Functions of Perspectival Metadiscourse in Reporting in Literature Reviews[*]

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Abstract:

Metadiscourse, which has been shown to be a typical feature of both written and spoken discourse, is a noticeable lexicogrammatical choice in reporting discourse, and it is also a way of offering perspectives in reporting. As a key part of dissertations, Literature review is a place where metadiscours is frequently employed. Based on the investigation of the metadiscourse in social science and natural science literature reviews, the study suggests that metadiscourse is a propositional, rhetorical, and functional aspect of language, and that it affects discourse interpretation in a supporting way. This study suggests that metadiscourse is a valuable rhetorical means by which the writer's comments are presented. On different occasions, the writer's rhetorical decisions reflect their conscious choices which in turn, present their perspectives.

Key Words: Metadiscourse, Perspective, Reporting, Literature review

1   PREVIOUS STUDIES

As a key part of a dissertation, literature review (LR henceforth) is the place where metadiscourse is frequently employed. Metadiscourse discussed in this paper is termed 'perspectival metadiscourse', as it is a central perspectival construct in reporting in LRs, and it shows how the writer influences the reader's understandings of both the text and his attitude towards its content.

Metadiscourse has always been a rather fuzzy term and is most often discussed with a point of departure in Vande Kopple's (1985) rather vague definition of "discourse about discourse, talk about talk or communication about communication". As an essential notion in argumentative writing (Crismore and Farnsworth 1990; Hyland 1999, 2000), metadiscourse comprises linguistic devices that indicate writers' "personality, credibility, considerateness of the reader, and relationship to the subject matter and to readers" (Crismore et al. 1993: 40). Use of metadiscourse is a very noticeable lexicogrammatical choice in reporting discourse. Metadiscourse, which has been shown to be a typical feature of both written (Mauranen 1993; Bunton 1999) and spoken (Thompson 2003) discourse, is also a way of offering a perspective in reporting.

Based on the view of writing as a social and communicative engagement between the writer and the reader, metadiscourse is seen as the aspect of the text which explicitly refers to the organization of the discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader. Discussions of metadiscourse have been heavily influenced by the Hallidayan distinction between the textual and interpersonal macrofunctions of language (Halliday 1973). Thus, the term is believed to be used to refer to non-propositional aspects of discourse which help to organize prose as a coherent text and convey a writer's personality, credibility, reader sensitivity and relationship to the message (Hyland 2000: 109). Yet, the current study argues that linguistic metadiscourse is a propositional and rhetorical aspect of language, and that it affects discourse interpretation in a supporting way, as will be discussed in the following.

2   PERSPECTIVAL METADISCOURSE IN LRS

Metadiscourse, which has been shown to be a typical feature of both written (Mauranen 1993, Bunton 1999) and spoken (Thompson 2003) discourse, is also a way of offering perspectives in reporting. In a LR, the writer frequently chooses to signal positive, negative or neutral perspective, explicitly with metadiscourse. As a central perspectival construct in PhD LRs, metadiscourse "allows us to see how the writer seeks to influence the reader's understandings of both the text and his attitude towards its content and the audience" (Hyland 1998: 437).

As far as the current study is concerned, different types of discourse display different preferences for certain types of metadiscourse. In the current study, metadiscourse termed as perspectival metadiscourse comprises adverbial clauses introduced by *as*, e.g. *as stated above*, linguistic structures like *I find*, and *I know*, and personal pronouns *I* and *we* are examined. They

are also known as endophoric markers, attitude markers and person markers respectively. They are chosen because they are frequently used in LRs and their role is indispensable in realizing the writer's perspectives. In the metadiscourse studied here, reporting verbs are a key element. This type of verbs is chosen, as a reporting 'verb represents a clearer expression of the writer's presence in the text than, e.g. a nominal form: *I/we argue* gives me a stronger feeling of authorial presence than *my/this argument*' (Dahl 2004).

