

# The Expression of the Writer's Attitude in Undergraduate Textbooks and Research Articles

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## Abstract

*This paper draws on the theory of metadiscourse, which is viewed as a significant attempt to conceptualize the interpersonal aspects of language (especially in the model presented by Hyland). The analysis focuses on one metadiscursive category, attitude markers, and aims to compare the expression of the writer's attitude in two genres of academic discourse, undergraduate textbooks and research articles, within one discipline – applied linguistics. The paper sets out to investigate different functions of the attitude markers in the two genres, e.g. 'creating a research space' in research articles and text-organizing functions in textbooks. This reflects the different purposes and audiences of the two genres – the instructional goal of the textbook on one hand, and the more persuasive goal of the research article on the other. The results suggest that metadiscourse is not only used to organize discourse and negotiate interpersonal meanings, but it may also function as a persuasive tool – even in academic writing, which is traditionally regarded as field-dominated.*

*Keywords: attitude markers, metadiscourse, undergraduate textbook, research article, academic discourse*

## 1. Interpersonality in academic writing

Recent research into academic writing has largely acknowledged its interactive character. Hyland considers academic writing as an interactive accomplishment, adding that this view is “now well established” (“Directives” 215). The interactive approach to academic writing foregrounds the role of the author and the reader, seeing written texts as social

interactions in which readers and writers negotiate meaning. Mauranen speaks about an “interpersonal turn” in the analysis of academic writing in the early 1990s, when written academic discourse began to be systematically analyzed in terms of interaction between writers and readers, developing such concepts as hedging and metadiscourse (45–46). This development was influenced by theories of social constructionism, which is one of the best-known approaches to conceptualizing academic discourse in general (Hyland, *Academic Discourse* 11). Within this approach science is seen as a social and rhetorical activity, and scientific knowledge is regarded “primarily as a human product, made with locally situated cultural and material resources, rather than as simply the revelation of a pre-given order of nature” (Golinski xvii). Generally, social constructionism studies the role of people as social actors in the making of scientific knowledge (ibid.).

Hyland is one of the main proponents of the constructionist approach to studying academic discourse. He rejects the positivist approach which assumes that knowledge is built on an objective, universal foundation which assures its validity (Hyland, *Hedging*). This approach maintains that science aims to discover the truth about the natural world, which is found by means of empirically tested theories. If a theory is accepted, it is believed that it is true, or at least not yet falsified (Hyland, *Hedging* 81–82). Positivism denies the existence or intelligibility of forces or substances that go beyond facts and the laws ascertained by science (Abbagnano 710). It opposes any procedure of investigation that is not reducible to scientific method, and it assumes that science is not affected by contingent factors, such as language.

On the other hand there is the social constructionist approach, which underlines the role of context in the creation of knowledge, arguing that what is believed to be a scientific fact is rather a result of interpretation than an objective description. Everything we see and believe is already filtered through language and current theories. Scientists work in the communities existing in a particular time and place, and this intellectual climate determines the issues they investigate, the methods they use, the results they see, or the ways in which they record them (Hyland, *Academic discourse*). Constructionists reject the idea that a scientific theory serves to reflect or map reality in any direct or decontextualized manner. Science has not found any universal principles for the validation of theories; it cannot be understood as a set of objective truths about the world since there are often a number of interpretations of particular observations. Science can only provide theories which are empirically adequate, and acceptance of a theory only involves the belief that it is empirically adequate. (Gergen 266–267)

Therefore, social constructionism stresses the role of language in scientific knowledge. Language is not seen only as a means of transmitting ideas and theories, but generally as a tool shaping them or at least influencing which theories will be accepted. Language, knowledge and discourse community form “an inseparable matrix” (Hyland, *Hedging* 83). However, social constructionism is not relativism. Hyland insists that knowledge cannot be identified entirely with the language in which it is formulated; rather he emphasizes the role of a social group in the construction of scientific knowledge. Research is thus understood less as a search for truth than as a quest for agreement, since claims have to be accepted by other scientists before they are recognized as facts (Hyland, *Hedging* 83).

