

Metadiscourse in academic writing of senior high school students

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Abstract

This study examined metadiscourse in academic writing of senior high school students in Area IV, Division of Batangas Province. This described academic writing in senior high school and investigated the common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse. The errors were analyzed using Hyland's model of metadiscourse and the researcher-made rubric. It also identified the levels of difficulty met by teachers in teaching metadiscourse while sample exercises designed to enhance metadiscourse usage in students' academic writing were prepared. The statistical tools used were weighted mean and frequency distribution. Findings revealed that the Senior High School Curriculum offers English courses that require students to produce academic texts like position papers, research abstracts, and concept papers. After in-depth analysis, grammatical and punctuation errors were found particularly on the use of transitions, frame markers, evidentials, hedges, engagement markers, and self-mention. Endophoric markers, code glosses, boosters, and attitude markers were not employed in the writings. Meanwhile, teachers find it difficult to teach frame markers, boosters, hedges, and transitions. Furthermore, the sample exercises constructed by the researcher contain activities on metadiscourse usage that are geared toward the development of senior high school students' academic writing skill. It was recommended that students should be given more guidance and prompt feedback with regard to their written output so they would be able to reflect on their writings and make necessary improvements immediately. Finally, further research on metadiscourse usage in a larger number of corpus may be conducted.

Keywords: metadiscourse, academic writing, senior high school, common errors, sample exercises

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1. Introduction

Since the Department of Education (DepEd) has adopted the K to 12 curriculum, those in the senior high school are required to create not just simple writing, but numerous academic writings as indicated in most of their courses. For instance, in English for Academic and Professional Purposes (EAPP), various outputs like position paper, concept paper, critique, and the like are assigned as course requirements. Academic writing is essential in the students' chosen field. Once they have developed this skill, it will be easy for students to meet academic requirements and to communicate their thoughts effectively. This is where metadiscourse could be of great help. Hyland (2015) explains that metadiscourse refers to the interpersonal resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's attitude toward either its content or the reader. It is a way of looking at language use based on the fact that, as people speak or write, they monitor the possible answers of others, making decisions about the kind of effects they are having on their listeners or readers, and adjusting their language to best achieve their purposes.

Therefore, if students would consider metadiscourse in their academic writing, they would be able to effectively communicate to their audience, express their emotions, share their ideas, or encourage their readers. With the use of metadiscourse, they would also be able to easily organize their ideas so that readers may have proper cohesion of the meaning that is being conveyed. It can be of great help to them because they can use various markers to signal their position toward the subject they would like to discuss, or they can create smooth interaction with their audience. Nowadays, the quality of most of the students' written works is at stake because most contain various errors which affect the texts' comprehensibility and effectiveness. There are many reasons behind this challenge. It may be lack of writing practice, the students' attitudes toward learning to write in English, or because English is a second language. However, these must not hinder students from learning effective writing. Also, this could be the reason behind numerous studies that were conducted which showed the importance of metadiscourse in producing effectively written work. With the help of metadiscourse, writers can involve readers in their text and not just establish connection with them. Further, they would be able to easily express their attitude or stance toward a subject which is deemed essential since most academic papers require persuasive approach. Also, writers may be able to smoothly control the purpose or direction of the text they have written. However, metadiscourse markers must be used carefully to avoid miscommunications.

Moreover, a closer look at the students' academic texts gave the researcher in-depth thoughts on what really the problems are and in which categories of metadiscourse the students encounter errors. With this, she was able to identify which ones should be given attention the most. Similarly, a comprehensive feedback would allow students to reflect on their own writings, therefore they may determine how and what they should improve. Since this study analyzed the utilization of metadiscourse in academic writings of senior high school students in order to identify the errors they commit in using it, the researcher would be able to contribute to the improvement of their writing capability. Additionally, the researcher observed that metadiscourse is not a common term used in teaching writing, therefore she would like to create awareness of metadiscourse and how it could be of help to students. Familiarization with the proper usage of metadiscourse would benefit all students because they can utilize it in several essays and researches that they need to submit as requirements in their courses.

1.1 Objectives of the study

This study analyzed metadiscourse in academic writing of senior high school students in Area IV, Division of Batangas Province. Specifically, it answered the following research questions:

- How may the academic writing in Senior High School be described?

