



Voice in Selected Human Trafficking Speeches: A Metadiscourse Study

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Abstract

The present research examines the linguistic resources used by selected celebrity speakers to adopt a position and engage with their audience. Metadiscourse resources provide ample opportunity to the writers/speakers to organize their propositional information and involve readers/hearers in their discourses. To this end, it is hypothesized that speakers' speeches do involve their evaluation and that they are just like academic writers in that they situate themselves to reflect and shape a valued disciplinary ethos through voice, which they manage through systems of stance and engagement. Drawing upon six speeches on human trafficking, the qualitative and quantitative analyses reveal that the interactional resources are an integral part of these speeches, and that stance and engagement elements were salient in the speeches. The employment of such devices will help the speakers prime their audiences to view the events and the involved participants in certain direction.



1. Definitions of Metadiscourse

Though the general lines and specifications of metadiscourse seem to be the same, there is no obvious agreement among linguists and researchers on the definition that best defines the term. Crismore (1984:280) defines metadiscourse as “an author's discoursing about spoken or written discourse; it is the author's intrusion into the discourse either explicitly or non-explicitly, to direct rather than inform the readers”. Hyland (2005:3) thinks of metadiscourse as a body embodying the idea that "communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods or services, but also involves the personalities, attitudes and assumptions of those who are communicating." However, Adel (2006:20) states that "Metadiscourse is text about the evolving text, or the writer's explicit commentary on her own ongoing discourse. It displays an awareness of the current text or its language use per se and of the current writer and reader qua writer and reader."

Regardless of the terms used to define and describe metadiscourse, it is for all linguists and researchers a kind of intrusion into the discourse, written or spoken, that involves the writer's or speaker's personality as s/he provides his/her own comment on the ongoing discourse.

2. Basic Functions of Metadiscourse

The general outline of the basic functions of metadiscourse is quite agreed upon among linguists. According to Adel (2006:20) there are some basic discourse functions of metadiscourse:

2.1 Metatext

In this type of function, the main aims of metadiscourse are paving the way to the reader into the sphere of the text and commenting on the specific features of language use in the text. To achieve these two functions the author/speaker focuses on the structure, discourse actions and wording of the text. S/he might use such phrases as; "in this essay; . . . will be discussed in the

following; see page 16; to conclude; strictly speaking; I will summarize . . . ; in brief.....etc."

2.2 Writer-reader interaction

Metadiscourse is mainly employed by the author/speaker to maintain interaction with the reader/ hearer in various procedures that help build and maintain a clear relation with the reader/hearer and that permit the author to affect him/her by addressing him/her straightly in a variety of ways. To achieve this interactional aim the author might make use of phrases and expressions like: "You will probably think that; Does this sound . . . to you?; Correct me if I'm wrong, but . . .; as you will see; dear reader, ladies and gentlemen....."

Adel (2006) maintains that metadiscourse can be considered "in terms of 'personal' or 'impersonal' types". Being considered in these terms, expressions of metadiscourse either explicitly include some linguistic references to the writer/speaker and his/her readers/ hearers, or simply they do not. Thus, metadiscourse is argued to include (a) references to the present discourse which Adel calls as "text-oriented metadiscourse", (b) references to the writer's character of the present discourse which Adel calls as "writer-oriented metadiscourse", and (c) references to the reader/hearer of the present discourse which is called as "reader oriented metadiscourse" by Adel. However, metadiscourse could also include blends of (b) and (c) which in Adel's terms is called "participant-oriented metadiscourse".

3. Metadiscourse Resources

No matter whether a discourse is written or spoken, it is always defined by two types of resources. These resources are conveyed by the employment of a number of rhetorical devices which are employed to achieve extra specific functions (Hyland, 2019). They can be classified as follows:



3.1 Interactive Resources

These represent the features used by the writer/ speaker to sort some hypothetical information in such a way that audience targeted is more probably to find coherent and satisfying. The interactive resources fall into five subcategories; "**Transition markers, Frame markers, Endophoric markers, Evidentials, and Code glosses**". Since these resources are not within the scope of our study, we find it improper to further explain them. For more information see (Hyland, 2019: 59-61).

