INTERPERSONAL METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN A WRITTEN REGISTER USED BY TURKISH WRITERS

EDA DURUK

Pamukkale University, Kınıklı, Denizli 20070, Turkey

Abstract- The aim of the present study is to explore to what extent Turkish writers use interpersonal metadiscourse markers in a written register and to examine the way Turkish writers use interpersonal metadiscourse, namely in MA dissertations from one major academic field; English language teaching (ELT). The rationale of the study is based on a corpus based approach by examining a total of 20 dissertations written by Turkish writers writing in a second language. Such kinds of expressions were searched through the dissertations and analysis was made by examining three sections of dissertations -methodology, results, and discussion. After having an in-depth analysis based on the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers, it was revealed that to some degree, 'hedges', 'empathics (boosters)' and 'attitude markers' are all used by Turkish writers; however, 'attitude markers' are found to be preferred most frequently. On the other hand, with respect to the use of personal markers, differences were found among the writers. The analysis of dissertation sections revealed common results.

Keywords- Metadiscourse; interpersonal metadiscourse; second language writing; rhetoric

I. INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal metadiscourse tends to play an important role in metadiscourse features since, according to Vande Kopple, it is the precise layer of the text in which the writer's personal intrusion into his or her text adds emotional flavour and demonstrates the degree of commitment toward the ongoing proposition (Vande Kopple, 1985). The quality and quantity of interpersonal metadiscourse markers are shown to be different in different genres. Genre analysis is employed in the field of 'English for specific purposes' (ESP) (Bhatia, 1993) to discover more specificity. According to Coe (1998), genres are conventionally accepted norms of dealing with any speech event. This perspective, however, has been slow to filter through to studies of the research writing of advanced second language students, and the L2 postgraduate dissertation/thesis remains something of a neglected genre. Therefore, the researcher intends to shed some light on the way L2 writers negotiate its interpersonal demands through an in-depth analysis of 20 MA dissertations written by Turkish L2 post graduate writers.

Interpersonal metadiscourse is mainly used to interact with the reader about the propositional content; in addition, the term metadiscourse tends to be used in studies discussing textual as well as interpersonal functions (Crismore, 1989; Crismore and Farnsworth, 1990). With respect to functions of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in writing, they allow the reader to express his/her thoughts, interpret the content or inform the reader about his/her perspective towards the propositional content. With interpersonal functions a writer can determine the relationship he/she wants to construct with the reader either choosing a style with a strong persona or a remote stance. Also, it helps the writers to directly refer to the reader so that it involves the readers into the text and makes it more interactional. Interpersonal metadiscourse functions also give the reader clues about the writer's certainty in the message whether the writer uses words related to possibility or with strong words such as must, certainly or definitely. They help the readers to understand the text better. To sum up, interpersonal metadiscourse is the device by which writers choose the way how they want to deliver their messages to readers and how they want to be understood.

According to Hyland's taxonomy of metadiscourse (1998), interpersonal metadiscourse has five sub-categories; hedges, emphatics (boosters), attitude markers, relational markers, and person markers. Table 1 below summarizes each category:

Table 1. Hyland's Taxonomy: Functions of Interpersonal Metadiscourse in Academic texts (1998)

Interpersonal Metadiscourse		
Hedges	*Withhold writer's full commitment to statements*	Might, perhaps, it is possible about
Emphatics	*Emphasise force of writer's certainty in message*	In fact, definitely, it is clear, obvious
Attitude Markers	*Express writer's attitude tp prepositional content*	Surprisingly, I agree, X claims
Relational Markers	*Explicitly refer to/build relationship with reader*	Frankly, note that, you can see
Person Markers	*Explicitly reference to author(s)*	I, we, my, mine, our

As can be seen in Table 1, hedges can be simply defined as the writer's full commitment to the statements. Hedges are the interpretations or a way of softening the claims of the writer. Emphatics enable the reader to realize the degree of writer's claims and force of writer's certainty in message. Attitude markers express the writer's perspective or evaluation of the propositional content. Relational markers such as "let us first consider" explicitly refer to the relationship with the reader. It directly addresses to the reader and includes the reader into the text, thus making the text interactional. Finally, person markers contribute to signal the author's presence in a text.

