

Use and Linguistic Realisations of Metadiscourse Features in Business News

Chee Mei Hooi, Mei Fung Yong* and Helen Tan

Department of English, Faculty of Modern Languages and Communication, Universiti Putra Malaysia

ABSTRACT

Metadiscourse features are the way in which writers express their opinion and achieve not only coherence but also cohesion in their texts. Although metadiscourse features are widely employed, it is sometimes the case that writers tend to use them inappropriately, resulting in incoherent and ineffective texts. A review of the relevant literature reveals that a significant body of research has been conducted on metadiscourse features in various academic contexts. However, studies targeted at news settings are still limited. Hence, this study adapts Dafouz-Milne's model to identify the types, functions and linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features that are commonly used in business news. Quantitative data were collected from 15 business news articles from "Star Online" and "Focus Malaysia", respectively from September 2014 until June 2016. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six business news writers individually. This paper aims to compare textual and interpersonal functions and their linguistic realisations to see whether business news in "Star Online" or "Focus Malaysia" has more engaging content to create awareness for writers.

Keywords: Business news, Dafouz-Milne's model, metadiscourse features, writers

INTRODUCTION

Business news usually reports and explains financial news and how it affects readers. The news informs readers how the government, stock markets, money system and business world operate globally and domestically. Mencher (2011) stated that news about business had become everyone's personal business. He stated that business news ranges widely from retail and consumer products to

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 03 January 2017

Accepted: 30 November 2017

Published: 24 December 2018

E-mail addresses:

hooiesther@yahoo.com (Chee Mei Hooi)

yong@upm.edu.my (Mei Fung Yong)

helen@upm.edu.my (Helen Tan)

* Corresponding author

investing and financial markets, the airline and automotive industries, management, corporate finance or investment banking or securities industries, the media and entertainment industries and advertising and marketing to labour and employment. Business news also includes local spot news stories, features and interpretative stories (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012).

Without access to business news, people would be isolated not only from the rest of the world but also from governments and law-makers as well as neighbouring towns and cities (Hudson & Rowlands, 2012). Currently, the media have evolved and Internet media are playing a major role in disseminating news to a wider range of readers. News networks provide coverage about what is going on in the corporate world so that people are updated on happenings in the business world (McNair, 2009). Most of the time, business news is complicated. People prefer to read other news rather than business news because its content does not appeal to them. However, good writers try to draw audience interest to the target subject (Mencher, 2011) by making reports as interesting and memorable as possible, for instance by using anecdotal examples to which readers can relate.

Business news is one of the types of news that people read the least because it uses technical terms and jargon that can be complex for the readers (Mencher, 2011). To make news reports more appealing and relevant, writers use metadiscourse features to reveal their awareness of readers and their need for elaboration, clarification,

guidance and interaction. Writers also utilise these features to make the text more reader-orientated, credible and interesting. Although metadiscourse features are employed, writers are sometimes inclined to them effectively and fail to attract the readers' attention (Khattak et al., 2003).

There seems to be a lack of appropriate guidelines in reference books, manuals or websites on journalism on how to write business news specifically (Khattak et al., 2003). All good media organisations have their house style manuals, which are referred to by thousands of newspapers, magazines, broadcast stations and public relations offices around the world (Itule & Anderson, 2008), but writers are given the flexibility either to use or not use those manuals. This may create inconsistencies that interrupt the thought and flow of ideas.

Metadiscourse features have been studied in different areas, such as translation studies, intercultural studies, gender studies and academic discourse (Hyland, 1998; Hyland, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Intaraprawat & Steffenson, 1995). Most of these studies have placed attention on the pragmatic aspect of discourse. Metadiscourse features can be investigated in many different forms syntactically such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, code glosses, hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions and engagement markers (Hyland, 1998). Dafouz-Milne (2008) examined the role of metadiscourse markers in persuasive writing through a cross-linguistic study of two well-known newspapers. Noorian

and Biria (2010) analysed the interpersonal metadiscourse features in persuasive journalism. Thomas and Finneman (2013) researched the Leveson Inquiry from inception to conclusion of its hearing phase through journalistic metadiscourse. Kuhi and Mojood (2014) investigated the effect of cultural factors and generic conventions on the use and distribution of metadiscourse within a single genre on 60 newspaper editorials (written in English and Persian). This study was a response to the call for further investigation on metadiscourse features in business news (Dafouz-Milne, 2008; Gonzalez, 2005; Noorian & Biria, 2010) because very few studies have been conducted to examine textual and interpersonal features in business news. To date, there is no study conducted in Malaysia for metadiscourse features in news. Therefore, the aim of this study was to investigate the types, functions and linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features in business news reported in “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” to fill the gap in the literature.

Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following research questions:

1. How is the use of metadiscourse features in “Star Online” similar to or different from their use in “Focus Malaysia”?
 - (a) How frequently are textual and interpersonal metadiscourse features used in business news?
 - (b) Which categories of metadiscourse features most commonly occur in business news?
 - (c) What are the functions of metadiscourse features in the rhetorical sections (i.e. introduction, body and closing)?
2. How are the linguistic realisations of metadiscourse used in “Star Online” similar to or different from those used in “Focus Malaysia”?

Models of Metadiscourse Features

In this study, the metadiscourse features in business news (“Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia”) are identified using Dafouz-Milne’s model (2008). Writing is more than the use of basic syntactic skills of grammar and punctuation (Sanford, 2012) to communicate a message. In fact, it is a complicated activity that requires concentration and skill. The focus in writing is maturity, when students understand how sentences are connected to one another and present positive attributes, then negative aspects.

Writing is a form of communication in which writers offer information and project ideas and emotions to the readers (Sanford, 2012). Metadiscourse helps writers and readers understand how the sentences in a text are connected to one another by providing a function of the text (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). This means the writers present an argument logically by presenting the

positive attributes, then the negative aspects and lastly, the conclusion in summary. This will help readers to establish understanding (Hyland, 2005).

There are various models of metadiscourse. The models have different interpretations when it comes to metadiscourse. Williams' notion of metadiscourse (2007) focusses on the term 'metadiscourse', where he defines metadiscourse as "writing about writing." Vande-Kopple's model (1985) focusses on metadiscourse as well as function and provides examples for each category. Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen's model (1993) is a modification of Vande-Kopple's classification of metadiscourse (1985). Hyland's model (2005) is an addition to Vande-Kopple's as well as Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen's categorisation. Dafouz-Milne's model (2008) is concerned with the syntactic and pragmatic aspect of metadiscourse features used in editorial news.

Dafouz-Milne's model (2008) was adapted for use in this research since it has been used in editorial discourse and it is closely linked to business news. This model is comprehensive because it consists of the syntactic and pragmatic aspects of metadiscourse features. It is used to find the types of metadiscourse feature through two dimensions: textual and interpersonal. Textual metadiscourse is used to organise propositional information in ways that will be coherent for a particular audience and appropriate for a given purpose (Hyland, 1999). It is the writers'

decision to share their views and reflect the particular convention (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). Textual metadiscourse provides guidance for readers on understanding how the information is organised (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). This structure encourages the writers to provide previous information before new information is shared. Coherence, cohesion and grammar constitute the core of textual features (Hyland, 2005). These features take on a significant role in facilitating meaning construction for readers by developing connectivity or supporting points through comprehensive details. There are many categories of textual metadiscourse such as logical markers, sequencers, reminders, topicalisers, code glosses, illocutionary markers and announcements (Dafouz-Milne, 2008).

The summary of the types, categories and examples of textual metadiscourse is shown in Table 1.

Another type of metadiscourse feature is interpersonal metadiscourse. Interpersonal metadiscourse allows writers to express a perspective towards their propositional information and their readers (Hyland, 1999). It helps them to express their personality in the text and characterises the interaction they have with the readers (Hyland & Tse, 2004). For interpersonal metadiscourse, the text is written in order to communicate an intended meaning to the readers (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). This involves attitude, personality and assumptions between the writers and the readers. It also enables the writers to determine the impact they want to have on their readers

Table 1
Textual metadiscourse (Dafouz-Milne, 2008)

Textual Metadiscourse	
Categories	Examples
Logical markers	
Additives	and, furthermore
Adversatives	however
Consecutives	therefore
Conclusives	finally
Sequencers	first, second
Reminders	let us return to
Topicalisers	in political terms, in the case of the . . . (NHS)
Code glosses	
Parentheses	when (as with the Tories now)
Punctuation devices	Tax evasion: It is deplored in others, but not in oneself.
Reformulators	in other words, that is, to put it simply
Exemplifiers	for example, for instance
Illocutionary markers	I propose, I hope
Announcements	there are many good reasons

(Hyland, 2005). Interpersonal features are the ways the writers interact with readers by commenting and intruding on their message as these are often a reflection of the writers' personality. Hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers and

commentaries are categories of interpersonal metadiscourse (Dafouz-Milne, 2008).

