Exploring Interactions in L2 Blogging: Metadiscourse in Philippine Investigative Journalism Blogs

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ABSTRACT

Although metadiscourse has been examined in different genres, such as academic papers, newspaper editorials, school textbooks, and the like, still relatively little attention has been given to the discourse of cyber-genres, particularly blogs or weblogs. Using Hyland's (2005) model, this paper examined the interactive and the interactional metadiscourse in Philippine investigative journalism blogs where English is used as a second language or L2. The corpus analyzed was taken from 20 investigative journalism blogs published in *http://pcij.org/blog/*, the official website of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) blogs. Based on the findings of the study, it can be inferred that there is much evidence in the use of metadiscourse in Philippine investigative journalism blogs; thus, the use of metadiscourse as an appropriate linguistic resource is supplemental and essential. The data revealed that the investigative journalism blogs have a higher frequency of use of interactive resources, allowing writers to organize and structure their propositions so that the text becomes more coherent to the readers. Among the five categories of interactive resources, the use of evidentials has the highest frequency. As regards the use of interactional resources, hedges are the most frequent. The findings of the study likewise provide pedagogical implications for ESL writing.

1.   Introduction

Writing, as a discourse, has emerged as a vital concern among applied linguists and language-study enthusiasts for the past decades.   Such a growing interest has characterized writing as a strategic and interactive process that covers a complex web of language features, rhetorical patterns, purposes, plans, options, conventions, creativity, constraints, and the like. In recent years, interests have sprung about the interpersonal or interactional character of writing across genres. For instance, in the context of academic writing, Hyland (2004) argues that aside from producing texts that represent external reality, writers also utilize language to credibly represent themselves and their work and, at the same time, establish social relations with readers. To him, "The ability of writers to control the level of personality in their texts, claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating their material, and acknowledging alternative views, is now recognised as a key feature of successful academic writing" (pp. 133-134). Based on this view about the interpersonal aspects of discourse, writers can attract their readers' attention and communicate effectively by giving expression to their experience, interacting with their audience or readers, and organizing their expressions into cohesive and coherent discourses (Halliday, 1973 as cited in Vande Kopple, 2012). Put simply, through these discourse features, writers anticipate their readers' expectations, needs, and interests, thus, engaging them in the texts and influencing their comprehension (Hyland, 2005; Hyland & Tse, 2004).

Metadiscourse, which is a useful concept in discourse analysis, is a self-reflective linguistic expression that pertains to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of the text; it argues that writing is a social engagement in which writers project and express their attitudes and commitments (Hyland, 2004 as cited in Tarrayo & Duque, 2011).   This view is premised on the assumption that writing is a social and communicative phenomenon (Dafouz-Milne, 2008).

Because of its pragmatic role in the written discourse, metadiscourse has attracted attention and interest among language researchers. For instance, Tarrayo (2011) examined the interface between language and culture based on metatext categories used by writers from three speech communities, namely, the Philippines, Iran, and Taiwan. Data were obtained from the results-and-discussion sections of 15 research articles (RAs): ESL RAs, representing the Philippine-English variety, were taken from the *TESOL Journal* published in 2009; and EFL RAs, representing both the Taiwanese-English and Iranian-English varieties, were from the *Asian EFL Journal* in 2008 and 2009.   Results indicated that the relative frequency of preview and review categories is highest in Philippine English RAs than in Taiwanese English and Iranian English RAs. In the entire corpus, the number of previews is larger than the number of reviews. Moreover, all three Englishes are built on the additive cohesive relation. The use of both simple connectors, such as *and*, *but*, *though*, and *yet* and their complex alternatives, such as *furthermore*, *on the other hand*, *in a similar vein*, and *in a similar sense* is evident — a preference for a more elaborate and a change-oriented   rhetorical   pattern. Philippine English has the most number of action markers; thus, it seems more writer-responsible among the three Englishes.

To   prove   the   discipline-   and language-specific nature of writing, Zarei (2011)   did   a   contrastive   study   on metadiscourse elements used in humanities

and nonhumanities research articles across Persian and English. The analysis of data revealed that the selected Persian articles use more metadiscourse elements than English. Applied linguistics, which represents humanities, heavily relies on interactive elements; in contrast, computer engineering, which represents nonhumanities, utilizes more interactional elements. The study proved that humanities tend to focus on textuality at the expense of reader involvement; thus, it is more reader-responsible.

