

Columnist Insights: A Corpus Based Analysis of Boosters and Self-Mentions in Pakistani English Newspaper

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Abstract

This study investigates the employment of interactional metadiscourse features, specifically self-mentions and boosters, by Pakistani male writers in English-language opinion columns across prominent national newspapers such as The News (TN), Dawn News (DN), and The Express Tribune (TET). Utilizing a mixed-methods approach within a descriptive research framework, this analysis encompasses a randomly selected sample of 90 opinion columns from each newspaper. Guided by Hyland's (2005) bifurcation of metadiscourse into interactional and interactive dimensions, the study quantitatively and qualitatively assesses the prevalence of these markers, shedding light on their strategic use in the nuanced context of Pakistani journalistic discourse. The results showed that the authors intentionally used boosters to make their points stronger and show they were confident about their ideas. They also talked about themselves in their writing to make a closer connection with the readers. This study highlights how these writing techniques can make opinion articles more convincing and interesting. It helps us understand better how writers in Pakistani newspapers use these methods to improve their work. Through this exploration, the research addresses a notable gap in the literature, enriching the discourse on metadiscourse application in non-Western journalistic settings.

Keywords: Interactional metadiscourse markers, Pakistani English Newspaper, Columns, Boosters, Self-mentions

1. Introduction

Newspapers serve as a crucial medium for disseminating ideas, beliefs, and viewpoints, playing a significant role in shaping public opinion. They offer a platform for authors to engage with events of public interest, as outlined by Abdollahzadeh (2007), and aim to inform and persuade a diverse readership. Newspapers not only present daily news but also articulate opinions on various matters, thereby influencing the readers' perceptions and beliefs (Hough, 2006; Fairclough, 1992). Within this context, the use of

metadiscourse, which Williams (1981) describes as discourse about discourse that guides readers rather than merely informs them, becomes particularly salient. Metadiscourse markers (MMs), as explained by Hyland (2005), are rhetorical devices that authors employ to signal their stance and engage with their audience, thereby making the text more accessible and engaging.

Recent studies, such as those by Abdullah, Rahmat and Zawawi (2020), have examined the use of interactional MMs in the context of COVID-19 reporting by South Korean and Malaysian writers, finding a notable absence of self-mention but a significant presence of other markers like boosters. Similarly, Takimoto (2015) investigated the use of hedges and boosters across various academic disciplines, uncovering disciplinary differences in their usage. These insights underline the dynamic nature of metadiscourse and its varying applications across genres and cultures.

Yet, the specific deployment of MMs such as boosters and self-mentions by Pakistani male authors in English-language opinion columns remains underexplored. This study aims to bridge this gap by offering a detailed examination of these markers' role in shaping discourse within Pakistani newspaper opinion columns.

1.1 Significance of the Problem

This study's exploration of interactional MMs in Pakistani English newspaper opinion columns, particularly focusing on male authors' use of boosters and self-mentions, is significant for several reasons. It addresses a clear gap in existing research, providing insights into the unique metadiscourse practices within the Pakistani opinion column context. While previous studies have emphasized the importance of metadiscourse in discourse construction, this research delves into the specific strategies employed by male columnists, offering a more detailed understanding of their rhetorical techniques.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

This research delves into the relatively unexplored domain of MMs in Pakistani English newspaper opinion columns, with a specific focus on the use of boosters and self-mentions by male authors. Despite the critical role of opinion columns in shaping public opinion, there has been limited investigation into the nuanced metadiscourse strategies employed by male columnists in this context. This study aims to address the scarcity of research on this topic and the need for more detailed guidance on the effective use of MMs, thereby enriching the discourse on journalistic practices in Pakistan and offering valuable insights for researchers, journalists, and educators.

1.3 Research Questions

This research seeks to answer the following questions:

- How do male authors in Pakistani English newspapers utilize boosters and self-mention markers in their opinion columns?
- What are the prevalent boosters and self-mention markers used by Pakistani columnists?

1.4 Research Objectives

The main goals of this research are to:

- Analyze the use and patterns of boosters and self-mention markers in opinion columns by male authors in Pakistani English newspapers.
- Investigate the frequency and types of boosters and self-mention markers used in these columns.

