Metadiscourse Use in Thesis Abstracts: A Case of M.Ed. English Majors

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Abstract

A metadiscourse is an important linguistic resource that binds different parts of a text together and facilitates communication building relationships with audiences. This aspect of discourse analysis has gained a considerable attention in academic writing these days. The aim of this study was to identify the types of metadiscourses used in the thesis abstracts of M.Ed. English majors of Tribhuvan University (TU), Kathmandu, Nepal. It also aimed at investigating the distribution patterns of metadiscourse resources in their thesis abstracts. Following Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse taxonomy, a corpus of 20 master theses submitted to the Department of English Education, TU in the year 2019 was analyzed to identify the types of metadiscourse used in the abstracts. Relying on a quantitative data analysis followed by qualitative analysis, it was found that the number of interactive metadiscourse features was considerably higher in the corpus than the interactional metadiscourse markers. The most frequent types of metadiscourses used in the texts were endophoric markers, transitions, boosters self mentions, and code glosses. Understanding the uses and functions of metadiscourse academic writing is pivotal for EFL/ESL students, particularly for postgraduate students when they are writing their theses or research articles for publication.

Keywords: Abstracts, M.Ed. English Majors, Metadiscourse, Thesis English Education

Introduction

Metadiscourse is a new concept in the field of discourse analysis and language education. Recently we find a considerable interest in the study of the use of metadiscourses in academic writing. Metadiscourse is a widely used term in current discourse analysis, and it stands for

the ways writers or speakers project themselves in their texts to interact with their receivers. The concept was first introduced into the map of applied linguistics by Zellig Harris in 1959. Along with Harris many other scholars (Williams, 1981; Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore, 1989; Hyland, 2004 & 2005) further developed this concept. These scholars took language forms such as hedges, connectives or comments that represent writers/speakers' influence on readers/hearers into the category of metadiscourse (Yang, 2007). This concept is based on a view of writing or speaking as a social engagement (Hyland, 2005; Dafouz-Milne, 2008).

Harris believed that metadiscourse is a way of understanding language in use or representing writers'/speakers' intention to guide receivers' perception of texts (as cited Hyland, 2008). Williams (1981) defined metadiscourse as "writing about writing, whatever does not refer to the subject matter being addressed" (p. 226). According to Vande Kopple (1985), metadiscourse is the word beyond the basic proposition which refers to a set of mechanism that can lead readers to organize, classify, interpret, evaluate and reflect the text message (as cited in Xu, 2006). For Crismore (1985), metadiscourse can be defined as "what writers inject into the text besides the content" (p. 6). Williams (1981, pp.211-212) defines it as "whatever does not refer to the subject matter being discussed." For (Halliday, 1973, 1978), metadiscourse is related to the two of three metafunctions of the language: the textual and the interpersonal. It deals with the relationship between writers of the texts, and their texts as well as texts' authors and their readers (Hyland, 2005).

Despite a considerable attention in metadiscourse by teachers and applied linguists, it has failed to achieve its explanatory potential due to a lack of theoretical rigor and empirical confusion (Hyland & Tse, 2004). One of the important aspects of writing, whether it is a thesis or a general essay, is the use of metadiscourse. The use of metadiscourse makes a text purposive, unified and meaningful. Several studies on discourse analysis have established the use of metadiscourse as an essential element of writing (Adel 2006; Farrokhi & Ashrafi, 2009; Hyland, 2004). Metadiscourse is tremendously used in academic writing and in the world of discourse analysis, and helps the writers or speakers to have interaction with the receivers of their texts**.** It is integral for academic writers in organizing the discourse, engaging the audience, and signaling the writer's or speaker's attitude (Fuertes-Olivera,Velasco-sacristan, Arribas-Bano, & Samaniego-Fernandez, 2001). So, it has been taken up and used by researchers to trace patterns of interaction, and to discuss different aspects of language in use.