Assuming that there is a dearth of research on metadiscourse, as used in the journalistic genre, Hashemi and Golparvar (2012) examined the metadiscourse markers in 20 Persian news reports taken from five Persian news agencies by utilizing Vande Kopple's (1985) classification of metadiscourse or metatextual functions. They found that metadiscourse markers are quite frequent in the said news reports, thus, implying their importance in this genre. Also, the study revealed that textual metadiscourse markers are more frequently used than interpersonal metadiscourse in the news reports. The analysis of the corpus likewise demonstrated the frequent use of text connectives, narrators, and commentary markers.

Sukma and Sujatna (2014) explored the interpersonal metadiscourse markers in opinion articles written by Indonesians. Results revealed that some categories are used in the newspaper opinion articles in which the most commonly employed are attitude markers, followed by commentaries, hedges, certainty markers, and attributors. As regards the subcategories, the findings indicated that attitudinal adverbs are most frequently present in the corpus, followed by the other types, namely, epistemic verbs, deontic verbs, inclusive expressions, rhetorical questions, personalizations, attitudinal adjectives, asides, probability adverbs, and cognitive verbs.

In her paper "Dialogic voices of writers and readers in *traveller forums* through interpersonality," Jimenez (2013) examined a web-based discourse genre by applying a dialogic framework to the study of interpersonality. Such a genre belongs to the domain of travel and tourism, where the interaction of writers-readers (or *wreaders*) aims at persuading others through positive and negative opinions. Findings show the following characterization of the *traveller forum*: (1) the stance voice, irrespective of the *wreader's* turn in the thread, is commonly expressed through *self-mentions* and *hedges*, establishing authority and personal discourse with credibility to obtain opinions and evaluations of a nonbusiness nature; (2) on the other hand, the engagement voice shows a seemingly constant and presumably generic weakness in the *wreader*; and (3) the most frequent interpersonal markers that aid readers' alignment are *personal pronouns/commitment markers* and *directives*. In this manner, the engagement voice achieves the *traveller forum* purpose, having constant reader involvement in evaluations, judgments, and advice and manifesting solidarity and peer-to-peer communication.

In 2013, Cretiu published the paper "The blogging artist: A genre-analysis approach." Anchored on the classic approaches to Discourse Analysis of Swales and Bhatia, the study aimed to establish the benefits and value of applying the genre-analysis method to teaching English for Art Purposes, with focus on a more recent internet genre, i.e., the artist's blog (weblog). Aside from investigating the communicative purposes of blogging and the macrostructure and the microstructure of the artist's blog,

Cretiu likewise examined the discourse particularities of the corpus. Among these discourse features are those that build the relation with the audience or reader. The use of the first-person personal pronoun, *I*, is a typical blogging practice to express subjectivity and suggest authenticity. The second-person pronoun, *You*, (as implied by the imperative mood) conveys a conversational tone, which suggests reader-involvement in the artist's blogging and in the whole process of creation. To imply a sort of objectivity and detachment, the authors tend to use the third-person pronoun to refer to himself or herself. Also, the use of qualifiers is evident in the art-related discourse.

Based on the aforementioned research investigations, the use of metadiscourse is generally related to conventions and norms of cultures and is particularly linked to discourse communities (Hyland, 1998). In other words, metadiscourse has been examined in different genres, such as academic papers and research articles (Dahl, 2004; Heng & Tan, 2010; Hyland, 1999), postgraduate writing, theses, and dissertations (Bunton, 1999; Burneikaite, 2008; Hyland, 2004), newspaper editorials (Dayag, 2004; Tarrayo & Duque, 2011), casual conversation (Schiffrin, 1980), science popularization (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990 as cited in Zaire, 2011), company annual reports (Hyland, 1998), slogans and headlines (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001), and school textbooks (Crismore, 1989). Although the presence of metadiscourse features has already been investigated in various contexts or domains, still relatively little attention has been given to the discourse of cyber-genres, particularly blogs or weblogs.

Is blog (short for weblog) an example of a genre? According to Miller (1984), when a type of discourse or communicative action acquires a common name with a specific context or community, that is good sign that it is functioning as a genre. In adherence to this view, the blog seems to have acquired this status quickly, with the increasing amount of attention it gets from the online community.

Blog, as a written discourse, is a social engagement between writers and readers. But what social action do blogs perform? Blogs are usually updated websites, commonly personal with commentary and links. Blogs are "online public writing environments in which postings (individual writing segments, often containing hyperlinks to other online sources) are listed in reversed chronological order" (Blood, 2002 as cited in Elison & Yu, 2008, p. 105). A typical blog can be short or long and can be used as a filter on the external world, as a personal journal, or as a notebook (Blood, 2002). Most bloggers write for self-expression to share opinions and tell stories in a computer-mediated forum to a large cyber audience. These bloggers foster a unique voice, a definite attitude, and a clearer motivation (Graham, 2002). Blood (2000) highlights this interesting point:

> As [the blogger] enunciates his opinions daily, this new awareness of his inner life may develop into a trust in his own perspective. His own reactions to a poem, to other people, and, yes, to the media will carry more weight with him. Accustomed to expressing his thoughts on his website, he will be able to more fully articulate his opinions to himself and to others. He will become impatient with waiting to see what others think before he decides, and will begin to act in accordance with his inner voice instead. Ideally, he will become less reflexive and more reflective, and find his own opinions and ideas worthy of serious consideration. (n.p.)

