Interpersonal Metadiscourse: Changing Patterns in Linguistics Book Reviews

ABSTRACT

This corpus-based study examines metadiscourse in linguistics book reviews across three key years: 2002, 2012, and 2022. Its aim is to trace the evolution and usage patterns of metadiscourse markers over this twenty-year span. Using Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal model, the research delves into both interactive and interactional metadiscourse. The study analyses various types of interactive metadiscourse markers, including transitions, code glosses, endophorics, frame markers, and evidentials. It also examines interactional metadiscourse, focusing on elements like self-mentions, attitude markers, hedges, boosters, and engagement markers. The findings show a notable consistency in the use of these markers across the studied years. Specifically, transitions are the most frequently used in interactive metadiscourse, followed by frame markers and others. In interactional metadiscourse, hedges are most prevalent, followed by engagement markers and others. The rationale behind this research is to understand how linguistic strategies in academic writing have evolved, particularly in the context of linguistics book reviews. By observing metadiscourse changes over two decades, the study offers insights into the evolving academic conventions and adaptations in writing practices in response to changing demands in scholarly communication. The results reveal a slight increase in the use of interactive metadiscourse markers and a small decline in interactional markers from 2002 to 2022. This trend highlights the dynamic nature of academic writing and emphasises the increasing importance of metadiscourse in structuring scholarly discourse and engaging readers. These findings provide insights for linguistics researchers and the broader academic community, underscoring the critical role of metadiscourse in effective scholarly communication.

Keywords: corpus-based; interactive metadiscourse; interactional metadiscourse; evolution; linguistics book reviews

INTRODUCTION

Academic writing is a crucial form of evaluation that requires writers to exhibit their knowledge and proficiency in specific disciplinary skills, including critical thinking, interpretation, and presentation (Irvin, 2010). Unlike everyday arguments, academic arguments need to be meticulously organised and supported by evidence, allowing the writer to effectively convey their viewpoints. This approach helps both the audience and the writer gain a deeper understanding of the subject matter, regardless of their personal opinions (Irvin, 2010).Within this context, a particular genre stands out for requiring writers to critically analyse the ideas presented by others in their writings (Diani, 2009). Birhan (2021) emphasises the significance of this genre, noting its role in enhancing academic literacy and raising awareness of genre structures and features. This genre is the book review (Hyland, 2004). Book reviews are unique in the academic landscape. They are structured around the writer's opinion and assessment of another text, making them one of the most personally expressive genres in academia. Such reviews provide a platform for community members to engage with and critique each other's ideas and analyses (Zou & Hyland, 2022). Essentially, book reviews are evaluations of the academic quality, clarity, integrity, and field value of another author's work (Hyland, 2004). The manner in which these judgments are expressed reveals the writer's identity, status, and competence within their field (Zou & Hyland, 2022). In crafting book reviews, writers also build a relationship with their intended audience. This is where metadiscourse comes into play, as writers utilise various resources in their writing to effectively communicate their ideas, positions, and arguments (Birhan, 2021; Hyland & Zou, 2022).

Metadiscourse, a term initially introduced by Zellig Harris in 1959, offers a framework for understanding the application of language (Hyland, 2005). Although interpretations of the term vary, it is widely accepted that metadiscourse reflects both a writer's stance and an awareness of the audience's needs. Successful texts consider the readers' schemata, rhetorical expectations, and processing requirements (Hyland & Jiang, 2020). Essentially, metadiscourse encompasses the range of devices writers use to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, allowing them to express viewpoints and engage with readers as part of a specific community (Hyland, 2005). The value of metadiscourse lies in its functions. Metadiscourse devices not only enhance learners' lexical competence but also enable writers to articulate their viewpoints and interact with their audience effectively (Birhan, 2021). These devices aid writers in clarifying their position within the text and assist readers in comprehending, organizing, and interpreting the content (Birhan, 2021). Hyland (2010) noted that by systematically examining metadiscourse features, we can gain insights into how writers or speakers establish positions and align themselves with their readers in specific contexts.

In the context of book reviews, metadiscourse plays a pivotal role in facilitating effective interaction between reviewers and their audience (Bal-Gezegin, 2016). It helps reviewers articulate their attitudes towards the book under review, a critical process in crafting an effective book review (Bal-Gezegin, 2016). Metadiscourse markers are instrumental in understanding how authors position themselves, convey their ideas, and interact with readers (Bal-Gezegin, 2016). In other words, effective communication in book reviews hinges on the strategic use of metadiscourse. Book reviewers need to consider their phrasing and positioning to achieve the benefits of engaging and informing the academic community. Book reviews serve not only to announce the publication of a book but also to establish the reviewer as a qualified expert in the field. In short, book reviews are crucial for academia, serving as a springboard for the evaluation and discussion of topics within specific fields and contributing to the dissemination of research (Groom, 2009; East, 2011; Birhan, 2021; Hyland & Zou, 2022). Thus, book reviewers

must carefully position themselves to address both interpersonal effects and the demands of their field (Tse & Hyland, 2006).

Despite their importance, book reviews have historically received less attention than might be expected from English for Academic Purposes (EAP) researchers and discourse analysts (Salager-Meyer et al., 2007; Groom, 2009; East, 2011; Hyland & Zou, 2022). Bal-Gazegin and Bas (2020) also pointed out that studies exploring the metadiscoursal features in academic book reviews, particularly in relation to linguistics, are insufficient. This gap underscores the need for this proposed study, which aims to analyse the relationship between metadiscourse markers and linguistics book reviews. Besides, conducting a diachronic study is crucial as it provides deep insights into the evolution of academic writing and its contextual influences. Such research contributes to developing teaching materials for EAP. Following Hyland and Jiang's (2018) assertion on the significance of diachronic changes in understanding academic practices, this study will focus on the use of metadiscourse in linguistics book reviews over a 20-year period. The selected time spans for analysis are 2002, 2012, and 2022. This approach aims to identify any notable changes in metadiscourse usage, determining whether these changes are more pronounced in earlier or later periods.

