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Indonesian and Uzbekistan EFL Students' Research Articles: Interactional Metadiscourse

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Abstract

Interactional metadiscourse is essential in EFL academic writing, as it enables writers to connect with readers, express their stance, and ensure effective communication. This study examines the interactional metadiscourse features used in research articles (RAs) written by EFL students from two institutions: one in Indonesia and one in Uzbekistan. Ten published students' RAs—five from each institution—were chosen for analysis. The analysis utilized Hyland's (2005) interactional metadiscourse framework, which includes boosters, hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. The results revealed notable differences in the rhetorical strategies of the two groups. Indonesian students favored hedges and self-mentions, indicating a cautious yet authorially visible writing style. In contrast, Uzbek students showed a preference for engagement markers and hedges, reflecting a reader-focused and dialogic rhetorical style. Both groups also employed attitude markers and boosters to a moderate extent, though with subtle variations in frequency and word choices. These differences highlight the influence of cultural and educational practices on students' academic writing styles. The study highlights the need to foster rhetorical awareness in EFL writing instruction to help students effectively use metadiscourse strategies in varying academic contexts.

Keywords

Interactional metadiscourse, Academic writing, EFL writing, Metadiscourse markers, Boosters, Hedges, Self-mentions, Engagement markers, Attitude markers

INTRODUCTION

Metadiscourse is a general concept used within discourse analysis to conceptualize the interaction between the writer, text, and reader. Metadiscourse concerns the language used to arrange the discourse within the text and engage the audience effectively (Dzulhaili, et.al 2021). It refers to the interaction deliberately created by the writer, using written language to engage readers. By revealing some of the expectations and understandings of the audience for whom a text is written, metadiscourse establishes a connection between the text and its disciplinary cultures, helping to clarify the rhetorical context. It is a self-reflective linguistic reference to the developing text, the author, and the potential readers (Hyland, 2004).

The concept of metadiscourse, originally introduced by Kopple (1985) has been widely studied to understand how it contributes to both the construction of academic identities and the effectiveness of written communication (Hyland, 2005). Metadiscourse refers to the interpersonal resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance toward either its content or the reader (Hyland, 2000). It addresses a wide range of linguistic features that writers employ to frame their arguments, allowing readers to bond with the text and interpret it as the writer intends. Although the

concept of metadiscourse is based on the belief that the ultimate meaning of a text is derived from the interaction of its constituent parts, there is still a need to distinguish the conceptual content of the text from elements that organize and contextualize the writer's perspective and attitude (Hyland, K., & Tse, 2004). Metadiscourse markers are language devices that depict the reader's involvement in the text. These markers represent the writer's engagement by referring to the text's structure and other rhetorical elements.

Thompson (2001) categorized metadiscourse into two primary types: interactive and interactional, with Hyland (2004) expanding on this framework. The interactive type focuses on organizing information and ensuring textual coherence, using tools like transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. Conversely, the interactional type emphasizes the writer's engagement with readers, offering comments on arguments and signaling perspectives through self-mention, engagement markers, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers.

Interactional metadiscourse is an essential component of academic writing. It enables authors to guide their readers through arguments, establish a stance, and manage the interaction between the writer and the reader. Interactional metadiscourse deals with how authors communicate their stance, engage readers, and assert their presence within a text. It includes features such as self-mention, engagement markers, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers, which help authors convey their arguments, express certainty or caution, and involve readers in the discourse. These features serve as tools that reflect the author's identity and authority while fostering reader engagement (Hyland, 2010).

Knowledge of interactional metadiscourse is essential for students when writing in an academic context, particularly in research articles (RAs). As the most prestigious research genre in many disciplines, RAs are scientific texts that report observable facts and the researcher's interpretations of the data. Writing a high-quality RA might be the goal of tertiary students as they are obliged to write them as a final academic requirement. To produce a comprehensible article, students need to utilize appropriate metadiscourse markers. Previous research indicates that interactional metadiscourse usage in research articles and other written academic texts varies across languages and academic traditions. For example, studies have shown significant differences in how authors from diverse cultural contexts employ interactional metadiscourse features, which can reveal underlying cultural communication preferences (Gong & Cao, 2021; Nugrahani & Bram, 2020; Raza, 2023; Saidi & Karami, 2021; Zali, 2020).