Nepalese students do not get sufficient exposure in thesis writing in their bachelor' and master's degree courses. One of the aspects of thesis or dissertation is that it uses metadiscourses a lot. Thesis or dissertation of any kind uses lots of metadiscourse as writers or scholars have to inform and convince their readers. The importance of meta-discourse is highlighted by Hyland and Tse (2004) as follows: Meta-discourse is an aspect of language which provides a link between texts and disciplinary culture, helping to define the rhetorical context by revealing some of the expectations and understandings of the audience for whom a

text was written (p. 175). The use of metadiscourse in academic writing makes the communication flow smooth. Swales (1990) states that "key differentiating aspect of dissertation writing is a much greater use of metadiscourse (p.188). Thesis or dissertations are important for university students. While stating the importance of thesis, Hyland (2004) mentions:

> The dissertation is a high stake genre at the summit of a student's academic accomplishment. It is perhaps the most significant piece of writing that any student will ever do, a formidable task of intimidating length and exacting expectations which represents what is potentially achievable by individuals writing in a language that is not their own. (p. 134)

It is through the metadiscourse we articulate and construct interactions. Metadiscourse encompasses writer-reader interaction. Metadiscourse is a linguistic means through which writers reach to their audience. Despite the use of metadiscourse in academic writing, thesis or dissertation in particular, no attempt has been made till date to study the uses of metadiscourse in academic writing in Nepal. Understanding the use of metadiscourse is particularly significant for graduate and postgraduate students when they are writing their theses or research articles for publication. Students writing their theses in English should be aware of the uses of metadiscouse markers language so that they can come with reader friendly cohesive theses.

Thesis Writing in English Education at Tribhuvan University

Thesis writing is very important component of M.Ed programme at Tribhuvan University. Being completely practical course, it provides the students with hands-on experience in preparing a thesis. The overall aim of this course is to enable students to acquire in-depth knowledge and skills for developing research proposal, conducting research and writing a thesis in a standard format. The course is divided into three parts: Academic writing (AW), proposal writing (PW) and thesis writing (TW). Academic writing introduces students to the basic concepts of writing for preparing proposal and thesis, which will be delivered by the course teacher; proposal writing presents the basic components of a research proposal and prepares the students to develop a proposal in the area of interest in their major subjects. Thesis writing engages the students in actually writing a thesis in the area of their choice. Each student is required to prepare a detailed proposal and thesis under the guidance of the thesis supervisor, and present both in the departmental research committee for evaluation and approval. Students need to write their theses in a standard format provided by the department, and present it to the departmental research committee.

M.Ed. students majoring English are required to submit a thesis to the Department of English Education in partial fulfillment for the Master of Education in English. M.Ed. English thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter. It includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and operational definition of the key

terms. The second chapter deals with the review of the related theoretical literature, review of related empirical literature, implication of the review and conceptual framework. The third chapter incorporates the discussions of methods and procedures of the study. It subsumes design of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, research tools, sources of data, data collection procedures, and ethical considerations. The forth chapter deals with analysis and interpretation of results. Finally, fifth chapter is about analysis and interpretation of results. The fifth chapter presents the major findings, conclusions, and implications of the study. The chapter is followed by references and appendices (if any). Thus, in an attempt to contribute to existing literature on metadiscourse use in academic writing, this study focuses on master's thesis abstracts and the way writers use metadiscourse markers in the abstract sections of their theses.

Literature Review

This section presents definitions and classifications of metadiscourse. The section comprises classifications made by Vande Kopple's (1985), Halliday (1994), and Hyland (2005).