The summary of the types, categories and examples of interpersonal metadiscourse is presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Interpersonal metadiscourse (Dafouz-Milne, 2008)

Interpersonal Metadiscourse	
Categories	Examples
Hedges	
Epistemic verbs	may, might
Probability	probably, perhaps
Epistemic expression	it is likely
Certainty markers	undoubtedly, clearly
Attributors	X claims that
Attitude markers	
Deontic verbs	have to
Attitudinal adverbs	unfortunately, undoubtedly
Attitudinal adjectives	it is absurd, it is surprising
Cognitive verbs	I feel, I think

Table 2 (continue)

Interpersonal Metadiscourse	
Categories	Examples
Commentaries	
Rhetorical questions	What is the future of Europe – integration or disintegration?
Direct address to readers	Dear reader
Inclusive expressions	We all believe
Personalisation	I do not want
Asides	She seemed (ironically for Spencer) not of the establishment.

In summary, Dafouz-Milne (2008) stated both textual and interpersonal features are crucial for creating a text that is both sensitive and persuasive. She also identified the correct function of each metadiscourse category. This shows that metadiscourse can link arguments and positions as well as create logical explanations when there is no solid evidence (Hyland, 2005). Writers should also show respect to readers by using the appropriate amount and type of metadiscourse to create rapport with the readers to encourage them to read on further (Sanford, 2012).

METHODS

Research Design and Data Collection

The research design of this study was based on the content analysis technique. This technique is commonly employed as it simply means doing a word-frequency count of words that reflect the greatest concerns (Stemler, 2001). This is because the selected words might be important in certain aspects of the setting, and this research aimed to show that such words are important not just to engage readers with a given text, but also to direct them through the text. This study

employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The corpus of business news was elicited through the quantitative data collection method. As one of the qualitative data collection methods, the semi-structured interview was used with six business news writers, three from “Star Online” and three from “Focus Malaysia”.

Samples

“Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” are two prominent news portals. “Star Online” is the most visited online news portal in Malaysia because the news is updated every five minutes. It has a wide readership of 1.2 million. “Star Online” differs from the Star e-paper in that some of the news that is available in “Star Online” is not available in the Star e-paper, particularly business news that is up-to-date. This is because the business news of “Star Online” is updated regularly, while only selected news is published in the Star e-paper. On the other hand, “Focus Malaysia” is an e-paper normally published on a weekly basis. The readership of “Star Online” is more than the readership of “Focus Malaysia” because “Star Online” has been in existence for 24 years, while “Focus Malaysia” has only

been operating for three years. The purpose of analysing both “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” was to see whether “Focus Malaysia”, which is relatively current and new, is on par in terms of quality of news reporting with “Star Online”, especially in the reporting of business news. Fifteen business news articles each from “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” were chosen through purposive sampling. News of similar topics was selected to compare the categories and functions of textual and interpersonal features.

Research Procedure

Fifteen business news articles each from “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” from September 2014 to June 2016 were chosen through purposive sampling. News of similar topics was selected to compare the categories and functions of textual and interpersonal features. The list of the topics is shown in Appendix A.

Data analysis

This research was carried out to determine the use of metadiscourse features used in the two online business news portals. The categories, functions and linguistic realisations of metadiscourse in business news writing were analysed using Dafouz-

Milne’s model (2008), which emphasises textual and interpersonal features.

In order to ensure validity and reliability of the research, two inter-raters were employed. One inter-rater had three years of experience in metadiscourse features, while the other had 10. The use of inter-coder reliability was to check the reliability of coding on the number of occurrences on the types and categories of metadiscourse features.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Comparison of the Use of Metadiscourse Features in Star Online and Focus Malaysia

In this section, the findings from 15 business news articles from “Star Online” and 15 business news articles from “Focus Malaysia” are reported and discussed in an integrative manner to answer the first research question. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics of the types of metadiscourse feature found in “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” business news articles. A variety of examples of metadiscourse categories are explained to show the different categories used because logical markers and sequencers are two of the most common categories in each rhetorical section.

