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Research Paper

Reflexive Metadiscourse Markers in Academic Interviews: Frequency and Functional study

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Abstract

There are two different trends for the study of metadiscourse, including interactive and reflexive. The reflexive model suggested by (Mauranen, 1993) and (Ädel, 2010) cares about the reflexivity in language. As reflexivity plays a pivotal role in spoken genres, this study aimed to study frequency and functions of reflexive metadiscourse markers in academic interviews. Hence, this study focused on a corpus of three academic interviews carried out in English native academic context that were taken from “The Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English” (MICASE). The corpus was analyzed using the model by Ädel that includes four functional categories of *metalinguistic comments*, *discourse organization*, *speech act labels*, and *references to the audiences*. The results showed that about one-quarter of the personal pronouns were metadiscursive. Besides, among the personal pronouns that perform metadiscursive function, singular first-person pronoun was the most frequent while plural first person pronoun was very rare. It was also found that among the four functions, the interviewees and interviewers *paid more attention to metalinguistic comments and references to the audiences*. The results of this study could add to the knowledge of those participating in interviews in general and in the academic context in particular.

Keywords: Interview, Metadiscourse, MICASE, Personal Pronoun, Reflexive Metadiscourse

بررسی عناصر فراگفتمانی بازتابی در مصاحبه های دانشجویی

دو دیدگاه متفاوت در مورد مطالعه عناصر فراگفتمانی وجود دارد. این دیدگاه ها عبارتند از: دیدگاه برهم کنشی و دیدگاه بازتابی. مدل بازتابی عناصر فراگفتمانی توسط ماورانن (۱۹۹۳) و ادل (۲۰۱۰) ارائه شد. از آنجایی که بیشترین کاربرد عناصر فراگفتمانی بازتابی در متنهای گفتاری است، لذا این مطالعه در نظر دارد عناصر فراگفتمانی بازتابی را در مصاحبه های آکادمیک بررسی کند. به همین منظور، سه مصاحبه انگلیسی از پیکره گفتاری آکادمیک میشیگان انتخاب شدند. این مصاحبه ها بر اساس مدل آریه شده توسط ادل (۲۰۱۰) که شامل چهار نقش فراگفتمانی بود تحلیل شدند. نقشهای فراگفتمانی مدل ادل (۲۰۱۰) شامل نکات فرا زبانشناسی، ساختار سخن، برجسب های گفتاری، و ارجاع به شنوندگان می شوند. نتایج تحقیق نشان دادند که یک چهارم ضمایر شخصی به کار رفته در مصاحبه ها، نقش فراگفتمانی بازتابی داشتند. علاوه بر این، از بین ضمایر شخصی، اول شخص مفرد بیشترین کاربرد و اول شخص جمع کمترین نقش فراگفتمانی بازتابی را در مصاحبه های تحلیل شده ایفا کردند. نتایج نشان دادند که هر چهار نقش فراگفتمانی در مصاحبه های تحلیل شده به کار رفته بودند. نتایج این تحقیق می تواند به دانش شرکت کنندگان در مصاحبه های آکادمیکی در زمینه کاربرد عناصر فراگفتمانی بازتابی بیفزاید.

واژگان کلیدی: مصاحبه، عناصر فراگفتمانی، پیکره گفتاری انگلیسی آکادمیکی میشیگان، عناصر فراگفتمانی بازتابی

Introduction

Cultural and social trends of human communities are displayed through communication, language, and talk (Van Dijk et al., 1997). Essentially, communication is social interaction including information exchange that is performed among various people with distinctive knowledge, aim, and requirements in a given society (Aguilar, 2008; Schiffrin, 1980). Conveying information is the most significant task in communication, and the writer/speaker utilizes different linguistic statements to achieve a cohesive and logical construction of data. Some of these statements show how the speaker/writer creates the logical progress of the substance of the context and his subjective tendency according to the substance. These special linguistic statements are named metadiscourse. Hyland (2005) believed that “metadiscourse incarnates the opinion that communication is more than just the exchange of services, data, or goods, but also includes the assumptions, attitudes, and personalities of those who are communicating” (p.3), and metadiscourse is “the coverage term for the self-reflective statements utilized to communicate interactional definition in a context, helping the writer/speaker to declare an opinion and engage with readers as members of a specific community” (p. 46).