LITERATRUE REVIEW

BOOK REVIEWS

Book reviews are essential in guiding readers through the literary world. Kaplan (2014) highlighted their role in providing succinct information, aiding readers in evaluating, screening, or comparing books. Book reviews enhance a book's exposure, longevity, and visibility, and align with the contemporary trend of selective reading to determine a book's worth. Initially serving mainly an informative purpose, book reviews have evolved to offer more evaluative insights (Oinas & Leppälä, 2013) while still summarizing content. This evolution reflects publishers' increasing selectivity, with reviews now offering deeper assessments of a book's quality and value.

The role of book reviews extends beyond aiding general readers. For scholars and graduate students, who face the challenge of staying abreast of developments in their fields, book reviews are a valuable resource. They provide concise, evaluative summaries that aid in selective reading, as noted by Junqueira and Cortes (2014). Zou and Hyland (2022) emphasised the role of book reviews in delivering critical information to academic communities and contributing to the production of knowledge and social cohesion within these circles. They offer academics a platform to share their perspectives without the need for extensive book analysis, serving as an accessible starting point for newcomers in a field (Salager-Meyer et al., 2007; Daini, 2009; East, 2011; Kaplan, 2014; Zou & Hyland, 2022).Birhan (2021) highlighted the importance of book reviews in enhancing academic literacy and genre awareness while Babaii and Ansary (2005) argued that understanding the linguistic features of book reviews can significantly improve the writing skills of novice English language learners, providing them with valuable insights into the reading and writing processes of these reviews.

Despite their utility, book reviews have often been overshadowed by research papers and remain a relatively neglected genre (Salager-Meyer et al., 2007; Zou & Hyland, 2022;). Recognizing and addressing this oversight is essential to ensure that book reviews are duly appreciated and utilised effectively in both academic and broader reading communities.

METADISCOURSE IN ACADEMIC WRITING

In the realm of academic writing, particularly in complex genres such as book reviews, the effective use of metadiscourse is fundamental for clarity and coherence. Metadiscourse, as delineated by Hyland (2005), encompasses two primary categories: interactive and interactional resources, each playing a distinct and vital role in academic discourse. Hyland (2010) described interactive resources as essential tools for writers to guide readers through the text. This category includes transitions, such as 'in addition' and 'but', which link ideas and arguments; frame markers like 'to conclude', orienting the reader to the structure of the text; endophoric markers such as 'noted above', 'see Fig' that refer to other parts of the text; evidentials, for instance, 'according to X', '(Y, 2016)' for sourcing claims; and code glosses ('namely', 'e.g.') that clarify complex ideas. Interactional resources, conversely, focus on the relationship between the writer and reader, reflecting the writer's persona and stance. This includes hedges (e.g., 'might', 'perhaps') to express caution, boosters (e.g., 'definitely', 'it is clear that') for emphasizing certainty, attitude markers (e.g., 'unfortunately', 'I agree') revealing the writer's feelings, engagement markers (e.g., 'consider', 'note that') addressing the reader directly, and self-mentions (e.g., 'I', 'we') to establish the writer's presence in the argument.

The strategic employment of these metadiscourse elements is particularly crucial in book reviews. According to Hyland (2000), Swales and Feak (2004, as noted by Junqueira & Cortes, 2014), and Hyland and Tse (2004), a well-structured review not only presents a clear critique but also situates the reviewer within the scholarly dialogue. Interactive resources guide the reader through the review, while interactional resources engage the reader and assert the reviewer's scholarly position. Thus, a profound understanding of metadiscourse is indispensable for academic writers, especially those engaged in book review writing. It not only enables the effective communication of intricate ideas but also fosters a connection with the reader, amplifying the impact and reach of the academic text.

Numerous studies have been conducted to explore the use of metadiscourse within academic settings, offering valuable insights into this aspect of scholarly communication. For instance, Birhan (2021) observed a predominant use of interactive metadiscourse markers in book reviews, especially in the English Language discipline, underscoring a disciplinary variance in metadiscourse application. Complementing this, Bal-Gezegin and Baş (2020) found book reviewers more evaluative in their conclusions, using more attitude markers compared to the cautious tone of research articles. Hyland and Jiang (2020) tracked interactive metadiscourse changes since 1965, noting an adaptation in academic rhetoric to accommodate diverse audiences, emphasizing the dynamic nature of academic discourse. Lo, Othman, and Lim (2020) highlighted the impact of field-specific practices on metadiscourse usage, suggesting a nuanced understanding of its role in effective academic communication. Similarly, Hyland and Jiang (2018) revealed an increase in interactive features, indicating a shift towards guiding readers through texts. Jalilifar, Hayati, and Don (2018) provided genre-specific insights, showing variation in metadiscourse usage between book reviews and blurbs. Bal Gezegin (2016) observed a universal distribution of metadiscourse in English and Turkish book reviews, hinting at its cross-cultural relevance. Junqueiria and Cortes (2014) contrasted interpersonal metadiscourse in English and Brazilian Portuguese book reviews, pointing to linguistic trends in criticality. Lastly, Hyland (2010) emphasised the distinct metadiscourse strategies between Masters and Doctorate level writings, reflecting different academic expectations and practices. These studies collectively underscore the multifaceted nature of metadiscourse, influencing this research to analyse its evolution in linguistics book reviews over 20 years, focusing on changes between 2002, 2012, and 2022, to deepen our understanding of its dynamic role in academic writing.