3.2 Interactional Resources

Interactional resources represent such features that involve the readers/hearers by providing them the opportunity to participate in the discourse by having them alerted to the writer's/speaker's attitude in respective of the proposed information and the readers/hearers themselves. They help provide an obvious control over personality level in the discourse as the writers/speakers acknowledge the presence of their and they try to connect to them by involving them in their argument, absorbing their awareness, accepting their doubts and directing them to reach at a plausible interpretation of the discourse. However, these resources may not be used as means whereby writers/speakers express their views only but they may also be used by them as a way of engaging with the others' positions which are determined by social norms. Thus, "they act to anticipate, acknowledge, challenge or suppress alternative, potentially divergent positions and so work to expand or restrict opportunities for such views" (White, 2003). The following are the five sub-categories of interactional resources:

- **Hedges** are "words or phrases" used by writers/speakers to indicate that their uncertainty of the proposition being discussed. They include words such as possible, might and perhaps (Yule, 2010).
- **Boosters** are words that boost the writer's/speaker's certainty. They also help construct affinity and solidarity with the

audience by including them with the topic as discourse participants. Boosters allow writers/speakers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say. They are words such as clearly, definitely, obviously....etc (Hyland, 1999)

- **Attitude Markers** are such words that are concerned with evaluating things, people's characters, attitudes and feelings. They create judgments and appreciations that might be considered of a high degree of intensity or a lower one, in other words they may be described with high or low amplification terms. So attitudes markers show the gradability of writer's/speaker's attitudes - they can turned up or down their volume depending on how intensely they feel (Martin & Rose, 2007: 27). The most explicit signaling of attitude in metadiscourse is by "attitude verbs (e.g. agree, prefer), sentence adverbs (unfortunately, hopefully) and adjectives (appropriate, logical, remarkable)" (Hyland, 2019:62).
- **Self-mention** indicates the explicitness degree of the writer's/speaker's voice in the discourse. This is measured by the frequency of occurrence of the "first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (I, me, mine, exclusive we, our, ours)" (Hyland, 2019:62).
- **Engagement Markers** are words used for the purpose of including alternative voices into the discourse. The inclusion or introduction of alternative/additional voices into the world of the discourse can be done via "projection, modalization or concession" (Martin & Rose, 2007:25 & 59). In Hyland terms, "engagement markers are devices that explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants" (2019:63). They fall into five categories:
 - a) Reader/hearer pronouns represent the most explicit way through which the writers/ speakers acknowledge the presence of their audience. The second person pronouns "(You & Your) are the clearest way to acknowledge the readers'/ hearers' presence";

however, they imply a distance between the participants in the discourse.

b) Personal Asides are devices mainly used by writers/speakers as they briefly interrupt the argument to offer a comment on what has been said.

c) Questions are a key strategy employed by writers/speakers to suggest invite their audience to get involved into the discourse. Mostly, questions used throughout the discourse are rhetorical which means that the writers/speakers don't want their audience to provide an answer. They rather want the questions "to arouse interest and encourage the readers/hearers to explore an issue with the writer/speaker as an equal, sharing his or her curiosity and following where the argument leads".

d) Directives according to Hyland (2019:187) imperatives like "consider, note, and imagine", modals verbs with an obligative meaning addressed to the reader (you must, you should, you ought) and predicative adjectives expressing judgments of necessity/importance (it is important to understand . . .) are the commonest types of directives used by writers/speakers. These directives help instruct the addressee to take some action or to judge things in the very way determined by the discourse producer.

e) Shared knowledge a way of presenting information as familiar or accepted. The major aim of employing shared knowledge is to position audience as members of a knowledge community; acknowledge audience's presence; guide audience to preferred interpretations (Baumgarten et al, 2012: 156)

Table (1) below summarizes the interactional categorization of Hyland's (2019) interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Table (1) interactional category of Hyland's (2019) interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Category	Function	Examples
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	Resources
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	emphasize certainty or close dialogue	in fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude Markers	express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self-mentions	explicit reference to author(s)	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement Markers	explicitly build relationship with reader	consider; note; you can see that