An appropriate use of metadiscourse helps the writer develop the text smoothly in the argumentation process. The functions of the perspectival metadiscourse in LRs are realized mainly in four ways. First, they are a valuable rhetorical means through which the writers' comments can be presented. Second, they contribute not only to the writer's construction of a discourse, but also to his attitudes towards the propositional material. Third, they perform pragmatic as well as discourse functions. Fourth, they enhance the reader-friendliness of the text and construct positive politeness by treating the readership as equals to refer to the previous research in order to support his statements and his own studies, as can be exemplified below in detail.

2.1 Functional realizations of person markers *I* and *we*

Although PhD LRs are written to many people, they should give the impression that they are written to a reader personally. Basically, this is achieved through the use of personal pronouns in reporting. The choice of a specific person marker by writers is related to their attitudes towards the propositional material. It is a conscious choice that contributes to ego involvement, to the degree of intimacy or remoteness, and to the ways writers wish to be represented in the text (Samson 2004).

In the metadiscourse taxonomy (c.f. Hyland 1998), only the first person pronouns *I* and *we* are considered metadiscourse elements which are used as self-mentions (cf. Crismore et al. 1993; Hyland 1998) to reflect the degree of writer presence, this paper, therefore, just focuses on the functions of *I* and *we* in its discussions.

First person is the prototypical site for expression of writer point of view, as indicated by Scheibman (2002), Hyland (2001), and Hyland and Tse (2004). Scheibman (2002) notes in his study of structural patterns of subjectivity that first person is the second most frequently occurring subject. As far as the current study is concerned, in a LR, the writer employs interactional metadiscourse, with frequent use of engagement markers and self-mentions. Self-mention is a key way in which the writer is able to promote a competent scholarly identity and gains accreditation for his research claims. First person plays a crucial interactional role in mediating the relationship between the writer, arguments and his discourse communities, allowing the writer to create an identity as both disciplinary servant and creative originator (Hyland 2001).

Person markers are found to be an explicit intrusion into the discourse of LRs. By using them, writers tend to intervene to help organize the argument or to justify decisions or interpretations.

Most commonly the writer appears to signal a text frame, e.g. Example (1), introduce research activities, e.g. Example (2), or indicate his attitudes to methods or findings, e.g. Example (3).

(1) In this paper I will show that the position Hegel calls here 'sound reason' is one he associates with Kant, or more precisely , with the first of the two opposing poles of Kant's moral philosophy. (Phil. 4)

(2) We try to find an overall grain size distribution which includes very small carbonaceous grains and is consistent with the observed extinction. (Phy. 8)

(3) We suppose that a hydrophobic, N-terminal region of TM undergoes a conformational change promoting fusion between the host cell membrane and the viral envelope. (Chem. 1)

Usually, the writer employs the first person pronouns with reporting verbs to comment on others' research or introduce his own studies. The choice of *I* or *we* reveals the decision on the part of the writer to take a stance and adopt different roles in his text. As is known, a plural first person pronoun can have either inclusive or exclusive semantic reference. An inclusive *we* includes both the writer and the reader, whereas an exclusive *we* excludes the reader. The use of inclusive *we* shortens the distance between the writer and the reader and stresses solidarity with the reader, as indicated in *as we know*.

More specifically, *I* and the exclusive *we* often overlap, in indicating 1) a clear choice to establish an authoritative self as a member of the academic community, 2) the writer's prominent position, and 3) promotion of research and the writer's self-image.

The awareness on the part of the writer of how to employ different personal pronouns to increase or decrease the reader's inclusion in LRs is exemplified by the use of the person marker *we* in the studied data. The use of the exclusive *we* reinforces the writer's power in LRs, as can be seen in the following example.

