Comparisons of Interactive and Interactional Metadiscourse among Undergraduates

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Abstract: Interactive and interactional metadiscourse are linguistic features used to maintain the coherence in essays. It involved a one-way interaction between the writer and reader, thus a challenge for Second Language (L2) learners to write effectively and comprehensively. A study is done on how the L2 learners produced the metadiscourse features and the usage is compared. A corpus of 200 evaluative essays by UiTM undergraduate students from computer science and business administration courses is analysed based on Hyland's (2005) framework. The purpose is to find out the amount and types of metadiscourse used and whether students from different course groups make any differences in their choices. The analysis revealed that students in both courses produced more interactive than interactional metadiscourse. The most prominent feature is *Self-mention* and the least is *Attitude Markers*. The same prominent feature for both courses is *Transition Markers*. The business administration course shows the least feature in *Evidentials*, whereas *Frame Markers* in computer science. These are evidence as to the importance of metadiscourse in students' academic writings and awareness is shown in its usage. This could lead to a proposition for a metadiscourse writing comparison between secondary schools and universities to gain fascinating outcomes.

Keywords: Evaluative writings, Interactional metadiscourse, Interactive metadiscourse, L2 learners, undergraduates

1.   Introduction

Metadiscourse is an intriguing field of investigation which is accepted to be significant in the process of arranging and producing writings as well as talks. Metadiscourse is considered as a social act as it involves interactions between everybody involved. For example, in writing or composing, the interaction is between the writer and the reader. As for a speech to make more sense and successful, it involves the interactions between the listener and the speaker. All these are based on the expectations, knowledge and

awareness of all parties. It is not simply an ideational thought from one side. Hyland (2004) sees metadiscourse as "self-reflective linguistic expressions referring to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of that text". It views composing both writing and speech as a social and open cooperation.

Having metadiscourse in compositions and speeches help readers and writers to see its significance in ensuring both parties understand the content. Hyland (2005) accepts that there are three principle advantages of teaching metadiscourse markers to learners. Firstly, the learners can recognize the thinking expectations that the writings request from the readers, and the manners in which could assist them with their composition processes as it is always good to understand the readers' needs to improve their writing performance (Boo, Ai, & Voon, 2019). Secondly, teaching metadiscourse will provide them with plenty of intentions to stand firm towards their thoughts. Thirdly, it empowers them to examine the rest with their readers. There are different advantages of teaching metadiscourse being discussed by academicians which the propositions that it does help in the learning process greatly.

1.1   Interactive and Interactional Metadiscourse

Hyland's (2005) proposed model comprises two types of metadiscourse: the interactive and the interactional measurements. The interactive metadiscourse helps the writer to sort out propositional substance to make it clear. These highlights are *Transition Markers, Frame Markers, Endophoric Markers, Code Glosses and Evidential*. Interactive metadiscourse alludes to the author's attention to crowd and the manner in which he passes on its plausible information, interests, expository desires and handling capacities. Its motivation is to diagram a book to address the reader's issues and to ensure the writer's planned understandings and objectives are met. In other words, interactive metadiscourse guides the reader through the content. In this way, it alludes to methods of sorting out talk. *Code Glosses* are utilized to expound propositional implications (for example to be specific, for instance, for example, *Endophoric Markers* allude to data in different pieces of the content (for example noted above, see fig. x), *Evidentials* allude to data from different writings (for example as indicated by x, z states), *Frame markers* allude to talk acts, successions or stages (for example at long last, to finish up), and, *Transition Markers* pass on the relations between primary conditions (for example, what's more, be that as it may, in this manner, and).