1.5 Limitations

This study faces several constraints:

- The analysis is based on a sample of 90 opinion columns, which may limit the findings' applicability to all male-authored opinion columns in Pakistani newspapers.
- It focuses on columns published within a specific period, possibly overlooking temporal variations in metadiscourse use.
- The research is limited to opinion columns, and its findings may not apply to other journalistic genres in Pakistani newspapers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The term metadiscourse was first coined by Zellig Harris in 1959, a concept further elaborated upon in Hyland's 2005 work. Despite its initial introduction, the concept saw limited engagement in the following two decades. It wasn't until the 1980s that a resurgence of interest in metadiscourse emerged among scholars. Hyland (2010) posited that the revival of metadiscourse aimed to address previous linguistic frameworks that primarily viewed language as a vehicle for conveying explicit ideas and information. In contemporary discourse analysis, metadiscourse encompasses a broader range of applications.

Several frameworks for analyzing metadiscourse exist, including those developed by Vande Kopple (1985), Crismore et al. (1993), Mauranen (1993), and Ädel (2006). Despite the diversity of these models, they exhibit considerable overlap and redundancy in their categorizations. This research employs Hyland's metadiscourse model, chosen for its comprehensiveness, widespread acceptance, and reliability in capturing the nuances of interpersonal communication within texts.

Hyland's framework, recognized for offering one of the most exhaustive perspectives on interpersonal dimensions in discourse (Fu & Hyland, 2014), categorizes metadiscourse into two primary types: interactive (textual) and interactional (interpersonal). This categorization, established over three decades ago by Vande Kopple (1985) and later refined by Hyland (2004) and Hyland and Tse (2004), serves as the foundation for analyzing the dynamic between text organization and writer-reader engagement in this study. Table 1 below delineates the distinctions between these two categories, illustrating their respective roles and functions within discourse.

Table 1

Metadiscourse categorization (Hyland, 2004, 2005; Hyland and Tse 2004)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive metadiscourse	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express semantic relation between main clauses	but, in addition, thus, and
Frame markers	Refers to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	To conclude, finally, my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refers to information from other part of the text	See figure, noted above, in section 2
Evidentials	Refers to source of information from other text	Z states that, according to x, (Y, 1990)
Code glosses	Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	Such as, namely, e.g., in other words
Interactional metadiscourse	Involve the reader in the argument	
Hedges	Show doubt and negation, open space negation	Perhaps, might, possible, about
Boosters	Writer's certainty and	Definitely, in fact, it is

	confidence, open space negation	clear that
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	I agree, unfortunately, surprisingly
Self- mentions	Explicit reference to author (s)	I, we, my, our, mine
Engagement markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with readers	Note that, consider, you can see that

The exploration of metadiscourse encompasses both textual and interpersonal dimensions, which are pivotal for understanding its role in discourse. Influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, notably Halliday's (1994) approach, the study of metadiscourse has evolved to consider the multifunctional aspects of language. However, Hyland and Tse (2004) critiqued the binary distinction of Systemic Functional Linguistics framework, advocating for a more nuanced interpersonal model of metadiscourse that incorporates interactional and interactive elements. The interactional dimension enhances the reader's engagement with the text, whereas the interactive aspect organizes and elucidates the presented information (Hyland, 2005).

Interpersonal metadiscourse, akin to appraisal (Martin, 2001) and evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2001), underscores the author's perspective through linguistic devices like hedges, boosters, and self-mentions. This contrasts with interactive metadiscourse, which focuses on the text's structure and coherence, such as through topic transitions and idea linkage (Hyland & Tse, 2004).

Hyland (2015) suggests that analyzing a text should commence with its linguistic form, followed by assessing its functional role. This approach indicates that form and function may not always be congruent. Interactional metadiscourse, with elements like modality and evidentiality, enables authors to express viewpoints and gauge potential reader reactions (Fu & Hyland, 2014).