4. The concept of voice

The concept "voice" in metadiscourse studies is "often used to refer to the ways writers express their personal views, authoritativeness, and presence". It is a characteristic of self-positioning into the discourse community. Language users show who they are by the choices they make in their discourses (written or spoken). In other words voice is achieved through negotiating the ways of representing the selves. So, thinking of voice as an aspect of self-representation incorporates how voice is traditionally viewed as authoritativeness. "The notion of voice is therefore closely related to that of interaction, and especially to the ways personal feelings and assessments are conveyed". (Hyland, 2008: 5-6)



5. Stance and engagement

Writer/ reader or speaker/ listener interactions within the discourse world are achieved through the categorizations of stance and engagement. "Stance refers to the writer's textual 'voice' or community recognised personality, an attitudinal, writer-oriented function which concerns the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments." It relates a person's, writer or speaker, authority, opinion, commitment, disguisable involvement and tentativeness in the discourses s/he is producing. "Engagement, on the other hand, is more of an alignment function, concerning the ways that writers rhetorically recognise the presence of their readers to actively pull them along with the argument, include them as discourse participants, and guide them to interpretations". Both of them acknowledge that statements are necessary to present two things; the writer's/speaker's ideas in addition to the reader's/listener's probable objections and his/her additional positions, subsuming a convenient awareness of self and audience (Hyland, 2008:7).

Although seemingly different, stance and engagement are very closely related. Owing to the fact of their contribution to the interpersonal interactions of the discourse, some overlaps between the two are noticed. Different categories are not reciprocally exclusive, i.e. the forms used by writers/speakers can often perform more than one function at once. For instance, to develop an argument, writers/speakers simultaneously try to make a proposition, argue for or against its truth, establish solidarity and represent their credibility.

6. Data description and methodology

The data consist of transcripts of six speeches on human trafficking, totaling approximately 15000 words. The six speeches were delivered by the former Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, in 2007, UK former Prime Minister's wife, Cherie Blair, in 2008, former US President Barack Obama, in 2012, President of the American Bar Association, Laurel G. Bellows, in 2013, former British Prime Minister, Theresa May, in 2014, and the American actor Ashton Kutcher, 2017.

As far as methodology is concerned, our analysis has been based on the Hyland's (2019) framework of "voice" and its related notions. Voice, as Hyland suggests, is realized by a "system of stance and engagement". Such a double layer system helps reflect the specifications of the "discourse community" of the text being studied. Discourse producers are apt to choose from the attainable options in their surrounding community for the purpose of conveying their own public image and their tendency to look after their interlocutors' interests; otherwise they will be vulnerable to the risk of legitimacy loss.

Since absolute consensus about the categorization of "stance and engagement" is absent due to the obvious overlap between the suggested schemes, this research paper mainly depended on Hyland's models (2005-2008 and 2019) to reflect the speakers' employment of voice through the systems of stance and engagement.

As the orientation of the study is both quantitative and qualitative, the Wordsmith software version 4 is used to obtain the frequency of occurrences and concordances. Finally, the occurrence of each interactional feature was analyzed in terms of its discursive functions.

7. Findings

According to the frequencies obtained via the Wordsmith software, we clearly see that the interactional features represented by stance and engagement elements reveal that the speakers were fully aware of the effectiveness of these elements in stamping their personal authority onto their speeches and acknowledging their relation with their audience by dragging them into the discourse of their speeches, concentrating their attention, addressing their doubts and including them into the discourse community as discourse participants.

7.1 Stance Elements

Stance elements throughout the six speeches under study occurred (625) times. Self-mentions element clearly predominates and stands out as the highest frequency element with (460) occurrences. The speakers frequently used first-person singular pronouns to highlight the monoglossic feature of the discourse which reinforces the position they communicate as undisputed or indisputable fact. First-person plural pronouns were also used to include the reader into the same group as the speakers, or exclude them from that group. Another notable feature which stands as the second most frequently used element is Attitude Markers with (84) occurrences. This helps showing that the speakers believed that their attitudes about the crime of human trafficking were critical in their speeches. The devices of Hedges and Boosters come third and fourth with (44) and (37) occurrences respectively. This approximate balance of Hedges and Boosters in the human trafficking speeches under study indicates the extent of the speakers' willingness to entertain alternatives and consequently they play an important role in conveying their commitment to the speech content and respect for hearers. Table (2) below summarizes the frequencies of stance elements in the six speeches.

