



In the Name of God

Personal Pronouns in Applied Linguistics Research Article Introductions:
A Chronological Study

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The Abstract

Using personal pronouns to refer to oneself as a subgroup of metadiscourse markers (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p.169) may contribute to shaping writer-reader relationship and help writers offer their own ideas and attitudes, hence construction of the writer's stance. This study, situated within the fields of pragmatics and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), aimed to analyze the distribution and frequency of occurrence of first person pronouns in research article Introductions written in English in Applied Linguistics during two five-years periods (1976-1980 and 2006-2010). The goal was to identify any diachronic variations in the use of personal attribution in these texts. The corpus consisted of 72 journal articles which were analyzed in terms of the possible semantic references (exclusive and inclusive first person plural pronouns) and different socio-pragmatic functions that these pronouns may perform using the two comprehensive taxonomies of Martin (2003) and Vladimirova (2006).

The results showed that nearly 45% of the articles investigated include at least one of the realizations of first person pronouns. This finding might suggest that writers of RAs tend to be aware of the importance of using first person pronouns in order to project a strong authorial voice and to take credit for one's findings. Within the period 1976-1980, the number of subjective singular and plural pronouns turned to be equal, but in the second chronological period (2006-2010) the use of *I* and its other forms nearly doubled that of *we*. This may suggest that 30 years ago writers who used plural self-references more widely seemed to avoid personal intrusions in their RAs while those who used the first person singular (the recent RA writers) are taking a different identity-driven ideological stance. They explicitly take the responsibility to guide the reader in the navigation through the text. The existing differences, especially the increased trend toward applying first person singular pronouns reflect the rather different rhetorical conventions of the two chronological periods.

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Chapter One: Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the interactive and rhetorical character of academic writing, expanding the focus of studies beyond the ideational or propositional dimension of the texts, to the ways they function interpersonally (Hyland, 2004a, p.136), that is, to the ways and devices writers apply to indicate their presence as the one who holds opinion towards what he expresses. At the same time, the concept of metadiscourse has come to be seen as an “umbrella term for the range of devices writers use to explicitly organize their text, engage readers, and signal their attitudes to both their imagined readers and the evolving text” (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p.156), or “a self-reflective linguistic expression referring to this communication triangle” (Abdi, Tavangar Rizi, & Tvakoli, 2010, p.1670).

The need to create a niche within academic community persuades the writers to employ such devices as first person pronouns-singular and plural. Gosden (1993) found that this explicit authorial presence is justified in the Introduction section as one of the most important rhetorical part of a RA (Bhatia, 1997) where authors signal explicit commitment to their work. Using personal pronouns to refer to oneself as a subgroup of metadiscourse markers (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p.169) may contribute to shaping writer-reader relationship and help writers offer their own ideas and attitudes, hence construction of the writer’s stance. The writer’s identity is made most visible by the use of self-mention through first-person pronouns that signal “explicit author presence in the text” (Hyland 2005a, p. 53). Hyland argues that self-mentions allow writers to provide “a clear indication to the reader of the perspective from which their statements should be interpreted, distinguishing their own work from that of others” (2005a, p. 148).

Self-mention plays a crucial role in mediating the relationship between writers’ arguments and the expectations of their readers, and the decision to adopt an impersonal rhetorical style or to represent oneself explicitly can influence the impression writers make on their readers and have significant consequences for how their message is received. Self-mentions are realized by means of self-references (i.e., singular and plural first person pronouns and possessive adjectives referring to the authors). Duenas (2007) maintains that in order to come up with a successful piece of research, it is not only necessary to demonstrate solidarity with the readers but also to show innovation which can be made clear by means of self-mention. Kim (2009) observes that by using reader-oriented personal pronouns, the writer shows his feeling of ‘in-groupness membership’ with the reader (p.2087). Dahl (2004, p.1809) observes that research article writers

