



RESEARCH PAPER

Attitude and Engagement Markers in Pakistani Academic Writing of Sciences and Social Sciences

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PAPER INFO	ABSTRACT
Received: May 14, 2021 Accepted: August 07, 2021 Online: August 10, 2021 Keywords: Academic Writing Attitude and Engagement *Corresponding Author tayyaba.yasmin@ ue.edu.pk	This paper explores the interactional patterns employed in the professional writing of research articles of two fields of academia. This is a corpus-based study. The corpus contains 100 research articles from the fields of Sciences and Social Sciences. The authorial strategies of attitude and engagement markers of two faculties have been examined following Hyland's (2005) framework of metadiscourse. The results of this study have shown that the voices of researchers from the field of Social Sciences are more visible in their academic interactions and they seek to establish a bond with their readers more explicitly. The field of Sciences is moving in the opposite dimension. The findings of the study can be exploited as a guide to increase the awareness of ESL learners regarding how to engage the readers in the text.

Introduction

The Academic writing is a representation of the authorial self which is carefully constructed according to the expectations and perceptions of various disciplinary communities (Hyland & Jiang, 2018). The whole process of report writing occurs within a disciplinary background by convincing the readers to acknowledge the work as a valuable contribution. These contributions entail vigilant decisions of authors regarding contextualization and embedding of their findings to involve the readers in a process of mediation and argumentation of different disciplines (Hyland & Jiang, 2018).

Metadiscourse resources exhibit the author's oratorical awareness of the audience as a contributor in textual discourse, who can be guided, involved, and persuaded by using metadiscourse devices (Hyland, 2005). According to Hyland (2005), it highlights those elements which explicitly evoke the manifestation of the author in the discourse, helps to organize the propositional content, and presents

authorial stance. The core idea behind this notion that linguistic expressions not only refer to the world related to transferring of knowledge but also to textual relations to facilitate the audience in interpretation and evaluation of the text (Hyland & Jiang, 2018). It has become a way to explore the language on the shreds of evidence, how we examine the rejoinders of others for deciding the effects of our talk on readers/listeners. It can be observed through the choices of individuals to demonstrate the preferences of the community. Consequently metadiscourse has been utilized by researchers and instructors around the globe. Scholars and linguists have conducted researches to investigate that how different authors reflect attitudes and engagement markers in the research writing of different disciplinary communities. However, the use of engagement and attitude markers in the fields of Sciences and Social Sciences is rarely explored in our Pakistani context. The present research endeavors to fill this niche by exploring that how Pakistani researchers reflect their attitude and engagement in the research articles of Sciences and Social Sciences.

Literature Review

The notion of metadiscourse was derived by Harris (1959). According to Crismore (1989), the key purpose of metadiscourse is to direct the readers and writers. Hyland (2005) states that metadiscourse makes communication something more than exchanging ideas; it engages attitudes, personalities, and shared assumptions of interlocutors. Metadiscourse has been classified into two broad categories: interactive and interactional (Hyland, 2005). The earlier is related to the organization of text and representation of the writer's evaluation regarding monitoring of readers to recover and comprehend the text. The latter illustrates the authorial efforts to regulate the writer's persona in discourse and develop an appropriate connection with his/her readers, claims, level of familiarity and reflection of obligations as well as attitudes. The interactive resources help the authors to direct the flow of knowledge to derive his/her interpretation.

Interactive category incorporates

- **Frame Markers** contain devices to denote boundaries of text structures, sequence labels, topic shifts, and for announcing the goals of discourse (to conclude, my purpose, finally).
- **Evidentials** include various sources of knowledge taken from the work of other scholars particularly citations (According to, X argues).
- **Transition Markers** include resources like conjunctions for indicating contrastive, additives, and sequential links of clauses (however, but, in addition, etc.)
- **Code Glosses** indicate the modification of ideational content (for example, e.g.).

- **Endophoric devices** are employed to make the textual content more salient for the audience by indicating various sections of the discourse (in section 3, see Figure, mentioned above).
- **Interactional category** highlights the involvement of the audience and presents tenor and authorial self-considering norms of the community. It includes:
 - **Boosters** indicate expressions of certainty (definitely, in fact).
 - **Attitude Markers** reflect an authorial attitude towards propositional content (surprisingly, unfortunately)
 - **Engagement Markers** speak to the audience by highlighting their attention or involving them in the discourse by employing readers, questions or directives.
 - **Hedges** hold back author's commitment towards their statements (perhaps, possible, might).
 - **Self-Mentions** are indicated through the use of pronouns and references to writers (our, I, we).