1.1. Research questions

The purpose of the study is to explore the interpersonal metadiscourse markers used by Turkish researchers in the MA dissertations according to Hyland's (1998) taxonomy discussed in the previous section.

The research questions sought to be answered in the study are formulated as follows:

1. Do all of the interpersonal markers exist in ELT dissertations?
2. Among the interpersonal metadiscourse markers, which is the most frequently used one?
3. Under the category of these markers which words are the most common ones?
4. What are these markers' distributions among the three sections of dissertations -methodology, results and discussion?

II. METHOD

1.2. Instrument

Metadiscursive text fragments are identified and classified. The criteria used for this purpose is Hyland's (1998) taxonomy of metadiscourse because it was noted to be simple, clear and comprehensive (Abdi, Tavangar & Tavakkoli, 2010). Drawing on this taxonomy, the disertations are analyzed according to one major parameter, namely, interpersonal metadiscourse and its subcategories summarized earlier in Table 1. Moreover, the software programme WordMetry 1.55, which is a tool for Word statistics, is used to count word frequency, sorting words functions including word order methods from the most frequently used to the least. As a concordancer, the web page www.lextutor.ca is used.

1.3. Data collection and analysis

The study employed quantitative approaches since it contains the data analysis through statistics. A corpus of 20 dissertations by Turkish L2 postgraduate writers was analyzed. The study included frequency counts of the methodology, results and discussion sections of 20 dissertations written by the writers. The writers were all from Turkey with Turkish as their first language. They completed their master degree during the last five years, in the same academic discipline, ELT.

Firstly, the dissertations are analyzed using WordMetry tool. It produced word statistics for each dissertation, the frequency of each word and concordance lines of selected items, then a more general analysis has been conducted by two instructors holding a PhD degree by analyzing them manually and deleting the words which does not match or fit into the categories of interpersonal metadiscourse. Next, in order to explore the distribution of interpersonal metadiscourse markers among the three sections, five of the dissertations were randomly selected and further analyzed. The methodology, results and discussion sections of these five dissertations were taken into account.

1.4. Inter-rater agreement

The application of Hyland's (1998) taxonomy is enhanced through inter-rater agreement to sidestep the potential shortcomings. To make the analysis more reliable, the level of agreement between raters has been measured by kappa value.

Each of the three sections was coded by the researcher and an independent rater for reliability. The independent rater was a university lecturer holding a PhD degree in ELT, and she had a background in research regarding academic written discourse.

The raters coded ten dissertations and to determine consistency between raters the Kappa statistic was performed. The inter-rater reliability was found to be Kappa = 0,990 ($p<0.001$).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interpersonal metadiscourse analysis reveals that all of the markers are widely used in the MA dissertations. The rate of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in ELT dissertations is found to be very high. The rate of each marker along with the corresponding words used was provided separately below.

As regarding the hedges, they have very frequent occurrences in the dissertations. With respect to words used for the category -hedges, Table 2 shows the frequency of them in detail.

Table 2. Hedges in ELT dissertations (per 10.000 words)

Hedges	Frequency
Might	6,59
Likely	3,95
possible	3,17
Perhaps	2,24
Probably	1,93
Possibly	1,77
Total	19.68

Writers use hedges to make their claims tentative and cautious. Instead of a direct claim, they prefer hedging. Among them, the most commonly used ones are 'might, likely, and possible', being 6,59, 3,95, and 3,17, respectively. The reason for the common use of hedges can be due to the fact that while writing their dissertations Turkish writers tend to make interpretations as hedges are mentioned to serve as the interactive elements which bridge between text information and writer's interpretation. The writers express their propositions with greater caution as done in the following examples:

(1) Causes of such a variety when compared with the earlier studies might be because of the design of the study.

(2) Nevertheless, a more detailed analysis possibly will reveal interesting findings.

As for empathics, writers used emphatics to make strong claims. The most frequently used markers are 'must (4,19), certainly (1,30), and actually (0,67)'. The distribution of emphatics in ELT dissertations is 7,69 (per 10.000 words).