manifest themselves in the text through the use of personal pronouns. He finds out that since in linguistics articles, argumentation is very much part of the knowledge construction process, the role of author as a researcher is predominant; therefore, there may be much use of personal pronouns. Thus, as the use of personal pronouns play an important role in identifying writer's stance in the text, via this study, which is situated within the fields of pragmatics and EAP, the distribution and frequency of occurrence of first person pronouns in research article Introductions written in English in the Applied Linguistics in two five-years periods (1976-1980 and 2006-2010) was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively. It was aimed to reveal whether there is diachronic variation in the use of personal attribution in these texts.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Personal pronouns have diverse and significant implications when used in the academic texts due to their different functions in various writing types. Harwood (2005) identifies the following as the range of functions personal pronouns can play: help the writer organize the text and guide the reader through the argument, state personal opinions and knowledge claims, recount experimental procedure and methodology, acknowledge funding bodies, institutions, and individuals that contributed to the study in some ways, as well as helping to reveal the kind of relationship established between academic writer and the audience. Therefore, the presence of personal pronouns helps to construct the "visibility of writer" (Harwood, 2005b, p.246) based on their function in a particular case which would be of great importance when the author makes a claim.

Besides, the very presence of personal pronouns in different texts can be a sign according to which the text quality is evaluated. Hyland (2001) finds out that while students are often taught to avoid the use of first person, it is a key by which professional academics gain credit for their research claims. Hyland (2008a) in an analysis of the use of personal pronouns in doctoral and masters dissertations reaches similar findings. The use of first person pronouns among PhD students in their doctoral dissertations was four times more than the use of this resource by the less experienced MAs, and they made use of this resource to "metadiscoursally announce their presence in the discourse where they were best able to promote themselves and their individual contributions" (Hyland, 2008a, p.135). Masters students tried to avoid using self-mentions, and

they reasoned that using “I” is representative of self opinion and “just ok for established scholars” (p.135). It seems to be a point of consensus that more qualified writers equip more interpersonal devices as some other researchers’ findings confirm this result (Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007, Krause & O’Brien, 1999). Thus, it appears that self-mention in an academic text has to be considered more seriously.

The studies performed thus far on the use of self-mention as the “explicit reference to the scholar’s role as authors” (Duenas, 2007) have considered one or two of the following factors as their point of departure: 1) genres, for example between undergraduate projects and journal articles (Hyland, 2002a); 2) disciplines, for example between hard and soft sciences (Harwood, 2005b, Hyland, 2001, 2004a); and 3) cultures (Jalilifar & Hosseini Marashi, 2012; Kim, 2009; Martin, 2003). Investigation into the existing literature reveals that few if any chronological studies, focusing on evolutionary development of use and distribution of personal pronouns, have been conducted so far. As a result, the present study tries to take into account the potential difference in the application of first personal pronouns (singular or plural) across time in order to shed light on the dearth of information and implicated ambiguity concerning it. Specifically, it focuses on the nature of the use of personal pronouns diachronically across two five-year periods of time, from 1976 to 1980, and from 2006 up to 2010. To this end, the following research questions are formulated:

1. Does temporal factor affect the organization of the applied linguistics research article Introductions regarding the use of personal pronouns, as a subcategory of metadiscourse markers?
2. What differences (semantic or pragmatic) exist in using first person pronouns in article Introductions across time?
3. Has the use of personal pronouns been changed across time regarding their roles as two subcategories of metadiscourse: engagement markers and self-mention?

1.2 Significance of the study

As mentioned, almost all the studies in the field have been fulfilled either across cultures or disciplines regarding the use of self-mention (Duenas, 2007), and this leads to the dearth of

knowledge regarding the evolutionary development of personal pronoun (whether singular or plural) use in empirical research studies across decades. This study explored the authorial presence in research articles using stance markers and how time factor might shape the use of self reference. The time factor allows to recognize how research article has developed and whether there is any difference concerning the use and nature of person markers (Hyland, 1998) between the writing of contemporary researchers and that of researchers of three decades ago.

