

A Corpus-Based Contrastive Study of Code Glosses Used in English Academic Articles Written by Authors of Politics and Applied Linguistics

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Abstract

In the field of academic writing, it is important to create a structurally and communicatively well-organized and coherent text. Metadiscourse is the way in which writers interact through their use of language in the form of writing with readers– is a widely used term in the field of pragmatics and language teaching. This research article aims to investigate using code glosses as a sub-category of metadiscourse in the introduction section of two different disciplines, politics and applied linguistics. The corpus consists of twenty research articles from the politics and twenty from applied linguistics. The model suggested by Hyland (2005) is used for analyzing the selected corpus. These articles were investigated and the number of code-glosses in each group was counted and analyzed. The result of data analysis revealed that there is significant difference between the frequency count of using code glosses used by applied linguistics and politics authors. Politics authors used more code glosses in comparison with applied linguistics and both applied linguistics and politics writers used reformulations more than exemplifications. This study can have pedagogical implications for EAP course designers as well as academic writing instructors and students.

Keywords: L2 Writing, Metadiscourse, Code gloss, Applied linguistics, Politics

1. Introduction

The development of writing proficiency has always been one of the most important goals of education. Writing is the graphic expressive form of communication in which the writer offers feelings, considerations, information and projects to the reader. Writing is a fertile and productive ground for gaining communicative competence and it has been one of great concerns to all language learners and consequently it has turned into the principal focus of attention for all pedagogues and language teaching and learning issues. Chastain (1988) stated that 'writing is one of the most important skills in the field of communication and a distinctive resource in processing of second language learning'. Writing is the learned process of forming thoughts into text, allowing the writer to explore, develop, clarify and communicate thoughts, feelings and words. For many centuries, written language has been seen as being the main issue for communication. This case is because of the significance of writing in all aspects.

Metadiscourse is quite a new concept in the area of text analysis. In spite of having been investigated from different angles recently, metadiscourse is still unknown to many of those who are involved in the field of linguistics and translation. Thus, it deserves more investigation and warrants comprehensive research. Metadiscourse is conceptually defined as "the linguistic resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader" (Hyland, 2000, p. 109). It is the non-propositional content of the written text that reflects the writer's attempts to organize the expressed information, to interact with the reader, and to influence the audience in accepting the stated ideas and arguments. Metadiscourse allows the writers to echo their rhetorical style and attitude; it also allows them to evaluate the propositional content of their writing. In other words, metadiscourse reveals the writers' awareness of the readers' need for elaboration, clarification, and interaction. These attributes signify the prominent role that metadiscourse plays in conveying the writers' preferred message to the reader through the text, and show us why metadiscourse is now considered as an important research topic for many researchers.

According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse talks about the issue that communication is more than just the information exchange, things or services, but also includes the characters, and attitudes of the people who are communicating. He mentioned that language is always an outcome of interaction, of the differences between people which are expressed through language, and metadiscourse alternatives are the ways we verbalize and construct these interactions. This, based on Hyland's (2005) view, is a dynamic view of language as metadiscourse emphasizes the idea that, as we speak or write, we communicate with other people, making decisions and considerations about the effects we are having on our listeners or readers (Hyland, 2005). This paper seeks to explore code glosses, as a sub-category of metadiscourse, in introduction section of applied linguistics and politics articles. The researcher was particularly interested in introduction section because usually the first step is the hardest in every article and some writers find it difficult to begin a research project. Therefore, the objective of this study is comparing and contrasting the use of code glosses between politics and applied linguistics.

2. Literature Review

2.1 *Metadiscourse*

Metadiscourse is a dynamic view of language, which offers a framework for understanding communication as a social engagement. With the aid of metadiscourse, a writer is able to relate the text to a given context and he/she can convey his/her personality, audience sensitivity or relationship to the written or oral message. The growing interest in metadiscourse and its subcategories has led to the production of different research projects in the field. Some of these projects have considered metadiscourse and its influence on students' writing and reading skills. For instance, Steffensen and Cheng (1996) investigated the effect of instruction of metadiscourse elements on the university students' writing ability. They taught the form, function, and the purpose of metadiscourse to the students in the experimental group. The researchers then asked the students, both experimental and control, to use metadiscourse features effectively in their writings. The results showed that the experimental group scores were significantly higher than the control group.

