above, **the aim of this study was to** evaluate the influence of the mandible to find ...* [Ir7]

2.3 Data coding

Once the corpus was compiled, a search to identify IMMs in each sub-corpus was made using WordSmith Tools – a set of operative text analysis programs used to identify language features in electronically-saved texts (Scott 2004). We started by examining the tokens of IMMs in Hyland's (2005) list. However, since interactive resources are an open-ended category of identification and may be compositionally complex, manual annotation was then taken to i) tease apart multifunctionality; ii) ensure that the computer-driven features were acting as metadiscourse and expressing discourse-internal relations; and iii) identify the writers' discourse functions for using IMMs in each dataset.

In order to reduce the risk of randomness and demarcate the precision of the analytical approaches taken at an adequately high level of consensus, a consistent method to data coding was essential. Therefore, although the corpus was mainly analyzed by the researchers, it was decided to improve on the coding of the texts through inter-coder agreement. The RAs were first coded sentence by sentence and a sheet of analysis was appended to each one for systematic comparison. Then, a small subset of the corpus – ten RAs (five from each sub-corpus) – was independently analyzed by a PhD graduate whose area of specialism is academic writing. He received several training sessions along with a coding manual containing descriptions and examples. Once the corpus was analyzed, the researchers went through the texts with the coder to identify any conflicting results. Slight conflicts in the identification of the writers' discoursal functions of the use of IMMs were found and ironed out through discussion. Inter-coder reliability was measured using Cohen's kappa, with the resulting value of 0.89 signalling a strong level of agreement.

2.4 Data analysis

We conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the IMMs identified in the corpus. For the quantitative analyses (using IBM-SPSS 27.0), different statistical tests depending on the normality distribution of raw frequencies were run on the data to see if any difference between the two groups of writers in their use of IMMs is statistically meaningful. To this end, the Shapiro-Wilks test was run to evaluate whether the results relating to each category and sub-categories of IMMs within each sub-corpus are normally distributed or not. Where the distribution was normal, the two sub-corpora were compared using the independent samples *t*-test. However, where the hypothesis of normality distribution was violated, the Mann-Whitney *U*-test, which is a non-parametric test, was conducted to evaluate the significance level of the difference observed between both sets of data. A chi-square statistical analysis was also performed to determine the significance of the difference found in the total frequencies of IMMs identified in the Iranian and non-Iranian sub-corpus. In the reporting of results in the next section statistical values are shown. The significance level was established at <.05 in all the types of statistical analyses used.

The qualitative analyses involved studying every instance of IMMs in context and examining how the various types of IMMs were used qualitatively similarly or differently across the corpus. To identify discourse functions, we began by analyzing the corpus guided, in part, by a compilation of the previously identified functions in other studies (cf. Khedri et al. 2013, Loi & Lim 2013). While reference was made to past studies, a data-driven approach was taken, with the functional analysis of the writers' uses of IMMs being derived from the corpus at hand. In the present study, cases of use found in at least one sub-corpus with at least one instance per 1,000 words[1] were regarded as main discourse functions.

3 Results and discussion

Table 2 illustrates the frequency of the use of IMMs in the two sub-corpora. The figures show that interactive devices are more frequent in the Iranian set of data than in the non-Iranian sub-corpus (53.9 vs 49.7 tokens per 1,000 words).

The chi-square statistical analysis run on IMMs as a group yielded a significant difference, $p = .001$, $\chi^2_{(4)} = 71.52$.

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		Iranian sub-corpus			
	Raw	Norm.	Raw	Norm.	Test statistic value	*P* value
Transitions	880	13.2	726	15.2	$t_{(38)} = 1.53$	.135
Code glosses	820	12.3	458	9.6	$t_{(27.1)} = 3.73$	.001
Endophoric markers	522	7.8	394	8.2	$t_{(38)} = 21.65$	.037
Evidentials	730	11	764	16	$t_{(38)} = -0.39$	.696
Frame markers	344	5.1	224	4.7	$t_{(38)} = 4.29$	< .001
TOTAL	3,296	49.7	2,566	53.9	$\chi^2_{(4)} = 71.52$	< .001

Table 2: Frequency of use of IMMs in the two sub-corpora

A closer look at the table also reveals variations in the distribution of IMMs between the two sets of data. Transitions (13.2 instances per 1,000 words), followed immediately by code glosses (12.3 instances), are the most frequent categories in the non-Iranian dataset. In contrast, evidentials (16 tokens per 1,000 words) and transitions (15.2 tokens) were pervasive in the Iranian sub-corpus. While evidentials are placed in third position in the non-Iranian set of data (11 instances per 1,000 words), code-glosses occupy the same position in the Iranian sub-corpus (9.6 cases per 1,000 words). This is followed by endophoric markers as the fourth most frequently used category in the two sets of data. They were employed 394 times (8.2 per 1,000 words) by the Iranian writers and 522 times (7.8 per 1,000 words) by their non-Iranian counterparts. Finally, frame markers have the lowest frequency of use in both sub-corpora, totaling 344 cases (5.1 per 1,000 words) in the Iranian sub-corpus and 224 cases (4.7 per 1,000 words) in the non-Iranian dataset. The detailed status of each category and their discourse functions are discussed below.

3.1 Transitions

One of the basic features of academic writing is a high frequency of transitions, indicating the necessity of creating an internal cognitive link in the text. In this study, transitional markers made up 28.2 per cent and 26.6 per cent of the total IMMs identified in the Iranian and non-Iranian sub-corpus, respectively. The independent samples *t*-test on transitional markers as a group found a non-significant difference between the two sub-corpora, $p = .135$, $t_{(38)} = 1.53$ (see Table 2). However, a closer look at the figures illustrated in the table shows that transitions appeared more frequently in the Iranian sub-corpus than that of the non-Iranian (15.2 vs 13.2 cases per 1,000 words). It can be argued that the texts created by Iranian writers are more reader-oriented, cohesive, and unfolding.

In the two sub-corpora, transitions were used by the writers to highlight a range of rhetorical functions, albeit to a different extent, realized by various linguistic resources performing different semantic functions of addition (*also*, *and*, *moreover*, *in addition*, *furthermore*), comparison/contrast (*similarly*, *likewise*, *in comparison*, *however*, *but*, *in contrast*, *on the other hand*, *nevertheless*, *nonetheless*, *despite*, *yet*, *still*), and inference (*therefore*, *thus*, *hence*, *so*, *as a result*, *accordingly*). Among them, additive (about 65%) and inferential (just above 15%) transitions registered as the most and least frequent logical devices in each sub-corpus (see Table 3). It seems that both sets of RAs commonly reflect a progressive argumentative style (Mauranen 1993b) based on the explicit signalling of addition.

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		**Iranian sub-corpus**			
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Test statistic value	*P* value
Additive transitions	551	62.6	467	64.4	$t_{(38)} = 1.59$	.121
Comparative transitions	185	21.1	145	19.9	$t_{(38)} = 2.85$	.007
Inferential transitions	144	16.3	114	15.7	$U = 139.00$	.095

Table 3: Frequency of use of transitional markers in the two sub-corpora

The independent samples *t*-test run on additive transitions revealed a non-significant difference between the two sets of RAs, $p = .121$, $t_{(38)} = 1.59$. The same statistical test was used to compare differences in the incidence of comparative transitions, which yielded a significant difference between both datasets, $p = .007$, $t_{(38)} = 2.85$. Finally, the Mann-Whitney *U*-test run on inferential transition showed that there is no significant difference between the two groups of writers, $p = .095$, $U = 139.00$.

The textual analysis further showed that additive transitions allow the writers to explicitly define the key concept and provide a clarification. Such uses were evident in both datasets (74.2% vs 72.6%). Some examples are as follows:

Defining the key concept:

(6a) ***Furthermore**, it is well known that periodontal disease itself leads to significant localised alveolar bone loss via inflammatory reactions (Pihlstrom et al. 2005; Chung et al. 2009).* [Int19]

(6b) *Another important factor is the parallelism of the maxillary anterior incisal curve and the lower lip and its asymmetry. **Moreover**, it appears that laypersons are capable of recognizing the characteristics of an ideal smile.* [Ir11]

Provide clarification:

(6c) *The Periotest assesses the damping capacity of the implant, although it is not useful to evaluate mesiodistal stability. **In addition**, Periotest seems to be insufficient to detect small changes in implant stability, because [...].* [Int5]

(6d) *Biofilm microorganisms have a greater chance of survival compared to microorganisms in water and planktons. They are **also** more resistant to antibiotics and agents capable of destroying planktons.* [Ir1]

In both sets of data, especially in the non-Iranian RAs (17.6% vs 11.7%), transitions such as the contrastive forms *however*, *but*, *despite*, were mainly used to start off statements of gap indication in the literature or counter-claiming. Such statements locate the present study in the context of past studies and claims by arguing how the study being reported seeks to plug the existing gap or warranting how the present study differs from relevant studies in the body of literature. Such contrastive forms are “antithetic discourse markers” that “exhibit connectivity and were sentence-initial concessive conjuncts appearing in the form of adversatives” (Lim 2012: 234). The use of a contrastive at the beginning of statements allows “writers to maneuvre themselves into line with what they expect reader may think to head off objections or counterclaims” (Hyland 2004: 138). Some of the examples found in the corpus at hand are as follows:

Gap indication:

(7a) *Concerning iNOS expression evaluation, similar level in both T0 samples and increased levels in T1 iliac crest sample compared to the T1 calvaria ones, are demonstrated, suggesting that [...]. **However, this hypothesis needs to be confirmed by further investigations** such as in vivo iNOS activity assay.* [Int20]

(7b) *Bolton analysis can help orthodontists in treatment of patients with severe tooth size discrepancies. **Nonetheless, it has some limitations and its precision and dependence to other factors are still matters of discussion.*** [Ir8]

Counter-claiming:

(7c) ***However****, even if autologous bone grafts demonstrated significantly higher new bone formation after sinus augmentation if compared with other bone substitutes (Browaeys et al., 2007; Danesh-Sani et al., 2017),* ***their use is associated with major drawbacks*** *such as […].* [Int6]

(7d) *Knowing the condylar movement after orthognathic surgery is important to prevent postoperative instabilities.* ***However****, condylar displacement within the physiologic capability of the adaptive mechanism* ***does not lead to*** *[…].* [Ir2]

Transitions were also used to construct interaction reflecting the interactive nature of metadiscourse. Inferential transitions, such as conjunctions, were utilized to show cause and effect so as to get the readers' acceptance for the significance of the study being reported through justifying the purpose of the study, as well as through claiming the centrality of new knowledge and contribution. Such uses were observed in the two datasets, with the Iranians using them almost twice as often as their non-Iranian peers (15.7% vs 8.2%). Text examples are:

Purpose of the study:

(8a) *[…] to the best of the authors' knowledge, no investigations have been conducted yet focusing on the healing potential of sites with different bucco-lingual width within the same maxillary sinus.* ***Therefore, the aim of this multicentre prospective study was to*** *analyse new bone formation 6 months after lateral sinus floor elevation in different anatomical areas of the maxillary sinus.* [Int6]

(8b) *Studies on the effect of xylitol-fluoride mouthwash in comparison with CHX on salivary S. mutans are limited.* ***Thus, this study aimed*** *to assess the effect of FX (Fuchs, Germany) mouthwash (combination of xylitol and 920 ppm fluoride) and 0.2% CHX (Behsa, Iran) on salivary S. mutans.* [Ir15]

Centrality claim:

(8c) ***Hence, it can be speculated that*** *the augmented bone, irrespective of the preoperative defect morphology, is able to support the soft tissue in […].* [Int15]

(8d) *Biofilm microorganisms have a greater chance of survival compared to microorganisms in water and planktons […].* ***Therefore, in the control of biofilms a general approach should be considered.*** [Ir1]

3.2 Code glosses

Code glosses were used by the two groups of writers (see Table 2), indicating that ensuring readers grasp writers' intended meanings is one of the established disciplinary propensities and conventions of which they are aware. Nevertheless, in line with previous findings (e.g. Abdi 2009, Attaran 2014, Mansoori et al. 2016), the non-Iranian sub-corpus displayed a statistically significant higher inclusion of code glosses than the Iranian sub-corpus (12.3 vs 9.6 instances per 1,000 words; p = .001, $t_{(27.1)}$ = 3.73 ; see Table 2). The varied readership of the international publications may call for various clarifications designed to lead readers to the interpretations intended by the writers, which would explain such a significant difference.

‘Reformulation markers’ used to reformulate given information (Hyland 2007: 269, see also Murillo 2004, 2012, 2019) and ‘exemplificatory markers’ to support previously mentioned propositional content (Lee 2004: 298, Guziurová 2020) are the two types of code glossing devices occurred in the corpus. The former is signalled by the use of expressions like *that is*, *put another way*, *or*, *in the other words*, or punctuation marks (e.g. colon, dash, hyphen, parenthesis, comma, etc.), and the latter through observations such as *for example*, *for instance*, *including*, *i.e.*, *e.g. such as*, *namely*. As illustrated in Table 4, reformulation markers show very high frequencies across the corpus, especially in the non-Iranian sub-corpus (84.3% vs 72.9%). This could be attributed to the density of code glosses evidenced in the RAs written by the non-Iranian authors (see Table 2). The independent samples t-test run on reformulation markers revealed a significant difference between the two sub-corpora, p < .001, $t_{(22.8)}$ = 5.11. However, no statistically significant difference was found in the inclusion of exemplificatory markers between the RAs in the Iranian and non-Iranian sets of data, p = .717, $t_{(38)}$ = 0.37.

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		**Iranian sub-corpus**			
	Raw	Norm.	Raw	Norm.	Test statistic value	*P* value
Reformulators	691	84.3	334	72.9	$t_{(22.8)}$ = 5.11	< .001
Exemplifiers	129	15.7	124	27.1	$t_{(38)}$ = 0.37	.717

Table 4: Frequency of use of code glosses in the two sub-corpora

The textual analysis also revealed that the two groups of writers use code glosses for similar functions, albeit to a different extent. The most prominent uses of reformulation markers were delimitation (35.8% by non-Iranians and 30.9% by Iranians, Examples 9ab) and elaboration (64.2% vs 69.1%, Examples 9cd). In the case of the former, the restatements in the second discourse units demarcate the scope of the propositional content in the first discourse units. By contrast, in the case of the latter, the second discourse units further elaborate or clarify the first discourse units. Some examples are as follows:

(9a) *Finally, the values for defect classification and for intra- and inter-rater reliability were higher in the second rating round than in the first round.* ***This means that*** *the occurrence of learning bias cannot fully be excluded even though we tried to […].* [Int4]

(9b) *However, there were significant differences between either the Geristore group or the Bioaggregate group and the control group (P < 0.05).* ***In other words****, Geristore and bioaggregate induced more inflammation even after 60 days.* [Ir18]

(9c) *Periotest,* ***which was originally used for measurement of natural tooth mobility****, has also been applied to test implant stability […].* [Int5]

(9d) *In contrast to cyclin D1, evaluation of other cell cycle proteins such as cyclin B1 (****showing transition from the G2 to the M phase of the cell cycle****) and Ki-67 (****which is expressed in all phases of the cell cycle but not in quies- cent cells****) demonstrated that only mononuclear cells were positive.* [Ir9]

Exemplificatory markers were very often used to explain technical and abstract concepts via more accessible examples (Examples 10ab) or to present specific instances of general propositions (Examples 10cd):

(10a) *The diagnostic accuracy of defect detection,* ***i.e.****, presence of peri-implant defects (yes/no), and type classification were assessed by calculating sensitivity and specificity as well as […].* [Int4]

(10b) *Hypodontia may be a dental manifestation of special syndromes* ***such as*** *ectodermal dysplasia12 and cleft lip and/or palate, or occur as an isolated condition.* [Ir20]

(10c) *The post-operative image served as baseline, and each forthcoming scan was registered with the previous one.* ***For example****, week 1 was registered with week 0, week 2 with week 1, and so on.* [Int13]

(10d) *Bolton analysis can help orthodontists in treatment of patients with severe tooth size discrepancies. Nonetheless, it has some limitations and its precision and dependence to other factors are still matters of discussion.* ***For instance****, Bolton's studied population and their ethnicity were not exactly specified; whereas, there is evidence regarding […].* [Ir8]

3.3 Endophoric markers

Like past studies (e.g. Zarei & Mansoori 2011, Mirhashemi & Alami 2013), endophoric markers were found with a similar frequency in the two sets of RAs (around 8 instances per 1,000 words; see Table 2). However, the independent samples *t*-test run on the raw frequencies of endophoric markers as a group found a significant difference between the two groups of writers, $p = .037$, $t_{(38)} = 21.65$ (see Table 2).

