Exploring Argumentation in Print Media: A Comparative Metadiscourse Analysis of British and Pakistani English Newspapers' Letters to the Editor

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Abstract

Letters to the Editor (LTE) is an important forum for public interaction in the print media. It is considered as a source of informing opinion of the public it represents and serves. Being a medium to express public opinions, the discourse of this genre is argumentative in nature and is the focus of this research. Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse has been chosen as the framework of this study to identify the interactive and interactional discourse markers and explore the persuasive strategies used to guide and involve the readers within the text. Comparative textual analysis is applied for studying metadiscourse in the British and Pakistani English Broadsheet Newspapers due to their analogous format and objectives. Systematic Sampling Technique was used to collect a corpus of 100 letters, 25 each from the British Newspapers (The Guardian and Daily Telegraph) and 25 each from the Pakistani English Newspapers (Dawn and The NEWS). The results reveal a dominance of Interactional Metadiscourse over the Interactive Metadiscourse among the newspapers. Furthermore, the British writers are observed to develop an impartial argument with the factual information. Conversely, the Pakistani English letters focus on the cohesion and coherence of the content and the comprehension of the stance. The findings of the study are useful in developing linguistic and rhetorical awareness among users of English language of various cultures by enabling them to concentrate more on interacting with their addressees along with the organization of their information, which would make them more efficient in their argumentative and creative writing skills.

Keywords*:* Metadiscourse, Argumentation, Newspapers, Letters-to-the-Editor, Pakistani English, British English

1. Introduction

The concept of argumentation has been defined by van Eemeren et al. (1996, p. 5) as a verbal and social process of reasoning in order to attack or defend a stand point for the listeners and readers with the help of a constellation of propositions. Three important factors can be identified on the basis of this definition. Firstly, argumentation is an active process, which involves the use of language to instigate a particular course of action among interlocutors. Secondly, it is a social process, which involves the reflection of ideologies, opinions, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors prevalent in the society. Lastly, it is a mutual process in which participants of a discourse are equally involved in the production, consumption and dissemination of information. Similarly, Richardson (2007) proposed the Rhetorical Triangle in which he considered the arguer, the argument and the audience as essential components of the argumentation process. Meanwhile for Aristotle (as cited in Richardson, 2007) the rhetorical argumentation is comprised of three

components: namely forensic (defending or accusing past actions), epideictic (targeting an individual character) and deliberative (focusing the future course of action).

Among many types of discourses which reflect a variety of linguistic features and strategies of argumentation to achieve the communicative purpose of interaction in a particular prevailing social context, opinion discourse in the news media has sustained a keen interest from researchers (such as Asher, Benamara & Mathieu, 2009; Shi-xu, 2000). One of these argumentative genres, meant to provide a reflection of society, is Letters to the Editor (LTE) of a newspaper (Richardson, 2001). It is taken as an important part of public discourse (Gregory & Hutchins, 2004) because it not only provides an open access to the readership in order to comment on the daily issues highlighted by the editors and journalists but also acts as an alternate forum for the public to interact and share their attitudes, opinions and beliefs with one another. This section has its significance in relation to the declining face to face interaction in daily life as highlighted by Putnam (2000). And, because these letters are used in developing and sharing the identity of a newspaper, they stand as the most important feature of a newspaper (Kapoor, 1995).

The selection criteria of these letters by the editorial board of a newspaper determine the news value and interpersonal function of a newspaper. Letters with similar notions and themes are arranged together reflecting the editorial mindset. The premise of a linguistic analysis begins from the assumption that there is always a reason behind the manner in which a text is structured (Richardson, 2007). This reason can be termed as its communicative purpose (Swales, 1990) which has a material impact on the audience of that text and requires an exploration (Eagleton, 1981). In spite of being an understudied genre, researchers have started exploring the content and the strategies of production and consumption used by the participants of this opinion discourse. As every argumentation aims at modifying the existing state of affairs (Perelman, 1969:11), LTE exemplify an ideal site to scrutinize the manner in which this modification occurs in different social and cultural contexts.

2. Opinion Discourse and Letters to the Editor

Since LTE fall in the category of opinion discourse, the relationship of opinion discourse and argumentation in newspaper genres cannot be ignored (Masroor & Ahmad, 2017). The aforementioned perspective has been explicitly corroborated by the conspicuous differences revealed by Masroor (2013) in the investigation of argumentative and persuasive strategies used across the cultures in Malaysian and Pakistani English Newspaper Editorials, the findings of which can ultimately benefit language users of these cultures (Masroor, 2016). Her findings revealed the authoritative and critical nature of Pakistani newspapers. Conversely, convincing strategies were extensively employed within the Malaysian newspaper editorials. The findings of the study revealed the necessity of conducting cross cultural studies of media discourses examining argumentative strategies. The analysis also reflected extensive use of metadiscourses and how its use might differ among various cultures. This comprehension about varying use of linguistics choices among cultures can be subsequently applied in the teaching of English language to young learners. Milne (2003) explored the metadiscourse used in print media discourse and newspaper genres. The focus of her research was the editorial discourse of Spanish 'El Pais' and English 'The Times' newspapers. As the editorials are ideal examples of opinion making discourse, they are comprised of myriad of rhetorical and persuasive strategies used by writers for the representation of claims and arguments. The results revealed a significant influence

of language and culture over metadiscourse used in the editorial discourse. The interactive and textual devices such as code glosses and sequence markers were used extensively in the Spanish editorials. Contrary to that, comparative and adversative markers were the most common interactional and interpersonal devices used in *The Times*. These results were used by Milne (2003) to elaborate an inclination of Spanish writers to use more words in the expression of opinion. Consequently, there is an extensive use of transition markers to connect these outlooks. Conversely, the propensity of English authors is to offer a contrastive analysis of shared propositions leading towards the application of adversative devices within the editorials. Therefore, the differences can be considered cultural and genre-based conventions which are mutually acknowledged and recognized by the members of different discourse communities.