Some bloggers also see blogging as a way to establish and develop relationships, via linking back, with an online community — the link made through blogging create connections that bind people (Hourihan, 2002). Such relationships borne out of linking and commentary will eventually become forms of social control and signs of approval, acceptance, and value.

In the last few years, a number of studies regarded the generic aspects of the blog (Herring et al., 2005; Puschmann, 2010; Schmidt, 2007). Likewise, many studies (Anderson, 2010; Armstrong & Retterer, 2008; Fageeh, 2011; Kelley, 2008; Roth, 2007; Sun & Chang, 2012) have proved the importance of blogs in developing students' writing skills. By utilizing blogs as a learning tool, students are made aware of the importance of clarity and organizational structures that make for strong and engaging posts. Blogs also serve as a potent avenue for the students to practice writing and analytical skills in their own blogs that will eventually transfer into essays and any other writing endeavors — seeing their own writing as *real*, with a practical application (Gayle Morris Sweetland Center for Writing, n.d.) Through blogging, which is a platform for writing and communicating in the cyber landscape, a link or bridge is established between the familiar digital world and the real world of academic essays, projects, and any other school-based assignments.

This paper will describe the metadiscourse features of Philippine investigative journalism blogs where English is used as a second language or L2. Specifically, it will answer the following questions:

1. How can the interactive metadiscourse resources of Philippine investigative journalism blogs be described in terms of transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses?

2. How can the interactional metadiscourse resources of the said blogs be characterized in terms hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions?

The study also aims to discuss the implications of the findings for L2 pedagogy, particularly ESL writing.

1.1 Theoretical Framework

Generally defined as writing about writing (Williams, 1981), metadiscourse is also described as discourse that goes beyond the actual content of the basic propositional information presented, enabling readers to organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to information in the text (Vande Kopple, 1985). To Hyland (2004), metadiscourse refers to "the linguistic devices writers employ to shape their arguments to the needs and expectations of their target readers" (p. 134). Further, Hyland (1998 as cited in Perez-Lantada, 2003) argues that:

> …based on a view of writing as a social and communicative engagement between writer and reader, metadiscourse focuses our attention on the ways writers project themselves into their work to signal their communicative intentions. It is a central pragmatic construct which allows us to see how writers seek to influence readers' understandings of both the text and their attitude towards its content and the audience. (p. 3)

For the past decades, a number of metadiscourse taxonomies have been proposed (Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 1998, 2000, 2005; Mauranen, 1993, Vande Kopple, 2002). The taxonomy of metadiscourse formulated by Hyland (2005) is central to the present study because such a model is recent, simple, clear, and comprehensive (Adbi,

Tavangar, & Tavakoli, 2010 as cited in Abdi, 2011).

Since the study also aims to explain the implications of the findings for L2 pedagogy, the model of metadiscourse in academic texts by Hyland (2005, p. 139) was used (see Table 1). Hyland (2005) elaborates the said model:

Interactive resources allow the writer to manage the information flow to explicitly establish his or her preferred interpretations. They are concerned with ways of organizing discourse to anticipate readers' knowledge and reflect the writer's assessment of what needs to be made explicit to constrain and guide what can be recovered from the text. These resources include the following:

Transitions comprise an array of devices, mainly conjunctions, used to mark additive, contrastive, and consequential steps in the discourse, as opposed to the external world.

Frame markers are references to text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure, including items used to sequence, to label text stages, to announce discourse goals, and to indicate topic shifts.

Endophoric markers make additional material salient and available to the reader in recovering the writer's intentions by referring to other parts of the text.

Evidentials indicate the source of textual information which originates outside the current text.

Code glosses signal the restatement of ideational information.

Interactional resources focus on the participants of the interaction and seek to display the writer's persona and a tenor consistent with the norms of the disciplinary community. Metadiscourse here concerns the writer's efforts to control the level of personality in a text and establish a suitable relationship to his or her data, arguments, and audience, marking the degree of intimacy, the expression of attitude, the communication of commitments, and the extent of reader involvement. They include:

Hedges mark the writer's reluctance to present propositional information categorically.