(4) In this section we survey the existing tourism literature and discuss the relevance of the international trade literature to international tourism ... In this study we view countries as differentiated products, and use a multinominal logit model that is better equipped to deal with demand systems for such goods. (Mkt. 3)

The author uses we to show that they take full responsibility for their utterances. They tell readers what they concentrate on, and what their research objectives will be. We like I, in Example (5), is related to the function of commenting on the previous research in Element 2 or announcing the present research in Element 4(Chen 2008). The role of the writer is reinforced, as in Example (5), by the co-occurrence and the repetition of the future tense will to indicate the intention of the writer to carry out certain activities.

(5) This is not the kind of approach I will be taking. Instead, I will observe certain constraints that any normative moral theory would need to satisfy if it is to be fully reasonable and compelling for general human practice. I will then consider what a viable understanding of morality would imply about the nature of morality and its possible contents. (Phil. 9)

Will co-occurs with reporting verbs *observe* and *consider*, which predicts a future completion of the writer's activity. The grammatical repetition and lexical variation in the grammatical structures – as in *I will examine*, *I will consider* – have two functions in LRs. First, they enable the reader to process the propositional content more easily. Second, they signal the writer's familiarity with the linguistic conventions of the discourse community for giving a reasonable account of one's thinking. Table 1 shows the frequency of person markers *I/we* in reporting in the 100 LRs[1].

Table 1 Frequency of person markers *I/we* in reporting in the 100 LRs

Discipline	Cases	Per 100 reporting verbs
Humanities	440	4.4
Sciences	221	5.8
Total	661	5.1

Figures in the table reveal that, person markers are used more often in the science LRs than in humanities. This is contrary to Hyland and Tse's (2004) conclusion that 'self-mention plays a far more visible role in the soft disciplines'. This suggests that the writer's use of first person to intrude into an argument may be an area where a degree of freedom to manipulate conventions is permitted, allowing the author to mix 'private intentions' with socially recognized communicative purposes (Bhatia 1993) and to present a personal dimension of his professional persona. In these LRs, scientists are more willing to make a solid personal commitment to the most powerful aspects of their texts. Scientists value their own research and emphasize their personal voices — their own arguments or claims than routines or community knowledge.

The writer's use of the first person pronouns allows him to mix 'private intentions' with socially recognized communicative purposes (Bhatia 1993). In other words, the writer is allowed to embark on a functional overlapping of the referential and conative functions (Fuertes-Olivera 2001), where first person markers help the reader to have trust in his research. The use of the first person pronouns also shows that in an academic community, the writer's

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[1] The 100 LRs are randomly chosen from PQDD, which are supposed to be written by American and English natives.

personal presence and authority are important resources for gaining approval from peers or colleagues for their work.

The presence or absence of explicit author reference is a conscious choice made by the writer who wants to adopt a particular perspective and have a particular role in his text. In the studied data, person markers vary according to the elements of LRs, and to the function and role the writer wants to adopt. In reviewing literature, the writer first defines the field of study and then establishes a niche for his research in the integral part of the text. In this way, he claims his authority as a source of knowledge, positioning himself differently from other researchers. However, to mitigate his superiority and show deference towards the scientific community members, the writer expresses personal views on established facts/previous research.

> (6) This work emphasizes the movement of the organization away from functional silos and toward cross-functional problem solving. However, it focuses on the macro- or organizational-level, rather than the specific decision-making level. We will attempt to explain clearly coordination of marketing decisions at the micro-level, focusing on mechanisms that enable markets to specifically coordinate pricing and targeting decisions. (Mkt. 2)

Examples like (6) are often used in Elements 2 and 3. In this example, the writer summarizes this work, showing his evaluation of this work, and emphasizing the reason for his current research. By using the first person pronoun in the hedged statement we will attempt to explain clearly, the writer weakens his claim, but allows the reader to judge and criticize his research.

Examples like (7) often occur in Elements 1 and 4. In Example (7), the writer introduces his topic, emphasizing the reason for his research by detaching himself from the topic with the impersonal there is usually a trade-off between plume diameter and temperature anomaly which is not well constrained in order to state established facts.