Metadiscourse refers to the speaker/writer’s consciousness of the ongoing discourse and the writer-reader or speaker-listener interaction. In the written mode of communication, metadiscourse is the self-reflective language used to assist writers to manage their unfolding discourse, express their stance, and engage with readers (K. Hyland, 2005). Metadiscourse has been explained in different ways by various scholars.

Metadiscourse is a widely utilized term in recent discussion analysis and English for Academic goals, but it is not always used to represent the same thing. For some, it is a meaning limited to elements associated with the text itself, looking inside to those points of view of a discussion, which assist organize the text as text. Mauranen and Adel demonstrated this situation and proposed the label of the *reflexive model* (2010). The concept of reflexivity in language (Hockett, 1977; Lucy, 1993; Lyons, 1977) goes back to the metalinguistic function in Jakobson’s typology of the language functions (Jakobson, 1980). Reflexivity and the metalinguistic function, essentially, refer to the capacity of natural language to ascribe to itself. Language users can use language to comment on language itself, the communicative situation, and their own roles in it.

Metadiscourse is treated from two points of view; one is the reflexive model suggested by Ädel (2010), and the other is the interactive model suggested by K. Hyland (2005). In the reflexive model of metadiscourse, reflexivity in language is underlined and taken to be the starting point for the model. By contrast, in the interactive model, reflexivity is not a scale but is utilized in place of the meaning to explain interaction—initially in written text—between the audience and writer, imagined extensively.

While research on metadiscourse has centralized to academic writing, academic speech is largely unexplored. In addition, comparisons of written and spoken metadiscourse are uncommon; thus, the differences and similarities between written and spoken types of metadiscourse are unclear.

College students have to deal with several academic literacies and skills, such as writing academic articles, taking notes, and listening to academic speeches. The students’ achievement in their academic work depends on their prosperous undertaking of these skills. However, many students find it hard to deal with these literacies. Students of English as a Second and Foreign Language may face more difficulties due to their lack of the required skills to understand and produce a wide range of composite academic speeches (Zare & Tavakoli, 2016).

Over the last two decades, English for Academic Purposes (EAP) has enhanced in importance due to the increasing utilization of English in academic texts (Charles, 2013). EAP research has focused on evaluating the wide range of spoken and written genres such as conference

presentations, research articles, textbooks, seminars, and lectures (Charles, as cited in (Zare & Tavakoli, 2016).

These studies have illustrated the properties of various modes of language used in academic settings. Metadiscourse is one of these properties receiving great consideration throughout the literature. Metadiscourse suggests a framework to understand communication as social engagement. It clarifies some aspects of how we plan ourselves into our speeches by signaling our attitude towards both the substance and the audience of the context. Language is always a result of interaction, of the diversities between people, declared verbally. Metadiscourse options are the ways we construct and articulate these interactions. Thus, this is a dynamic perspective of language as metadiscourse stresses the fact that we converse with others as we write or speak, making decisions about the type of impacts we are having on our readers or listeners.

Having the importance of metadiscourse in communication on board, this study intends to shed the light on one of neglected genre in academic setting, interview. Thus, this study aims to investigate the frequency and functions of reflexive metadiscourse markers in interviews. To meet this end, the following research questions are raised:

1. *How frequent are reflexive metadiscourse markers in English interviews?*
2. *How frequent are personal pronoun types performing reflexive metadiscourse roles in English interviews?*
3. *What are the discourse functions of personal pronouns performing reflexive metadiscourse roles in English interviews?*

Literature Review

Metadiscourse and Its Importance

The word metadiscourse suggests a way of language comprehension in use, representing a speaker or writer's efforts to direct a receiver's understanding of a context. Native speakers or writers of a language usually communicate more than just the exchange of services, goods, or data, doing this through what is called metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005).