While interactional metadiscourse strategies have been widely studied in research articles (RAs) produced by academics, few studies have focused specifically on how students from Indonesia and Uzbekistan use these interactional features. In the context of non-native English speakers, such as students from Indonesia and Uzbekistan, it is especially important to explore how these features are used, as the choices they make may reflect not only personal or disciplinary norms but also broader cultural influences. Both countries have unique academic and cultural traditions that shape students' writing practices. Indonesia, as a Southeast Asian nation, is influenced by both traditional Asian values and modern educational practices, often encouraging a formal and hierarchical approach to communication. On the other hand, Uzbekistan, with its Central Asian roots and a strong historical influence from Russian academic traditions, demonstrates a distinct academic style shaped by these influences. These divergent backgrounds likely influence how students from these countries engage readers and assert their authorial presence in academic texts.

To address these issues, this study examines the specific types of interactional metadiscourse employed by Indonesian and Uzbek students in their research articles, comparing the prevalence of features such as self-mention, engagement markers, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers. By focusing on the interactional aspects of metadiscourse, this research will offer new insights into how students from Indonesia and Uzbekistan construct their academic identities and engage with readers in their research articles. The study's findings will have implications for academic writing pedagogy, particularly in helping instructors develop more culturally responsive teaching practices that account for these rhetorical differences.

Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse is a crucial aspect of academic writing that facilitates the interaction between the writer and the reader, guiding the interpretation and understanding of the text. It encompasses various linguistic devices that serve to organize discourse, project the writer's stance, and engage the audience effectively. The concept has been extensively explored in various academic contexts, revealing its multifaceted roles across different genres and cultures. The foundational work of Hyland (2005) has significantly influenced the understanding of metadiscourse, categorizing it into interactive and interactional types. Interactive metadiscourse markers are primarily concerned with structuring the text for the reader, helping to organize the discourse and relate different parts of the text. For instance, transitions serve to connect ideas and maintain coherence, while frame markers signal the organization of the discourse (Alghazo et al., 2023; Alharbi, 2021; Farahani, 2024). In contrast, interactional metadiscourse focuses on the writer's engagement with the reader, reflecting the author's attitude and facilitating a conversational tone within the text (Gai & Wang, 2022; G. Liu & Zhang, 2022).

This distinction is vital as it highlights how metadiscourse can shape the reader's experience and understanding of the material presented. Research has shown that the use of metadiscourse varies significantly across different academic disciplines and cultural contexts. For example, studies comparing metadiscourse in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) contexts in British and Chinese settings reveal distinct patterns in the use of interactive markers, with teachers from both backgrounds employing similar transition markers to enhance clarity (Wu & Yang, 2022). Furthermore, the cultural background of the writer influences metadiscourse usage, as seen in the differences between Persian and English academic genres, where genre-based instruction can enhance understanding of these variations (Ariyanfar & Mitchell,

2020; Gu & Xu, 2021). This cultural dimension underscores the importance of teaching metadiscourse as a rhetorical strategy, particularly in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) contexts, to improve students' writing competence and identity construction (Gu & Xu, 2021; Pandey, 2020).

Moreover, metadiscourse plays a significant role in persuasive communication across various genres, including political discourse and corporate communications. For instance, the strategic use of metadiscourse in political speeches can enhance the speaker's rapport with the audience, employing inclusive language to foster a sense of community and shared purpose (Liu & Zhang, 2022; Yoovathaworn & Tangpijaikul, 2023). Similarly, in corporate press releases, metadiscourse markers are utilized to enhance persuasiveness, guiding the reader's interpretation and reinforcing the intended message (Liu & Zhang, 2022). This demonstrates that metadiscourse is not merely a stylistic choice but a fundamental component of effective communication that shapes the reader's engagement and response. Consequently, metadiscourse serves as a vital tool in academic writing and communication, influencing how texts are constructed and understood. Its dynamic nature, shaped by cultural and disciplinary contexts, necessitates a comprehensive approach to teaching and research. Understanding the various functions of metadiscourse can significantly enhance both the writing skills of students and the effectiveness of scholarly communication.

