Engagement Features in Business Newspapers Corpus: A Comparative Study of Business News and Business Articles

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Abstract: *The study explores the Pakistani business newspaper corpus for the presence of engagement features—one of the systems of interactional metadiscourse. Business corpus of 1 million words comprised Pakistani business news and business articles collected from the four well-reputed Pakistani English newspapers, i.e., The Daily Times, The Nation, The Business Recorder, and The Dawn. It was found that the writer presents his ideas and arguments and engages his/her reader by employing different engagement features Furthermore, in the corpus of business articles, the writers were found keener to be informative and engaging than they were for the corpus of business news. The results of the study can potentially help future researchers in understanding the use of Engagement markers in other business corpus texts. In addition, educationists and syllabus designers may use the findings of the study for developing better teaching materials.*

Key Words: Interactional Metadiscourse, Engagement, Business Discourse

Introduction

The development of a well-structured message is facilitated by the metadiscourse analysis that engages the readers and displays the stance of the writer towards the addresses and propositions of the text. The analysis of meta-discourse features can provide insights into the nature of reader-writer interaction. Interactional features play a vital role in any discourse to establish the writer's and reader's relationship. A text-only connects with the reader when the writer can accurately assess the reader's ability to interpret the textual resources of metadiscursive nature. Interactional metadiscourses are further divided into the systems of Stance and Engagement. This study is related to exploring the use of Engagement markers in Pakistani business newspaper discourse. Engagement features are of great importance as by using these features, the writer wants to establish a connection with the reader of the text (Malik, Islam & Shahbaz, 2020). It becomes significant, especially in business discourse, when the writer wants to convince the readers using various interactional strategies. Engagement

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features allow writers to communicate with their readers more effectively.

Literature Review

Genre

The concept of genre is not new and has been developed a lot over the last few decades. The word genre has been taken from the Latin word for "kind" or "class" (Chandler, 1997). Genre shows those activities that frequently happen in society (Dudley-Evans 1989, p. 77), and they are considered the same type in a given speech community (Richards et al, 1992, p. 156). According to Swales (1990), genre refers to the class of communicative events having some specific communicative goals. Hyland (2006) describes genre as a term for assembling texts, that demonstrates how writers use language in natural settings.

Register

The register includes two perspectives. Firstly, an analysis of linguistic choices involves analyzing the situation in which these linguistic choices have been used (Biber & Conrad, 2009). Halliday *et al.* (1964) specify that the registers have been variously recognized bearing three contextual factors i.e., field, tenor and mode. The most basic difference between register and genre is that context of culture is referred to as genre and immediate context is regarded as register (Biber, 1988).

Business discourse

Business discourse is a type of discourse that is used for business interactions in formal or informal settings. Usually, people think that business discourse only involves conversation and formal writing for official use, but informal communication is another important aspect of this discourse. Business discourse is characterized by a certain style and jargon that achieves communication objectives in the domain of business. Importantly, the language of business discourse is generally technical and formal (Bargiela-Chiappini & Nickerson 1999).

The current focus of the study is newspaper business discourse. The current study is based on the Pakistani business newspaper corpus. Business newspapers cover a number of business topics and issues like business news, financial predictions, economic debates, forex updates, market analysis, etc. These financial issues are discussed in different text types of newspaper discourse. Two of the major text types are business news and business articles. The focus of business news is the recent and latest developments in the financial world. Business news focuses on factual content and attempts to update its readers on different financial news. On the other hand, business articles cover a broader range of topics and present a detailed analysis of business matters. Additionally, business articles may include interviews, discussions, opinion articles, and insights on the market future.

Metadiscourse

Zellig Harris (1959) was the first linguist to use "metadiscourse". This term explains the way of comprehending the writer's stance and readers' perception after studying the text (Hyland, 2005a, p. 3). This term helps to understand the writer's stance towards the proposition. Vande Kopple (1985), Williams (1983) and Crimsore (1989) have further explored the term metadiscourse and they explain metadiscourse in terms of communal interaction that occurs in the listen-reader or the speaker-writer interaction. (Piller & Hyland, 1999) highlights that metadiscourse is gaining popularity in explaining the text-structures and composition. Thomson (2001) has presented two further sub-divisions of metadiscourse, which are interactive and interactional features. Interactional features include the writer's authorial stance and reader engagement (see Bamford & Bondi, 2005).