The textual analysis showed that endophoric markers, which are explicit references to other parts of the text, include linear and non-linear referencing devices (cf. Bunton 1999, Mauranen 1993a), which appeared in both sets of data. Non-linear references (e.g. *as illustrated in Table X*, *refer to Fig X*) are used to point to visual aids (e.g. tables, figures), formulas, or sections (Example 11a). On the other hand, linear references are used to enhance explicitness in discourse. The latter appeared mostly in the non-Iranian sub-corpus (82.8% vs 71.4%; see Table 5) and acted as a forward/preview (e.g. *in the following section*, *as will be discussed latter*; Example 11b), an inward/overview (e.g. *this cross-sectional study*, *the present study*; Example 11c), and a backward/review (e.g. *as described earlier*, *as mentioned above*; Example 11d). The independent samples *t*-test on linear references yielded a significant difference between the two sub-corpora, $p = .001$, $t_{(27.5)} = 3.93$ (see Table 5). Unlike what happened in the case of linear references, the independent samples *t*-test run on non-linear references showed that there is no significant difference in the incidence of such interactive devices in the two sets of RAs, $p = .117$, $t_{(38)} = -1.60$.

(11a) *The absolute values of the discrepancies (mean, SD and range) in x-axes, y-axes, z-axes, and the total 3-D are presented in* ***Table 1****.* [Int3]

(11b) ***As will be discussed later****, the use of osseointegrated implant for the treatment of edentulism has become an increasingly widespread therapy […].* [Int11]

(11c) *Therefore, the aim of* ***the present study*** *was to investigate the effect of delayed irradiation and/or preconditioning of […].* [Ir14]

(11d) ***As mentioned above****, the complex system of bearing occlusal stress along a fixed bridge was divided into smaller and simpler elements for better understanding and analysis, with the use of FEA method.* [Ir14]

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		**Iranian sub-corpus**			
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Test statistic value	*P* value
Linear references	432	82.8	281	71.4	$t_{(27.5)} = 3.93$	.001
Inward/Overview	241	55.7	176	62.6	$t_{(38)} = 4.23$	< .001
Forward/Preview	116	26.9	64	22.8	$t_{(38)} = 5.01$	< .001
Backward/Review	75	17.4	41	14.6	$U = 120.00$	.026
Non-linear references	90	17.2	113	28.6	$t_{(38)} = -1.60$	.117

Table 5: Frequency of use of endophoric markers in the two sub-corpora

Referring to Table 5, there is a higher density of inward referencing devices used in the rhetoric of the texts produced by Iranians compared to that of non-Iranians (62.6% vs 55.7%). In contrast, forward and backward referencing devices were more prevalent in the non-Iranian sub-corpus compared to the Iranian. Arguably, the non-Iranian writers are more mindful of guiding the readers through making references in the text. The independent samples *t*-test on inward/overview ($p < .001$, $t_{(38)} = 4.23$)) and forward/preview ($p < .001$, $t_{(38)} = 5.01$)) as well as the Mann-Whitney *U*-test on backward/review ($p = .026$, $U = 120.00$) revealed statistically significant differences between the two groups of RAs.

The textual analysis showed that the two groups of writers deploy endophoric markers for different uses. Their most prominent use was 'announcing research outcome' (87.9% by Iranians and 70.8% by non-Iranians; Examples 12ab). The writers also used endophoric markers to 'present methodological procedures used in the study', mainly by the non-Iranian authors (21.6% vs 12.1%, Examples 12cd). The last discourse function, which occurred only in the non-Iranian sub-corpus, was 'introducing study descriptively and/or purposively' (Example 12e). It constituted 7.6 per cent of the total endophoric markers identified in the non-Iranian sub-corpus.

(12a) ***The results showed that*** *the distribution of the implant location in the upper and the lower jaw was very homogeneous (**Table 1**).* [Int18]

(12b) ***The present study showed*** *a low bond strength value for delayed […].* [Ir6]

(12c) *OCP **was prepared** by mixing a calcium and phosphate solution **as described previously**.* [Int9]

(12d) ***In the present in-vitro study**, the effect of delayed light-curing through a zirconia disc **was evaluated** on the mechanical properties of two types of resin cement.* [Ir10]

(12e) *Therefore, **this clinical study introduces** a digital solution that uses evidence-based medicine as the basis for bone augmentation design before […].* [Int17]

3.4 Evidentials

As for evidentials, while the difference between the two sets of RAs is not statistically significant ($p = .696$, $t_{(38)} = -0.39$; see Table 2), the frequency analysis showed that the Iranian dentistry writers, compared to their peers publishing in International ISI-indexed journals, have a greater reliance on crediting their propositional information via citing outside sources (16 vs 11 cases per 1,000 words; see Table 2). Such reliance could be attributed to the avoidance of mitigating strong certainty in claim-making. The avoidance is likely to reveal the presence of greater subjectivity in an argument. Therefore, Iranian writers may feel a stronger obligation to provide support for their subject matter and express their familiarity with the relevant literature to the readers.

The textual analysis showed that both Iranian and non-Iranian writers represent the work of others in their own discourse through integral and non-integral citations. With integral citations, the authors incorporate cited sources into their arguments as in Examples 13abc, while in non-integral citations, which showed very high frequencies throughout the corpus (above 70%; see Table 6), they attempt to remove cited sources from their arguments and put them in footnotes or in brackets as in Example 13d. The independent samples *t*-test on non-integral citations found a non-significant difference between the two sub-corpora, $p = .255$, $t_{(38)} = 1.16$. Nevertheless, the Iranian sub-corpus displayed a statistically significant higher inclusion of integral citations than that of the non-Iranian, $p = < .001$, $t_{(30.0)} = -6.08$.

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		**Iranian sub-corpus**			
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Test statistic value	*P* value
Integral citations	127	17.4	219	28.7	$t_{(30.0)} = -6.08$	< .001
Non-integral citations	603	82.6	545	71.3	$t_{(38)} = 1.16$	.255

Table 6: Frequency of use of evidentials in the two sub-corpora

This study took a further step towards looking into how the authors project cited works into their own discourse. It was found that citations are manifested through three different ways: i) occurred on their own (Example 13a); ii) preceded by adjunct agent forms (e.g. *according to*; Example 13b); and iii) materialized by impersonal linguistic expressions, such as *other studies*, *previous research* (Example 13c).

(13a) *In addition,* ***Godoy-Bezerra et al.*** *reported that conditioning the enamel with 10% polyacrylic acid [...].* [Ir16]

(13b) *In addition,* ***according to Navimipour et al.****, the surface treatment of resin-modified glass-ionomer with Er,Cr:YSGG laser increased the bond strength of [...].* [Ir13]

(13c) ***Other studies*** *have evaluated the accuracy of the implant impressions by measuring interim plant distances of working casts [...].* [Int16]

(13d) *The original study population consisted of 72 patients as described in a previous study (****Zitzman et al., 2001****).* [Int10]

The textual analysis of evidence markers also revealed that the two groups of writers make references out of the text to: i) support their new findings (52.3% in the non-Iranian sub-corpus and 45.6% in the Iranian sub-corpus; Examples 14ab); ii) signal a reasonable and credible basis for the topic being studied (37.6% in the non-Iranian sub-corpus and 33.7% in the Iranian sub-corpus; Examples 14cd); and iii) justify experimental procedures applied in their study (20.7% in the Iranian sub-corpus and 10.1% in the non-Iranian sub-corpus; Examples 14ef). The first two discourse functions were evident in both sub-corpora, especially in the RAs written by non-Iranian authors. In contrast, the last use was more prevalent in the Iranian dataset than in the non-Iranian one.

(14a) ***Previous in vitro studies*** *comparing splinted with non-splinted impression techniques* ***also showed that*** *[...].* [Int3]

(14b) ***In a study conducted by Muirhead et al.*** *87% of oral cancer patients* ***also showed*** *expression of Rb protein.* [Ir19]

(14c) ***In a 3-year follow-up report by Hutton et al. (1995)****, the implant failure rate in cases of mandibular implant-supported overdentures was 3.3% [...].* [Int12]

(14d) ***Based on the results of some recent studies*** *the acid-base and photo-initiated free-radical reactions have a reciprocal [...].* [Ir3]

(14e) *All implants were placed using a standardized surgical procedure (****Buser et al. 2000****).* [Int8]

(14f) *This technique* ***was introduced by Torneck in 1966 and confirmed by Olsson et al in 1981****.* [Ir12]

3.5 Frame markers

The results of the frequency analysis show that framing devices used to outline text boundaries and partition the propositional content occurred with a similar frequency in the two sets of data (about 5 cases per 1,000 words; see Table 2). However, the independent samples *t*-test run on the raw frequencies of frame markers as a group yielded a significant difference between the two sets of data, $p = < .001$, $t_{(38)} = 4.29$ (see Table 2). In addition, the textual analysis revealed that frame markers are characterized by various devices used for different discourse functions in the two sets of RAs, albeit to a different extent: i) 'sequencers' (e.g. *first/second/finally*, *a/b*, *1/2*; see Cao & Hu 2014) to order discourse-internal units (47.8% in the Iranian sub-corpus versus 26.4% in the non-Iranian; Examples 15ab); 'announcers' (e.g. *aim [to]*, *focus [on]*, *seek*, *investigate*; see Cao & Hu 2014) to announce discourse goals (60.8% in the non-Iranian sub-corpus versus 29.4% in the Iranian; Examples 15cd); iii) discourse-labels (e.g. *in summary*, *to sum*, *thus far*; see Cao & Hu 2014) to label discourse stages (15.7% vs 9.3% in the Iranian and non-Iranian sub-corpora, respectively; Examples 15ef); and iv) 'topicalizers' (*coming back to*, *as regards*, *turning to*, *concerning*, see Cao & Hu 2014) to shift between topics (7.1% in the Iranian sub-corpus versus 3.5% in the non-Iranian; Examples 15gh).

To compare these frequencies, an independent samples *t*-test on sequencers and a Mann-Whitney *U*-test on announcers, discourse-labels, and topicalizers were run. The Mann-Whitney *U*-test on announcers yielded a significant difference between the two sets of writing, $p = < .001$, $U = 9.00$. Unlike what happened in the case of announcers, no statistically significant differences were found in the incidence of sequencers ($p = .185$, $t_{(38)} = -1.35$, discourse-labels ($p = .458$, $U = 175.00$), and topicalizers ($p = .440$, $U = 174.00$).

	Non-Iranian sub-corpus		**Iranian sub-corpus**			
	Raw	%	Raw	%	Test statistic value	*P* value
Sequencers	91	26.4	107	47.8	$t_{(38)} = -1.35$	.185
Announcers	209	60.8	66	29.4	$U = 9.00$	< .001
Discourse-labels	32	9.3	35	15.7	$U = 175.00$	.458
Topicalizers	12	3.5	16	7.1	$U = 174.00$	.440

Table 7: Frequency of use of frame markers in the two sub-corpora

(15a) *Patients were not accepted into the study if they met any of the following exclusion criteria:* ***1)*** *active infection [...]* ***2)*** *systematic disease [...]* ***3)*** *treatment with radiation [...].* [Int7]

(15b) *In this study application of circumferential and occlusal fibers led to ... which can be explained from two accepts.* ***First****, according to levers principle the anchorage...* ***Second****, in these biaxially braided fibers [...].* [Ir3]

(15c) ***The aim of this study was to*** *investigate whether appropriately designed, screw-retained, full-arch prostheses retained by [...].* [Int1]

(15d) *Therefore,* ***the purpose of this study was to*** *evaluate and compare the expression of cyclin D1 between aggressive and nonaggressive CGCGs of the jaws to define whether [...].* [Ir5]

(15e) ***In general****, all 30 implants achieved good bone augmentation effect in both horizontal and vertical directions before the second-stage surgery [...].* [Int17]

(15f) ***To summarize****, the various chemical components of complex materials, such as RMGIs might give rise to diverse clinical behaviors.* [Ir17]

(15g) ***Coming back to our example**, the VTW of the first curve is 726 Ncm […]. **With respect to** surface topography, numerous experimental and clinical studies have shown that […].* [Int18]

(15h) ***Regarding the clinical types in group II**, most patients had leukoplakia (15 leukoplakia patients, 10 OLP patients, and 5 OSMF patients).* [Ir2]

4 Conclusion

This article reports on a comparative study of IMMs in English dentistry RAs written by Iranian and non-Iranian scholars. Drawing on Hyland's metadiscourse framework, the study examined the use of five types of interactive metadiscourse, together with their sub-types, in a comparable corpus of 40 RAs. The frequency analysis revealed that the Iranian sub-corpus displayed a statistically significant higher inclusion of IMMs as a group than the non-Iranian sub-corpus. The results further showed that the interactive categories and their sub-categories appeared across the corpus and, in most cases, the statistical analyses yielded statistically significant differences between the two sub-corpora.

Concerning the qualitative phase of the study, although most of the uses of IMMs were common in the two sets of RAs, albeit to a different extent, the textual analysis disclosed some rhetorical variations. For instance, 'introducing study descriptively and/or purposively' expressed by endophoric markers proved to be exclusive to the dentistry RAs written by Iranian authors. 'Announcing discourse goals' realized through announcers and 'ordering discourse-internal units' realized through sequencers were the discourse functions of frame markers occurred frequently in the non-Iranian sub-corpus and the Iranian one, respectively. In general, this research has convincingly shown significant differences in the expression of some interpersonal values in English academic written texts in international and national contexts.

Indeed, work on IMMs in academic writing, such as RAs, could give us crucial and practical hints to distinguish discipline-specific pragmatic and socio-rhetorical norms and conventions. The results of the study presented here can also have important implications for scholars who are used to working in different cultural and linguistic contexts. The pedagogical implications of this study should not be overlooked. The results of such studies could be harnessed to i) ameliorate aspects of language pedagogy, such as the teaching and learning of writing, especially RA, for academic purposes; and ii) raise novice writers' awareness of the socio-rhetorical and discursive norms and conventions required to meet the expectations of gatekeepers. However, this is a preliminary study and deserves to be replicated. Possible recommendations to arrive at more conclusive results are broadening the range of features for examination, such as including interactional resources; widening the range of sub-genres of RAs under investigation, such as taking qualitative RAs on board for the analysis of IMMs; and enlarging the corpus.

Notes

[1] To control length variation and allow for the comparison between the two sets of data of unequal sizes, raw frequencies of IMMs were normalized following Biber et al. (1998) [(Raw frequency count/number of words in the text) x 1,000 = normalized frequency count].