Boosters express certainty and emphasise the force of propositions.

Attitude markers express the writer's appraisal of propositional information, conveying surprise, obligation, agreement, importance, and so on.

Engagement markers explicitly address readers, either by selectively focusing their attention or by including them as participants in the text through second person pronouns, imperatives, question forms, and asides.

Self-mentions suggest the extent of author presence in terms of first person pronouns and possessives. (pp. 138-140)

Table 1

A model of metadiscourse in academic texts

Category Interactive resources	Function Help to guide reader through the text	Examples
Transitions	Express semantic relation between main clauses	In addition/but/thus/and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	Finally/to conclude/my purpose is to
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above/see Fig./in Section 2

Evidentials	Refer to source of information from other texts	According to X/(Y, 1990)/Z states
Code glosses	Help readers grasp meanings of ideational material	Namely/e.g./such as/in other words
Interactional resources	Involve the reader in the argument	
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	Might/perhaps/possible/about
Boosters	Emphasize force or writer's certainty in proposition	In fact/definitely/it is clear that
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	Unfortunately/I agree to/surprisingly
Engagement markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	Consider/note that/you can see that
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	I/we/my/our

2.

Method

2.1   Study Corpus

For the purpose of this study, 20 investigative journalism blogs published from January to April 2014 were selected from *http://pcij.org/blog/*, the official website of the Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism (PCIJ) blogs. As an independent, nonprofit media agency that specializes in investigative reporting, PCIJ (n.d.) believes that:

> …the media play a crucial role in scrutinizing and strengthening democratic institutions, defending and asserting press freedom, freedom of information, and freedom of expression. The media could—and should—be a catalyst for social debate and consensus that would redound to the promotion of public welfare. To do so, the media must provide citizens with the bases for arriving at informed opinions and decisions. (para 3)

For 22 years, PCIJ has published over 750 investigative reports and over 1,000 other stories in major Philippine newspapers and magazines. It has also produced five full-length documentaries and launched over two dozen books and video documentaries. The PCIJ has won over 150 major accolades, which include nine National Book Awards, a Catholic Mass Media Award, and more than two dozen awards and citations from the Jaime V. Ongpin Awards for Investigative Journalism (Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism, n.d.).

Since it was nearly impossible to gather blogs that dealt with the same topic or issue, the length of the blogs' texts served as a prime consideration in the selection of the study corpus. Thus, longer blogs were chosen, for they were assumed to have more metadiscourse features. On average, it seemed that five long blogs were published each month in the PCIJ Blog website from January to April 2014. The number of words of these selected blogs ranges from 302 to 1,195. These Filipino-authored blogs (two have by-lines, see Appendix A) comprised the corpus for analysis.

2.2 Procedure

The study is a systematic analysis of metadiscourse features as used in Philippine investigative journalism blogs. Although the

focus was on the quantitative aspect, the qualitative component was also covered in all parts of the analysis.

The analysis was done manually to ensure its validity. Likewise, a context-sensitive analysis was carried out since metadiscourse features in the corpus can be varied and multifunctional. In analyzing the data, only words or expressions that have metadiscoursal values are classified as metadiscourse. For instance, the transition 'and' counts as metadiscourse only if it is used to link two clauses. When it is used as a linker in a series of words, such as 'political, economic, and social impact,' it is disregarded as metadiscourse feature.

In order to achieve a higher reliability in the manual analysis, two independent coders from two local comprehensive universities examined and coded one-third of the investigative journalism blogs in terms of metadiscourse features. Both the researcher and the intercoders conferred on the individual codings made and reached agreement in cases when markings differed. Frequency and percentage counts were used to analyze the data.

3.   Results and Discussion

3.1   Interactive and interactional metadiscourse in Philippine investigative journalism blogs

Table 2 presents the metadiscourse features used in Philippine investigative journalism blogs.

Table 2 Frequency of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in Philippine investigative journalism blogs

Metadiscourse category		Frequency	Percentage	Total Percentage
Interactive resources				
Transitions		102	33.33	27.06
Frame markers		3	0.98	0.80
Endophoric markers		10	3.27	2.65
Evidentials		155	50.65	41.11
Code glosses		36	11.76	9.55
	Total	**306**		**81.17**
Interactional resources				
Hedges		43	60.56	11.40
Boosters		9	12.68	2.39
Attitude markers		9	12.68	2.39
Engagement markers		4	5.63	1.06
Self-mentions		6	8.45	1.59
	Total	**71**		**18.83**
Grand Total		**377**		**100.00**

Evidently, the data show that the corpus has a higher frequency of use of interactive resources (306 or 81.17%). This finding runs parallel with other studies on metadiscourse (Hyland, 2004; Hyland & Tse, 2004). The use of interactive linguistic resources allows writers to organize and structure their propositions so that the text becomes more coherent to the readers. Thus, from the interactive perspective, the writers of Philippine investigative journalism blogs seem sensitive in achieving coherence in writing.