Ken Hyland's Model of Interaction

Interaction in the text includes Stance features that take a position or stance on the issues given in the text by the author and Engagement features that interactively involve the reader in the text. The Stance and Engagement systems are further divided into their sub-components as shown below in Fig. 1:

Figure 1.

Interactional Metadiscourse Markes in Hyland (2005)
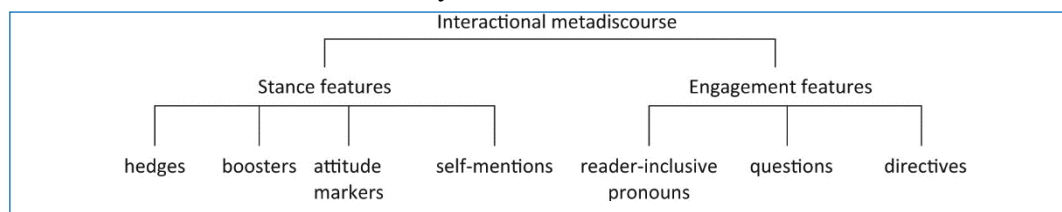
Engagement

Engagement features encourage the readers to engage in the text. Unlike stance, it is associated with the reader's presence and attention. Hyland (2001, 2005) explains it as a textual dimension that helps the writer establish a connection with the readers and guides their interpretations by signalling the acknowledgement of their uncertainties and perspectives on the issue.

Reader Pronoun

Among Engagement markers, reader pronouns are the most commonly used linguistic feature. By using "you" and "your" the writer brings the reader into the text. Other than this, inclusive "we" is the frequently used reader pronoun device that binds readers and writers together. These devices send the gesture of membership by textually connecting the reader and the writer having the same understandings and goals.

Directives

Many acts are performed through directives in an authoritative form. They are exercised to indicate the reader's presence and show the reader's active engagement. Directives are performed through imperatives (like consider, note, and imagine) and obligations (like must and ought to) indicating the writer's opinion of requirement or significance (Hyland, 2002). Textual acts guide readers to consult another text or a later part of the text. Predicative adjectives are usually used to perform textual acts.

Physical acts inculcate the reader on how to accomplish a concrete act in the real world. e.g., should, must, ought to, etc. Physical acts are accomplished through these models of obligations.

Cognitive acts inspire the writers to guide the reader in inferring the idea or to make them attentive by using words like to consider, note, etc. Cognitive acts are performed through imperatives.

Questions

Writers ask the question to indicate the reader's existence in the discourse. The writer asks questions to catch the attention of the reader. Questions arose to interest the reader and encourage him/her to interact with the writer in a conversational manner. Questions develop a type of "dialogic involvement" (Hyland 2002b). These are some of the most effective rhetorical strategies that the writer can use to engage the reader. Swales (1994) claims that questions are also a means of establishing a niche in research articles.

Personal Asides

Sometimes writers interrupt an argument and directly speak to the reader to pass comments on what has been uttered or proposed. Personal asides attempt to show interpersonal relationships. In fact, through personal asides, writers try to build an interpersonal relationship by giving their argument or passing comments in an indirect reader-writer interaction. It is simply an interference to indicate the affinity and interpersonal connection between the speaker and the listener.

Appeals to Shared Knowledge

This feature points the reader "to recognize something as familiar or accepted". The writer

uses words like "by the way" to convince the reader about some opinions. Writers can interact with the readers to engage him/her in the discourse to agree with the writer's viewpoint by making certain polite choices that express solidarity with the reader.

Research Questions

- What are the Engagement features used in the Pakistani English newspaper business discourse?
- How are the Interactional Engagement features differentially used in the Business News and Business Articles of Pakistani English business newspapers?

Methodology

The researcher has used the mixed method approach for this research. Both qualitative and quantitative analysis have been used in this research. Each interactional engagement feature has been identified from its concordances, and then it has been included in one of the five categories of interactional metadiscourse engagement features. This study shows how the writer engages and convinces the reader to achieve the logical consequence.