> (7) Many of these models suggest quantitative predictions of the plum flux; however there is usually a trade-off between plume diameter and temperature anomaly which is not well constrained (Tryggvason et al.1983; Wolfe et al. 1997). In this paper we try to present evidence firstly for the existence of a plume beneath Iceland, but also for its radius by studying the diffraction effects of the plume on seismic energy passing through it. (Phy. 1)

Impersonalization is usually seen as a contribution to the objectivity of LRs. However, it may be a face-saver to protect the writer from his peers. Such an attitude is underlined, in Example (7), by a non-integral citation (*Tryggvason et al.1983*; *Wolfe et al. 1997*) which shows, the writer's familiarity with the research field, helps to create a personal research space for the writer. In the statement we try to present evidence he addresses his peer readership more directly.

2.2 Functional analyses of attitude markers *I find*, *I believe*, *I think* and *I know*

In the data studied, 123 such attitude markers as *I find, I think, I believe,* and *I know* are used. Thus, it is important to consider the functions of these syntactico-semantic devices.

2.2.1 A rhetoric approach and a device of evaluation

The expression of modality *I believe* and the self-report signal *I think* are used to foreground the writer's perspectives or points of view. According to Halliday (1985; 1994), there are two orientations in modality: subjective and objective. In order to state explicitly that the probability is subjective, or alternatively, at the other end, to claim explicitly that the probability is objective, the writer construes the proposition as a projection and encode the subjectivity (*I believe, I think*) or the objectivity (*probably, it is likely*), in a projecting clause. In the following examples, writers choose to project their propositions subjectively.

(8) However,…, I found significant differences between offline runs with monthly-averaged fields and online runs – calculating the tracer distributions with the full set of time-varying model flow-fields. (Chem. 8)

(9) I think it would be worthwhile to comment on these in some detail. (Ling. 3)

The explicitly subjective clauses *I found* in Example (8) and *I think* in Example (9), by encoding modality metaphorically, appear to be propositions about writers themselves, and so foreground writers' own subjective points of view.

Because metadiscourse draws attention to the intentions and activities of the writer, it serves in LRs to 'refocus the reader on the act of evaluating, rather than the evaluation itself' (Hyland 2000: 59). In a LR, the writer shows his degree of commitment to what he writes in a number of ways. As one of the important ways, attitude markers like I believe and I think are semantically related to the clauses and discourses and are used as comment markers to show the writer's perspectives, modality, and evaluation. That is to say, besides expressing comments on and showing attitudes towards propositions, this type of perspectival metadiscourse can perform the function of evaluation. Think and believe are potentially subjective, which means that when employing them, the writer must be fully responsible to what he thinks or believes. Thus, they are used when the writer wants to show his stance or to air his views or when the writer and the reader have different or even contradictory opinions. For example,

(10) Any regulative epistemological theory, I think, is committed to the existence of some property F which has the following features… (Phil. 8)

(11) Forster, I think, is very right to claim, as others have not, that the section expresses the standpoint of common sense. (Soc. 7)

The evaluative function of this type of attitude markers is not only observable at the microlevel of discourse of single clauses but also at the macrolevel of discourse, which can be found in the studied data which shows that reporting verbs in this type of attitude markers are among the most frequently used verbs in LRs.

2. 2.2 A pragmatic strategy and a semantic interpretation

While Halliday's functional view of language provides the most general basis for this analysis, Brown and Levinson's (1987) sociolinguistic theory of politeness phenomena is also helpful in analyzing attitude markers like *I find, I believe, I think* and *I know*. They two complement each other in that the former, starting from the functional point of view, makes a clear account for the subjectivity of such attitude markers, while the latter, from the sociolinguistic point of view, explains how such perspectival metadiscourse works as a kind of 'social accelerator', indicating a desire to establish social solidarity or redressing an FAT (face threatening act).

