



Contrastive Analysis on Metadiscourse Markers Used in Blotter Entries

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Abstract

This quantitative study analyzed the use of the metadiscourse markers used in the blotter entries taken from two police stations in the country. Using Metadiscourse Analysis of Hyland, the study reveals that blotter entries from Region 6 contain more hedges and logical connectives; however, blotter entries from National Capital Region (NCR) contain more evidentials. This study concludes that writers of blotter entries from Region 6 are more cautious while writers of blotter entries from NCR tend to sound more certain or authoritarian by observing the use of evidentials. This study also shows that writers from the two discourse communities are aware of the usage of logical connectives as they are evident or can be observed in the collected sample blotter entries.

Introduction

Background of the Study

The Philippines is recognized globally as one of the largest English-speaking nations with the majority of its population having at least some degree of fluency in the language. English has always been one of the official languages of the Philippines and is spoken by more than 14 million Filipinos. It is the primary medium of instruction in education as well as the language used in commerce and law (Cabigon, 2014). Every professional is expected to be fluent when it comes to speaking and writing the second language to make them more globally competitive (Emperador, 2019).

Professionals like police officers are required to write many different types of narrative documents. In policing, the basic incident report documents the officer's activity; records the actions and testimony of the victims, suspects, and witnesses; serves as a legal account of an event; and is used for court testimony. As a professional, an officer should strive to become the best writer possible (Allen & Houghland, 2019).

The need to write well has never been more important. Relating facts about an incident and investigation go far beyond the eyes of the supervisor and agency. Writing in general and writing well is a cornerstone of professional communication skills, and according to Lentz (2013) as cited by Allen and Houghland (2019) "is seen as a mark of professionalism and intelligence." Writing well is a necessary requirement in policing, and police officers are often expected to complete a variety of writing assignments. A well-written police report will convict criminals, encourage the support of the community, and become a guide for both the officer and department.

A. First Entry in the Blotter Book		
1. Blotter Entry No: 0001	3. Name of complainant/reportee	7. Police Officer/ Investigator to whom the incident was referred to.
2. Date/Time of the reception of the complainant/reportee	4. Nature of incident	8. Name and signature of the Police Officer/ Investigator.
	5. Place of occurrence	
	6. Name and signature of Desk Officer	

B. Second Entry in the Blotter Book		
1. Blotter Entry No: 0002	3. References: a. Initial blotter entry no: (Blotter Entry No: 0001) b. IRF No: 130101-201401-0001	4. Disposition: for record/ further investigation/ filing of case
2. Date/Time of the reception of the IRF	4. Details of IRF No: 130101-201401-0001	7. IRF forwarded to Crime Registrar
	5. Name and signature of Desk Officer	8. Name and signature of Crime Registrar

Figure 1. Template in Accomplishing the Police Blotter

When writing police blotter entries, the National Police Commission released Resolution no. 2009-707 that approves the Standard Specification for Police Blotter Entry. It says that the entry should answer the cardinal elements of the police record: Who; What; Why; Where; When; How; and the

Disposition of the Case. Further, the resolution also reminds the police officers that clarity should not for brevity though the agency encourages simple reporting. In September 6, 2011, Crime Information Reporting and Analysis System (CIRAS) Enhanced e-Blotter System to serve as a more efficient electronic blotter system across the country (Valoria, 2019). The picture below shows the template in accomplishing the police blotter in CIRAS.

Hyland's Metadiscourse Markers

When police officers write their blotter entries, it is inevitable that they use linguistic features to ensure that correctness and clarity of their reports. Aside from being aware of correct usage of language mechanics, police officers need to be knowledgeable as well of the metadiscourse markers as these affect the credibility of the blotter entries.

Metadiscourse is seen as the interpersonal resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader (Hyland, 2000 as cited by Hyland, 2004). It refers to the linguistic devices writers employ to shape their arguments to the needs and expectations of their target readers. The term is not always defined and used in the same way, but it is typically employed as an umbrella term to include a heterogeneous array of features which help relate a text to its context by assisting readers to connect, organize, and interpret material in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the understandings and values of a particular discourse community (Halliday, 1998 as cited by Hyland, 2004).

