The use of metadiscourse markers in applied linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study aimed to investigate how the metadiscourse markers are used in Applied Linguistic research proposals written by

Vietnamese MA students. Besides, it also examines what the most and least common types of metadiscourse markers are used in this kind of proposal. The study used a corpus consisting of Applied Linguistic research proposals written by a total of 20 students. The analysis of the type and frequency of metadiscourse markers used in the selected research proposals was based on Hyland's (2005) model. With the support of the concordance computer program, namely Antconc, the occurrence of each metadiscourse marker found was calculated to find out the results. The finding of the study showed that interactive markers are more commonly used than interactional markers in Applied Linguistic research proposals. It is also seen that transition markers are the most common type of metadiscourse markers, while evidential markers have the lowest frequency. This can imply that Vietnamese students prioritize the interactive metadiscourse markers over the interactional metadiscourse markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals due to the fact that it is the easiest way for the author to organize the text in order to make readers comprehend the whole text.

1. Introduction

In recent years, there has been an increasing interest in metadiscourse in the area of discourse analysis, which refers to the ways speakers and writers use words to mark the direction and purpose of a text. Derived from the Greek words for "beyond" and "discourse," metadiscourse can be broadly defined as "discourse about discourse" or as "those aspects of texts that affect the relations of authors to readers" (Crismore, 1989, p. 35). Hui and Na (2008) referred to metadiscourse as text elements that comment about the main information of a text, but which themselves contain only inessential information. In other words, a sentence without metadiscourse markers is not grammatically incorrect, and metadiscourse markers do not change the meaning of a sentence. However, using metadiscourse markers makes a text more friendly to the readers, and the writers can reach their audience more easily.

Needless to say, metadiscourse markers have been considered a very important part of academic writing in general and in Applied Linguistics research proposals in particular. For some writers, using metadiscourse markers seems to be a habit that sometimes writers themselves do not even notice. According to Kopple (1985), metadiscourse helps writers express their

personalities, their evaluations of and attitudes towards material; it also helps to show their choice of communication situation and indicate their expectation of readers' response. Hyland and Tse (2004) wrote, "metadiscourse is recognized as an important means of facilitating communication, supporting a writer's position and building a relationship with an audience" (p. 159). With that in mind, metadiscourse markers have become more and more important in academic writing as they promote and facilitate language use. In fact, many researchers have conducted a lot of studies to find out the use of metadiscourse markers in different kinds of areas.

Hyland (2005) classified metadiscourse markers into two main categories, which are "interactive" and "interactional" metadiscourse. The first category, interactive, refers to "the writer's management of information flow" to help guide the reader through the text (Hyland & Tse, 2004). Interactive markers include transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential markers, and code glosses. Transitions link ideas by conjunctive adverbs (*however, so, nevertheless*) and prepositional phrases (*in addition, in contrast, in fact*). Frame markers are connectors that make the text flow (*first, next, finally*). Endophoric markers help readers understand the text better (*noted above, see figure, as follows*). Evidential markers introduce information in other parts of the text (*according to X, X states that*), and code glosses are used to "supply additional information by rephrasing, explaining or elaborating what has been said, to ensure the reader recovers the writer's intended meaning" (Hyland, 2005, p. 52) (*namely, in other words, such as*). The interactional markers, on the other hand, refer to the writer's "explicit interventions to comment on and evaluate material" (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 168) to engage the reader in the argument. Interactional markers are classified into hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions. While hedges refer to the writer's degree of certainty (*it seems, perhaps, I think*), boosters emphasize a writer's certainty in proposition (*indeed, definitely, clearly*). Attitude markers express a writer's affective attitude towards the propositional content of the text (*unfortunately, surprisingly, I agree*). Engagement markers are used to build a relationship with the readers (*consider, note that, you can see that*). Finally, self-mentions show the writer's presence in the text (*I, we, our*).