Reflecting on the comprehensive body of research reviewed, it becomes evident that while various studies have explored metadiscourse in academic writing, specifically in book reviews, there remains a notable gap. To date, there appears to be no research focusing specifically on the evolution of metadiscourse markers in linguistics book reviews. This lacuna presents an opportunity for a novel investigation. Therefore, the present study aims to delve into the usage of metadiscourse markers in linguistics book reviews over a span of 20 years. By examining metadiscourse markers at three distinct points in time—2002, 2012, and 2022—this research seeks to uncover any significant changes and trends. The diachronic perspective adopted here is crucial; it not only contributes to a deeper understanding of the dynamic nature of academic writing in linguistics but also potentially reveals broader shifts in discourse practices over time. Such insights are invaluable for academics and students alike, as they navigate the evolving landscape of scholarly communication.

Addressing the research gaps and justifications outlined earlier, the primary objective of this study is to identify the types and frequencies of metadiscourse markers present in linguistics book reviews across three specific years: 2002, 2012, and 2022. Additionally, it aims to track and analyse the changes in the utilisation of these metadiscourse markers over the two-decade span between 2002 and 2022.

METHOD

THE CORPUS

A corpus-based approach was employed to select book reviews from linguistics journals, focusing on those published in the years 2002, 2012, and 2022. This temporal spread allows for a comprehensive diachronic analysis, providing insights into the evolution of metadiscourse practices over two decades. The selection of journals was guided by several key criteria to ensure the quality and relevance of the sources. Primarily, journals with a high Journal Impact Factor (JIF), were prioritised. This criterion was chosen because journals with a high JIF are generally recognised for their academic rigor and the influence of their published works within the academic community. Furthermore, within these high-impact journals, preference was given to book reviews that had garnered significant attention, as indicated by being listed as 'most cited' or 'most viewed' by their publishers. This approach was adopted with the rationale that more frequently cited or viewed reviews likely reflect a greater influence or relevance in the field (Gilmore & Millar, 2018), thereby offering richer data for analysing metadiscourse trends.

A total of 100 book reviews for each specified year were randomly selected, ensuring a balanced representation of each time period. The choice of a random sample from the selected journals aimed to mitigate selection bias, providing a more accurate reflection of metadiscourse usage across the broader academic discourse. The journals included in the study were accessed from reputable databases such as Elsevier and Taylor and Francis, ensuring the reliability and accessibility of the sources. This access also allowed for a wide range of high-quality academic journals to be considered, further enhancing the robustness of the corpus. Table 1 below presents the specific journals chosen and the number of book reviews sourced from each journal for each designated year. This detailed breakdown offers transparency regarding the source material, contributing to the credibility of the study and the reproducibility of its findings.

TABLE 1. Name of Journal Selected and the number of book reviews selected for each specific year

Name of Journal	Number of book reviews	Number of book reviews	Number of book reviews selected

	selected for 2002	selected for 2012	for 2022
International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism	11	8	8
SYSTEM	16	22	16
English for Specific Purposes	10	13	8
Journal of Second Language Writing	0	7	9
Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development	0	25	20
Language Policy	15	8	0
Computational Linguistics	17	8	6
Journal of English for Academic Purposes	3	4	8
Language and Education	10	5	6
Journal of Pragmatics	18	0	19
Total	100	100	100
Total number of words in each sub-corpus	154735	140406	157796

DATA ANALYSIS

In this study, *Antconc* software version 4.1.4 (Anthony, 2022) was employed to analyse the metadiscourse markers in linguistics book reviews published in year 2002, 2012, and 2022. The initial step involved utilising *Antconc's Word List* function to identify the frequencies and types of metadiscourse markers, as outlined in Hyland's (2005) comprehensive list. This process provided a quantitative foundation for the analysis, enabling a systematic assessment of metadiscourse usage across the selected years. To ensure the accuracy and relevancy of the identified markers, the *Concordance* function in *Antconc* was subsequently utilised. This function is instrumental in contextual analysis, as it helps in determining whether the identified markers are indeed functioning as metadiscourse. The standard context size was initially set to 10 tokens on either side of the marker. However, to achieve a deeper understanding of the context and to ensure the accurate interpretation of these markers, the context size was flexibly adjusted. In cases where the context within a 10-token range was insufficient to comprehend the meaning of the sentence in context, it was expanded to 15 tokens, and further to 20 tokens on each side if necessary.

The method utilised in the study allowed for a nuanced examination of how metadiscourse markers are embedded within the linguistic fabric of the book reviews. It also provided insights into the evolution of their usage over the two-decade span. Following the methodology of Hyland and Jiang (2018), common conjunctions such as 'and' and 'or' were excluded from the transition counts. This decision was based on the rationale that these words often function as default grammatical connectors rather than deliberate rhetorical strategies. By omitting them, the analysis focused more sharply on the markers that are more likely to contribute to the rhetorical and discursive objectives of the text. In short, the methodology outlined here combines quantitative and qualitative analysis tools, offering a comprehensive view of metadiscourse in linguistics book reviews. This approach not only identifies the prevalence of certain markers but also contextualises their usage, thereby enriching our understanding of metadiscourse strategies in academic discourse.

RESULTS

INTERACTIVE METADISCOURSE MARKERS USAGE IN 2002, 2012 and 2022

We examined the overall usage of interactive metadiscourse markers, which writers utilise to guide readers through their texts. These markers enable authors to manage the flow of

information and embed their preferred interpretations within their writings (Hyland, 2010). Table 2 below presents the frequencies of these interactive metadiscourse markers for each specific year, with data normalised to per 10,000 words for consistency and ease of comparison.