Interactional metadiscourse permits the author to comment on their messages. Hyland calls this current 'author's demeanor of a printed "voice" (Hyland, 2005) which are *Self-mentions, Hedges, Boosters, Attitude Markers and Engagement Markers*. The interactional metadiscourse includes the reader in the contention and demonstrates the writer's viewpoint towards the propositional content (Hyland, 2004). Self-mentions allude to the level of unequivocal creator nearness in the content' (Hyland, 2005). This can be acknowledged by the utilization of first individual pronouns and the possessive descriptive words *'I, me, my, our, mine and us'*. Different highlights that can be utilized to Self-mentions are *'the writer, the essayist, the writer's and the writer's'*. *Hedges* are utilized 'to perceive elective voices and perspectives thus retain promise to the suggestion' (Hyland, 2005). Supports express the writer's data as a feeling or a conceivable thinking as opposed to a reality. For instance, *'in my view, as I would like to think, likely and tend'*. Different highlights are *Boosters*. In contrast to *Hedges, Boosters* help scholars to communicate with sureness what they need to state. Models are 'in reality, surely and disobediently'. Engagement Markers are utilized by writers to expressly address the readers and draw in them in the discussion. This should be possible by the utilization of comprehensive *'we, our and us'*, reader's pronouns *'you and your'* and the question mark. Hyland (2005) calls attention to that 'the most evident sign of an essayist's dialogic mindfulness happens when the individual in question plainly alludes to readers, posing inquiries, making proposals and tending to them legitimately'. The last interactional highlights are Attitude Markers. They 'show the essayist's full of feeling, as opposed to epistemic, disposition to suggestion'. Examples are *'lamentably, strikingly and luckily'*. Some past examinations prove that good essays contain more metadiscourse than weak essays (Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007). Be that as it may, the utilization of interactional metadiscourse relies upon the writer's writing ability which most of them are not fully expert, if their papers are to be contrasted with the expert authors or local speakers (Amaal & Radzuwan, 2017).

1.2   Previous Studies

Writing is perceived to be the challenging skill to gain by language learners, albeit crucial, as it requires the creative practice of reaching out for one's thought, discovering them, and requires standard types of grammar, syntax and word choice (Matmin, Md Naim & Nik Luqman,2020)

Sorahi and Shabani (2016) led an examination to look at the utilization of metadiscourse in Persian (20) and English (20) research article introductions in the linguistics field. In contrasting the use of kind of metadiscourse, it was demonstrated that both Iranian and English RA introductions utilized more intuitive than interactional metadiscourse.

Ramoroka (2016) looked at the use of interactional metadiscourse highlights in two college classes, by Media Studies and Primary Education understudies at the University of Botswana. 40 articles were analyzed and the examination of interactional metadiscourse highlights in the two corpora demonstrated the occurrence of interactional metadiscourse markers, anyway it was discovered that there were varieties in the utilization and dissemination of these highlights by the understudies.

Abdi (2002) concentrated on the research genre in which concentrate on metadiscourse highlights utilized in scholarly settings and inspected its disciplinary variety. In contemplating 60 scholarly exploration articles of social sciences (SS) and natural sciences (NS), Abdi (2002) examined the manner in which analysts utilize interactional metadiscourse to enclose their character. It was discovered that social science writers, however, used metadiscourse frequently and were emotional in their proposition compositions. Thus, Abdi suggested that the decision of interactional metadiscourse identified with their field of study. Also with the examination directed by Hyland (2004), who broke down 240 expositions in which concentrated on how L2 master's and doctoral understudies created both interactive and interactional metadiscourse in their papers. It was discovered that the scholars created marginally more interactive than interactional metadiscourse features. The outcomes additionally demonstrated huge distinction in the utilization of metadiscourse over the disciplines, with the humanities and sociologies utilizing more metadiscourse and over 60% of the interactional features. The interactive metadiscourse was adjusted over the controls and formed a higher extent of utilization of metadiscourse in the science theses.

On the other hand, this was different with the study on L2 writers by Heng and Tan (2010), where the study had revealed that Malaysian undergraduate students produced more interactional metadiscourse markers than interactive metadiscourse markers in their argumentative essays. Interestingly, Mahmood, Javaid & Mahmood (2017) also found that Pakistani undergraduate students were more inclined in using interactional metadiscourse markers instead of interactive ones in their corpus of argumentative writings in which is similar to the findings by Heng and Tan (2010). *Transition Markers* were found as the most frequently used features by L2 learners.

Recently, the research field of metadiscourse is prone towards comparative studies. As the world is getting further developed and innovative situated, comparative studies between ethnicity, nations and societies are increasing in greater prevalence. For instance, a study done by Ariannejad, Aida, Osam, Ulker, Yigitoglu & Nur (2019) explored and made correlations of utilization of metadiscourse in English and Persian structural exploration articles. Like most scientists in this field, they likewise drew their examination based on Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse. Their examination explores the work of *Hedges, Boosters,* and *Attitude Markers* in a corpus made out of the post-technique areas of 100 exploration articles (50 English and 50 Persian) in the field of engineering. Overall, it was found that there are measurably noteworthy contrasts between the frequencies of *Hedges, Boosters,* and *Attitude Markers* utilized in English and Persian sub-corpora. Ariannejad et al. (2019) expressed that their findings "provide deep insights into the rhetorical conventions and norms in architectural articles and offer a broader perspective towards discoursing patterns and persuasion strategies of English and Iranian academic writers in this field".