Helms-Park and Stapelton (2003) stress that learners from different cultural backgrounds cannot produce “individualized voice” in their writing which may be considered as not being able to conform to the rules of writing in target language. They regard “self-identification” (using first person pronouns and the like) as one of the criteria selected as key elements of voice in texts along with assertiveness, reiteration of central points, and authorial presence and autonomy of thought. Shokouhi and Talati Baghsiahi (2009) express the same idea and maintain that a non-native learner has to learn those conventions of writing that are beyond the mechanics of writing. They need to be aware of the rules “which operate on discourse and text level and which are the results of an L2 speaker’s culture and pattern of thought” (Shokouhi & Talati Baghsiahi, 2009, p.550). According to Hyland (2004a), clarifying the function of personal pronouns in research articles used to engage the reader or to highlight the writer stance will be useful for teachers to help their students understand written texts and to gain control over their writing to be able to participate in their discipline. First person pronouns, both singular and plural, can be found with a wide variety of referents and discourse functions in different texts, and it is up to the speaker and hearer to ‘negotiate’ which of them is used. It is hoped that the findings of the present study help the non native and novice writers to get familiar with the general conventions of personal pronoun inclusion and the different discursal roles they may play in expert writing so that they could show their authorial presence in their writings which are aimed to be propounded in professional ground. Also, The findings of this study may help language teaching RA writers better understand the changes or development of RAs linguistically across time.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The present chapter starts by describing two important factors influencing the success or failure of every piece of academic writing, namely, *audience awareness* and *genre*. The genre of research articles (RAs henceforth) has been chosen to be focused on in the present study, and along the same line, the study takes into account what promotes the quality of an RA, to be representative of writer awareness of social context and the professional consequences of the writing. Then *metadiscourse* or discourse about discourse in Vande Kopple's (1985) words which signifies these qualities is elaborated on. The notion is being discussed in details, and one of its subcategories, "self-mention", in the latest typology of Hyland (Hyland, 2005a) will also be taken to be the main focus of this study. Later in this chapter, different factors relative to personal pronouns as representative of "self-mention" and in some contexts "engagement markers" will be discussed in more details.

2.1 Audience awareness and writing

When conceiving a discourse, the author has to have in mind certain objectives that he/she wants to realize in it and with it. These objectives, according to Hempel and Degnd (2008), can be of different nature and of varying degrees of relevance or weight according to the different oral or written communicative situations: focus may lie on the message, on the form, on the function, on the intention of the author, etc. One of these factors which appears important to consider during the process of discourse production is the presence of interlocutors, of an audience (Kim, 2009). The concept of audience is a very controversial one especially in written texts where this seems particularly difficult as written interaction represents a specific process of the information transfer: it is closed and nonreciprocal, whereas it is open and reciprocal in spoken communicative events, as the listener can directly react and reply to what has been said (Hempel & Degand, 2008, p.678). A writer's audience awareness is very important to the conception of a discourse: writers possessing a high degree of awareness of the participants in a communicative event will be able to establish a more direct relationship to their audience (Ding, 2007; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005).

2.1.1 Genre and writing

Writing within a given discipline necessarily requires familiarity with the conventional discursive practices of the disciplinary community (Hyland, 1998; Pogner, 2003; Swales, 1990)

and in order to be identified as a member of a discourse community, one requires detailed knowledge and appreciation of the trends in that community (Swales, 1990). Writing is extricably related to culture and even within a single language, different discourse communities (academic, business, religious, etc.) have different writing conventions (Vergaro, 2002, 2004) because how and by whom a text is read are influential factors in the effectiveness of an argument (Siew Mei, 2007). Therefore, the writer has to combine writing strategies with what he considers to be the rhetorical purposes of performing the writing task and audience expectations “to shape the process of composing” (Wong, 2005, p. 31). Producing a text within a discourse community cannot be successfully achieved unless the writer can define the goals in terms of the “abstract, socially recognized ways of using language or *genre*” (Hyland, 2003, p.21). According to Ding (2007), the analysis of context and audience plays an important role in genre studies. Paltridge discussed the two concepts of context and audience in depth, distinguishing the “context of culture” from “the context of situation” (Paltridge, 1997, pp. 62–67).