Many studies on metadiscourse showed that good essays contain more metadiscourse markers than weak essays (Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007). So far, however, there has been little discussion about research investigating metadiscourse markers in research proposals written by Vietnamese students doing their master's course in Applied Linguistics. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the use of Interactive and Interactional markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students. Within the context of Vietnam, findings from the current study contribute to the understanding of the use of metadiscourse markers in research proposals written by Vietnamese students.

The main questions in this paper are:

1) How are the metadiscourse markers used in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students?

2) What are the most and least common types of metadiscourse markers used in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students?

This paper is divided into four parts. The first part provides a general overview of the study. In this part, we establish the importance of the topic, as well as present background information and mention the context of Applied Linguistic research proposals written by Vietnamese MA

students. Besides that, this part gives general descriptions of the literature on metadiscourse and metadiscourse markers as well as the general reference of previous studies. The second part presents in detail the research method, including the size of the corpus used, data collection, and analysis procedures. This study used the corpus consisting of Applied Linguistics research proposals written by 20 students. Hyland's (2005) model was employed for the investigation. The next part deals with the data collected based on the software AntConc. The findings of the study, as well as the conclusions and recommendations, are given in the last part.

2. Literature review

The term metadiscourse is defined by different researchers. Derived from the Greek words for "beyond" and "discourse," Crismore (1989) uses the term metadiscourse to refer to "discourse about discourse," or "aspects of texts that affect the relations of authors to readers" (p. 35). Along the same line, Hyland and Tse (2004) have provided that authors can take advantage of using metadiscourse markers to communicate, support his or her position, and even build a relationship with the audience. According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse markers are used to express the writer's awareness of the reader as well as his or her need by elaborating, clarifying, guiding, and interacting. Making the readers or audiences aware of texts only happens when the author has a clear, reader-oriented reason for doing so. By another saying, the more skillful the author is in handling metadiscourse markers, the closer the author can reach his or her audience through clear guidance and elaboration. In the literature, the term metadiscourse marker tends to be used to refer to linguistic elements that writers (or authors) apply to not only exchange information but also express their attitudes, personalities, as well as expectations by addressing and interacting with readers (or audiences) of the message (Hyland, 2005). With that in mind, metadiscourse markers have become more and more essential in academic writing as they support and enable language use.

Depending on the functions, metadiscourse makers are classified into three categories which are based on their functions, namely ideational, interpersonal, and textual, as follows:

- The ideational function aims at conveying the author's thinking to his or her readers.

- Interpersonal function deals with the way in which language is established, maintained, and given signals of the relations between the author and reader.

- The textual function of language focuses on creating logical written and spoken texts that are related to both audiences and context.

While Halliday (1994) has pointed out three different metadiscourse marker categories, Hyland (2005) shows in his studies that there are only two metadiscourse markers, namely "interactive" and "interactional".

According to Hyland (2005), the first category, interactive metadiscourse, illustrated in Table 1, mentions "the writer's management of information flow" in order to guide the reader through texts.

Table 1

An interactive model of metadiscourse markers (Hyland, 2005)

Category	Function	Examples
Transitions	link ideas by conjunctive adverbs and prepositional phrases	*however, so, nevertheless* *in addition, in contrast, in fact*
Frame markers	connectors that make the text in the flow	*first, next, and finally*
Endophoric markers	help readers understand the text better	*noted above, see figure, as follows*
Evidential markers	introduce information in other parts of the text	*according to X, X states that*
Code Glosses	used to "supply additional information by rephrasing, explaining or elaborating what has been said, to ensure the reader recovers the writer's intended meaning."	*namely, in other words, such as*

Source: Adapted from Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing, by Hyland, 2005, p. 49. Copyright 2005 by NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Hyland and Tse (2004) also indicate that interactional markers, in contrast, help the writers to explicit interventions to comment on and evaluate materials in order to appeal to readers to the argument. Interactional model is classified in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2