Previous Studies on Metadiscourse Analysis

Many studies have been conducted using metadiscourse analysis. Most of them focused on the academic papers (Gao, 2004; Zarei& Mansoori, 2011; Shrizadi et al., 2017; Akinci, 2016; Koyashi; 2016; Farhani, 2018; Livytska), business e-mails (Carrio-Pastor & Calderon, 2015), books reviews (Cheng, 2014; Soleimani & Mohammadkhah, 2020; Junqueira and Cortes, 2014), and newspaper editorials (Homayounzadeh& Mehrpour, 2013; Bonyadi& Samuel, 2013; Magtira& Bernardo, 2019; Kuhl& Mojood, 2014; Lee, 2020; Koutchade, 2021; Tarrayo and Duque, 2011).

The study of Gao (2004) investigated the use of hedges found in 10 academic papers: five Chinese articles and five English articles. His study revealed that Chinese scientists tend to use fewer hedges than English scientists do. Chinese scientists showed less tendency to use their writing as an opportunity for communication and interaction with others. They might have been afraid of misleading others if they showed too much uncertainty with hedges. They seemed to shoulder the responsibility of providing accurate information and interpretation. Gao (2004) then concluded that the Chinese scientists acted more like authorities than researchers.

The study of Shirzadi et al., (2017) also investigated the differences between Iranian and American M.A. EFL writers in using stance strategies (hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions) in Introduction and Discussion sections of academic papers. The corpora for this study were 40 articles (20 for American native and 20 for Iranian nonnative writers). The findings showed that there was no statistically significant difference between native and nonnative writers in using stance strategies although native writers tended to use hedges, attitude markers, and self-mentions comparatively more than nonnatives, whereas nonnative writers used a greater number of boosters.

The study of Kobayashi (2016) also compared the use of metadiscourse markers in L2 essays and identified discourse devices used to distinguish different L1 groups. The essays originated from the International Corpus Network of Asian Learners of English (ICNALE) compared six L1 groups (viz., Chinese, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Taiwanese, and Thai) based on the frequency of metadiscourse markers. The results suggested a substantial difference in the use of metadiscourse markers between East Asian groups (viz., Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Taiwanese) and Southeast Asian groups (viz., Indonesian and Thai).

The study of Carrio-Pastor and Calderon (2015) investigated the metadiscourse features used in digital business communications. More specifically, they focused on the interactional metadiscourse devices categorised as boosters. They analysed and compared a corpus of one hundred emails written by two groups of non-native speakers of English working in an export company and using English to communicate in a business environment. One group was composed of workers from Spain and the other was composed of workers from China. The results revealed that speakers with different linguistic backgrounds use boosters in a different way. Notably, Spanish writers of English show a preference for greater assertiveness when communicating in business English.

The study of Junqueira and Cortes (2014) analyzed 180 academic book reviews across two languages, Brazilian Portuguese (BP) and English, in three disciplines: Applied Linguistics, History, and Psychology. The results of the study revealed that interpersonal metadiscourse devices were considerably more frequent in the book reviews in the English corpus across the three disciplines investigated than in the BP counterparts.

The study of Lee (2019) explored cross-cultural differences between English newspaper editorials written by Korean writers and those by native writers of English in the distribution of interactional metadiscourse. Two elite newspapers, The Korea Herald and The New York Times were adopted as corpora, using Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse to compare them in the writers' use of interactional metadiscourse to construct a public opinion in interaction with readers. Findings showed that native English writers used more diverse types of interactional metadiscourse than Korean writers.

The study of Kuhl and Mojood (2014) examined a corpus of 60 newspaper editorials (written in English and Persian) culled from 10 elite newspapers in America and Iran. Based on Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse, both interactive and interactional metadiscursive resources were analysed. The results disclosed that genre conventions had a determining role in the writers' choice of some metadiscourse resources that contributed to some similarities in the use and distribution of metadiscourse resources across English and Persian data. In addition, some differences were found between two sets of editorials which were attributed to cultural/linguistic backgrounds of both groups of editorialists. The interactional category and attitude markers proved to be, respectively the predominant metadiscourse category and subcategory in newspaper editorials genre.