In fact, without familiarity with the writing practices of relevant discourse communities, it will be very difficult to gain entry into these communities (Abdi, Tavangar Rizi, & Tavakoli, 2010). Therefore, another factor which should be taken in mind when producing a written text in parallel with audience awareness is the consideration of genre (Bazerman, 1988; Hyland, 2003). According to Hyland (1998), the effectiveness of linguistic choices in writing lies in their cognitive and cultural value to a community (p.438).

2.1.2 Research article: *The prestigious genre*

During the past few decades, research articles have received considerable attention due to what Jalilifar (2009, p.12) calls “the center of knowledge production and creating research space”. Every practitioner in the domain of academic research wishes to be accepted and recognized as a member of the academic community and the very means and at the same time the end is submitting research articles which are published in outstanding journals. It could also be argued that people write research papers because they enjoy the considerable challenge that they pose (Swales, 2004). This challenge becomes more significant when one notifies the fact that although the topics the researchers work on are among the most eye-catching ones, most of the time their papers are rejected. Two of the main reasons can be the writers’ unawareness of the generic structure of international RAs (Khani & Tazik, 2010) and failure to consider the

expected audience and anticipate their background knowledge, processing problems, and reactions to the text (Hyland, 1994).

Research writing is one domain where “an orientation to the reader” (Hyland, 1998, p.438) is crucial for although this “prestigious genre”, as Swales (2004, p. 217) calls it, has often been considered impersonal and propositional, it helps the writer convey rhetorical objectives. The research article writer has to make linguistic choices which if chosen appropriately will have a hand in convincing an academic audience as a persuasive device. Hyland (1998) maintains that writers must consider the reactions of their expected audience, anticipating its background knowledge, processing problems, interests and interpersonal expectations. At the same time, reader would try to second-guess what comes next from the perspective of writers’ personal research goals. Thus, academic writers seek to produce texts that raise specific responses in an active audience both informing and persuading readers of the truth of their statements.

English for academic purposes (EAP) has attracted considerable attention in recent years (Martinez, 2003). Kuteeva (2010) considers writing in EAP as a social activity dependent on the relationship between writer, reader and the social context. She refers to reader-oriented approaches to teaching and research writing, including writing as social interaction, writing as social construction, and writing as power and ideology. The first two perspectives are particularly relevant here, since they lay emphasis on the writer–reader relationship and the notion of the writer as a member of a given discourse community. This way, we can perceive writing as a cyclical process in which writers simultaneously shape their discourse to involve the reader and are influenced by the reader’s expectations resulting from community practices. That is, success in academic writing is achieved “as a result of demonstrating solidarity with the community and showing respect for its common goals” (Abdolazade, 2010, p.2) and “analyzing and accommodating the needs of readers” (Hyland, 1999, p.5). Therefore, features of rhetoric are always relative to a particular audience and social purpose, but the ways this familiarity and negotiation are indicated in the text is not a simple question. As mentioned above, it involves several factors, e.g. a rhetorical understanding of the genre one is writing in and an idea of how the audience being addressed may react to what is being put forth. The textual mechanisms which regulate the position between reader, writer and message are essential and offer a way of unveiling how stance is being conveyed. These mechanisms often fall into what is generally called *metadiscourse* (Silver, 2003). But before turning to the concept more specifically, it is

worth noting the importance of Introduction, and why this RA's section has been selected for precise investigation in the current study.

2.1.3 Research article Introduction

Introduction, Method, Results, and Discussion sections have different functions (Swales, 1990) and different rhetorical moves (Khany & Tazik, 2010), and consequently, rhetorical and linguistic resources may be manifested differently in each part. Differences have been observed in relation to the rhetorical moves of the sections (Swales, 1990) as well as in relation to the different grammatical resources used across the sections of the article such as transitivity patterns (Martinez, 2001), thematic choices (Martinez, 2003), and the use of first person pronouns (Carciu, 2009; Jalilifar & Hosseini Marashi, 2012; Lorés Sanz, 2006; Martinez, 2005).