It seems that the social constructionist approach can provide an interesting perspective on the study of academic discourse (without embracing language relativism). Firstly,

it stresses the fact that academics do not work in a vacuum but exist in a social reality that provides a context for their work. The context generally imposes constraints on the research, influencing the problems investigated, the methods used or the results that are foregrounded. Secondly, the acceptance of theories takes place in discourse communities, as individual claims have to be reassessed by other scientists before they can be regarded as facts. This has important implications for the nature of academic discourse, e.g. its persuasive character, as recognized by Hyland.

## 2. Metadiscourse

Interpersonal strategies within academic discourse have been investigated using different theoretical frameworks, such as *stance* (Biber), *evaluation* (Hunston and Thompson), *appraisal* (Martin) or *positioning*. One of the significant attempts to conceptualize the interpersonal aspects of language is the model of metadiscourse, especially in the approach presented by Hyland (e.g. Hyland, *Metadiscourse*). Metadiscourse has a short but complex history<sup>1</sup>, and it is a somewhat controversial concept, partly due to the number of different approaches to it. The common aspect of a number of earlier definitions was their stress on the non-propositionality of metadiscourse; for example, Avon Crismore defined it as “linguistic material, written or spoken, which does not add anything to the propositional content” (Crismore et al. 40). However, this criterion has not proved to be satisfactory. Writers have sought theoretical support for metadiscourse in Halliday’s theory of metafunctions, or recently in Jakobson’s functions of language. The propositional content/metadiscourse distinction may serve as a starting point for exploring metadiscourse, but most researchers have adopted a functional approach in that they classify metadiscourse markers according to the functions they perform in a text.

Basically, it is possible to identify two approaches to metadiscourse – integrative and non-integrative – depending on whether it includes only text-organizing elements and elements referring to the text itself, or also the writer’s epistemic and affective attitude to the text and the interaction with the reader.<sup>2</sup> The present study takes an integrative approach (including both “textual” and “interpersonal” dimensions), and metadiscourse can thus be characterized as the linguistic resources that the writer uses to explicitly organize the text, to express his stance towards its content, and to interact with the reader (based on Hyland & Tse 157). This paper builds on my previous research into metadiscourse, which provides a more detailed overview of the concept, the two approaches and their advantages and disadvantages (Malčíková 77–95).

## 3. Aims and methods

This small-scale study focuses on one metadiscursive category, attitude markers, and aims to compare the expression of the writer’s attitude in two genres of academic discourse – the undergraduate textbook and the research article – within one discipline, applied linguistics. It is part of a larger research project aiming at the identification and description of metadiscursive features in the two genres, especially the undergraduate textbook, which has for a long time been sidelined by researchers.

The corpus consists of 7 undergraduate textbooks and 8 research articles, written by native speakers of English. They are all from one discipline, applied linguistics, in order to avoid the disciplinary variation in metadiscourse shown by previous studies. The textbooks were published between 1997 and 2010 and they are all “introductory” textbooks in the sense that they are regarded as introductions to linguistics or relevant linguistic disciplines. One or two chapters from each textbook were analyzed so that the total number of words would be approximately the same. The chapters were randomly chosen, but the introductory chapters were omitted because they have a special status; they were found to differ in many respects from the rest of the book (see Bondi, *Small corpora and language variation*). The corpus yielded 51,522 words altogether. The research articles were taken from two well-established journals, *English for Specific Purposes* and *Journal of Pragmatics*, published between 2002 and 2008. So far 8 articles have been analyzed, totalling 53,145 words. All the textbooks and the articles are single-authored.

In the original framework formulated by Hyland, attitude markers are defined as expressions “indicating the writer’s affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions. They convey surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, frustration and so on.” (*Metadiscourse* 53) While attitude in academic writing can be expressed through the grading of the ideational content, by the use of subordination, comparatives, punctuation, text location etc., most explicit metadiscourse signals include:

attitude verbs (*agree, prefer*)  
sentence adverbs (*unfortunately, hopefully*)  
adjectives (*appropriate, logical, remarkable*) (ibid.)