An interactional model of metadiscourse markers (Hyland, 2005)

Category	Function	Examples
Hedges	refer to the writer's degree of certainty	*It seems, perhaps, I think*
Boosters	emphasize a writer's certainty in the proposition	*indeed, definitely, clearly*
Attitude markers	express a writer's affective attitude towards the propositional content of the text	*unfortunately, surprisingly, I agree*
Engagement markers	used to build a relationship with the readers	*consider, note that you can see that*
Self-mentions	show the writer's presence in the text	*I, we, our*

Source: Adapted from Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing, by Hyland, 2005, p. 49. Copyright 2005 by NY: Bloomsbury Publishing.

Up to now, a number of researchers have big concerns about metadiscourse markers in general and the use of metadiscourse markers in Applied Linguistics in particular. Pasaribu (2017) did a study on gender differences and the use of metadiscourse markers in writing essays. With the aim of investigating metadiscourse markers in academic essays written by male and female students by collecting 20 writings from each sex, the author found that gender differences influence the use of metadiscourse markers. The study also revealed that genre is not the only factor that determines how writers express themselves. Pasaribu (2017) still has limitations of focusing on

the discipline of the essays and the need for authors' cultural backgrounds. Seyyedrezaie and Vahedi (2017), who are on the same line, made a comparison of the way native English and native Persian writers use different interpersonal stance-taking metadiscourse markers in their articles. Like Pasaribu's (2017) study, there remain some limitations as they should extend to studying age, ethnic background, and social class besides genre. Another study, which was carried out by Boshrabadi, Biria, and Zavari (2014) on the use of Textual and Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers in English and Persian Newspaper articles, concludes that the American group tends to use these items slightly more than Persian writers. Some researchers, such as Banaruee, Mohammadian, and Zare-Behtash (2017) had an interest in studying the use of metadiscourse markers in pure mathematics textbooks.

It can be seen that several studies have documented metadiscourse markers. However, there are few studies on Applied Linguistic research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students. Hence, in this study, the authors want to investigate the use of metadiscourse markers and their functions in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students. Within the background of Vietnam, the research is necessary from the authors' point of view. If it is successful, it will contribute to the understanding of the use of metadiscourse markers in writing research proposals.

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

This study is carried out in order to find the way metadiscourse markers are used in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students as well as the most and the least common types of metadiscourse markers used by these students. A collection of research proposals, which were originally written in English, were purposively selected. The corpus was taken from the research proposals of 20 Vietnamese MA students who study in the applied linguistics program. These Applied Linguistics research proposals were used for the thesis defense. The corpora contained about 103,792 words with 7,250 word types. The markers were highlighted and counted using Antconc, a free concordance and analysing tool, by drawing on Hyland's model of metadiscourse markers (2005). The collected data were elaborated using a descriptive qualitative approach. Both figures and numbers are explained through verbal means. Following is the table indicating the corpus for investigation.

Table 3

Vietnamese MA students' general information

No.			N = 20	
			F	%
1	Gender	Male	6	30
		female	14	70
2	Age	20 - 30	5	25
		31 - 40	11	55
		Over 40	4	20

No.			N = 20	
			F	**%**
3	Working institution	Elementary	1	5
		Secondary	6	30
		High school	1	5
		University	12	60
4	Years of teaching English experience	01 - 05	3	15
		05 - 10	6	30
		more than 10	11	55

Source: The data are from compilation of unpublished Applied Liguistics research proposals of Vietnamese MA students.

3.2. Procedures

The analysis of the type and frequency of metadiscourse markers used in the selected research proposals was based on Hyland's (2005) model. According to this model, all markers from the collection of data were separated into two classes: interactive metadiscourse markers and interactional metadiscourse markers. We looked for metadiscourse markers in the corpus based on the list of 498 metadiscourse markers (Hyland, 2005). These metadiscourse markers were then analysed and classified into the various metadiscourse subcategories including transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, code glosses, hedges, boosters, attitudes markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. After being identified and classified into distinctive categories, the number of each marker was recorded. The aim was to find how the metadiscourse markers were used in Applied Linguistics research proposals. In order to answer the research question of what the most and least common types of metadiscourse markers were used in Applied Linguistics research proposals, we also compared the numbers of various markers.

