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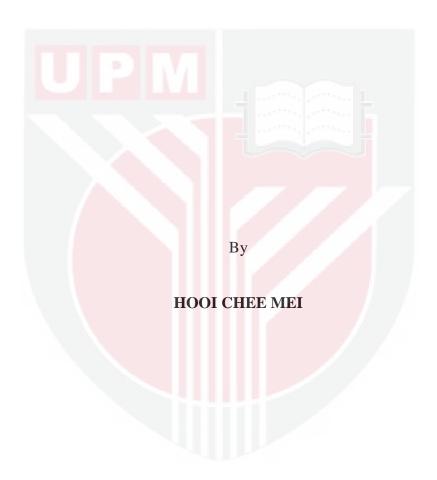
WRITERS' AWARENESS, LINGUSTIC REALISATIONS AND READERS'
RESPONSES TO METADISCOURSE FEATURES IN MALAYSIAN
BUSINESS NEWS

HOOI CHEE MEI

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WRITERS' AWARENESS, LINGUSTIC REALISATIONS AND READERS' RESPONSES TO METADISCOURSE FEATURES IN MALAYSIAN BUSINESS NEWS

By

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WRITERS' AWARENESS, LINGUISTIC REALISATIONS AND READERS' RESPONSES TO METADISCOURSE FEATURES IN MALAYSIAN BUSINESS NEWS

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September 2020

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Metadiscourse features (textual and interpersonal metadiscourse) also known as pragmatic features are ways in which writers express their opinions and construct a text to make it reader-friendly. Researchers have analysed metadiscourse features in different areas which include intercultural studies, gender studies, and academic discourse. However, studies on metadiscourse in news settings are limited. To date, only a few researchers such as Kuppers and Ho-Dac (2010), Lambiase (2010) and Yuryevna (2012) have conducted studies on metadiscourse in news discourse.

To increase the existing pool of literature on metadiscourse, this study sought to investigate the awareness of the use of metadiscourse features by writers of two online business news portals: *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia.* This study also aimed to identify the linguistic realisations and categories of metadiscourse categories that were commonly used in business news. Apart from that, responses of readers to the business news with metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse were examined.

A mixed-method approach was employed and a modified Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model was used as an analytical framework in this study. Metadiscourse Awareness Test and a collection of 50 business news items from *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* were used as quantitative data collections. For the qualitative analysis, news with and without metadiscourse, as well as writing prompts were used in this study.

Two types of sampling methods were adopted in the study. Purposive sampling was used to select 10 *The Star Online* writers and 10 *Focus Malaysia* writers to test their awareness of the use of metadiscourse in the writing of business news. Fifty business news were also selected purposively from the two news portals respectively to analyse the linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features. Moreover, 30 students from English major courses were chosen through convenience sampling to examine the readers' responses to news with the presence and the absence of metadiscourse.

The findings of this study showed that both *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* writers had a bit of difficulty in identifying announcements and sequencers for textual metadiscourse, but not in other categories of interpersonal metadiscourse. Besides that, the findings revealed that the use of both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse was prevalent in both the news portals. Textual metadiscourse was used much more frequently than interpersonal metadiscourse in *The Star Online*, whereas in *Focus Malaysia,* both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse were used. The data also revealed that the frequency of metadiscourse used varied across the different categories. For readers' response, it was found that most students preferred to read news with textual and interpersonal metadiscourse because they believed that through the use of metadiscourse, the news was more comprehensible and reader-friendly.

To conclude, metadiscourse are useful writing devices that help produce engaging prose, academic or otherwise. It is important that the awareness of metadiscourse in business news among the writers be heightened through the use of Metadiscourse Awareness Test. The linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features could also be used as useful means for the writers to know the role of metadiscourse in business news discourse.

KESEDARAN PENULIS, BENTUK PENYAMPAIAN LINGUISTIK DAN RESPONS PEMBACA TERHADAP CIRI-CIRI METAWACANA DALAM BERITA PERNIAGAAN MALAYSIA

Oleh

HOOI CHEE MEI

September 2020

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Ciri-ciri metawacana (metawacana tekstual dan interpersonal) juga dikenali sebagai ciri-ciri pragmatik ialah cara-cara, iaitu penulis-penulis menyatakan pendapat-pendapat mereka dan membina teks untuk menjadikannya mesra di kalangan pembaca-pembaca. Penyelidik-penyelidik telah menganalisis ciri-ciri metawacana di aspek-aspek yang berbeza yang merangkumi kajian antara budaya, kajian gender, dan akademik. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian-kajian mengenai metawacana dalam tetapan berita adalah terhad. Sehingga kini, hanya beberapa penyelidik seperti Kuppers dan Ho-Dac (2010), Lambiase (2010) dan Yuryevna (2012) telah menjalankan kajian-kajian mengenai metadiscourse dalam wacana berita.