Interactional Metadiscourse

Interactional metadiscourse refers to the linguistic resources that writers use to engage their readers and manage their responses within a text. This concept is crucial in academic writing, where establishing a connection with the audience can enhance the clarity and persuasiveness of the argument presented. According to Hyland, interactional metadiscourse is categorized into several subtypes, including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers, each serving a distinct function in facilitating reader interaction and guiding their interpretation of the text (Alghazo et al., 2023; Kustyasari et al., 2021; Liu & Zhang, 2021). The role of interactional metadiscourse is particularly significant in academic contexts, where it aids in constructing authorial identity and positioning the writer in relation to the audience. For instance, Liu & Zhang, (2022) highlights how interactional metadiscourse markers are employed differently in Chinese master's theses compared to international journal articles, revealing variations in author identity construction across cultural contexts. Similarly, Kustyasari et al. emphasize that these markers are essential for expressing attitudes and opinions, which are vital for effective communication in academic discourse (Kustyasari et al., 2021).

This indicates that the use of interactional metadiscourse can reflect not only the writer's intent but also their cultural and disciplinary backgrounds. Moreover, interactional metadiscourse has been shown to play a pivotal role in persuasive writing, particularly in contexts such as responding to customer reviews. Goals. Huang et al., (2020) illustrates that interactional metadiscourse markers are frequently utilized to restore reputation and build rapport with customers, thereby achieving persuasive goals (Huang et al., 2020). This aligns with findings from Rui-qi, Z and Li (2023) who noted that the use of interactional metadiscourse markers is prevalent in hotel responses to negative reviews, helping to achieve persuasive objectives such as restoring damaged reputations and enhancing rapport. Such studies underscore the importance of interactional metadiscourse in enhancing the effectiveness of communication across various genres and contexts.

Moreover, self-mention, engagement markers, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers are essential components of academic discourse that facilitate communication between writers and their audience. Each of these elements plays a distinct role in shaping the tone, clarity, and persuasive power of academic texts. First, self-mention refers to the use of first-person pronouns by authors to establish their presence in the text. This strategy can enhance the credibility of the author and create a connection with the audience. Self-mention contributes to the positive portrayal of authors in academic texts, thus influencing readers' perceptions and enhancing the informative aspects of the writing (Choudri, 2021). The use of self-mention can also serve to assert authority and ownership over the ideas presented, which is particularly important in academic contexts where establishing credibility is paramount. Second, engagement markers are linguistic tools that authors use to involve their readers in the discourse. These markers can include questions, directives, or inclusive pronouns that invite readers to participate in the discussion. Gustilo, et.al (2021) note that engagement markers are prominently used in research article abstracts to manage readers' impressions and meet the expectations of the discourse community. Such markers help create a dialogue between the writer and the reader, making the text more interactive and accessible.

Furthermore, hedges are expressions that convey uncertainty or tentativeness, allowing authors to soften their claims and acknowledge the complexity of their arguments. Mifdal and Lewis (2023) emphasize that hedges serve as expressions of doubt and uncertainty, which can be crucial in scientific writing where definitive statements may not always be warranted. Furthermore, hedges can function as politeness strategies, helping to mitigate the impact of negative evaluations and fostering a more respectful communication environment (Boginskaya, 2023). This aligns with the findings of Liu, who identifies hedges as essential for maintaining a polite discourse and achieving effective communication (Liu, 2020). On the other hand, booster are linguistic devices that convey certainty and assertiveness. They serve to strengthen claims and demonstrate the author's confidence in their assertions. AlGhamdi & Alyousef (2022) argue that the strategic use of boosters in research articles is vital for constructing knowledge claims and influencing the discourse community's perception of the author's expertise. The balance between hedges and boosters is crucial; while hedges allow for nuance and caution, boosters assert authority and conviction, as highlighted by the findings of Jovic, et.al (2023) in their analysis of persuasive language in TED Talks.