TABLE 2. Interactive Metadiscourse Markers Usage in Year 2002, 2012, 2022 (per 10,000 words)

Category	Year 2002	Year 2012	Year 2022
Transitions	70.636	103.129	120.345
Evidentials	49.891	57.761	52.789
Code glosses	43.752	35.539	44.297
Frame markers	62.493	59.114	82.891
Endophorics	3.489	1.068	1.013
Total	230.261	256.611	301.335

A consistent pattern emerges from the data, showing transitions markers as the most frequently used, followed by frame markers, evidentials, code glosses, and endophoric markers, which are the least used. Transition markers, leading with an average of 98.036 instances per 10,000 words, are pivotal in academic writing. They articulate semantic relations between main clauses and foster a rational flow of ideas in the text (Hyland, 2010; Birhan, 2021). Their predominant usage underscores their role in structuring arguments and guiding readers through complex academic discussions. For example:

(1) *This chapter sketches an insightful picture of crisis communication, <u>at the same time</u> demonstrating how corpus analysis facilitates the interpretation of companies' strategies and customer feedback in such discourse.*
(2) *<u>In addition</u> to these findings, the author points out that customers might not prefer companies' formulaic replies.*

In Example (1), the transition marker 'at the same time' is employed to signal to the readers that an insight and a demonstration are being presented concurrently in a specific chapter. This marker aids in clarifying the simultaneous presentation of these elements, thereby enhancing the readers' comprehension of the chapter's content. In Example (2), the use of 'In addition' serves as a connector, introducing supplementary information to the ongoing discussion. This transition marker effectively guides the readers through the progression of ideas, helping them to follow and understand the logical flow and the addition of new, relevant points to the narrative.

Frame markers are notably prevalent in linguistics book reviews, with an average occurrence of 68.166 per 10,000 words, ranking them as the second most common type. These markers are instrumental in sequencing stages of discussion, articulating the writer's objectives, or indicating topic shifts, as noted by Birhan (2021). Their significant presence underscores the structured nature of academic discourse, emphasising the importance of clear signalling of the writer's purpose and the progression of ideas.

(3) *This book has a number of strengths. <u>First of all,</u> this volume can clearly cater to a wide range of readers who are interested in L2 feedback because it is well-written and easy to read.*
(4) *In spite of this comment, I <u>wish to</u> state clearly that the book is not dogmatic in tone, and in fact, has a pleasant, friendly style.*

For example, in Example (3), the use of 'First of all' functions as a frame marker to initiate a list of the book's strengths, guiding the readers through the writer's planned presentation of positive aspects. Similarly, in Example (4), the phrase 'wish to' is used as a frame marker, conveying the writer's intent to clearly state their opinion about the book's tone and style. Both instances illustrate how frame markers are employed to structure the narrative and clearly articulate the writer's intentions and transitions in their review.

Evidentials, which are used to cite sources of information external to the current text, rank third in frequency of use in academic writing, with an average of 53.33 instances per 10,000 words. As highlighted by Hyland (2010) and Birhan (2021), their role in academic writing is vital for substantiating claims and providing evidence. In the context of book reviews, evidentials add credibility and scholarly rigor to the evaluations and perspectives offered.

> (5) *What made the difference, <u>according to Toohey</u>, was not the superior cognitive or motivational traits of the successful children…*
> (6) *Moreover, the process of novice writers learning to become proficient in them is often left up to a process of 'trial and error' <u>(Howe, 1990, p. 216).</u>*

For instance, in Example (5), the phrase 'according to Tooey' is utilised as an evidential marker. It lends authority to the writer's presentation by attributing the information to a credible source. Similarly, in Example (6), the in-text citation '(Howe, 1990, p. 216)' serves as an evidential, grounding the writer's claims in scholarly research. This use of evidentials not only strengthens the arguments made but also aligns the text with academic standards of evidence-based discussion.

Code glosses, with an average of 41.196 instances per 10,000 words, are a notable feature in academic writing, especially used by authors to elaborate or clarify ideas, thereby enhancing reader comprehension. Hyland (2010) emphasises their role in ensuring that academic discourse is accessible and understandable, an aspect particularly crucial in texts dealing with complex or nuanced subjects.

> (7) *The method is to select one key discipline in each of the areas of science (natural, social and human), <u>namely,</u> chemistry, economics and history.*
> (8) *The authors do a good job tying psychological research which may seem abstract to language teachers to current trends in language teaching. <u>For example,</u> the authors point out the links between general research in metacognition and the work of…*

In Example (7), the marker 'namely' is used to explicitly specify the key disciplines selected in the study, which are chemistry, economics, and history, representing the areas of natural, social, and human sciences, respectively. This clarifies the exact subjects of focus for the reader. Similarly, in Example (8), the phrase 'for example' is utilised to elucidate the writer's point about the book's effective integration of psychological research with current language teaching trends. It introduces an illustration of how the authors of the book under review successfully linked general research in metacognition with language teaching, thereby concretising the writer's positive assessment. Both instances highlight the use of code glosses to provide clarity and aid understanding, reflecting the writer's commitment to making their review both informative and comprehensible.

Endophoric markers, with a relatively low frequency of 1.856 instances per 10,000 words in book reviews, offer an interesting insight into academic writing practices. Birhan (2021) noted that these markers typically refer back to previously mentioned ideas. However, in book reviews, as per Hyland's (2005) taxonomy, they often reference the

original book being reviewed rather than previous segments of the review itself. This pattern results in their limited presence, indicating a specialised use in this context. The focus in book reviews is more on discussing aspects of the book at hand rather than revisiting earlier parts of the review.