It is believed that metadiscourse, as a facilitator factor in communication, a supporter of an utterance or a position, and as an increasing factor of the reader-writer relationship, will help both non-native and native speakers and writers of a language to tell their ideas and engage with their listeners or readers efficiently (Fuentes-Olivera et al., Hyland & Tse, 2005, as cited in (Ghaffari et al., 2015).

Metadiscourse is the interpretation of a context by its producer in the course of writing or speaking and is a widely used term in current language teaching and speech analysis. Adel defines metadiscourse as “speech about the evolving speech or the writer’s clear explanation on her own ongoing context” (Ädel, 2006). This indicates that the basic components of metadiscourse potentially contain the speaker/writer persona (the expressive function), the speech or text itself (the metalinguistic function), and the imagined or real audience (the directive function).

In general, the fundamental aim of the academic manuscript is to inform other academic researchers about the findings in a specific field. When the context has to be written in a foreign language, the academic manuscript is supposed to become more perplexing (Tafaraji Yeganeh & Ghoreyshi, 2015). Metadiscourse simplifies the development of a well-structured message that commits the readers and reveals the writer’s stance toward audience of the text and the propositions. Metadiscourse shows the writer’s social presence in the context, although it does not enhance any external data content.

As K. Hyland (2005) reported, metadiscourse analysis makes it possible to “access the ways that speakers and writers take up situations and equal themselves with their readers in a specific text” (p. 127). Metadiscourse evaluation reveals the social interaction between readers and

writers. Therefore, this kind of analysis exhibits the way in which students engage with various contexts and exchange information. The present study is based on Adel's taxonomy (Ädel, 2010).

The study uses the reflexive model, again following Adel's criteria (Ädel, 2006) for metadiscourse, including explicitness, the world of speech, the current speech, and—for personal types of metadiscourse—writer-speaker qua writer- speaker and audience qua audience. One important point in Adel's model is keeping out the referential function, as it refers to entities in the real world, which is out of the world of speech. Ädel (2006) makes a difference between impersonal and personal metadiscourse.

Ädel (2006) describes personal metadiscourse as instances of metadiscourse that make a “direct reference to the reader and/or writer of the current context, either through nouns (like a writer, reader, and author) or pronouns (mainly I, their, you, and we possessive and oblique forms) (p. 47).” Phrases like “as you will see” (p. 162) and “as I showed above” (p. 48) are instances of personal metadiscourse.

As Ädel (2006) indicates, the focus in personal metadiscourse is “how readers and writers relate to each other within that world or how they relate to the world of speech (or the context) (p. 20).” Impersonal metadiscourse, however, relates to those cases of metadiscourse that “do not make clear reference to the speech contributors” (p. 14). Passive voice and other impersonal constructions may help prevent clear self or other exhibition in impersonal metadiscourse instead of utilizing nominal and pronominal references to the reader or the writer. Phrases, as shown and concluded above, are examples of impersonal metadiscourse (p. 48). However, there is a need to a deeper and more detailed sorting system.

Previous Research on Metadiscourse

Different EAP fields of research have evaluated a variety of genres in academic written English, including textbooks, different sections of research papers, and theses.

Some studies have focused on the role of metadiscourse for pedagogical objectives. These contain the impact of students' information of metadiscourse on their reading (Camiciottoli, 2003; Jalilifar & Alipour, 2007; Parvaresh & Nemati, 2008) writing (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996), listening comprehension (Hashemi et al., 2012; Pérez & Macià, 2002), and speaking.

Pooresfahani et al. (2012) explored the use of interactional and interactive metadiscoursal properties based on Hyland's taxonomy of metadiscourse (K. Hyland, 2005) in research articles from two disciplines, namely applied engineering and linguistics. Their findings indicated that the writers used interactive metadiscourse markers more than interactional ones in both set of research articles.

Dastjerdi and Shirzad (2010), Gold Sanford (2012), and Taghizadeh and Tajabadi (2003) examined the relationship between writing and metadiscourse markers. The first research used Vande Kopple's classification (Vande Kopple, 1985), while the second and third studies were based on Hyland's model (K. Hyland, 2005) and Hyland's taxonomy of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2000), respectively.