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THE FUNCTION OF SCARE QUOTES IN HARD NEWS: METADISCOURSAL AND GENERIC PERSPECTIVES

Zuzana Nádraská

Abstract

This paper is concerned with the issue of scare quoting in British hard news reports. It examines two types of scare quotes distinguished by voice origin – scare quotes originating with the internal voice and scare quotes attributed to an external voice (Dillon 1988, Schneider 2002, Predelli 2003, Bednarek 2006, Meibauer 2015, Nacey 2012). Scare quotes originating with the internal voice are comparable to code glosses (Hyland 2005, 2007) and they reflect the writer's assumptions about the reader's expectations regarding various aspects of the enclosed words, including meaning, register and style. Such scare quotes tend to co-occur with explicit verbal metadiscourse, partial quotes and contextualising authorial discourse with which they create functionally homogenous sections. Scare quotes attributed to an external voice overlap with partial direct quotes but the former are overlayed with an authorial attitude towards the enclosed words or the reported speaker; attitude is induced by the interaction between scare quotes and context, especially generic/discourse patterns such as contrast and repetition. The authorial comment signalled by code glossing and attitudinal quotation marks is implicit and thus in line with hard news generic conventions. The functions of scare quotes bear relevance to the novelty and negativity of reported events and are also reflected in the distribution across the generic structure (Urbanová 2013).

Keywords

scare quotes, hard news, implicitness, reader-writer engagement, metadiscourse

1 Introduction

This paper is a small-scale qualitative study dealing with the phenomenon of scare quoting in British hard news reports. The functions of scare quotes are manifold, ranging from a non-verbal commentary on unexpected, unconventional use of an expression to an implicit signal of authorial attitude; scare quotes are employed with the reader in mind and in line with the accepted generic norms and expectations (Thompson 1994, Schneider 2002, Bednarek 2006, Nacey 2012, Meibauer 2015). This brief description suggests that the examination of scare quotes may benefit from a multi-perspective approach; the present paper aims to address the said phenomenon from two different yet interrelated points of view, delving into the areas of metadiscourse and genre.

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From the metadiscoursal point of view, the paper aims to examine scare quotes as interpersonal resources which signal "interactions between text-producers and their texts and between text producers and users" (Hyland 2010: 125). It adopts the broad interactive perspective introduced in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005). As markers of metadiscourse, quotation marks in scare quotes are explicit but non-verbal and, consequently, the metadiscoursal comment remains implicit and is to be supplied by the reader or emerges as a joint enterprise involving both the writer and the reader. Thus, the analysis of a metadiscoursal function of scare quotes requires a context- and genre-sensitive approach, advocated, for instance, in Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001), Ädel (2018: 778) and Kuhi (2017: 46-47). The present paper tries to comply with this requirement. Moreover, the paper discusses the potential of scare quotes for multifunctionality, especially with regard to the fact that most classifications of metadiscourse functions are based on explicit verbal markers (cf. Kumpf 2000, Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, Herrando-Rodrigo 2010, De Groot et al. 2016).

As mentioned above, a metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes is complemented by a generic perspective. Thus, the aim of the paper is not only to examine scare quotes as resources for reader-writer engagement but as resources which also respect and simultaneously contribute to the generic distinctiveness of hard news. The aim of hard news is to report on events of extra-linguistic reality in a manner that is supposedly objective and impersonal and that backgrounds the voice of both the journalist and the reader (Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008, Turow 2009: 54-57, White 2012). As non-verbal resources evoking implicit authorial comment, quotation marks in scare quotes represent a convenient form of writer intrusion and their employment is completely in line with hard news generic conventions and expectations. The generic analysis adopted in this paper is grounded in *Systemic Functional Linguistics* and follows White (1997, 2012) and Feez et al. (2008); it examines the metadiscoursal role of scare quotes as a manifestation of the following generic variables: the communicative aim, the writer and reader and the nature of their interaction, and, finally, the generic structure.

2 Scare quotes

The definitions of scare quotes (SQ)[1] revolve around the notions of discourse participants and discourse community, social engagement, context, genre and accepted norms and conventions. Schneider (2002: 190) considers SQ a means of "frighten[ing] the reader" and "jolting" them to attend to the way the enclosed words are being employed; they are a tactic writers adopt to achieve a variety of rhetorical goals (ibid.: 204).

SQ can imply a range of attitudes, including criticism, sarcasm, irony, distance and disapproval, and invite the reader to evaluate from their own point of view (Fairclough 1992, Schneider 2002, Predelli 2003, Bednarek 2006, Meibauer 2015). SQ may indicate novelty, tentativeness, the reader's unfamiliarity with the expression or its inappropriateness and inapplicability in the context in which it is employed (Fairclough 1992, Thompson 1994, Bednarek 2006, Predelli 2003, Nacey 2012); SQ can indicate that a non-stereotypical and non-standard interpretation is required (Gutzmann & Stei 2011). Finally, SQ are a means of broadening one's audience and bridging the gap between audiences and respective communities (Schneider 2002).

From the above definitions it follows that the nature of SQ is highly dialogic. Drawing on Dillon (1988), Schneider (2002: 202) suggests that SQ appear in places wherein "a writer struggles to decide from which community she speaks and to whom she is speaking". SQ appear in places which have lost their "monologic innocence" and which function as "boundaries or gates where the words of the other enter, stand, and exit from the discourse" and "where the word merges, recoils, and intersects with the words of others" (Dillon 1988: 68-69).

Examples 1 and 2 illustrate some of the above-mentioned uses of SQ. In all examples the SQ which are relevant to the discussion are marked in bold.

(1) *The "**work capability assessment**" was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme.* (Hope 2010)

(2) *Mr Hayward, who enraged Americans by declaring that he "**wanted his life back**" during the accident and then went yachting around the Isle of Wight while oil was still spewing from the broken Macondo well, will receive a pension valued at £600,000 a year plus a £1 million one-off pay-off.* (Pagnamenta 2010)

In Example 1, the quotation marks (QM) enclose a term from the topical domain of social benefits. They function as a warning or call to attention that the expression may be novel and pertain to a special register.[2] However, the voice of the relevant professional community remains backgrounded and the expression in QM is not interpreted as a direct quote attributable to a specific voice external to the text (EV), e.g. a reported speaker, but as a SQ originating with the internal voice (IV) of the author, i.e. the hard news writer. In Example 2 the words in QM are attributed to a specific EV (*Mr Hayward*) via a reporting verb (*declaring*) and the QM signal that the IV is not responsible for the choice of the quoted words. Due to the presence of the reporting verb, attribution to an EV, QM and the incompleteness of the quoted material, the structure is identical to a partial direct quote (PQ). The PQ is explicitly evaluated and the evaluation is attributed to another EV (*who enraged Americans*). However, despite the author's abdication of responsibility, when the PQ is interpreted in the context of the entire sentence, there seems to be a layer of authorial attitude concerning the quoted words and possibly also the EV (*Mr Hayward*). Authorial attitude is not overtly expressed and stems from the contrast between the content of the quote and the context in which it is embedded. Even though the attitude is not verbalised, it seems decidedly negative, corresponding to disapproval and rejection. The QM thus serve a double purpose: first, they signal that the quoted words belong to the EV; second, they emphasise the quoted words, bring them to the reader's attention and, together with the embedding context, invite the reader to assess for themselves and potentially agree with the author. In this case, the author appropriates the words of others, makes them their own, populates them with their own intention and adapts them to their own purpose (Bakhtin 1981: 293-294). The PQ is not only recycled but allows the writer to take a stance towards the quote (Bublitz 2015: 9).

Papers discussing SQ from various perspectives (semantic, pragmatic, discoursal) are not uniform in their definitions of SQ, especially in connection to a PQ; some find the concepts sufficiently different to maintain a distinction between them while others admit a formal and functional overlap (Thompson 1994, Bednarek 2006, Brendel et al. 2011, Nacey 2012, Landert 2014, Arendholz et al. 2015, Saka & Johnson 2017). The present paper adopts a broader perspective on SQ and takes into account the following cases. First, the words in QM originate with the internal, authorial voice to the exclusion of any specific expressly identified or identifiable EV (Example 1). Second, the words in QM are attributable or explicitly attributed to a specific EV and formally overlapping with reported language; simultaneously, however, the quote is overlayed by attitude originating with the IV (Example 2).

Given the many perspectives on and conceptualisations of SQ, there is also a variety of terms employed to refer to the above-described uses of QM. The most widely applied term, and the one adopted in this paper, is *scare quotes* (Fairclough 1992, Thompson 1994, McDonald 2008, Brendel et al. 2011, Gutzmann & Stei 2011, Nacey 2012, Landert 2014, Meibauer 2015, Saka & Johnson 2017); others include *strategic quotation* (Richardson 2007), *apologetic quotes* (Predelli 2003), *inverted commas* (Dillon 1988) and *non-standard quotes* (Schneider 2002); for a brief terminological overview, see Bednarek (2006) and Dillon (1988).

2.1 Scare quotes in newspaper discourse

The research on SQ in newspaper reporting is not numerous and deals with SQ from different perspectives. Examining SQ from the perspective of evaluation, Bednarek (2006: 182-183) subsumes them within the category of hearsay hedges expressing a range of evaluative values; an important aspect of SQ is that their evaluative strength is highly variable, varying with different contexts and readers. Examining mainland Chinese press, McDonald (2008) adopts an ideological perspective and views SQ as graphic warning signs and means of reiterating symbolic control. Dealing with SQ from the perspective of personalisation in mass communication, Landert (2014: 175, 188-189) sees them as impersonal anonymous quotes enabling the writer to distance themselves from the content and style of the quote (cf. Garretson & Ädel 2008). Nádraská (2015) discusses ambiguities between SQ and PQ in the discourse of hard news from the perspective of blurring the distinction between the internal (SQ) and external voice (PQ); she attributes the potential for ambiguity to generic conventions, and similar formal and pragmatic properties of SQ and PQ. (See Thompson (1994: 161-163), Fairclough (1992: 119-120), Semino and Short (2004: 216-217), Richardson (2007: 102-103) and Musolff (2015) on brief comments on singular examples of SQ.)

The present paper approaches SQ in hard news from two points of view – the point of view of metadiscourse and the point of view of genre, described more fully in Section 2.2.

2.2 Metadiscoursal and generic perspectives on scare quotes

In the discussion of the function of SQ in hard news this paper aims at a fusion of metadiscoursal and generic perspective. The following sections outline the basic concepts related to these analytical frameworks.

2.2.1 Metadiscourse

This paper adopts the broad perspective on metadiscourse described in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005) (cf. Mauranen 1993, Ädel 2006, Ädel & Mauranen 2010). Metadiscourse is a form of engagement between the writer and the reader revealing the former's assumptions regarding the latter's knowledge, believes, values, experience and their subsequent expectations and needs, for instance, for elaboration or clarification. Writers use metadiscourse to negotiate meanings and guide their readers to understand and assess texts in a preferred way and in line with the norms and values accepted within a given discourse community. Writers draw on metadiscoursal resources to express stance towards the content or the reader of the text (Hyland 2005, 2017). Metadiscourse is thus essentially dialogic (Hyland 2005: 13-14).

The metadiscoursal function of non-verbal resources is taken into account, for instance, in Crismore et al. (1993: 48), who "go beyond the 'word'" and include punctuation and typography into metadiscourse because they "can signal text glosses and clarifications as well as uncertainty, certainty, and attitude"; they (ibid.: 54) admit that the inclusion of punctuation into metadiscourse may be a "complication" that is, however, "unavoidable" and provide examples of QM in the function of interpretative markers (a subtype of textual metadiscourse), which serve to caution the reader about the interpretation of the enclosed words (ibid.: 49-50). Herrando-Rodrigo (2010: 260) takes into account non-verbal metadiscourse signals (italics, font, size) since they "represent the writer's or speaker's overt attempt to create a discoursal effect by graphically leading the reader's attention towards certain parts of the discourse". Dafouz-Milne (2003, 2008) notes parentheses and punctuation (dash, colon) in the function of code glosses. On punctuation and typographic devices serving the purpose of clarification, emphasis and attitude marking see also Hyland (1998: 443, 1999: 6, 2005: 52, 53, 2007: 267-276). Kumpf (2000) and De Groot et al. (2015) examine visual metadiscourse and Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001: 1296, 1303-1304) explore non-verbalised picture-text relationships and intertextual or interdiscursive relations.[3]

It will be noticed that the definitions of SQ and metadiscourse both refer to discourse participants, writer-reader engagement and the norms and values accepted within a discourse community. Thus, both concepts are closely related and a metadiscoursal perspective represents a useful analytical framework for the description of the functions of SQ.

Metadiscourse in newspapers has been studied largely from cross-cultural, cross-language or cross-generic perspectives and focus has been placed especially on persuasive writing and writing with a recognised authorial voice such as editorials and opinion articles. The majority of studies examine interpersonal (interactional) and textual (interactive) function of verbal metadiscourse and, if they take into account non-verbal resources, they examine other genres than news reports and do not relate specifically to SQ (e.g. Dafouz-Milne 2003, 2008, Le 2004, Makkonen-Craig 2011, Boshrabadi et al. 2014, Fu & Hyland 2014, Wang & Zhang 2016 Farnia & Mohammadi 2018, Nugroho 2020). Simultaneously, as shown in Section 2.1, the research on SQ in news reports seems fragmentary or has been carried out from different than metadiscoursal perspectives. The main objective of this paper is to fill in this gap and explore the metadiscoursal potential of SQ in hard news.

2.2.2 Genre

In addition to the above-mentioned conceptual overlap between SQ and metadiscourse regarding discourse participants and interaction, the notions of SQ and metadiscourse both refer to aspects of genre. This section aims to describe the genre of hard news in terms of the key variables such as the communicative aim, hard news writer, audience and generic structure. All these aspects manifest themselves in the employment of SQ. The present analysis draws on White (1997, 2012), Feez et al. (2008), and White and Thomson (2008). Alternative approaches to the analysis of hard news include, among others, a narrative approach in Bell (1991), a cognitive approach in van Dijk (1988) and Ungerer (2000, 2002), and the perspective of news values in Bednarek (2016, 2019), and Bednarek and Caple (2014, 2017).

Hard news is a genre whose aim is to identify an event in the extralinguistic reality that is recent, newsworthy and in the majority of cases negative (accidents, criminal acts, natural disasters, war, problems in the sphere of politics, economy etc.) (White 1997: 101-106). Hard news is concerned with socially and otherwise disruptive events that may not have been publicly addressed yet. The aspects of novelty and negativity go hand in hand with hard news discourse being "dialogically 'hot'… contentious and disputatious" (Dillon 1988: 69).

Other issues that are relevant are the author, audience and the interaction between them. Generally, hard news is said to aim at anonymous mass audience that approach hard news texts from heterogenous reading positions. Hard news is characterised by the so-called 'reporter voice', i.e. a kind of authorial key in which the writer is typically backgrounded, subdued or even absent and does not normally participate in certain kinds of explicit appraisal, namely judgement, appreciation and authorial affect. Explicit interaction between the writer and reader is kept to a minimum or avoided altogether (Feez et al. 2008, White 2012, Martin & White 2005: 164-184).

The generic structure of hard news has been described as based on the relation between the nuclear section (i.e. headline(s) and lead) and the body of the text containing a number of functional-generic units, so-called satellites. The headline and lead identify the reported event and provide the angle from which it is portrayed, while the body of the text specifies the nucleus by way of elaboration, contextualisation, evaluation and various cause-effect relations (Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008). Not all nucleus-satellite relations are relevant to the present discussion; let us describe those characterised by the occurrence of SQ. Elaborating satellites repeat, restate in other words, provide more detail or exemplify the information in the nucleus; contextualising satellites provide spatial-temporal and social context, specify events which precede, follow or take place simultaneously with the event in the nucleus or are presented for comparison; appraisals evaluate the nucleus in moral, aesthetic or affective terms; concession, one of the cause-effect relations, provides information that runs contrary to or frustrates the conclusions and expectations following from the nucleus. On further detail on the generic structure see Urbanová (2013) and Nádraská (2016). It will be shown below that the functions of the individual sections in the generic structure bear direct relevance to the occurrence of SQ.