> (9) *Notwithstanding the <u>above</u> points, the volume has some strengths.*
> (10)*As noted <u>before</u>, the quantitative approach may not appeal to everyone.*

Despite their rare use, endophoric markers are still observable in specific instances. For example, in Example (9), the use of 'above' serves to remind readers of points mentioned earlier in the review before introducing the strengths of the volume. Similarly, in Example (10), 'before' is used to refer back to a previously stated observation about the quantitative approach. These examples show how endophoric markers like 'above' and 'before' are strategically employed by the writer to link back to earlier discussions, guiding readers through a cohesive narrative. This usage underscores the writer's effort to maintain continuity and coherence in the review, ensuring that readers can easily follow the flow of arguments and ideas presented.

Overall, the analysis underscores the varied and significant roles of interactive metadiscourse markers in shaping and elucidating academic texts, especially within the context of linguistics book reviews. These markers play a crucial part in organising the structure and enhancing the clarity of the content, making it more accessible and coherent for readers. The observed consistency in their usage across the three studied years further suggests a stable and enduring pattern in the application of these linguistic strategies in academic writing. This consistency indicates that these markers are integral to the conventions and practices of academic discourse, reflecting a deep-rooted preference for clear, well-structured, and reader-friendly communication in scholarly literature.

INTERACTIONAL METADISCOURSE MARKERS USAGE IN 2002, 2012 and 2022

This section delves into the utilisation of interactional metadiscourse markers in the selected book reviews, encompassing hedges, engagement markers, boosters, self-mentions, and attitude markers. Interactional resources, as Hyland (2010) elucidated, are employed by writers to actively involve readers in the discourse while simultaneously presenting their own persona. Table 3 below presents a consistent trend across year 2002, 2012, and 2022 in the usage of these markers. Notably, hedges are the most frequently used, followed by engagement markers. Boosters rank third, self-mentions fourth, and attitude markers are the least used.

TABLE 3. Interactional Metadiscourse Markers Usage in Year 2002, 2012, 2022 (per 10,000 words)

Category	Year 2002	Year 2012	Year 2022
Hedges	98.297	96.790	89.799
Engagement markers	53.316	53.060	37.073
Boosters	47.888	31.052	27.440
Self-mentions	22.942	17.235	24.208
Attitude markers	16.479	16.808	15.589
Total	**238.922**	**214.945**	**194.109**

Hedges are the most frequently occurring metadiscourse markers in academic book reviews, with an average of 94.962 instances per 10,000 words. They primarily serve to express the writer's hesitancy in fully endorsing a proposition. This is evident in the use of terms like 'might' and 'perhaps' in Examples (11) and (12), respectively.

(11)This part of the book <u>might</u> be useful to a computational linguist who needs a quick reference to one of the classic classification systems devised for organizing library stocks.

(12) *<u>Perhaps</u> the most interesting insight to emerge from these chapters is the vs. talking at them.*

In Example (11), 'might' is used to suggest that a part of the book could be beneficial for a computational linguist, but without asserting this as a certainty. Similarly, in Example (12), 'perhaps' introduces a proposition as a possibility rather than a definite fact, indicating that the insight mentioned could be the most interesting, but this is not presented as an absolute. The regular appearance of 'might' and 'perhaps' reflects a characteristic approach in academic writing, particularly in linguistics book reviews, where authors often adopt a cautious and measured tone. Such usage conveys a level of uncertainty or openness to alternative interpretations, aligning with Birhan's (2021) observations about common linguistic strategies in this genre. It indicates a preference for moderation and careful consideration in academic discourse, avoiding overstatement and leaving room for reader interpretation and further inquiry.

Engagement markers, averaging 47.816 instances per 10,000 words, facilitate a conversational and interactive tone. They are instrumental in establishing a connection between the writer and the reader, often used to negotiate ideas and encourage reader participation in the discourse (Birhan, 2021).

(13)First, we <u>note</u> that such a multicultural nationalism would be ….

(14)We also need to <u>consider</u> the text features of source-based writing such as voice, stance, and engagement.

In Example (13), the writer employs 'note' as an engagement marker, aiming to forge a connection with the readers. This is achieved by urging the readers to be cognizant of a specific idea that has been presented. Similarly, in Example (14), the writer uses 'consider' to engage with the readers, effectively inviting them to contemplate the characteristics of source-based writing. Both instances exemplify strategic language use to involve and interact with the audience in the discourse.

Boosters, averaging 34.460 instances per 10,000 words in academic writing, are indicative of a writer's certainty and assertiveness about a particular proposition. These linguistic markers are employed to emphasise the writer's confidence in their evaluations or assertions within a review. As Hyland (2010) noted, boosters play a key role in academic discourse by reinforcing the strength and validity of the writer's points, helping to convey a sense of authority and conviction. This usage reflects a deliberate strategy to assert and underscore the writer's perspective, contributing to the persuasive and authoritative tone often sought in academic writing.

(15)This information is <u>surely</u> relevant to other research methodologies.

(16) *The question of language versus dialect is <u>obviously</u> unanswerable, and, sensibly,*

In Example (15), the use of 'surely' allows the writer to convey a sense of confidence and certainty about the information presented. This word choice subtly emphasises the writer's assurance in their viewpoint. Meanwhile, in Example (16), the employment of 'obviously' reflects the writer's firm stance and clear conviction in their evaluation of the question

raised in the book. Both instances demonstrate how the writer uses language to assert their confidence and assertiveness in their assessments and opinions.