Another fascinating study was conducted by Alkhathlan (2019) who explored Saudi EFL undergraduates' research articles, focused on the type and frequency of metadiscourse markers used.

Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse was used to analyse the data. The findings indicated that there are huge contrasts in the occurrence of interactive and interactional metadiscourse. The learners utilized more interactive metadiscourse markers than interactional ones. The study further indicated that *Transition Markers* happened regularly in the research articles, followed by *Hedges*. The least utilized metadiscourse markers were *Endophoric Markers* and *Attitude Markers*.

Based on that, Lotfi, Sarkeshikian, & Saleh (2019) led a diverse investigation of the utilization of metadiscourse markers in argumentative essays by Iranian and Chinese EFL learners. He noted and demonstrated that learners from various societies and first language act diversely in creating argumentative essays. Hyland's model for interactional-source subtypes incorporates Hedges, Boosters, Attitude Markers, Engagement Markers, Self-makes reference tool was utilized so as to think about the understudies' composition and Mann–Whitney U test was utilized to explain the distinctions in utilizing the metadiscourse markers. The outcomes demonstrated that there were critical contrasts among Iranian and Chinese EFL understudies in the utilization of all, yet one, of the referenced metadiscourse markers. They proposed that their discoveries may give better points of view toward culture-explicit variations in writing skill.

1.3   Conceptual Framework

By using the established table of metadiscourse by Hyland (2005), this study analysed the students' evaluative writings by analysing the two types of metadiscourse: Interactive and interactional metadiscourse. The interactive metadiscourse are *Transition Markers, Frame Makers, Endophoric Markers, Evidentials* and *Code glosses,* while, the interactional metadiscourse are *Self-mentions, Engagement Markers, Attitude Markers, Hedges* and *Boosters* as shown in figure 1 below.
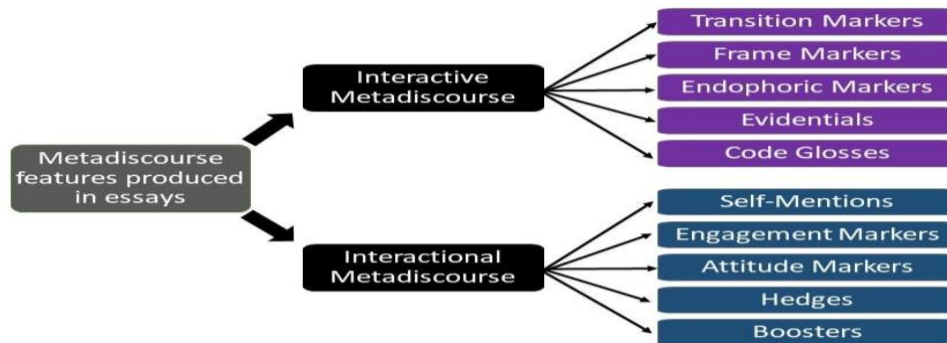

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of Study

Right now, explorations on metadiscourse and composing are still in the blossoming stage, with their attention on English composing guidance in the English teaching community specifically in L2 writings by using evaluative essays. Referring to the previous research related to academic writing that rarely can be found in this area, it is interesting to investigate and analyse the metadiscourse in academic texts written by L2 Malaysian learners. This study aimed to investigate: (a) the frequent types of metadiscourse produced by students from business administration and computer science courses in their writing, (b) the differences of metadiscourse features produced by these students and (c) the most prominent and the least metadiscourse features produced by ESL students in evaluative essays based on Interactional and Interactive Metadiscourse Model by Hyland (2005).