2.2.3 Research objectives

The paper aims to contribute to the following research areas: the presence of authorial voice in hard news and the writer-reader engagement (e.g. White 2012); the function of quotes and SQ in hard news (e.g. Semino & Short 2004, Garretson & Ädel 2008, McDonald 2008, Urbanová 2013, Landert 2014, Nádraská 2015); and the employment of (non-verbal) metadiscourse in news reports (e.g. Boshrabadi et al. 2014, Fu and Hyland 2014, Wang & Zhang 2016, Zhang 2016, Nugroho 2020). The paper has the following research objectives: to determine the discourse functions of SQ in hard news reports; to discuss the possible metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ; and to show the connection between (metadiscoursal) SQ and genre.

3 Data and method

The data were excerpted from a collection of 175 hard news reports (79,945 words) published in four British broadsheet newspapers in 2010 and 2011 (*The Times*, *The Independent*, *The Guardian* and *The Telegraph*). Table 1 summarizes the frequency of occurrence of the two types of SQ, namely those that originate with the internal voice of the journalist (IV, Example 1) and those that are attributed to an external voice and are simultaneously evaluated by the internal voice (EV + IV, Example 2). It also shows the frequency of ambiguities (A, 70) and, for the purpose of comparison, PQ (336). Ambiguous forms include cases in which the context does not provide sufficient cues to determine whether the words in QM belong to the IV or to an EV, or the presence of attitude towards the quoted words is not substantiated discoursally (e.g. by the presence of contrast or repetition) and its postulation would thus be entirely dependent on the reader's position (cf. Nádraská 2015). (See Urbanová (2013) for more information on the corpus.)

Scare quotes		Partial quotes	A (SQ or PQ)
IV	EV + IV	EV	EV or IV
36	56	336	70
92		336	70

Table 1: Frequency of occurrence of scare quotes

Given the overall size of the corpus, the phenomenon of SQ (92) is not very frequent, especially in comparison with PQ (336). However, it deserves attention as it is one of the means contributing to the interpersonality of hard news and the reader-writer interaction.

Each occurrence of QM with the exception of fully direct reported speech was assessed with respect to voice origin – the IV or an EV. In the former case, the quote was interpreted as a SQ and evaluated in terms of discourse function. In the latter case, the potential for implicit authorial attitude, largely negative, was a decisive factor and the primary reason for SQ reading and inclusion in the analysis. In order to postulate attitudinal SQ, there had to be co-textual indicators on the basis of which (implicit) attitudinal interpretation would possibly arise such as contrast between the quote and the embedding context, and/or emphasis effected by the repetition of the quote;[4] PQ without the potential for attitudinal overlay were not considered SQ and were excluded from the analysis. In the case of uncertainty as to voice origin or the presence of attitude, ambiguity was postulated.

Since this is a small-scale study, a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach was adopted. The function of SQ was assessed taking into account close context; the presence of explicit (non-)verbal metadiscourse, PQ and contextualising authorial discourse was noted in the case of SQ originating with the IV and the presence of more extensive discourse/generic patterns such as contrast and repetition was noted in the case of SQ originating with an EV and evaluated implicitly by the IV. In addition, the analysis raises a possibility of a metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ, especially in connection with the non-verbal nature of QM and the implicitness of the authorial comment; for this purpose, the broader interactive approach to metadiscourse presented in Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005, 2007) was adopted. Furthermore, in the interpretation of the (meta-)discoursal functions of SQ, the generic variables such as the communicative aim of hard news, the voice of discourse participants and the interaction between them were taken into account. Moreover, SQ were assessed with respect to their distribution across the generic structure; a distinction was made between their occurrence in the headline/lead (nucleus) and in the body of the text, including the satellite type (White 2000, 2012, Feez et al. 2008, Urbanová 2013).

4 Results of the analysis

This section aims to present the results of the analysis. Sections 4.1 and 4.2 deal with instances of SQ originating with the IV and EV, respectively.

4.1 Functions of scare quotes: The quote originates with the internal voice

This section deals with SQ in which the words are, despite the presence of QM, attributed to the authorial voice (36 instances).

The use of SQ in the examples below seems to be motivated by the writer's assumptions about the reader's expectations regarding the following aspects: terminology and register-specific meaning (military and scientific register in Examples 3 and 4, respectively), a lower level of formality than would be expected in hard news (Example 5), figurative language (Example 6), foreign provenance (Example 7) and a context-specific interpretation (Example 8).

(3) *Staff Sergeant Brett Linley, a "**high-threat operator**", was killed while carrying out a bomb disposal operation.* (Coghlan 2010)

(4) *In the North Atlantic phytoplankton "**blooms**" naturally in spring and autumn when ocean storms bring nutrients to the surface.* (Connor 2010)

(5) *In what appeared yesterday to be a "**tit for tat**" alert, the French government warned its citizens that it was "very likely" public transport and tourist sites in the UK would be hit and that they should be "extremely vigilant".*
On Sunday the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its terror alert level from "general" to "high" for travellers to France and Germany. (Norton-Taylor 2010)

(6) *The British delegation has "**fanned out**" across India, with representatives of leading financial companies accompanying George Osborne, the Chancellor, to Mumbai.* (Prince 2010)

(7) *In a tense, historic vote, Catalonia's regional parliament yesterday banned Spain's "**national fiesta**" – bullfighting, handing a victory to animal rights activist, who predicted the start of a bloodless era across the country.* (Brooks 2010)

(8) *The Rodney case was one reason the last government tried to change the law to allow "**secret**" inquests to be held. The police belief that Ripa [Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act] <u>meant</u> they could not share material from intercepts with unauthorised persons also <u>meant</u> that officers were told by their bosses to give incomplete statements to an investigation into the death conducted by the Independent Police Complaints Commission.* (Dodd 2010)

The motivations for the use of QM in some of the examples are reflected in the near context, which specifies and elaborates on the enclosed words (*bullfighting* in Example 7) and by providing additional background information also explains the words' (local) meaning and use (Examples 3, 5 and 8). In Example 3, the meaning of "*high-threat operator*" is suggested *by carrying out a bomb disposal operation*; in Example 8, the local meaning is to be derived from the co-text ("*secret*" means *not sharing evidence* and *giving incomplete statements*); in Example 5, the expression in QM ("*tit for tat*") does not only summarize and encapsulate the following passage but, in addition to it, also evaluates it (note also the epistemic evaluation expressed by the verb *appeared*). Moreover, the expressions in Examples 7 and 8 are accompanied by non-verbal (a dash) and verbal (*meant*) markers of metadiscourse (underlined), namely code glosses; code glosses paraphrase, explain or elaborate on potentially problematic words and thus expand the reader's understanding of the expressions (Vande Kopple 1985, Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 2005, 2007).

The motivations for the use of SQ fall into two major categories, namely meaning (77%) and style (16%). The former includes instances with register specific meaning (Examples 1, 3 and 4), figurative meaning (Example 6) or meaning restricted to the local context (Example 8); the latter includes especially expressions associated with informal style (Example 5); the remaining occurrences (7%) seem to be motivated by mostly singular reasons such as foreign provenance (Example 7), emphasis and/or implicit authorial attitude ("*quality*" in Example 11 below) or new coinage ("*fit to work test*" in Example 9 below). In addition, it must be emphasised that the ratios are only approximate since, rather than being mutually exclusive, the individual motivations for the use of SQ are inter-related and operating simultaneously.

4.1.1 Interaction between scare quotes and context

This section aims to explore more deeply the interaction between SQ and context, in particular authorial discourse, non-verbal and verbal metadiscourse and PQ. It will be shown that these aspects pattern in order to create coherent, functionally homogenous passages. For the description of the examples the following conventions are used: SQ are marked in bold and explicit verbal metadiscourse markers are underlined.

Example 9 illustrates a combination of explanatory authorial discourse, explicit verbal metadiscourse and SQ employed in different parts of the report.

(9) *Fit to work test blocks 76pc of benefit claims* (headline)
*More than three out of four applicants for sickness benefits are being turned away or have stopped claiming altogether because of a new "**fit to work**" test.* (lead)
*The "**work capability assessment**" was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme.*
....
*A further 14 per cent were transferred to a "**work related group**", which meant that, while they were too ill to work at present, they could return to work in the future.* (body of text: elaboration) (Hope 2010)

The SQ expressions in Example 9 come from the domain of unemployment and social benefits. The Lead introduces a concept referred to by an interpretative popularising expression coined by the IV and enclosed in QM ("*fit to work test*"); the same expression also appears in the headline but without the accompanying QM, probably due to a greater tolerance in headlines for more expressive, vivid and informal language than would be acceptable in other parts of the text. The novelty of both the concept and the form expressing it is reflected in the pre-modification (new). In the body of the text, the concept is referred to by an official term enclosed in QM ("*work capability assessment*"). The reasons for the use of SQ in the lead and in the body of the text are thus not identical – the popularising and unofficial expression in the former case and a terminological expression with a register-specific meaning in the latter. The SQ is contextualised by a section of authorial discourse (*was introduced in October 2008 along with the employment and support allowance, which replaced the incapacity benefit scheme*), which provides background information and enhances the reader's understanding of the reported event. The body of the text contains another SQ term from the same topical domain ("*work related group*") accompanied by contextualising, meaning-descriptive comments (*while they were too ill to work at present, they could return to work in the future*) to which the term is linked by an instance of verbal metadiscourse (*which meant that*); it is a case of consequential mean, a type of impersonal code gloss guiding the reader to proper interpretation and taking part in the overall contextualising function of the passage; its meaning can be paraphrased as "the consequences of X are Y" (Ädel 2006: 114).[5]

Example 10 is a complex passage featuring SQ, PQ, non-verbal metadiscourse (dash), verbal metadiscourse, explanatory authorial discourse and a passage that is ambiguous (A) between the PQ and SQ interpretation (A: EV or IV).

(10) *Briton killed by US drone 'had wanted to attack UK'* (headline)
*On Sunday the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its terror alert level from "general" to "high" for travellers to France and Germany. However, the official British terror threat level remained at "**severe**" <u>meaning</u> an attack was "**highly likely**"* (A: EV or IV). *This is the second highest level. "**Critical**" – <u>suggesting</u> an attack may be imminent – is the highest.* (body of text: contextualisation) (Norton-Taylor 2010)

The PQ (*the British Foreign Office in Britain raised its…*) serves to introduce two terms from the topical domain of national security ("*general*", "*high*") and attributes responsibility to the EV via the reporting verb and QM. The ambiguous passage displays a verb referring to the past (*remained*) but contains no explicit reporting expression; it is located between the preceding unambiguous PQ and the following authorial discourse and seems to represent a fuzzy middle ground in which one mode of presentation seeps into another and which is characterised by the mixing and blurring of voices. In contrast to the verb *mean* in Example 9, *mean* in Example 10 facilitates the definition of the term ("*severe*") and is thus "more explicitly metalinguistic" than the *consequential* type in example 9 (Ädel 2006: 114). It illustrates the *definitional* type of the code glossing *mean*, whose function can be paraphrased as "the definition/linguistic meaning of X is Y" (ibid.). The ensuing authorial discourse offers background information regarding the expression (*This is the second highest level.*). The final section of authorial discourse features a related SQ term ("*critical*") accompanied by non-verbal (dash) and verbal (*suggesting*) metadiscourse markers which facilitate the definition of the term and provide comparison with the term introduced previously ("*severe*").

Example 11 demonstrates a SQ co-occurring with an explicit marker of metadiscourse (so-called), possibly indicating that the IV and/or the reader would not use the expression in the same way, especially in the context of defending the use of subterfuge in journalistic practice; the SQ can thus be the source of implicit attitude.

(11) *Subterfuge can be in public interest, Guardian reporter tells press inquiry* (headline)
*Referring to the so-called "**quality**" press, Leigh said: "Most of the time we are extremely well-behaved."* (body of text: elaboration) (Robinson 2011)

In Examples 9-11 above SQ work in tandem with means which complement and build upon each other and contribute to the functionality of the whole section of discourse. Out of the total of 36 SQ attributed to the IV, ten are accompanied by verbal and two by non-verbal metadiscourse markers with a code glossing function (33.3%), 23 (63.9%) are embedded in authorial discourse providing background information or explanation, and six (16.7%) appear in the context of PQ.[6] While QM in both SQ and PQ highlight the expressions and draw the reader's attention to them, PQ, in contrast to SQ, shift primary responsibility to an EV. The occurrence of SQ in the near context of non-verbal and verbal metadiscourse with a similar function shows that SQ themselves may be, to some extent, viewed as metadiscoursal in nature, an issue discussed in Section 4.1.2 below. The importance of semantic and lexical patterning involving metadiscourse is discussed, for instance, in Bondi (2010).

4.1.2 A metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes originating with the internal voice

As shown above, SQ accompany metadiscourse markers or function metadiscoursally on their own (Examples 1, 3-6). Due to the non-verbal nature of QM, any (metadiscoursal) comment is necessarily implicit. Possible attempts at the verbalisation of the implicit comments in Examples 3-11 could run as follows:

- *I'm using a word from a specific field, sphere of life or profession.*
- *This word has a figurative meaning.*
- *This expression is less formal than could be expected.*
- *This expression has a non-standard, context-specific meaning.*

As follows from Examples 3-11 and the hypothetical comments above, the use of QM in these contexts seems close to code glosses. Code glosses contribute to "the creation of coherent, reader-friendly prose while conveying the writer's audience-sensitivity and relationship to the message" (Hyland 2007: 266). Code glosses paraphrase, explain, define or elaborate on the words the writer believes the reader may find problematic and guide the reader in the comprehension and correct interpretation of the writer's intended meaning (Vande Kopple 1985: 84, Crismore et al. 1993: 46, 49, Hyland 2005: 52). Code glosses increase the communicative effectiveness of the text and display the writer's perception of the reader as a member of a discourse community characterised by certain knowledge, understandings and intertextual experience (Hyland 2007: 284).

However, due to the non-verbal nature of QM and the absence of explicit metadiscoursal comment, a question arises whether implicitness could leave room for a different functional interpretation or polyfunctionality, a feature of (explicit, verbal) metadiscourse noted by various authors (Crismore et al. 1993: 41, Dafouz-Milne 2003: 35-36, Ädel 2006: 24, 2008: 100, Hyland 2017: 18). For instance, if QM were interpreted as an appeal to the reader to approach and understand the enclosed words in a particular way, they could be seen as implicit engagement markers, defined as devices which address readers and engage them as discourse participants (Hyland 2005: 53-54) (cf. Herrando-Rodrigo 2010).

- *Be careful about the expression in QM.*
- *Please pay attention to the special/novel/context-specific use of the word in QM.*

In addition, QM may be interpreted as indicating the author's assessment of the enclosed words, which makes the implicit comment similar to attitude markers, defined as conveyers of attitude towards the propositional content, reader or style of the text (Crismore et al. 1993: 53, Hyland 2005: 53). In the function of attitude markers QM may express doubt or uncertainty regarding the use of the quoted words; according to Predelli (2003), SQ are a form of apology on the part of the IV.