Self-mentions, with an average occurrence of 21.311 per 10,000 words in academic writing, provide a means for writers to insert their personal presence into the text. As noted by Birhan (2021), this usage lends a more personal dimension to academic discourse. By explicitly referencing themselves, writers can directly express their viewpoints, experiences, or reflections, thereby adding a subjective element to the otherwise objective tone of academic writing. This technique not only humanises the text but also clarifies the source of ideas, opinions, or interpretations, making the discourse more engaging and relatable for the readers.

> (17) *Here I am employing the author's notion of recursiveness to refine my own ideas about the relationship of language and thought.*

In Example (17), the writer's use of 'I' and 'my' serves as self-mention markers, effectively inserting their personal presence into the review. This approach personalises the narrative, making it clear that the ideas and viewpoints presented are from the writer's own perspective. Such usage of self-mention markers is a strategic way to convey ownership of the opinions and to emphasise the subjective nature of the analysis being provided.

Attitude markers, though less frequently used with an average of 16.292 instances per 10,000 words, hold a significant role in academic writing, particularly in book reviews. They are essential for expressing the writer's personal feelings and attitudes towards the subject matter. Despite their lower occurrence, these markers are instrumental in adding a subjective layer to the review, giving readers insight into the writer's perspective and evaluative stance.

> (18) *Fortunately, the editors of this volume do not take such a view.*
> (19) *I can agree with the first statement but not with the second.*

In Example (18), the writer's use of 'fortunately' conveys a sense of relief or positive sentiment. This word choice suggests that despite some negative aspects, there is a redeeming factor, something the writer views as a fortunate development. It is a way of expressing personal feelings about the situation being discussed, indicating a turn for the better. In Example (19), the use of 'agree' indicates the writer's concurrence with the first point being discussed. This attitude marker clearly communicates alignment with one aspect of the subject matter but not with another. It is a straightforward way of expressing agreement with one part of the argument while distancing oneself from another, underscoring the writer's selective endorsement of the ideas presented. The relatively infrequent use of attitude markers suggests that writers often prefer to maintain an objective or neutral tone in book reviews. This tendency could be attributed to the desire to uphold a sense of academic detachment, as Birhan (2021) pointed out. It reflects a careful balance in academic discourse, where personal opinions and feelings are expressed judiciously, ensuring that the review remains primarily focused on the content and scholarly analysis rather than on the writer's personal biases or emotions. This approach contributes to the credibility and professionalism expected in academic publications, while still allowing for a measured expression of personal viewpoints.

The analysis of interactional metadiscourse markers in linguistics book reviews reveals their diverse roles in defining the tone, fostering engagement, and establishing the author's presence within the text. The uniformity in their application over various years suggests that these markers are integral to the established conventions of this genre,

playing a key role in shaping how ideas are communicated and how readers interact with the content.

<div align="center">

CHANGING PATTERNS OF METADISCOURSE USE

</div>

Figure 1 presents the metadiscourse usage in linguistics book reviews over two decades provides invaluable insights into the evolving practices of academic writing. The data shows a modest but steady increase in overall metadiscourse usage, rising from approximately 469 instances per 10,000 words in 2002 to 495 in 2022. This trend indicates a growing reliance on metadiscourse as a tool for structuring and clarifying scholarly communication.
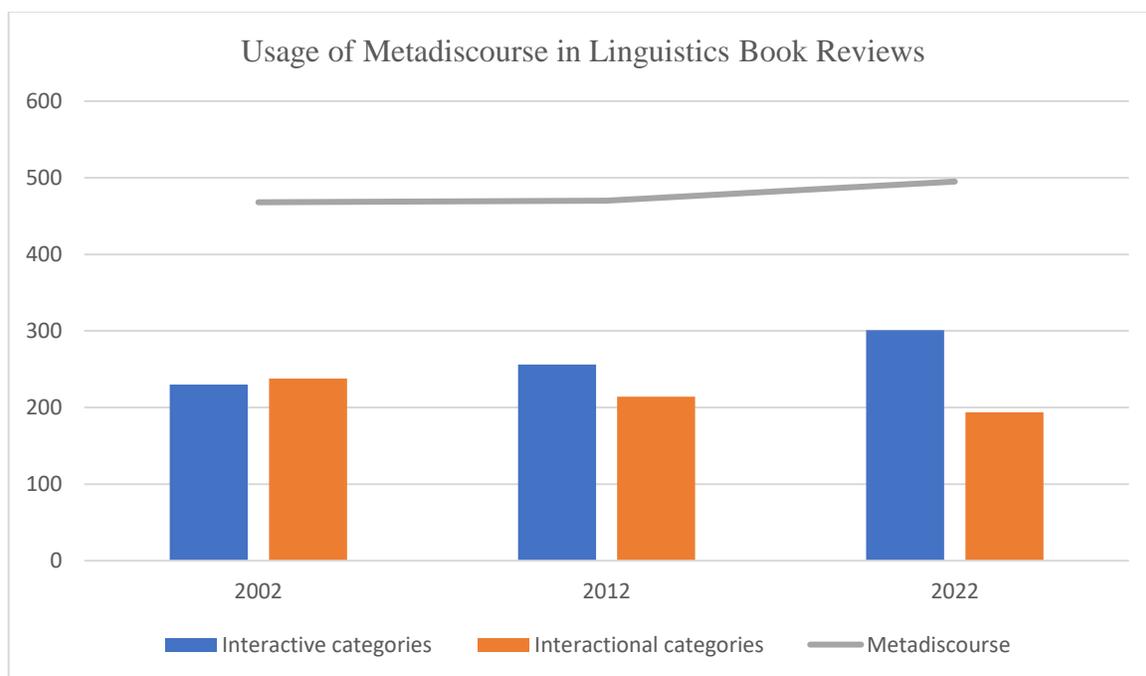

FIGURE 1. Changes of interactive and interactional metadiscourse over time (per 10,000 words)

The observed 3.5% increase in interactive metadiscourse, particularly in transitions and frame markers, suggests a shift towards more guided and structured academic discourse. Transitions, showing the most significant growth, are crucial for linking ideas and indicating logical relationships, thereby enhancing the reader's comprehension and engagement with the text. This increase in transitions, along with a 1.02% rise in frame markers, underscores a trend towards more explicitly structured and reader-friendly academic texts. Such changes align with Hyland and Jiang's (2018) findings, highlighting an evolving academic style that favours clear guidance and overt persuasion.