Key components of interactional metadiscourse, including hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and engagement markers, are instrumental in academic writing, fostering authorial engagement and persuasive argumentation (Hyland, 2005). This study seeks to delve into the use of boosters and self-mentions in Pakistani English newspaper columns by male writers, aiming to illuminate their distinctive rhetorical approaches and contributions to discourse.

2.2 Empirical Framework

This section consolidates existing studies on MMs, highlighting their roles within texts and in shaping the interaction between writers and readers. Hyland (2005) defines metadiscourse as the linguistic devices used by authors to organize their discourse and engage with the content or the reader, underscoring writing as a social act that involves a dynamic interplay among the writer, the reader, and the societal context (Nystrand, 1986; Hyland, 2000; Thompson, 2001).

The concept of "metadiscourse" originated with Zellig Harris (1959), who used it to describe the authorial intent in guiding reader interpretation through language use. This idea was further developed by Williams (1981), Vande Kopple (1985), and Crismore (1989), who identified various discursive tools like hedges and connectives, employed by writers to engage with their texts and readers.

Hyland (2004) proposed three foundational principles to clarify metadiscourse's conceptual framework, distinguishing it from propositional content and emphasizing its role in facilitating writer-reader interactions. Hyland (2005) categorized MMs into interactive and interactional types, with each serving specific functions in text organization and reader engagement. Adel (2006) and Crismore et al. (1993) noted the influence of gender on the use of these rhetorical devices, observing differences in metadiscourse application among male and female writers, particularly in persuasive essays.

Recent research has broadened the scope of metadiscourse analysis to include various text types such as social media advertisements (Al-Subhi, 2022), business communications (Lee, 2021), and academic genres (Keshavarz & Kheirieh, 2011). These studies demonstrate the versatility of metadiscourse as a rhetorical tool across different contexts. For instance, Memon, Pathan and Memon (2021) revealed distinct preferences in the use of interactive metadiscourse elements between British and Pakistani engineering article authors, highlighting cross-cultural stylistic variations.

Dafouz-Milne (2008) explored cultural differences in the use of metadiscourse in Spanish and British newspaper opinion pieces, finding that an effective mix of textual and interpersonal markers is vital for persuasive writing. Dastjerdi and Shirzad (2010) investigated the effects of interaction markers on Iranian EFL students' writing proficiency, offering insights into the educational implications of metadiscourse instruction.

Keshavarz and Kheirieh (2011) compared metadiscourse use in academic articles from Applied Linguistics and Civil Engineering, noting disciplinary differences in

metadiscourse utilization. Boncea (2014) and Švárová (2008) examined the strategic use of hedges for mitigating assertion strength and expressing politeness, respectively.

Shafique, Anwar and Shahbaz (2019) focused on the function of boosters and hedges in Urdu newspaper editorials, suggesting a prevalence of ambiguity in editorial discourse. Siddique, Mahmood and Iqbal (2018) analyzed metadiscourse in Pakistani English-language newspaper editorials, identifying prevalent framing strategies that facilitate reader engagement.

Abdullah, Rahmat and Zawawi (2020) compared the use of interactional MMs in South Korean and Malaysian online articles related to COVID-19, observing differences in engagement strategies. Takimoto (2015) highlighted the disciplinary influence on the use of hedges and boosters, pointing to a more subjective use in the humanities and social sciences compared to the natural sciences.

Ali and Shakir (2022) investigated gender differences in hedging use within Pakistani opinion columns, concluding that text genre plays a more significant role than gender in determining hedging use. These studies collectively enrich our understanding of metadiscourse, underscoring its importance in effective communication across various genres and contexts.

The empirical framework of this study synthesizes a wide range of research on MMs, highlighting their crucial role in structuring texts and facilitating writer-reader interaction. Building on foundational theories and expanding into investigations of gender and cross-cultural variations, the framework underscores the adaptability of metadiscourse across different communicative contexts and genres. The present study, focusing on male-authored opinion columns in Pakistani English newspapers, reaffirms writing as a socially situated act, where strategic use of boosters and hedges reflects the authors' intentions to engage readers and negotiate emphasis. Insights from this study reveal the nuanced application of metadiscourse, influenced by factors such as cultural and disciplinary contexts, and suggest that genre conventions may significantly impact rhetorical choices, potentially overshadowing gender influences. This comprehensive approach to understanding metadiscourse underscores its importance in achieving effective communication and the skilled manipulation of linguistic resources to foster reader engagement and coherence in discourse.