Such expressions foreground the writer and contribute to the construction of a credible disciplinary identity, as they often “signal the evaluator’s desire to identify with the standards and values of a particular field” (Hyland, *Disciplinary Identities* 81). Later, Hyland characterized attitude markers as follows: “Attitude markers [...] express the writer’s appraisal of propositional information, and convey surprise, obligation, agreement, importance and so on.” (*Disciplinary Identities* 180)

These definitions are somewhat general, and Hyland did not specify them further or go into more detail. Indeed, there are other, more elaborated conceptions of attitude, especially the framework proposed by Martin and White in their *Language of Evaluation* (2007). Their system of attitude involves three categories – Affect, Judgement and Appreciation. Affect (emotions) is concerned with registering positive or negative feelings: do we feel happy or sad? Judgement (ethics) concerns the attitude towards behaviour, which we admire or criticize. Appreciation (aesthetics) involves evaluations of semiotic and natural phenomena, according to the ways in which they are valued or not in a given field. Appreciation includes our ‘reactions’ to things (is it interesting or boring?), their ‘composition’ (is it balanced, logical, etc.), and their ‘value’ (how original, authentic or helpful it is). Hyland’s category of attitude markers partly corresponds with the framework suggested by Martin and White, especially with their category of appreciation; however, not all evaluation would be considered metadiscursive since metadiscourse should reflect how **writers** explicitly project themselves into their discourses (signalling their attitude towards the content and the audience of the text).

Another influential conception of evaluation is the framework suggested by Hunston and Thompson, who define evaluation as “the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer’s attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about” (5). They take a so-called ‘combining approach’ to evaluation, which stresses the similarities between epistemic and attitudinal meanings, subsuming both under a single label.<sup>3</sup> These meanings are regarded as different types of ‘opinions’ expressed by the author: one signalling the likelihood and the other signalling his attitude. Thus, evaluation is basically one phenomenon, and it could be described along one central parameter – good–bad. According to the authors, even the evaluations of certainty and uncertainty are not neutral with respect to cultural value, and could relate to this central axis (knowledge is good, while the lack of knowledge is bad) (Hunston & Thomson 25).

This study takes a so-called ‘separating approach’ since epistemic meanings are treated within different metadiscourse categories, namely hedges and boosters. Therefore, this study discusses only the writer’s attitude to propositions, including his opinions, reactions to things and his personal evaluation, often expressing an explicit positive or negative value of things. It should be noted that expressions of obligation are also treated as attitude markers in this study. The status of obligation is not clear within Hyland’s theory of metadiscourse. While it is included in the definition of attitude markers, Hyland’s list of potential metadiscourse items does not contain obligation modals at all. Only later (Hyland, 2012) do they appear on the list, but it seems that this is only because there is no better way of classifying them (within metadiscourse theory). I included obligation as one of the categories of attitude markers on the grounds that it often seems to express the writer’s attitude (ex. 1); however, I admit that it might not be the best way of conceptualizing it. As other researchers might agree, dealing with evaluation or attitude is slippery.

- (1) *Grice’s own discussion incorporated both generalized and particularized conversational implicatures, and **should not be interpreted** as marginalizing generalized conversational implicatures.* (RA8: 1898)

First, this study briefly discusses the occurrence of attitude markers in the RAs and undergraduate textbooks in the corpus and focuses on their distribution in different sections of RAs. Second, it sets out to describe different semantic concepts that appeared in both genres. The categories are based on the parameters of evaluation formulated by Bednarek. Finally, the study addresses the different functions of attitude markers in the two genres.

#### 4. Results and discussion

The quantitative analysis shows a higher number of attitude markers in research articles (5.9 items per 1,000 words) than in textbooks (3.8 items per 1,000 words). These results roughly correspond to Hyland’s research carried out on a larger corpus of 245,000 words, covering three academic disciplines – 4.3 in textbooks and 4.5 in research articles (Hyland, *Metadiscourse* 102). Similarly to other metadiscourse features, their number varied among individual textbooks and articles, with greater variation among textbooks.