Table 3. Empathics in ELT dissertations (per 10.000 words)

Empathics	Frequency
Must	4,19
Certainly	1,30
Actually	0,67
Exact	0,59
in fact	0,37
Total	7,30

As discussed earlier, empathics are used to realize the degree of writer's claims and force of writer's certainty in message such as in fact, definitely, it is obvious; thus, it can be concluded that a relatively low frequency of empathics can be because Turkish writers pretend not to sound too firm on their claims, as provided in the examples taken from the dissertations below:

(1) Students who attributed their failure on internal causes certainly have a low level of motivation.

(2) The anxiety level of these students must stem from the methodology used.

With respect to attitude markers, the distribution of them in ELT dissertations is 93,50 (per 10.000 words). The most frequently used interpersonal markers are 'important, significant, and clearly', being 6,71, 5,18, and 4,07, respectively. The most commonly used markers are provided below.

Table 4. Attitude Markers in ELT dissertations (per 10.000 words)

Attitude Markers	Frequency
Important	6,71
Significant	5,18
clearly	4,07
Clear	3,45
Strong	2,67
Better	2,51
Consistent	2,51
Interesting	2,51
Easily	2,36
Significantly	2,20
Well	2,20
Total	83.35

The results reveal the general tendency towards writer's stance in ELT. L2 post-graduate writers are more flexible in reflecting their perspectives which is strongly due to the issues that ELT covers. Plausible reason for the frequent use of the attitude markers can be the fact that the attitude markers are used to convey a message and reveal the writer's point of view and writers try to fill the gap or shed some light on the relevant research by adding something new to what is already known in the literature. Some examples are given below:

(1) Students receiving corrective feedback significantly had better scores than the other two group.

(2) It is obvious that Turkish writers prefer the strategy "indicating a gap" to justify their studies.

As for the relational markers, ELT dissertations contain 4.25 per 10.000 words. The writers do not use the pronoun 'you' to refer to the readers. This can be because Turkish writers try to avoid having a direct relationship with them. Instead, they use the phrase 'let us + verb' or the pronoun 'we' to involve the reader into the text. ELT dissertations have some differences among themselves in terms of personal markers. While one writer made use of "I" pronoun 29 times in his/her study, the others chose to use either none of the pronouns or the pronoun "we".

After examining the overall distribution of each interpersonal marker among the dissertations, the first three ones (hedges, empathics, and attitude markers) were further analyzed under three sections of dissertations -methodology, results, and discussion. Relational markers and personal markers were not further examined under these sections due to their low-frequency use. The distributions of the findings are classified across the dissertation sections in Table 5 below:

Table 5. The distribution of each interpersonal marker across the dissertation sections (per 10.000 words)

Section:	Hedge	Empathics	Attitude Markers
Methodology	0,31	0,06	5,74
Result	3,22	0,65	18,2
Discussion	8,5	2,86	25,37
TOTAL	**12,03**	**3,57**	**49,31**

It can be seen from Table 5 that overall, attitude markers (49,31) are the most commonly used ones in ELT dissertations which is followed by hedges (12,03) and empathics (3,57). Similarly, attitude markers are the most frequent ones in each section, being 5,74, 18,2, and 25,37, respectively. Hedges are the second most common ones in each section, being 0,31, 3,22, and 8,5, respectively. In each section empathics are the most infrequent ones. Writers are trying to be clear and direct, concise and straight to the point while writing methodology sections, they clearly explain the process of data collection, statistical procedures, etc. Similarly, in a results section, they present the key results of their research without interpreting their meaning. On the other hand, it is the discussion section where writers really begin to add their interpretations to the work. Therefore, the high percentage of interpersonal markers in the discussion sections is due to the fact that writers try to interpret their findings by making use of these markers. Regardless of sections, the wide use metadiscourse markers among L2 writers is line with what other researchers have found in their studies (Bunton, 1999; Chu & Yu, 2002; Mostafavi & Tajalli, 2012).