- What are the common errors made by the senior high school students in using metadiscourse?
- What are the levels of difficulty met by teachers in teaching metadiscourse?
- Based on the analysis, what sample exercises on metadiscourse usage in academic writing may be prepared?

1.2 Framework of the study

This study is anchored to Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model which can be used to analyze English academic writings. He emphasized that metadiscourse embodies the idea that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating. He added that it is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meaning in a text, assisting the writer or speaker to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community.

He divided metadiscourse into two categories such as interactive and interactional dimension. The interactive dimension concerns the writer's awareness of a participating audience and the ways he or she seeks to accommodate its probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities. The writer's purpose is to shape and constrain a text to meet the needs of particular readers, setting out arguments so that they will recover the writer's preferred interpretations and goals. The use of resources in this category addresses ways of organizing discourse, rather than experience, and reveals the extent to which the text is constructed with the readers' needs in mind.

At the same time, he also explained the interactional dimension which concerns the ways writers conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. He mentioned that the writer's goal here is to make his or her views explicit and to involve readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text. Metadiscourse here is essentially evaluative and engaging, expressing solidarity, anticipating objections and responding to an imagined dialogue with others. It reveals the extent to which the writer works to jointly construct the text with the readers.

2. Methodology

Research design - The study employed the descriptive research design to describe the academic texts in senior high school and determine the errors committed by the senior high school students as well as the difficulty met by the teachers in teaching metadiscourse.

Subjects of the study - This study covered a corpus of 20 scholarly compositions by senior high school students from Area IV of Batangas Province. These academic writings were position paper, concept paper, and research abstract which were carefully described and analyzed. Moreover, a total of 54 teachers from the same locale answered the survey-questionnaire.

Instrument - The data gathering instruments utilized in this study were senior high school students' academic writings, discourse analysis, researcher-made rubric, and questionnaire.

Data gathering procedure - Through a letter, the researcher sought permission from the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Batangas Province to gather all important data needed in the study. When permission was given, she went to the public schools with senior high school in Area IV and distributed the questionnaire to the teachers handling English courses. She also asked the teachers for sample students' outputs on academic writing. After gathering all necessary data, the answers on the questionnaire were tallied and submitted to the statistician. The results were immediately returned to the researcher for interpretation. The students' outputs were analyzed word for word using Hyland's model of metadiscourse and the rubric made by the researcher. It took

several days for the researcher to finish the analysis as she had to scrutinize each paper.

Statistical treatment of data - For a meaningful interpretation and analysis of the study, the data were subjected to frequency distribution and weighted mean. Frequency distribution was used to determine the number of errors in using metadiscourse and weighted mean was to quantify the teacher-respondents' level of difficulty in teaching metadiscourse.

Ethical considerations - A letter of approval and informed consent were obtained prior to the conduct of survey. With regard to the sample outputs, these were randomly selected by teachers. All data gathered were treated with high anonymity and strict confidentiality. Moreover, appropriate citations of original authors were included to ensure scientific integrity.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Description of academic writing in senior high school

The researcher was able to gather a total of 20 academic texts from different districts in Area IV, Batangas Province Division. The corpus was composed of position papers, research abstracts, and a concept paper. As what the curriculum guides in English provided by the Department of Education state, the senior high school students must be able to produce reaction paper, review, critique, concept paper, and position paper, while others may be required to create report survey or field report, and laboratory or scientific technical report. Other scholarly texts that students are required to submit are book review or article critique, literature review, research report, and project proposal. This means that the students were able to write various corpora and that outputs for three of the categories were gathered by the researcher.

Most of the academic texts collected by the researcher were position papers. It can be observed from the corpus that the writers were able to show their stand on their chosen subject; however, most of them used first person point of view. This is probably because it is easier for them to express their claims or stance if they use first person because it is already coming from them. Also, most of the works start by giving explanation about the topic that they are about to discuss, then they later present their argument. Conclusions were also evident at the end of the text. There are a few errors on punctuation and grammar that sometimes affect the comprehensibility of the texts. Further, some connections are unclear because writers used limited words in their texts.