It should be noted that any quantitative analysis of evaluation in general is problematic. Not only are there many different ways of expressing attitude, but we can also recognize explicit and implicit attitude markers, which undoubtedly form a scale. For example, the following sentence comes from a research article: “Recent work in RT gives us further insights into how intonational meaning may be processed” (RA7). The word *insights* has positive connotations since it is generally considered important to understand phenomena. Nevertheless, it is not the author’s attitude to things, although it might imply that he respects recent work in Relevance Theory. Furthermore, this study rules out all the expressions of attitude that cannot be ascribed explicitly to the writer, e.g. “many linguists dismiss prescriptivists as wrong” (TB1). They are part of evaluation in general, but they cannot be considered metadiscursive. It should also be stressed that this study does not deal with epistemic stance, which is manifested e.g. in hedges. It focuses on explicit markers of the writer’s attitude and especially on the different functions they perform in the two genres.

There were several semantic concepts that occurred repeatedly in both genres. As mentioned above, the categories partly draw on the parameters of evaluation formulated by Bednarek. Her core evaluative parameters include: comprehensibility, emotivity, expectedness, humorousness, importance, possibility/necessity, and reliability. In addition, there are peripheral evaluative parameters – evidentiality, mental state, and style (11–12). It is evident that Bednarek takes a so-called combining approach to evaluation, so not all of her categories are applicable to attitude markers. Furthermore, some of her parameters are not particularly appropriate for academic writing, such as humorousness (Bednarek aimed to develop a parameter-based approach that would be generally applicable to evaluation in language).

The semantic concepts to be presented here are derived from the corpus of RAs and undergraduate textbooks. They have been tentatively classified into several dimensions that occurred repeatedly in both genres (the frequency per thousand words is given in Figure 1; the data are given only for comparison, the numbers are obviously too small to draw any conclusions). They can be summarized as follows:

- IMPORTANCE (*important, significant, key, crucial*)
- VALUE AND APPROPRIACY (*good, right, appropriate*)
- INTEREST (*interesting, remarkable*)
- USEFULNESS (*useful*)
- DIFFICULTY (*easy, difficult, complicated*)
- OBLIGATION (*must, should, need, necessary*)
- “EMPHASIS” (*what must be emphasized, it is worth noting*)
- EXPECTEDNESS (*surprising, unexpected*)

	Textbooks	RAs
IMPORTANCE	0.90	1.22
VALUE AND APPROPRIACY	0.78	0.98
INTEREST	0.21	0.40
USEFULNESS	0.27	0.43

	Textbooks	RAs
DIFFICULTY	0.35	0.56
OBLIGATION	0.56	1.15
“EMPHASIS”	0.17	0.40
EXPECTEDNESS	0.01	0.15

**Table 1** The frequency of occurrence of the parameters in textbooks and RAs

There were other attitude markers in the corpus, such as *famous* or *tempting*, however, they occurred only exceptionally. As explained above, obligation has been included in the parameters, as well as the expression of explicit emphasis (*it is worth noting, it should be noted*), although this might seem controversial since there are numerous other devices that give prominence to the proposition, which are not reflected in this analysis.

The most frequent concept in both genres was **importance**, with a frequency of 1.22 per thousand words in the articles and 0.9 per thousand words in the textbooks. The numbers seem small, and indeed, as Gray and Biber point out, studies that take a multi-register perspective have shown that overt stance expressions are relatively rare in academic writing when compared to other spoken and written registers, so that the views considering it as impersonal and stanceless are to some extent legitimate (Gray and Biber 24). However, this finding does not make the investigation of stance less significant. Even though they are not numerous, attitude markers foreground the author, and (together with other devices) show that academic writing is not “faceless”, but is always based on the researcher’s interpretation.

One of the differences between the two genres can be seen in the parameter of **expectedness** (or rather unexpectedness), which was found almost exclusively in the research articles. Textbooks writers found certain facts *interesting* or *remarkable*, but only RA writers tried to stress that some of their results, approaches or viewpoints were *surprising*. This suggests how desirable originality is in the current scientific paradigm.