In another study, as a case in point, Abdi (2011) investigated the frequency and type of metadiscourse use in academic articles (Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections) between social sciences (linguistics, education, and ethnography) and natural sciences (physics, biology, and medicine). The findings of the study revealed different patterns of metadiscourse use by the groups and this attributed “to the differences in cognitive-generic structure of different sections” (p. 12). Social sciences favored transitions, frame markers, hedges, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers in results and discussions, whereas natural sciences favored endophoric markers and boosters in results and discussions and code glosses in methods. Firoozian, Khajavy, and Vahidnia (2012) investigate the using of interactional and interactive metadiscourse devices in two fields, engineering and applied linguistics. The corpus was 8 articles of applied linguistics and 8 articles of engineering discipline. The results reveal that in both disciplines, writers applied an interactive meta-discourse more than an interactional one. In addition, engineering writers applied more code glosses and endophoric markers, and less sequences and topicalisers than applied linguistic writers. Furthermore, engineering writers used more hedges and self-mentions, and less attitude markers and boosters that applied linguistics writers.

VandeKopple (1985) classified metadiscourse in two major sub-groups: interpersonal and textual. Interpersonal metadiscourse is utilized to establish the relationship between the writer and the reader and to include the personal opinions of text producers (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996). Textual metadiscourse (Bunton, 1998), organizes the text and directs the reader. Adel (2010) maintains that the research area of metadiscourse is not unified; rather, two quite different strands can be discerned, as noted by Mauraanen (1993) and Adel (2006): one adopting a narrow definition (referred to as “reflexive model”) and another adopting an extensive definition (referred to as ‘interactive model’). In the reflexive model of metadiscourse, reflexivity in language is stressed and is taken to be the first point for the grouping. In the interactive model, by contrast, reflexivity is not a criterion but, instead, the concept is used to describe interaction—primarily in written text—between the writer and

audience, conceived broadly. But metadiscourse has certainly outgrown its early characterization as simply “discourse about discourse” and come to be seen, in the “interactive model”, as a comprehensive term for the variety of strategies authors employ to unequivocally compose their texts, involve the audience, and express their attitudes to both their pieces of writing and their readers (Hyland, 2005). Although scholars such as Adel (2006), VandeKopple (1985), and Crismore (1989) contributed to a better understanding of metadiscourse, Hyland (2005) proposed an “interpersonal model of metadiscourse” (see Table 1) which is widely referred to in discourse studies and is used as the basis of the present study, too.

Table 1. An Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005)

Category		Examples
<i>Interactive</i>	<i>Help to guide the reader through the text</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Transition	Express relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	Refers to discourse acts, sequences or stages	finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refers to information in other parts of the texts	noted above; see Fig; in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	according to X; Z states
Code gloss	Elaborate prepositional meanings	namely; e.g.; such as; in other words
<i>interactional</i>	<i>Involve the reader in the text</i>	<i>Resources</i>
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	emphasize certainty or close dialogue	In fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude markers	express writers attitude to proposition	unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self mentions	explicit reference to author(s)	I; we; me; our
Engagement markers	explicitly build relationship with reader	consider; note; you can see that

As mentioned in Hyland (2005), according to this model, metadiscourse contains two main and important dimensions of interaction:

1. The interactive dimension. This is related to the author's conscious attention that an audience exists and to the ways he or she seeks to take into account the reader's knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities. The author's intention in this case is to form a piece of writing to satisfy the needs of particular kinds of the readers.

2. The interactional dimension. This aspect of metadiscourse deals with the ways text producers interact with the readers by interrupting and commenting on their message. The author's final purpose in this case is to make his or her views clear and to engage readers by providing them with the opportunity to interact with the unfolding text. As shown in Table 1, each category includes several subcategories, but the one which was the focus of this study was “code glosses”.