3. Methodology

This section outlines the methodological framework of the study, focusing on textual analysis to examine opinion columns by male writers in Pakistani English newspapers.

3.1 Research Design

The study employs a descriptive approach, concentrating on the exploration of boosters and self-mention markers, specifically its interactional dimension. It integrates both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, with data initially gathered through qualitative means and subsequently analyzed using both approaches. The analysis hinges on the frequency of boosters and self-mention markers to provide insights into the interactional aspects of the discourse.

3.2 Data Collection

Data were sourced qualitatively from secondary sources, specifically the online editions of three Pakistani English newspapers: Dawn News (DN), The Express Tribune (TET), and The News (TN). A random sampling strategy was employed to select 90 opinion columns, ensuring a diverse cross-section of content. The chosen sample encompasses a total of 100,480 words. The Antconc 3.5.9 software, renowned for its corpus analysis capabilities, was utilized as the primary analytical tool.

The corpus, comprising 90 opinion columns and totaling 100,480 words, was systematically compiled. The process entailed several stages: initial extraction of columns into notepad files from the designated online sources, organization of metadata (including authors' names, file count, and publication years) in Excel for accessibility, and subsequent data cleaning to remove extraneous elements such as publication dates, authors' names, and advertisements. The final step involved consolidating the cleaned data for analysis in Antconc 3.5.9.

3.3 Data Analysis Procedure

The principal aim is to scrutinize the use of boosters and self-mention markers within the male-authored columns, shedding light on their functions and significance. This necessitated a meticulous examination of the corpus to identify and quantify these markers. The columns, randomly selected from DN, TET, and TN, provided a representative sample reflective of the broader discourse in Pakistani English journalism. The analytical process was manual, emphasizing the accurate recording of interactional markers' frequencies to achieve a comprehensive understanding of their roles and implications in the context of the studied corpus.

4. Results of the Study

The results are articulated through an exhaustive evaluation of frequencies and proportions, illuminating the subtle employment of boosters and self-mention markers in

the realm of male-authored opinion columns within the Pakistani English journalistic landscape.

4.1 Boosters

The concept of "Certainty Markers" within propositional content is central to conveying notions of assurance, emphasis, certainty, validity, obligation, likelihood, and truthfulness. This term has evolved in academic discourse, now commonly referred to as "Boosters" following Hyland's (2005) framework, and previously known as "Emphatics" in the works of Crismore and Farnsworth (1989) and Vande Kopple (2002). An analysis of various boosters employed by male columnists reveals a frequent use of terms such as "Without," "Actually," "Believe," and "Always." The deployment of these linguistic elements indicates a deliberate effort by male writers to project confidence, underscore certainty, and affirm the authenticity of their assertions. The range of boosters identified, from "Doubt" to "Indeed," illuminates the nuanced strategies columnists employ to instill a sense of assurance or conviction in their opinion pieces. This examination of language choices made by male authors unveils the strategic utilization of boosters to enhance the clarity, impact, and persuasive power of their prose.

Table 2

Frequencies of Boosters in Pakistani English Newspaper Columns

Boosters	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Without	17	30.36
Actually	8	14.29
Believe	6	10.71
Always	4	7.14
Certain	4	7.14
Known	4	7.14
Know	3	5.36
Beyond	3	5.36
Indeed	3	5.36
True	2	3.57
Doubt	1	1.79
Believed	1	1.79
Total	56	100

The keyword analysis of the table presenting frequencies and percentages of boosters used in Pakistani English newspaper columns reveals a significant reliance on certain linguistic elements to convey assurance and emphasis. The most prominent booster, "Without," accounts for 30.36% of occurrences, indicating a strong preference

for negation or exclusion as a rhetorical strategy. This is followed by "Actually" and "Believe," which hold 14.29% and 10.71% respectively, suggesting an emphasis on grounding statements in reality and expressing conviction.