Untuk meningkatkan kajian literatur yang sedia ada mengenai metawacana, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menyiasat kesedaran penggunaan ciri-ciri metawacana oleh penulis bagi dua portal berita perniagaan: *The Star Online* dan *Focus Malaysia*. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti bentuk penyampaian linguistik dan kategori-kategori metawacana yang biasa digunakan dalam berita perniagaan. Selain itu, respons pembaca terhadap berita perniagaan dengan metawacana dan berita perniagaan yang tiada metawacana diperiksa.

Pendekatan kaedah campuran digunakan dan model Dafouz-Milne (2008) yang telah diubahsuai telah digunakan sebagai rangka analisis dalam kajian ini. Ujian Kesedaran Metadiscourse dan koleksi 50 item berita perniagaan dari *The Star Online* dan *Focus Malaysia* telah digunakan sebagai pengumpulan data kuantitatif. Untuk analisis kualitatif, berita dengan dan tanpa metawacana serta arahan bertulis telah digunakan dalam kajian ini.

Dua jenis kaedah persampelan digunakan dalam kajian ini. Pensampelan bertujuan digunakan untuk memilih 10 penulis *The Star Online* dan 10 penulis *Focus Malaysia* untuk menguji kesedaran mereka tentang penggunaan metawacana dalam penulisan berita perniagaan. Lima puluh berita perniagaan juga dipilih dari kedua-dua portal berita masing-masing secara bertujuan untuk menganalisis bentuk penyampaian linguistik ciri-ciri metawacana. Lebih-lebih lagi, 30 pelajar dari kursus utama bahasa Inggeris telah dipilih melalui pensampelan mudah untuk menganalisis respons pembaca terhadap berita dengan kehadiran dan ketiadaan metawacana.

Hasil-hasil kajian ini menunjukkan bahawa kedua-dua penulis *The Star Online* dan *Focus Malaysia* mempunyai sedikit kesukaran dalam mengenal pasti pengumuman dan penyusunan bagi metawacana tekstual, tetapi tidak dalam kategori lain bagi metawacana interpersonal. Selain itu, hasil-hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa penggunaan kedua-dua metawacana tekstual dan interpersonal adalah lazim di kedua-dua portal berita. Metawacana tekstual digunakan dengan lebih kerap daripada metawacana interpersonal dalam *The Star Online*, sedangkan bagi *Focus Malaysia*, kedua-dua metawacana tekstual dan interpersonal digunakan. Data juga mendedahkan bahawa kekerapan metawacana digunakan secara bervariasi merentasi kategori yang berlainan. Bagi respons pembaca, didapati bahawa kebanyakan pelajar lebih suka membaca berita dengan metawacana tekstual dan interpersonal kerana mereka percaya bahawa melalui penggunaan metawacana, berita itu lebih mudah difahami dan mesra di kalangan pembaca.

Kesimpulannya, metawacana ialah alat penulisan yang berguna yang dapat menghasilkan prosa, akademik atau sebaliknya. Kesedaran tentang metawacana dalam berita perniagaan perlu ditingkatkan di kalangan penulis melalui penggunaan Ujian Kesedaran Metawacana. Bentuk penyampaian linguistik ciri-ciri metawacana juga dapat digunakan sebagai alat yang berguna bagi para penulis untuk mengetahui peranan metawacana dalam wacana berita perniagaan.