Among the five categories of interactive resources, the use of evidentials has the highest frequency, with more than

half of the total percentage of interactive metadiscourse (155 or 50.65%). Since the study corpus can be categorized as journalistic writing, it appears that citation, through the use of evidentials, is crucial to the social context of persuasion in blogging, for it provides support and justification to the writer's proposition. Also, the data reveal a number of transitions in the corpus (102 or 33.33%). According to Hyland (2004), metadiscourse involves "unpacking the decisions writers make in creating a discourse itself rather than the events and processes they have participated in outside it" (p. 140). He adds that this concerns "identifying as metadiscourse those cases where transitions… are being used to link sequences in the argument and discounting those cases where they are being used to express relations between processes" (p. 140). Thus, based on the findings, investigative journalism blog writers give importance to both the organization of the text in general and the connection or link between and among pieces of information in the writing in particular.

As regards the interactional resources, results reveal the most frequent use of hedges (60.56%), which is more than half of the total number of interactional metadiscourse. Heng and Tan's (2010) study proved that the use of hedges essentially reflects the writer's objectivity and readiness to accept alternative views. The use of such a metadiscourse resource likewise implies the importance of distinguishing facts from opinions in writing and the "need for writers to evaluate their assertions in ways that are likely to be acceptable and persuasive" to their readers (Hyland, 2004, p. 140). Hence, in blogging, the use of hedges guarantees that assertions are toned down and persuasion and confidence are shown with caution.

3.2 Interactive metadiscourse features in Philippine investigative journalism blogs

The following tables present the use of ten different types of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005) in Philippine investigative journalism blogs. It is important to note that since one property of human language is creativity (Fromkin, Rodman, & Hyams, 2007), each of these types or categories can be realized through a variety of linguistics forms. Thus, the analysis of the corpus's metadiscourse features was done in context, for any linguistic form can be interpreted as having either propositional or metadiscoursal meaning (Heng & Tan, 2010).

Table 3 Transitions

Form of transitions	Frequency	Percentage
But	23	22.55
While	19	18.63
However	16	15.69
Also	14	13.73
Despite	4	3.92
At the same time	3	2.94
In addition	3	2.94
So	2	1.96
And	2	1.96
Although	2	1.96
As well	2	1.96
Still	2	1.96
Now	2	1.96
As a result	2	1.96
Another	2	1.96

Otherwise	1	0.98
In line with this	1	0.98
After all	1	0.98
Yet	1	0.98
Total	**102**	**100.00**

Table 3 shows the transitions used as interactive metadiscourse in the corpus. Of the 19 transitions identified in the blogs, '*but*' was the most common, comprising 23 or 22.55% of the total, followed by other *adversative connectors* (borrowing the term of Halliday & Hasan, 1976) '*while*' (19 or 18.63) and '*however*' (16 or 15.69). The other transitions appeared minimally in the texts, such as '*now,' 'as a result,' 'otherwise*,' and '*after all*.' Note also that four out of the first five transitions in the corpus are classified as adversative linkers, except for '*also*.' The adversative transitions are evident in the corpus since they seem to aid in achieving balanced and objective investigative journalism; thus, writers tend to state or express opinions or comments by presenting both sides of any issue, such as political corruption, corporate wrongdoings, and the like. Moreover, the simple transition 'but' is preferred in the genre, which implies adherence to the journalistic principle of concision.

In the following extracts, 'but' is used in the initial position of a paragraph to denote the transition from a preceding idea to one that entails a contrast:

[1]   Ordinarily, this information is secret or extremely hard to access — even for law-enforcement officials.

But now citizens, scholars, investigators and others will be able to quickly search for names and connections among people and offshore entities linked to the Greater China region…

[2]   In the end, the women found common ground with the warriors by talking about family and home. These were issues that everyone could relate to, whether warrior or peacemaker. After all, family and home had to be the only real reasons why people go to war in the first place.

But the female panel members had just as much difficulty with their own side, with the Philippine National Police and the Armed Forces of the Philippines. "These are all men who are used to the chain of command," one panel officer said. "You need to have a lot of grace and steel to keep them   on   the   line."

Table 4 Frame markers

Form of frame markers	Frequency	Percentage
In the end	1	33.33
By the last leg of the X	1	33.33
After the X	1	33.33
Total	**3**	**100.00**

With regard to the use of frame markers, only three were identified in the corpus; they seem to function as sequence or time markers. The genre tends to use frame markers least frequently since it usually presents criticism of a policy or judgment on an issue in a straightforward or direct way.