- (2) *However, what is more **unexpected** is that the relative distribution of the three clause types is the same in both corpora.* (RA4: 313)

Also, the concept of **difficulty** was realized differently in the two genres. In the textbooks it was mainly connected with ‘comprehensibility’, since their authors sometimes wanted to point out that certain aspects of the theory can be difficult to understand (ex. 3). This should be a signal for students that they should focus on the passage because it could be abstract or fuzzy. However, it is also reassuring since the author himself admits that the topic is complex. Moreover, a textbook author can point out that the passage is “an oversimplified version” of what may actually take place (TB3).

- (3) *What has just been said is no doubt **difficult** to comprehend when it is formulated in such general terms, as it has been here.* (TB4: 222)

Let us now turn to the distribution of attitude markers in the research articles. Almost half of them appeared in the Introduction or in the final sections (Conclusion, Discussion, Further Research, Pedagogic Implications; the sections of the articles were not identical). This was quite interesting since these sections were much shorter than the main body of the articles, and it demonstrates that different sections perform different rhetorical purposes. Table 2 shows the distribution of attitude markers in the corpus; 40 in the introductions, 171 in the main body of the articles, and 100 in the concluding sections. Figure 1 demonstrates a considerably higher frequency of attitude markers in the introductions and final sections of the articles (10.4 markers per 1,000 words) than in the other sections (4.3 markers per 1,000 words). Thus the focus will be on the functions which attitude markers fulfil in the first and the final sections.

RA's	No. of attitude markers	%	No. of words
Introduction	40	12.9	5617
Main body of the articles	171	55	39637
'After the result' sections	100	32.1	7891

Table 2 Distribution of attitude markers in research articles

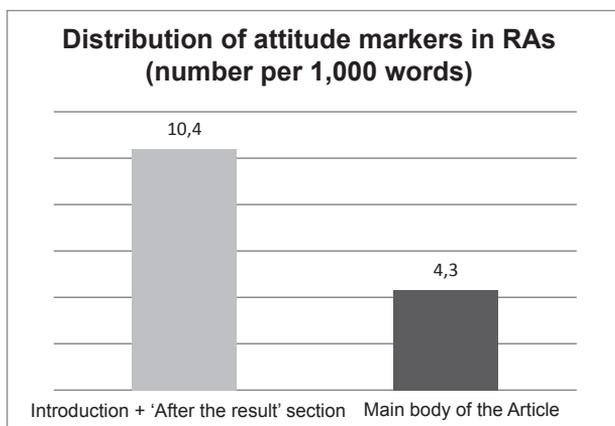


Figure 1 The frequency of occurrence of attitude markers in different sections of research articles

In the introductions, attitude markers were often used to ‘create a research space’ (the CARS model introduced by Swales, *Genre Analysis*). Within ‘Establishing a territory’, which is Move 1 in Swales’ model, authors pointed out the significance of the research field itself (example 4), stating that the topic is important or interesting. They also used more implicit strategies, for example by pointing out that the phenomenon is problematic for non-native speakers and thus deserves our attention (5).

- (4) *Citation plays a key role in academic writing.*<sup>4</sup> (RA4: 311)
- (5) *Signalling nouns are likely to be **problematic** for non-native, as well as native speakers, for a number of reasons; [...].* (RA3: 330)

Attitude markers also accompany establishing a niche in the current research, a gap that will be filled by the research described in the article (example 6).

- (6) *Surprisingly, however, there has been very little explicit consideration of the inter-relationship between the two concepts [identity and face].* (RA6: 639)

In the final sections of the articles ('After the Results'), the significance of the topic is often re-established. Berkenkotter and Huckin even claim that Discussions tend to have a mirror-image reversal of the moves in Introductions: "occupying the niche → (re)establishing the niche → establishing additional territory" (in Swales, *Research genres* 235). The results presented earlier are summarized and their significance is pointed out, sometimes highlighting why the research is useful and to whom particularly (7).