The use of such perspectival metadiscourse in the context of LRs may also serve as a politeness strategy that addresses interpersonal relations. Reporting can be an FTA, distancing the reader from the writer, if it is given arrogantly or inappropriately. The writer, therefore, may use *I find*, *I think*, etc. to limit the scope of his claims to knowledge (knowledge is one aspect of power). It is a politeness strategy that emphasizes solidarity by humbling the writer, by making the writer appear less powerful, authoritative, all-knowing, and arrogant (cf. Johnson 1992).

(12) Inspired by Franco Moretti's example, I find that France and the Low Countries stand at the centre of the work. (Soc. 1)

(13) I believe that it points to significant weaknesses in commonly discussed normative moral views – viz., consequentialist, Kantian and generously construed, neo-Aristotelian. (Phil. 3)

In these examples, by using I find and I believe, writers make it explicit to their audience that they are offering personal points of view, and that their perspectives may not be shared by others ('I think X, although others might not agree').

The key differentiating aspect of dissertation writing is a much greater use of metadiscourse, or writing about the evolving text rather than referring to the subject matter (Swales 1990). In LRs the interpersonal relationship between the reviewer and the reviewed strongly influences how a review is written. The use of polite language to maintain a harmonious interpersonal relationship is crucial. To create a text that addresses both critical substantive goals and interpersonal social goals, the writer uses a number of politeness strategies to delicately balance his criticism with his positive comments, which is a frequent and important strategy. With the properties of these attitude markers in mind, the present research analyses their strategic uses in LRs.

First, in LRs this type of attitude markers is often used in cases where the writer wishes to express his personal opinions but does not want to be put in the dominant position. In this way, the writer can avoid being patronizing, arrogant or imposing, and will not cause the difference in background and have too much effect on the communication. For example,

(14) It is possible that the actual better selves of people may not, we may reasonably believe, be morally better enough. (Phil. 9)

The important point in the example is that the writer is clear about what he is saying and appear to be confident.

Second, this type of attitude markers is used to mitigate some strong statements. By using these attitude markers, the statements sound milder. For example,

(15) In Mexico, on the other hand, I believe that communication in many cases is sometimes all that a physician can offer those who cannot afford much else. (Ling. 6)

All these and similar uses indicate that these attitude markers weaken or mitigate the force of the claim or the reaction, in such a way that they do not endanger the academic communication and leave room for intervention by other researchers.

According to Halliday (1985, 1994), the interpersonal function of language enables users to participate in communicative acts with other people. This function concerns the interactional aspect of language, typified by vocatives and choice of mood and modality. Therefore, interpersonal metadiscourse alerts addressees about the perspective and attitude of the addresser to the propositional information and to the addressees themselves. In other words, it contributes to a writer-reader relationship by means of projection and modality.

Projection and modality are the two major linguistic devices which the writer employs to portray the functions of this type of attitude markers. Based on a view of writing as a social and communicative engagement between the writer and the reader, Hyland (1998: 437) states that metadiscourse directs people's attention to the ways that the writer projects himself into his work to signal his communicative intentions. It is a central functional structure which allows people to see how the writer seeks to influence the reader's understandings of both the text and his attitudes towards its content and the audience.

Attitude markers like *I think, I fear, I suppose, I believe, I know* and *I insist* indicate that the views being interpreted are the writer's own. For this reason, their presence may be perceived as inessential to truth conditions (Ifantidou 2001: 155). Some of these attitude markers are hedges, which affect the writer's commitment to the proposition through modal responsibility.

Many (Urmson 1963, Sadock 1974) think that sentences b, c and d in Example (18) are equivalent in strength, but weaker than the plain assertion in Example (18) a. Yet, the current study holds that they are partly right. The different functional interpretations of (18) b to d result from differences in syntactic positions of the attitude marker I think. There is an obvious difference in the strength of assertions (or writer commitment) associated with the presence, absence and syntactic positions of the attitude markers such as I think in Example (18).