Introductions serve as a transitional element of discourse, linking the work done by other members of the discipline with the work done by the writer him/herself. Bhatia (1993) argues that an Introduction serves the purpose of “making ‘the present story’ relevant by placing it appropriately in the context of ‘the first story’ .i.e., previous research in a particular field of study” and “is meant to ‘motivate’ the present research and to ‘justify’ its publication”, (p.82 as cited in Tessuto, 2008). This function coincides with Swales’ (1990, 2004 for later developments) model of moves in research article Introductions. However, another function that can be assigned to Introduction according to Bhatia (2004, cited in Tessuto, 2008) is “looking for readership, indirectly promoting research” (p. 73). What is important in “promoting research” (Ibid) and therefore determining the comprehensibility and coherence of the text is the type of rhetorical strategies necessary to render the Introduction more effective as certain linguistic categories play an outstanding role in the organization of discourse and in the expressions on interpersonal values. Metadiscourse emerged as one of these rhetorical strategies -a way of understanding language in use, representing a writer or speaker’s attempts to guide a receiver’s perception of a text. Some scholars, investigating the field (see Vande Kopple, 1997) found out that in research reports, the Introduction and Discussion sections have markedly more metadiscourse markers than do Methodology and Results sections. Also, Helsot (cited in Swales, 1990) revealed that there is no instance of use of personal pronouns in Results or Method sections, but the cases are seen in Introduction and Discussion sections. Besides, the readers’ first impression of the article and the study is strongly influenced by the way an Introduction section of the study proceeds which may persuade the readers to continue or cause them to stop

reading. According to Samraj (2008), the Introduction is a site where the interplay of the writer's agency in the research being reported and the role of previous research are manifested. Therefore, the focus of the present study will be on Introduction as it is probably the best locus for investigating rhetorical strategies.

2.2 Metadiscourse

The qualities of a *good* writer can be said to be a certain degree of knowledge of what to make explicit in his/her text and of what to take for granted, in order to avoid incomprehension or even wrong interpretation of what he/she intended to express. Thompson (2001) suggests that for developing the skill of effective writing, an essential component is developing an awareness of the audience and “the ability to reflect and exploit that awareness in the way the text is written” (p.58). One area which is directly affected by audience awareness is the way in which the text is organized and the organization is signaled. In this way, the clues that the writer provides for her/his readership to signal the text organization are of paramount importance. That is, the text is being seen as a dialogic interaction between writer and reader in which the former attempts to guess the reader's information needs and expectations at each point and react to them. Subsequently, the question arises of how this interaction between author and reader, or this “social engagement” (Hyland and Tse, 2004, p.156), can be linguistically marked in a text. Metadiscourse represents an effective possibility to express this interaction, and “to establish an appropriate, discipline-defined balance between the researcher's authority as expert-knower and his/her humility as disciplinary servant” (Hyland, 1998, p.440). It refers to “the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community” (Hyland, 2005a, pp. 37–38) one of its key principles being writer–reader interaction. Metadiscursal devices can be viewed as resources indicating the writer's position towards the content or the reader of the text. These devices include words, phrases, main clauses and even punctuation and typographic marks (Crismore, 1982; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Hyland, 2005a; Ifantidou, 2005; Williams, 1981). These features function as a guide to the extent of the writer's awareness of the need to point to features of the topic so that the audience may become aware of the force of the argument.

The concept of metadiscourse derives from the postulate that people use language not only to convey ideational meaning, i.e. meaning based on information about the world, but that this

referential meaning is complemented with other dimensions of linguistic meaning (Hempel & Degand, 2008, p.678). Many scholars believe that metadiscourse is completely different from ideational or referential materials in any piece of writing. For example, Williams (1981, p.47) points out that whenever a writer writes more than a few words, he usually has to write on two levels: “he writes about the subject he is addressing, of course [...] but he also tells his audience directly or indirectly how they should take his subject.” Williams uses the term metadiscourse to distinguish this kind of writing about reading from writing about primary subjects. Vande Kopple (1985) has provided a useful definition which has been repeatedly quoted in many studies where he talks about two levels of writing: propositional content and metadiscourse which in his point of view is “discourse about discourse or communication about communication.” (p.83).

