



**UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

**A CROSS-DISCIPLINARY EXPLORATION OF METADISOURSE IN  
EXPERIMENTAL RESEARCH ARTICLES**

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**FBMK 2014 8**



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By

**MOHSEN KHEDRI**

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia, in  
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**August 2014**

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*Specially Dedicated to.*

*My beloved parents  
My beloved sister, Minoa  
My beloved brother, Milad*

*This is just a small token of my love &  
affection and underlying gratitude &  
appreciation for all you have done for me.*

*Thank you and God bless you always*

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfilment of  
the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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**Chairperson: Prof. Chan Swee Heng, PhD**

**Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication**

In today's academic arena, the research article is one of the extensively accomplished communicative genres among members of a particular disciplinary community. Through such a seminal genre, members are able to disseminate their own new knowledge and secure acceptance from addressees. A generic analysis of the research article can enfold issues of different varieties; among them are linguistic features. A crucial part of linguistic features of the research article is shaped through metadiscourse. Metadiscourse is a facet of language which provides a linkage between texts and disciplinary epistemologies, assisting to delineate the rhetorical context by demonstrating some of the readers' anticipations and expectations. The key principle behind metadiscourse deployment is the view of writing as socially engaging; particularly, it designates writers' styles whereby they bring themselves into discourses to pronounce their standpoints and commitments to readers. Being so, the current research aimed at exploring the status of metadiscourse in experimental research articles written by scholars belonging to the four disciplines of Applied Linguistics, Psychology, Environmental Engineering and Chemistry. Simply put, this study sought for i) detecting the extent to which metadiscourse markers are incorporated in experimental research articles in the four disciplines; ii) investigating the types of metadiscourse mapped in each rhetorical section (IMRD) of research articles cross-disciplinarily; and iii) finding out different communicative functions fulfilled by the different groups of writers through metadiscourse usage in each of the rhetorical sections (IMRD).

To this end, adopting Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse and taking a mixed-method of quantitative and qualitative analysis, forty experimental research articles (10 per discipline) sourced from internationally well-known refereed journals were analyzed. Results revealed evident variations across the disciplinary communities regarding both frequency and functional analysis. One salient finding concerns the dominant presence of metadiscourse in both corpora of the soft science disciplines, especially in AL writings. This shows that the style adopted is one that reflects a more writer-responsible style. In contrast, their peers in the fields of EE and Che preferred a reader-responsible approach which imposes on readers to mentally create less obvious linkages between different layers of given information to obtain the message.

In terms of writers' communicative functions of metadiscourse deployment in different rhetorical sections of research articles, more marked cross-disciplinary variations were found. For example, the psychologists, in results and discussion sections, resorted to hedges to reintroduce research purposively/descriptively and to state limitation of their works. These communicative functions were totally absent from the other disciplines.

Based on the findings, it can be deduced that metadiscourse use is directly concerned with socio-rhetorical disciplinary norms and conventions established in each particular communities. Results of such an exploratory study could be used by members, especially novice writers in the academic communities concerned to i) make good use of metadiscoursal resources in their writings; ii) broadcast their knowledge through research articles effectively; and iii) familiarize themselves with their respective communities, thus enabling them to gain acceptance from their disciplinary established gatekeepers. The examination of the metadiscourse emphasizes the need to create a reader-based prose which will enhance writing quality that could result in greater opportunities for publication. Much more research could be conducted to seek out the cross-disciplinary differences in rhetorical use in metadiscourse.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**KAJIAN EKSPLORATORI SILANG DISIPLIN MENGENAI METAWACANA  
DALAM ARTIKEL PENYELIDIKAN AKADEMIK**