On the other hand, the slight decrease in interactional metadiscourse usage, particularly in boosters and engagement markers, might reflect changing norms in authorial presence and argumentation styles in academic writing. The decline in boosters could signal a move away from forceful assertions, adopting a more balanced and nuanced approach in presenting arguments. This could be attributed to an increased awareness of the diverse academic audience and the need to accommodate various perspectives, especially in fields that are becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. Furthermore, the reduction in engagement markers might indicate a shift in how writers perceive and address their audience. As academic disciplines evolve and intersect, the assumption of shared knowledge becomes less certain, possibly leading writers to adopt a more inclusive and explanatory approach, rather than assuming a common ground with the reader.

These trends not only reflect the dynamic nature of academic discourse but also the broader changes in the academic landscape, including the diversification of research fields, the expansion of the academic audience, and the evolving expectations of academic communication. As such, understanding these trends is crucial for academics, researchers, and students alike, as it offers insights into effective writing strategies that resonate with contemporary academic standards.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study resonate with, yet diverge from, previous research on metadiscourse in academic texts. Birhan (2021) identified transitions and frame markers as the most frequent interactive metadiscourse markers in various disciplines, which aligns with our findings. However, Jalilifar et al. (2018) reported transition and code glosses as the most common in their study of book reviews and blurbs, differing slightly from our results. Despite these variations, a consistent trend in all three studies is the pre-eminence of transition markers. Their crucial role in connecting logical relations and aiding reader comprehension in academic texts is well-documented (Hyland and Jiang, 2018). The frequent use of transition markers, especially in longer academic texts, is pivotal for maintaining clarity and ensuring effective communication.

In terms of interactional metadiscourse, our study found hedges to be the most prevalent, which corroborates the findings of Junquiera and Cortez (2014), and Bal-Gezegin (2016) in English book reviews. However, Birhan (2021) observed self-mentions as the most used markers, followed by hedges. Bal-Gezegin and Bas (2020) noted that attitude markers were most frequent, followed by hedges. While no uniform trend emerges regarding the most prevalent interactional marker, hedges consistently rank high in most studies, reflecting their role in expressing cautiousness, particularly in interdisciplinary research where authors may be hesitant to commit fully to propositions outside their expertise. The variability in the usage of self-mentions and attitude markers might be influenced by factors such as the field of study, the nature of the research, and authorial preferences. In multi-author contexts, diverse viewpoints could lead to cautious language choices, impacting the frequency of these markers. In summary, these findings highlight the nuanced and dynamic nature of metadiscourse in academic writing. Transition markers, essential for logical cohesion and clarity, consistently emerge as vital across various studies. The use of interactional metadiscourse markers like hedges reflects a cautious and measured approach in academic discourse, potentially shaped by the increasing prevalence of interdisciplinary research. Understanding these patterns is crucial for comprehending the evolving landscape of academic writing and communication.

This study uniquely investigated the changes in metadiscourse usage in linguistics book reviews between 2002 and 2022. While its findings are distinct, they reflect broader trends noted in academic writing research. These broader trends are notably illustrated in the studies conducted by Hyland and Jiang. Their 2018 research, which analysed metadiscourse in research articles spanning from 1965 to 2015, identified a notable increase in the use of interactive metadiscourse coupled with a decrease in interactional metadiscourse, despite an overall growth in metadiscourse utilization (Hyland & Jiang, 2018). This finding was further supported by their subsequent 2020 study, which specifically examined the trajectory of interactive metadiscourse over a fifty-year period, affirming the continuous rise in its usage (Hyland & Jiang, 2020).

The alignment of our findings with Hyland and Jiang's studies points to a more extensive, genre-crossing pattern in the domain of academic writing. It suggests an increasing emphasis on and recognition of the usage and functions of metadiscourse across different academic genres. This trend reflects an evolving academic ethos that increasingly

values clarity, precision, and effective communication. Within this context, metadiscourse emerges as a critical component, playing a vital role in structuring arguments and enhancing reader engagement.

In linguistics book reviews, the rising use of interactive metadiscourse markers, such as transitions and frame markers, underscores a growing focus on guiding readers through complex discussions and aiding their comprehension. This trend is especially important for ensuring the accessibility of scholarly texts to a diverse audience, which may include readers outside the immediate field of study. On the other hand, the decrease in interactional metadiscourse might indicate a movement towards a more objective and less personal style of academic writing. This shift could be attributed to the broadening scope of interdisciplinary research and the need to communicate effectively with a varied audience, including specialists, non-specialists, and stakeholders beyond the academic realm.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, this study contributes to the understanding of metadiscourse in academic writing and offers a foundation for future research and pedagogical practices. By expanding upon the findings of the study, future studies can continue to advance our understanding of effective communication in scholarly texts, accommodating the dynamic nature of academic writing and its changing demands. In particular, this study enriches the existing body of knowledge on metadiscourse. It offers valuable insights into how individual academic genres are adapting to the changing demands of scholarly communication. The insights gained from this study on the usage of metadiscourse in linguistics book reviews significantly contribute to the broader understanding of metadiscourse in academic writing. Metadiscourse, as mentioned in the literature review, plays a crucial role in enhancing the clarity and effectiveness of communication by highlighting how specific markers are employed in scholarly texts. This study, by shedding light on the types of frequently used metadiscourse markers in linguistics, provides valuable guidance for researchers, writers, and readers within this field, facilitating the creation of more comprehensible and engaging academic texts.