3.3. Theoretical framework

In the present study, the taxonomy of metadiscourse markers proposed by Hyland (2005) was adopted. Since this classification of metadiscourse markers is more comprehensive than others, the researchers aimed to choose this model for raw data analysis. Hyland (2005) distinguished two types of metadiscourse markers as follows:

1- Interactive metadiscourse markers, which consist of five subcategories:

- Transitional markers

- Frame markers

- Endophoric markers

- Evidentials

- Code glosses

2- Interactional metadiscourse marker consists of five subcategories:

- Hedges

- Boosters

-     Attitude markers

-     Engagement markers

-     Self-mentions

3.4. Data analysis

With the support of the concordance computer program, Antconc, the occurrence of each metadiscourse marker found was calculated to indicate which type of metadiscourse marker was used more commonly in Applied Linguistics research proposals. Following that, the collected data was analysed quantitatively through descriptive statistics. Finally, based on the analysis of collected data, we attempt to explain how metadiscourse markers were used as well as their frequency in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students.

4. Results and discussion

To realize how metadiscourse markers were used in Applied Linguistics research proposals written by Vietnamese MA students, as well as what are the most and least common types of metadiscourse markers used carefully, metadiscourse markers of each category were counted individually in order to calculate the strict frequency of their happenings. Table 4 indicates the number and frequency of occurrence of interactive and interactional metadiscourse according to Hyland and Tse's (2004) categorization.

Table 4

Frequency of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse

	Raw number	**%**
Interactive markers	6,885	62.1
Interactional markers	4,202	37.9
Total	11,087	100

The results of this study indicated that more interactive markers were used than interactional markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals. The frequency use of interactive markers was 6,885 words, while the number of interactional markers used was 4,202 words. Interactive metadiscourse markers account for 62.1%, which is much higher than interactional metadiscourse at the rate of 37.9%. This finding is similar to the study of Mohamed and Rashid (2017), which shows that writers applied more interactive markers than interactional ones. This study also produced results that corroborated the findings of another metadiscourse study conducted by Rustipa (2014). However, these findings are different from the study of Tan and Eng (2014), which found that more instances of interactional discourse markers occurred in Malaysian undergraduates' writings compared with interactive discourse markers.

As was mentioned, interactive markers are more frequent than interactional markers. It can be said that Applied Linguistics research proposals require arguments through logical relationships among sentences. Every statement must be based on a previously proven statement. In fact, without proof, a statement has no value in a research proposal. Mohamed and Rashid (2017) proved in their study that using more interactive metadiscourse can help readers comprehend the entire proposals with the assistance of transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. On the other hand, the lower frequency use of interactional

metadiscourse in Applied Linguistics research proposals involves the use of hedges, engagement markers, boosters, self-mention, and attitude markers to attract the readers's attention while they are reading the text.

Table 5

Categories of interactive markers in AL

Interactive Markers		AL	
		Raw number	**%**
Code Glosses		496	7.1
Evidential markers		147	2.1
Endophoric markers		554	8
Frame markers	Sequencing	695	10
	Label stages	54	0.8
	Announce goals	482	6.9
Transitions		4,457	64.7
Total		**6,885**	**100**

Table 5 shows that the transition markers (e.g., *and, also, but, so*), which indicate relationships between arguments, are considerably highly used. They are recorded with 4,457 words, which accounts for 64.7% more than half of the total interactive metadiscourse. With the use as a linker to connect nouns, noun phrases, or clauses, as well as an additor, *and* is the most preferable with 3,327 times. Hinkel (2002) claims that Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, and Arabic students significantly overused phrase-level transitions such as *and, but, yet*, and so on, compared with an English native speaker group, who often produce extremely long, complex sentences. There is no doubt that Vietnamese MA students in this research used transitions at a very high frequency, especially 3,327 times.