Attitude markers express the writer's feelings or attitudes towards the content being discussed. These markers can indicate approval, disapproval, or emotional engagement with the subject matter. The effective use of attitude markers can enhance the persuasive power of academic writing by aligning the author's stance with the audience's expectations and values. For instance, Butragueno (2022) illustrates how hedging and attitude markers can be employed to navigate the complexities of academic discourse and mitigate potential criticisms. In summary, self-mention, engagement markers, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers are integral to academic writing, each serving specific functions that enhance communication and persuasion. The interplay between these elements allows authors to navigate the complexities of academic discourse, establish credibility, and engage effectively with their audience.

Integration of Metadiscourse with Research Article in Academic Writing

Metadiscourse is an essential feature of academic writing that enhances clarity, coherence, and reader engagement. The effectiveness of metadiscourse in enhancing reader engagement has been supported by various studies. Hooi et al., (2020) argue that texts featuring metadiscourse elements are perceived as more engaging by readers, which has implications for writing instruction and curriculum design. This is further corroborated by Chen (2023) comprehensive review, which emphasizes the role of explicit metadiscourse instruction in improving reading comprehension among EFL learners. Such findings highlight the pedagogical importance of integrating metadiscourse into academic writing curricula to foster better communication skills among students. The use of metadiscourse also varies across disciplines and cultural contexts. For example, analysis of cross-linguistic patterns indicates that metadiscourse markers are employed differently depending on the academic discipline, affecting how authors construct their arguments and engage with their readers (Leijen, 2024). Similarly, cultural factors influence the use of metadiscourse, with different academic traditions shaping how scholars interact with their audiences (Kustyasari et al., 2021; Wei & Xiong, 2023). This variation underscores the need for writers to be cognizant of disciplinary conventions and reader expectations when employing metadiscourse markers.

Furthermore, the importance of conducting integrated literature reviews as a research method. They outline guidelines that help researchers critically analyze existing literature, synthesize new knowledge, and articulate their findings in a structured manner (Molepo & Blose, 2023). This process not only aids in identifying gaps in the current research landscape but also serves as a catalyst for future studies, reinforcing the notion that literature reviews are foundational to advancing scholarly discourse. The bibliographic review as a research methodology, detailing the steps involved in crafting a review article. They emphasize the necessity of a systematic approach to bibliographic searches, organization of information, and the articulation of findings, which collectively enhance the scientific rigor of the review process (Ocaña-Fernández & Fuster-Guillén, 2021). This structured methodology is essential for ensuring that the review contributes meaningfully to the existing body of knowledge. Bahishti (2021) adds to this discourse by discussing the increasing relevance of review articles in scholarly literature, particularly in light of the overwhelming volume of research publications.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This is a descriptive study focusing on analyzing the interactional metadiscourse features found in research articles authored by students from two universities: Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar in Indonesia and Samarkand State Institute of Foreign Languages in Uzbekistan. Ten research articles--five written by Indonesian students and five by Uzbek students--were selected for analysis. These research articles were chosen based on their relevance to EFL teaching and learning and were published in reputable national and international journals, and conference proceedings over the past five years. The primary framework for analysis was based on Hyland's (2005) model of interactional metadiscourse, which includes five key categories: boosters, hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers.

Table 1 Interactional Metadiscourse Framework (based on Hyland, 2005)

Interactional Metadiscourse	Function	Examples
Self-mention	To explicitly refer to writers	<i>I, me, my, we, our, the writer, the author, the researcher, etc.</i>
Engagement Markers	To involve readers explicitly	<i>We, our, us, you can see that, note that, consider that, etc.</i>
Attitude Markers	To express writer's attitude to the proposition	<i>Agree, prefer, unfortunately, it is surprising that</i>
Hedges	To withhold writers' commitment and open dialogue	<i>Might, perhaps, possible, could, would, about, seem, assume, indicate, likely, etc.</i>
Boosters	To emphasize certainty or close dialogue	<i>Definitely, certainly, in fact, absolutely, clearly, obviously, must, show, prove, always, etc.</i>

The data were gathered through an in-depth content analysis on the research articles, aiming to identify the types of interactional metadiscourse features employed by the students. All sections of the articles, from the abstract to the conclusion, were analyzed. A coding scheme was employed to categorize the features into specific interactional metadiscourse types. Furthermore, the data were illustrated with examples from each category as they appeared in the students' articles.