- (7) *Working with patterns, then, can be **beneficial** in raising student awareness of contextual factors and in enhancing their understanding of what lies behind [...]. It is **important** for students to gain this insight [...].* (RA4: 327)

What proved consistent in the whole corpus was a certain pattern that could be identified in the final sections. It could be generally described as a **Problem – Solution** pattern. The problem may be a gap in the present knowledge, formulated e.g. as a question following from the results, or it is shown that the object of study is a complex phenomenon, sometimes explicitly stating that "the mechanisms [...] are still imperfectly understood" (RA7: 1556). The problem may also be something more real, for instance the difficulties that the phenomenon investigated (e.g. citation) presents for novice writers, L2 writers etc. This was typical of the *English for Specific Purposes* journal, where pedagogical implications can often be drawn (and might even be required if the research allows). The solutions that were suggested were also accompanied by attitude markers. For example, obligation modals were used to suggest which approach is needed for a better understanding of the phenomenon, or what needs to be considered. Moreover, the significance of the topic can be reinforced by emphasizing its usefulness in practice (for students, L2 writers, children etc.). The use of attitude markers suggests that authors need to adequately justify their current research, especially if we consider a large number of journals and articles published every year. Obligation modals are also used to point out that further research is necessary and what deserves greater attention.

On the other hand, the use of attitude markers in textbooks reflects the fact that it is an instructional genre. Textbook authors carefully guide readers through the discourse (8) and instruct them at the same time, sometimes indicating how they should understand the given issue (9).

- (8) *This is an important point; There are two important aspects...*  
 (9) *It is more **accurate** to view the two modes as having different but complementary roles.* (TB1: 5)

The expressions guiding readers through the text account for 25% of all attitude markers in textbooks, and 16% in research articles. They play an important role in both genres since

they allow the author to draw the reader's attention to important parts of the discourse. They often structure the text, functioning as frame markers at the same time, so they could be regarded as metadiscursive in the narrow sense<sup>5</sup> (the expressions such as *It is necessary to examine* can thus be considered as multifunctional). Frequent structures include: *The crucial point is; It is interesting to note; It should be noted*. The genres differed not only in the number of these expressions, but also in their character, with textbooks containing more personal structures, such as *we should keep in mind, we need also to remember*.

Attitude markers also reflect the unequal relationship between the authority of the teacher and the students in the use of obligation imposed on readers (10). While the expressions of obligation occurred more frequently in RAs than in textbooks (see Figure 1), in RAs this obligation is not explicitly directed at readers. The authors used impersonal subjects, such as "care must be taken", or an inclusive *we* ("we need to be open to a range of cases displaying variation in the form and nature of the cooperation", RA8). Generally, the pronoun *you* was used freely in four textbooks (127 items in the corpus), which together with inclusive *we* contributed to the interactive character of the genre (see Hyland, *Metadiscourse*). On the other hand, research articles did not contain the pronoun *you*, with the exception of one article in which it was used several times in a hypothetical example ("You wish to buy a used car..."). The use of imperatives, such as *consider, notice, compare*, was also higher in textbooks (54 instances in textbooks and 13 in research articles); moreover, half of the instances in the articles took the form "let us (consider)", making it rather a suggestion.<sup>6</sup> The asymmetrical relationship between the teacher-expert and students-novices is, however, often mitigated by the inclusive *we*, which enables writers to engage readers in their exposition, presenting it as a mutual endeavour.

(10) *you should remember that; you will need to look at it carefully* (TB5)

Another difference between the genres can be found in their evaluation of the work of others. Textbook authors are not primarily addressing other experts but novices in the field, which enables them to evaluate other theories more freely. They can explicitly state that scientists are *correct* or *right* in their views of language, but also express their disagreement without any mitigating strategies. Example 11 shows the explicit negative evaluation in one textbook, whose author is discussing the extreme forms of prescriptivism claimed:

(11) *Simon's views of language are also highly elitist, especially his idea that there is a great linguistic divide between "educated" and "uneducated" masses. People like Simon should be ignored; they have nothing constructive to offer to discussions about language.* (TB1: 14)

Textbook authors sometimes evaluate theories that represent the "codified knowledge" of the discipline. For example, Lyons informs students about why generativism has been an influential movement but at the same time stresses its *controversial* and *problematical* aspects, even claiming that "the terms 'competence' and 'performance' are inappropriate and misleading as far as the distinction between what is linguistic and what is non-linguistic is concerned" (TB4: 234). Thus, writers do not conceal the argumentative nature

of certain aspects of the discipline, which is also supported by a relatively high number of hedges found in the corpus (see Malčíková 77–95). Moreover, authors evaluate publications that are recommended to students – a section that is, as a rule, placed at the end of the chapter. Their role as teachers is foregrounded again because they have to briefly characterize further resources – e.g. as a *good* survey, as an *excellent, clear* introduction, or as *useful* but rather *difficult*.