The study of Tarrayo and Duque (2011) described the discourse structure and textual metadiscourse in newspaper editorials in the Philippines where English is used as a second language. Data examined were the 24 newspaper editorials published in 2010 by two leading Philippine broadsheets, namely, Philippine Daily Inquirer and The Philippine Star. Findings revealed that, with regard to the use of connectors, Philippine newspaper editorials were built more on the additive relation, using a progressive or accumulative strategy. In addition, the genre examined used more simple connectors, such as the additive and, or, and also, adversative but and yet, and causal because and so. In terms of code glosses, editorialists seemed to use more parenthetical definitions to provide adequate clarifications and exemplifications in the proposition or content.

Lastly, Koutchade's (2020) study analyzed metadiscourse markers in selected online articles. Specifically, the study focused on two online newspapers' editorials in Nigeria, PUNCH and THE NATION. The results revealed that apart from code glosses and self-mentions which are non-existent in the first text, the other types of interactive and interactional metadiscourse occur in the two texts. The distribution of interactive metadiscourse showed that transitions, evidentials and frame markers are mostly utilized in the first text whereas transitions, endophoric and frame markers are most dominant in the second text. Regarding interactional metadiscourse, hedges and engagement markers are dominant in PUNCH editorial while hedges and attitudes makers are mostly used in THE NATION. Koutchade (2020) concluded that these linguistic markers are all the more important as they facilitate the construction and negotiation of social relations.

The Present Study

As of today, there have been no studies on the metadiscourse analysis of blotter entries reported or read by the researcher. As contribution to filling this methodological gap, this study aimed to determine and analyze the metadiscourse markers used in the blotter entries acquired from two police stations: one from the National Capital Region and one from Western Visayas. This sought to answer the questions:

Statement of the Problem

1. What are the metadiscourse markers used in the blotter entries?
2. Is there a significant difference between the two discourse communities in terms of:
 - a. The use of hedges?
 - b. The use of evidentials?
 - c. The use of Logical Connectives?

Hypothesis

There is no significant difference between the two discourse communities in terms of the use of hedges; of evidentials; and of logical connectives.

Theoretical Framework

The present study used the framework of metadiscourse developed by Ken Hyland, which is the most widely accepted in the field of discourse analysis. Hyland (2005) defined metadiscourse as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community." Hyland's list of metadiscourse markers is used to analyze different types of texts, such as introductory academic course books (Hyland, 1999), undergraduate textbooks (Hyland, 2000), postgraduate dissertations (Hyland, 2004), and learner writings (Hyland & Tse, 2004). In the present study, the researcher compared the blotter entries from two discourse community groups in terms of the frequency of nearly 500 types of metadiscourse markers listed in Hyland (2005). These metadiscourse resources can be classified into ten functional categories.

Table 1. Hyland's Classification of Metadiscourse Markers

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive Resources	Help to guide the reader through text	
Transitions (TRA) or Logical Connectives	Express semantic relation between main clauses	<i>In addition, but, thus, and</i>
Frame Markers (FRM)	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	<i>Finally, to conclude, my purpose here is to</i>
Endophoric Markers (END)	Refer to information in other parts of text	<i>Noted above, see Fig., in Section 2</i>
Evidentials (EVI)	Refer to source of information from other texts	<i>According to , (Y, 1990), Z states</i>
Code Glosses (COD)	Help readers grasp functions of ideational material	<i>Namely, e.g., such as, in other words</i>
Interactional Resources	Involve the reader in the argument	
Hedges (HED)	Without writer's full commitment to proposition	<i>Might, perhaps, possible, about</i>
Boosters (BOO)	Emphasize force or writer's certainty in proposition	<i>In fact, definitely, it is clear that</i>
Attitude Markers (ATM)	Express writer's attitude to proposition	<i>Unfortunately, I agree, surprisingly</i>
Engagement Markers (ENG)	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	<i>Consider, note that, you can see that</i>

Self-mentions (SEM)

Explicit reference to authors

I, we, my, your

(Hyland & Tse, 2004)

Methodology

Research Design

This quantitative study utilized the descriptive statistics in determining the metadiscourse markers found in the blotter entries. According to Cohen (1980) and Creswell (1994) as cited by Sukamolson (2007), quantitative research focuses on gathering numerical data and generalizing it across groups of people or to explain a particular phenomenon.