(18) a. The most challenging objections to the viability approach are about normativity.

b. I think the most challenging objections to the viability approach are about normativity. (Phil. 9)

c. The most challenging objections to the viability approach are, I think, about normativity.

d. The most challenging objections to the viability approach are about normativity, I think.

Intuitively, the earlier the attitude marker occurs in the clause, the greater the effect on interpretation (Ifantidou 2001). Thus, where I think has an increasing weakening effect, this will be greater in Example (18)b than Example (18)c, and in Example (18)c than in Example (18)d. This can be explained as follows.

One thing worth noticing is that I think, as in Example (18)c and Example (18)d has a characteristic, low-key intonation. While I think in Example (18) b can carry main stress, and thus constitute the main point of the clause, I think in c-d of Example (18) are invariably backgrounded. Another point to notice is that the later the position of the metadiscourse, the more likely it is to have a 'repair', or 'afterthought' interpretation. So, for example, as Example (18)d proceeds, it may occur to the write/speaker that the reader/hearer might misinterpret or be in doubt about how to interpret the intended degree of strength, and add an attitude marker to clarify his/her intentions. While in planning Example (18)b the speaker must already have foreseen these possibilities of misinterpretation and have taken steps to eliminate them. Typically, then, the metadiscourse in Example (18)b should make a substantial and integrated contribution to overall relevance, whereas Example (18)c to d will be perceived as merely 'fine-tuning' an already accessible interpretation.

In fact, as suggested above, it is not always true that metadiscourse has a weakening effect, i.e. it weakens the engagement of the writer to the meanings of the sentences. Linguistic structures such as *I/we know, I/we* insist*, Bill thinks, Chomsky says*, can have a strengthening function, i.e. these structures are employed in discourse to strengthen the writer's degree of commitment, as in Examples (19) and (20).

(19) We know the morally relevant features – the right act description – in (most) any situation. (Phil. 4)

(20) I have tacitly argued, to insist either that moral principles should be stretched or to the contrary that we ought to take a stand in defense of strict moral principles… (Soc. 9)

I know and *I insist* are explicit strong attitude markers, without which some weaker attitude markers (e.g. *I think*) might be supplied. Attitude markers, then, can encourage the reader to move away from a default interpretation that would otherwise be constructed. As the examples above show, movements may be towards either a weaker or a stronger degree of commitment.

The primary function of attitude markers *I believe, I think* is to determine the strengths of the assumptions which fall within their scope. A further range of metadiscourse, such as *I/we hope, I/we want* seems to perform two simultaneous functions. On the one hand, they tend to weaken the strength of assumptions that fall within their scope, and on the other hand, they determine the writer's emotional attitude to these assumptions. Thus, they appear to fall midway between

weakening attitude markers such as *I think* and attitudinal adverbials such as *sadly, unfortunately*. Consider Examples (21) and (22).

(21) In this section, I want to address two such higher-order questions which seem principle be used as a guide by an actual epistemic agent. (Phil. 6)

(22) Drawing on the previous studies, I hope to demonstrate that "digital microfluidic" systems potentially possess many of the same advantages that make the design and operation of digital electronic systems so flexible, robust and powerful. (Eng. 2)

By employing I want and I hope, these writers reduce their commitment to the truth of the propositions, and at the same time portray their emotional attitudes towards the state of affairs described.

2.3 Functional instantiations of 'as …'

Perspectival metadiscourse '*as …*' referred to in this paper includes 'endophoric markers' (e.g. *as noted above, as stated earlier*) and clauses used as adverbials (e.g. *as we can see, as we know*). Although these 'endophoric markers' and adverbial clauses 'play an important role in making additional ideational material salient and therefore available to the reader in aiding the recovery of the writer's argumentative intentions' (Hyland 1998), they are the type of linguistic forms which explicitly addresses the reader, either by selectively focusing his attention or by including him as a participant in the context. Therefore, they are also one way of explicitly expressing the writer's perspectives. They focus more on the reader's participation, but are typically writer-oriented. Thus, the writer uses such perspectival metadiscourse to show appreciations or criticism of facts, techniques, theories, methods, and research results and give positive or negative social values to them based on the value system of this particular discourse community. For example,