Defining Metadiscourse

Zellig Harris introduced this term in 1959 to represent a writer's or speaker's attempt to guide a receiver's perception of a text (Hyland, 2005). According to Harris (1959), metadiscourse emerged as a way of understanding language in use, representing a writer or speaker's attempts to guide a receiver's perception of a text. In discourse literature we find different definitions of metadiscourse such as "writing about writing" (Williams 1981, p. 211) or "discourse about discourse or communication about communication" (Vande Kopple, 1985, p. 83), to more specific ones, such as "writing about the evolving text rather than referring to the subject matter" (Swales, 2004, p.121). It is thus as an umbrella term for the range of devices writers use to explicitly organize their texts, engage readers, and signal their attitudes to both their material and their audience (Hyland, 2005). It includes heterogeneous array of cohesive and interpersonal features which relate a text to its context so that readers can interpret a text well as intended by the writer or the speaker. As Vande Kopple (1985, p. 83) observes, "writers do not add propositional material but help our readers to organize, classify, interpret, evaluate, and react to such material."

Metadiscourse embodies writer-reader interaction. Metadiscourse is a linguistic system that enables writers to establish interpersonal relations, to interact with their audience. Hyland (2005) defines metadiscourse as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community" (p. 37). It is a kind of tool through which writers interact with their readers. In fact, writers and readers are viewed as social agents and texts as a social enterprise in which writers do not only want their messages to be understood (an illocutionary effect), but also to get accepted (a perlocutionary effect). For Crismore, Markannen, and Steffensen (1993) metadiscourse refers to "linguistic material in text, written or spoken, which does not add anything to the propositional content

but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate the information given" (p. 40).

Previous Studies and Classifications of Metadiscourse

Hyland (2004) looked into doctoral and master theses written by Hong Kong students to find out how academic writers use language to offer a credible representation of themselves**.** The results of his study indicated "the importance of metadiscourse to students writing in this genre…" (Hyland, 2004, p. 140).

Applied linguists and researchers have categorized metadiscourse in relation to the three communicative functions of language identified by Hallidayan systemic functional grammar (Halliday, 1994). Halliday's classification of language functions lays foundation stone for the study of metadiscourse use in academic writing. The three communicative functions are: i) Ideational function ii) Interpersonal function iii) Interpersonal function. Halliday defines textual function as the use of language to organize the text itself, coherently relating what is said to the world and to readers. Interpersonal function in Halliday's terms is used to establish, maintain and signal relationships between people. The ideational function, in Halliday's framework, organizes a speaker's or writer's experience of the world and conveys information which can be stated or denied. According to Vande Kopple (1985), primary discourse fulfils the ideational function and metadiscourse serves the interpersonal and textual functions of language.

Metadiscourse is considered as one of the important rhetorical features and strategies in the production of any piece of discourse (Hyland, 1998). The first comprehensive functional classification of metadiscourse was introduced by Vande Kopple (1985). Vande Kopple (1985) puts forward seven types of metadiscourse resources. Seven categories of metadiscourse he has identified are: Text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, validity markers, narrators, attitude markers, and commentaries. He considers that metadiscourse can convey either textual or interpersonal meanings and divides seven types of metadiscourse resources into two broad categories: textual and interpersonal. Textual metadiscourse, sometimes called metatext (Bunton, 1999; Mauranen, 1993), serves the function of organizing the text and directing the reader and fulfils Halliday's textual function. Interpersonal metadiscourse is employed to develop the relationship between the reader and the writer and to add the writer's personal belief and degree of commitment toward an ongoing proposition (Cheng & Steffensen, 1996). Textual metadiscourse includes text connectives and code glosses. They help to show how individual elements of those propositions make sense in conjunction with the other elements of the text in a particular situation. Interpersonal metadiscourse incorporates illocution markers, narrators, validity markers, attitude markers and commentaries. They help to characterize the interaction between the writers and readers about the content. Text connectives help readers understand how a particular text is organized and how its parts are connected. Words and phrases like however, first of all, as we saw above, see in chapter 2, etc., come under text connectives.