2.   Methodology

The study was conducted at the Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Terengganu which comprised two campuses: Dungun and Kuala Terengganu. Two different courses, business administration (BA) and computer science (CS) courses, had been chosen to take part in this study. This quantitative and qualitative research involved 200 students who were currently taking English for Critical Reading (ELC501). The subjects were selected by using a purposive sampling method. The 200 corpus of evaluative essays were submitted for the purpose of the study; 100 essays each from business administration and computer science courses. The essays are part of the requirement of their on-going assessment, and these were subsequently analysed manually for the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse. The students were given four weeks to complete their writing under one centralised theme (current social issues). The metadiscourse model developed by Hyland (2005) was used to differentiate the metadiscourse features produced in 5 items for interactive metadiscourse such as *Transition Markers, Frame Makers, Endophoric Markers, Evidentials* and *Code glosses* and 5 items for interactional metadiscourse like *Attitude Markers, Self-mentions, Engagement Markers, Hedges* and *Boosters*. To obtain data on the writers' use of metadiscourse, an analysis of the corpus of essays was carried out manually using a list of search items compiled based on Hyland's (2005, pp. 218–224) list of metadiscourse items as shown in table 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. Interactive Metadiscourse Model based on Hyland, 2005

No.	Interactive Metadiscourse	Examples
1.	Code glosses- supply additional information by rephrasing, illustrating or explaining.	called, defined as, e.g., in other words, specifically
2.	Endophoric markers- refer to other parts of the text in order to make additional information available, provide supporting arguments, and thus steer the reader toward a preferred interpretation.	(in) (this) Chapter; see Section X, Figure X, page X; as noted earlier
3.	Evidentials- are metalinguistic representations of an idea from another source and help to establish authorial command of the subject.	(to) quote X, according to X
4.	Transitions Markers- express semantic relation between main clauses	In addition, but, thus, and, because
5.	Frame markers- to discourse acts, sequences or text stages	Finally, my purpose is/ to conclude

Table 2. Interactional Metadiscourse Model based on Hyland, 2005

No.	Interactional Metadiscourse	Examples
1.	Attitude Markers- indicate the writer's opinion or assessment of a proposition.	I agree, I am amazed, appropriate, correctly, dramatic, hopefully, unfortunately.
2.	Self-mention refers to explicit authorial presence in the text and gives information about his/ her character and stance.	I, we, the author
3.	Engagement markers- explicitly address readers to draw them into the discourse.	We, our (inclusive), imperative mood.
4.	Hedges- indicate the writer's decision to recognize other voices, viewpoints or possibilities and be (ostensibly) open to negotiation with the reader,	Apparently, assume, doubt, estimate, from my perspective, in most cases, in my opinion, probably, suggests
5.	Boosters- allow the writer to anticipate and preclude alternative, conflicting arguments by expressing certainty instead of doubt.	Beyond doubt, clearly, definitely, we found, we proved, it is an established fact.

3.   Results and Discussion

The study was designed to (a) identify the frequent types of metadiscourse produced by business administration and computer science students in their writing, (b) distinguish the differences of metadiscourse features produced by these students and (c) determine the most prominent and the least metadiscourse features produced by them. The results and discussion of the study are explained in line with the objectives of the study.

(a)   The frequent types of metadiscourse produced

The two tables below indicate the metadiscourse features (interactive and interactional) produced by students from business administration (BA) and computer science (CS) courses in their writing.

Table 3. The frequency and percentage of metadiscourse features produced by BA course.

BA	Frequency	%
INTERACTIVE METADISCOURSE		
Code glosses	177	13.70
Endophoric markers	108	8.36
Evidentials	66	5.11
Transition markers	836	64.71
Frame markers	105	8.13
Total	1292	100.0
INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE		
Hedges	120	9.83
Boosters	118	9.66
Attitude markers	117	9.58
Engagement markers	137	11.22
Self-mention	729	59.71
Total	1221	100.0

Table 3 shows that BA course students produced more interactive metadiscourse (1292) as compared to Interactional metadiscourse (1221). However, there is not much difference in total number between both. The table also shows that the BA course used 13.70% in *Code glosses*, 8.36% in *Endophoric markers*, 5.11% in *Evidentials*, 64.71% in *Transition markers* and 8.13% in *Frame markers* which were related to the interactive metadiscourse. While in the interactional metadiscourse, this course shows 9.83% in *Hedges*, 9.66% in *Boosters*, 9.58% in *Attitude markers*, 11.22% in *Engagement markers* and 59.71% in *Self-mention*.

Table 4. The frequency and percentage of metadiscourse features produced by CS course.