The consistent use of "Always," "Certain," and "Known," each constituting 7.14%, further underscores a tendency towards asserting universality and indisputability. The boosters "Know," "Beyond," and "Indeed" are also notable, each with 5.36%, indicating a strategy to affirm knowledge, extend beyond the obvious, and acknowledge truth respectively. Lesser-used boosters like "True," "Doubt," and "Believed," with lower frequencies and percentages, reflect a more cautious approach to asserting truth or expressing skepticism and past beliefs.

This analysis suggests a nuanced use of language to navigate the realms of emphasis, certainty, and persuasion, highlighting the strategic deployment of boosters to enhance the communicative effectiveness of opinion columns. The diversity in booster usage points to the varied rhetorical techniques employed by columnists to engage with their readership and assert their viewpoints with conviction.

4.2 Self-mention

The concept of self-mention, characterized by the use of first-person pronouns (I, we) and possessive adjectives (my, our), plays a pivotal role in articulating personal involvement and authorial stance within academic and journalistic discourse, a notion supported by Hyland's (2001) exploration of academic writing and Tang and John's (1999) analysis of journalistic texts. This study specifically examines the employment of first-person pronouns to elucidate the manner in which information is presented by male authors in Pakistani English newspaper columns, drawing on the framework established by Ivanič (1998), who discusses the implications of self-mention in constructing writer identity, and Vande Kopple's (1985) seminal work on metadiscourse, which provides a foundation for understanding the strategic use of personal pronouns in engaging readers and establishing an authoritative stance.

Table 4

Frequencies of Boosters in Pakistani English Newspaper Columns

Self-mention	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Our	316	29.92
We	360	34.09
Us	264	25.00
I	76	7.20
Me	24	2.27
My	16	1.52

Total	1056	100
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The analysis of self-mention in Pakistani English newspaper columns reveals a marked preference for plural first-person pronouns such as "We," "Our," and "Us," which are used significantly more often than singular forms like "I," "Me," and "My." This preference underscores a collective authorial approach, with "We" and "Our" leading at 34.09% and 29.92% respectively, suggesting that columnists frequently adopt a group perspective. This could be a strategic choice to foster solidarity with readers or to present viewpoints as shared beliefs, thereby enhancing inclusivity and group identity. The pronoun "Us" further emphasizes this trend with a substantial 25.00% usage rate.

In contrast, the relatively infrequent use of "I" (7.20%), followed by "Me" (2.27%) and "My" (1.52%), points to a deliberate minimization of individual stance within the discourse. This pattern may reflect a cultural or editorial preference for a communal narrative over a singular, personal voice, suggesting that male columnists prefer to engage their audience through a unified, collective voice, likely to increase the relatability and impact of their messages.

This inclination towards collective voice aligns with previous research, such as Hyland's (2001) findings on the role of self-mentions in academic writing, and similar trends noted in journalistic writing by Vande Kopple (1985) and Tang and John (1999), where self-mention is utilized to personalize narratives and strengthen the connection with the audience. The strategic use of self-mention, particularly the dominance of plural pronouns, highlights its importance as a rhetorical tool for male writers to build rapport with readers, thereby enhancing the persuasive power and relatability of their columns. This study not only provides insight into the linguistic strategies of male columnists but also contributes to the broader understanding of how self-mention can shape reader engagement and narrative appeal in journalistic discourse.

5. Discussion

5.1 Boosters

Boosters, as delineated through past scholarly examinations, are defined as linguistic elements that authors employ within their discourse to underscore certainty, amplify the force of their assertions, and imbue their statements with a sense of confidence and authority. This definitional perspective emerges from a synthesis of academic inquiry into the nature of rhetorical strategies within various genres of writing, notably in academic and scientific discourse. Studies by Hyland (2005), Varttala (1999), and Salager-Meyer (1994), among others, have contributed to a nuanced understanding of boosters by highlighting their role in negotiating the delicate balance between assertiveness and the scholarly convention of hedging. These linguistic tools are not

merely about enhancing the persuasive appeal of an argument; they also serve to establish the author's presence, lend credibility to their propositions, and facilitate a clear and impactful communication of ideas. Thus, boosters are integral to the construction of effective scholarly discourse, enabling writers to navigate the complexities of academic communication with precision and authority.