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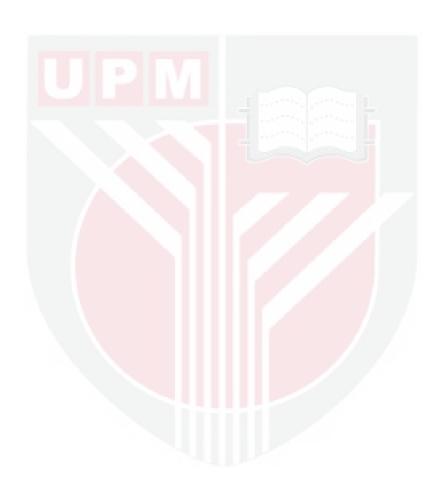
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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CPI	Consumer Price Index
CPO	Crude Palm Oil
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
ELL	English Language Learning
EPF	Employees' Provident Fund
ESAP	English for Specific Academic Purposes
ESP	English for Specific Purpose
ESL	English as a Second Language
GDP	Gross Domestic Products
GST	Goods and Services Tax
HEP	High English Proficiency
LEP	Low English Proficiency
LED	Light-emitting Diode
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
MCQ	Multiple-choice question
O&G	Oil and Gas
Petronas	Petroliam Nasional Bhd
RA	Research Articles
RMC	Research Management Centre
SAQ	Short-answer question
TNB	Tenaga Nasional Berhad
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language

TOWL-3   Test of Written Language-Third Edition

UPM   Universiti Putra Malaysia

1MDB   1Malaysia Development Berhad

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Introduction

This chapter starts with a summary and the background of the study. Problem statement, purpose, research questions, as well as the theoretical and conceptual frameworks are discussed. Scope and significance of the study are also presented and discussed. This chapter then concludes with a list of the definition of terms that are used in this study.

1.2   Background of the Study

News is a compilation of current events that is written with perspective, collected from the incidents that happened, and published in a particular medium (Mencher, 2011). Mencher (2011) elucidates that news helps to keep society well-versed with the updated events, issues and predominant figures in the globalisation era. Hence, news is essential to keep citizens informed about the happenings around the world.

In this era of fast and overloaded information, television and radio sets that used to showcast news bulletins and programmes are now available online, on phones, and on computers (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). In other words, only at particular times of the day, news reports were showcasted to viewers and listeners. This news was decided by the editors and producers in a running order. Furthermore, this news tends to appear more on social networking sites, email notifications, blogs, micro-blogs, and professional websites (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). Price, Tewksbury and Powers (1997) state that news writing has become a more challenging task now. The editors and reporters of news have industrialised workways, processes and lessons to help them in publishing news rapidly and consistently (Price, Tewksbury, & Powers, 1997).

Over the past decade, the circulation of print newspapers has decreased considerably. Readers prefer to get their news from other forms of media in the 20th century (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). This declination has caused many journalists to be removed from the industry; therefore, McNair (2009) states that there is a decline in print newspapers and likewise a decline in the news' quality. Due to the decline of income, readership and the evolution of Internet use for news (McNair, 2009), organisations are progressively referring to their websites to retain readers and appeal to new audience. McNair (2009) mentions that the Internet provides interactive tool to interact with the readers. This tool enables the readers to control and post content, as well as send articles to others.

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In newspaper writing, the facts are organised in order of importance (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). Less vital information comes last so the sub-editor can cut the story from the bottom to fit the page. This construction is known as an inverted triangle or pyramid (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012; Itule & Anderson, 2008; Mencher, 2011; Ryan & Tankard, 2005). It may work for newspapers because readers do not often reach the end of a story before moving onto something else in the paper. Journalists are always thinking of the organisation of the stories they write (Itule & Anderson, 2008). Lead is always written first, while journalists compose the news mentally when they interview and check records. They must present the news in a clear style that flows from paragraph to paragraph when they write the story. Transitions are also used throughout the story to introduce additional sources; thus, the story moves effortlessly from place to place and source to source (Itule & Anderson, 2008; Ryan & Tankard, 2005). A logical structure is important for any news story because effective organisation makes writing easier and it makes any writing easier to read. This logical structure enables the citizens to know what to expect when the story is read (Mencher, 2011). If it is interesting and important, they will pay attention. Otherwise, they will stop reading. This shows that people are too busy to stay without reward.

There has been a dramatic growth in business news and business-related media sources such as magazines, newsletters and newspapers (Kjær & Langer, 2005). Kjær and Langer (2005) highlight that analysis of mass media as management knowledge needs to be supplemented with a more thorough business news investigation to make business news more presentable. Business news has expanded because business sections are published in the newspapers. A large reporting and editing staff is employed to write business news (Hewitt, 2002). Hudson and Rowlands (2012) mention that for now, there are more than 4,000 magazines, newsletters and newspapers of the business news. However, it has been observed that the readers do not like to read business news (Hewitt, 2002). One of the solutions of attracting the readers is writers are advised to engage readers whenever possible because business news is not appealing to them (Mencher, 2011).