CS	Frequency	%
INTERACTIVE METADISCOURSE		
Code glosses	126	7.54
Endophoric markers	307	18.36
Evidentials	214	12.80
Transition markers	945	56.52
Frame markers	80	4.78
Total	1672	100.0
INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE		
Hedges	33	5.94
Boosters	36	6.47
Attitude markers	16	2.88
Engagement markers	81	14.57
Self-mention	390	70.14
Total	556	100.0

Table 4 indicates that CS students used more interactive metadiscourse than interactional metadiscourse in their writings. The table also shows the CS course highlights 7.54% in code glosses, 18.36% in *Endophoric markers*, 12.80% in *Evidentials*, 56.52% in *Transition markers* and 4.78% in *Frame markers* through the interactive metadiscourse. While in the interactional metadiscourse, this course shows 5.94% in *Hedges*, 6.47% in *Boosters*, 2.88% in *Attitude markers*, 14.57% in *Engagement markers* and 70.14% in *Self-mention*. In overall, both courses used more interactive metadiscourse features (2964) than interactional metadiscourse features (1777) in their writings. In general, both courses employed more interactive metadiscourse features than interactional metadiscourse features in their writings which is similar to the result by Alkhathlan (2019), but somehow different with studies by Heng and Tan (2010) and Mahmood et. al (2017) who revealed that undergraduate students' L2 corpus exhibited more interactional metadiscourse features rather than interactive metadiscourse features. This might be because interactional metadiscourse is usually produced by skilful writers and really challenges writers' writing skills (Amaal & Radzuwan, 2017).

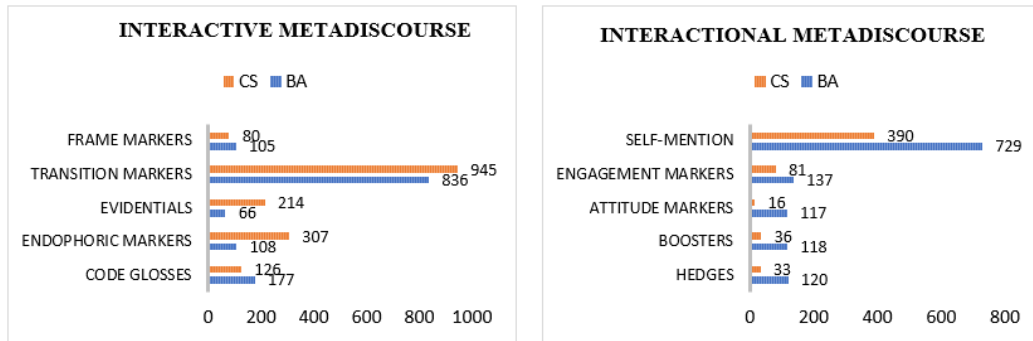(b)   The differences of metadiscourse features produced

Fig. 2. The metadiscourse features produced by CS and BA courses

The above charts demonstrate the differences in metadiscourse features produced by computer science and business administration courses in the interactive and interactional metadiscourse. If we compared between these two, CS students preferred to use the elements of interactive metadiscourse such as *Frame markers, Transition markers, Evidentials, Endophoric markers* and *Code glosses* compared to interactional metadiscourse. However, for BA students, they preferred to use the elements of interactional metadiscourse such as *Self-mention, Engagement markers, Attitude markers, Boosters* and *Hedges* which is agreed with studies by Abdi (2002) that the choice of interactional metadiscourse was discipline related where business administration students (who belong to social and humanities field) tended to intervene a lot (through the use of interactional metadiscourse features) and were subjective in their writings. Hyland (2005) also found the same result that the writers exhibited more interactive than interactional metadiscourse features. The outcomes likewise demonstrated huge distinction in the utilization of metadiscourse on highlights with the humanities and social sciences using more metadiscourse and over 60% of the interactional features

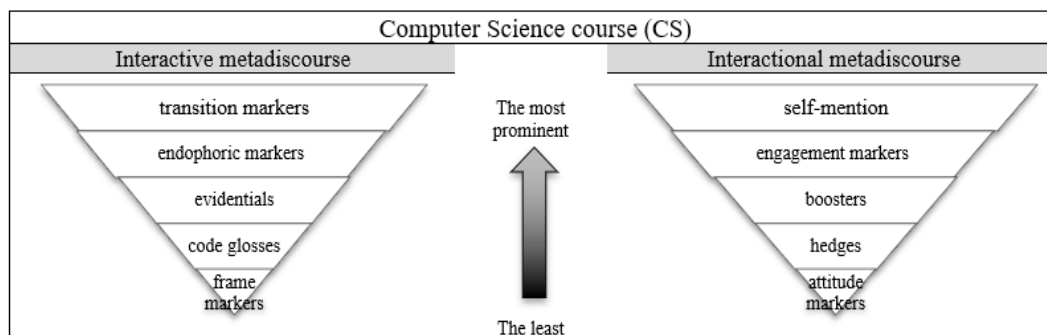(c)   The most prominent and the least metadiscourse features produced