Extract 3 below shows the use of a frame marker in the corpus.

[3]   *After the forum*, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process

also launched the magazine Kababaihan at Kapayapaan, a bi-annual magazine on the role of women in the peace process.

Table 5 *Endophoric markers*

Form of endophoric markers	Frequency	Percentage
The X may be downloaded here./X may be read here	3	30.00
The following are the X:/The X follows:/The X… the following X:	3	30.00
See X Table	1	10.00
These X include(d)…	1	10.00
X: Check it out…	1	10.00
Read about X:	1	10.00
Total	**10**	**100.00**

Based on Table 5, it seems that investigative journalism blogs have a relatively small number of endophoric markers. It is true that these interactive metadiscourse resources provide additional salient materials to readers by referring to other parts of the texts. But since the genre under study is journalistic in nature, perhaps a more explicit and targeted manner of presenting information is more effective, direct, and facilitating. The following extract shows the use of an endophoric marker:

[4]   *The following are the salient points* of the Annex on Normalization:

The MILF shall undertake a graduated program for decommissioning its armed forces "so that they are put beyond use;"

Decommissioning should include a smooth transition for MILF rebels to "productive civilian life" through a comprehensive socio-economic program;…

Table 6 *Evidentials*

Form of evidentials	Frequency	Percentage
Said/say(s)	110	70.97
X told	10	6.45
According to X	8	5.16
X added	4	2.58
X show(ed)	3	1.94
X point(ed) out	3	1.94
X argue(d)	3	1.94
X noted	3	1.94
X acknowledged	2	1.29
X stressed	2	1.29
In this X	1	0.65
X claimed	1	0.65
X revealed	1	0.65

X states	1	0.65
X explained	1	0.65
X reported	1	0.65
X reads	1	0.65
Total	**155**	**100.00**

Table 6 shows that evidentials can be realized through various forms. The use of the most common and simple evidential 'said/say(s)' (110 or 70.97) demonstrates the principal concern of writers, that is, to present information clearly, explicitly, and persuasively. This attribution category aims to lend credibility to the investigative journalism blogs by presenting objective evidence and making valid claims. Pak (1997 as cited in Dayag, 2009) argues that attributing ideas to sources makes opinions more credible.

The following are examples of how evidentials can be used:

[5] In the last committee hearing in 2013, Almonte's committee formed the TWG and set a deadline for the TWG to draft a consolidated version by the middle of February this year. That's less than a month away, and yet the TWG has not even met yet, Aglipay *said*.

[6] PERCEPTIONS within the business community that there is "a lot of corruption" in the government rose in 2013, reflecting "some disappointment" over government's avowed campaign to stamp out corruption, *according to* the yearly Survey of Enterprises on Corruption.

Table 7 *Code glosses*

Form of code glosses	Frequency	Percentage
Use of ( )	13	36.11
Such as	6	16.67
For example	5	13.89
Or X	4	11.11
Parenthetical definition	3	8.33
Also called	2	5.56
Including	1	2.78
Also known as	1	2.78
That is	1	2.78
Total	**36**	**100.00**

The figures in Table 7 indicate that the use of parentheses is the most common among the identified code glosses, comprising 13 or 36.11% of the total, followed by '*such as*' (6 or 16.67%) and '*for example*' (5 or 13.89%). This finding proves that metadiscourse is not only realized through and by words alone but also through punctuation marks, such as '( ),' allowing writers to elaborate further the proposition they convey (Heng & Tan, 2010). Noticeable, too, is the use of different code glosses to explain, rephrase, expand, or exemplify information. This would validate the elaborate and change-oriented (Mohamed & Omer, 2000) rhetorical pattern of Philippine English as an Outer-Circle-English variety.

The following extracts exemplify the use of code glosses:

[7]   "May kaunting disappointment siguro ang mga companies na hindi kasing galing ng last year," said SWS president Mahar Mangahas. *(There is some disappointment*

among the companies that the fight against corruption is not as good as last year's.)

[8]   The group's report *(A New Global Partnership: Eradicate Poverty and Transform Economies through Sustainable Development)* was welcomed widely for recognizing the vital role human rights play in securing meaningful economic and social development.