Code glosses help grasp the meaning of elements in texts. Some examples of code glosses in English are: in other words, that is, e.g., etc. Illocution markers make explicit for the reader what speech or discourse act is being performed at a certain point of a text, for example, we claim that, to sum up, etc. The main purpose of validity markers is to assess the probability or truth of a statement. These express the author's view of the validity of the propositional content. Hedges in English are the examples of validity markers. Narrators in discourse are used to indicate the source of the information presented. Attitude markers reveal writers' attitude to propositional contents, for example, surprisingly. Commentaries in a discourse address readers directly and draw them into an implicit dialogue.

Researchers have classified metadiscourse in different ways. There are two taxonomies on metadiscourse resources that most people are familiar with which are textual metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse; interactive metadiscourse and interactional metadiscourse (Xin & Shang, 2016). According to Hyland (2005), metadiscourse can be divided into two broad categories namely; interactive (textual) and interactional (interpersonal). The former refers to features used to organize information so that the target reader should find it coherent and convincing. This group includes code glosses, endophoric markers, evidentials, frame markers, and transition markers. The latter group refers to "features that draw the reader into the discourse and give them an opportunity to contribute to it and respond to it by alerting them to the writer's perspective on propositional information and orientation and intention with respect to that reader" (Hyland, 2005, p.52). Table 1 below presents the metadiscourse types categorized by Hyland (2005).

Table 1
Classification of metadiscourse

Interactive resources		
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
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		
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

There are five interactional metadiscourse categories in this group which are as follows: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mentions and engagement markers. Attitude markers indicate the writer's opinion or assessment of a proposition. Self-mention refers to explicit authorial presence in the text and gives information about his/her character and stance. Engagement markers explicitly address readers to draw them into the discourse. Hedges indicate the writer's decision to recognize other voices, viewpoints or possibilities and be (ostensibly) open to negotiation with the reader. Boosters allow the writer to anticipate and preclude alternative, conflicting arguments by expressing certainty instead of doubt. This study takes Hyland's (2005) classification model of metadiscourse as the main theoretical framework.

Objectives
The use of metadiscourse strategies shows to what extent student writers are aware of discourse-as-process and how they manage it. In other words, the use of metadiscourse helps us know how students structure their texts and how they engage their readers, and themselves. The present study adopts a corpus-based approach to investigate the types of metadiscourse resources in EFL students' thesis abstracts. The study aimed at: 1) exploring the types of metadiscourse resources used in the thesis abstracts of M.Ed students majoring English at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal 2) finding out the overall distribution of metadiscourse resources in thesis abstracts, and 3) describing patterns of metadiscourses used in thesis abstracts.

Methods and Procedures
This study employed both the quantitative and quantitative analyses with a focus on frequency counts, and manual text analysis of 20 theses submitted to the department of English Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal.

The Data
The corpora of the present study consists of abstract sections of 20 theses written by the students of Department of English Education, Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. Each student at the department is required to carry out a thesis in the fourth semester to earn the master's degree in English Education at Tribhuvan University, Nepal. These theses were submitted to the Department of English Education in the year 2019. All these theses were related to English language teaching and applied linguistics. All of them have a similar format consisting of two paragraphs. The first paragraph includes motivation, objectives, methods and procedures and the major findings. The second paragraph is about the chapterization. Twenty theses submitted to the department