Oleh

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Dalam arena akademik hari ini, artikel penyelidikan merupakan salah satu genre komunikasi yang secara giat berjaya dilaksanakan dalam kalangan ahli komuniti sesuatu bidang disiplin. Melalui genre tersebut, seperti seminar, ahli dapat menyebarkan ilmu pengetahuan baharu mereka dan perkara ini dapat menyakinkan sasaran penerima. Analisis generik sesuatu artikel penyelidikan dapat menyelesaikan pelbagai jenis isu; antaranya ialah ciri linguistik. Bahagian penting ciri linguistik bagi sesuatu artikel penyelidikan dapat dibentuk melalui metawacana. Metawacana merupakan faset bahasa yang menyediakan pautan antara teks dan epistemologi disiplin, membantu untuk menggariskan konteks retorikal dengan mendemonstrasikan sebahagianantisipasi dan ekspektasi pembaca. Prinsip penting di sebalik metawacana ialah aspek penulisan sebagai keterlibatan secara sosial, terutamanya, sebagai penanda stail penulis yang mereka bawa ke dalam wacana bagi menyatakan pegangan dan komitmen mereka kepada sasaran pembaca. Atas sebab tersebut, penyelidikan semasa ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi status metawacana dalam artikel penyelidikan eksperimental yang ditulis oleh cendekiawan bagi empat disiplin, iaitu, Linguistik Gunaan, Psikologi, Kejuruteraan dan Kimia Persekitaran. Dengan kata lain, kajian ini dijalankan adalah untuk i) mengenal pasti sejauh mana penanda metawacana digabungkan dalam empat disiplin artikel penyelidikan eksperimental tersebut; ii) menyelidiki jenis metawacana yang dibincangkan dalam setiap bahagian retorikal (IMRD) artikel penyelidikan silang disiplin; dan iii) meneliti pelbagai tujuan komunikasi yang dipenuhi oleh pelbagai kumpulan penulis melalui penggunaan metawacana dalam setiap bahagian retorikal (IMRD).

Bagi mencapai tujuan kajian ini, dengan mengadoptasi Model Interpersonal Metawacana Hyland (2005) dan menggunakan analisis kaedah campuran kuantitatif dan kualitatif, empat puluh artikel eksperimental (10 bagi setiap disiplin) yang diperoleh dari jurnal wasit antarabangsa telah dianalisis. Hasil dapatan menunjukkan terdapatnya bukti variasi silang disiplin mengenai kedua-dua frekuensi dan analisis fungsional. Salah satu dapatan yang menonjol ialah melibatkan kewujudan metawacana yang dominan dalam kedua-dua korpora disiplin ilmu sains ringan, terutama dalam penulisan AL. Hal ini menunjukkan bahawa stail yang diguna pakai merupakan sesuatu yang menggambarkan stail yang lebih bersifat tanggungjawab penulis. Sebaliknya, rakan sebaya mereka dalam bidang EE dan Che menyukai pendekatan yang bersifat tanggungjawab pembaca yang memaksa supaya pembaca menggunakan mental bagi mewujudkan pautan yang kurang jelas antara pelbagai paras maklumat yang diberikan bagi memperoleh mesej.

Dari segi tujuan komunikatif penulis tentang unsur metawacana dalam artikel penyelidikan bahagian retorikal yang berbeza, didapati lebih penanda variasi silang disiplin. Sebagai contoh, ahli psikologi, dalam bahagian hasil dapatan dan bahagian perbincangan, menggunakan hedge bagi memperkenalkan semula tujuan kajian/secara deskriptif dan menyatakan limitasi hasil kerja mereka. Tujuan komunikatif tersebut langsung tidak wujud dari disiplin yang lain.

Berdasarkan hasil dapatan, dapatlah dibuat kesimpulan bahawa penggunaan metawacana adalah secara langsung berkaitan dengan norma dan konvensyen sosioretorikal disiplin yang wujud dalam setiap komuniti. Hasil dapatan dari kajian eksploratori tersebut harus digunakan oleh ahli, terutamanya penulis novis dalam komuniti akademik yang berkaitan bagi i) menggunakan sumber metawacana yang berguna dalam penulisan mereka; ii) mewar-warkan pengetahuan mereka melalui artikel penyelidikan secara efektif; dan iii) membiasakan diri mereka dengan komuniti yang berkenaan, seterusnya membolehkan mereka memperoleh penerimaan daripada penyaring maklumat mantap mereka. Penelitian terhadap metawacana menekankan keperluan untuk mewujudkan prosa yang berorientasikan pembaca yang akan meningkatkan kualiti penulisan yang menyebabkan peluang dan ruang yang lebih bagi tujuan penerbitan. Lebih banyak penyelidikan harus dijalankan bagi mendapatkan perbezaan silang disiplin dalam penggunaan retorikal dalam metawacana.



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This thesis was submitted to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia and has been accepted as fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. The members of the Supervisory Committee were as follows:

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