Kuhi and Mojood (2014) conducted a cross linguistic metadiscourse analysis of Persian and English newspaper editorials. The corpus of sixty editorials collected from ten prestigious newspapers from the two cultures contained an abundant use of attitudinal metadiscourse considered by Abdollahzadeh (2010) as the primary characteristic of a dialogic interaction and an explicit aspect of persuasive and argumentative genres (Hyland, 2005). According to Dafouz (2003), a steadfast persona is also established with the use of interactional metadiscourse in the studied data. Although, the findings have provided an insight with respect to the use of cross linguistic and cross cultural metadiscourse in editorial discourse, metadiscourse studies on newspapers are limited, paving the way for further investigations particularly into Letters written to the Editor because the ideologies of newspapers and the voices of their readership are merged and integrated within this genre. Although Sheron Beder (2004) has discussed in detail about the power of media in manipulating and molding the news and the way editorials are used to cover specific issues and views with the masses, the genre still remains worth exploring, particularly across languages to identify the techniques used in LTE to the editor which are particular to the communicative purpose of the particular countries and cultures.

The LTE Section is a promising area for a linguistic investigation as it exhibits the diversity found in the general public's differences of opinions, attitudes, behaviors and beliefs. Furthermore, it provides a reflection of people's norms and expectations in relation to the particular society they are living in. However, limited scholarly studies have linguistically explored the communicative purpose underlying these letters. Thus, the current study focuses on the use of discursive strategies employed within newspaper LTE by examining Interactive and Interactional Metadiscourse markers.

3. Metadiscourse: A Conceptual Tour

The concept of Metadiscourse has established itself as an important notion in the current analytical study of discourse and second language teaching. The term, Metadiscourse, was used at the outset for referring to discourse about discourse (Amiryousefi & Rasekh, 2010). Now, its meaning has been extended to include those linguistic strategies which are used by the writers to organize their information, engage with the readers and reflect their attitude towards their content (Aguilar, 2008). Subsequently, it can be considered as a social activity used to have an impact on the manner in which different ideas are presented and realized (Hyland & Tse, 2005; Hyland, 2004; Hyland, 2005). Fundamentally, Metadiscourse states the belief that communication is not just a limited exchange of knowledge, services and goods. Conversely, it portrays the personalities of conversationalists involved in an interaction along with their attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and outlook (Amiryousefi & Rasekh, 2010). It has been explicitly elaborated by Hyland (2000) that

the theory of metadiscourse is analogous to a walk taken by a reader on a path laid down by a writer.

Metadiscourse provides an ideal outline to comprehend the process of communication as a social activity. It vividly illustrates those schemes and linguistic strategies which are applied by the authors to portray their attitudes in their writings and consequently making their discourses more engaging and interesting for the readers (Mina & Biria, 2017). This relation of the interlocutor with text and its context increases the integrity and trustworthiness as the author reflects an awareness of the background knowledge of their readership through the language they use (Hyland, 2000). Nevertheless, acts of speaking and writing are never impartial and neutral (Simon et al., 2006). Conversely, these are always affected by thoughts and interests of producers of those means of interaction (Aguilar, 2008). It directly relates with one of the three fundamental attributes of metadiscourse: engagement with readers. The other two traits being the organization of discourse and reflection of personality and attitude are directly associated with the aforementioned functions.

The study of metadiscourse is not a novel approach as Malinowski (1923) identified the use of language not only to transfer information but also to form and maintain representative meanings. Analogous findings have been observed in the domain of Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 1992), English Language Teaching (Skelton, 1987), Academic Writing (Chafe, 1986) and Pragmatics (Fraser, 1990). As communication is a mutual exchange of information, the role of a speaker or writer becomes significant to be aware of the needs, perceptions and interests of the target audience. Metadiscourse is an important resource to measure the manner in which an interlocutor projects language to meet the expectations of target audience consequently making communication effective and explicit (Mina & Biria, 2017). Grabe and Kaplan (1996) proposed five fundamental factors which influence the writing process. Proximity is the extent of closeness which exists between the interlocutors and directly affects the use of interactive discourse markers (Biber, 1988). Similarly, the number, status of readership and their background knowledge also structures writing. According to Wolfson (1989), similar status results into an increased use of collaborative discourse. The degree of relevance is another important factor to determine the use of words in constructing a piece of information. Although addressees and receivers of information are considered important in a conversation, they are also considered to be symbolized in the language of an addresser (Kirsch &Roen, 1990).

The significance of Metadiscourse can also be realized by its interpretation as indicated by Lautamatti (1978) who considers it as important linguistic information which adds to the meaning of a text but has no link with the propositional meaning of the text. The same idea has been shared by Williams (1981) to define metadiscourse as a language not related to the subject of a text. Kopple (1985) has characterized it as explicitly indicating the manifestation of an author instead of explicating propositional information. Crismore (1983, 1993) considers metadiscourse as the linguistic imposition of a writer to dictate the organization, interpretation and evaluation of a text for readers. According to Halliday (1994), everything which can be comprehended, affirmed, argued upon, explained and denied etc. falls under propositional meaning. Albeit, it is taken to be framed within the text, yet it is the use of language which determines its clarification and explanation by the author. Therefore, propositional and interactional meanings are two sides of the same coin which are vital for appropriate understanding of a discourse. This supports Beauvais' (1989) claim that metadiscourse facilitates the comprehension of arguments incorporated by an author in their text as it develops an explicit link between assertion and proposition.

Metadiscourse is generally studied by analyzing linguistic markers which are explicit and vividly reflected in the linguistic expression of a writer. However, the attitude of a writer is also revealed through non-verbal signs (Crismore et al., 1993, pp. 48). Emoticons, exclamation marks, highlighting, underlining and capitalization are some of the fundamental examples of written non-verbal metadiscourse. In the case of print media discourse, the quality of printing, publisher's position and newspaper size also determines the impact of metadiscourse on readers. Nevertheless, the main focus in metadiscourse studies is towards the rhetorical aspects of a text. Moreover, sentence sequence is investigated to highlight the stance of an author organized within a text. All these inquiries reinforce how writing is a collaborative process which is based on the assumption of a writer about the background knowledge of readers and likewise the anticipation of readership with respect to the motives of an author in the written discourse (Nystrand, 1989). This comprehension is achieved by the analytical study of individual elements found in a text and lesser emphasis on the collective propositional meaning of its'content (Crismore et al., 1993).