In light of Hyland's (2005) model, booster markers are employed to express certainty, emphasize the strength of the argument, and assert the author's confidence in their statements. The use of boosters in the provided examples reflects a strategic rhetorical choice to reinforce the claims made and to enhance the persuasive power of the discourse.

Example 1

However, we must acknowledge the fact that English is fast catching up as one of our own languages of literary expression, since it is used more and more, **beyond** officialese and legalese, by younger generations of urban educated Pakistanis.

Example 1 utilizes "fast catching up" and "more and more" as boosters to underscore the rapid adoption and increasing prevalence of English among urban educated Pakistanis. This strong assertion aims to convince the reader of the significant role English is playing as a language of literary expression, beyond its traditional use in formal and legal contexts.

Example 2

Truth was **indeed** a major casualty of the latest round of hostilities.

In Example 2, the phrase "indeed a major casualty" serves as a booster that reinforces the gravity of the situation being described. The use of "indeed" adds a layer of emphasis to the claim, suggesting that the loss of truth in the context of hostilities is an incontrovertible fact, thus strengthening the author's stance.

Example 3

Wartime is **always** a time of silencing, uniformity of opinion, racism, incitement, and hatred; absolute enlistment in service of propaganda, the end of tolerance and the persecution of anyone who dares step out of line.

Example 3 employs "always" and "absolute" as boosters to paint a definitive picture of wartime conditions. These markers leave no room for ambiguity or doubt, presenting the

characteristics of wartime as universal truths, thereby amplifying the author's argument about the pervasive impact of war on society.

Example 4

Indeed, the high policy rate we have today has largely repressed private sector demand, thus tempering inflation.

Example 4 uses "indeed" to bolster the causal connection between high policy rates and the suppression of private sector demand. This booster serves to reinforce the author's assertion, lending it an air of indisputability and heightening the credibility of the analysis presented.

Example 5

No **doubt** under registration of women is a primary issue, but merely blaming cultural norms is not going to solve the problem.

Example 5 features "No doubt" as a booster to unequivocally state that under-registration of women is a primary issue. This expression pre-empts any counterargument, establishing the claim as an accepted premise before discussing the inadequacy of attributing the problem solely to cultural norms.

Overall, in the context of Hyland's (2005) framework, the employment of booster markers in these examples demonstrates the authors' deliberate use of language to fortify their arguments, express unwavering certainty, and engage the reader with a compelling and authoritative discourse. These boosters serve not only to emphasize the validity of the claims made but also to enhance the persuasive appeal of the text by projecting confidence and credibility.

5.2 Self-Mention Markers

Self-mentions, as conceptualized through the prism of past scholarly research, refer to the explicit or implicit references that authors make to themselves within their academic or professional discourse. These linguistic strategies, often embodied through first-person pronouns or nominal expressions, serve multiple rhetorical functions, from establishing authorial presence and agency to delineating the scope of contributions and engaging with the reader. Pioneering studies in the field of academic writing, such as those by Hyland (2001) and Ivanič (1998), have underscored the significance of self-mentions in constructing a scholarly identity and asserting ownership over one's arguments and findings. This nuanced understanding posits self-mentions not merely as stylistic choices but as strategic elements that facilitate the articulation of personal stance,

delineate authorial responsibility, and foster reader engagement. Through this lens, self-mentions emerge as a pivotal component of scholarly discourse, enabling authors to navigate the complexities of academic conventions while maintaining a clear and persuasive authorial voice.

Hyland's (2005) framework on academic discourse emphasizes the strategic use of self-mention markers as a way for authors to navigate the complex interplay between asserting personal authority and engaging the reader. Through the lens of Hyland's model, the self-mention markers in the provided examples can be interpreted as devices that not only project the author's presence but also construct a relationship with the audience by fostering a sense of inclusivity and personal engagement.