These idioms will be analyzed *and* contrasted to show the cultural, syntactic, *and* semantic similarities *and* differences between English idioms *and* those in Vietnamese. (P.7)

The rise *and* fall of the voice combined with the different pitches. (P.6)

We had an enormous *and* fantastic meal today. (P.11)

They are Linguistic factors, Social factors, *and* Social Dimensions. (P.12)

The second most common markers used by Vietnamese MA students are *Frame markers,* which are used to mention the sequence and help structure the local and global organization. Some markers, such as "*first, second, next, then*" are the most popular. *Second* seems to be preferable to *secondly*. It is counted 85 times, while *secondly* is only 12 times.

First, contributions of the visual and picture … (P.14)

First, Chesterman (1998) divided the classification of strategies ... (P.18)

Second, books for children, both historically and currently, are illustrated (Nodelman, 1988). (P.14)

Second, English is a compulsory subject to study in the school. (P.12)

Secondly, Secondly, the research ensured the representativeness of the study by selecting teachers from four universities in equal proportion. (P.4)

Secondly, it discusses the previous studies on the related matter, both foreign and domestic ones … (P.12)

Not only being used as sequencing words, frame markers are used to summarize the author's idea, such as *In conclusion* (06 times), In brief (once), In short (04 times), In sum (03 times), In summary (03 times).

In conclusion, different though the ways of describing are… (P.7)

In conclusion, this study particularly aimed to investigate … (P.13)

In brief, the researcher has a variety of ways …. (P.16)

In short, after the topic of the thesis is chosen …. (P.17)

In sum, contrastive analysis and qualitative research method … (P.7)

In summary, with these above definitions, the researcher is of the opinion … (P8)

Moreover, a number of common types of metadiscourse markers such as "*(in) chapter X, (in) part X, (in) section X*" are found in Applied Linguistics research proposals of Vietnamese MA students.

……… interpreted *in Chapter 3-* Literature review … (P.15)

In Chapter 2, theoretical definitions, conceptual framework, and previous studies … (P.1)

Thanks to the concordance computer program, it can be seen that frame markers are used more frequently (17.7%) than endophoric markers (8%) and code glosses (7.1%). *Example X* in the endophoric markers group might be the best choice for most Vietnamese MA students to show evidence or examples with a frequency of 99 times. It is surprising that there is no presence of *Fig.X* and *X earlier.*

Example: CAN ask simple questions about a menu and understand simple answers … (P.10)

For example, among others, Stern (1983) addressed the Direct Method … (P.4)

In the group of Code Glosses, *such as* is used 122 times to give lists or examples.

……. uses language in a nonliteral way, *such as* a metaphor or synecdoche, or in a structured or unusual way, *such as* anaphora or chiasmus, or that employs sounds, *such as* alliteration or assonance, to achieve a rhetorical effect. (P.17)

The lowest frequency of use of interactive metadiscourse belongs to evidential with only 147 words, recorded as 2.1%, in which *cited* takes 20 times, and *quoted* takes only once.

………choral music *cited* in the biomedical literature … (P.11)

As *cited* in Filippi (2016), there is a tendency …. (P.12)

…….. *cited* in Ellis (2003, p. 84) among others who argued … (P.4)

…….an analysis method from Corder as *quoted* by Haryanto (2007) ... (P11)

Table 6

Categories of interactional markers in AL

Interactional Markers	AL	
	Raw number	%
Hedges	1,159	27.6
Boosters	734	17.5
Attitude markers	268	6.4
Engagement markers	1,437	34.2
Self-mentions	604	14.3
Total	**4,202**	**100**

Besides the wide use of interactive metadiscourse markers in research papers, interactional ones, which are applied in order to offer a credible representation of the author's self and his work by claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating material, and acknowledging alternative views, is a defining feature of successful academic writing in English. Similar to interactive metadiscourse category, interactional metadiscourse is also classified into five sub-categories including Hedges, Boosters, Attitude markers, Engagement markers, and Self-mentions.