Based on the curriculum guide for English for Academic and Professional Purposes, students must be able to understand the principles and uses of a position paper. In writing this kind of paper, a student must be able to defend a stand on an issue by presenting reasonable arguments supported by properly-cited factual evidences. However, the papers used in this study failed to provide evidences of their claims. This could be because there are students who are not fond of reading while others do not have access to sources like internet. Therefore, most of the content is purely based on the writers' own experiences or views.

Other academic texts gathered by the researcher were research abstracts. After in-depth analysis, the researcher found out that necessary information were presented by the authors in their abstracts. They were able to describe the main subject and the purpose of their research. Likewise, the methods used in their study including the data collection procedure were explained. Most of the abstracts were written using the prescribed format and were able to provide summary of results and conclusions. However, there were grammatical errors found including errors on punctuation. Also, most of the statements were just enumerated. Therefore, most of the texts lack transitional devices and had limited use of words which affected its comprehensibility. This is the same case in Letsoela's (2013) observation that using transitions appropriately is still a challenge to students. This is why she recommended that students need to be made aware of the meaning of each transition marker and not just give them a list of transitions.

A concept paper was also studied by the researcher. She discovered that it was clearly written and easy to follow. The purpose of the paper was also clear and direct to the point. There are very minimal errors on grammar and punctuation marks which did not affect the comprehensibility of the paper. However, in the background information, the writer failed to cite the source where the information was taken from. This usually happens when students forget to note the sources where they take information while some are not fully aware how and when they need to cite their sources. This also makes the argument weak because of the failure to present credible sources.

Furthermore, it can be implied from the description of academic writings that students know how to compose such texts. However, they still commit errors in grammar and punctuation. Also, most of the texts demonstrate limited use of words which affect its effectiveness. This could be a serious problem and as highlighted by Anwardeen et al. (2013) in the study they conducted, it is highly significant for students to have the knowledge to accurately use metadiscourse in order to produce a written product which will interact with readers effectively. They even suggested that training and practices have to be given more to students in order to decrease the errors that they made in using metadiscourse.

Moreover, there are students who tend to focus on just being able to comply or submit outputs without considering its quality and how their message would be delivered to the reader. This proves the statement of Cheng and Steffensen (2014) that many novice writers focus on the product, the written text, and do not pay enough attention to the ultimate goal of writing, and communicating with an audience. Thus, the collected corpus shows students' lack of practice in writing and in using various metadiscourse markers.

3.2 Common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse

The researcher determined and analyzed the errors made by the senior high school students in using metadiscourse using a teacher-made rubric which was validated by experts. There were a total of 20 academic texts written by the students. These texts include research, concept, and position papers.

Table 1

Frequency distribution of the common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse particularly interactive resources

Interactive resources	Accomplished	Competent	Developing	Beginning	Inadequate
Transitions	3	3			14
Frame markers	1	1		1	17
Endophoric markers					20
Evidentials		2			18
Code glosses					20

Table 1 presents the frequency distribution of the common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse particularly interactive resources. It can be gleaned that three texts were considered to be accomplished as these showed no errors in using transitions and there was a variety of thoughtful transitions used. Also, they clearly showed how ideas were connected. Further, another three writings were considered competent because the use of transitions clearly showed how ideas were connected, but there was little variety. On the other hand, 14 texts were considered inadequate because they showed very poor use of transitions. For instance, the transition marker *and* was used several times in the texts and writers committed mistakes in using it. In Text 1, the writer enumerated statements in which numbers were used. However, in the last part it states:

“The researchers came up with the following recommendations: (1) encourage undisciplined people to stop throwing garbage everywhere; (2) enhance environmental awareness in the community; (3) Teach others about different ways on how they can manage their waste; (4) put some trash bags in different sidewalks and; (5) continue maintaining the cleanliness in the barangay.”

This shows incorrect use of punctuation as the semi-colon should have been placed before and. The same error was observed in Text 4 wherein the writer did not put punctuation mark, particularly comma, before and. A comma is necessary because the writer pertains to separate samples. The same error was found in Text 20:

“This project will be a help in transforming the health condition of the teachers, students and other school staffs into a better one.”

Moreover, another error on the use of and was found in Text 8 in which it was used to start a sentence. The statement says:

“They said that death penalty is still an issue to argue. And if ever death penalty was approved our country will be beneficiary of it.”