Metadiscourse is usually investigated by closely analyzing the textual role performed by linguistic markers. Conjuncts and adverbials are the most conspicuous indicators of the interpersonal function of language. Due to their multifarious nature, these markers are named 'Text Connectives' (Kopple, 1985) and Logical Connectives (Crismore, 1993) as they can also be oriented towards the ideational meaning of the text. This duality of role is vital in building a logical and coherent discourse among communicators. Textual function is also significant because of its explanatory characteristics that are used to merge interpersonal, ideational and experiential aspects of a text. This availability of a single feature of language for its interpretation consequently turns it into a discourse. Thus, textuality can be defined as arrangement of a text keeping in view its context in such a manner that its reference towards the world outside the text forms the propositional meaning whereas its orientation towards discourse and readership develops into metadiscourse.

An important aspect of metadiscourse is its emphasis on the relationship of the world within the text and experiences outside it. Linguistic markers are usually analyzed with respect to their exhibition of external events (Martin, 1992). Conversely, these elements are vital in building a logical and coherent argument. The communicative nature of these expressions is a fundamental subject of interest and has consequently been chosen for analysis in this research inquiry. Metadiscourse being a pragmatic guide has provided an ideal framework for the manifestation of propositional content in an argumentative manner. The judgment and inferences of a writer are also of prime importance in the study of metadiscourse (Palmer, 1990). These are revealed by analyzing the use of epistemic modal verbs within different statements. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of these markers differentiating interactive meaning from the propositional content is fundamental in metadiscourse studies and can be explored by a thorough categorization of metadiscourse.

As most of metadiscourse studies have been conducted on academic discourse genre (Aguilar, 2008; Mina & Biria, 2017), the current research is a novel attempt to apply Ken Hyland's Interpersonal Model on LTE. Keeping in view the significance of metadiscourse in structuring arguments, this study aims to better understand the genre of LTE and how the line of argumentation, stance and point of view varies across cultures based on various political and social contexts.

4. Ken Hyland's Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse

Hyland's Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (2005) was chosen to analyze how writers create an image of credibility through their LTE. As a text-based rhetorical tool (Chu & Yu, 2003), it has been used to examine various written genres including academic research articles (Hyland, 1999; Dahl, 2004), post-graduate dissertations (Bunton, 1999), casual conversations (Schiffrin, 1980) and school textbooks (Crismore, 1989). Utilizing these works as a guideline, the current investigation studied the opinion discourse of British and Pakistani English LTE published in newspapers through the lens of metadiscourse.

According to Hyland (2005), the Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse refers to the manner in which a writer communicates with self, readers and the written content. It realizes the situational peculiarity of discourse with respect to the changing context based on the Interactive-Interactional categories of discourse proposed by Thompson and Thetela (1995). It recognizes evaluative and organizational characteristics of a conversation (Hyland, 2001; Hyland and Tse, 2004) and takes into account stance along with other aspects of engagement used by a writer. The Interpersonal Model (Hyland, 2005) is built from the previous frameworks of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2000) and divided into two major dimensions. Interactive Metadiscourse is used to manage the flow of information and Interactional Metadiscourse being more personal is used to engage the reader explicitly in the discourse. Interactive Metadiscourse indicates the awareness of the writer about the interests, background knowledge, processing abilities and rhetorical expectations of the readers. It is studied in the text by analyzing Transition markers, Frame markers, Endophoric markers, Evidentials and Code Glosses which are used to guide the reader through the text. Likewise, Interactional Metadiscourse reveals those linguistic forces which are used by the writes to comment on their own content, thus reflecting the way a text and its meaning is mutually constructed along with the readers. Markers studied to explore this metadiscourse include Hedges, Boosters, Attitude Markers, Engagement Markers and Self-Mentions. These markers play a pivotal role in making the text argumentative and persuasive thus involving the readers by developing their interest. The details of Metadiscourse markers as proposed by Hyland (2005) along with examples are explained in the subsequent paragraphs.

4.1 Interactive Metadiscourse

According to Hyland (2005), the strategies which are applied by a writer to shape a text keeping in view the processing abilities, rhetorical expectations, probable knowledge and interests of readers come under the category of interactive metadiscourse. Through the use of such strategies, an argument is constructed in a manner so that the intended meaning of the author directs its interpretation by the reader(s). Similarly, it is used to guide readers through a text by arranging the ideational information into a form which appears convincing and logical. The interactive discourse markers are further classified into five basic categories.

4.1.1 Transition Markers

The linguistic expressions which facilitate readers to comprehend logical and rational links between different phases of an argument are known as transition markers. These signs are used to indicate comparative, consequential and additive relations between different statements of an interaction. These lexes play a pivotal role to link ideas within a text for the readers. Additive elements are used to include supporting details in an argument. *By the way, moreover, and, furthermore* are some of the basic examples.

4.1.2 Frame Markers

Lexes which are utilized to structure an argument by defining its textual limitations and boundaries are generally known as Frame Markers. These expressions are employed to anticipate, label, sequence and shift claims in order to form an explicit discourse for interlocutors. The motives of an interaction are also revealed with markers like *my purpose is, I argue here* etc. and likewise, these are used to denote a shift of subject within the discourse e.g. *let us return, now, well* etc.

4.1.3 Endophoric Markers

Linguistic expressions which are used to point towards the other sections of a text are known as Endophoric Markers. *As noted earlier, aforementioned, see figure* etc. are some of the conspicuous examples of these signs. These markers are used to highlight superfluous propositional content for readers to comprehend the intended meaning and perspectives of a writer with improved means and therefore enable writers to support an argument.