Data Collection and Development of Corpus

The stages involved in the development of a business newspaper corpus are discussed in the following sections.

Data Collection

This research includes data from a prominent Pakistani business newspaper. Data has been collected from the business news of newspapers like The Nation, The Business Recorder, The Daily Times and The Dawn. Business columns have been collected from various business article writers like Dr Pervaiz Tahir, Ishrat Hussain, Kamal Manoo, Shahid Javed Burki, Dr Akmal Hussain, Dr Ashfaq H Khan, and Shahid Kardar.

Development of Corpus

The total corpus size of the business corpus used for this study was 1 million words. This corpus consisted of two text types, i.e., business articles (0.65 million) and business news (0.45 million). To collect this data, the researcher gathered the data in a soft form from the sites of newspapers and copied the news and articles on an "MS Word" file. One thing that is very important while developing the corpus is one has to change the file type from "MS Word" to "txt" or "plain text" after that one can save the file. This is necessary because the software cannot recognize any other file type.

Interactional Metadiscourse

The model of interpersonal metadiscourse was introduced by Ken Hyland (2005). According to him (2005) there are two dimensions of interpersonal metadiscourse, one is interactional, and the other is interactive. Interpersonal metadiscourse is further categorized into two parts that are "stance and engagement". Our focus is engagement, including questions, reader pronouns, appeals to shared knowledge, personal asides, and directives.

Engagement Features

Unlike stance features, engagement features are related to the reader's attention and presence. Engagement is the textual approach of bringing the writer's identity into the text, interactively. Engagement features help writers to engage with the readers and negotiate their existence in the given text. Hyland (2005) gave all the engagement features in one list. He has not categorized these features. This list includes 84 words. The researcher has categorized these words in directives, reader pronouns, appeals to shared knowledge, questions, and personal asides based on definitions. There are five main engagement features (Hyland, 2005).

1. Reader pronouns.
2. Appeals to shared knowledge.
3. Directives
4. Personal asides.

5. Questions.

Research Tools

The researcher has used "AntConc 3.4.4" to explore the engagement features. The software has Many other options such as N/Grams, collocation, concordance plot, keyword list, and file view. In this project, the researcher used the keyword list option and concordance option. Concordance is used to find all the occurrences of the words in context, and the keyword list tells us about the frequency and word type.

Results and Discussion

The "AntConc 3.4.4" software was used to discover the frequencies of use of Engagement markers in both corpora, i.e., business news and business articles. The detail of the analysis is given in the following sections.

Reader Pronoun

Reader pronoun is the most used Engagement feature that is used to bring the reader into the text. The use of "you" and "you are" are the clear terms in the text which appeal to the reader to come into the discourse. The most binding force which attracts the reader is the use of inclusive "we". It gives an indication of the solidarity and closeness between the writer and the reader. Furthermore, inclusive "we, our, and us" raises the reader's status up to the level of the writer. The following table (Table 1) gives the frequency of reader pronouns in the business news corpus and business articles corpus.

Table 1

Readers' Pronouns in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Top Reader Pronouns in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Top Reader Pronouns in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized Frequency in Business Articles
1	We	385	962.5	We	776	1295.92
2	Our	202	505	Our	704	1175.68
3	You	98	245	You	115	192.05
4	Your	68	170	Us	110	183.7
5	Us	51	127.5	Let us	50	83.5
6	Let us	34	85	Your	48	80.16

Discussion

The above-stated list presents the list of reader pronouns in the corpus of business news and articles. Hyland (2005) has presented all reader pronouns in a single list. The researcher has sorted out the words of reader pronouns from Hyland's (2005) list and found out the frequency of reader pronouns in both corpora. It is noted that the most commonly employed reader pronoun in the business news corpus is "we" and its normalized frequency is 962.5; similarly, the least used reader pronoun is "let us" and its normalized frequency is 85. The most used reader pronoun in business articles is also "we" and its normalized frequency is 1295.92 and the least used is "your" and its normalized frequency is 80.16. "we, our, you" are at 1st, 2nd, and 3rd number in both corpora. "Your" is at the fourth number in its frequency use in business news corpus and at the sixth number in its frequency use in business articles. "Us" is fifth in the list of news and fourth in articles. "Let us" is sixth in news and fifth in articles.