(23) As stated earlier, a library is generally created that contains signatures of various objects. (Comp. 1)

(24) As summarized in Figure 2.4, the historical context in which these cohorts came of age and their collective experience as they aged affected not only the amount of human capital they brought to the workforce, but also affected their career expectations. (Soc. 4)

(25) However, as noted by Milroy (1987) and others, since narratives produced in the context of an interview are different from those which are produced in naturally occurring conversation, interviews alone are inadequate as a means of collecting oral narrative data, particularly when the analytical focus is interactive. (Ling. 2)

The writers show appreciation of facts, methods and research findings in Examples (23) and (24) by using *as stated earlier* and *as* summarized *in Figure 2.4*. In Example (25), the writer expresses collegiality by the use of *as noted by Milroy (1987) and others*.

The writer also uses inclusive perspectival metadiscourse like *as we shall/will see* to enhance the reader-friendliness of the text and construct positive politeness by treating the readership as equals. In addition, *as we shall/will see* provides the writer with the opportunity to flag up the newsworthiness of the research, advertising his findings in advance (Harwood 2005). This can be illustrated in the following example.

(26) Yet, as we will see, none of these research programs has presented a comprehensive alternative to the mainstream model of information processing and choice. (Mkt. 9)

The use of such metadiscourse emphasizes the writer's great reliance on multi-modality and arguments which require frequent reference to tables, figures, photographs, examples, and so on. For example,

(27) As noted in Section 2.1, since I do not measure the disclosure of an event it is difficult to directly apply a good/bad news theory to this setting. (Eco. 1)

In these examples, writers employ 'as …' to refer to the previous research, in order to support their statements and their own studies.

Table 2 shows the occurrence of this structure per 100 reporting verbs in each discipline in the studied data.

Table 2 Frequency of 'as …' (per 100 reporting verbs)

Humanities						Sciences					
Ling.	Soc.	Eco.	Mkt.	Phil.	Total	Phy.	Chem	Com.	Bio.	Eng.	Total
91	87	30	48	62	318	37	28	10	38	15	128
3.8	3.3	3.1	3.8	2.0	3.2	5.1	3.9	2.1	2.5	2.2	3.2

As is shown, the LRs in science discourses cover as many 'as …' structures as those in discourse of humanities (3.2% to 3.2%), which means that the density of this type of perspectival metadiscourse is remarkably the same in sciences and humanities. This reveals that epistemological reasons, such as evidence from others' data and research results, and the achievement of social goals in academic communities, namely the need for negotiation of knowledge before claims are accepted and consensus is reached, are the main motivating factors behind their employment. Of all the ten disciplines, the highest frequency of

perspectival metadiscourse 'as …' is found in the physics LRs (5.1%). By using this linguistic device, the writer defines his epistemic and attitude stance towards propositions and engages the reader in the construction of claims, which suggests that this type of metadiscourse proves to be resources for physicists in their effort to create research space for themselves, assert their learned authority and expertise, solicit the reader's acceptance of claims, and reach consensus.

3   CONCLUSION

This paper has shown the various functions performed by perspectival metadiscourse in LRs in social and natural science LRs. First person pronoun is a significant means of gaining membership and acceptance for one's ideas. Person markers constitute one of the central functional features of LRs as they contribute not only to the writer's construction of a discourse, but also to his attitudes towards the propositional material. It also shows that perspectival metadiscourse, with reporting verbs as a key part in it, is a means by which the writer expresses his comments, viewpoints and opinions as a researcher in a certain discipline, presents his genre and register awareness of how to represent himself and his research, as well as realizes different perspectives. It suggests that perspectival metadiscourse is a valuable rhetorical means by which the writer's comments are presented. On different occasions, the writer's rhetorical decisions reflect their conscious choices which in turn, present their perspectives.

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