2.2 Code Glosses

Glosses were primarily notes made in the edge or between the lines of a text in a classical language; the meaning of a word or text is explained by the gloss. As such, glosses differ in thoroughness and complexity, from simple marginal notations of sentences one reader found

difficult or ambiguous. A gloss is an insignificant notation regarding the main text in a paper. Code glosses are used to elaborate on what has just been said by the writer and help readers gain the appropriate meanings of elements in passage. Some-times we judge that we should define or explain a word, phrase, or idiom. They help the writer elaborate, explain, or rephrase a mentioned subject to make it more understandable for the reader. According to Hyland (2007), writer's main points are accompanied by small acts of propositional decoration that aim to improve perception, form meanings better, and connect sentences to the reader's experience and processing requirements. The function of elaboration is divided into two sub- functions: reformulation and exemplification.

2.2.1 Reformulation

Hyland (2007) regards reformulation as a discourse function whereby the second part is a restatement of the first using different wording. Reformulation in writing must be seen as part of a pre-meditated action and; as a result, goal-oriented, showing that the author is trying to get across particular meanings or achieve rhetorical effects. To be more specific, by reformulating, a text producer rewords an idea so that it is understood more easily. Some reformulation markers include: parentheses, i.e., in particular, particularly, that is, especially, in other words, namely, specifically, which/that means, put another way, and or, in sum, to conclude, in the next chapter, to put it simply, called, defined as.

2.2.2 Exemplification

According to Hyland (2007), by exemplification, the first part is supported by providing an example in the second part. It is an effort by the author to convey meanings that he believes that are restorable from the example: presenting one element from the writer's data or experience to make the nonconcrete more concrete. Consequently, it indicates that the author has some presuppositions about the reader's closeness with the topic and world knowledge. Some exemplification markers include: an example of, like, for instance, say, e.g., for example, and such as.

According to the researches mentioned above, the following research question was formed for this study:

Is there significant difference between the number of code glosses used by applied linguistics and politics authors in introduction sections?

3. Methodology

3.1 The Corpus

The corpus in this research article consisted of 40 research articles written and lately published by applied linguistics and politics authors. These articles were randomly selected and the introduction section of each article was chosen as the corpus of the study. The articles were taken from wiley online library and lately published ones.

3.2 The Procedure

The first phase of the study was text selection, in which the articles were selected in agreement with above-mentioned criteria. In the second phase, the texts were precisely read word by word in order to establish and locate the main features which could potentially act as elaborations and whenever an example of a code gloss was spotted, it was recorded in a code gloss table. As it was mentioned, Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse and his classification of code glosses were used as the framework in this study. The code gloss table was divided into two parts: reformulation and exemplification, so that each instance of code gloss could be placed in its relevant cell. All cases were examined to ensure their functions as either exemplifications or reformulations. After finishing each section and recording the number of code glosses, For the sake of ensuring that the frequency counts were accurate, the introduction sections were double-checked and the instances of code glosses were reexamined. Whenever there were differences, the researcher discussed to have an agreement on the selected code gloss. Then, after identifying the realizable differences between the introduction parts of applied linguistics and politics studies, the text were compared and analyzed. In the last phase, the data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics by SPSS. To find an answer to the research question of the research study, a Chi-square test was run because the collected data were frequency counts. Also, frequency tables and charts were used to display the data.

4. Results

In the first phase, descriptive statistics were used to tabulate the data. As shown in Table 2, the total number of code glosses used by applied linguistics writers was 496 ones. Less than half of them (36.9% of the code glosses) belonged to the exemplification category and 63.1% belonged to reformulation category.

Table 2. Frequency Table for Code Glosses Used by Applied Linguistics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	reformulations	313	63.1	63.1	63.1
	exemplifications	183	36.9	36.9	100.0
	Total	496	100.0	100.0	

Table 3. Frequency Table for Code Glosses Used by politics

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	reformulations	369	62.3	62.3	62.3
	exemplifications	223	37.7	37.7	100.0
	Total	592	100.0	100.0	

Politics writers used a total of 592 code glosses 37.7% of the code glosses were exemplification markers and 62.3% of them were reformulation markers (see Table 3).