Directives

Directives, as suggested by the name, are the linguistic forms that function to direct the reader during the process of reading. Like imperatives, they are characterized by the use of linguistic expressions like add, allow, consider, and note. Sometimes certain obligatory modals like must, should, ought to, etc., and the writer also employs predicative adjectives to guide the reader through the reading process.

Cognitive Acts

Cognitive acts bring the reader to infer an idea or to make them attentive by using words like to consider or to note etc. Imperatives come under this heading.

Table 2

Directives (Cognitive Acts) in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Cognitive Acts in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Cognitive Acts in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized Frequency in Business Articles
1	Imagine	2	5	Imagine	4	10
2	Suppose	1	2.5	Suppose	4	10
3	think about	1	2.5	Think about	1	2.5

Discussion

The above-stated list indicates different cognitive acts in both corpora. "Imagine" is at the top of the list in both corpora. All the words in cognitive acts are in the same position. "Suppose, think about" are at the 2nd and 3rd number respectively in both corpora.

Physical Acts

Physical acts guide the readers about the nature and the process of physical action. Physical acts are performed using the model of obligations, also known as the necessity model. Examples of physical acts are as follows (Table 3).

Table 3

Directives (Physical acts) in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Physical Acts in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Physical Acts in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized Frequency in Business Articles
1	should	284	710	Should	490	818.3
2	Must	98	245	Need to	342	571.14
3	Need to	67	167.5	Have to	217	362.39
4	Have to	63	157.5	Must	205	342.35

Discussion

The above-given table shows that there are four different modal verbs that can be used to make the reader perform any physical action. It is found that the most widely used physical act in both corpora is "should" and its normalized frequency in the business news corpus and business articles corpus is 710 and 818, respectively. "Must" is the second number in its use in the business news corpus and the fourth number in the business articles corpus. "Need to" is the third most frequently used modal in the business news corpus; however, in the corpus of business articles, it is the second most frequently used modal. Similarly, "have to" is the fourth number in the business news corpus and the third number in the corpus of the business articles.

Textual Act

Textual acts attract the attention of the reader to some other part of the text or images like pictures or figures. Textual acts are performed by using predicative adjectives. In the list presented by Hyland (2005), there are only two words that come in the category of the textual act.

Table 4

Directives (Textual acts) in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Textual Acts in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Textual Acts in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized Frequency in Business Articles
1	See	4	10	See	14	23.38
2	Look at	2	5	Look at	7	11.369

Discussion

The most widely used textual act in the whole corpus is "see" and its normalized frequency is 10; similarly, the second most used directive of the textual act is "look at" and its normalized frequency is 5. There are many words in the list presented by Hyland (2005) but only two words come under the heading of the textual act. The main characteristic of the textual act is that they have the features of a positive Politeness strategy.

Appeals to shared knowledge

This feature makes the reader relate to some shared knowledge. For instance, the writer uses words like "of course", "by the way", etc., to convince the reader about some opinion. The following table (Table 5) gives the frequency of use of 'appeals to shared knowledge' in the corpus of business news and business articles.

Table 5

Appeals to Shared Knowledge in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Appeals to Shared Knowledge in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Appeals to Shared Knowledge in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized frequency in business articles
1	By the way	2	5	By the way	14	23.38

Discussion

In Hyland's (2005) proposed list of metadiscourse features, only one word "by the way" is given as an "appeal to shared knowledge". The normalized frequency of "appeals to shared knowledge" in business news and articles is 5 and 23.38, respectively. The frequency of business articles is more than that of business news and this is because in business articles, writers can involve the readers with something already familiar to both reader and the writer by using words like "by the way" in the text. In contrast, in business news writers only communicate the news, and due to the nature of the current and updated content in the news the writers rarely use any of the Engagement markers that have an "appeal to shared knowledge".