Fig. 3. The most prominent and the least metadiscourse features produced by CS course
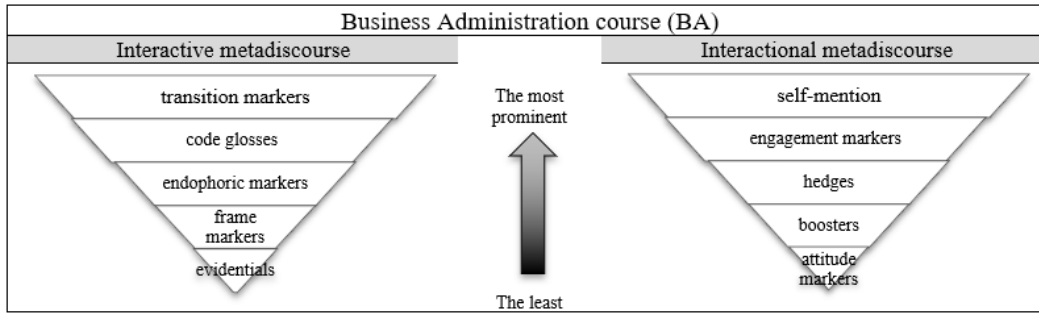
Fig. 4. The most prominent and the least metadiscourse features produced by BA course

The two figures above show the metadiscourse features produced by computer science (CS) and business administration (BA) courses. Based on the interactive metadiscourse graph, *Transition markers* were the highest feature used by CS students with 945 which is similar to the result by Alkhathlan (2019). *Transition Markers* link the relations between main clauses like *in addition, but, thus, and, first, next etc.* However, based on interactional metadiscourse graph, *Self-mention* was the highest feature used by BA students with 729. Since using the evaluative essay, the writers used *Self-mention*s frequently like *'I, me, my, our, mine and us'*. Other features that can be used too are *'the author, the writer, the author's and the writer's'*. Hence, we conclude that CS students preferred to use the features in interactive metadiscourse as compared to interactional metadiscourse and likewise to BA group. Apart from that, according to interactive metadiscourse graph, the least metadiscourse feature was *Evidential* with 66 produced by BA students while in interactional metadiscourse graph, the least metadiscourse feature was *Attitude markers* with 16 produced by CS students in which agreed with the result of study by Alkhathlan (2019). *Attitude Markers* are to indicate the writer's opinion or assessment of a proposition such as '*I agree, I am amazed, appropriate, correctly, dramatic, hopefully, unfortunately etc.'*

4.   Conclusion

Metadiscourse as the linguistic tool assumes a significant job in producing good writing. Therefore, the instruction of metadiscourse's features is imperative to make the writers' texts clearer. In general, both courses employed more interactive metadiscourse features than interactional metadiscourse features in their writings. In addition, the business administration course students preferred to use the elements of interactional metadiscourse such as *Self-mention, Engagement markers, Attitude markers, Boosters* and *Hedge.* And of course, the most prominent metadiscourse features are the *transition markers.*

Metadiscourse is a construct that is prominent in both composition and reading research. Although most universities required undergraduate composition classes, most students do not write as thoroughly as they should even after instruction. Thus, to teach metadiscourse, it would be effective to also teach the concept of metadiscourse. In teaching the concept of metadiscourse, the students will be introduced to features of metadiscourse in writing. This would be effective for university level students because many novice writers just concentrate on the product which is the written text itself and they do not pay enough attention to the main objective of writing which is communication with the audience.

This present research, however, has faced several limitations that could be addressed in future study. First, the corpus material of this study was limited. The validity of these findings could be more precise with a larger sample. Second, the information on the writers or participants was not sufficient. To gain access to the appropriate information of participants can help to conduct a thorough analysis of the results.

For future research, it is suggested that a study on comparisons pertaining to metadiscourse writing can be done between secondary schools and universities as to widely compare the students' levels and the usage of metadiscourse features. From that, we can see whether the students have been introduced to the

usage of metadiscourse at secondary level and at the same time is to see the application of metadiscourse at the university level.

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