All studies showed a positive relationship between metadiscourse markers instruction and writing quality, confirming the association of metadiscourse markers and writing abilities. The literature on the relationship between speech and writing helps to predict how spoken and written types of metadiscourse may differ. Previous work on metadiscourse has failed to make this comparison as research into metadiscourse has almost exclusively dealt with the written language (Luukka, 1992; Thompson, 2003).

While showing similar overall frequencies of metadiscourse types cross-culturally, the results bring to the surface —both culture- and language-specific lexicogrammatical realizations of metadiscourse units – various preferences for impersonal/personal metadiscourse and also

preferred textual expansions in the construction of dialogism via metadiscourse. This research compares speech and writing Metadiscourse through mapping interactions in academic writing reports on a study of advanced second language writing by predominantly L1 Cantonese speakers, based on a four-million-word corpus of 240 masters' and Ph.D. dissertations. The analysis of metadiscourse will uncover one aspect of the social and rhetorical distinctiveness of disciplinary communities, as six various disciplines are examined, including electronic engineering, business studies, public administration, applied linguistics, biology, and computer science.

The results show that the use of metadiscourse varies both in the masters versus Ph.D. and in the disciplinary variables. As evidenced by the use of metadiscourse, members of these groups represent themselves and observe their readers in quite various ways. Pérez-Llantada's paper —The speech functions of metadiscourse in published academic writing: language and issues of culture – presents a large-scale study of two key sections of research articles, which are introductions and discussions. The material is based on biomedical journals and represents 114 samples of introductions and discussions, retrieved from different populations: Spanish scholars writing in Spanish, North-American scholars writing in English, and Spanish scholars writing in English. The total word count per population ranges between approximately 65000 and 70000. Pérez and Macià (2002) analyzes the text-oriented and participant-oriented types of metadiscourse, based on Ädel (2006), with a view toward the discourse functions, carried out by metadiscourse. Then, these micro-level discourse functions are related to broader move-patterns found for introductions and discussions, based on Swales (1990). While showing similar overall frequencies of metadiscourse types cross-culturally, the results bring to the surface —both culture- and language-specific lexicogrammatical realizations of metadiscourse units - various preferences for impersonal/personal metadiscourse and also preferred textual expansions in the construction of dialogism via metadiscourse. This research will compare speech and writing.

Methodology

Corpus

Even it is rarely happen but interview is considered as an important genre in academic context. Thus, this study intends to focus on this neglected academic genre. To this end, a corpus of three interviews extracted from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English (MICASE). The interviews were extracted from the MICASE corpus due to the following justifications: first, the interviews were recorded in academic English native context and second, the interviews were available in transcribed form that make the analysis to be easier task. Details of the corpus are as follow:

Table1

Details of the corpus of this study

File Name			Recording (minute)	Length	Transcript Count	Word
Graduate Interview 1	Student	Research	34		5168	
Graduate Interview 2	Student	Research	20		2963	
Interview with Botanist			31		5159	
Total			85		13290	

The selection of these three interviews was based on the fact that there were only three available interviews in MICASE.

Framework

Adel (2006, 2010) is one of the pioneers that focused on reflexive metadiscourse markers in academic spoken and written genres. In this regards, she proposed one of the most comprehensive and detailed framework for the analysis of reflexive metadiscourse markers in spoken and written academic genres. Thus, this study has used Adel's taxonomy (Ädel, 2010), which includes 23 discourse functions, divided into four main categories of *Metalinguistic comments*, *Discourse organization*, *Speech act labels*, and *References to the audience*. The category of Metatext referred to metalinguistic comments, including the discourse functions of *Repairing*, *Reformulating*, *Commenting on Linguistic Form/Meaning*, *Clarifying*, and *Managing Terminology*. *Repairing* (Example 1) refers to both self- and other-initiated suggestions and alterations to correct or cancel a preceding contribution. *Reformulating* (Example 2) refers to the offering of an alternative term or expression, not because the preceding contribution was regarded erroneous (as in the case of *Repairing*), but because of the added value of expansion. *Commenting on Linguistic Form/Meaning* (Example 3) includes metalinguistic references to linguistic form, word choice, and/or meaning. *Clarifying* (Example 4) is used to spell out the addresser's intentions to avoid misinterpretation. Here, clarifying does not refer to a specific interactive function; thus, it is not classified as a type of *Reference to the audience* as it involves examples of the addressers wishing to specify what they are (or are not) saying to avoid misunderstandings. *Managing Terminology* (Example 5) typically involves giving definitions and providing terms or labels for phenomena talked about.