Personal Asides

Personal asides are the devices that allow the writer to pass comments or directly interact with the reader about some argument under discussion. One can say that the writer uses

personal asides to pass a comment or to say something about what has already been said. Through personal asides, writers try to give their interpersonal opinion in an indirect reader-writer interaction. As it is the interactional metadiscourse feature of engagement, its purpose is to show that both reader and writer are engaged in the text.

Table 5

Personal Asides in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Personal Asides in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Personal Asides in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized frequency in business articles
1	( )	352	880	( )	598	998.66

Discussion

The parentheses are generally used when the writer wants to put a personal comment or additional remark regarding any proposition in the text. The data shows that personal asides are more common in the corpus of business articles than that in the corpus of business news. This is because the nature of the content given in the business articles requires writers to make the text more reliable, authentic, and expert. Therefore, the writers of business articles try to establish their rapport by frequently giving personal asides.

Questions

Questions are asked by the writer for engaging the reader in the text. Questions require a dialogic involvement. As the reader cannot respond to these questions like a real-time conversation, most of the time these questions are rhetorical in nature. Swales (1994) argues that questions play a significant role in establishing a niche in the research article. The following table (Table 6) shows the frequency of questions in business news and articles.

Table 6

Questions in the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Rank	Questions in Pakistani Business News	Frequency in Business News	Normalized Frequency in Business News	Questions in Pakistani Business Articles	Frequency in Business Articles	Normalized frequency in business articles
1	?	205	512.5	?	418	698.06

Discussion

Hyland (2005) gives the punctuation mark of the question "?" to represent this engagement marker. The data shows that the normalized frequency of questions in business articles is more than that of business news. This is

Because, in articles, writers ask short

questions in the text to improve the dialogic involvement of the reader in the text. Its purpose is to grasp the reader's attention towards the text and interactively advance the argument.

The following chart indicates the percentage use of Engagement markers in both corpora.
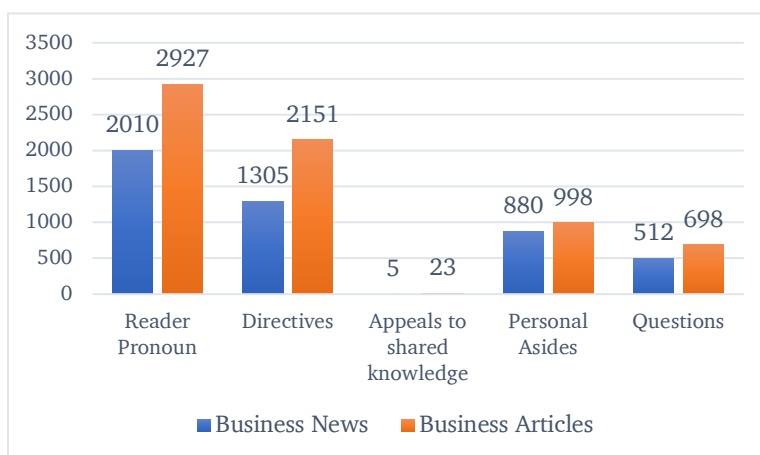
Table 7

Comparison of the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Engagement Feature (Per Million Words)	Business News	Business Articles
Reader Pronoun	2010	2927
Directives	1305	2151
Appeals to shared knowledge	5	23
Personal Asides	880	998
Questions	512	698

Figure 2

Comparison of the Corpus of Business News and Business Articles

Conclusion

All interactional Engagement features are used more frequently in business articles than the business news. This is because in business articles the subject matter of the discussion allows the writer to use Engagement features more frequently to engage their readers in the text. Furthermore, the use of Engagement markers produces a more interactive and authentic version of the text, and this makes business discussions on the survey analyses, companies' performance, and market opinions look more genuine and realistic. Through the use of Engagement markers, the writer makes the text more interpersonal, which helps him/her to win the trust of the reader. This interpersonal and interactive relation is much needed in business articles and therefore, we find that the use of Engagement features like reader pronouns, personal asides, directives, questions, and appeal to shared knowledge, is more frequent for business articles than business news.

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