in 2019 were selected randomly. The abstract of the theses were numbered from 1 to 20. The theses selected for this study were: 1) Working conditions of novice English teachers in the initial year of teaching; 2) Female teachers' experiences in teacher professional development; 3) Graffiti in Kathmandu valley: Multimodal discourse analysis; 4) Effectiveness of co-operative strategies for improving learners' reading comprehension; 5) Teaching English in multilingual classrooms: Challenges faced and strategies employed; 6) Strategies and factors of teachers' motivation for their professional development; 7) Self-monitoring practices for professional development: Teachers' narratives; 8) Teacher induction for professional development: Females' perspectives; 9) Role of head teacher in the professional development of English teachers 10) English code-mixing in Gurung Language in public communication 11) Role of motivational strategies in developing students' speaking skill; 12) Critical discourse analysis of my literacy book series from gender perspective; 13) Teachers' beliefs and practices on the use of questioning strategy in ELT classrooms 14) A critical discourse analysis of the novel 'Yogmaya' from feminist perspective 15) ELT situation of community schools of Kailali District 16) Challenges of female English language teachers 17) English teacher hiring practices in private schools 18) The feminist perspective in the novel "Samanantar Aakash" 19) Students' perceptions on using youtube videos in learning vocabulary, and 20) M.Ed. English students' perceived difficulties in writing thesis. The word length of the thesis abstracts ranged between 279 and 420. The total number of words in 20 theses is 6901. Thus the average word length of an abstract is 345.05.

Procedures

The abstract sections of the theses were carefully read word by word in order to identify and locate the meta-discourse markers. In the stage of analysis, metadiscourses used in the abstracts were identified, their frequency of occurrences were counted. While analyzing, metadiscourses used were also categorized. The metadiscourse markers used in the texts were categorized using a model proposed by Hyland (2005). Table 2 below presents the categories of metadiscourses identified by Hyland (2005) in academic writing.

Table 2

Categories of metadiscourses in academic texts as proposed by Hyland (2005)

Interactive	Interactional
Transitions	Hedges
Frame markers	Boosters
Endophoric markers	Attitude markers
Evidential	Self-mentions
Code glosses	Engagement markers

Results and Discussion

Types of Metadiscourse Markers in the Thesis Abstracts

All 20 abstracts were carefully were read word by word in order to identify and locate the meta-discourse resources. Metadiscourses markers used in the abstracts were identified, their frequency of occurrences were counted. To find out the pattern of metadiscourse distribution in the thesis abstracts I used a model proposed by Hyland (2005). Table 1 below presents the types of metadiscourses identified in the thesis abstracts and their frequency counts.

Table 3

Types of metadiscourse used in master's thesis abstracts

MDs	Frequency	Percent
Transitions	81	25.79
Frame markers	44	14.01
Endophoric markers	100	34.84
Code glosses	19	6.06
Evidentials	0	0
Hedges	1	0.31
Boosters	35	11.14
Attitude Markers	0	0
Self mentions	34	10.82
Engagement Markers	0	0
Total	314	100

Table 3 shows that the most frequent subcategory in this corpus is the use of endophoric markers which comprise 34.84 % of all the metadiscourses used in the theses written by M.Ed English students of Tribhuvan University, Kathamndu, Nepal. Endophoric markers are followed by transitions. As is apparent in table 3, 25.79 % of metadiscousres used in the texts were transition markers. Similarly, frame markers constituted 14.01% of the total number of markers used in the theses. Other groups of metadiscourses are code glosses (6.06%), boosters (11.14%), self mentions (10.82%), and hedges (0.31%).

Patterns of Metadiscourse Distribution

Table 4 below shows the hierarchy of occurrence of the metadiscourse markers used in the theses written by students doing their M.Ed. in English. The table shows that three (of ten) metadiscourse markers; evidentials, attitude markers and engagement markers were not used in the thesis abstracts.

Table 4
Hierarchy of metadiscourses

MDs	Frequency	Percent
Endophoric markers	100	34.84
Transitions	81	25.79
Frame markers	44	14.01
Boosters	35	11.14
Self mentions	34	10.82
Code glosses	19	6.06
Hedges	01	0.31
Evidentials	0	0
Attitude Markers	0	0
Engagement Markers	0	0
Total	314	100

The pattern of metadiscouses found in the texts from most frequent to least were endophoric markers, transitions, frame markers, boosters, self mentions, code glosses, and hedges.

Endophoric Markers
Endophoric markers refer to information used in other parts of the text. The sentences below include some of the examples of endophoric markers used in the text.