RESULT AND INTERPRETATION

The purpose of the study was to investigate the categories of interactional metadiscourse that appear in Indonesian and Uzbekistan students' research articles. After analyzing 10 research articles—five written by Indonesian students and five by Uzbekistan students—it is found that there are 133 interactional metadiscourse features occurred in Indonesian students' RAs and 65 features in Uzbekistan students' RAs. The distribution of the categories can be seen in the following tables.

Table 2 The frequency and percentage of interactional metadiscourse categories in Indonesian students' RAs

Interactional Metadiscourse in Indonesian EFL Students' RAs		
Categories	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-mention	40	29.20
Engagement Markers	6	4.38
Attitude markers	23	16.79
Hedges	48	35.03
Boosters	20	14.60
Total	133	100.00

The distribution of interactional metadiscourse categories in Indonesian EFL students' research articles (RAs) reveals a notable emphasis on certain rhetorical elements. Among the 133 identified instances, *hedges* were the most frequently used category, with a frequency of 48, accounting for 35.03% of the total. This prominence suggests a preference for cautious language that allows writers to present claims tentatively and acknowledge alternative perspectives. *Self-mention* was the second most common category, appearing 40 times (29.20%). This significant usage indicates a degree of authorial presence, reflecting the writers' active engagement and identity assertion within their academic discourse. *Attitude markers* constituted 23 instances (16.79%), highlighting the students' effort to convey their stance, emotions, or evaluation of the subject matter, although less prominently than hedges or self-mention. *Boosters*, which amplify certainty and reinforce arguments, appeared 20 times (14.60%), reflecting a controlled use of assertive language to strengthen claims. Finally, *engagement markers*, with a frequency of only 6 (4.38%), were the least utilized category, suggesting a limited focus on directly addressing or involving the audience in the discourse. In general, this distribution highlights Indonesian students' strategic use of metadiscursive resources. They balance assertiveness with caution while maintaining an appropriate academic tone. It also reflects their alignment with disciplinary norms, emphasizing tentativeness and authorial presence over direct reader engagement.

Table 3 The frequency and percentage of interactional metadiscourse categories in Uzbekistan students' RAs

Uzbekistan Students' Interactional Metadiscourse		
Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Self-mention	4	5.12
Engagement Markers	26	33.33
Attitude markers	9	11.54
Hedges	22	28.21
Boosters	17	21.80
Total	65	100.00

On the other hand, Uzbek students demonstrate a different rhetorical preference, with *engagement markers* being the most frequently used interactional metadiscourse feature (33.33%). This substantial presence suggests that Uzbek student writers prioritize direct interaction with their readers, employing strategies to involve the audience and create a conversational tone within their academic discourse. *Hedges*, which appeared 22 times (28.21%), were the second most prominent category. Their notable use reflects the writer's cautious approach, allowing room for alternative interpretations and expressing claims with tentativeness. *Boosters*, with 17 instances (21.80%), indicate a tendency to reinforce arguments assertively, aiming to establish credibility and persuade readers effectively. *Attitude markers*, accounting for 9 instances (11.54%), demonstrate a moderate expression of the writers' personal stance or evaluative comments on the content. Finally, *self-mention*, with only 4 instances (5.12%), was the least utilized category, indicating a minimal emphasis on explicit authorial presence or identity assertion in their academic writing. The overall distribution suggests that Uzbek students employ a reader-oriented rhetorical strategy, characterized by high engagement, balanced hedging, and a relatively low profile of authorial identity. This pattern reflects cultural and pedagogical influences, shaping their approach to constructing arguments and interacting with their academic audience.