Attitude markers help to express obligation, agreement, significance, and surprise (Hyland, 2005). Adel (2006) asserts that attitude markers can be employed to highlight the appropriateness, importance, and interest of the writers towards textual material. Hyland (2005) states that these markers facilitate the authors to convey their stance and involve them in collusion of agreement. Different components of engagement markers can also be utilized to involve the audience including personal asides, questions, directives, reader pronouns, and appeals for collective knowledge. Researches on the investigation of metadiscourse features of academic writing have focused on text comparisons of different languages and also on discourse created by native and nonnative speakers of English. Such investigations have examined the textual discourse of the English language or only introductions and abstracts of research articles (Gillaerts&Ven de Velde, 2010; Hu and Cao, 2011; Li & Wharton, 2012). Comparative studies have been conducted across different genres and disciplines in this regard. Kawase (2005) conducted a study to explore such features of two genres i.e. PhD theses and introductory sections of research articles. The findings of the study revealed higher use of metadiscourse markers in the research articles as compared to PhD theses. However, the disciplinary variation is a less investigated phenomenon.

Material and Methods

This is a corpus-based study. The corpus comprises of 100 research articles selected from two major fields of academia i.e. Social Sciences and Sciences. Fifty

articles have been selected from each faculty. The field of Sciences encompasses the disciplines of biology and chemistry whereas the field of Social Sciences incorporates education and psychology. Data has been collected from the well-known Pakistani journals of Sciences and Social Sciences.

Table 1
Word Tokens in Corpus

Faculties	No of Word Tokens
Social Sciences	292627
Sciences	252,627
Total	545,254

Hyland's (2005) classification of metadiscourse has been utilized as a framework to investigate the use and variation of engagement and attitude markers in the corpora of two major faculties. The category of attitude markers includes attitudinal verbs, attitudinal adjectives, and attitudinal adverbs whereas engagement markers embrace the sub-types: directives, reader pronouns, personal asides, questions, and appeals to shared knowledge. The frequencies of engagement markers and attitudes markers have been searched from the corpora through the concordance tool of antconc software. After that, these values have been normalized (per 1000 words) for comparison of both faculties. The types of these markers have also been qualitatively analyzed.

Results and Discussion

Table.1 presents the frequencies of engagement and attitude markers per 1000 words found in the corpus.

Table 2
Normalized frequencies of Engagement and Attitude markers in Corpora

Faculties	Social Sciences	Sciences
Engagement Markers	12.138	3.73
Attitude Markers	4.182	1.322

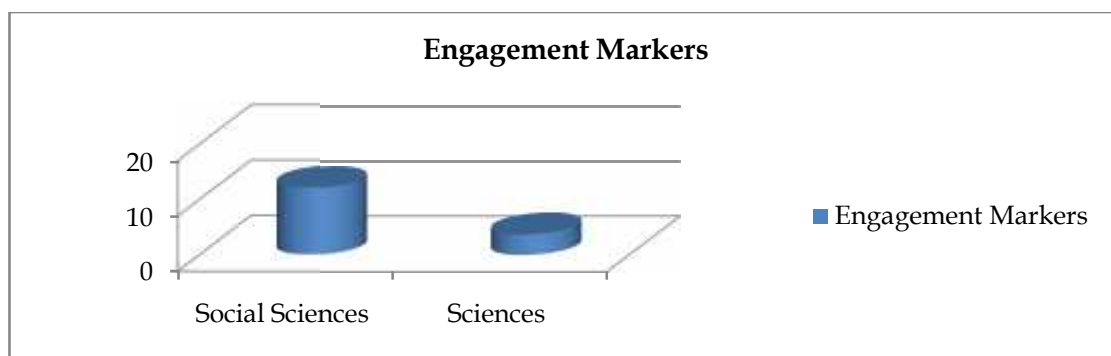


Figure.1 Comparison of Engagement Markers in two faculties

The percentages of each sub-category of Engagement Marker are demonstrated in table.3.

Table 3
Percentages of sub-categories of Engagement Markers in Corpora

Faculties	Directives	Readers' Pronouns	Questions	Appeals to Shared Knowledge	Personal Asides
Social Sciences	27.4	34.2	16.4	13.4	8.6
Sciences	34.3	30.6	15.6	13.2	6.3

Figure 2 highlights that attitude markers have been more extensively utilized in the corpus of Social Sciences whereas less use of these attitude markers has been found in the faculty of Sciences.