3.3 Interactional metadiscourse features in Philippine investigative journalism blogs

Table 8 Hedges

Form of hedges	Frequency	Percentage
Would	18	41.86
Can	6	13.95
May	5	11.63
Could	4	9.30
Appeared	3	6.98
Perhaps	2	4.65
Possibly	1	2.33
Is believed	1	2.33
Seems	1	2.33
Seeming	1	2.33
Could probably	1	2.33
Total	**43**	**100.00**

As shown on Table 8, the prevalent form of hedges is the use of the auxiliary verb; the first four preferred forms are 'would,' 'can,' 'may,' and 'could.' The results also indicate that hedges are relatively less frequent but varied in the corpus. They seem less frequent since most parts of the investigative journalism blogs are factual; thus, they tend to express certainty and commitment to the veracity of information. On the contrary, such an analysis would point to the need to use more hedges in L2 writing. According to Williams (2007),

[9]   In addition, the Supreme Court also struck down other controversial provisions of R.A. 10175, *such as* Section 19 *or* the "Takedown Clause" that allows the government to block or restrict access to internet material it deems as criminal in nature without a warrant.

successful writers usually are able to hedge more.

The effective use of hedges is evidenced by these extracts from the blogs:

[10]   The demand side of the equation, they argued, would be the ability of citizens to ask government for data that they find useful. This requires a law that *would* compel agencies to make this data available on demand…

[11]   (*Perhaps* their expectations had risen, so it was toned down a bit.)

Table 9 Boosters

Form of boosters	Frequency	Percentage
In fact	3	33.33
Apparently	2	22.22
Should	1	11.11
Truly	1	11.11

Of course	1	11.11
Must	1	11.11
Total	**9**	**100.00**

The use of boosters in the genre is relatively less frequent. Since the investigative journalism blogs cover facts in analyzing issues or current events, it seems that the use of boosters to accentuate the certainty of propositions is not obligatory.

The following extracts show the use of 'in fact' as a booster:

[12]   Despite the drop in the ratings, the SWS says that business expectations for the next two years have ***in fact*** reached a record high of 76 percent, from 74 percent in 2012.

[13]   The greatest irony of all: While freedom of expression and freedom of the press advocates have been campaigning to decriminalize libel, government has ***in fact*** expanded the scope of the crime and increased the penalty…

Table 10 Attitude markers

Form of attitude markers	Frequency	Percentage
(More) likely	3	33.33
Expressly	1	11.11
Quietly	1	11.11
Pointedly	1	11.11
More importantly	1	11.11
Ironically	1	11.11
Ordinarily	1	11.11
Total	**9**	**100.00**

Similar to the use of boosters, attitude markers in the corpus are relatively less frequent. The writers do not tend to express their appraisal of the proposition by conveying surprise, obligation, and the like. Also, journalistic writing tends to be objective or impartial, thus, expressions of attitude are not prevalent. The following extract indicates the use of 'likely' as a booster:

[14]   Peace Process adviser Teresita 'Ging' Deles however said this does not mean that the gender barrier had already been broken – more ***likely***, it was the women who had the perseverance, determination, attention to detail, and persistence to get things done…

Table 11 Engagement markers

Form of engagement markers	Frequency	Percentage
You	3	50.00
We (inclusive)	1	25.00
Total	**4**	**100.00**

A relatively small number of engagement markers are found in the corpus. This seemingly lack of strategy somehow shows the inability of the genre to "bring readers into the text as participants in an unfolding dialogue" (Hyland, 2004, p. 143). The following extract could prove the effective use of an engagement marker, in a

form of a rhetorical question, to draw readers to participate in processing an argument:

[15] PERHAPS you know them well enough to elect them. But really, how well do you   KNOW   them?

Table 12 Self-mentions

Form of self-mentions	Frequency	Percentage
We	5	83.33
Us	1	16.67
Total	6	100.00

Table 12 shows the two forms of self-mention in the genre in which '*we*' is more prevalent (83.33%). Although such an interactional resource is relatively less frequent as a persuasive strategy, it still allows writers to express their stand on an issue, seemingly demonstrating personal feelings toward a proposition. Hyland (2005, p. 53 as cited in Heng & Tan, 2010), however, highlights that "the signaling of the writer's presence or absence in the text is a matter of the writer's conscious choice." The following extract justifies this point:

[16] ICIJ's latest "China Leaks" stories this week revealed the offshore holdings of dozens of powerful Chinese financial and political players. Today *we*'re going a step further — unveiling more than 37,000 names of offshore clients from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan connected to companies and trusts in 10 tax havens.

4.   Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be inferred that there is much evidence in the use of metadiscourse in Philippine investigative journalism blogs. The use of metadiscourse as an appropriate linguistic resource is supplemental and essential. To Vande Kopple (2012), "One of the reasons the study of metadiscourse is so interesting and important is that it shows how intricately structured language is and how attentive to detail one must be in the study of language and its effects" (p. 40). Both the interactive and the interactional metadiscourse influence the way a blogger argues and engages with his readers – how the former organize and structure his proposition, how he presents himself in the social context of persuasive writing, how he justifies and strengthens his proposition, and how he evaluate his readers' need for elaboration and involvement. Thus, a blogger should provide sufficient linguistic cues to guarantee the understanding and acceptance of a proposition.