In Abdollahzadeh's (2003) study, he found that native Anglo-American writers tend to use significantly higher instances of boosters and attitude markers in the discussion sections of published Applied Linguistics research papers than their Iranian counterparts. Another study carried out by Vassileva's (2001) showed that Bulgarian academics used far fewer hedges and more boosters when writing papers in English. Yakhontova (2002), in contrast, revealed that Ukrainian/Russian speakers were far more likely to use self-referential pronouns and evaluative expressions than their English counterparts when writing both in English and in Ukrainian.

Unlike Anglo-American writers such as Iranian, Bulgarian, Ukrainian/Russian speakers, the result of the study, which is shown in Table 6 reveals that engagement markers, which are a heterogeneous group of devices used to address the readers directly, has been used in proposals written by Vietnamese MA students. They used words such as *find, allow, must, demonstrate,* and so on. Engagement markers are counted up to 1,437 times or over 34%. In this group, *Find* is used popularly by almost all students in this research 102 times. Some of the other markers overused are *should* (86 times), *use* (287 times), *order* (70 times), and *must* (55 times).

…. usually easier to *find* a Vietnamese idiom … (P.11)

……. researching proverbs to *find* new ways of researching … (P.17)

….. it *should* be clear from the context …. (P.11)

……a practical research *should* be conducted … (P.1)

…….. it may be appropriate or necessary to *use* a more specific word … (P.11)

I *use* a camera recorder to save files … (P.12)

……Vietnamese translation *should* add the word ... (P.11)

Hedges are common in academic writing as a means of conveying indirectness, opening a rhetorical space for alternative views, and avoiding responsibility for the certainty of a proposition. They are in the second position with 1,159 words, accounting for 27.6%. In this group, *About* is the most remarkable, with 231 times.

Their own understanding *about* a story or concept

The next list is *about* articles related to his achievements and typical works

(Vietnamese MA students' Corpus, concordance *about*)

Boosters such as *certainly, demonstrated, really,* and so on, which are used to emphasize or reinforce truth value, are counted as 17.5%. In this group, markers such as adverbs, verbs, and adverbs such as *certain* (36 times), *always* (30 times), *know* (53 times), *think* (25 times), and *sure* (13 times) are used quite a lot by Vietnamese MA students in order to amplify and strengthen the idea.

…… the translator has to *know* almost perfectly … (P.11)

Beginners of foreign language *always* face difficulties ... (P.11)

To find out why *certain* errors occurs … (P.2)

In order to make *sure* some the reliability and validity of the result … (P.16)

Self-mentions only take 14.3%. Findings of the use of self-mentions in this study show that self-mentions seem to be not desirable by Vietnamese MA students in particular. They are often believed to favour collectivist ways of expressing identity or opinion. Almost all of the non-native writers in this study used significantly more first-person pronouns *I* 234 times. *We* are followed with 134 times. There is no presence of *mine*, *the author's*, *the writer's*.

For those reasons, *I* adopt qualitative methods … (P.12)

During the data collection process, *I* record some mp3 files …. (P.12)

We aim to discover its value, aesthetics, and beauty ... (P.17)

Finally yet important is Attitude markers. Markers such as *agree, important, unexpected, unfortunately,* and so on seem to be used at least with having only 268 words, accounting for 6.4%. This fact helps us see that Vietnamese MA students are not fancy on Attitude Markers. Some markers like a*ppropriate* appeared 40 times; *agree* is followed with 11 times. *Amazed, amazing, amazingly, desirably,* and *disappointed* do not appear in any paper written by Vietnamese MA students.