Traditional financial news from bankers are usually reported in the form of business news to explain to readers what it means and how it affects them (Itule & Anderson, 2008). The readers are informed on how the stock markets, government, money organisation, and business world operate internationally or locally (Mencher, 2011). Thus, citizens are aware of how job opportunities are influenced by the economy, how high or low interest rates may go, whether layoffs are imminent in local industries and what the value of a bond or stock is.

Although business news does not attract readers (Mencher, 2011), metadiscourse could be used to attract them through the emphasis of the writers' authority, as well as involvement of the readers in the text. Metadiscourse is the key aspect to engage the readers to the discourse, as well as reveals the writers' authority by signalling their attitude and opinion towards the content of the discourse. In other words, metadiscourse involves the readers by acknowledging or involving them in the

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discourse and by informing them about the writers' opinions towards both texts and readers themselves (Hyland, 2005).

Business news updates people about the world of business and commerce. Through the proper use of metadiscourse in business news, a difficult text can be transformed into a reader-friendly prose with more clarity (Mencher, 2011). Writers can also express their attitudes towards an issue in a neutral way (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). They would be more critical and effective writers as they apply their metadiscourse knowledge and skills appropriately throughout their practice. The use of metadiscourse features could help to link unrelated topics to create continuity of ideas for increased comprehension of the text (Hyland, 2005). This is because metadiscourse features are vital pragmatic linguistic features used to convey ideas chronologically and connect different pieces of information to make the news more lucid and comprehensive.

There are several ways to define metadiscourse. Metadiscourse is defined by Williams (1981) as "writing about writing" (p. 212). On the contrary, Vande-Kopple (1985) stated that metadiscourse highlights the writers' presence but does not provide extra propositional information to the content. This has been concurred by Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen (1993) that metadiscourse guides the readers to organise, comprehend and evaluate the information given.

Likewise, Hyland and Tse (2004) defined metadiscourse as a way for the writers to organise their written work and reveal their identity towards the text or the readers. Hyland and Tse (2004) made a clear distinction between proposition and metadiscourse. They described that a proposition provides information that the readers can debate on or disagree with, but metadiscourse stresses on the writers' attitude towards the proposition of the content.

In this study, metadiscourse is used not only for the writers to assist and aid the readers through the content of the text, but also convey their thoughts and feelings towards the propositions to the readers. In short, writing is communicative in nature; thus, Hyland (2005) concurs that metadiscourse is interpersonal. Hyland (2005) mentioned that metadiscourse helps in making the content more intelligible, persuasive and coherent for the readers.

1.3   Problem Statement

Business news is crucial to the sustainability and growth of the readers (Hewitt, 2002). It is a form of structure, which also possesses agency attributes in imposing or triggering certain actions from the readers. Almost simultaneously, business news is also the product of interaction from readers, which is being shaped over time and space towards the exchanges of interactions from readers (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). Among the topics covered in business news are investment opportunities and innovative business ideas in which business-minded members of the society would

want to be updated with the latest happenings in the world of finance (Hewitt, 2002). As such, business news should facilitate informed engagement with the public on important issues such as economic and financial progress (Doyle, 2006). Hence, journalists are responsible to report unbiased, accurate information from reliable sources (Hewitt, 2002). The incomprehensible content of the business news may be caused by the writers' inadequate awareness on how to report news in an engaging manner to layman readers. Hence, metadiscourse is used by writers to explain business terms and jargons in simple and more reader-friendly manner by providing more explicit reading cues and examples for the readers (Hewitt, 2002). Nevertheless, it is surprising that the investigation of metadiscourse features in business news texts has not received much attention (Hewitt, 2002; Hudson & Rowlands, 2012).