In this statement, there is no need to use *and* as the writer may just start with *If* then place comma after *approved*. Meanwhile, Text 17 displays that there is overuse of and as shown in the following statements:

“The student under this Program will be expected to develop skills in listening, reading and writing and speaking a new language.”

The aforementioned findings are similar to the results of the study of Letsoela (2013) which indicated how students inappropriately used transitions in their academic writing and the extent to which such inappropriate uses affected text comprehensibility. She found out that the errors in the students’ use of transitions ranged from minor errors that did not affect text comprehensibility to very serious ones. With regard to the errors that did not affect text comprehensibility, it was observed that these were mainly grammatical. However, some errors were more serious where it was difficult for the reader to interpret what the writer was trying to say even though there were transitions used. These evidences clearly show that even though students use transitions, they are still having difficulty on how to properly use them, while others avoid its use. This could mean that most students lack knowledge on how to properly use transitions and that they are not confident in using it.

As regards frame markers, one text was considered accomplished as text boundaries were clearly indicated, including items used to sequence, to label text stages, to announce discourse goals, and to indicate topic shifts. Moreover, one text was competent because text boundaries were indicated but limited. However, another text was deemed beginning because there were many errors in using frame markers and text boundaries were unclear while the remaining 17 papers show no usage of text boundaries at all. One of the texts that contained error was Text 5 as shown in the following:

“Finally, the study suggested that (1) Computer user must reduce the tension of barrier between co-user in relation to their age (2) Computer user should maintain his/her good attitude when it comes in using computer (3) Computer user must behave in able to keep the computer shop at peace (4) Maintaining the valuable attitude of each younger and older computer user to each of them (5) Effective rules and regulation in the internet café that the customers should obey politely (6) Owners should treat their

customer nice to gain more computer user (7) Younger and Older customer should treat themselves as a whole family (8) Computer users should express their feelings and opinion to others by means of interacting to such things (9) Owner must learn themselves how the attitude and behavior of the customer affect their business/computer shops.”

It was apparent that the writer used numbers to create sequence however, they were not used properly due to lack of proper punctuation. The writer should have placed semi-colon after each sentence before each number.

The result is almost the same with the research accomplished by Ashgar (2015) which showed relatively low percentage on the use of the mentioned resources. He added that there was no introduction made to signal the development stage of thought. This suggests that in the present study, the writers of the collected corpus were not yet familiar on the use of frame markers, hence the lack of its presence on their papers. Also, this could affect the readers' understanding of the construction of the whole text because the writers failed to determine development stages of their thought in their discussion.

When it comes to evidentials, only two were considered competent as both contained a few minor errors in citing sources of textual information. One of the errors was found in Text 16 as shown below.

“According to Clinton (1996) youth curfews help the children out of harm's way.”

In this sentence, the writer was not able to put comma after *According to Clinton (1996)*. This was the same case found in Text 1.

“Based on the findings the researchers came up with the following conclusions.”

Here, a comma is also necessary after *Based on the findings*.

While the cited texts contained errors, the papers that were not mentioned showed non-existence of sources of information. As opposed to the contrastive rhetoric study performed by Munalim and Lintao (2016) in which Filipino writers used evidential twice higher than the English authors, the results of the current study revealed low use of the said markers. Citation of sources of information is highly significant in order to establish credibility of statements and to avoid plagiarism. However, most of the corpus in the current study did not show evidences of their claims which implies that the students were not fully aware when and how to cite sources of information. This may also denote students' lack of readings to support their claims which greatly affects the credibility of their proposition.

Next to the categories under interactive resources were endophoric markers and code glosses. After thorough examination of all the texts, these markers were not found; hence, considered inadequate. This confirms the findings of Ashgar (2015) in which the aforesaid markers were also not found in the texts that were examined. As for the study of Mahmood et al. (2017), endophoric markers also appeared to be non-existent in their student-respondents argumentative essays. This is parallel to the texts used in the current study as these did not contain any additional materials that could be available to the readers. This infers the writers' lack of readings on their subject of study. To be able to put endophoric markers, one must conduct further readings or researches on what he or she would like to discuss. This is also related to the lack of evidentials as previously mentioned. Since most of the writers were not able to cite sources, including additional materials to be available for readers would also be a problem.