Figure 1 shows the comparison of applied linguistics and politics writers in terms of the number of reformulations and exemplifications used by each group.

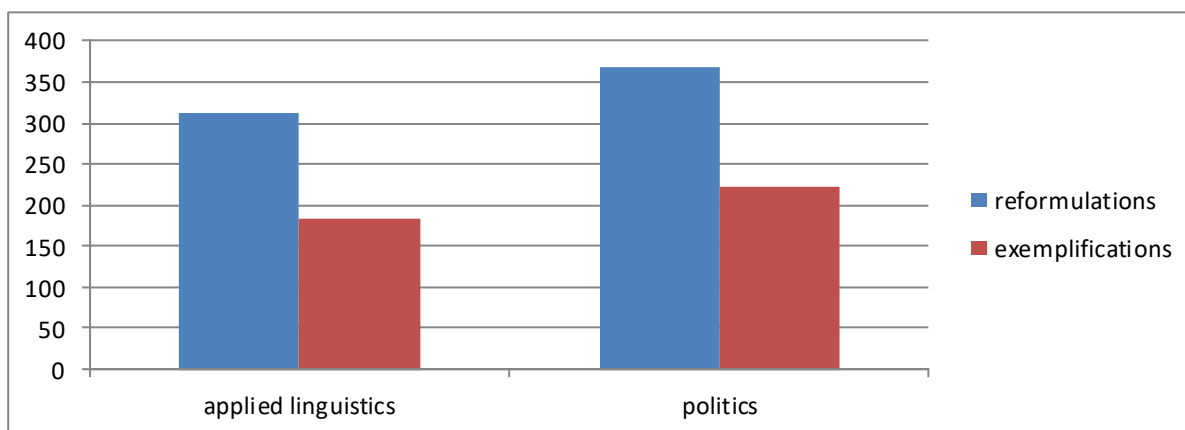


Figure 1. The number of reformulations and exemplifications used by applied linguistics and politics writers

In the last phase, a Chi-square test was run. As it is shown in table 4, then p-value was smaller than .05; as a result, there was significant difference between applied linguistics and politics writers in using code glosses in the introduction sections of journal articles.

Table 4. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.466a	1	.035		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.069	1	.044		
Likelihood Ratio	4.437	1	.035		
Fisher's Exact Test				.044	.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.457	1	.035		
N of Valid Cases	496				
a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 68.99.					
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table					

5. Discussion and Conclusion

This research project aimed to investigate the number of code glosses (reformulations and exemplifications) used in the introduction sections of English language published articles by applied linguistics and politics writers. The data analysis showed there is significant difference between the frequency counts of using code glosses. In this study, both applied linguistics and politics writers used more reformulations in comparison with exemplifications. A possible explanation for this might be that both groups preferred to make sure the readers fully grasp the complex ideas presented in introductions by elaborating less complicated language, than by making the abstract concepts more concrete through exemplification. In addition, the researcher found significant difference between applied linguistics and politics authors in their code glosses usage. Politics used more code glosses in comparison with applied linguistics. An interpretation for this might be their command of academic writing.

Other previously published studies conducted in this area of study such as Dastgoshadeh (2001) and Parvaresh (2008) show that if a text includes metadiscourse elements, it will help learners read more effectively and when students have problems in understanding a text, metadiscourse can help them both in comprehending and remembering the propositional content of the text better. So, if academic writers utilize such features, their articles will be more recognizable and understandable for a broader range of teachers and students. Also, Vande Kopple (1985) emphasizes the pedagogical utility of metadiscourse by highlighting the effect it can have on making authors more sensitive to the needs of the readers and the role it can play in training more ethical writers.

Further research can be done using different populations, different genres, or different settings. For example, academic writing of other disciplines could be the focus of future studies.

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