Table 3
Frequency of type of metadiscourse feature in business news

Metadiscourse Features	“Star Online”		“Focus Malaysia”	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Textual metadiscourse	301	52.71	354	41.84
Interpersonal metadiscourse	270	47.29	492	58.16
Total	571	100.00	846	100.00

From the 15 business news articles of “Star Online”, it was observed that textual metadiscourse (52.71%) was used more frequently than interpersonal metadiscourse (47.29%). However, the reverse was observed in “Focus Malaysia”. Interpersonal metadiscourse (58.16%) was used more frequently than textual metadiscourse (41.84%) in 15 business news of “Focus Malaysia”. The findings are similar to the findings of Dafouz-Milne’s research where there was almost a balance between both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse used. This means that the writers used the features to guide and acknowledge readers by emphasising interaction with them by bringing them into the text through solidarity.

To examine further the use of metadiscourse features used in the two online business news portals, the frequency and percentage of occurrence of the metadiscourse features in the introduction (first paragraph), body (subsequent

paragraphs) and closing (last paragraph) of the news articles were also analysed. The categories of metadiscourse features in “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” were then compared to find out which category appeared the most in the rhetorical sections. The results are shown in the tables below.

Out of 22 occurrences of metadiscourse features in 15 business news articles of “Star Online”, 27.27% of sequencers, 22.73% of logical markers, 18.18% of attitude markers, 9.09% of code glosses, 9.09% of hedges, 9.09% of attributors, and 4.55% of certainty markers were used in the introduction section. This signifies that sequencers were the most frequently used, while certainty markers were the least frequently used. One of the reasons underlying this finding may be related to the characteristic of the introduction, which aims to guide and lead readers to the rest of the story with coherence and cohesiveness. An example of a code gloss is given below.

Table 4
Frequency of categories of metadiscourse features in the introduction section of business news

Categories	“Star Online”		“Focus Malaysia”	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Logical markers	5	22.73	16	40.00
Sequencers	6	27.27	7	17.50
Code glosses	2	9.09	2	5.00
Hedges	2	9.09	6	15.00
Certainty markers	1	4.55	2	5.00
Attributors	2	9.09	1	2.50
Attitude markers	4	18.18	4	10.00
Commentaries	0	0.00	2	5.00
Total	22	100.00	40	100.00

Code Gloss. An example of the code gloss found in the data is “like”. Its use is illustrated in Excerpt 1 below.

The government has no plan to implement capital controls like during the 1997-1998 Asean financial crisis in the face of ringgit depreciation as the situation is different, Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chua Tee Yong said. (Excerpt 1 – Business news article 11)

The code gloss “like” is used in the middle of the sentence to help readers interpret the meaning of the words and phrases or to give an example to make the text more comprehensible for them. An example of the situation, the ASEAN financial crisis, was given to guide readers to ensure they were able to get the writer’s message.

As can be seen in Table 4, 40 occurrences of metadiscourse features were noted in the introduction section of 15 Focus Malaysia business news articles. A total of 40.00% of logical markers, 17.50% of sequencers, 15.00% of hedges, 10.00% of attitude markers, 5.00% of code glosses, 5.00% of certainty markers, 5.00% of commentaries and 2.50% of attributors appeared in this section of business news articles. This means that logical markers were the most frequently used, while attributors were the least frequently used in the introduction section of the business news articles in “Focus Malaysia”. This is because the purpose of the introduction is to present the news in a descending order of importance to

introduce continued reporting news and key sources with coherence and cohesiveness. An example of a hedge is given below.

Hedges. An example of hedges found in the data is “would”. Its use is illustrated in Excerpt 2 below.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, who is also Finance Minister, would have us believe that Budget 2015 announced on Oct 10 is a “fiscally-responsible” budget, which invests in future fiscal and economic growth sustainability at the cost of short-term pain and adjustment. (Excerpt 2 – Business news article 1)

The hedge “would” is used in the middle of the sentence to show uncertainty of the truth of the assertion in the text. The hedge “would” is used against accuracy rather than protection against overstatement. This means that uncertainty of the facts dominates over any attempts to disguise the writers’ opinion to arouse the readers’ level of interest in the content.