CONCLUSIONS

The researcher aimed to shed some light on the way L2 writers negotiate its interpersonal demands through an in-depth analysis of 20 MA dissertations written by Turkish L2 post graduate writers. The results suggest that all of the five interpersonal markers were found to be used in ELT dissertations. However, they vary greatly in terms of frequency because relational markers and personal markers are not so much commonly used as the others. Next, the frequency counts of interpersonal metadiscourse markers show that attitude markers, hedges, and empathics are all preferred to be used by Turkish writers. Thirdly, it is revealed that certain interpersonal metadiscourse markers are commonly used by them, which implies a common rhetorical style. Finally, when the distributions of the markers within the sections are analyzed, attitude markers seem to be the most common ones which are followed by hedges. Empathics appear to be the most infrequent ones in each section.

Depending on these findings, this study suggests that interpersonal metadiscourse markers are valuable rhetorical means through which different functions can be accomplished. They have a variety of functions in the interpertation findings, namely in discussion sections. Moreover, it can be concluded that metadiscourse analysis can help a reader/writer to understand the norms of the discourse community and metadiscourse is a useful tool for a writer to present his/her ideas, especially in academic written discourse. Moreover, such metadiscourse studies can help writers to develop their writing skills and they can use it in their studies or articles.

REFERENCES

[1] Abdi, R. (2002). Interpersonal metadiscourse: an indicator of interaction and identity. Discourse Studies, 4: 2. 139–145.

[2] Abdi, R. Tavangar Rizi, M., & Tavakoli, M. (2010). The cooperative principle in discourse

[3] communities and genres: A framework for the use of metadiscourse, Journal of Pragmatics, 42(6), 1669-1679.

[4] Ayers, G. (2008). The evolutionary nature of genre: an investigation of the short texts accompanying research articles in the scientific journal Nature. English for Specific Purposes, 27, 22-41.

[5] Bhatia, V. K. (1993). Analyzing Genre: Language Use in a Professional Setting. New York: Longman.

[6] Bunton, D. (1999). The Use of Higher Level Metatext in PhD Theses. Journal of English for Specific Purposes, 18: S41–S56.

[7] Chu, T., & Yu, C. (2002). The image of academic journals: analyzing editor's comment. Proceedings of Academy of Information and Management Sciences, Nashville, 6(1), 3-7.

[8] Coe, R.M. (1998). The Rhetoric of Genre in the Process Era – and Beyond, in A. Freedman and P. Medway (eds) Genre and the New Rhetoric. London: Taylor & Francis.

[9] Crismore, A. (1989). Talking with Readers: Metadiscourse as Rhetorical Act. Peter Lang, New York.

[10] Crismore, A., & Farnsworth, R, (1990). Metadiscourse in popular and professional science discourse. In: Nash, W. (Ed.), The Writing Scholar: Studies in Academic Discourse. Sage, Newbury Park/London.

[11] Hyland, K. (1998). Persuasion and context: the pragmatics of academic metadiscourse. Journal of Pragmatics, 30, 437-455.

[12] Hyland, K. (2000). Disciplinary discourses: Social interactions in academic writing. London: Longman.

[13] Lore´s, R. (2004). On RA abstracts: from rhetorical structure to thematic organisation. English for Specific Purposes, 23, 280-302.

[14] Milne, E. (2008). The pragmatic role of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers in the construction and attainment of persuasion: A cross-linguistic study of newspaper discourse. Journal of Pragmatics, 40. 95-113.

[15] Mostafavi, M., & Tajalli, G. (2012). Metadiscoursal Markers in Medical and Literary Texts. International Journal of English Linguistics, 2(3), 64-77.

[16] Stotesbury, H. (2003). Evaluation in research article abstracts in the narrative and hard

sciences. Journal of English for Academic Purposes, 2, 327-341.
[17] Vande Kopple, W. (1985). Some Exploratory Discourse on Metadiscourse. College Composition and Communication 36: 82–93.

AUTHOR BIODATA

Dr. Eda Duruk has been working as an instructor for 10 years. Being a graduate from English Language Teaching Department, METU, she has been teaching both at School of Foreign Languages and at ELT Department. She holds her MA and PhD degree in ELT. Her research areas are applied linguistics, second language acquisition and teaching language skills.

★★★