Data Gathering Procedure

Phase 1 Acquisition of the Sample Materials

The researcher prepared a letter of request asking for the copies of the blotter entries. After the letters were approved, the contact person then sent the sample blotter entries via electronic mail.

Phase 2 The Sample Materials

Forty (40) blotter entries were received by the researcher: 20 blotter entries from one of police stations in Metro Manila (NCR) and 20 blotter entries from one of the police stations in Iloilo City.

Phase 3 Analysis of the Selected Sample Materials

After gathering the blotter entries, the researcher then proceeded to the analysis of the gathered data.

Data Analysis

To answer the first research question, pen and paper analysis was utilized. The researcher tallied the number of sentences and words found in the materials. Palmquist (1998) as cited by Delavin and Buayan (2020), noted that the content analysis method via paper and pencil is advantageous in tracking down errors during the proceedings of coding compared to automated programs. Descriptive Statistical Tools such as Frequency, Mean, and Percentage were also utilized.

Two coders were asked to validate the occurrence of these categories as they code one-third of the materials.

To answer the second research question, Chi-square of Goodness Fit was utilized and was run through SPSS.

Overall, the researcher compiled and analyzed forty (40) blotter entries. The researcher only included the sentences and words found under "For record" written by the desk officer or the author of the said corpus.

Ethical Consideration

Though the study dealt with the metadiscourse features, the blotter entries also contained delicate or sensitive issues; that is why, the researcher ensured that the names and addresses found in the blotter entries even the place or the station where the blotter entries were taken remained anonymous.

Results and Discussion

A total of 8656 words were analyzed and the frequency of hedges, evidentials, and logical connectives are displayed in the following tables. The total data set identified in the blotter entries can be seen in Table 2:

Table 2. Data extracted from the blotter entries

Blotter Entries	Number of Words	Occurrences of Hedges	Occurrences of Evidentials	Occurrences of Logical Connectives	Total
NCR	3607	6	25	145	176
Region 6	5049	23	17	201	241
Total	8656	29	42	346	417

The items obtained were divided into three sets: the first consisted of the hedges; the second, of evidentials; and the third, of logical connectives. The metadiscourse markers were identified by Bax, Nakatsuhara, and Waller (2019) based on the work of Hyland (2005).

Table 3. Occurrences of Hedges in two discourse communities

Hedges	NCR Blotter Entries	Region 6 Blotter Entries
<i>Suspect</i>	1	15
<i>Could</i>	1	0
<i>Doubt</i>	1	0
<i>Usually</i>	1	0
<i>Would</i>	2	0
<i>Believed</i>	0	1
<i>May</i>	0	5
<i>Little</i>	0	1
<i>Possible</i>	0	1
Total	6	23

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	76.689 ^a	25	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.767	25	.113
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 34 cells (94.4%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .00.

The table above shows the actual result of the Chi- Square Goodness-of-Fit Test regarding the occurrences of hedges in blotter entries. Since the p value is 0.000 which is lesser than $\alpha=0.05$, then the null hypothesis should be rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the two discourse communities in terms of the use of hedges. Though both blotter entries from two discourse communities contain hedges, blotter entries from Region 6 use more hedges than that of NCR. This result supports the studies of Shirzadi et al., (2017) and Gao (2004) that claimed that the hedges were used by the non-native writers. However, it is evident that blotter entries from NCR use less hedges to probably show certainty or authority.