(1) *The first chapter* deals with the introduction of the study along with background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definitions of the key terms. (Abstract #1)

(2) Similarly, *the second chapter* contains the review of related literature and conceptual framework. (Abstract #1)

(3) *The third chapter* discusses the method and procedures of the study. It consists of design, method, and procedures of the study. (Abstract #3)

(4) Likewise, *the third chapter* includes with methods and procedures of the study, design of the study, population and sample, sampling strategies, data collection tools, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation procedures and ethical considerations. (Abstract #1)

(5) *Chapter four* presents the analysis of the data and interpreted of the result. (Abstract #2)

In examples 1-5, italicized phrases; *the first chapter*, *the second chapter*, *the third chapter, chapter four* and *fifth chapter* are endophoric markers. These endophoric markers were found

in the second paragraph of the abstracts. The second paragraph of the abstracts deals with chapterization of thesis.

Frame Markers

Frame markers are discourse acts, sequences or stages in the text or the discourse. They refer 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. Some examples of the frame makers used in the theses abstracts are as follows:

(1) The main *objective of the study was to find* out the effectiveness of co-operative strategies for improving learners' reading comprehension of secondary level students. (Abstract #4

(2) This study entitled 'Strategies and factors of Teachers' Motivation for Their Professional Development' was conducted *to explore English language teachers' motivation for teaching* and professional development and *to identify the factors that affect teachers' motivation in professional development.* (Abstract #6)

(3) This research entitled "Teacher Induction for Professional Development: Females' Perspectives" was an attempt *to explore the female teachers' perspectives about induction for their professional development.* It also *aimed to find out the current practices of teacher induction in the Nepalese context.* (Abstract #8)

(4) The present research study entitled Teachers' Beliefs and Practices on the Use of Questioning Strategy in ELT Classrooms *aimed to identify the beliefs of teachers* on the use of questioning strategy and to find out the practices of questioning strategy in ELT classrooms. (Abstract #13)

(5) The main objective of my study was to identify the aspects of feminism in "Samanatar Aakash" in terms of social, cultural and religious aspects, gender aspects, place of women and women rights in the society, and role of patriarchy. (Abstract #19)
The frame

The italicized parts in sentences 1-5 are some frame markers identified in the abstracts.

Transitions

Transitions consist of devices, mainly conjunctions, used to mark additive, contrastive, and consequential steps in the discourse, as opposed to the external world. The following sentences show the way transitions are used in the thesis abstracts.

(1) *However,* it was found that while using YouTube videos in learning vocabulary, students have faced the problem like sounds or pronunciation understanding and listening. (Abstract #20)

(2) Thus, gender inequality and discrimination at home, society and institution made them feel depressed and marginalized. (Abstract #2)

(3) *Further,* the finding also showed that female teachers faced challenges, dilemmas and tension due to the gender most. (Abstract #2)

(4) Similarly, three different roles of female teachers were identified viz. professional, societal and familial, of female teachers. (Abstract #2)

The connectors 'however', 'thus', 'further', and 'similarly' in the above sentences (1-4) are transitions as they connect between arguments in the discourse.

Code Glosses

Code glosses are used to signal the restatement of ideational information in a discourse. The following examples show how code glosses are used in the thesis abstracts.

(1) The results of the study revealed that multiple features *such as* presentation of various themes, multiple modes *like* signs, symbols, colours, words with images, stylish writing structures and linguistic features were noticed in graffiti writing of Kathmandu valley. (Abstract #3)

(2) On the basis of pre-test score, controlled Group "A" and experimental group "B" were formed. Group "A" was taught through the use of conventional lecture method of teaching by using text book whereas group "B" was taught by using various strategies of co-operative learning *such as* jigsaw, round robin/round table, pair/group work, group investigation, think/pair and share (TPS). (Abstract #4)

(**3**) The fifth chapter presents the findings, conclusion and recommendations of this research in different areas *such as* policy related, practice related and further research related. References and appendices are included in concluding part of the thesis. (Abstract #10)

(4) *That is to say,* the experimental group performed better than controlled group of students. (Abstract #4)

Boosters

Boosters express certainty and emphasize the force of propositions. The examples below present the way boosters are used in the abstracts.