Following the preliminary definition by Vande Kopple (1985), quoted above, came lots of other definitions (Crismore, 1982; Hyland, 1998, 1999) which gradually moved from these purely linguistic categories and definitions to taxonomies which were more functional and rhetorical in which the choice of metadiscourse was closely related to the context in which it operates and the writer’s communicative intention. While it may seem fairly easy to classify a range of different metadiscoursal features, “one must not forget (...) (that) one’s primary concern must remain with metadiscoursal functions and not with specific forms that can fulfill those functions” (Vande Kopple, 1997, p.2). Hyland and Tse (2004) define metadiscourse as the linguistic resources used to organize the discourse or the writer’s stance towards either its content or the reader. In their view, it is typically used as an umbrella term to include a heterogeneous array of cohesive and interpersonal features which help relate the text to its context by assisting reader to connect, organize and interpret material in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the understandings and values of a special discourse community (Hyland, 1998). The same stance is adopted by Abdi (2002, p.140), Dahl (2004), Shokouhi and Talati Baghsiahi (2009), Abdollahzade (2010), and Abdi, Tavangar Rizi, and Tavakoli (2010). Adel (2006) defines it as text about the evolving text, or the writer’s explicit commentary on her own ongoing discourse, displaying an awareness of the current text or its language use *per se*, and of the current writer and reader *qua* writer and reader. In Dafouz Milne’s view, explicitness is a key feature of metadiscourse since, in addition to being a practical means of identification and comparison, it represents the author’s attempt to create a particular discoursal effect (Dafouz

Milne, 2008). She views metadiscourse as a rhetorical strategy whose primary macrofunction is to have a persuasive effect on readers. In other words, metadiscourse categories ultimately intend to convince readers of the validity of the arguments introduced in the text (Dafouz Milne, 2003). Hempel and Degand (2008) based on definitions provided by Mao (1993) bring about two broad meanings associated with the term ‘metadiscourse’: first, it “can refer to discourse about discourse, to any kind of critical interpretation or theoretical exposition of a given (or ‘target’) discourse or theory” and the second which is more concrete: “it refers to various kinds of linguistic tokens that an author employs in her text to guide or direct the reader as to how to understand her, and her stance towards it” (Hempel & Degand, pp. 678-9). But the most comprehensive and clear definition seems to be incorporated in Hyland’s (2005a) words: “Metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 37).

Metadiscourse was found to be in close relationship with the quality of writing especially in learners’. In their analysis of the persuasive writing of 12 ESL university students, Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) found that in the case of good essays (i.e., those with the highest holistic scores for overall quality), writers used marginally more interpersonal metadiscourse features (54%) than textual features (46%). The complex interconnections between the use of a range of metadiscourse features, apparent awareness of audience needs and the overall quality of essays produced have been proved by a number of scholars in the field (Hyland, 1998; Jafarinejad & Tavakoli, 2011; Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007; Krause & O’brein, 1999; Steffensen & Cheng, 1996).

A number of studies have investigated metadiscourse in different areas. Abdi (2002) conducted a study on 55 academic research articles from the social sciences and natural sciences to compare the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in two disciplines. Also, there has been a great deal of work originating in students’ coursework in writing and composition (Williams, 1981; Vande Kopple, 1985), with later pedagogic implications for ESL university-student essay writing (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995). Particular grammatical or lexical features have been isolated and analyzed – *it-clauses* in business journal articles and MBA dissertations (Hewings and Hewings, 2002), *evidently* in research articles (Silver, 2003), *hedging* as a subcategory of interpersonal or interactional metadiscourse (Crompton, 1997; Davoodifard, 2008; Falahati,