Apart from the lack of studies on metadiscourse in business news, Canado and Esteban (2005) also mentioned that university students are generally not taught how to use metadiscourse features in their writings. This notion was further confirmed by some scholars who highlight that references and examples on business news in the textbooks are not adequate. Khattak, Yaqoob and Basri (2003) mention that the brief information of metadiscourse features in news tends to come from reference books or manuals and websites on broadcast journalism. Hudson and Rowlands (2012) concur with Khattak, Yaqoob and Basri (2003) that there are no detailed discussions on news writing in reference books or manuals. Chung (2007) and Sundar (1999) state that the information from textbooks is unclear because there is only a small section of guidelines in writing news. Reference books or manuals on communication focused only on particular contexts although those books are beneficial to those who write commercial correspondence in English (Goss, 1988). Therefore, learners do not have enough awareness on how to use appropriate metadiscourse in their writing particularly the writing of business news. They are unaware of the use of metadiscourse features in business news (Khattak, Yaqoob, & Basri, 2003). They do not know that textual metadiscourse is responsible to guide or assist the readers to understand the news better (Bell, 1991). They are also not aware that interpersonal metadiscourse is used to highlight the writers' identity or authority by projecting themselves into the discourse to convey their opinions and attitudes through metadiscourse (Gonzalez, 2005; Hyland, 2004).

News writers do not normally refer to guidelines in writing news when they write news (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012; Itule & Anderson, 2008; Mencher, 2011; Ryan & Tankard, 2005). They are only exposed to the inverted-pyramid style (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012; Itule & Anderson, 2008), in which the most important of the five W's and H (what, where, who, when, which, and how) are in the lead as the lead should interest the readers, followed by the body of the news, which should hold the readers' attention until the closure. They also use whatever grammar rules which appeal to them at the moment when they write (Ryan & Tankard, 2005). While good media organisations do not have guidelines, they have house style manuals. These manuals are used by various newspapers, stations of broadcast, magazines, and public relation offices (Itule & Anderson, 2008). It depends on the writers either to use the manuals or not. Due to this, the concern is that writers might face difficulty

with the correct linguistic conventions to write business news effectively (Yuryevna, 2012). Thus, it is imperative to identify and investigate the linguistic patterns in terms of forms and categories of metadiscourse features in business news to expose the writers to the proper way of making the news reader-friendly. This could be done to avoid the inconsistencies of the linguistic conventions and features that interrupt the thoughts and the unclear flow of well-written sentences.

There are also different areas of studies done on metadiscourse features, such as translation studies, intercultural studies, gender studies, and academic discourse (Hyland, 1998a; Hyland, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Intaraprawat & Steffenson, 1995). The pragmatic aspect was emphasised by the studies mentioned earlier. Thus far, the use of the categories of metadiscourse features in news has not been analysed thoroughly. There were a few studies, which analysed metadiscourse features pragmatically in news. These studies investigated how metadiscourse is used in context (Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Kuhi & Mojood, 2014; Noorian & Biria, 2010; Thomas & Finneman, 2013). Dafouz-Milne (2008) investigated on metadiscourse in editorial news. In her research, the persuasive role of metadiscourse markers is examined from a cross-linguistic perspective on two well-known newspapers, which were the *Spanish El Pais* and the *British The Times*. Noorian and Biria (2010) analysed the interpersonal metadiscourse features in persuasive journalism. Two elite newspapers in the United States and Iran, which were *The New York Times* and *Tehran Times* respectively were chosen. Thomas and Finneman (2013) conducted a research on the Leveson Inquiry from its inception to the conclusion of its hearing phase through journalistic "metadiscourse". They examined the comment from the editorial board in mainstream national daily and Sunday newspapers. Kuhi and Mojood (2014) investigated how metadiscourse was used and distributed within a genre on 60 English and Persian newspaper editorials and whether metadiscourse was affected by cultural factors and generic conventions. They analysed both interactive and interactional metadiscourse based on Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse. However, these researchers did not investigate the features of metadiscourse in-depth. On the whole, the previous studies mentioned earlier confirmed the presence of metadiscourse features in newspaper discourse, but those features were not investigated in detail because either only authorial stance or readers' engagement was analysed (Kuppers & Ho-Dac, 2010). Hence, this study is conducted to respond to the call to investigate further on metadiscourse features in business news (Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Gonzalez, 2005; Noorian & Biria, 2010).

Additionally, there are not many studies that investigate the readers' response on text with metadiscourse to ensure that the readers are well engaged with the text and have a sense of belonging with the content of the text (Camiciottoli, 2003; Mohd Nazriq, 2016; Rodway, 2018). Camiciottoli's (2003) exploratory study on on the effect of metadiscourse on ESP reading comprehension showed that appropriate use of metadiscourse in the text revealed a higher level of students' comprehension of the reading text. Another study that was conducted by Mohd Nazriq (2016) about a discourse of both Malaysian and Singaporean Mathematics textbooks at the final secondary level revealed that both Malaysian and Singaporean students preferred to read Singaporean Mathematics textbooks because they contained more

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metadiscourse markers that made them understand the questions and statements better. Furthermore, Rodway's (2018) study on metadiscourse use in a dialogic feedback practice indicated that the use of metadiscourse in the feedback reflected the interactivity of argumentation between the writer and readers. As texts are written to be read and as the studies above have shown that successful texts usually contain appropriate use of metadiscourse, it is interesting to examine the response of readers to texts that have metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse. Thus, it is pertinent to investigate the readers' responses on the use of metadiscourse in written news, particularly business news.