Table 4. Occurrences of Evidentials in two discourse communities

Evidentials	NCR Blotter Entries	Region 6 Blotter Entries
<i>Said</i>	16	17
<i>According to</i>	9	0
Total	25	17

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	189.519 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	110.224	2	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 2 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .76.

The table above shows the actual result of the Chi- Square Goodness-of-Fit Test regarding the occurrences of evidentials in blotter entries. Since the p value is 0.000 which is lesser than $\alpha=0.05$, then the null hypothesis should be rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the two discourse communities in terms of the use of evidentials. Though both blotter entries from two discourse communities contain evidentials, blotter entries from NCR use more hedges than that of Region 6. This result supports the studies of Cortes (2014), Lee (2019), and Kuhl and Mojood (2014) that claimed that the evidentials were used by the non-native writers. However, it is evident that blotter entries from NCR use more evidentials to show certainty in their blotter entries (Gao, 2004).

Table 5. Occurrences of Logical Connectives in two discourse communities

Hedges	NCR Blotter Entries	Region 6 Blotter Entries
<i>And</i>	88	137
<i>Likewise</i>	0	22
<i>Thus</i>	0	9
<i>Or</i>	3	13
<i>While</i>	4	12
<i>But</i>	11	2
<i>Also</i>	11	4
<i>Furthermore</i>	2	1
<i>As a result</i>	0	1
<i>Accordingly</i>	8	0
<i>Hence</i>	3	0
<i>However</i>	6	0
<i>So</i>	5	0
<i>Because</i>	2	0
Total	145	201

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	232.213 ^a	88	.000
Likelihood Ratio	260.555	88	.000
N of Valid Cases	201		

a. 99 cells (91.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

The table above shows the actual result of the Chi-Square Goodness-of-Fit Test regarding the occurrences of logical connectives in blotter entries. Since the p value is 0.000 which is lesser than $\alpha=0.05$, then the null hypothesis should be rejected. Hence, there is a significant difference between the two discourse communities in terms of the use of logical connectives. Though both blotter entries from two discourse communities contain logical connectives, blotter entries from Region 6 use more hedges than that of NCR. This result supports the studies of Tarrayo and Duque (2011) and Koutchade's (2020) that claimed that the evidentials were used by the non-native writers. However, it is evident that blotter entries from Region 6 use more logical connectives probably because of the number of sentences observed in Region 6 blotter entries.

Conclusion

Metadiscourse is seen as the interpersonal resources used to organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader (Hyland, 2000 as cited by Hyland, 2004). It refers to the linguistic devices writers employ to shape their arguments to the needs and expectations of their target readers. The term is not always defined and used in the same way, but it is typically employed as an umbrella term to include a heterogeneous array of features which help relate a text to its context by assisting readers to connect, organize, and interpret material in a way preferred by the writer and with regard to the understandings and values of a particular discourse community (Halliday, 1998 as cited by Hyland, 2004).

This study aimed to determine the metadiscourse markers used in the blotter entries produced by two discourse communities. Using the content analysis and Chi-square Goodness-of-Fit Test, the study reveals that blotter entries from Region 6 contain more hedges and logical connectives; however, blotter entries NCR contain more evidentials. This study concludes that writers of blotter entries from Region 6 are more cautious while writers of blotter entries from NCR tend to sound more certain or authoritarian by observing the use of evidentials. This study also shows that writers from the two discourse communities are aware of the usage of logical connectives as they are evident or can be observed in the collected sample blotter entries.

It is then recommended police officers who are mainly writers of the blotter entries should have wide knowledge of the metadiscourse markers to create a clear picture of what they report or write in the entries. Ozkayran and Yiaz (2020) emphasized that the professionals who produce articles in English should focus also on metadiscourse markers aside from the usual grammar lessons which were the most problematic areas of language listed when producing essays or reports.

It is also recommended that administrators or superintendents should also conduct writing workshops where police officers' linguistic or language proficiency will be refreshed or improved especially on the use of metadiscourse markers. The researcher also recommends that future researchers

conduct the same study using more materials and utilizing a qualitative research design to explain more the reason why non-native writers should or should not use metadiscourse markers.

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