4.1.4 Evidentials

'Metalinguistic representation of ideas from another source' (Thomas & Hawes, 1994) are generally categorized as Evidentials as these are used to channel the elucidation of reader and develops an authorial domination over the subject matter of an interaction. The significance of these linguistic markers lies in their support to a persuasive motive as these references are extensively used to defend an argument. '*According to A', 'B has stated that'* are some of the common examples of these markers.

4.1.5 Code Glosses

The discourse markers which provide supplementary and extraneous intelligence with respect to the aforesaid content through its explanation, clarification, rephrasing and elaboration are known as Code Glosses. These expressions are utilized to ensure that the proposed meaning of the author and the aimed interpretation are received appropriately by readership. The anticipation of an author regarding the contextual familiarity is portrayed with phrases exemplified as *in other words, for example, such as* etc.

4.2 Interactional Metadiscourse

The extent of collaboration and reciprocal construction of textual meaning among readers and writers come under the Interactional Metadiscourse. It involves the strategies used by a writer to explicitly involve readers by holding an assumed interchange of ideologies and perspectives. Readers are allowed to react on the forthcoming information. Due to the dialogic nature of these discourse markers, writer is able to develop a persona which represents the mutually shared outlooks of community. An author can discern and comment on the written content consequently associating himself or herself with the reader. If the attention is turned towards the readers of a text, they are actively involved in the meaning making process using Interactional Metadiscourse. Readers become more conscious regarding the author's viewpoint towards the content and its intended receivers. Moving onwards, these markers are not only utilized to acknowledge the perspectives of readership but also to censure and challenge the ideologies of the opposition (White, 2003). There are five modes of developing Interactional Metadiscourse in writing which are discussed as follows:

4.2.1 Hedges

The linguistic devices which are used by a writer to identify and indicate alternate expressions and perspectives ultimately reserving an absolute assurance of the propositional content are known as Hedges. Information is exhibited as estimation such as *might*, *perhaps*, *possibly*, in contrast with explicit statistics consequently paving the way for conciliation. The extent of veracity and consistency that a declaration possesses is portrayed by a writer through these discourse markers. These expressions are also applied in the refutation of an argument (Hyland, 1998). It can be inferred from the aforesaid discussion that a proposition can be the result of a conceivable deduction instead of evident facts and figures.

4.2.2 Boosters

The expressions which are used to delimit the diversity of views are generally termed as Boosters. *Obviously, clearly* are some of the important examples. These words are used to express firmness of writers towards their beliefs. Boosters are meant to recognize and emphasize the authenticity of content by developing affinity with the readers at the outset followed by a mutual defense of a proposition against opposing claims (Hyland, 1999). These markers are used to intensify the proposed argumentation for which a joint familiarity is requisite to elicit a common deduction between readers and writers. In other words, the Boosters are applied to manifest assurance of presented content.

4.2.3 Attitude Markers

Linguistic Devices which are applied to signify the attitude of a writer towards the written information are known as Attitude Markers. These expressions are not related with the anticipated pertinence, veracity and position of the presented material. Conversely, these words are used to express agreement, significance, astonishment, compulsion and aggravation etc. *Prefer, agree, hopefully, fortunately* are the common Attitude verbs which are utilized to construct Interactional Metadiscourse.

4.2.4 Self-mentions

The extent of unequivocal manifestation of an author in his or her writing is analyzed by the application of linguistic markers identified as Self Mention. Possessive Adjectives like *mine, ours* and first-person pronouns like *I, we* are the most conspicuous examples of self-depiction (Ivanic, 1998). A text remains incomplete without the exhibition of writer's stance with respect to arguments and readers. This demonstration of authorial distinctiveness in terms of stance is achieved through Self Mention Discourse Markers.

4.2.5 Engagement Markers

Linguistic devices which are utilized to vividly involve readers within conversation are known as Engagement Markers. These expressions are not only meant to direct readers' consideration but are also applied to make receiver of information an active contributor in the meaning making process of discourse. The main intent behind these discourse markers is to modulate the participation of readers within the text. There are two major functions performed by Engagement Markers. The first is the anticipation of reader's expectation to develop harmony by the use of interjections like *you may notice, by the way* and second person pronouns like *your, you* in an argument. The second function is the linguistic placement of audience at pivotal instances by anticipating their probable censure followed by its logical clarification. Deontic Modals like *must,*

should, Directives like *note, see* and Interrogatives are mostly used to point towards mutually shared information.

5. Research Methodology

LTE collected from prestigious and well-read newspapers in their respective countries with a global readership, formulated the population for the study. *Dawn* and *The News International* are the two renowned broadsheets chosen for the collection of Pakistani LTE. On the other hand, *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Guardian* are the British Broadsheets selected for this study. Systematic Sampling was applied for collecting the samples of LTE from British and Pakistani English Newspapers in order to handle the large data and to spread the results more evenly (Kothari, 2004). Keeping in view the requirements and the time frame for this inquiry, first five LTE from each of the British and Pakistani English Newspapers were the focus of this research and were collected for a period of five days starting from Monday till Friday (from 3rd August 2015 to 7th August 2015), making a corpus of twenty-five letters from each newspaper. Thus, the total data comprised of hundred letters containing fifty from each country's newspapers.

This study makes use of qualitative research methods, which concentrate on answering questions related to the understanding of context, perspectives and cultural influences (Silverman, 2010). A thorough understanding of the framework guided the procedure of analysis. On qualitative grounds, the present study involved an understanding of use and function of the words used by the writers of LTE of British and Pakistani English newspapers in relation with their context and codifying them in accordance with the metadiscourse categories and markers outlined in Hyland's model. All words, lexical choices, arguments and sentences of the sampled letters were scrutinized and codified accordingly. Furthermore, it utilized statistical procedures to convert the qualitative data into numerical forms. Each codified entity's frequency was computed which developed the respective percentages of occurrence for each main-category and sub-category of metadiscourse markers. Afterward, the resulting numerical figures were converted into tabulated and graphical forms for a thorough presentation of the outcomes. Subsequently, the analysis of British LTE was compared with that of Pakistani English LTE. This facilitated developing a comprehensive comparative study of the linguistic strategies used by authors of the letters for making their letters persuasive and argumentative with the help of metadiscourse.