For educators and EAP learner, the findings of this study emphasise the importance of familiarizing themselves with the metadiscourse markers commonly used in their respective disciplines. This knowledge can significantly enhance teaching methodologies, leading to the development of teaching materials that better equip students with the skills necessary for effective academic writing. Keeping track of the evolving trends in metadiscourse, influenced by factors like publishing trends and audience expansion, as noted by Hyland and Jiang (2018), is crucial for preparing new writers to meet the changing demands of academic writing and communication.

Future research can build upon the findings of this study in several ways. One approach is to narrow the focus to linguistics book reviews in high-impact, first quartile journals, providing a deeper understanding of metadiscourse in these high-quality publications. Expanding the research to include a variety of disciplines could also offer valuable insights into how metadiscourse is employed across different academic fields and how its usage has evolved over time. Such comparative studies could reveal interesting disciplinary differences in the application of metadiscourse. Future research could also explore metadiscourse usage in book reviews across various disciplines and languages, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of its role in the global academic landscape. Further recommendations include exploring the role of digital and online platforms in shaping metadiscourse usage, given the increasing prevalence of digital publishing and online scholarly communication. Investigating how metadiscourse is

adapted for digital mediums could provide insights into the evolving nature of academic discourse in the digital age.

Additionally, there is a need for an updated framework for analysing metadiscourse. Hyland's 2005 taxonomy, while comprehensive for its time, may not fully capture the nuances of current academic writing practices. Future research should aim to revise this taxonomy, possibly incorporating newer metadiscourse items or reassessing the relevance of existing ones. This update is necessary, as evidenced by the absence of certain items like 'incontrovertibly' and 'undisputedly' in the analysed sub-corpora, indicating shifts in metadiscourse usage.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

Anthony, L. (2022). AntConc (Version 4.1.4) [Computer Software]. Tokyo, Japan: Waseda University. Available from https://www.laurenceanthony.net/software

Babaii, E., & Ansary, H. (2005). On the effect of disciplinary variation on transitivity: The case of academic book reviews. *Asian EFL journal*, *7*(3), 113-126.

Bal-Gezegin, B. (2016). A corpus-based investigation of metadiscourse in academic book reviews. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, *232*, 713-718.

Bal-Gezegin, B., & Bas, M. (2020). Metadiscourse in academic writing: A comparison of research articles and book reviews. *Eurasian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *6*(1), 45-62.

Birhan, A. T. (2021). An exploration of metadiscourse usage in book review articles across three academic disciplines: a contrastive analysis of corpus-based research approach. *Scientometrics*, *126*(4), 2885-2902.

Diani, G. (2009). Reporting and evaluation in English book review articles: A cross-disciplinary study. *Academic evaluation: Review genres in university settings*, 87-104.

East, J. W. (2011). The scholarly book review in the humanities: An academic Cinderella? *Journal of Scholarly Publishing*, *43*(1), 52-67.

Gilmore, A., & Millar, N. (2018). The language of civil engineering research articles: A corpus-based approach. *English for Specific Purposes*, *51*, 1-17.

Groom, N. (2009). Phraseology and epistemology in academic book reviews: A corpus-driven analysis of two humanities disciplines. *Academic evaluation* (pp. 122-139). Palgrave Macmillan, London.

Hyland, K. (2004). *Disciplinary discourses, Michigan classics ed.: Social interactions in academic writing*. University of Michigan Press.

Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing*. Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.

Hyland, K. (2010). Metadiscourse: Mapping interactions in academic writing. *Nordic Journal of English Studies*, *9*(2), 125-143.

Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. K. (2018). "In this paper we suggest": Changing patterns of disciplinary metadiscourse. *English for Specific Purposes*, *51*, 18-30.

Hyland, K., & Jiang, F. K. (2020). Text-organizing metadiscourse: Tracking changes in rhetorical persuasion. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, *21*(1), 137-164.

Irvin, L. L. (2010). What Is "Academic" Writing?. *Writing spaces: Readings on writing*, *1*, 3-17.

Jalilifar, A., Hayati, S., & Don, A. (2018). Investigating metadiscourse markers in book reviews and blurbs: A study of interested and disinterested genres. *Studies about Languages*, *33*, 90-107.

Junqueiria, L., & Cortes, V. (2014). Metadiscourse in book reviews in English and Brazilian Portuguese: A corpus-based analysis. *Journal of Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*, *6*(1), 5.

Kaplan, S. (2014). Why Book Reviews?. *Transport Reviews*, *34*(4), 415-417.

Lo, Y. Y., Othman, J., & Lim, J. W. (2020). The use of metadiscourse in academic writing by Malaysian first-year ESL doctoral students. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *10*(1), 271-282.

Oinas, P., & Leppälä, S. (2013). Views on book reviews. *Regional Studies*, *47*(10), 1785–1789. https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2013.856530

Salager-Meyer, F., Ariza, M. Á. A., & Berbesí, M. P. (2007). Collegiality, critique and the construction of scientific argumentation in medical book reviews: A diachronic approach. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *39*(10), 1758-1774.

Tse, P., & Hyland, K. (2006). 'So what is the problem this book addresses?': Interactions in academic book reviews. *Text & Talk*, *26*(6), 767-790.

Zou, H. J., & Hyland, K. (2022). How the medium shapes the message: Stance in two forms of book reviews. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *193*, 269-280.