Example 1: So, everyone knows that I didn't mean to say hard real-time system.

Example 2: So, if you want rephrase it what happened to this airplane nobody.....

Example 3: You don't know exactly what time step you're gonna do a particular action

Example 4: What does it mean to have a probability of, the action, I mean after all, you're contr-the action is what.....

Example 5: I'm calling temporally dependent unconditional probability rule function....

Discourse organization includes several discourse functions having to do with topic management: *Introducing Topic* (used to open the topic) (Example 6); *Delimiting Topic* (used to explicitly state how the topic is constrained) (Example 7); *Adding to Topic* (used to explicitly comment on the addition of a topic or subtopic) (Example 8); *Concluding Topic* (used to close the topic) (Example 9); and *Marking Aside* (used to open or close a "topic sidetrack" or digression) (Example 10). *Discourse organization* also includes a series of discourse functions having to do with phonics management: *Enumerating* (Example 11) helps show how specific parts of the discourse are ordered in relation to each other. *Endophoric Marking* (Example 12) points to a specific location in the discourse and refers to cases in which it is not clear or relevant whether what is referred to occurs before or after the current point (unlike *Previewing* and *Reviewing*). One example is when the audience is instructed to look at a table or turn to a specific point in a handout. *Previewing* (Example 13) and *Reviewing* (Example 14) point forward and backward in the discourse, respectively. The addresser uses them to announce what is to come, remind the audience what has already taken place in the discourse, and carry out contextualization (Example 15). Example 6: What we're gonna do in this part of the defense.....

Example 7: You're gonna end up in the state that we've talked about.....

Example 8: So, for each new problem that you add in to your system, I'm, I really.....

Example 9: So, we set that originally and in fact in these sets we set it.....

Example 10: I prefer to skip this part because



Example 11: I'm going to talk about two different mechanisms.

Example 12: Therefore, as you can see in.....

Example 13: I'll go all the way around the schedule and.....

Example 14: If you remember from the plan. It was not an ordered set of action so.....

Example 15: Right, well, you're controlling the action but you can't control where you are in this cycle schedule when you do.....

Speech act labels include the discourse functions of *Arguing* (Example 16), used to stress the action of arguing for or against an issue; *Exemplifying* (Example 17), used to explicitly introduce an example; and a general category of *Other Speech Act Labelling* (Example 18) for those speech acts which are not sufficiently frequent - at least not in the present data set - to have their own label (examples below include giving a hint, suggesting, mentioning, and emphasizing).

Example 16: I argue that there's two basic dimensions.....

Example 17: We could have more than one all the examples that I present have

Example 18: All the things that you're prioritizing are things, are the, the ways things could go.....

References to the audience include five discourse functions. *Managing comprehension* (Example 19) functions when the addresser wants to check the participants' understanding of the input. *Managing audience* (Example 20) involves directly addressing the participants and in some cases complimenting or reprimanding them for their behaviors. *Anticipating the audience's response* (Example 21) refers to cases in which the addresser predicts probable reactions of the participants to the information presented. *Managing the message* (Example 22) requires emphasizing the main part of the discussion to be remembered by the participants. *Imagining scenarios* (Example 23) happens when the participants are expected to suppose something in the shared world of the discourse.

Example 19: Would you come up with a different plan if you ordered them in some.....

Example 20: So, we set your attention please? It is so.....

Example 21: Initially we set that to infinity because we don't know what it's supposed to be.....