…. competence in *appropriate*, contextualized communicative language ... (P.1)

……their educational experience is *appropriate* for their needs ... (P.10)

….. they definitely *agree* that his works have a huge impact on humankind …. (P.8)

Based on the result of the study, it is evident that Vietnamse MA students use more interactive markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals. This may help the readers grasp and understand the text in a coherent and logical manner. It can be said that using transition markers (but, and, thus) and frame markers (first, then, finally) is the easiest way to organise sentences and ideas. Besides, in research proposals, writers frequently use evidential to refer to the works of other researchers. This is why the frequency of evidential markers which belong to interactive markers

appears more in this study. In fact, as it has been acknowledged in similar studies (Banaruee et al., 2017; Mohamed & Rashid, 2017), interactive markers help to guide the reader through the text and lead the readers to understand through the application of transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, and code glosses.

On the other hand, the frequency of use of interactional markers in the corpus is lower because it relates to the writers' skill in attracting readers by engaging them in discussion of the text. In case the writers are not native speakers, the effective use of hedges (*perhaps*, *possible*, *tend to*), boosters (*in fact*, *believe*, *definitely*), engagement markers (*consider*, *note*, *refer*), attitude markers (*expected*, *unfortunately*, *surprisingly*) and self-mention (*I*, *we*, *us*) often depends on the writing skills of the writers. In a research study by Hyland (1998), the author shows the use of logical connectives, endophoric markers, frame markers, code glosses and evidential (55.1% of total metadiscourse), and emphatics, hedges, relational markers, attitude markers and person markers (44.9% of total metadiscourse). The percentage gap is fairly small. In regard to these findings, experienced writers are expected to write with more interactional metadiscourse as compared to inexperienced writers. Mohamed and Rashid (2017) also agree that the use of interactional metadiscourse depends on the writers' writing skills, which most non-native speakers do not yet fully master if their essays are to be compared with professional writers or native speakers.

5. Conclusion

This study reveals that interactive markers are more commonly used than interactional markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals. It is also seen that among interactive markers, Vietnamese MA students prefer using transition markers, in which "*and*" is the most occurrence. Frame markers take second place. They are used more than endophoric markers and code glosses, while evidential markers is the least common type of metadiscourse marker used in Applied Linguistics research proposals. This can be inferred that Vietnamese students prioritize the interactive metadiscourse markers over the interactional metadiscourse markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals because it is the easiest way to organise the text. The author wants to make the readers understand the whole text.

For interactional metadiscourse, engagement markers have a significantly high frequency. This means that MA students like using engagement markers (*find, allow, must, demonstrate, consider, show*) in their proposals to build a relationship with the readers. Hedges are the second most common occurrence. Among interactional markers, attitude markers have the lowest frequency. This can be implied that the nature of research proposals requires students to organise sentences and ideas properly more than concentrate on being critical and argumentative. Moreover, these proposals are written by non-native English speakers who are limited in writing's skill in foreign languages as well as in using interactional metadiscourse to present their ideas. Therefore, interactional metadiscourse is used less by Vietnamese MA students in Applied Linguistics research proposals.

A comparison between the frequencies of interactive markers and interactional markers shows that interactive markers have a higher presence than interactional markers in Applied Linguistics research proposals of Vietnamese MA students. Interactive markers take two-third of the total markers used in the proposals.

In conclusion, the frequency and variety of metadiscourse markers used by Vietnamese MA students in the Applied Linguistics research proposals suggest that it is essential to consider the

teaching of metadiscourse markers in foreign language acquisition. First, students need to be aware of the importance of cohesion and coherence in the text, and the only way to achieve this is through learning the functional roles of metadiscourse markers in different contexts. Second, experienced teachers should pay attention to the use of metadiscourse markers as they can contribute to the establishment of appropriate metadiscourse usage habits for students. Finally, the curriculum should address the use of metadiscourse markers to improve students' ability in writing skills.

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