The implicitness of the metadiscoursal comment and the consequent potential for multifunctionality go hand in hand with the resources that accompany SQ. First, metadiscourse markers co-occurring with SQ are either non-verbal and thus equally implicit (dash) or impersonal, avoiding explicit reference to either the IV or the reader (*which means*/*meant*, *meaning*, *suggesting*, *so-called*, *known as*) (Ädel 2006). Moreover, different instances of impersonal metadiscourse manifest different degrees of metalinguistic element such as the *consequential mean* (Example 9) that is less explicitly metalinguistic than the *definitional mean* (Example 10) (Ädel 2006: 113-114). Second, even though the explanatory contextualising passages originate with the IV, they do not put the IV into the foreground (cf. contextualising personal metadiscourse such as *I have chosen this subject because* …. in Ädel 2006: 60, 64-66). Similarly, the words in PQ are attributed to an EV to the exclusion of the IV.

In summary, SQ pattern with means which are functionally compatible and/or complementary and the function of the individual elements in the pattern crystalises when they are interpreted together. None of the means brings either the IV or the reader to the foreground and implicitness creates the potential for polyfunctionality, which can be exploited by the reader to interpret SQ in a manner that is in agreement with their own reading position and that they find appropriate and acceptable. The non-verbal nature of QM leads to functional implicitness and is tightly linked to the implicitness of hard news discourse participants. The co-occurrence of SQ with non-verbal or impersonal verbal metadiscourse, PQ and especially the incorporation of SQ into non-metadiscoursal authorial discourse disguise the interactional as the ideational and conceal to some extent the engagement between the writer and the reader.[7]

4.2 Functions of scare quotes: the quote originates with an external voice

In the broader conception of SQ and the one adopted in this paper, SQ serve to express attitude on the part of the writer. As noted by Meibauer (2015: 196), there has to be a motive for the reporting speaker to select from an original more extensive quote only a short string of words, and this motive tends to be the expression of attitude and the invitation to the reader to share it. This section examines the use of SQ in structures which are formally identical with reported language, namely PQ, but which simultaneously create potential for the expression of authorial attitude, which is predominantly negative such as sneer, irony or disagreement (Example 2). Let us discuss the examples first.

(12) *US files contain names and locations of secret sources* (headline)
Hundreds of Afghan lives have been put at risk by the leaking of 90,000 intelligence documents because the files identify informants working with Nato forces. (lead)
*He [Julian Assange] claimed that WikiLeaks had implemented a "**harm-minimisation policy**" to weed out documents that could endanger the lives of Afghans.* (body of text: concession) (Coghlan & Whittell 2010)

(13) *Taliban condemns murder of Shia worshippers* (headline)

*In an emailed statement, the movement [the Taliban] described the attacks as "un-Islamic" and blamed the "**invading enemy**", one of the terms they use to describe US-led Nato forces.* (body of text: elaboration) (Boone & Shah 2010)

(14) *How pencil lead and sticky tape led to Nobel Prize* (headline)
*THE discovery of a wonder material while "**mucking about in the lab**" has won two British-based scientists the Nobel Prize in Physics.* (lead) (Alleyene 2010)

The plausible motivations for direct quotation (and explicit attribution in Examples 12 and 13) are a register-specific meaning (intelligence security) in Example 12, an ideologically laden expression in Example 13 and an informal expression suggesting familiarity with the described situation in Example 14. Direct quotation enables the IV to abdicate responsibility and shift it to the EV, which is especially important when the expressed stance is incompatible with the expected neutral stance of the IV.

Although the IV evades responsibility for the quoted words, they seem to take a stance, though implicit, towards the words in QM and/or the reported speaker. In Example 12, the SQ provides information that frustrates the conclusions and expectations following from the headline/lead (*Files identify informants so WikiLeaks has not implemented a "harm-minimisation policy".*). The concessive meaning is likely to produce disagreement, doubt or disbelief on the part of the IV (or the reader) regarding the content of the SQ utterance.[8] In Example 13, the contrast resides in the two referring expressions ("*invading enemy*" and *US-led*

Nato forces) and the ideological standing they express, the negative evaluation being based on the division between *them* and *us*. In Example 14, the contrast obtains between the extraordinary achievement and recognition on the one hand (*Nobel Prize*), and the simplifying, modest perspective and the informal, personal stance of the EV on the other (*pencil lead*, *sticky tape*, "*mucking about in the lab*"), resulting in a positive and humorous attitude; both points of view are presented in the headline and the contrast between them recurs also in the body of the text.

In Example 15, the attitude is potentially triggered by the repetition of the SQ and the contrast between the SQ and the information in the headline/lead.

(15) *Observers kept away from the worst of violence, say activists* (headline)
The role and effectiveness of Arab League observers in Syria was cast into doubt yesterday amid reports that members of the mission have not had unfettered access to cities in rebellion. (lead)
*Comments by General Mohammed Ahmad Mustafa Dabi, the head of the delegation, that the initial assessment of the situation in the restive city of Homs was "**reassuring**" added to the sense of unease.* (body of text: contextualisation)
….
*Their concerns were heightened by comments from General Dabi, ..., who said that the situation in Homs seemed "**reassuring so far**".* (body of text: contextualisation) (Blanford 2011)

In Example 15, dealing with the role of Arab League observers in Syria, the expressions in QM occur in two separate satellites in the body of the text which contextualise the speech events in the headline/lead by providing statements made by a different EV (*Comments by General Dabi that the situation was "reassuring" added to the sense of unease.*). The words flanked by QM receive emphasis on account of their brevity, recurrence across the text in an almost identical form (*reassuring*) and contrast with what has been selected as the central issue and described in the headline/lead (*Arab League observers have not had full access to violence.*). The combination of these factors may give rise to an implicit negative attitude (disbelief, reservation, scepticism, incredulity) to the words in QM and/or the reported speaker on the part of the IV and possibly also the reader.

As mentioned, the attitude in Examples 12-15 is implicit and merely a potential that materialises on the basis of the interaction (clash) between the quoted words and context. The main contribution of QM to the implication of attitude is that they draw attention to the selected words and endow them with special salience, conspicuousness and newsworthiness, the relevance and prominence of the quote being further underlined by its brevity and conciseness.

SQ/QM function as markers of dialogicity and facilitate the dialogic battle between divergent voices.

4.2.1 A metadiscoursal perspective on scare quotes originating with an external voice

This section raises the possibility of a metadiscoursal interpretation of SQ originating with an EV that would be parallel to the metadiscoursal perspective on SQ originating with the IV. In Examples 12-15, together with the verbal reporting expressions (*claimed* in 12, *blamed* in 13 and *comments* in 15), the QM function as evidential markers serving to attribute content to another source (Crismore et al. 1993, Hyland 2005: 51-52). They instruct the reader where to find the boundary between the IV and the EV and indicate that the enclosed words express the deictic and speech-functional perspective of the reported situation and that they represent faithful reports with regard to the expected degree of faithfulness determined by the generic conventions (Short et al. 2002). Thus the QM are used with explicit verbal evidentials to narrow down the evidential meaning.

However, as noted above, the presence of implicit attitudinal comment was the reason for distinguishing attitudinal SQ from regular PQ. Even though implicitness precludes an exact specification of authorial attitude, in the majority of cases it is decidedly negative (but see Example 14). Attempts at verbalisation can possibly result in the following:

- *In the context of what has been said, I find the words of the EV humorous/unbelievable/ immoral etc.*
- *I don't agree with the EV.*
- *"This is what he said, but I do not know whether he was right or not."* (Thompson 1994: 52).

With the above attitudinal comments in mind, QM in attitudinal SQ can be compared to attitude markers, serving to express the writer's stance towards the propositional content, the reader or the style of the text (Crismore et al. 1993: 53, Hyland 2005: 53). Simultaneously, however, implicitness allows for the possibility of an alternative interpretation: similarly to code glossing SQ, attitude signalling SQ can be seen as engagement markers, serving as an appeal to the reader to form their own opinion (Hyland 2005: 53-54, cf. Herrando-Rodrigo 2010).

- *I don't agree with the EV – please judge for yourself.*
- *Pay attention to the words I have highlighted – do you agree?*

As has been emphasised before, implicitness is of great significance since it renders the presence of authorial comment a mere potentiality and grants the reader the freedom to decide whether or not they will interpret SQ as an appeal to engage in evaluation. Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that the presence of attitude does not reside in QM inherently but arises out of the combination of factors and is fundamentally dependent on the interplay between QM, quoted words and aspects of context. In other words, the primary evidential function of QM is only potentially exploited for the secondary role of an attitude or engagement marker.

5 Scare quotes from the point of view of the generic characteristics of hard news

The examination of SQ has shown that their use is tightly bound to genre and generic conventions. As mentioned, hard news deals with recent, primarily negative and contentious events (White 1997). This requires the evocation of different EVs and the presentation of different points of view. Even though verbal and non-verbal markers of evidentiality normally serve this function, SQ occur in contexts in which novelty requires explanation or background information or in which novelty concerns the aspects of register and style (Examples 3-10); additionally, SQ highlight evaluations or concepts that are deemed likely to cause controversy, disagreement and opposition (Examples 11-13, 15).

Regarding the hard news reader, code glossing SQ cater to the presumption of lay, non-expert audience lacking in a unified background which knits together more specialised and professional communities. Attitude signalling SQ cater to the ideological diversity of the audience. The mass character and anonymity of hard news readership is not compatible with explicit and functionally determinate appeal reflecting more concrete and specific assumptions about the reader. According to Meibauer (2015: 202), an important aspect of SQ is that they are not inherently evaluative but, given a suitable context, they allow the reader to evaluate from their own point of view. Consequently, the final text is co-produced by the author and members of the audience (Hyland 2005: 13); the text is not merely "constructed with the reader's needs in mind, but … jointly constructed, with communicative space being left for the readers to contribute to the achievement of the texts' goals" (Thompson 2001: 62).

Concerning the subdued and backgrounded reporter voice (White 2012), the author draws on attitudinal SQ as inexplicit resources of evaluation in order to create room for the expression of authorial stance. Implicit evaluation on the part of the author and/or reader results from the interaction between QM that serve to focus attention on the enclosed words, the brevity and content of the quote, and the discourse and generic patterns such as repetition and contrast.

The above outlined functions also manifest themselves in the distribution of SQ across the hard news generic structure (White 2000, Feez et al. 2008, White & Thompson 2008). SQ appear in sections whose overall generic functions correspond to the individual functions of SQ. The distribution shows the following tendencies: out of the total of 92 code glossing and attitudinal SQ, eleven (12%) have been found in the nuclear headline/lead, i.e. sections which serve to identify the newsworthy event and display a high degree of novelty; 38 instances (41.3%) have been found in satellites that elaborate (i.e. repeat, restate or provide more detail) on the nucleus; and 34 SQ (36.9%) have been found in satellites that contextualise the event reported in the headline/lead. While attitudinal SQ show a slightly stronger preference for elaborating (22) than for contextualising (18) satellites, the distribution of code glossing SQ in elaborations (16) and contextualisations (16) is even. In addition, attitudinal SQ (9 instances, 9.8%) appear in satellites which express appraisal, concession and other types of contrast. Consequently, the distribution of SQ corroborates the connection between code glossing SQ, recency, novelty and the need to explain and provide background information in order to secure the reader's understanding on the one hand, and the connection between attitude signalling SQ, negativity, recency and the need to indicate a possible controversial nature of the expressions. The above examples illustrate the following distribution of SQ: the lead (Examples 9 and 14), elaboration (Examples 9 and 13), contextualisation (Examples 10 and 15), and a concessive satellite (Example 12).

Regarding the discussed discourse/generic patterns, repetition, which contributes to the salience of SQ and is a potential source of implied attitude, represents the fundamental relation between the nuclear headline/lead and elaborating satellites, or between satellites with other functions with respect to the nucleus that, however, recur across the text (e.g. recurrent contextualisations in Example 15). Contrast, another salient relation and the source of potential attitude, is found mainly between the headline/lead, and concessive or contextualising satellites (Examples 12 and 15, respectively); the contrast obtaining between the statements in the headline/lead and in the body of the text is of vital importance since it produces opposition against the voices, points of view or interpretations selected as the central, nuclear issue.

6 Conclusion

The present paper attempts to show how SQ are employed in hard news reports in order to create the potential for implicit authorial comment. The paper distinguishes between SQ originating with the IV and SQ originating with an EV, the latter being simultaneously evaluated by the IV.

The paper raises the question of interpreting QM in SQ as non-verbal markers of metadiscourse: QM which flank authorial discourse work as code glosses, while QM enclosing external discourse work as attitude markers. However, since the sole presence of QM is not sufficient to indicate attitude but its stipulation depends heavily on the interaction between SQ and context, the metadiscoursal interpretation of attitude signalling QM seems more tenuous. While attitude signalling SQ are often embedded in the context characterised by contrast and repetition, code glossing SQ may but do not have to co-occur with other means that help evoke an implicit authorial comment, including contextualising authorial discourse, explicit verbal metadiscourse or PQ. In addition, the implicitness of the metadiscoursal comment may allow for multiple functionality; for instance, QM can also be interpreted as engagement markers.

The functions of SQ reflect the novelty and negativity of reported events and respect the backgrounded nature of discourse participants, and the subtleness and indirectness of writer-reader engagement. Implicitness is of vital importance as it helps achieve a seemingly objective and impersonal discourse which presents authorial comment as a mere potentiality, leaves room for multi-functionality and invites the reader to make their own opinion. The functions of SQ are also reflected in the distribution across the generic structure; the functions of SQ match those of the nucleus and corresponding satellites.

This research has implications for the study of ideology and implicit authorial stance in hard news and in general. It shows that in the absence of explicit evaluation hard news writers can still indicate attitude and bias by effective voice management and careful orchestration of discourse. Moreover, the study carries theoretical implications for the delimitation of metadiscourse and the repertoire of potential, especially non-verbal, metadiscoursal resources; it demonstrates the need to consider genre in the identification and assessment of means with a metadiscoursal function.

Due to the limited amount of data, the results need to be corroborated by further research. More attention could also be paid to the interaction between QM and other signals of authorial intrusion in addition to verbal and non-verbal metadiscourse. Furthermore, contrastive approach to the study of SQ could emphasise functional differences between the use of SQ in different genres and languages and shed more light on their employment.

Notes

1 The abbreviation *SQ* is used to refer to *scare quote(s), scare quoting and scare quoted*.

2 See Biber and Conrad (2009) on the distinction between register, style and genre. *Topic*, or *topical domai*n, is one of the aspects of the situational characteristics of registers influencing especially the choice of vocabulary (Biber & Conrad 2009: 40, 46-47).

3 There are a number of studies which provide examples of SQ accompanying verbal or non-verbal metadiscourse but without any comment on their occurrence (Ädel 2006: 110, 114, 117, 2010: 84, Hyland 2007: 267-276, Bondi 2010: 104, Molino 2010: 91-97, Guziurová 2020: 46). This, in some cases, stems from the fact that the authors apply the narrow text-reflexive model of metadiscourse, which is confined to explicit verbal metadiscourse (Mauranen 1993, Ädel 2006).

4 In the case of repetition, each occurrence of SQ was counted separately. See Example 15.

5 In a different newspaper report on the same topic the same strategy is adopted and the new concept is referred to by a popularising SQ expression ("back to work" test). However, in contrast to Example 9, other terms are not SQ but attributed to an EV in a PQ, absolving the IV from responsibility (*The report says this "automatic entitlement" has encouraged dependency on benefits ...*).

6 The context examined for the co-occurrence of SQ with metadiscourse markers, contextualising authorial passages and PQ was delimited by satellite boundary (White 2000, Feez et al. 2008, White &Thompson 2008).

7 The tentative observations presented here are consistent with more extensive studies, including Zhang (2016), who shows that metadiscourse markers in the press are infrequent and seldom reveal the writer's presence.

8 In Example 12 the author's reservation about the reported content is expressed more explicitly by the reporting verb (*claimed*).