Example 22: And then also we want you to think about making it easy for them to create

Example 23: Okay and the probability let's say we're computing is very dependent on

Data Analysis

The researchers went through the following steps to analyze the data. First, they downloaded the interviews from the MICASE and save them into word format. Second, the interviews were scanned for personal pronouns, including I, We, and You. Third, the tagged personal pronouns were checked regarding their metadiscourse functions. Fourth, the metadiscursive personal pronouns were classified based on the functional classification suggested by Ädel (2010), followed by the tabulation and discussion of the results as the last step.

Results and Discussion

The data were analyzed to answer the research questions. The reflexive pronouns performing reflexive metadiscourse roles were found to answer research question 1 (Table 2). The results presented in Table 2 indicate reflexive pronouns as important linguistic features that worth to be investigated and included in teaching syllabus of genres such interviews. Based on the results in Table 2, speakers or participants used personal pronouns in a metadiscursive manner at about one-fourth of the whole personal pronoun presentations. This could be enough to show the importance of such linguistic features for investigation (Example 1). Compared to reports by

Matroudy and Ebrahimi (2022) and Zare and Tavakoli (2016), personal pronouns with metadiscursive functions in this study were far less than findings of Matroudy and Ebrahimi (2022) and close to findings of Zare and Tavakoli (2016). These differences and similarities in tendencies towards metadiscursive personal pronouns could clearly suggest a close link to the nature of genres. For instance, Matroudy and Ebrahimi (2022) reported that around half of the personal pronouns served metadiscourse functions in Ph.D. defense sessions in two spoken genres. They justified this finding as the use of personal pronouns for metadiscursive functions could help establish explicit relations between speakers and audiences, helping them understand who was responsible for what was stated in the discourse. The results of the study are justifiable as the speakers prefer to use mainly the first-person pronouns in the interviews to show their authority concerning the ideas, opinions, and facts stated.

Example 1: **i** think so um **i** mean **i** certainly, learned a lot and **i** think a lot of it's useful, um... (xx) what what **i**'d learned from consulting. [S1: mhm] um... **i**'d like to, not necessarily restoration but just looking at sort of big picture, [S1: mhm] um, projects,

Table 2

Frequencies of Metadiscourse Markers (per 1000 words)

	Word count	Reflexive pronoun (per 1000)	Non-metadiscourse (per 1000)	Metadiscourse (per 1000)
Interview 1	5168	313 (60.56)	187 (36.18)	126 (24.38)
Interview 2	2963	209 (70.53)	178 (60.07)	31 (10.46)
Interview 3	5159	316 (61.25)	258 (50)	58 (11.25)
Total	13290	838 (63.05)	623 (46.87)	215 (16.17)

The data were analyzed for the frequencies of types of personal pronoun types (I, We, you) performing reflexive metadiscourse roles. As shown in Table 3, the pronoun *I* was used the greatest compared to other personal pronouns. This is the same in other studies reviewed in the literature. The possible justification for this great inclination towards the pronoun *I* could be that in interviews, there are mainly questions raised by the interviewer, and interviewees should answer them from their own point of view. Thus, the higher frequency of this pronoun is not uncommon. Besides, having the pronoun *I* in the subject position helps speakers to show their stance towards their expressions (Example 2). The pronoun *You* had the second highest frequency among reflexive pronouns. Its use can be explained by the fact the interviewees intend to draw the interviewer's attention to the intended discourse during interviews and ensure that they are following the discourse. Thus, it is clear that both speakers want to help each other to have a better understanding of the information or ideas presented (Example 2). The last personal pronoun in the list is We, which did not receive attention from the speakers, possibly because the nature of the interview imposes only the use of *I* and *You* pronouns.

Example 2: S2: um... **i** think there's there's some good things and there's some things that **you** know **i** wish were a little different. [S1: mhm] um... it's, Saint Lawrence was a really small school there's two thousand people. [S1: mhm] and their main focus was, educating people [S1: yeah] um and not_ and research and publishing took uh was secondary. [S1: yeah] um, and coming um, so at Saint Lawrence um **i** think people_ the professors', um experience was conveying information to people. [S1: right] and on a more on a really personal pers- personal level, [S1: mhm] and um... here it just seems like, um, **you** know their their fo- they they do great work they're really intelligent, [S1: yeah] they're just not as polished, at presenting_ conveying [S1: uhuh] information it seemed, [S1: uhuh] and that and that was a big shock, [S1: yeah] and and also **i** mean it could be that **you** know **i** was out of school for... six seven years and, **you** know it

sort of glorified, <S1: LAUGH> school a little bit. [S1: uhuh] um um... the (xx) could also be that it's so expensive and, and i'm paying for it this time <SS: LAUGH> instead of my parents and um, that can make, make a big difference too. [S1: yeah] um so i think that's kinda the the biggest thing. [S1: mhm] um.