In the body section, a total of 514 occurrences of metadiscourse features was used in “Star Online”. Of these occurrences, 33.46% were logical markers, 17.90% were attributors, 12.65% were sequencers, 12.45% were certainty markers, 9.92% were hedges, 5.06% were attitude markers, 4.28% were code glosses, 2.53% were commentaries and 1.75% were topicalisers. This means that logical markers were the most frequently used, whereas topicalisers

Table 5
Frequency of categories of metadiscourse features in the body section of the business news articles

Categories	“Star Online”		“Focus Malaysia”	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Logical markers	172	33.46	333	42.21
Sequencers	65	12.65	35	4.44
Topicalisers	9	1.75	28	3.55
Code glosses	22	4.28	30	3.80
Illocutionary markers	0	0.00	1	0.13
Hedges	51	9.92	84	10.65
Certainty markers	64	12.45	50	6.34
Attributors	92	17.90	170	21.55
Attitude markers	26	5.06	43	5.45
Commentaries	13	2.53	15	1.90
Total	514	100.00	789	100.00

were the least frequently used in the body section of the 15 business news articles from “Star Online”. This shows that the purpose of the body section was to provide readers a smooth flow in reading the news by giving them transitions and accurate additional facts to assist them to enable better understanding of the news. Examples of sequencers in the body section are given below.

Sequencers. Examples of sequencers found in the data are “firstly” and “secondly”. Their use is illustrated in Excerpt 3 below.

According to Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar, the Government deems the initial GST rate of 6% as reasonable, firstly because it is equivalent to the current average SST rate, and secondly, it is the lowest rate

among Asean countries. (Excerpt 3 – Business news article 1)

The sequencers “firstly” and “secondly” are used here in the middle of the sentence to order the argument of the points in the text. This is to focus attention, signalling that readers now have to concentrate in order to understand the content that is about to follow i.e. the two reasons given by the authorities for their belief that the GST rate is reasonable.

In the “Focus Malaysia” articles, 789 occurrences of metadiscourse features were used in the body section. There were 42.21% logical markers, 21.55% attributors, 10.65% hedges, 6.34% certainty markers, 5.45% attitude markers, 4.44% sequencers, 3.80% code glosses, 3.55% topicalisers, 1.90% commentaries and 0.13% illocutionary markers used in this section of the business news articles. This means that logical markers were the most frequently used,

whereas illocutionary markers were the least frequently used in the body section of the business news articles from “Focus Malaysia”, suggesting that the purpose of the body section of these articles was to guide and assist readers in following the flow of the news texts. An example of an attributor is given below.

Attributors. An example of an attributor found in the data was “Suria Capital chief financial officer Ng Kiat Min tells FocusM”, as given in Excerpt 4 below.

Suria Capital chief financial officer Ng Kiat Min tells FocusM the Jesselton Quay project was facing a delay as the company had to come up with a proper plan for traffic management encompassing not only the project but also the city. (Excerpt 4 – Business news article 4)

In Excerpt 4, the attributor “Suria Capital chief financial officer Ng Kiat Min tells FocusM” is used at the beginning of the sentence to refer to information from the source about the plans of a company. Attributors are used to make a text persuasive in tone by emphasising the writer’s authority. By referring to information from other sources, the writer stimulates interest in readers to know more and to read on as they become convinced that the source of the information is credible.

Thirty occurrences of metadiscourse features were used in the closing section of the 15 business news articles from “Star Online”, of which, 50.00% were logical markers, 20.00% were attributors, 10.00% were certainty markers, 10.00% were attitude markers, 6.67% were code glosses and 3.33% were hedges. This means that logical markers were used the most, whereas hedges were used the least in this section. This illustrates that the purpose of the

Table 6
Frequency of categories of metadiscourse features in the closing section of the business news articles

Categories	“Star Online”		“Focus Malaysia”	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Logical markers	15	50.00	16	44.44
Sequencers	0	0.00	3	8.33
Topicalisers	0	0.00	3	8.33
Code glosses	2	6.67	0	0.00
Hedges	1	3.33	2	5.56
Certainty markers	3	10.00	1	2.78
Attributors	6	20.00	6	16.67
Attitude markers	3	10.00	2	5.56
Commentaries	0	0.00	3	8.33
Total	30	100.00	36	100.00

closing section as intended by the writers was to help readers to process and evaluate the news that they had reported as well as to relate it to earlier information given in the body paragraphs. An example of a certainty marker used is given below.

Certainty Markers. An example of a certainty marker found in the data was “largely”. Its use is illustrated in Excerpt 5 below.