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REQUEST STRATEGIES AND MODIFICATION DEVICES AS PERFORMED BY CZECH EFL LEARNERS: A FOCUS ON BORROWING OBJECTS

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Abstract

This study presents an analysis of informal written requests from the national school-leaving exam and simulated spoken requests collected via Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT) to describe pragmalinguistic features used by Czech EFL learners in requests for borrowing objects. In both types of data, the findings reveal strong preference for conventionally indirect strategies and external modification, but considerable underuse of softeners within head acts. The written requests show significant reiteration with a great deal of modification devices outside head acts and a higher proportion of face-threatening features, such as expectations and direct strategies realized by want statements and imperatives. The WDCT requests tend to employ more face-saving strategies but show less variability in request realization. Consequently, awareness raising activities, helping Czech EFL learners fully understand the face-threatening nature of requests, as well as explicit metapragmatic treatment, focusing on strategic use of requests constituents, are recommended.

Keywords

request strategies, politeness, head acts, internal modification, external modification, pragmatic competence

1 Introduction

In English, requests are regarded as the most impositive speech acts (Martínez-Flor 2003) that frequently occur in everyday interaction. To avoid being considered rude, they should be realized in a polite and contextually appropriate way. However, the concept of politeness differs across languages (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989), so acquiring pragmatic competence is an indispensable condition for L2 learners to become communicatively competent in the target language (Kasper 2001). Participation in L2 discourse practices is a useful way to gain the required socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge, but not all members of the target speech community behave in accordance with the shared principles

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with respect to the degree of politeness. Moreover, the EFL context hardly offers sufficient exposure to target community practices (Alcón Soler et al. 2005), so learners are dependent on teachers to make the pragmatic feature salient and learnable by means of explicit metapragmatic treatment.

This is further supported by solid evidence suggesting that explicit pragmatic teaching can have a positive effect on L2 learners' pragmatic awareness and competence (e.g. Takahashi 2001, Alcón Soler et al. 2005, Economidou-Kogetsidis et al. 2018). However, most English language course books at lower proficiency levels tend to rely on implicit teaching and present speech acts using a large number of examples that are appropriate in particular communicative situations. Teachers' manuals hardly ever contain detailed explanation of principles underlying the use of individual speech acts. This can be attributed to the fact that course book writers producing a global product are unable to foresee how speech acts and politeness principles differ across the respective mother tongues of the learners who are likely to use the course book.

Hence, this paper responds to the lack of knowledge concerning pragmalinguistic variation between Czech and English languages and its findings can be instantly exploited in the process of devising teaching materials for pragmatic treatment of requests for borrowing objects. The originality of the current research lies in the use of two different samples collected via two elicitation methods which enabled us to provide a detailed and more reliable description of the written as well as simulated spoken requests and also to focus on the extremely under-researched area of pragmatics in secondary-school L2 production.

As a basis for subsequent metapragmatic treatment, it is essential to gain solid evidence concerning the extent to which Czech EFL learners use request constituents appropriately, and to identify the areas that require special attention in English language instruction.

Accordingly, the aims of the study were as follows:

- To determine which requesting strategies and mitigating devices Czech students of English at B1/B2 levels use when they need to borrow an object in an informal situation;
- To compare request constituents used in written and spoken requests;
- To identify the appropriate and inappropriate features in relation to native English speakers' expectations;
- To ascertain which particular requestive behaviour needs to be addressed in teaching.

2 The speech act of request

Requests belong to the category of directives (Searle 1975) because their function is to get the hearer to do something which is in the interest of the speaker and which the hearer would not normally do because it requires a certain effort (Brown & Levinson 1987). The hearer is thus under pressure either to grant or not to grant the favour and can be in danger of losing face because their self-esteem is threatened (Goffman 1971). For this reason, requests are regarded as face-threatening acts, i.e. acts in which the hearer's freedom of action is restricted by imposition and their right to non-distraction is violated (Brown & Levinson 1987).

Since the speaker does not want to lose face, i.e. public self-image, by being rejected and at the same time wants both to compensate for their impositive effect and to prevent the hearer from losing face, it is necessary to formulate the request in a socially and culturally appropriate way, i.e. by means of face-saving strategies or face-work. The face-work is most frequently realized within the core of the request, termed head act, which is the smallest unit of utterance that can realize the request independently. Based on contextual factors, such as the degree of imposition, the relative power of the hearer and the social distance between the speaker and the hearer, the speaker chooses the most appropriate request realization from three major strategies, differing by the extent to which the illocution is transparent from locution, which are: 1) direct requests, 2) conventionally indirect requests, and 3) non-conventionally indirect requests (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984).

Direct forms of requests are employed when the speaker states without ambiguity what the hearer is required to do. They include imperatives (i.e. mood derivables), performatives, hedged performatives, expressions implying obligation, wishes, and declarative sentences containing the verbs *want* and *need* (i.e. want statements) (ibid.). Their main focus is clarity and efficiency, but they pay very little attention to face (Brown & Levinson 1987).

Conventionally indirect requests consist of formulaic expressions carrying implicit meaning which would hardly be deducible solely from the linguistic form without the particular context. These routinized expressions, query preparatory (QP) and suggestory formulae, which are "less direct, potentially less clear, generally longer, and with a more complex structure" (Yule 1996: 65), are valued not only for giving the hearer an option to refuse without losing face and/or distancing the request from reality, but also because they show that the speaker has made "a greater effort, in terms of concern for face (i.e. politeness), than is needed simply to get the basic message across efficiently" (ibid.). A request becomes in effect indirect, "when it shifts to a question form and, most commonly, makes use of some modal form" (Eskin 2017: 54) as questions give the hearer the option to say no, or at least make it less obvious that the hearer is expected to comply. Politeness is considerably increased when questions about the hearer's ability are employed because people can hardly be blamed for inability to carry out the speaker's wish.

Non-conventionally indirect requests (i.e. strong or mild hints) avoid naming the desired action explicitly. As they refer only partially to one or more of its aspects, the hearer is expected to assume the illocution from the interaction of the locution with the context. In this case, the hearer has an option to pretend not to have noticed the request.

Request structure	**PRE-HEAD ACT**	**HEAD ACT**	**POST-HEAD ACT**
	peripheral constituents	**core**	**peripheral constituents**
Example (written requests)	*Hi David, Listen,*	*I would need your bicycle, please.*	*My car is broken and I am not able to get to school in any other way.*
Modification devices	EMDs: e.g. attention-getters preparators disarmers apology	IMDs: e.g. *if*-clauses softeners openers fillers intensifiers *please*	EMDs: e.g. cost minimisers grounders expanders expressing gratitude promises of reward concluding expressions

Table 1: Request structure (adapted from Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1984: 200)

The requests are further "redressed, modified, or made less direct in order to soften their illocutionary force" (Eskin 2017: 52), which can be seen in Table 1. At the sentential level (i.e. within the head act itself or closely linked to it), they can be softened or intensified by internal modification devices (IMDs), such as syntactic and lexical modifiers and point of view orientation. At the discourse level, they tend to be mitigated by external (peripheral) modification devices (EMDs), also called adjuncts or supportive moves, which appear in the immediate linguistic context surrounding the head act. British English native speakers consider internal modification obligatory, but external modification is viewed as optional (Faerch & Kasper 1989), providing support and setting the request in context (Halupka-Rešetar 2014). Neither internal nor external modification devices have the potential to affect the level of directness, but both mitigate the face-threatening impact of the request and perform face-saving functions, which are oriented either to a person's negative face, i.e. the right to independence of action, or to a person's positive face, i.e. the need to be accepted and liked by others.

Functioning as IMDs, syntactic downgraders (e.g. interrogative sentences, *if*-clauses, past tense, past-tense modals) modulate the illocutionary force of requests by downtoning the expectations as to their fulfilment. Their implicit softening effect is not inherent in the grammatical meaning of these structures (Faerch & Kasper 1989), so the learners may not be fully aware of their mitigating functions (Takahashi 2001).

Similarly invisible for L2 learners can be the mitigating functions of request perspective although their downtoning effect is considered comparable to the level of directness and modification by Ogiermann and Bella (2020). In relation to their linguistic realizations, Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1984) distinguish four different types of request perspective based on the entity addressed in the head act: speaker-oriented (*Can I …?*), hearer-oriented (*Can you …?*), inclusive/speaker and hearer-oriented (*Can we …?*), and impersonal (*Can one …?*). Imperatives and questions containing *will* and *would* are always hearer-oriented while declarative sentences and questions with *may* are speaker-oriented. With regards to the impersonal perspective, this is most frequently realized by expressions containing the adjective *possible*, while interrogative sentences containing modal verbs *can* and *could* can take any of the four perspectives. When asking for an object, English native speakers strongly prefer speaker-oriented requests (Ogiermann & Bella 2020), which Leech (1983) considers "marginally more polite than hearer-oriented ones" (ibid.: 134). Contrary to this, L2 English data, such as obtained from Japanese (Niki & Tajika 1994) and Czech university students (Huschová 2020), show a strong preference for the hearer-oriented perspective.

Lexical means situated within head acts which are frequently used to modify and/or decrease the illocutionary force of requests include, for example, openers, fillers (e.g. appealers, cajolers, phatic enquiry), softeners (e.g. downtoners, hedges, understatements), intensifiers, and the politeness marker *please*, which is considered one of the most significant and transparent signals of politeness in English requests. One of its multiple functions is to mark the utterance as directive, especially in ambiguous cases when the utterance has the form of a question (Martínez-Flor 2009). *Please* also mitigates and softens the illocutionary force of the request, so that it sounds courteous and polite. As this politeness marker is emotionally loaded to a certain extent, it can be employed as a reinforcer, or to beg for cooperation. The politeness marker *please* can be used either extrasententially or within the head act. Previous research shows that

L2 learners tend to use *please* in the embedded position at higher proficiency levels and/or after a longer exposition to target language forms (Barron 2003). This position "approximating the native speaker norm" (Martínez-Flor 2009: 40) is considered a sign of developing pragmatic competence when used by L2 English speakers (ibid.). The overuse of this politeness marker by L2 learners is explained by Faerch and Kasper (1989) by the fact that the use of please requires less pragma-linguistic competence than the use of other modifiers.

3 Cross-cultural differences between English and Czech requests

Brown and Levinson (1987) consider politeness strategies to be universal, but "empirical research has shown that the pragmatic force of syntactically and semantically equivalent utterances differs across languages" (Ogiermann 2009: 190).

In Czech, requests are not perceived to be as intrusive as in English and a potential refusal involves less face-loss, probably because the notion of a person's negative face (Brown & Levinson 1987) has not been considered as crucial as in English. The politeness values in Czech are seen mainly in clarity and honesty even in formal written requests (Chejnová 2014). On the contrary, in English, "pragmatic clarity and directness are viewed as lack of concern for the hearer's face" (Ogiermann 2009: 191).

Although the level of directness in Czech tends to be higher, imperatives are only appropriate among equals when the imposition is minimal (Chejnová 2014). Polite requests are commonly realized by QP, i.e. by interrogative sentences in present tense indicative of perfective verbs naturally referring to the future (i.e. *Půjčíš mi …?/Will you lend me…?*), or in conditional clauses (i.e. *Půjčil bys mi …?/Would you lend me …?*), which are perceived as more polite. The speaker can choose from four different options ordered from the least to most polite: questions (see above), questions containing the equivalents of the modal verbs *can/could* (i.e. *Můžeš mi půjčit…?/Can you lend me …?*; *Mohl bys mi půjčit …?/Could you lend me …?*), negative questions (i.e. *Nepůjčíš mi …?/Won't you lend me …?*; *Nepůjčil bys mi …?/Wouldn't you lend me …?*), and negative questions with the equivalents of the modal verbs *can/could* (i.e. *Nemůžeš mi půjčit …?/Can't you lend me …?*; *Nemohl bys mi půjčit …?/Couldn't you lend me …?*). Questions in negative form are seen as more tentative in Czech, and thus more polite, probably because they imply that the compliance is optional (Obenbergerová 1992). In English, however, interrogative sentences containing negation would be classified as rude (Ogiermann 2009) because they tend to be used to express "disappointment or annoyance" (Greenbaum & Quirk 1990: 233) when the previous positive expectations have not been realized. The range of speaker-oriented interrogative sentences in Czech is limited to those containing the equivalents of the modal verbs *can* and *could*, but all four types of questions can be hearer-oriented.

Other dissimilar tendencies can be found when comparing modification devices. If QP is used, Czech would have a limited range of IMDs to soften the illocutionary force. They include only conditionals, modal verbs and negation, as the chief means of politeness in Czech (Hirschová 2013), and the equivalent of the politeness marker *please*; diminutives, which are largely restricted to the context of people in a close relationship; and minimizing the duration of the favour.

In Czech, imperatives tend to be accompanied by the equivalent of the politeness marker *please* and this modification device can appear with most request realizations. However, the function of *please* seems to differ from the English equivalent to a considerable extent. This formulaic expression (*prosím*) is the first person singular of the performative verb *to ask/beg* and when used within a request it emphasises how badly one needs the favour to be fulfilled, especially if it follows the head act. In this position, it can be further intensified by adverbs. When used prior to the requestive act, it draws the attention to the message that follows and emphasises it in this way. Consequently, it has no place in formal written requests, which use other means as attention-getters, and which are not expected to contain emotional expressions.

The strategy that is strongly associated with requests in Czech is thanking. These formulaic expressions, containing the exact equivalent of the verb *thank*, emphasise positive outcome. As such, they are perceived as face-flattering acts (Chejnová 2014), and thus nearly obligatory, especially in formal written requests. They are used regardless of the likelihood of the request being granted and are not perceived as an imposition on the requestee.

4 Previous research

Requests are considered to be the most researched area of interlanguage pragmatics, probably because their inappropriate realization is likely to lead to a breakdown in communication. Consequently, there is a growing need to find out which strategies and devices learners should acquire and employ in requests to enhance and maintain the mutual relationship.

Research into interlanguage request realizations in English seems to yield relatively consistent results. Longitudinal studies and studies analysing the discourse of L2 learners at different proficiency levels show a clear development from direct requests mitigated by the politeness marker *please* to predominant use of conventionally indirect requests as proficiency levels increase (Kasper

& Rose 2001). This reveals the considerable influence of L2 competence on general appropriateness (Taguchi 2006), the range of modification devices (Schauer 2004, Halupka-Rešetar 2014) and the use of indirect strategies (Ellis 1992, Kasper & Rose 2002, Achiba 2003, Jalilifar et al. 2011). Nevertheless, the pragmatic competence of informants appears to lag behind their linguistic competence (Halupka-Rešetar 2014, Huschová 2020).

While preference for conventionally indirect requests in both English native speakers' and Taiwanese, German and Danish L2 learners' requests was revealed in several comparative studies (House & Kasper 1987, Trosborg 1995, Chen 2001), it was also found out that Greek, Turkish, German and Japanese learners in comparison to native speakers tend to underuse IMDs (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2008, Otcu & Zeyrek 2008, Woodfield 2008), especially downtoners (Faerch & Kasper 1989, Trosborg 1995), while the politeness marker *please* appears to be overused by Irish learners of German and German and Danish learners of English (House & Kasper 1987, Faerch & Kasper 1989, Trosborg 1995, Barron 2003). A higher frequency of lexical and syntactic IMDs in English native speakers' e-mail requests was reported by Hartford and Bardovi-Harlig (1996), Chen (2001), Biesenbach-Lucas (2007), Economidou-Kogetsidis (2011), and Pan (2012) whereas Spanish and Greek L2 learners of English used a higher proportion of direct strategies (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011, Alcón Soler 2013). In some studies analysing e-mail requests in academic communication (Biesenbach-Lucas 2007, Félix-Brasdefer 2012, Pan 2012), however, the use of strategies was revealed to be conditioned by the level of imposition.