2008; Hyland, 1994; Koutsantoni, 2006), hedging and boosting in abstracts of applied linguistics articles (Hu & Cao, 2011). Similarly, genre-specific analyses of business letters (Jalilifar & Beitsayyah, 2011; Vergaro, 2002), editorials (Le, 2004) and newspapers opinion column (Dafouz Milne, 2003, 2008) have also yielded interesting results. Finally, academic metadiscourse has been investigated with respect to intercultural variation (Mauranen, 1993, cited in Abdi, 2002), research articles (Swales, 1990; Hyland, 1998), non-native PhD students' dissertation writing (Bunton, 1999), and university textbooks (Hyland, 1999).

2.2.1 The models of metadiscourse

Many taxonomies have been provided for the concept since its early days. The classifications to a large extent were true followers of the options for linguistic behavior which were derived from three macro-functions of language; ideational, interpersonal and textual (Halliday, 1978, cited in Abdi, 2002). The first comprehensive functional classification of metadiscourse was introduced by Vande Kopple (1985) based on Holliday's classification. He suggested two main categories for metadiscourse: textual and interpersonal. Textual metadiscourse serves the function of organizing the text and directing the reader and fulfils Halliday's textual function. Interpersonal metadiscourse is employed to develop the relationship between the reader and the writer and to add the writer's personal belief and degree of commitment toward an ongoing proposition (Abdi, 2002). Vande Kopple slightly changed the subcategories of these two general categories in 1997. Besides Vande Kopple, several others proposed their taxonomies on metadiscourse since the term was first coined (Crismore, 1982; Hyland, 1998; Vande Kopple, 1997; Williams, 1981; among others). Some classifications seem to give more importance to the taxonomy per se than to the function metadiscourse markers play in the text.

Actually, as Adel (2006) puts it, there is a division between researchers who see metadiscourse as covering both the interpersonal and textual functions (the broad approach) and those who see metadiscourse as covering the textual function of language only (the narrow approach). For formers, metadiscourse is a concept restricted to elements which refer to the text itself, looking inward to those aspects of a discourse which help organize the text as text and sometimes is called "metatext" (Bunton, 1999; Dahl, 2004; Vergaro, 2002; 2004) or "reflexive model" (Adel, 2006). Adel has divided metadiscourse into two main categories, referred to as 'metatext' and 'writer-reader interaction'. 'Metatext' is described as metadiscourse that guides

the reader through the text or comments on the use of language in the text. The focus is on the structure, discourse actions or wording of the text. Some examples are *in this essay; . . . will be discussed in the following; see page 16; to conclude*. ‘Writer-reader interaction’, on the other hand, is described as metadiscourse that is used by the current writer to interact with her imagined reader in ways that create and maintain a relationship with the reader. This allows the writer to influence her reader by addressing him directly in various ways. Examples are *You will probably think that . . . ; Does this sound . . . to you?; Correct me if I’m wrong, but. . . and dear reader*. Dahl (2004) also takes a narrow approach in her investigation of research articles across three languages (English, French and Norwegian) and three disciplines (economics, linguistics and medicine). What Dahl studies is “locational” and “rhetorical” metatext. Locational metatext comprises “linguistic elements that refer to the text itself or to parts of it” (2004, p. 1811) and includes examples like *The present paper* and *in Section 3*, as well as more unexpected ones like *already* (as in *As already mentioned*). Rhetorical metatext includes “meta-elements which assist the reader in the processing of the text by making explicit the rhetorical acts performed by the writer in the argumentation process” (2004, p. 1812), such as *We conclude that . . .*

For others, those taking an “interactional” position, a writer’s commentary on his or her unfolding text represents a coherent set of interpersonal options. This more encompassing model is the one which will be employed in this paper, taking metadiscourse as a set of features which together help explain the working of interactions between text producers and users. In spite of minor differences, the majority of available taxonomies have divided metadiscourse markers into the two aforementioned textual and interpersonal functions (Abdi, 2002; Dafouz Milne, 2003, 2008; Hu & Cao, 2011; Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Le, 2004; Silver, 2003; Vande Kopple, 1985, 1997; Williams, 1981).