The research house noted that the more intense competition had thus far largely come from U Mobile Sdn Bhd and is expected to continue to be aggressive in 2015, as it seeks to achieve greater economies of scale for its mobile business. (Excerpt 5 – Business news article 7)

The certainty marker “largely” is used in the middle of the sentence to express total commitment to the truth value of the text about a company. They also opted for this word in order to emphasise certainty or to establish close dialogue with the readers. News must be reported with due accuracy and presented with due impartiality through the use of certainty markers. This is because it is acceptable to expect a certain degree of impreciseness to make the news clearer for the readers.

Table 6 shows that a total of 36 occurrences of metadiscourse features was used in the closing section of “Focus Malaysia”, of which 44.44% were logical markers, 16.67% were attributors, 8.33% were sequencers, 8.33% were topicalisers,

8.33% were commentaries, 5.56% were hedges, 5.56% were attitude markers and 2.78% were certainty markers. This means that logical markers were used the most, while certainty markers were used the least in this section. This is because the purpose of the closing section as used in the articles was to encourage the writers to express their intended meaning relating the ideas so that the readers could understand the texts better. An example of a topicaliser is given below.

Topicalisers. An example of a topicaliser detected in the data is given in Excerpt 6 below.

Amid still political hurdles for some countries, policymakers must step up structural, economic and financial reforms to build a stronger buffer against external shocks, even if this involves short-term adjustment pain.

In the near to medium term, there is a greater sense of urgency to speed up credible reforms in the goods and services market, open or liberalise markets and investment policies to foster healthy competition in trade and investment, overhaul education, strengthen healthcare services and public infrastructure as well as enhance social safety nets to shelter needy groups from the adjustment costs of liberalisation and subsidy rationalisation. (Excerpt 6 – Business news article 10)

The topicaliser “In the near to medium term” is used at the beginning of the sentence to indicate a topic shift; thus, readers are able to know that the writer is introducing a new topic within the news context. This is important because news stories are viewed positively when readers can look at the issues from a different point of view or link seemingly unrelated topics together.

Comparison of Linguistic Realisations of Metadiscourse Used in “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia”

This section discusses examples and explanation of linguistic realisations of metadiscourse features in “Star Online” and “Focus Malaysia” to answer the second research question. The linguistic realisations are explained with regard to grammatical use of metadiscourse, indication of new topics and use of metadiscourse function.

Grammatical Use of Metadiscourse. In Excerpt 7, the use of “and” as a logical marker at the beginning of the sentence in the first body paragraph after the introduction shows the improper grammatical use of metadiscourse. In Excerpt 8, on the other hand, “and” is used at the beginning of the sentence of the first body paragraph and it is used correctly. This shows that these features enable the text to have some elements of textual flow. This relates to focussed attention due to the concentration of mental activity because the use of logical markers helps readers to focus their concentration, absorption and temporal dissociation on the text.

And businesses, some of which are already struggling to survive in the present challenging environment, will definitely come under heavy pressure because of the prices increases. (Excerpt 7 – “Star Online”, Business news article 1)

The budget has outlined wide-ranging strategies and initiatives on strengthening economic growth, sustaining investment momentum, enhancing fiscal governance, developing human capital and entrepreneurship, advancing the bumiputera agenda, increasing women participation and developing national youth transformation. (Excerpt 8 – “Focus Malaysia”, Business news article 1)

Indication of New Topics. The topicaliser “in particular” in Excerpt 9 is used in the middle of the sentence but there is no clear shift indication of a new topic in the news, which could cause confusion among readers. However, in Excerpt 10, “to make matters worse” is used as a topicaliser at the beginning of the sentence to show a clear indication that there is a shift to a new topic. These features are important because they are connected to durability, which combines the concepts related to the readers’ likelihood of returning and evaluating the level of success of the news report. This is important because news stories are viewed positively when readers can look at issues from a different point of view or link seemingly unrelated topics together.