Overuse of EMDs by Spanish, Hebrew, German and Danish L2 learners of English was reported by Kasper (1981), Blum-Kulka and Olshtain (1986), House and Kasper (1987) and Alcón Soler (2013), and grounders were identified as the most frequent EMDs (House & Kasper 1987, Trosborg 1995). In L2 production, they tend to be longer, redundant and overexplicit (Blum-Kulka & Olshtain 1986, Hassall 2001), but it is speculated that their frequency could also to some extent be affected by elicitation procedures (Ali & Woodfield 2017).

Studies analysing requests by Czech EFL learners seem to show similar findings. Chejnová (2014) examined high imposition requesting e-mails addressed to the faculty members to discover that students used both direct and conventionally indirect strategies, a great deal of syntactic modification, and elaborate external modification. Huschová (2020), who used *Czech Students' Spoken Corpus*, compiled at the University of Pardubice, investigated modification devices in requests for information in pre-prepared roleplays performed by first-year university students majoring in English (i.e. at approximately B2 CEFR level), revealed a limited range of lexical IMDs and a preference for the syntactic ones while the most common EMDs were grounders. When investigating the influence of social variables (i.e. the formality and informality of the situation) on the choice of requesting strategies, Lahodová Vališová (2020) compared two data collection techniques and discovered that Czech university students overwhelmingly use conventionally indirect strategies irrespective of the social variable.

Our research, motivated by an attempt to inform teaching and based on an integrated analytical framework, builds on these findings and extends them to an extremely under-researched area of secondary-school students' production. In an attempt to provide a detailed description of request strategies used by Czech EFL learners, it brings into light pragma-linguistic features from two different samples, including rarely analysed informal written requests.

5 Methodology

5.1 Context and participants

To find out which requesting strategies are used by Czech EFL learners when not focused on politeness and which strategies they consider socially and culturally appropriate in relation to their available pragmatic knowledge, the present study used two groups of participants and two different elicitation techniques (see Table 2).

The secondary-school sample was written under the stress of a high-stake exam and can be considered as clinically elicited data (Ellis & Barkhuizen 2005) because the students were prompted in Czech what to include in their informal e-mails. They were not specifically instructed to use polite utterances and politeness was not taken into account during the rating process. The students knew their primary focus was to convey the required message as accurately as possible in terms of appropriate vocabulary and grammar structures, but the exam requirements were void of any pragmatic criteria. Since e-mails are frequently used in interpersonal communication with requesting functions (Chen 2001), the task is likely to resemble a naturalistic setting. The data also hold some features of both a general and a focused language sample as the individual parts of the task may restrict the choice of language features so that the task can be successfully accomplished. However, the task lacked the capacity to enforce a specific target structure.

Participants	final-year secondary-school students	first-year university students
Age	19 +	19 +
CEFR level	approximately B1	approximately B1/B2
Schools	different types of secondary schools in the Czech Republic	Faculty of Business and Economics at Mendel University in Brno
Elicitation	informal e-mails	WDCT
Aim	school-leaving exam	research on requests and apologies
Focus	communicative aim and accuracy	linguistic politeness
Motivation	to pass the exam successfully	no motivation to perform well
Form	written	spoken (simulated)
Number of texts	195 requests for a bike	130 requests for a mobile phone 81 requests for a book
Length	60-70 words (required)	20 words (on average)
Data collected	spring 2017	2018/2019
Sample	random cluster sample	simple random sample
Source	*Centre of Educational Assessment* (CERMAT)	dissertation project: research on requests and apologies

Table 2: Comparison of research samples

The university sample was written by students who could have contributed to the secondary-school sample the previous school year and they were explicitly told to create utterances which they consider to be appropriate in the particular social context from which the emphasis on politeness was obvious. The sample was elicited by the most widely adopted collection method, Written Discourse Completion Task (WDCT), which is highly valued for easy administration and adaptability (Eskin 2017) and for the ability to reliably record the pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic norms which the respondents consider to be appropriate (Barron 2003, Ogiermann 2009).

5.2 Research design

The request strategies and their constituents were analysed using an integrated analytical framework combining the *CCSARP coding manual* (Blum-Kulka et al. 1989) and the *Typology of modifiers for the speech act of requesting* (Alcón Soler et al. 2005). The former provided a taxonomy of head acts and the latter contributed to the recognition of modification devices. These two complementary approaches make it possible to describe the learner language both from the pragma-linguistic and socio-pragmatic positions. However, several categories had to be prioritized over the others mainly due to the frequency of the studied features in the data.

As a general description of pragma-linguistic features employed by Czech EFL learners at B1/B2 levels in requests for borrowing objects was the main objective of the study, the collected data were subjected to comparison only to a limited extent.

5.3 Procedure

The description of pragma-linguistic competence of Czech EFL learners was based on the frequency analysis of request strategies and modification devices. First, requests were deconstructed into individual moves, i.e. semantic units containing identifiable ideas and/or functions, and each segment was coded according to the recognized communicative aim. In order to ensure consistency in coding, a sample of 20 requests from both cohorts was coded by both authors and any disagreements were resolved by unanimous decision. The remaining data were coded on the principles agreed on in the process of coding and decision-making.

When individual head acts and peripheral constituents were identified, these elements were further classified according to the function, employed request strategy, and linguistic features used. The proportion of request constituents in the written secondary-school data and WDCT first-year university data was compared and request moves likely to cause breakdowns, failures, and infelicities in communication were identified in relation to cross-cultural differences between Czech and English requests as presented in literature. Finally, several features which require special attention in teaching how to conduct a speech act of request were identified.

6 Findings and discussion

As the main objective of this study was to describe which requesting strategies are used and/or considered appropriate by Czech EFL learners when borrowing an object, 406 requests for borrowing three different objects were analysed: 195 written e-mails asking for a bike, 130 WDCT requests asking for a mobile phone, and 81 WDCT requests asking for a book.

6.1 Head acts

All 211 WDCT requests contain only one head act each, but 216 head acts were identified in 195 written requests because 21 of those exam texts (10.76%) include two different or identical utterances with the same pragmatic function as the core of the requests (e.g. *I'd like to borrow your bike. Can I borrow it please?*). Although this finding may be rather surprising, Halupka-Rešetar (2014) acknowledges the repetition of requests as internal modification, and Yang and

Kwan (2015) report that 28.85 per cent of business e-mails written by Chinese lower-intermediate and intermediate students had two head acts and 3.8 per cent of them even three.

As seen in Table 3, the majority of requests in our study are realized predominantly by conventionally indirect strategies exploiting the modal verbs *can* and *could*. Their proportion is even higher in WDCT requests, around 90 per cent, which can be a sign of greater awareness of face, but also indicates less variability in the chosen form. Written e-mails contain a slightly higher proportion of willingness modals (3.2%), and one request is realized by the permission modal *may*, but the proportion of direct strategies is considerably higher. Moreover, 14.7 per cent of written requests are realized by mood derivables and want statements, which do not allow the recipient to refuse without losing face. These highly impositive request realizations are rare in WDCT data, but they contain several requests realized by non-conventional indirect strategies, which also fail to carry politeness values (Chen 2001) because the hearer is required to draw a conclusion from incomplete information. By contrast, written data, which require more explicitness, were void of hints and showed stronger preference for repetitiveness.

Head act strategies	**Example**	**Written**	**WDCT**	**WDCT**
Object		bike	mobile	book
Head acts		n=216	n=130	n=81
Direct strategies		**27.2**	**2.4**	**8.6**
Mood derivables	**Borrow me ...*	0.9	0.8	1.2
Hedged performatives	*I would like you to lend me ...*	12.4	0.8	2.5
Want statements	*I want to borrow ...*	13.9	0.8	4.9
Conventionally indirect strategies		**72.8**	**96.1**	**90.0**
QP ability modals	*Could you lend me ...*	67.2	91.5	86.4
QP willingness modals	*Would/Will you lend me ...*	3.3	2.3	1.2
QP permission modals	*May I borrow ...*	0.5	0.0	0.0
QP mind collocations	*Would you mind lending me ....*	0.9	1.5	1.2
QP possibility collocations	*Is it possible to borrow ...*	0.9	0.8	1.2
Non-conventionally indirect strategies		**0.0**	**1.5**	**1.2**
Hint	*Man, do you really need that book? You have got it already for ages.*	0.0	1.5	1.2

Table 3: Distribution of head act strategies (in %)

6.2 Internal modification

The research concentrated predominantly on functional aspects of request modification, but the syntactic realizations of requests, which are closely linked to the request perspective (Ogiermann & Bella 2020), have to be taken into account as well, especially in view of their capacity to distance the request from reality and show that the speaker's expectations are tempered. Table 4 shows that the majority of requests were realized by interrogative sentences in the form of direct questions followed first by declarative sentences and then by indirect questions. A considerable proportion of head acts, including a great deal of the above-mentioned request realizations, exploited less certain and more tentative modal verbs (i.e. *could*, *would*). Table 4 also presents the proportion of head-act realizations with speaker-oriented perspective (S) and hearer-oriented perspective (H), but our data also contain four instances of impersonal request perspective within QP possibility collocations. In line with learner data from different L1 backgrounds (Niki & Tajika 1994, Lin 2009, Ogiermann & Bella 2020), Czech EFL learners tend to foreground the hearer's role in syntactic realizations enabling learners to choose the perspective.

Syntactic realization	**Written bike**			**WDCT mobile**			**WDCT book**		
	Total	**S**	**H**	**Total**	**S**	**H**	**Total**	**S**	**H**
Direct q.	56.5	17.6	38.9	88.5	29.2	59.2	85.1	9.9	75.3
Indirect q. (*if*-clauses)	16.2	3.2	13.0	2.3	0.0	2.3	3.7	1.2	2.5
Indirect q.	1.3	0.5	0.9	5.4	1.5	3.8	3.7	0.0	3.7
Declarative sentences	26.4	23.1	3.2	2.3	2.3	0.0	6.2	5.0	1.2
Imperative	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.2	0.0	1.2
Past tense	0.9	0.0	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	1.2	0.0
could/would	25.9	4.2	21.8	42.3	7.7	34.6	30.9	1.2	29.6

Table 4: Proportion of syntactic downgraders and speaker and hearer perspective (in %)

Interrogative sentences are strongly affected by *borrow* vs *lend* confusion, which, on average, has been observed in 21 per cent of all head acts (e.g. **Could you borrow me your bike, please*?). Table 5 clearly shows that the verb *borrow*, which is slightly more frequent in written requests, is more likely to be used incorrectly in both types of data. Possible reasons for these errors might include issues with deixis, an inability to distinguish the request perspective, and/or the meaning of the verbs. Moreover, these verbs are substituted by other verbs, such as *give*, *use*, *take*, *elevate*, *advance*, *rent*, *hire* (e.g. **Do you can advance your wheel?*). In the written requests, all of them (n=7) are used inappropriately, but in WDCT requests (n=29), their use is acceptable.

Frequently confused verbs	Written bike 201=100%		WDCT mobile 130 = 100%		WDCT book 81 = 100%	
	correct	incorrect	correct	incorrect	correct	incorrect
lend	32.1	7.5	55.4	4.6	54.3	4.9
borrow	34.8	21.4	18.5	10.8	7.4	14.8
Total	66.9	28.9	73.9	15.4	61.7	19.7

Table 5: Proportion of correctly and incorrectly used verbs (in %)

Similarly to Faerch and Kasper (1989) and Trosborg (1995), our study reveals that Czech EFL learners tend to underuse IMDs, especially softeners (see Table 6). Both downtoners, which relativize full commitment to the content of the request and allow the hearer to refuse, and hedges, which make the specification of the request more tentative, were completely absent in all head acts. However, all three types of requests contained a limited number of understatements (n=15), i.e. *a little*, *only*, *just*, *for a day*, underrepresenting the scope of the request (e.g. *Could I borrow it just for a few minutes?*). Softeners as well as other features generally considered to be IMDs tend to appear with much higher frequencies within EMDs, especially in written requests which use a hedge (e.g.**I am writing you because I am in sort of trouble.*); understatements (n=51) in preparators (e.g. **I have a little request on you.*); and cost minimisers (e.g. *I want it only for one week.*). WDCT requests rarely employ IMDs outside head acts.

IMDs	Bike		Mobile (WDCT)		Book (WDCT)	
	Head Act	**EMDs**	**Head Act**	**EMDs**	**Head Act**	**EMDs**
Softener	2.3	23.6	9.3	0.8	6.2	0.0
Intensifier	0.0	40.7	2.3	29.2	2.5	25.9
please	39.4	13.8	55.3	1.5	46.9	1.2
Opener	30.3	0.0	5.4	0.0	5.0	0.0
Filler	32.3	0.0	0.8	0.0	2.5	0.0

Table 6: Proportion of internal modification devices (in %)

Intensifiers have a potential to increase the impact of the requests, but their absence within head acts in our study may be a positive sign because their inappropriate use can make the request sound impolite due to the emphasis on necessity and urgency. In both data sources they were used far more frequently outside head acts as mitigating devices emphasizing the scope of imposition in preparators, the extent of the requestor's problem in grounders, and the extent of gratitude. Nevertheless, the intensification of some praising and flattering expressions in disarmers (e.g. *I know that you have a really good bike.*) can be considered a risky strategy. The same is true for time intensifiers in concluding expressions (10.8%), which apply a considerable pressure on the hearer (e.g. **Send me very fast your answer.*).

The politeness marker *please* is the most frequently used internal modifier in our data and its overall frequency is similar in all three types of requests. In the written requests, however, *please* tends to be positioned relatively frequently (13.8%) outside head acts, predominantly in concluding expressions where it tends to assume the initial position bearing the connotation of urgency (e.g. *Please answer me ASAP.*). This politeness marker is also used to modify disarmers, expanders, gratitude, and preparators with softening and mitigating effects. Its frequency within the head acts in the written requests is the lowest (39.4%) and most of its instances are found in QP realized by ability modals. The final position prevails in requests using the modal verb *can* (e.g. *Can I borrow your bike please?*), but when the more tentative modal verb *could* is used, the central position (e.g. *Could you please lend it to me?*), regarded as a sign of developing pragmatic competence by Martínez-Flor (2009), prevails. Considerably shorter WDCT requests contain the politeness marker *please* mostly within head acts in the final position. The high-imposition requests for borrowing a mobile show its highest proportion (55.3%).

WDCT data and written requests differ considerably in the frequency of openers and fillers (see Table 6), both of which may carry an element of hesitation. Openers, conventionalised expressions seeking the addressee's co-operation, are rare in WDCT data, but the conventions of the written discourse, the lack of eye contact, and the immediate context may be responsible for a relatively high frequency of the formulaic sequences introducing requests (e.g. *I'm writing because…*, *I would like to ask you…*, *I want to ask you …*). Although there is no need to fill in the gaps occurring during interaction, more than 30 per cent of the written requests contain fillers, which are highly formulaic and semantically void expressions with socio-pragmatic functions, mainly in the form of phatic inquiry and adjacent formulaic structures. Fillers in WDCT data appear only marginally at the end of head acts and they take the form of appealers eliciting the hearer's approval (e.g. *Is it OK? Will you? Is it possible?*).