1.4   Purpose of the Study

The business news portals that were selected in this study were *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* because they are two popular news portals in Malaysia. *The Star Online* is the most visited online news portal in Malaysia (The Star Online: The Star Still M'sia's Preferred, 2018) and appears to be one of the top 30 Malaysian news sites (The Top 30 Malaysian News Sites: Top 30 Malaysian Newspapers & News Media, 2019), while *Focus Malaysia* has the highest circulation of 650,000 copies compared to other news portals (Lins.Ad: Newspapers, 2020).

Henceforth, this study examines the role of metadiscourse in business news. The general objective of this study is to investigate the linguistic realisations and categories of metadiscourse features in business news of *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia.* Business news from both news portals are compared in terms of metadiscourse used. The reason for analysing both news portals was to determine whether *Focus Malaysia*, which is currently new and has the highest circulation of copies, is on par in terms of quality of news reporting with *The Star Online*, especially in the reporting of business news.

At a micro level, this study is guided with specific objectives. First, awareness of the use of metadiscourse features for the *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* writers is analysed. The awareness is analysed in order to determine how aware the writers are on the proper use of metadiscourse in business news. Second, the use of metadiscourse features is compared in terms of linguistic realisations in business news. The objective is to find out the various linguistic expressions of metadiscourse used in *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*. Third, the study intends to analyse the types of metadiscourse features: textual and interpersonal metadiscourse used in *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*. The reason is to analyse the number of occurrences of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse used in business news. From the types of metadiscourse features, metadiscourse categories in business news are analysed specifically. A comparison is made on the frequency of metadiscourse categories in *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*. Lastly, responses of readers to the business news with metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse are also examined. The effort of creating awareness on appropriate metadiscourse use for business news writers could also involve readers to know how the readers respond to business news

with metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse. This could serve as a basis for the business news writers to construct news.

1.5   Research Questions

The study is conducted to answer the following research questions on *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* business news:

1. To what extent are the business news writers of *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* aware of the use of metadiscourse features?
2. What are the forms of metadiscourse categories found in *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* business news?
3. What categories of metadiscourse features are commonly used in *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* business news?
4. How do the readers respond to the business news with metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse?

1.6   Theoretical Framework

This study uses social constructionist theory as the main theory of the research. Social constructionist theory stems from the approach developed by Berger and Luckmann (1966) and interactionist approach proposed by Blumer (1969).

Social constructionist theory is the most suitable theory for this research. This theory is suitable for the business news writers because the focus is the effectiveness of how the writers interact with the readers (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Blumer, 1969). This theory also focuses on the process by which any body of knowledge comes to be accepted as reality. In this situation, the important criterion of effectiveness is acceptance of content (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). Blumer (1969) states that the most obvious source is the content that is exposed through public communication media such as online business news portals. Therefore, in achieving higher levels for the readers to understand the content of business news, they need to actively engage in reconstructing their existing knowledge through the interaction with the writers (Hyland, 2005). Social interaction between the writers and the readers in business news has an essential impact on the readers' cognitive and linguistic development in the knowledge construction (Nyikos & Hashimoto, 2007).

In the context of this study, the importance of metadiscourse in business news can be explained from the social constructionist point of view. If knowledge construction is a social act, then writing as meaning construction can also be viewed as a social activity (Hyland, 2005). Both the writers and the readers play an important role in the meaning construction in business news. In order for the online news to be well-written, metadiscourse features need be used (Mencher, 2011). Hyland (2005) emphasises that metadiscourse features allow the writers to articulate their meaning,

as well as consider their social influence and the impact that they have on those who interpret the meaning, especially the readers, who are the audience for the communication.