Officials in Washington and London in particular were eager to start lifting interest rates in part because with rates near zero they have to resort back to unconventional policies to counter any new downturn. (Excerpt 9 – “Star Online”, Business news article 8)

To make matters worse, Bursa Malaysia has seen net outflow of foreign funds for 10 straight weeks. (Excerpt 10 – “Focus Malaysia”, Business news article 9)

Use of Metadiscourse Function. In Excerpt 11, “engineers from Toshiba, IHI Corp and Hyundai Group – the consortium that won the engineering, procurement and construction contract for the project – were already” is used as a code gloss in the middle of the sentence, but it is used incorrectly. In Excerpt 12, “US\$52.85 (RM192.37)” is used as a code gloss in the middle of the sentence, and it is used correctly. The function of code glosses is to explain, rephrase or exemplify textual material. The code gloss is used incorrectly in Excerpt 11 because although there is a signal of restatement of complicated terms, it is not clear, and readers have to read the sentence many times to comprehend the term. Nevertheless, in Excerpt 12, the code gloss is used in correct function as from reading the sentence, readers will know that the conversion of US\$52.85 to Malaysian currency is RM192.37, and they would understand the term almost immediately. This links to durability for the readers to

evaluate the overall experience of reading news on the news portal and perceiving its success as well as whether they would recommend the news site to others.

According to sources, engineers from Toshiba, IHI Corp and Hyundai Group – the consortium that won the engineering, procurement and construction contract for the project – were already at the headquarters of TNB as part of the latter’s assessment of the project. (Excerpt 11 – “Star Online”, Business news article 15)

According to Central Appalachian Coal (CAPP) futures, coal prices declined by some 17.9% to US\$52.85 (RM192.37) per tonne on March 24 from a high of US\$64.40 in August last year. (Excerpt 12 – “Focus Malaysia”, Business news article 15)

CONCLUSION

The findings of this study illustrated that metadiscourse plays an essential role in business news writing. From the data, the findings showed that both textual and interpersonal features were used more frequently by “Focus Malaysia” writers than by “Star Online” writers. This shows that the emphasis of “Focus Malaysia” is not only on precision and accuracy of information but also on honesty, humility and proper caution in presenting facts (Laane, 2010). Metadiscourse tends to be used primarily to

convey the message precisely and accurately in “Star Online”. However, for “Focus Malaysia” writers, metadiscourse is used primarily to encourage readers to engage with the text. Business news writers would be unable to formulate statements creating different points of view or describing new information through negotiation and persuasion of information without the presence of metadiscourse. Since textual and interpersonal features are important in business news, it is the most significant resource with a variety of realisations that the writers have to acquire to reflect their professional persona and communicate with their readers. It is believed that there should be a mixture of textual and interpersonal features in business news writing because as much as the content needs to be specific so that the message is conveyed clearly, some offensive remarks can be disarmed in order to establish a relationship with readers. Hence, it is pertinent to create awareness among the writers on which metadiscourse categories can be included in the news. These categories would assist them to use the correct language, conventions and functions efficiently and effectively. The writers will also then be able to record and report events in an orderly manner to enable readers to know what happened as soon as the story begins to unfold.

Further research into this topic can focus on investigation into the use and importance of metadiscourse features in other types of news writing, apart from business news. In this regard, identifying the use of metadiscourse features is essential

in journalism courses. This study can be extended to compare and contrast the research with local professionals to evaluate whether the use of metadiscourse features in other types of news writing is able to meet the demands of the news industry.

REFERENCES

- Crismore, A. (1989). *Talking with readers: Metadiscourse as rhetorical act*. New York, USA: Peter Lang.
- Crismore, A., Markkanen, R., & Steffensen, M. S. (1993). Metadiscourse in persuasive writing: A study of texts written by American and Finnish university students. *Written Communication*, 10(39), 39–71.
- Dafouz-Milne, E. (2008). The pragmatic role of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers in the construction and attainment of persuasion: A cross-linguistic study of newspaper discourse. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 40, 95–113.
- Gonzalez, R. A. (2005). Textual metadiscourse in commercial websites. *IBERICA*, 9, 33–52.
- Hudson, G., & Rowlands, S. (2012). *Broadcast journalism handbook* (2nd ed.). Essex, England: Pearson Education Limited.
- Hyland, K. (1998). *Hedging in scientific research articles*. Amsterdam, Netherlands: John Benjamins.
- Hyland, K. (1999). Talking to students: Metadiscourse in introductory coursebooks. *English for Specific Purposes*, 18(1), 3–26.
- Hyland, K. (2000). Hedges, boosters and lexical invisibility: Noticing modifiers in academic texts. *Language Awareness*, 9(4), 179–197.
- Hyland, K. (2004). Disciplinary interactions: Metadiscourse in L2 postgraduate writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 13, 133–151.