When it comes to the use of code glosses, the present study proves the research result of Anwardeen et al. (2013) wherein they discovered that their respondents were using less code glosses alongside stance indicator.

The corpus used in the current study did not show restatement of ideational information. This means that readers might not be able to fully grasp the meaning of the texts because the writers failed to substantiate their ideas.

Table 2

Frequency distribution of the common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse particularly interactional resources

Interactional resources	Accomplished	Competent	Developing	Beginning	Inadequate
Hedges		1			19
Boosters					20
Attitude Markers					20
Engagement Markers		2			18
Self-mention	15	1			4

Table 2 shows the frequency distribution of the common errors made by senior high school students in using metadiscourse particularly interactional resources. As revealed in the analysis, only one text was considered to be competent in using hedges as there was only one error found. In Text 20, the statement:

“School health and nutrition services are services provided through the school system to improve the health and well-being of children and in some cases whole families and the broader community.”

shows that the writer used “in some cases” but did not put a comma after it which is considered as a minor error only. On the other hand, the rest of the texts did not utilize hedges at all, therefore considered inadequate. This goes against the findings of Tarrayo (2014) in which hedges appeared to be the most frequently used interactional resources in Philippine investigative journalism blogs. This infers that the writers involved in the present study did not show detachment to the ideas that they expressed. It could also be implied that the students were not knowledgeable enough when it comes to hedging.

As regards the use of boosters, an error found in Text 17 which states:

“We cant deny to fact, that our society now a days are losing for a globally competitive citizens who are active participants in nation building and responsive to the challenges of the 21st century.”

It can be observed that aside from *cant* should be written as *can't*, the statement contains grammatical error as it should be *we can't deny the fact* instead of *we cant deny to fact*. Moreover, all texts were found to be inadequate because some exhibited very limited use while most of them did not utilize the said markers. Therefore, the students were not able to express certainty at all. This implies that the students were not assertive in presenting their propositions, thereby resulting to weak claims. This affirms the investigation conducted by Kondowe (2014) focusing on hedging and boosting in which it was found that boosters were used three times less than hedges. It was emphasized that the respondents used boosters only when they were convinced that their claims share some universal understanding, which could also be the same case in the present study. Further, it can be inferred that the students have insufficient awareness when it comes to the use of boosters in writing.

Next on the list was the Attitude Markers which are used to clearly express attitude to propositional content. After careful examination, all texts were deemed inadequate because expression of attitude to propositional content was non-existent. Contrariwise, Duruk's (2017) analysis of dissertations revealed that attitude markers were the most frequently used. Since the texts in the current study showed absence of the said markers, this means that the writers' positions toward the content and the readers were not communicated. This implies that

the writers were not familiar on how to express their position or stand in a subject.

Moving on to the succeeding category which is the Engagement Markers, only two texts were found to be competent as these contain only one to three errors and were able to build relationship or connection with the readers. As shown in Text 3, grammatical errors were found.

“Teachers and school’s staff needs to elaborate and needs to practice their students on proper waste management.”

Here, there is an error on the subject-verb agreement because the writer used *needs to* instead of *need to*. The subject is in plural form, *teachers and school’s staff*, therefore the verb should agree with it. A similar error was found in Text 8.

“Therefore, I can conclude that this Death Penalty should not imposed.”

It can be observed that the writer wrote *should not imposed* when it must be *should not be imposed*.

Meanwhile, the other 18 texts were tagged as inadequate because the writers were not able to establish connection with the readers at all. The result is contradictory to the finding of Djonda (2014) in which engagement markers appeared to be one of the most prominently used ones in the homilies written and delivered by Filipino and Indonesian priests. This suggests that the current respondents have insufficient knowledge on how to engage their readers through their writing. This arises the need to practice writing effectively, including how to build relationship with the readers.

With regard to self-mentions, 15 texts were considered accomplished as author presence was clearly stated. One was identified as competent because there was only a minor error in stating author presence.

“The researchers choose the students as its participants to know if the students are responsible in terms of managing the waste and garbages that they consumed daily.”

This clearly shows incorrect referent of *The researchers*. This is because *its* was used to refer to the antecedent *the researchers* instead of *their*.