Table 3
Frequencies of reflexive pronoun types (per 1000 words)

	I	You	We	Total words
Reflexive pronouns	141 (10.60)	73 (5.49)	1(0.08)	13290

As shown in Table 2, around two-thirds of the reflexive metadiscourse markers served the function of the metalinguistic comments. Besides, around one-third of the reflexive metadiscourse markers were used to refer to the audience function. The other functions received no attention from the speakers while running the interview (Example 6-7). These results are in contrast with the results obtained by Zhu (2018) and in line with the results reported in Zare and Tavakoli (2016). It seems that both the interviewer and interviewee prefer the orientation toward the discourse itself through the inclination towards the function of metalinguistic comments. This metadiscourse function refers to the intention to clarify and correct the discourse or repair the expressions. As the comprehension of the information presented in the interview guarantees the continuation of the discourse, the interviewee and interviewer prefer to use reflexive metadiscourse markers to make their discourse more interpretive and understandable. The use of reflexive pronouns to serve the function of reference to the audience is justifiable, given that genres such as interviews are dialogic in nature. In such genres, speakers refer to the audience to ensure catching the attention of the audience as they play a major role in the continuation of the interview.

Example 6: S2: um i think we just, just through the master's, um planning course [S1: mhm] project and process, um... we... i guess we had started talking before Christmas, um we had... um... i guess i sent around s- an, an email summarizing, sort of, we were sen- people were sending back and forth potential topics, [S1: mhm] projects um we sent that around and i think we had, um... that was, kinda informal, [S1: yeah] and that started like in November [S1: uhuh] and then, um... and i think i posted some information on it and then... i guess just in the, in the um, in the class we, Lou came in and, and gave a, talk on it and s- and, um, showed some aerial footage [S1: mhm] um of the river, and, so i just, i think through, through that whole process [S1: yeah] and they just seemed interested in it.

Example 7: S2: um <PAUSE:11> uh i don't know [S1: mhm] um <PAUSE:09> probably, um... just, talking to different people in the program i've i mean i've [S1: mhm] feel like i've picked up a lot of information from... from people, just other students, um, but also... um one of the professors um i'm taking a class with him now um Rob Buford has started_ h- has um, been looking at a lot of stuff um and he works a lot with Bob Seyfarth [S1: mhm] um, their_ I guess their approach for looking at rivers and streams is, that, more from like a geomorphological point of view [S1: mhm] that like the geology um was here first and then th- the biology of the streams and the chemistry all came after that and so that, shapes everything [S1: yeah] um, just because it was here first and it's older and there's some interactions that go on after that, that just looking at it from that perspective, um i think is really neat um, an- and that's and that's i think unique to the_ to the school.

Table 4
Frequencies of four categories of reflexive metadiscourse markers (%)

Function	Frequency	Percentage
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Metalinguistic comments	132	61.39
Discourse Organization	- -	
Reference to audience	82	38.13
Speech Act Labels	1	0.48
Total	215	100

As shown in Table 5, the clarifying metadiscourse function is the only subcategory of metalinguistic comments function used in the interview analyzed (Examples 8). This finding is in line with the findings reported by Zare and Tavakoli (2016). This result is not uncommon as there is a kind of relationship between the interviewee and interviewer, which could signal the need for clarification to guarantee comprehension of the discourse. It is important to make the discourse as clear as possible to provide a transparent stance concerning the ideas and opinions presented in the interview. This function seems to help the interviewee to convince both the interviewer and other possible listeners and students.