(1)The findings of the study *clearly* showed that novice teachers faced various problems in the initial phases like classroom management problems, content knowledge problem, unsatisfactory salary, lack of collegiality, unsupportive principal and administration, disruptive behaviour of students, heavy work load, low job satisfaction etc. (Thesis abstract #1)

(2) The findings of the study *reveal* that teaching is challenging profession because they have multiple responsibilities beside their profession. (Thesis abstract #2)

(3) It was also *found* that multiple issues were raised in the graffiti, which included politics, gender discrimination, women violence and languages.

(4) It was *explored* that job enrichment, flexible working hours, merit base payment and incentives were the significant strategies for enhancing motivation to teachers in teaching and professional development. (Thesis abstract #5)

All the italicized words in examples 1-4 are boosters used in the thesis abstracts.

Self Mentions

Self mentions refer to the authorial presence in the texts in terms of first person pronouns and possessives. The examples below include some of the self mentions used in the abstracts.

(1) *I* used only publicly appeared graffiti wall arts. (Thesis abstract #1)

(2) *I* analyzed and interpreted the collected data from descriptive point of view. (Thesis abstract #5)

(3) *I* used narrative inquiry research design to carry out this research. (Thesis abstract #6)

(4) *I* conducted in depth interview to elicit the required information. (Thesis abstract #6)

Distribution of Metadiscourse: Interactive and Interactional

Metadiscourses can convey either textual or interpersonal meanings. Vande Kopple (1985), broadly devides metadicousres into two types: textual and interpersonal. Similar classification is made by Hyland (2005). He divided metadiscourse markers into two major types: Interactive and interactional. Table 5 presents the distribution of metadiscourse resources in terms of Hyland's classification.

Table 5
Macro-level distribution of metadiscourse in thesis abstracts

MDs	Frequency	Percent
Interactive metadiscourses	244	77.70
Interactional metadiscourse	70	22.30
Total	314	100

Interactive resources allow the writer to manage the information flow to explicitly establish his or her preferred interpretations. These resources include the following: transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, and code glosses. Interactive resources guide the reader through the text. On the other hand, interactional resources involve the reader in the argument. The subcategories it includes are: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self mentions.

Table 5 clearly shows that interactive metadiscourses were highly used in the theses written by M.Ed English students. The use of interactive metadiscourses accounts for 77.70 percent. In comparison to interactive discourses interactional metadiscourse markers were lower in number. Only 22.30 percent of metadiscourse markers were used in the abstracts.

Conclusions

The main aim of this study was to explore the types of metadiscourse markers used in the thesis abstract written by M.Ed English majors of Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, Nepal. The results revealed that students make greater use of metadiscourse in their thesis abstracts. Interactive metadiscouse markers were found to be far more frequent in the abstracts than the interactional ones. The interactive metadiscourse markers used in the thesis abstracts were: endophoric markers, transitions, frame markers and code glosses. Thesis writers did not use evidentials (one of five interactive metadiscourse markers) in their abstracts. Similarly only three of five interactional metadiscourse markers were used in the thesis abstracts. The

markers used in the texts were boosters, self mentions. The study showed the students did not use attitude markers and engagement markers at all in their abstracts. It was also found that writers made the authorial presences in qualitative researches particularly in narrative researches. The hierarchy of the metadiscourse types (both interactive and interactional) used in the thesis abstracts was: endophoric markers, transitions, frame markers, boosters, code glosses and hedges. The findings clearly indicate that the abstracts use a large number of metadiscourse markers which may help to promote the quality, credibility and legitimacy of the academic texts. The results reject the idea that meta-discourse devices are just marginal to the texts (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990). EFL writers try to establish their membership in academic discourse community by giving more importance to metadiscourse use. They want to communicate with other scholars in their fields.