Moreover, only four texts were considered inadequate because author presence was non-existent. The finding affirms the study of Ashgar (2015) which revealed that self-mention was frequently utilized to express writer stance. This could be because most of the collected outputs were researches and position papers which significantly have to use author presence. It can also be inferred that the students are confident and familiar on the utilization of pronouns referring to themselves.

3.3 Levels of difficulty met by teachers in teaching metadiscourse

The levels of difficulty met by the teachers in teaching metadiscourse were determined through a questionnaire which was based on various readings.

Table 3

Levels of Difficulties met by Teachers in Teaching Metadiscourse as regards Interactive Resources

Interactive resources	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation
Transitions		
logically sequence ideas	2.50	Difficult
connect clauses	2.43	Easy

connect one paragraph to another	2.39	Easy
connect one sentence to another	2.33	Easy
Frame Markers		
indicate text boundaries	2.74	Difficult
clearly label text stages	2.56	Difficult
announce discourse goals	2.52	Difficult
announce topic shifts	2.52	Difficult
Endophoric Markers		
clearly show references in the same text	2.41	Easy
include additional materials/information in the same text	2.37	Easy
provide supporting arguments	2.37	Easy
refer to information in other parts of the text	2.35	Easy
Evidentials		
look for other types of resources	2.28	Easy
refer to sources of information from other texts	2.26	Easy
show evidences for students' statements	2.20	Easy
properly cite sources	2.19	Easy
Code Glosses		
reword ideas to be easily understood	2.28	Easy
elaborate ideas and information	2.19	Easy
connect sentences to readers' experiences	2.17	Easy
convey meanings through providing examples	2.09	Easy

The results confirm that the teachers find frame markers as the most difficult to teach under interactive resources. This supports the claim of Ashgar (2015) in his study that students do not seem to frequently use frame markers, which are important for a well-organized structure. Also, he found out in his study that there is low percentage of frame markers which indicates the writers' tendency of not using these markers sufficiently in the task. This could be connected to the current finding that the teachers experience difficulty in teaching the aforesaid resources; hence, the writers' low use of these resources.

It can also be gleaned from the findings that the teachers find difficulty in teaching transitions as well, specifically in terms of how to logically sequence ideas. As Letsoela (2013) underscored, the teachers' challenge is to focus on the explicit teaching of using these markers because it is evident that students still encounter challenges in utilizing transitions properly. This is also apparent on the result of the analysis mentioned in the previous section wherein numerous errors on the use of transitions were discovered. This confirms why students still commit errors when it comes to connecting one idea to another. Also, insufficient time could hinder teachers from further discussing these markers due to several topics that need to be covered in one semester.

Table 5

Levels of Difficulties met by Teachers in Teaching Metadiscourse as regards Interactional Resources

Interactional resources	Weighted mean	Verbal interpretation
Hedges		
be open to negotiation with the reader	2.52	Difficult
make decisions about the stance on a particular subject	2.50	Difficult
be keen to avoid generalizations	2.48	Easy
be careful in stating information	2.39	Easy
Boosters		
express certainty of propositions	2.61	Difficult
anticipate arguments	2.57	Difficult
assert a proposition with confidence	2.52	Difficult
put strength on the claims made	2.44	Easy
Attitude Markers		
express a position toward the content	2.35	Easy
take a stand about a particular subject	2.33	Easy
express opinions toward the text	2.20	Easy
express feelings and emotions about the content	2.15	Easy

Engagement Markers		
recognize potential readers	2.39	Easy
build relationship with the readers	2.33	Easy
communicate with the readers the message or the argument of the text	2.33	Easy
meet readers' expectations toward the text	2.31	Easy
Self-mentions		
indicate extent of author presence	2.33	Easy
give information with regard to the writer's character	2.28	Easy
use possessives	2.11	Easy
use first person pronouns	1.98	Easy

The findings revealed that among the metadiscourse markers, teachers find it difficult to teach boosters the most. Boosters are used by writers to express certainty of their claims or thoughts. As Mahmood et al. (2017) suggested, teachers must hone the students to use boosters in their writings to fill the gap in communication between the writer and reader. They added that students must use correct amount of boosters to increase their confidence in their writings and to make the text reader-friendly as this would develop a stronger interaction with the reader. Aside from boosters, teachers experience difficulty in teaching hedges as well. Kondowe (2014) asserts that hedges, together with boosters, are necessary to be taught to novice writers. However, since teachers find it difficult to teach this feature, students were not able to use it on their texts as shown in the previous part discussing hedges.