Ifantidou (2005) in her leading article argues against standard views of academic metadiscourse and redefines it. Trying to simplify existing taxonomies, she deals with two broad metadiscoursal categories: intra-textual, when specific reference is made to other parts of the same text (or to the author herself) or inter-textual, when other texts (or other authors, or the author herself at another time) are referred to within a single text. Given this twofold distinction, metadiscourse may indeed be said to include a variety of lexical items. However, within this division (between broad and narrow categories) there have been important variations mainly due to the type of the text or the rhetorical context in which metadiscourse appears. Many of those

typologies have been followed by other researchers with slight modifications (Dafoua-Milne, 2003; Bunton, 1999).

The classification followed in this research is one of the recent classifications of Hyland (Hyland, 2005a). In his several papers and the outstanding book, he was usually revising his own work and those of the others. In 1998, he adopted Crismore et al.'s (1993, cited in Hyland, 1998) system in distinguishing textual and interpersonal types and further classified more specific functions within these. However, he heavily changed Crismore's classification to accommodate the meanings expressed in his corpus of academic articles. Later on, Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005a) have put forth a stronger interpersonal view on metadiscourse, claiming that all metadiscourse categories are essentially interpersonal since they need to take into account the readers' knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs. Thus, he proposed a change in the terminology, adopting Thompson's (2001) label of interactive (instead of textual) and interactional (instead of interpersonal) metadiscourse. This recent classification was preferred in the present study for (a) being recent, simple, clear and inclusive, (b) building on previous taxonomies, and (c) lending itself more easily to our purpose.

2.2.2 A taxonomy of metadiscourse markers

According to Hyland's (1998) classification, metadiscourse kinds convey textual and interpersonal meanings; both are considered as linguistic devices to organize the propositional content of the text. Later on, he refines his own taxonomy with a major shift in this classification. He turns down the dual functionality of metadiscourse choosing instead to take all metadiscourse markers as interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experience, and processing needs. Hyland and Tse (2004) build on the terminology proposed by Thompson (2001) and consider *interactive* and *interactional* resources as the devices realizing interpersonal dimension of language. Through interactive resources, writers anticipate reader's knowledge and occupy the techniques to guide their readership through the text by constraining what should be captured from the text, and interactional devices are employed by the writer to control the level of personality, comment on the material and make a relationship to the audience and argument both. The former includes *transitions*, *frame markers*, *endophoric markers*, *evidential* and *code glosses*. The latter includes *hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers*, *engagement markers* and *self-mention*, as illustrated in Table 2.1 (Hyland & Tse, 2004, Hyland, 2004a & b, 2005a, 2008a).

Table 2.1 An Interpersonal model of metadiscourse

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

These features are used as indicative of writer’s level of awareness of audience (Krause & O’Brien, 1999) and since every metadiscourse marker may implicate one meaning in one context and another thing in a different text (see Abdi, 2002, p.141 for more references), the one-to-last above mentioned resource, self-mention, is chosen as the single point of focus of our empirical study. Since our interest is to trace the behavior of the personal pronouns, paying particular attention to its role as metadiscourse, close textual and discourse analyses are made for each occurrence. For the purposes of this line of investigation, it is our feeling that the analysis of the behavior of but two of them (*I* and *we* and their other realizations) within a specific genre of academic discourse offers what Swales refers to as a “narrower and deeper” analysis (Swales, 1990, p. 3), which has the strategic advantage of making it easier for us to compare our findings with the definitions and categorizations of other researchers.

Using personal pronouns to refer to oneself may contribute to shaping writer-reader relationship and help writers offer their own ideas and attitudes, hence construction of the writer’s stance. Duenas (2007) maintains that in order to come up with a successful piece of research, it is not only necessary to demonstrate solidarity with the readers but also to show