6. Results

The metadiscourse analysis of LTE revealed a key contribution of metadiscourse in argumentative and persuasive compositions (Hyland, 2005). Table 1 below provides average word count of and average use of metadiscourse markers in the letters of the two countries.

Table 6.1. Average Word Count and Metadiscourse Markers in British and Pakistani LTEs

Newspaper(s)	Average (Av) Word Count	Average (Av) Metadiscourse Markers
British (Br)	3956.5	451.5
Pakistani (Pk)	4164.5	440

The percentages of individual metadiscourse markers were collected by dividing the average frequency of each marker with the total metadiscourse instances as observed within the British and Pakistani English newspapers. The details are presented in Table 2 below.

Table 6.2. Frequency and Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers in British and Pakistani LTEs

S No.	Metadiscourse Markers	Quantitative Distribution			
		Br. Av. Frequency	Br. Percentage	Pk. Av. Frequency	Pk. Percentage
	Interactive	30.7%	41%		
1	Transition	59.5	13.2%	106.5	24.2%
2	Frame Markers	12	2.6%	11.5	2.6%
3	Endophoric Markers	0.5	0.1%	4	0.9%
4	Evidentials	37	8.2%	24.5	5.6%
5	Code Glosses	30	6.6%	34	7.7%
	Interactional	69.1%	58.8%		
6	Hedges	30.5	6.7%	16.5	3.7%
7	Boosters	90.5	20%	84.5	19.2%
8	Attitude Markers	57	12.6%	69.5	15.8%
9	Self Mention	83.5	18.5%	54.5	12.3%
10	Engagement Markers	51	11.3%	34.5	7.8%

Table 6.3 below presents the total instances of metadiscourse in the British and Pakistani LTEs.

*Table 6.3. Metadiscourse used within British and Pakistani LTEs*

Total Metadiscourse	1783
The Guardian	539
The Telegraph	364
DAWN	494
The News (International)	386

According to Table 6.2, the percentages of metadiscourse in British and Pakistani LTE indicate an analogous pattern of more interactional markers as compared with interactive metadiscourse. In other words, the authors of British and Pakistani English LTE pay emphasis on interacting with readers more than organization of a text. Due to the same reason, interactional metadiscourse is considered as the central aspect of reader-writer dialogue (Abdullazadeh, 2010). Kuhi and Mojood (2014) have elaborated this idea as the focus on relationship instead of the comprehension of content. According to Dafouz (2003), interpersonal or interactional metadiscourse is used by an interlocutor to develop an attractive, reliable and convincing persona for readership. The focus on interactional aspect in communication within LTEs can be witnessed through its percentage within British LTE which is 69.1% (30.7 Interactive) and 58.8% (41% Interactive) within Pakistani English LTE.

However, language, textual composition and contrastive rhetoric are reflections of culture and traditions (Moreno, 1997:5). Connor (1996) has also argued that every language is comprised of its own idiosyncratic conventions and norms including the uniqueness of first and second language. Keeping in view the perspectives of Ansary and Babaii (2009) regarding newspapers genre as ideal for cross cultural linguistic investigations being argumentative and persuasive in nature, a detailed and comprehensive analysis of interactive and interactional metadiscourse

markers revealed a variation in frequencies of different metadiscourse markers in British and Pakistani English LTE as shown in the Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1. Comparison of Metadiscourse Markers in British and Pakistani LTEs
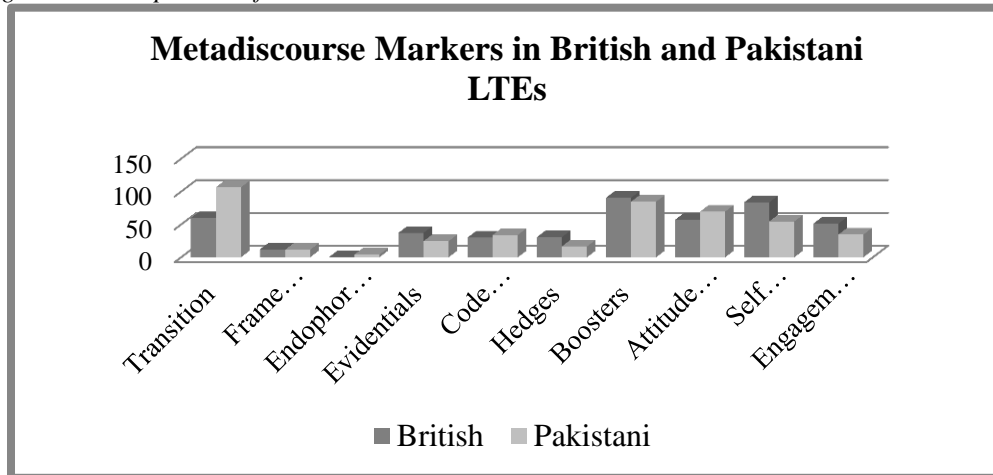
It was observed that Boosters (20%) were the most frequent marker in the British newspapers whereas these were preceded by transition markers (24%) within Pakistani English newspapers. Self-Mention (18%) was the second most extensively used discourse marker in the British data and the same position was occupied by Boosters (19%) within the Pakistani English LTE. The third place was occupied by Attitude Markers (13%) within the British newspapers and Pakistani English newspapers (16%). However, these attitude markers were accompanied with transition markers (13%) in the British data. The application of Engagement Markers was recorded to be 11% consequently placed fourth in the overall distribution of metadiscourse in British LTE. However, these were next to Self-Mention discourse markers (12%) within the corpus of Pakistani English LTE. The percentage of Evidentials used in the British data was similar (8%) to the use of Engagement markers and Code Glosses within the Pakistani English newspapers and therefore, placed at fifth position in the use of metadiscourse in LTE. The percentage of Evidentials was 5% thus placed at sixth in the Pakistani English corpus of letters. The application of Code Glosses was comparatively less in the Pakistani corpus and thus were placed sixth with a percentage of 7% alongside hedges (7%) which were allocated the seventh place with the percentage of 4% as recorded in Pakistani LTE. Despite an analogous percentage of 3%, Frame Markers occupied seventh position in the British newspapers and eighth position in the Pakistani English LTE. The least frequent metadiscourse marker was observed to be the Endophoric markers (0% in British and 1% in Pakistani English LTE). A pictorial representation of these percentages have been provided in the form of pie charts followed by a detailed discussion on metadiscourse markers as used within the LTE of four newspapers.