It can be implied that teachers experience difficulty in teaching boosters and hedges because students have insufficient knowledge of these markers, as discovered in the analysis in the previous section. Even though the teachers have superb knowledge on the aforesaid markers, it would be difficult for them to impart it to students if students do not have enough awareness or background information about it. Also, there are numerous topics that have to be covered in one semester, therefore giving teachers inadequate time to focus on a single topic.

In addition, the teachers who answered the questionnaire mentioned that the difficulty they meet depends on the students. For example, it is easier for them to teach STEM students compared to students from other strands/track because STEM students are high-achievers. This is due to the memorandum that the Department of Education has implemented, stating that students must have grades of 85 and above in order to be accepted in the STEM strand.

3.4 Sample exercises on metadiscourse usage in academic writing

After thorough analysis of all the academic papers collected for this study, it became evident that students commit numerous errors when it comes to using metadiscourse while others do not use it at all. As for interactive resources, most of the texts were considered inadequate due to the fact that these markers rarely appeared on the texts. This is also the same case when it comes to interactional resources as these were hardly found in the texts, aside from self-mentions. This can possibly be because students have insufficient awareness on what these metadiscourse markers are and how these can be used in their writings.

Because of the aforementioned case, the researcher finds it necessary to create sample exercises on the use of metadiscourse markers. Though metadiscourse is not a specific topic being discussed in the classroom, teaching students how to use each marker can help improve their writing skills. This affirms the statement of Munalim and Lintao (2016) that it could be reasonable if teachers introduce metadiscourse to students. Likewise, Ashgar (2015) stressed that awareness of metadiscourse features must be developed to make students' writing more effective and well-structured. This also conforms to Hyland's (2005) assertion that with the help of metadiscourse, students better assist the readers in processing the information in the text, they are provided with resources that may help them express their stance on a subject, and they are able to engage with their readers.

Moreover, for teachers to present this to their students, sample exercises are necessary. This is also the proposal of Mahmood et al. (2017) that there should be trainings and exercises to improve the use of

metadiscourse features in students' writing. Meanwhile, Cheng and Steffensen (2014) had the same concept that holistic exercises are especially significant because the aim of studying metadiscourse is to be able to integrate it into written texts.

Students in the senior high school are bombarded with numerous academic papers to write not only in their English courses but in other fields as well. This is because it is assumed that they have already gained enough knowledge and skills in writing once they reach the senior years. However, in reality, there are still students who are having difficulty in expressing themselves in written form. In schools, they are patiently taught by their teachers on how they can improve their writing skills. Sometimes, they are asked to read about different writing techniques and strategies. Despite these efforts, however, students still have writing impediments. Some students claim that they are not comfortable in using English words, or they are not confident with how they should be used, or how they should clearly write a sentence to express their thoughts. This is where metadiscourse could be of great help to improve students' writing.

The created sample exercises on the use of selected metadiscourse markers were classified into two categories namely interactive and interactional resources. On the last part, the sample academic text involves both resources. The main objectives of the exercises are to provide practice exercises to students having difficulty in writing academic papers, familiarize students with various metadiscourse markers that they may use in producing effective written texts, and improve students' academic writing skills.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

- Most of the academic texts written by senior high school students are position papers as these are one of the main requirements in most of the English courses.
- Metadiscourse markers except from self-mentions were not used very well in the texts.
- Teachers find it difficult to teach frame markers, boosters, hedges, and transitions.
- The sample exercises contain activities on metadiscourse usage that are geared toward the development of senior high school students' academic writing skill.

4.2 Recommendations

Based on the conclusions, the following are recommended:

- The students should be given more guidance and prompt feedback with regard to their written output so they would be able to reflect on their writings and make necessary improvements immediately.
- The sample exercises made by the researcher may be used by the teachers to enhance their students' academic writing skills.
- Further research on metadiscourse usage in a larger number of corpus may be conducted to fully understand the challenges students encounter during writing, with the end view of providing appropriate solutions to it.

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