To provide a deeper understanding of the use of interactional metadiscourse features in Indonesian and Uzbek students' articles, the following section presents detailed explanations and examples.

a. Self-mentions

Self-mentions refer to the use of personal pronouns or specific expressions by authors to emphasize their involvement in the research process. In this research, Indonesian students frequently use self-mentions in their research articles. This strong preference for self-mentions in Indonesian students' research articles suggests that Indonesian students are more

inclined to assert their presence explicitly in their writing. This aligns with Hyland's (2005) theory of stance, where self-mention serves to assert authorial identity and establish authority in the text. Conversely, self-mentions in Uzbek students' RAs were almost absent. This limited use of self-mention may suggest a rhetorical preference for minimizing the author's presence in the text, in line with the theory of impersonal academic discourse (Ivanic, 1998), which posits that some academic traditions discourage overt authorial presence. It also indicates a preference for a more impersonal and detached academic style, consistent with traditions influenced by Russian academic norms that prioritize objectivity and reduce personal visibility (Malyuga & Tomalin, 2017). The following are examples of how students employ self-mentions in their articles:

Table 4 Examples of Self-Mentions in Indonesian and Uzbekistan Students' RAs

Indonesian Students' RAs	Uzbekistan Students' Ras
<i>The researchers</i> distributed a questionnaire which included twenty questions derived from four indicators. (Article 1)	We can show an example of the sentences he pours as initial information... (Article 1)
<i>The researchers</i> used a specific writing rubric which emphasized content and organization elements to be examined. (Article 3)	We took George Orwell's "Animal Farm" as a research object. (Article 1)
<i>The researchers</i> used interviews and observation as instruments in data collection process. (Article 4)	We aim to contribute to the understanding of communicative competenc in the young learners' classroom by introducing the research-based model of creative speaking. (Article 2)

The examples above show that Indonesian students often refer to themselves using the term "*the researchers*". One possible reason for this tendency is that L2 students are commonly taught not to use first-person pronouns in their writing as they might be considered informal, personal, and subjective (Hyland, 2004). The deployment of depersonalized self-references such as "the researchers", "the author", or "the writers" is an effort to make their writing tone more academic. Conversely, Uzbek students prefer using the plural pronoun "we" over the singular pronoun "I" when employing first-person pronouns. This approach allows students to present their findings more objectively while acknowledging the collective contribution of all writers involved in the article (Huang et al., 2020).

b. Engagement markers

Engagement markers enable writers to directly engage readers with their propositions (Nugrahani & Bram, 2020). Using these features, student writers can communicate their ideas through an imagined dialogue with the reader. The data reveal that Indonesian students employ fewer engagement markers in their articles. The small portion of engagement markers could indicate a preference for a more monologic discourse, where the writer's role is to inform rather than to engage the reader actively. This lack of engagement markers may also reflect a broader cultural tendency toward deference and hierarchical structuring in communication (Hofstede, 1984), where writers may prioritize respect for established knowledge over direct engagement with readers.

Table 5 Examples of Self-Mentions in Indonesian and Uzbekistan Students' RAs

Indonesian Students' RA	Uzbekistan Students' RA
As <i>we</i> all know, teaching media includes any tools or aids that a teacher or student may utilize to accomplish specific educational goals. (Article 4)	<i>Our</i> mission as a teacher is to provide warmth; a climate that encourages students to speak. (Article 2)
Knowing <i>your</i> grammar will help <i>you</i> avoid errors that make your English sound strange to native speakers. (Article 5)	...writers frequently turn to metaphors to describe people in unexpected ways and metaphors can help <i>us</i> imagine the current situation "visualize" understand a situation or put an event in a specific context. (Article 1)
We know that learning grammar is very important in speaking. (Article 5)	<i>You</i> should give the entire conjugation paradigm or show all forms of degree of comparison, etc. (Article 3)

Meanwhile, Uzbek students' focus on engagement markers may reflect a more dialogic approach to writing, influenced by both local cultural norms and the historical influence of Russian educational practices, which emphasize open, reader-oriented communication (Malyuga & Tomalin, 2017). This suggests that Uzbek students are more focused on engaging the reader actively, with inclusive pronouns like "we," "our," and "us" to foster a sense of shared responsibility and collaborative dialogue. This finding aligns with the theory of reader engagement (Hyland, 2010), which posits that engagement markers help to anticipate and address reader needs by making the discourse more interactive. The frequent use of engagement markers by Uzbek students can be seen as part of a broader communicative strategy that values relational interaction and audience involvement.