6.3 External modification

EMDs, which are considered optional by English native speakers (Faerch & Kasper 1989), were discovered in high frequencies in the analysed requests, but the communication channel and assignment affected their proportion to a great extent. Attention-getters, conventionalized preparators and concluding expressions are mandatory parts of e-mails, and the secondary-school students were guided to use grounders (i.e. explanation of the reason for borrowing a bike) and expanders (i.e. further suggestions concerning collecting the bike). As such, the written data show a considerably higher proportion of requests in which these EMDs were used (see Table 7). Moreover, in some of them, two different EMDs of the same type (i.e. grounders, expanders, cost minimisers) were found in two different positions (e.g. *I need it only for that one day. ... *I will not broke it.*). Another sign of repetitiveness can be found in asking for additional approval at the end of many requests (e.g. *Do you agree?, *I can?, *ok for you?*). In the written requests, preparators are largely declarative sentences signalling a forthcoming request, but pre-requests are used only exceptionally. Disarmers often show awareness of the imposition and compliment the hearer and the bike, but in seven cases, they were used in a risky way to confront the hearer with the speaker's previous knowledge preventing the refusal (e.g. *I need a bike and I know that you have one.*).

External modification types	Bike	Mobile	Book
Attention-getter	100.0	55.4	86.4
Preparator	40.5	9.2	18.5
Grounder	100.0	88.5	75.3
Disarmer	11.8	0.0	0.0
Expander	94.9	1.5	1.2
Cost minimiser	39.1	8.5	6.2
Promise of reward	3.6	8.5	0.0
Gratitude *(I would be very grateful.)*	11.3	0.8	3.7
Thanking expressions *(Thank you.)*	36.4	6.9	7.4
Apology	2.1	11.5	4.9
Concluding expressions	84.6	0.0	0.0
Expectations	10.3	0.0	0.0

Table 7: Proportion of external modification devices (in %)

The phrases outside head acts contain a range of softening and mitigating features as well as modal verbs, *if*-clauses and, exceptionally, past-tense forms.

The use of these devices might be perceived positively by English native speakers because they enable the requestors to distance themselves from the request and treat it as unreal. Nevertheless, secondary-school students also employed impositive and risky EMDs. In more than ten per cent of requests, they used expectations, strongly impositive claims (e.g. **I hope that you comply me.*) and often relied on thanking expressions (e.g. *Thank you in advance.*), which can be viewed either as closing devices unable to mitigate the request (Chen 2001) or as strong presuppositions of the positive outcome, and thus rather impositive (Economidou-Kogetsidis 2011, Chejnová 2014). As such, using appreciators in combination with conditionals closely following the head act would be more appropriate (e.g. **If you could please lend me your bicycle on one day I would be so grateful.*).

WDCT data employ considerably fewer thanking expressions, and they appear predominantly in positions where they are more likely to be viewed as closing devices. In simulated spoken requests, there is no need to be overexplicit, so expectations and disarmers were not found. In line with the previous research, grounders, which help the addressee understand the reasons behind the request (Martínez-Flor 2009), remain the most frequently used EMDs despite not being required by the assignment. Requests for borrowing a mobile phone show a higher proportion of cost minimisers (e.g. *I will make only one urgent phone call.*) and promises of reward (e.g. *I could pay you the cost.*), which may indicate that the first-year university students can use some EMDs with respect to the level of imposition. Apologies (e.g. *Sorry but I need the book./Sorry to bother you but ...*) were also very common in simulated spoken requests and appeared in 11.5 per cent of requests for borrowing a mobile phone.

7 Conclusion and pedagogical implications

In this study, an integrated analytical framework and two different elicitation techniques were used to identify the request strategies and modification devices employed by Czech EFL learners in informal requests for borrowing objects. The findings reveal that on the basis of their previous life experiences with English language instruction and their mother tongue Czech learners prefer strategies and modification devices which they consider to be polite. However, they fail to use the language strategically in order to match English native speakers' expectations, probably due to limited awareness of the face-threatening nature of requests.

The majority of requests in our study show some similarity to request realization in Czech and also show some consideration for the hearer's face because they are realized predominantly by conventionally indirect strategies (i.e. QP) in the form of direct questions but also partially by indirect questions, both of which mainly exploit the modal verbs *can* and *could*. These realizations are also most frequently mitigated by the only relatively common IMD, *please*, which tends to assume the final position when the more frequent modal verb *can* is used. Despite being regarded as optional by English native speakers, EMDs are frequently used. Moreover, they contain syntactic and lexical means with softening and mitigating functions, which native speakers tend to use more strategically within head acts (Faerch & Kasper 1989).

The frequency and range of request constituents was strongly affected by the data-collection method. WDCT data show a lower proportion of direct strategies than the written requests, and a few of them are realized by hints requiring the requestee to estimate the illocution on the basis of interaction between the partial reference and the context. WDCT requests employ the politeness marker *please* and rare softeners considerably more frequently within head acts, and there is no tendency to use modification devices in abundance within EMDs. First-year university students that produced WDCT data also show the ability to modify their requests in accordance with the degree of imposition because requests for borrowing a mobile phone, which appear to be more impositive than requests for borrowing a book, are mostly realized by conventionally indirect strategies and show a higher proportion of softeners, openers, cost minimisers, promises of reward, and apologies.

The written requests show slightly greater variability in head act realisations and a considerably stronger tendency for reiteration. This is demonstrated by doubling head acts and EMDs, and by asking for additional approval towards the end of the e-mails. Mitigating devices generally considered to be IMDs, including the politeness marker *please*, tend to be relatively frequent outside head acts. The higher frequency of openers and fillers, attention-getters, preparators and concluding expressions is affected by the communication channel, but the higher proportion of *borrow* vs *lend* confusion in head acts which enable the learners to choose the request perspective might be attributed to lower language proficiency in the secondary-school sample.

The lack of socio-pragmatic and pragma-linguistic knowledge is reflected in three groups of infelicities: features that need to be implemented (i.e. obligatory internal modification), features that have to be avoided (i.e. mood derivables, want statements, expectations), and features that constitute risky strategies (i.e. thanking, initial position of *please*). Bearing in mind the lack of exposure to negative evidence in EFL setting, learners should be supported to achieve not only deeper understanding of the face-threatening nature of requests for both the speaker and the hearer but also to recognize general principles regarding how to minimize the imposition. To give the hearer the feeling of optionality, Czech EFL learners should be advised to employ only conventionally indirect strategies in request realizations. Not only query preparatory, but also suggestive formulae and a wider range of modal verbs would deserve to be used. More attention should be paid to head acts and their internal modification primarily by means of softeners. However, more research is needed to find out at which proficiency levels softeners and hedges are teachable because learners need sufficient syntactic knowledge to be able to position them properly. Czech EFL learners also need to be warned against using mood derivables, want statements and hints as request strategies and expectations as EMDs in order to avoid impositive realizations. A detailed explanation why *please* used in the initial position and why thanking might apply pressure on the hearer can lead to a better awareness concerning their use.

Further research is needed to focus on pedagogical interventions and to investigate what type of explicit instruction is effective; how to develop pragmatic and speech-act-specific motivation (Tajeddin & Zand-Moghadam 2012); how to exploit learner subjectivity (Siegel 1996); how to eliminate language ego barriers (Guiora1994); and what is the best way to approach the discovered infelicities in an EFL context characterised by limited pragmatic input, insufficient number of contact hours and few opportunities for intercultural communication.

The results of our research, however, can hardly be generalized to all types of requesting behaviour of Czech EFL learners because in our study, only requests for borrowing objects were analysed and only two elicitation methods were used. Further limitations of our research may include a relatively small sample and a lack of precise information concerning the participants' length of English language instruction, stay in the target culture, age, and language proficiency.

The results of our research confirm most of the previous findings concerning interlanguage request realizations, such as underuse and a limited range of the lexical IMDs and overuse of EMDs. Moreover, the analysis of written requests in the secondary-school sample brings some original contributions, including the discovery of modification devices softening already overused EMDs, and a considerable tendency for reiteration.

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REVIEWS

Mur-Dueñas, P. & Lorés, R. (2022) *Scientific and Parascientific Communication*. MDPI. 122 pp.

Scientific communication is an essential part of research, as it provides the public with access to findings outside the traditional specialized platforms like journals and conferences. Parascientific communication combines scientific and popular communication practices with the aim to promote citizen participation. Outreach has become a central focus of research institutions, as they increasingly organize workshops for truthful and approachable knowledge dissemination to the public. Still, science communication faces many challenges like dealing with uncertainty, generalization of results, and conveying trust in the changing state of the art. This makes the edited volume by Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Rosa Lorés an important and timely contribution to the topic of scientific and parascientific communication. The volume is a reprint of a special issue in the MDPI journal *Publications,* and the open access format of the eBook is a praiseworthy decision in the spirit of open science.

The volume introduction by Pilar Mur-Dueñas and Rosa Lorés discusses the concept of scientific communication in relation to the less researched concept of parascientific communication. The editors emphasize the "erosion of boundaries" (p. 1) between science and parascience as well as between researchers and the general public. These developments motivate the research on new digital practices in knowledge dissemination. The volume contributions are connected by three overarching research questions on 1) the difference between scientific and parascientific communication, 2) new discourse practices emerging with the boundary erosion in scientific communication, and 3) the adaptation of well-established methodology approaches to the new needs of science communication (pp. 2-3).

Jan Engberg and Carmen Daniela Maier look at multimodal genre practices in videos from the *Harvard Business Review*. They explore how semiotic modes like text, sound, and image are interactively used to create meaning in YouTube videos shared through Facebook. Another thematized level of interaction is the user exchange in the comments. The authors focus on videos from three genres using Bucher's (2020) framework: quick study, tips & ideas, and explainer videos. They find that despite the graphical-visual efforts, the "processes of knowledge expansion are absent" (p. 18), perhaps due to the advertisement appeal of the videos (p. 20). While the qualitative analysis of the videos and commentaries is quite detailed and informative, it would be interesting to analyse the user comments posted on YouTube, as YouTube is mentioned in the third research question (p. 6) but not explicitly distinguished in the results.

Marina Bondi provides a comprehensive analysis of the dialogicity created in four individual and four multi-authored institutional scientific blogs. The dialogue with the community is approached systematically from three perspectives based on prominent keywords. Participant dialogicity is shown to be realized through metadiscourse markers such as personal pronouns. Individual blogs are described to have more representations of the blogger as a writer (in contrast to the blogger as a researcher) (p. 30). They also directly address the audience more frequently (p. 30), whereas institutional blogs have a higher share of reported discourse (p. 30). Action-oriented dialogicity is realized through imperatives engaging the reader (*let's*), mostly in individual blogs, whereas institutional blogs rely on structures shaping the rhetoric of the debate like concessives (pp. 33, 35). Evaluative dialogue is expressed through attitudinal language of praise and criticism more prominently in individual blogs (p. 36), though both subgenres frame evaluation epistemically through certainty and probability (e.g. *could have had*) (pp. 36-37). The role of the blogger in the scientific debate is recognized to be the main difference between institutional and personal blogs, as individuals rely more on interaction with the sources while institutions focus on accurate reporting (p. 38). Overall, blogs are shown to be an interesting genre that blurs the authors' private and public identities (p. 39) to combine the likeableness of the individual subject with the competence of the professional persona in a dialogue with the community of practice.

Ruth Breeze investigates the debate on the COVID-19 vaccine through a corpus of more than 10,000 online comments on 25 articles from the *(Daily) Mail Online*. The paper explores how individuals attribute expertise to themselves and external sources with the aim of building authority. The comments are classified around four major themes: the contested nature of "expert" knowledge, claiming the right to speak, denying the right to speak, and sources of authority. Knowledge and authority can receive a different weight when they are produced from personal experience and from science, politics, or the media. The comments on the breaking news are interpreted in the post-truth paradigm where some users dismiss not only experts but also the existence of truth (p. 52). In the light of the rapidly changing state of the art and miscommunication of the scientific method, the "expert" loses credibility and trust (p. 52). Breeze's solution is transparency of science and institutions, including both government and private companies like the pharma industry (p. 53).

Francisca Suau-Jiménez and Francisco Ivorra-Pérez provide another perspective on comments on COVID-19 news, namely on those challenging parascientific information. Parascientific genres here are popular news articles and their comment sections (p. 59), which act as a hybrid space between popular and scientific discourse. The paper analyses a large amount of stance markers following Hyland (2008) as well as closeness and distance pragmatic strategies in 100 news articles and 500 reader comments. Although the result tables are quite detailed, their notation is slightly confusing. For instance, in Table 1 (p. 64), the use of the asterisk * as a footnote marker before "1000" is misleading, since it gives the initial impression that it is "RF *times* 1000". Then, the note explains that "the absolute frequency was calculated per 1000 words" (p. 64), where "relative frequency" would have been the clearer term. Still, the tables and the discussion of examples provide a comprehensive overview over the stance and heteroglossia markers in the news and the reader comments. The paper concludes on the critical nature of "participatory journalism" (p. 71), which can be both beneficial in the case of constructive criticism and harmful in the case of pseudoscience.

Carmen Sancho Guinda explores the implications for democratic discourse in the graphical abstract genre, which combines features of the emblem, the infographic, and the billboard genres (p. 76). The author brings up a good point that the public is no longer "easily persuadable" and in need of "content simplifications and popularisations" (p. 75) but rather needs a dialogue. The paper argues that it is difficult to find objective criteria on how accurate and "successful" a graphical abstract is (p. 77), yet still manages to provide a detailed classification scheme for a descriptive analysis (p. 78). Graphical abstracts are shown to leave space for creativity and insider jokes. Some more exclusive references to Western culture are claimed to be a sign of "cultural colonisation" (p. 83) and while the joke indeed adds an additional reference layer that may not be accessible to all audiences, "colonisation" is a strong term that also implies some intention, which may not be the case. The paper looks at good and bad stylisation practices and concludes with thoughts on the new trend of standardisation through abstract templates.

Julien Longhi looks at the case of Didier Raoult and the media and social media discourse around his statements on Hydroxychloroquine during the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the Alceste method, which is a type of topic modelling, the author synthesizes five classes with texts and distinguishes three of them on the efficacy of the drug, the scientific validation in *The Lancet* and the epidemic (p. 101). A filtering list for words like "www" could be useful to exclude unnecessary classes like class 3 (p. 101). The self-idolization of Raoult and arising conflicts around this COVID-19 discourse are then made evident through the modelling of tweets, again using the Alceste method. The heated debate combines praise and criticism towards the physician and the media reporting on the issue. The paper also summarises the interaction with hashtags, where the social discourse is shown to move to parascientific and even propaganda directions (p. 109).

Manh-Toan Ho, Manh-Tung Ho and Quan-Hoang Vuong present a strategy for communicating open science called Total SciComm – "using every medium to communicate science" (p. 117). They present the Seshat study, which was retracted after reanalysis of the open dataset it was based on. This case highlights the importance of openness and reproducibility in science. The authors also emphasise the issue of speed of publication, as journal publications take longer to review submissions compared to the platforms used to express criticism – preprints, social media and blogs (pp. 116-117). The paper provides ideas for genres like the scientific novel, film/video, or art. While fiction is an effective way to promote science to a larger audience, it should be noted that its credibility is limited. The article emphasises the benefits of open science in the ability to quickly criticise peer-reviewed papers in preprints, even though the criticiser becomes more vulnerable due to the lack of anonymity (p. 119). While preprints are published speedily, they are not peer reviewed and should themselves also be taken with consideration. Nevertheless, the idea of Total SciComm is promising and can inspire researchers to explore new genres of science communication.

Overall, the edited volume combines interesting perspectives on scientific and parascientific communication. It has the potential to show the importance of science communication and contribute to the investment in resources promoting public outreach. The volume highlights the difficulty of conveying complex information that has to be perceived in a short time and attention span, as in the case of news, blogs and graphic abstracts. The contributions provide a thorough analysis of scientific and parascientific communication from different perspectives, making the open access book useful for researchers in academic discourse, scientists interested in public outreach, science communication workshop developers, and students looking for replicable case studies. I therefore recommend the book for everyone interested in the intersection between media and academic discourse.

Marina Ivanova

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