Example 8: S2: um **i** think we just, just through the master's, um planning course [S1: mhm] project and process, um... we... **i** guess we had started talking before Christmas, um we had... um... **i** guess **i** sent around s- an, an email summarizing, sort of, we were sen- people were sending back and forth potential topics, [S1: mhm] projects um we sent that around and **i** think we had, um... that was, kinda informal, [S1: yeah] and that started like in November [S1: uhuh] and then, um... and **i** think **i** posted some information on it and then... **i** guess just in the, in the um, in the class we, Lou came in and, and gave a, talk on it and s- and, um, showed some aerial footage [S1: mhm um of the river, and, so **i** just, **i** think through, through that whole process [S1: yeah] and they just seemed interested in it.

Table 5

Frequencies of metalinguistic comments (%)

Sub-Function	Frequency	Percentage
Clarifying	132	100
Total	132	100

As shown in Table 6, anticipating the audience response is the most frequent sub-function of the reference to audience function (See Example 9). This sub-function is frequently used to fulfill some communicative purposes related to the genre of the interview. In the interview, the interviewer prefers to predict and guess the interviewee responses to be able to prepare the next possible question.

Example 9 : S1: yeah, it is, and and also how um... how inexplicable in a way it is when somebody manages to really like shift the, thinking in a whole field [S2: mhm] and then **you** think well of course <LAUGH>[S2: right] **you** know that's been there all along but i- it wasn't just difficult for you to see it was difficult for [S2: yeah] **you** know difficult for everyone to actually get it in perspective or [S2: mhm] or to see that it had consequences or **you** know something like that

The next sub-function receiving about one-third of the reference to audience function is managing comprehension. In the spoken discourse interviews, for instance, the listener has no chance to get back, check, and understand or comprehend the information; thus, managing comprehension seems a necessity in spoken discourse (Example 10).

Table 6

Frequencies of reference to audience (%)

Sub-Function	Frequency	Percentage
Anticipating the audience response	51	62.19
Managing comprehension	31	37.50
Imagining sceneries	1	0.31
Total	82	100

There were no other functions of reflexive metadiscourse in the interview analyzed.

Conclusion

This study explored the use and functions of reflexive metadiscourse markers in interviews extracted from the MICASE corpus. The interviews were analyzed using the taxonomy of reflexive metadiscourse pronouns suggested by Ädel (2010).

Based on the results reported in this study, around a quarter of the reflexive pronouns used in the corpus were metadiscursive in function. Therefore, the function of reflexive pronouns is supposed to be important for exploration as they not only perform authority or self-mention functions but also other functions such as metadiscursive, of which the ESL students need to be aware.

Among the reflexive pronouns, the interviewee and interviewer preferred to use the first-person pronoun *I* more than other reflexive pronouns, indicating that the speakers desired to present their stance concerning the presented discourse and take responsibility for their expressions. Thus, the use of the first-person pronoun here is considered a norm imposed by the nature of the genre under investigation. ESL students possibly treat this genre as other academic genres in which the use of the first-person pronoun *I* cannot be regarded as a norm. Thus, it seems necessary to consciously raise ESL students' knowledge about this conclusion.

Concerning the functions of reflexive metadiscourse, metalinguistic comments and anticipating the audience response were commonly used in the interviews analyzed, and the other two functions were somewhat neglected. Thus, reflexive metadiscourse markers mostly served to establish relationships with audiences, including the interviewer and interviewee. This concluding remark can be included in similar courses such as seminars, in which the authors are mainly responsible for others' understanding.

The findings of this study have important implications for developing knowledge of ESL students and instructors on how to present the functions of metadiscourse in genres such as seminars, and also how to engage the listeners in the discourse to encourage them to pay attention to the presentations while making sure that they focus on the content.

This study could also have the following recommendations for further research: first, reflexive metadiscourse markers have received less attention compared to the interactive and textual markers suggested by Hyland (2005). Thus, further research with the focus on reflexive metadiscourse markers are required. Second, in academic context, functions of personal pronouns are restricted to grammatical functions and their metadiscourse functions are neglected. Thus, further researches that focus on metadiscourse functions of personal pronouns are suggested.

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