The authors of research articles were cautious in presenting negative views of theories by other researchers, using adjectives such as *problematic* or *difficult*, which were either hedged or compensated by some positive characteristics (example 12). Naturally, the authors need to comment on the theories used, and often take a certain stance while interpreting them. However, they need to be careful in presenting criticism since it is potentially their colleagues they are talking about, and such criticism, albeit indirect, would threaten these colleagues' "professional" face. Example 13 provides the most explicit disagreement present in the corpus, saying that "Capone is wrong", but it is preceded by a hedge (we *could* draw) and followed by a clarification stating that Capone is in fact partially right.

- (12) *Whilst the broad rhetorical analysis underlying Latour and Woolgar's schema is of great **interest**, from a linguistic point of view its details are **problematic**.*  
(RA2: 349)

- (13) *One conclusion we could draw from this kind of example is to say that Capone is **wrong** to say that Grice's cooperative principle only applies to linguistic cooperation. While that is one way of putting it, it may be **preferable** to say that the cooperative principle does indeed only apply to linguistic cooperation but in some cases the extra-linguistic goal determines linguistic cooperation.*  
(RA8: 1901)

## 5. Conclusion

The use of attitude markers in research articles and textbooks reflects the different purposes and audiences of the two genres. While this metadiscourse category is also used to guide the reader in the discourse, foregrounding certain parts which the writer considers to be important, it reflects the instructional goal of the textbook genre on one hand and the more persuasive goal of the research article on the other. Attitude markers also express interpersonal meanings in the two genres and prove again that metadiscourse can function as a powerful manipulative tool – even in academic discourse, which is regarded as field-dominated, because while it organizes the discourse it also effectively guides the reader's reasoning and understanding.

The present study follows the current interest in the interpersonal aspects of academic writing, and evaluative language in particular. It is interesting to note that the recently published *Continuum Companion to Discourse Analysis* (2011), which offers "a comprehensive and accessible reference resource to research in contemporary discourse studies" and has been written by leading figures of the field (e.g. R. Wodak, J. R. Martin, D. Biber, J. Cutting), includes a chapter on academic discourse (written again by Hyland) which is heavily influenced by the social constructionist approach. Among the main findings of current research, it lists:

- “(1) That academic genres are persuasive and systematically structured to secure readers’ agreement; [...] (4) That academic persuasion involves interpersonal negotiations as much as convincing ideas”. (Hyland, *Continuum* 177)

Allowing for a certain degree of simplification which such general statements require, this shows the orientation of the current paradigm concerning academic discourse research.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> The term is believed to have been coined by Zellig Harris in 1959 to describe certain kernel units. It was adopted in discourse studies in the 1980s and was characterized as a specialized form of discourse that can be distinguished from other types of discourse (often referred to as primary, propositional content); or simply as “a discourse about discourse” (Vande Kopple 82).

<sup>2</sup> For a detailed discussion of the two approaches, see, for example, Annelie Ädel’s *Metadiscourse in L1 and L2 English* (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> A similar approach is taken by Conrad and Biber (57) who use the term *stance* to cover *epistemic stance* and *attitudinal stance*.

<sup>4</sup> In all cases, emphasis in the examples is mine.

<sup>5</sup> Frame markers, which are defined as devices signalling text boundaries, can be used to sequence, label, predict or shift arguments (Hyland, *Metadiscourse* 51). Their frequency in the corpus was similar for both genres, which was quite surprising given that they can make the discourse clear to readers. However, textbook chapters were divided into further sub-chapters or sections that were distinctly graphically highlighted, and some of them included chapter outlines, key terms in bold or other graphic devices that make the orientation in the text easier.

<sup>6</sup> Pronouns and imperatives by themselves are not regarded here as attitude markers. Although some of their functions overlap, they are considered as engagement markers since their primary function is to explicitly address readers as discourse participants.

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