The study also suggests that thesis writing courses should include metadiscourse markers to help writers to come up with coherent write up. While teaching academic writing to EFL/ESL teachers need to pay attention to most frequent metadiscourse makers. At the same time, students and teachers should pay attention to the use of less frequent markers like hedges, evidential, attitude markers and engagement markers. These metadiscouse markers help to improve the overall quality of writing. Language writing instruction should encompass the uses of these all metadiscouse markers. It is necessary to make thesis writing students aware of these markers and their functions in the text.

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Appendix: Sample Abstracts
#1 Abstract

This research entitled **Female Teachers' Experiences in Teacher Professional Development** was an attempt to analyze the roles and challanges of female teachers professional development. In order to provide the viable insight about their journey as teacher, I adopted the narrative inquiry as the research design. Three female teachers of three different government schools at Kirtipur were choosen purposively, interviewed with semi-structured questionnaire, the information was transcribed, analysed and concluded. The findings of the study reveals that teaching is challenging profession because they have multiple responsibilities beside their profession. Further, the finding also showed that female teachers faced challenges, dilemmas and tension due to the gender most. Similarly, three different roles of female teachers were identified viz. professional, societal and familial, of female teachers.Thus, gender inequality and discrimination at home, society and institution made them feel depressed and marginalized. Due to these facts, female teachers donot have the significant space for sharing their stories to others. Time management, child rearing and caring, economic management and multiple role of mother, wife and daughter in law are the most influencing challenges for female teachers' professional development.

The present study consists of five chapters. Chapter one is an introductory chapter. It includes background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation of the study and operational definition of the key terms. Chapter two deals with review of the related theoretical literature, review of related empirical literature, implication of the review and conceptual framework in relation to experiences of female teachers, their challenges and opportunities. Chapter three includes design of the study, population, sample and sampling strategy, research tools, source of data, data collection procedures, ethical consideration. Chapter four presents the analysis of the data and interpreted of the result. Finally, chapter five includes the findings, conclusions and recommendation of the study. The study ends with my reflection which include my experiences regarding writing this thesis.

 # 2 Abstract

Co-operative learning is an instructional method in which learners in small group work together to complete the assigned task. The main objective of the study was to find out the effectiveness of co-operative strategies for improving learners' reading comprehension of secondary level students. The researcher conducted an experimental research to determine the effectiveness of co-operative strategies. The test items were developed on the basis of unseen texts for the collection of data. The researcher collected data from the sampled population of thirty two students of grade nine of a community school in Dolakha district. The participants were selected by using random sampling method. For the research study, pre-test was administered among the thirty two students of the school. On the basis of pre-test score,

controlled Group "A" and experimental group "B" were formed. Group "A" was taught through the use of conventional lecture method of teaching by using text book whereas group "B" was taught by using various strategies of co-operative learning such as jigsaw, round robin/round table, pair/group work, group investigation, think/pair and share (TPS). At last, a post-test was administered to collect the data. The collected data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively with the help of simple statistical tools i.e. mean, percentage, and bar-diagram. The major finding of this study showed that co-operative strategies played great role for improving learners' reading comprehension. The students of experimental group scored 9.75 marks and controlled group scored 19.81 marks in average out of 25 in post test. That is to say, the experimental group performed better than controlled group of students.

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter includes the introduction with background of study, statement of problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitations of the study and operational definition of the key terms. The second chapter includes the review of both theoretical and empirical literature, implications of the review for the study and conceptual framework. The third chapter is the discussion of methods and procedures of the study. The forth chapter is about analysis and interpretation of results. Finally, chapter five presents the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations are further presented in policy, practice and further research related aspects. The chapter is followed by references.