It is understood that news writing is a social process (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). Hyland (2005) states that the use of meaningful and appropriate metadiscourse features in business news can be seen as one of the social practices of the discourse community which the writers have to follow. The writers use metadiscourse to make choices in their writing to meet the readers' expectations (Hyland, 2005). As an example, the writers have balanced the metadiscourse use when writing business news. Tan and Wong (2014) explain that having too few metadiscourse features would render the news piece to be too authoritative and may not be well-received by the readers. On the other hand, Hyland (2005) finds that having too many metadiscourse features could reflect on the writers' over-confidence of their views, and this again, may not be well-received by the readers. It is evident that the metadiscourse use is closely knitted in the social processes and business news setting.

Communication between the news writers and readers is exchanged at the news portal (Giddens, 1984). The news portal is commonly the interface that allows the news writers to interact with the readers. The tenets of this theory are applied to help comprehend the connection between news writers and readers (Berger & Luckmann, 1966, Blumer, 1969). In this research, the interaction between the writers and readers is determined by the structure of the news, namely how the news is constructed (Giddens, 1984). When writers communicate with readers of news, both of them draw on metadiscourse features tGo straight to the pointo help draw meaning of interactions; at the same time those features are reproduced and modified by those interactions. These features, which are surrounded in social structure as meaning or signification is either comprehensible or incomprehensible by the readers of news (Hyland, 2005).

1.7   Conceptual Framework

In this study, the metadiscourse features in business news (*The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*) are determined by Berger and Luckmann's (1966) and Blumer's (1969) social constructionist theory and Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model (see Figure 1.1, p. 9). Social constructionist theory is the main theory of this research (theoretical framework) because writing is a dialogic act and the writers attempt to engage their readers through various linguistic cues. One of the linguistic cues is metadiscourse which is the main focus of this study. Social constructivist theory is linked to Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model because both emphasise interaction with writers and readers (see Section 2.6.5, p. 26). Dafouz-Milne's model is used to analyse the data (analytical framework). Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model is adapted in this research because the findings of the pilot study revealed that most of the metadiscourse categories from the model appeared in business news. This model consists of syntactic and pragmatic aspects of metadiscourse features; thus, it is comprehensive.

Figure 1.1 shows the conceptual framework of this study. In this study, firstly, the awareness of the business news writers is analysed through a Metadiscourse Awareness Test which is administered to 10 *The Star Online* and 10 *Focus Malaysia* writers. Secondly, the linguistic realisations and categories of metadiscourse features are analysed by adopting Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model as an analytical framework and using 50 *The Star Online* business news and 50 *Focus Malaysia* business news. Lastly, responses from readers to the business news are examined through news with and without metadiscourse, as well as writing prompts, which are given to 30 English major students.

Figure 1.1 : Conceptual framework of the research

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study covers the examination of metadiscourse features in business news. The two news portals chosen were *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*. In this study, 20 writers from the two news portals were selected to analyse their awareness of use of metadiscourse features in a Metadiscourse Awareness Test. A collection of 50 business news from *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia* respectively was also done to analyse the types of metadiscourse features: textual and interpersonal metadiscourse used, the frequency of metadiscourse categories, as well as the linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features. In addition, 30 English major students were chosen to examine their responses as readers of the business news with metadiscourse and those without metadiscourse, as well as the writing prompts.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study shed light on the metadiscourse use in business news writing. There are essential areas, in which this study is beneficial for curriculum designers, writers and students.

Firstly, the findings of this study assist curriculum designers to develop more relevant resources to practitioners to ensure some form of structured guidelines are provided by course lecturers to students. The various linguistic expressions taken from the news samples will serve as a good example for demonstrating metadiscourse at work (Yuryevna, 2012). Roush (2006) states that none of the textbooks has structured guidance in reporting and writing about industry, the economy, markets, and other business-related issues. New graduates from communication courses often believe that they have good working experience but often lack real-life experience due to the lack of exposure to structured guidance (Hodges & Burchell, 2003). Hence, this study provides an important opportunity to advance the understanding of metadiscourse in the academic setting.

The findings of this research also heighten the writers' awareness in engaging the readers to the news text. The appropriate wording of business news through the use of metadiscourse features by the writers can contribute to readers' engagement to the content of the business news (Noorian & Biria, 2010), as well as clarity of the business news. The use of metadiscourse is analysed to determine whether the content and ideas of the business news would be conveyed clearly to the readers (Kuhi & Mojood, 2014). Thus, this study offers some important insights in metadiscourse for the business news writers.