c. Attitude Markers

Attitude markers are used to communicate a writer's affective stance, engaging readers on an emotional level. By using these markers, writers can convey their personal feelings including importance, agreement, frustration (Khendri, et. al

2013). The high use of attitude markers by Indonesian students could suggest a greater willingness to engage with the emotional dimension of academic writing, making their texts more personable and accessible. In contrast, the minimal use of attitude markers by Uzbek students may reflect a more formal and distanced approach to academic writing, where personal emotions are deemphasized in favor of objective presentation. The following are examples of attitude markers in Indonesian and Uzbek students' articles:

Table 6 Examples of Attitude Markers in Indonesian and Uzbekistan Students' RAs

Indonesian Students' RA	Uzbekistan Students' RA
<i>It is important</i> to acknowledge that higher education requires high quality teaching as well as high quality learning. (Article 1)	For this, <i>it is very appropriate</i> not to extend the class time... (Article 5)
<i>It is ideal</i> for developing certain grammar and vocabulary skills. (Article 3)	Thus, <i>it is crucial</i> to teach young children a foreign language. (Article 4)
The usage of multimedia, particularly in presentations, has a <i>significant</i> impact and is helpful to improve student learning outcomes. (Article 4)	<i>It is important</i> for teachers to vary the types of learning activities since young learners lose interest more quickly. (Article 5)

Attitude markers can be identified through specific lexical choices such as attitude verbs (e.g., agree, prefer), sentence adverbs (e.g., unfortunately, hopefully), and adjectives (e.g., appropriate, remarkable) (Hyland, 2005). The examples illustrate that both Indonesian and Uzbek students frequently use adjectives such as “important”, “significant”, and “appropriate” to express their views on the discussed topic. This observation aligns with Huang et al., (2020), who found that students favor attitude adjectives to emphasize the importance of specific actions, highlight propositional content, and capture readers' attention regarding the value of findings of results.

d. Hedges

Hedges are used to indicate writers' level of commitment to the ideas being conveyed and encourage possible dialogue between writers and readers (Hyland, 2005). In Indonesian and Uzbek students' research articles, hedges are frequently used by students, accounting for 31.54% and 28.21% of the total markers, respectively. This finding aligns with Lee & Deakin (2016), who found that students frequently employed hedging devices to demonstrate their modesty and tentativeness in their writing. The high frequency of hedges in both groups suggests a cautious approach to academic claims, which may reflect a broader cultural tendency toward politeness and face-saving strategies in communication. This aligns with the politeness theory, which posits that hedging serves as a strategy to maintain harmony and reduce the forcefulness of claims. The following are examples of hedges in Indonesian and Uzbek students RAs:

Table 7 Examples of Hedges in Indonesian and Uzbekistan Students' RAs

Indonesian Students' RA	Uzbekistan Students' RA
Likewise, portrayal of college in popular culture—social media, television and movies <i>seemed</i> a lot more fun than it was. (Article 1)	Using the target language creatively is <i>perhaps</i> a significant motivational factor for the children. (Article 2)
It is <i>unlikely</i> that students will be able to master these four skills with limited vocabulary. (Article 3)	...and a division into writing, reading, speaking, and listening games <i>could be</i> a good idea. (Article 4)
A teacher who does not have technical understanding of how to use an overhead projector, for example, <i>may be</i> motivated to avoid utilizing it even though it is present in the school. (Article 4)	<i>To my way of thinking</i> , watching cartoons, movies, shows, and interesting TV programs can help to enhance speaking... (Article 2)

Table 7 illustrates that both Indonesian and Uzbek students frequently use expressions of uncertainty such as *perhaps*, *seem*, *may*, and *could* when presenting their ideas. The use of these words reflects a preference for acknowledging alternative perspectives and softening the force of their arguments. They try to show that there might be other possibilities, and the readers might have different opinions about the propositional content. These characteristics are often observed in Southeast Asian academic traditions, where deference to established knowledge and avoidance of overgeneralization are valued (Hofstede, 1984). Studies have shown that writers from more collectivist cultures, like Indonesia and Uzbekistan, may use hedges more frequently to avoid confrontation or overstatement (Crismore, et. al., 2018). By using hedges extensively, the students demonstrate an awareness of their academic judgments, aiming to avoid potential criticism or disagreement.