Example 6

So today where **our** debt service requirements for those power plants and gas and road infrastructure have increased, our ability to pay hasn't.

In example 6, the use of "our" situates the author within a collective, potentially including the reader, which can create a sense of shared understanding or common ground regarding the challenges of debt service requirements. This plural first-person pronoun blurs the line between the author and the audience, embedding the author's experience within a wider community experience.

Example 7

As **we** accumulated CADs every year, our debt increases every year.

Example 7 follows a similar pattern with the use of "we" and "our," further emphasizing a collective identity. This could be seen as an attempt to unify the author with the audience against a backdrop of shared concerns, in this case, the accumulation of CADs and the resultant debt.

Example 3

What **I** also find encouraging is that the new writing that has emerged over the past few years from Pakistan is quietly setting a new direction.

In example 3, the singular first-person pronoun "I" marks a shift towards a more personal narrative. According to Hyland, this can serve to underline the author's individual perspective, making the discourse more direct and engaging. The author's personal take on the emergence of new writing in Pakistan brings an intimate and

subjective lens to the discussion, potentially making the content more relatable and compelling for the reader.

Example 4

Over the past 70 years the **us** and Britain have treated Israel has the pivot of their Middle East policy.

Example 4, interestingly, does not contain explicit self-mention markers but may imply an authorial stance through the declarative nature of the statement. In Hyland's model, even the absence of direct self-mentions can be strategic, aiming to universalize the statement or to present the information as an accepted fact, thus avoiding a subjective overlay.

Example 5

Let **me** begin the story from the 1917 Russian Revolution, which brought to power the Bolsheviks.

Example 5, "Let me" is a direct address to the reader that serves to invite the audience into the narrative. This rhetorical strategy, as Hyland might suggest, is used to draw the reader closer, creating a conversational and inclusive tone that positions the reader as a participant in the unfolding story.

Through Hyland's (2005) perspective, these examples demonstrate how self-mention markers can varyingly function to assert authority, personalize discourse, and engage readers. The strategic choice of inclusive pronouns like "our" and "we" fosters a collective identity, while "I" and "me" offer a personal touch that can make the discourse more engaging and relatable.

6. Conclusion

The analysis of booster and self-mention markers in the metadiscourse of opinion columns written by male authors in Pakistani English newspapers yields insightful conclusions in response to the research questions posed.

Male writers in the context of Pakistani English newspaper opinion columns demonstrate a strategic use of boosters and self-mention markers to shape their metadiscourse. The preference for boosters such as "Without," "Actually," "Believe," and "Always" suggests an effort to assert certainty, emphasize claims, and express conviction. This indicates that male columnists leverage these linguistic tools to strengthen their arguments and engage the readers by enhancing the clarity and persuasiveness of their viewpoints. Furthermore, the pronounced use of plural first-person pronouns ("We," "Our," "Us") over singular ones ("I," "Me," "My") in self-mentions signifies a collective

approach, aiming to establish solidarity with the readership and present a communal perspective. This strategic deployment of self-mention markers underscores the authors' intent to involve themselves and their readers in a shared narrative, thus fostering a sense of inclusivity and group identity.

The prominent boosters and self-mention markers identified in the Pakistani opinion columns include both boosters and self-mention markers. Boosters are employed to intensify the authors' stances and imbue their assertions with a sense of authority and credibility. In contrast, self-mention markers, particularly plural pronouns, are used to draw the readers into a dialogic engagement, creating a more interactive and engaging discourse. These markers serve not only to structure the text but also to personalize it, making the columns more relatable and compelling to the readers. The combined use of boosters and self-mention markers thus plays a critical role in how male authors construct their interactional metadiscourse, utilizing these linguistic strategies to navigate the delicate balance between asserting authority and fostering reader engagement.

In light of these findings, it can be concluded that male writers in Pakistani English newspapers adeptly use boosters and self-mention markers as integral components of their metadiscourse to enhance the effectiveness of their opinion columns. By doing so, they not only strengthen their rhetorical presence but also actively involve the readership, thereby enriching the interactive quality and persuasive power of their discourse.

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