- Hyland, K. (2005). *Metadiscourse: Exploring interaction in writing*. London, England: Continuum.
- Hyland, K., & Tse, P. (2004). Metadiscourse in academic writing: A reappraisal. *Applied Linguistics*, 25(2), 156–177.
- Intaraprawat, P., & Steffensen, M. S. (1995). The use of metadiscourse in good and poor ESL essays. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 4(3), 253–272.
- Itule, B. D., & Anderson, D. A. (2008). *News writing & reporting for today's media*. New York, USA: McGraw-Hill.
- Khattak, H. K., Yaqoob, S., & Basri, R. (2003). *Communication skills module*. Retrieved January 21, 2017, from <http://www.hec.gov.pk/InsideHEC/Divisions/LearningInnovation/Documents/Learning%20Portal/NAHE/communication%20skills%20module.pdf>
- Kuhi, D., & Mojood, M. (2014). Metadiscourse in newspaper genre: A cross-linguistic study of English and Persian editorials. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 98, 1046–1055.
- Laane, M. (2010). Strategies of hedging in science writing. *Proceedings of the 8th International Symposium "Topical Problems in the Field of Electric and Power Engineering*, 3–7.
- Mauranen, A. (1993). Contrastive ESP rhetoric: Metatext in Finnish-English economic texts. *English for Specific Purpose*, 12(1), 3–22.
- McNair, B. (2009). *News and journalism in UK*. New York, USA: Routledge.
- Mencher, M. (2011). *Melvin Mencher's news reporting and writing*. New York, USA: The McGraw-Hill Companies.
- Noorian, M., & Biria, R. (2010). Interpersonal metadiscourse in persuasive journalism: A study of texts by American and Iranian EFL columnists. *Journal of Modern Languages*, 20, 64–79.
- Sanford, S. G. (2012). *A comparison of metadiscourse markers and writing quality in adolescent written narratives* (Unpublished master's thesis), University of Montana, Missoula, USA.
- Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation*, 7(17). Retrieved October 31, 2014, from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17>
- Thomas, R. I., & Finneman, T. (2013). Who watches the watchdogs? British newspaper metadiscourse on the Leveson inquiry. *Journalism Studies*, 15(2), 172–186.
- Vande-Kopple, W. J. (1985). Some exploratory discourse in metadiscourse. *College Composition and Communication*, 82–93.
- Vande-Kopple, W. J. (2002). Metadiscourse, discourse, and issues in composition and rhetoric. In E. Barton & G. Stygall (Eds.), *Discourse studies in composition* (pp. 91–113). Cresskill, USA: Hampton Press.
- Williams, J. M. (2007). *Style: Ten lessons in clarity and grace* (9th ed.). New York, USA: Pearson-Longman.

APPENDIX

List of Business News Topics

Number	Business News Topics	
	“Star Online”	“Focus Malaysia”
1	Bracing for Tough Times	Bracing for Pain and Adjustments
2	SBC Plans New Property Launches	Suria Capital Sees End to Jesselton Quay Hiccup
3	Badlishah Takes Charge of Malaysia Airports	Challenging Tasks for New MAHB MD
4	MMS Ventures Looks to Bounce Back	Sunny Outlook for MMS Ventures, Elsoft Research
5	Sime Darby JV Gets RM58m Tractors Deal from Westports	Sime Darby’s Puzzling Deals
6	Oil and Gas Stocks Hit by Impairments and Narrow Margins	Yinson Increases Assets Despite Falling Oil Prices
7	2015 Good Year for Malaysian Mobile Phone Industry	Competition Hots Up, for Mobile Players
8	Central Bankers May Have No Quick Fix As Markets Swoon, Economy Weakens	Just Fix the Economy
9	EPF Emerges As a Major Shareholder of Yinson	Yinson’s ‘Costly’ Placement Exercise
10	KLCI, Key Asian Markets Slide on Grexit Woes	Asia Ready for Grex
11	Malaysia Has No Plan for Capital Controls, Says Chua	Capital Controls Not the Solution
12	Now is the Best Time to Buy Gold	Dazzling Outlook for Gold Investment
13	EPF Achieves Strong Growth in Investment Income	Net Buyer EPF Helps Lift KLCI
14	Heavy Price to Pay If TNB Deal Not Transparent	Be Transparent on Edra Sale
15	TNB Takes Over Project 3B	No Joy for TNB from Low Coal Prices