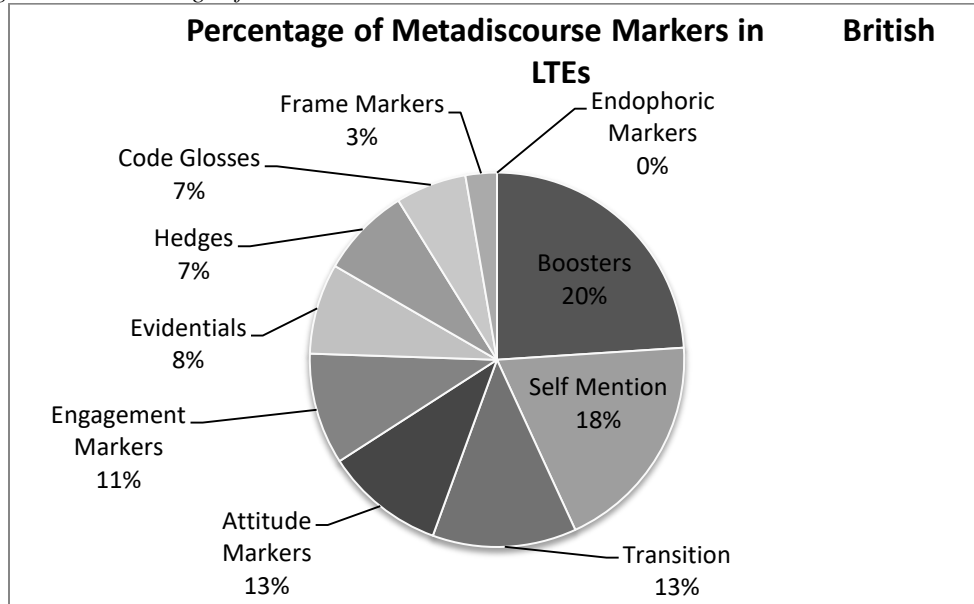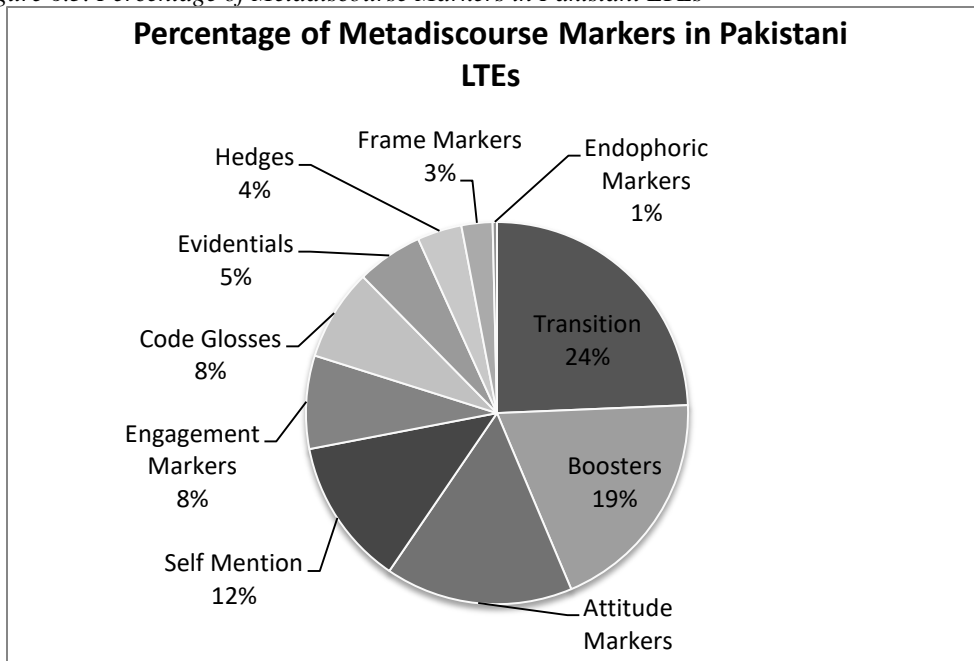*Figure 6.2. Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers in British LTEs*

Figure 6.3. Percentage of Metadiscourse Markers in Pakistani LTEs

7. Discussion

The linguistic structure of an argument can be elaborated keeping in view the aforementioned results. According to the obtained percentages, the interactional metadiscourse dominated the interactive metadiscourse within British and Pakistani English LTE. The specific findings in this respect are as under:

7.1 Interactional Metadiscourse

There was an extensive use of Boosters, Attitude Markers, Self Mention and Engagement Markers including a limited application of hedges. In other words, the prime focus of authors within LTE is to gain solidarity with readership to determine their future course of action.

The writers portray an assertive nature and manifest firmness towards the presented information. This assurance and emphasis on the authenticity of content along with mutual defense against the opposing claims delimits the diversity and makes the authorial viewpoint conspicuous. All the aforementioned functions are performed by the use of boosters. Some of the pertinent examples from British and Pakistani English LTE have been shared as follows:

> **"Think** what you are saying to a poor woman in India or Africa, where populations are on track to double soon." (The Guardian, G1, August 3, 2015).
> "SIR- We **must harden** our hearts." (The Telegraph, TT1, August 3, 2015).
> "WITH the PPP co-chairman holding meetings of his party in Dubai for reshuffling in the Sindh cabinet, **it has become clear** that Karachi has lost its status as capital of Sindh." (DAWN, D4, August 3, 2015).
> "The government **should have** relocated them before going for the demolition operation." (The News, TN1, August 3, 2015).