The findings also provide journalism students with prior knowledge, interest and curiosity about language and structure on how they could construct business news (Arnold, 1991; Breen, 1985; Canado & Esteban, 2005; Morrow, 1977). Kaur (2013) states that it is vital for the course lecturers to engage students in meaningful learning experiences in various courses offered in the university. Therefore, the

findings contribute to research on business news by exposing the students on metadiscourse features in the working place as business English news is vital for them. This study provides an exciting opportunity to advance the knowledge of metadiscourse among the journalism students.

1.10   Definition of Key Terms

Business News

Business news consist of similar themes, such as latest business news on investments and expert advice in terms of economic climate (Hewitt, 2002). Business news on decisions regarding corporate strategy, marketing, operations, human capital, public presence, and governance have a direct impact on our society (Bowman & Willis, 2003). In this study, business news of similar genre are selected to analyse the metadiscourse features that are in them.

Metadiscourse Features

Metadiscourse is a linguistic material referring to the text that is developed over a period of time, to the writers, and to the specified readers of the text (Hyland & Tse. 2004). In this study, metadiscourse features engage the readers to the discourse, as well as reveals the writers' authority by signalling their attitude and opinion towards the content of the discourse. Metadiscourse features also involve the readers by acknowledging or involving them in the discourse and by informing them about the writers' opinions towards both texts and readers themselves (Hyland, 2005). There are two types of metadiscourse features, which are textual metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse.

a) Textual Metadiscourse

Textual metadiscourse is used to ensure that the text will be coherent for a particular audience by organising propositional information (Hyland, 1999). It is the decisions of the writers to emphasise relationships and aspects of organisation to ensure that the readers understand the text, are guided in their reading, as well as are aware of the writers' interpretations (Hyland & Tse, 2004). In this study, textual metadiscourse acknowledges the involvement of the readers in the text in terms of the writers' assessment of conveying the message across precisely and accurately.

b) Interpersonal Metadiscourse

Interpersonal metadiscourse allows expressions of writers on their opinions towards their propositional information and their readers (Hyland, 1999). It guides the writers to show their personalities to the content of the texts and characterise the communication and engagement they have with the readers (Hyland & Tse, 2004). In this study, interpersonal metadiscourse relates to the genre of the discourse and

influences writers' closeness, expression of attitude, commitment to propositions and degree of readers' involvement to maintain the relationship between writers and readers.

Metadiscourse Awareness

Metadiscourse awareness is important in a written text (Jalififar & Shooshtari, 2011). It draws the attention of practitioners to ensure that lexical and structural features of metadiscourse were used correctly. Moreover, it helps the meaning to be brought about by the use of different forms of metadiscourse (Al-Rubaye, 2015). In this study, metadiscourse awareness is analysed through exposure and use of metadiscourse in business news.

Forms of Metadiscourse Features

Language is always linked with creativity. Thus, each metadiscourse feature can be expressed in a variety of forms, which are also referred to as linguistic realisations (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007). There are either similarities or differences in patterns of forms for the expression of metadiscourse features (Noorian & Biria, 2010). In this study, forms of metadiscourse features are analysed by using Dafouz-Milne's (2008) model of metadiscourse.

Readers' Responses

Readers' responses focus on the readers and their experience of the text (Sipe, 1999). Throughout the reading, neither the readers or the text is fixed, but the readers' responses which influence the text (Arnold, 2006). In other words, the relationship between the readers and the text as a site for the production of knowledge is not only the interpretation of knowledge. Readers, text and context of reading collaborate in the continued inventing and interpreting of knowledge (Sumara, 2002). In this study, readers' responses are analysed through the reading of business news and their reactions towards the news.

Engagement

Engagement is considered a voice that represents itself in acknowledging, engaging with, challenging, or aligning itself with other utterances (White, 2003; White, 2004). It is defined within a social perspective of communication, as proposed by Bakhtin (1981). When adopting engagement with others, the writers can be said to take in some form of potential negotiation with the readers (Fairclough, 1989). Engagement is analysed through the involvement, acknowledgement and connection of readers to the text of business news in this study.

1.11   Summary

This chapter discusses in detail the background of the study, problem statement, research questions, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, significance of research, and definition of key terms. The objectives of this research are to determine the awareness of the use of metadiscourse features for the business news writers of *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia*, the linguistic realisations and categories of metadiscourse features in business news of *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia,* as well as the readers' responses on use of metadiscourse features in business news of *The Star Online* and *Focus Malaysia.*

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