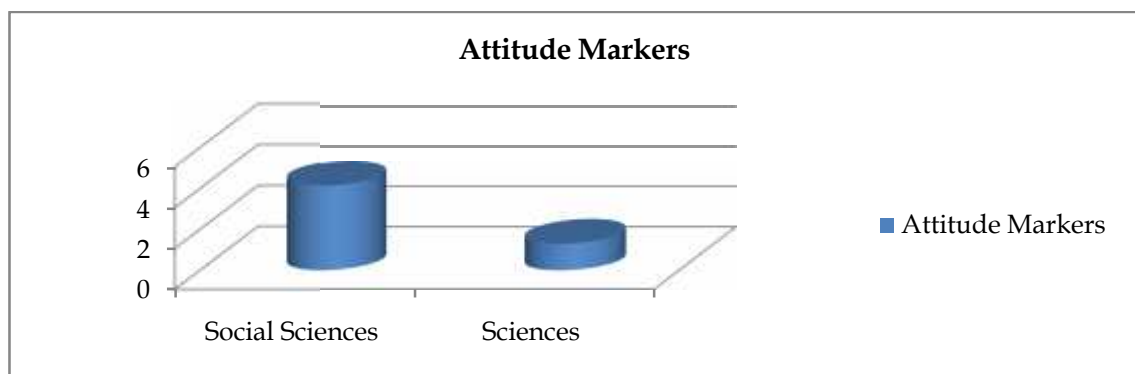


Figure.2 Comparison of Attitude Markers in Corpora

Table 4
Percentages of sub-categories of Attitude Markers in Corpora

Sub-categories	Sciences	Social Sciences
Adjectives	60.59	65.86
Adverbs	39.25	33.8
Verbs	0.16	0.34

Discussion

The realization of engagement markers in the faculty of Social Sciences shows that reader pronouns have been more commonly employed with 34.2%. These findings agree with Hyland's (2005) study on stance in which reader pronouns have been more extensively employed in the soft fields than the field of sciences. The writers from the faculty of Social Sciences tend to focus on mutual understanding of disciplinary norms by creating an intimate bond with their audience.

The results reveal that the type of EM which has been more recurrently used in the corpus of Sciences than Social Sciences is directives (34.3%). Authors from the

field of Sciences has communicated their thoughts more explicitly by employing more directives. Hyland (2002) postulates that these interactional devices reflect writer's expertise to build a dialogic relationship with their readers. The third sub-type of EM utilized by both the faculties is questions. However minor differences have been found concerning the use of questions with a frequency count of 16.4% in Social Sciences and 15.6% in Sciences.

Appeals to shared knowledge and personal asides have been less frequently employed in both fields. It can be implied that researchers from the field of Social Sciences are more subjective, overtly engaged and they also take a personal stance for making claims and argumentation of their academic writings whereas the researchers from the field of sciences create more objective and less reader inclusive text. The findings of this study have also been confirmed by the previous studies (Yasmin & Mahmood, 2016) in which more metadiscourse devices were employed in the faculty of Social Sciences.

Attitude markers help the writers to present their viewpoint and attitude towards the content. The researchers from the field of Social Sciences have shown their inclination towards the use of more adjectives as compared to the authors of Sciences. The researchers from the field of Social Sciences tend to control the explanation and interpretation of the reported material by employing various kinds of attitude markers. In this category, "*important*" and "*interesting*" are the most dominant adjectives used in the corpora. The second most commonly used sub-type of attitude markers in both faculties is adverbs. It is also found that attitudinal adverbs (such as '*only*', '*significantly*', '*necessarily*' '*completely*') have been used more frequently than attitudinal verbs in the research articles of Sciences. Attitude verbs have been the least frequent attitudinal lexicon in this study. In short, attitudinal lexicon such as adjectives, adverbs, and verbs have been considered as evaluative items expressing value, significance, and importance, indicating a need or a lack of sources, expressing evaluation, showing emotion, and indicating weaknesses and shortcomings. Similar results have been found in Yang's (2014) study in which more interactive components have been utilized in the academic writing of Soft disciplines.

Conclusion

The findings of the present research suggest that the use of engagement markers and attitude markers in the academic genre of research articles is controlled by the conventions of these disciplines. Results revealed that the writers used more engagement markers and attitude markers in the field of Social Sciences than in the Sciences. Marked dissimilarities have been found that how the writers of different disciplinary communities represent their contributions in the field. It can be concluded that research articles of Social Sciences are more interactive. This interactivity is represented by engaging the readers directly in the text. This study has some significant pedagogical implications for novice researchers, ESP instructors, and learners. Metadiscourse analysis can be employed as a coherent source to analyze the rhetorical preferences of the different cultures and discourse

communities. The textual discourse of Sciences seems to be more concise as it helps to create economy of textual rendition. Variation of attitude as well as engagement markers of various cultures could be an appealing topic for ESL learners and future researchers.

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