This assertive nature of authors in LTE is accompanied with the evaluation of probable veracity with respect to the shared knowledge. Furthermore, writer intervenes within the text to share personal perspectives. The Attitude Markers are used to portray an author's commitment and develop his/her reliability consequently reinforcing the persuasiveness of an argument to gain agreement with readership. The explored textual examples of Attitude Markers from the selected LTEs have been discussed below:

> **"Thankfully**, many others have taken the opposite view… and the City remains untouched." (The Guardian, G18, August 6, 2015).
> **"Sadly,** the book also charts an increasingly dysfunctional relationship between the RAF… at broad level." (The Telegraph, TT3, August 3, 2015).
> "While **it is satisfactory** to note that… have been left in the lurch." (DAWN, D1, August 3, 2015)"
> **"It is also very strange** that there are… except the SCO (Special Communication Organisation)." (The News, TN5, August 3, 2015).

These attitude markers lead towards the exhibition of writer's stance eliciting an authorial distinctiveness. This self-depiction that strengthens an argument is achieved by the use of self-mention markers as exemplified from the obtained data presented below.

> **"My** final point is that Professor Beresford seems to criticize… heard in the media."
> (The Guardian, G15, August 5, 2015)

"**I** also note that Rolls-Royce, our one remaining global player in the aero-engine market, has issued several profits warnings." (The Telegraph, TT3, August 3, 2015).
"**I** urge the Sindh government to restart the rehabilitation process and provide the flood-affected people with food, shelter and clothes." (DAWN, D3, August 3, 2015).
"**I** recently went to **my** designated bank to draw **my** pension, which was increased by parliament in the last budget." (The News, TN25, August 7, 2015).

The originality of an argument within a letter to the editor is strengthened by anticipating the expectations of readership. An author aligns with readership to modulate their participation making them the active contributors in the meaning making process within the text. The engagement markers are used to direct the consideration of readers and ultimately manipulate their thinking for gaining solidarity through language. Some of the observed examples have been given below.

"Moreover, it reduces the likelihood of social and economic meltdowns, which are certain if **we** carry on as **we** are." (The Guardian, G1, August 3, 2015).
"SIR- **We** must harden **our** hearts." (The Telegraph, TT1, August 3, 2015).
"**Our** forefathers struggled against foreign rule, but **our own** rulers have destroyed whatever foreign rulers had put in place." (DAWN, D4, August 3, 2015).
"**We all** want to promote relations with China and for this purpose frequent contacts between institutions and **people of both countries** should continue." (The News, TN13, August 5, 2015).

As regards hedges, their percentage was found lowest in the British and Pakistani English LTE. In other words, an ideal and argumentative letter to the editor tends to avoid the element of uncertainty created by multifarious voices, thereby maintaining absolute assurance of the presented content. Similarly, the authorial language appears explicit. In other words, there is no detachment between the writer and the shared outlook. Some of the pertinent examples to this effect have been provided below:

"While mushroom foraging for personal use **may be** defensible… survival of species in the wild." (The Guardian, G6, August 4, 2015).
"This sentence **seems** unduly harsh. Did nobody else know what was going on?" (The Telegraph, TT12, August 5, 2015).
"You **may** recall China was and **perhaps** still is interested in importing Iranian gas through the Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline agreement currently under expected revival. So exporting gas by China **seems** quite unlikely." (DAWN, D12, August 5, 2015).
"**Perhaps** Imran Khan should ask his favourite (JKT) why he continues to rob us in this manner." (The News, TN24, August 7, 2015).

7.2 Interactive Metadiscourse
If the attention is shifted towards the Interactive metadiscourse, an argumentative letter to the editor is based on safeguarding the intended comprehension of a text. The proposed outlooks are logically connected for a comprehensive explanation of the presented content.

These linguistic functions are achieved by the application of transition markers which were found in abundance within British and Pakistani English LTE. However, it was observed that the

interactive metadiscourse markers dominated the interactional metadiscourse in Pakistani English LTE (24%) as compared to their use by the native speakers in British LTE (13%).

> "In its 2014 report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change showed how the reduction through efficiency... it then offered pages of energy policy advice, **but** not a word on population." (The Guardian, G1, August 3, 2015).
> "The call is for experienced teachers to become examiners **but** why- when markers often receive less than 15 percent of the entry fee- would they want to take on stressful extra work?" (The Telegraph, TT7, August 4, 2015).
> **"As such**, earthquakes in the area are a normal phenomenon. **However**, Islamabad residents would like to know how the city administration and the disaster management cell… does arise." (DAWN, D2, August 3, 2015).
> **"In addition to** the reform process, there is another dimension to this issue- media coverage." (The News, TN4, August 3, 2015).

An interesting contrast was observed in the preference of British and Pakistani writers concerning the application of Evidentials and Code Glosses within their LTE. The British writers tend to portray the gravity, exclusiveness and impartiality of newspapers. As a result, the percentage of Evidentials is higher than the Code Glosses to support a persuasive motive. Likewise, these markers are used to develop an authorial domination over the subject matter. This representation of ideas from another source makes the reasoning within a letter more effective ultimately forming an authentic and reliable argument.

> **"In its 2014 report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** showed… not a word on population." (The Guardian, G1, August 3, 2015).
> "SIR- **Eldon Sandys (Letters, August 1)** calls for a memorial to those who took in wartime evacuees." (The Telegraph, TT4, August 3, 2015).
> "On the other hand, sadly, **according to media reports**, the postal department suffered a loss of Rs.599 billion owing to fraud… the last five years." (DAWN, D1, August 3, 2015).
> **"This refers to the letter,** 'Capital Demolition Authority' (August 3) **by Shakeel Phullan**." (The News, TN19, August 6, 2015).

Conversely, the extensive use of Code Glosses as compared to Evidentials within the Pakistani English Letters tends to ensure that the proposed meaning and the aimed interpretation are received by the readers as one and the same. Furthermore, this higher percentage also reflects an author's care and anticipation regarding the contextual familiarity of readership. Consequently, the Pakistani English LTE provide supplementary and extraneous intelligence for the explanation, clarification and elaboration of presented content. Some of the pertinent examples of Code Glosses from British and Pakistani English Newspapers have been provided below.