**Table (2) Frequency of Stance elements**

Stance Element	Representing Words	Frequency	Total
Self-mentions	we	190	460
	I	102	
	our	83	
	us	39	
	my	29	
	me	10	
	ourselves	4	
	ours	1	
	mine	1	
myself	1		
Attitude Markers	must	43	84
	should	17	
	important	9	
	extraordinary	6	
	agree	2	
	really	2	
	appropriate	2	
	remarkable	1	
	unfortunately	1	
apparently	1		
Hedges	may	18	44
	could	13	
	might	4	
	likely	3	
	perhaps	2	
	hardly	2	
	suppose	1	

	kind of	1	
Boosters	of course	9	37
	clear	8	
	actually	4	
	sure	3	
	in fact	3	
	clearly	2	
	obvious	2	
	obviously	2	
	exactly	2	
	certainly	1	
	highly	1	
Total			625

7.2 Engagement Elements

Although speakers are expected to bring their audience, very often, to the world of their speeches through the use of different engagement elements, the frequency of these elements is not that much as expected. Engagement elements occurred (113) times only. Hearer Pronouns predominate as the most frequent engagement element with (74) occurrences. In this category, second-person pronouns (you, your) were repeated (58) and (16) occurrences respectively. Personal Asides come next with (24) occurrences. Questions and Directives come fourth and fifth with (10) and (5) occurrences respectively. Quite surprisingly, although shared knowledge is one of "the most frequent engagement categories" (Baumgarten et al, 2012: 174), the speakers never made a single reference to Shared Knowledge. Table (3) below sums up the frequencies of engagement elements in the six speeches.

Table (3) Frequencies of Engagement Elements

Engagement Element	Frequency
Reader/Hearer Pronouns	74
Personal asides	24
Questions	10
Directives	5
Total	113

8. Conclusions

As the main aim of this research is to explicate how interactional metadiscourse serves to encode the participants of the interaction (speakers and audience) in the discourse. It is concluded that the interactional resources in the speeches under study offered a salient control over the level of personality as the speakers acknowledge and connect to their audience. Add to this, the speakers excelled in pulling their audience along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties and guiding them to interpretations. These resources not only display the speakers' voices, through stance elements, but they also help them engage with the socially determined positions of others, through engagement elements.



In spite of their importance as overt linguistic devices intended to display the speakers' pragmatic awareness to bring in their audience to the world of their speeches, the frequency of engagement elements reflects that the speakers were either unaware of the importance of these elements as a means of connection with their audience or it may be a mere negligence on their part.



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صوت المتكلم في خُطب مُختارة حول الاتجار بالبشر:

دراسة ما وراء الخطاب

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الكلمات المفتاحية: موارد التفاعل، الموقف، صوت المتكلم

المستخلص

يقوم هذا البحث بدراسة المصادر اللغوية المستعملة من قبل بعض الشخصيات المشهورة، لتبني الموقف والتفاعل مع جمهورهم. إن مصادر ما وراء النص توفر فرصة كبيرة للكتاب والمتكلمين لتنظيم معلوماتهم المقترحة، وإشراك القراء والمستمعين في خطاباتهم. تحقيقاً لهذه الغاية، افترض البحث أن هذه الخُطب تنطوي على تقييم أصحابها للمواقف وكيف أنهم يضعون أنفسهم بشكل يعكس روح التأديب القيمة من خلال الصوت بنظم المواقف والمشاركة. تم الاعتماد هنا على ستة خطب حول الاتجار بالبشر، وقد كشفت التحليلات النوعية والكمية أن المصادر التفاعلية جزء لا يتجزأ من هذه الخطب، وأن عناصر الموقف والمشاركة كانت واضحة فيها. وقد ساعد استعمال هذه الأدوات على رفع قدرة المتكلمين على جذب الجمهور و عرض الأحداث والمشاركة في اتجاه معين منها