e. Boosters

Boosters, which emphasize certainty and confidence in claims, are also a significant feature in both groups; however, they appeared less frequently in Indonesian students' writing (14.60%) than in Uzbek students' writing (21.80%). The relatively lower use of boosters by Indonesian students might suggest a preference for a more balanced or cautious tone,

which could be indicative of a greater awareness of uncertainty or a desire to avoid overstatement. This finding aligns with their higher use of hedges, indicating a tendency to signal caution in their writing. Conversely, Uzbek students may be more inclined to present their arguments with certainty to reinforce their claims. According to stance theory, boosters are essential for constructing a confident academic persona (Hyland, 2005), and their prominence in Uzbek students' writing indicates an effort to assert authority and certainty. This may reflect cultural values that prioritize assertiveness and clarity in academic discourse, encouraging writers to project expertise through firm and confident assertions. The following are examples of boosters in Indonesian and Uzbek students' RAs.

Table 8 Examples of Boosters in Indonesian and Uzbekistan Students' RAs

Indonesian Students' RA	Uzbekistan Students' RA
It is <i>proved</i> with the mean score of Surface Approach was higher than the mean score of deep approach. (Article 1)	... it is <i>absolutely</i> vital to provide them with more chances to discover and experiment with the language... (Article 2)
Teachers <i>must</i> be familiar with many types of learning media to deliver courses effectively and quickly. (Article 4)	The benefits of bilingualism <i>clearly</i> prevail over its shortcomings, and this issue needs further comprehensive research. (Article 3)
The students <i>should</i> develop their competencies in both written and spoken communication. (Article 3)	<i>In fact</i> , using games is an important tool that allows language teachers to add colours to their classrooms by providing challenge and entertainment. (Article 5)

Boosters can take the form of emphatic verbs, including modal verbs and lexical verbs, as well as emphatic adjectives, adverbials, and other expressions (Hu, & Cao, 2011). Table 8 demonstrates that Indonesian and Uzbekistan students use various lexical choices in expressing their certainty over their claims. Expressions such as *it is proved* or *it is shown* are quite common in Indonesian students' RAs when they aim to convince readers by presenting proof or findings supporting their claims. Modals such as *must* and *should* are also popular in Indonesian students' articles. Meanwhile, Uzbek students prefer to employ more adverbials such as *absolutely* and *clearly* to express their confidence in their claims.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study investigated the use of interactional metadiscourse features in research articles (RAs) written by Indonesian and Uzbek students, revealing notable differences in their rhetorical strategies. Indonesian students demonstrated a strong preference for hedges and self-mentions, reflecting a cautious approach to academic claims and a significant authorial presence. Attitude markers and boosters further highlighted their effort to balance assertiveness with politeness, while their minimal use of engagement markers indicates a preference for a more monologic style. In contrast, Uzbek students prioritized engagement markers, showcasing an interactive and reader-oriented approach. Hedges and boosters followed, underscoring a mix of caution and confidence in their discourse. Self-mentions were the least frequent, reflecting a more impersonal academic style. These findings suggest that Indonesian students emphasize authorial identity and caution, while Uzbek students focus on engaging the reader and maintaining a collaborative tone. The observed differences can be attributed to cultural and pedagogical influences, which shape the students' rhetorical choices. This study contributes to the understanding of metadiscourse practices across cultural contexts and highlights the importance of fostering rhetorical awareness in academic writing instruction. Future research could explore larger datasets and examine the impact of these rhetorical choices on reader interpretation and academic success. On the other hand, the implications of interactional metadiscourse research for EFL students in Indonesia and Uzbekistan highlight the necessity for explicit instructional strategies that enhance students' awareness and application of these markers. By focusing on metadiscourse in academic writing, educators can significantly improve the communicative effectiveness of their students, ultimately leading to better academic performance and greater confidence in their writing abilities.

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