The findings of the study provide pedagogical implications for ESL writing. Metadiscourse has a prominent place in second-language instruction. Previous research found the positive impact of explicit instruction of metadiscourse on learners' writing performance (Crismore, 1984; Dastjerdi & Shirzad, 2010; Perez-Llantada, 2003; Simin & Tavangar, 2009; Xu, 2001). Through explicit instruction in metadiscourse, L2 learners can develop their writing skills by using models that allow them to practice writing within the socio-rhetorical framework of their target communities (Hyland, 2005), e.g., blogs, academic writing, journalism.

Likewise, the use of investigative journalism blogs, which are *real* and more appealing texts, can help enrich a more context-sensitive and -specific L2-writing pedagogy. Critical thinking skills, which can be developed through blog writing of significant real-life events, will eventually

transfer into the students' essays and any other academic-writing endeavors. By introducing metadiscourse resources in L2 instruction, learning can become more interactive. In this way, such an instruction can reduce the usual information-exchange view of reading and writing; thus, learners can move beyond from a simple and ideational process to a more complex and context-rich interaction (Dafouz-Milne, 2008 as cited in Tarrayo & Duque, 2011). Accordingly, teachers may provide exercises that make students internalize linguistic forms or expressions associated with metadiscourse, such as evidentials, hedges, code glosses, and the like.

It is significant, however, to determine how much detailed instruction in metadiscourse would be necessary for an L2-pedagogy context. Vande Kopple (2012) suggests the following steps:

1. Looking closely at a variety of texts in the L2 to discover what elements of metadiscourse appear.
2. With the help of a native speaker of L2, discovering whether the uses of metadiscourse are natural and successful or not.
3. Deciding which function or functions the elements of metadiscourse are meant to fulfill.
4. Discussing whether or not other specific elements of metadiscourse could be substituted for the elements of metadiscourse that do appear.
5. Discussing whether there is a link between functions of metadiscourse and aspects of the culture that sustain and is sustained by the particular L2.
6. Discussing why there might be a link between functions of metadiscourse and aspects of the culture that sustain and is sustained by the particular L2.
7. Working on analyses, exercises, and real-world tasks to help the students learn appropriate uses of the metadiscourse. (p. 43)

Aware of the limitations imposed upon the present data, the researcher suggests that further research with larger and more varied samples or corpus can be done to arrive at more conclusive results or generalizations. Future studies can deal with other types of blogs, such as politics, sports, food and cuisine, etc. Moreover, a comparison of the intricacies of metadiscourse used in blogs in a variety of disciplines can be undertaken. And since writing is culture-bound, intercultural or contrastive rhetoric studies, e.g., metadiscourse in ESL and EFL blogs or in blogs written in different Englishes, can be done.

About the Author

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Appendix A

Study Corpus (from http://pcij.org/blog/)

Corruption up, 'some' dismay over anti-corruption fight (January 16, 2014)

Aglipay: Main FOI hurdle is committee chairman (January 20, 2014)

Transparency, info, and tech converge in 'unconference' (January 23, 2014)

Unlocking China's Secrets: Get all the data you want! (January 24, 2014)

MILF, PH gov't sign annex for decommissioning of MILF forces (January 26, 2014)

Access to info, free media pillars of development, 197 CSOs tell UN (February 5, 2014)

SC affirms law vs. online libel, clips powers in Cybercrime Act (February 18, 2014)

Media, netizens to mark EDSA with 'Black Tuesday' protest (February 21, 2014)

#JunkCyberLibel! – A new call for People Power (February 25, 2014)

YanukovychLeaks: How Ukraine's journalists are making history (February 28, 2014)

Online libel provision gives 'chilling effect' (March 3, 2014)

Senate passes FOI on final reading (March 10, 2014)

'Who audits COA?' (March 11, 2014)

MoneyPolitics Online update: Profiles of 2013 winners (March 17, 2014)

PH internet at 20 (March 30, 2014)

Warriors of grace and steel: The women in the peace panel (April 8, 2014)

Indonesia's parliament vote to set tone for presidential polls *by Ryan D. Rosauro* (April 9, 2014)

Tiempo Muerto, Tiempo Suerte? (April 16, 2014)

Pasyon at Debosyon *by Julius D. Mariveles* (April 18, 2014)

PNoy draws ire of media, HR group after blooper on media killings (April 30, 2014)