> "Does it mean, **for example,** more electric cars so that we can cruise around in "clean" vehicles, focusing in on the … from nuclear and coal?" (The Guardian, G8, August 4, 2015).
> "Rejecting Lord Foster's proposals for the Isle of Grain, **also known as** "Boris Island", was a colossal mistake." (The Telegraph, TT10, August 4, 2015)
> "The applicants requested that the information for all such individuals may be provided **under the following heads**: a) name of individual; b) date and duration of each visit to the UAE… by the political party." (DAWN, D25, August 7, 2015).

> "Mostly farmers live in the area and damage to their crops **means** everything is lost." (The News, TN2, August 3, 2015).

The application of Frame Markers is equally important like the other Interactive metadiscourse markers discussed earlier and its percentage was almost similar within the corpus of British and Pakistani English LTE (that is 3%). These are significant in sequencing and shifting claims to direct textual limitations for constructing an effective argument within a Letter to the Editor. Some of the important examples are given below:

> **"First**, learn the lessons of history…**Second**, don't abrogate complex political decisions…**Third**, stop selling arms to anyone in the Middle East." (The Guardian, G7, August 4, 2015).
>
> "A number of factors prevent us from controlling our borders. **First**, the EU, through its principle of free movement; **secondly**, the Human Rights Act and the perversity with which it is interpreted; **and finally**, the failure of our leaders to balance lawful immigration with the means to remove those who are here illegally." (The Telegraph, TT18, August 6, 2015).
>
> **"As a result**, I am in deep distress. I appeal to Balochistan chief minister and the chief secretary to address my problem and reimburse my medical expenses." (DAWN, D11, August 5, 2015).
>
> "Unfortunately, those in power are themselves involved in massive tax evasion and are, **therefore**, unwilling to set any precedents." (The News, TN11, August 5, 2015).

Lastly, writers of LTE avoid forming a redundant composition as the readers would not focus on the monotony of the text created with continuous references to the content within the letter. Therefore, the use of Endophoric markers also known as explanatory markers was kept to a minimum by the respective authors within the LTE of British and Pakistani English newspapers. The brevity of the texts in this type of discourse might also account for the low frequency of the strategy. Some of the textual instances displaying presence of Endophoric markers in the LTEs have been presented below:

> "There are two basic principles of war… first is to know your enemy and second is to know your own realistic capabilities. **As for the first**, we must… little experience." (The Guardian, G7, August, 4, 2015).
>
> **"These two statements** are effectively the same, expressed with different emphasis." (The Telegraph, TT2, August 3, 2015).
>
> **"This sentence** seems unduly harsh." (The Telegraph, TT12, August 5, 2015).

8. Conclusion

According to the obtained results, the percentage of metadiscourse within the British corpus was 11.4% which was slightly different in case of Pakistani English LTE having an average of 10.5%. Nevertheless, the detailed analysis corroborated the dominance of interactional metadiscourse over the interactive metadiscourse in the construction of an argumentative letter to the editor. In other words, the focus seems on developing an attractive, reliable and convincing persona to gain solidarity with readership. When it comes to the comprehension of an argumentative communicative purpose, an assertive argument is developed with the application of boosters to reduce the difference of opinion. Boosters are accompanied with attitude markers to create harmony among interlocutors. The application of Self-Mention determines the authorial position

within an argument. These are used by an author to emphasize the shared perspectives. However, the engagement of readership is equally significant in the meaning making process. An ideal argument successfully anticipates the expectations of readership and aligns the author with the target audience for the mutual interpretation of shared information. Hedges are to be avoided to reduce uncertainty and ambiguity within an argument. This would assure that the presented content is authentic, valid and reliable.

The extensive use of transition markers within the British and Pakistani English LTE shows the significance of transacting and guiding the readers through a text in the construction of an argument. However, a prominent difference was observed in their usage by the native and the second language writers consequently the research question of a comparative study of two discourse communities was answered. It was found that Pakistani authors tend to focus more on the development of cohesion and coherence in their argumentative text compared with their British counterpart. Consequently, the percentage of transition markers was higher in Pakistani LTE than the British LTE. Another important result revealed the significance of Code Glosses for the Pakistani writers and Evidentials for the native writers of English language. In other words, the British writers take a dominating position in their writings to implement a particular course of action in the target audience. Their focus is to keep their argument grave, exclusive, impartial and reliable. All these objectives are achieved by the use of Evidentials. Conversely, the Pakistani writers tend to be more meticulous with respect to the contextual familiarity of readership. Their emphasis is towards the comprehension of proposed meaning by the target audience. Consequently, Code Glosses are extensively used for the clarification and explanation of presented content.

The sequence of claims was considered equally important to construct an effective argument within the British and Pakistani English LTE. Therefore, similar percentages of frame markers were observed within the corpus of two communities. As the repetition of information with continuous reference to content within the text may lead to a lack of interest among readership, minimum use of Endophoric markers is observed in arguments. However, each statement should support the preceding information instead of repeating its content.

9. Recommendations

The study has brought into the forefront the similarities which are to be followed uniformly in the construction of an argument. Furthermore, it has revealed some metadiscourse differences resulting from the cultural dissimilarities, changing contexts and the influences of mother tongues.

When it comes to the application of these findings for classroom practitioners, the results of an analysis of media language can be used to enhance the critical reading skills of young learners (see Masroor, 2016). Furthermore, these findings clearly illustrate that the young interlocutors should focus more on interacting with readers along with the organization of information in their text. Secondly, the presented statements should be logically coherent for an effective argumentation. Lastly, the addresser should be well aware of background and expectations of the target audience. In other words, the focus is on the provision of factual information in the case of native interlocutors of English language. Conversely, the writer should take care of the schematic knowledge of second language learners and speakers. Thus, the author should concentrate more on the comprehensive explanation of presented content in the context of English as a second

language. This elaboration and clarification of information by an author alongside the interactive involvement of readership would consequently improve their language learning abilities.

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