

Máster en Estudios Textuales y Culturales en Lengua Inglesa 60709 - Metalinguistic Resources in English Academic Texts

Course 2010 - 2011

Curso: 1, Semestre: 2, Créditos: 7.5

Basic information

Teachers

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Recommendations to attend this course

A course will be opened in the electronic platform Moodle at the University of Zaragoza (www.moodle.unizar.es) for students registered in this subject.

Course Schedule and Deadlines

Presentation and individual discussion of the most relevant taxonomies (typologies and functions) of metadiscourse devices in a corpus of academic texts, and interpretation of their use according to a theoretical framework.

Group analysis and discussion of a selection of academic texts, in which metadiscourse devices will be identified and classified.

Presentation of a 3,000 word essay: last day of the second semester

Home

Learning outcomes that define this course

The student, in order to pass the course, will have to show her/his competence in the following skills:

- 1: The student can recognize and identify the most relevant metadiscourse devices available to the academic writer and their function in several academic texts.

- 2:** The student is capable of elaborating hypotheses about the way metadiscourse devices have been used in a corpus of English academic texts and of validating such hypotheses using a specific analytical method.
- 3:** The student is familiar with the differences in the use of metadiscourse devices in various academic genres in English and Spanish and is able to interpret such differences from different theoretical perspectives.
- 4:** The student can appropriately use metadiscourse devices in research articles, and is aware of the effects metadiscourse provokes on the reader, that is, of the way writers project their authorship and the type of interaction created between writer and reader.

Introduction

Brief presentation of the course

The main aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the most relevant metadiscourse devices that characterize written academic discourse. Students need be familiar with metadiscourse features in order to improve their own performance in academic writing. Therefore, this course provides students with the discursive bases that contribute to improve students' competences as far as the draft and the interpretation of academic texts are concerned in their future professional and/or research career.

Competences

General aims of the course

The expected results of the course respond to the following general aims

The main aim of this course is to provide students with an introduction to the most relevant metadiscourse devices that characterize written academic discourse and by means of which academic writers lead readers through the text and interact with them. The knowledge of such devices will allow students to recognize and identify the use of those devices in other academics' written production and use them in a critical manner in their own academic writing.

The specific aims of this course are the following:

- a) Familiarise students with the main taxonomies and functions of metadiscourse devices available to academic writers.
- b) Help students elaborate hypotheses about the way metadiscourse devices have been used in a corpus of English academic texts.
- c) Make students aware of the differences in the use of metadiscourse devices in research articles in English and Spanish.
- d) Improve the students' ability to use devices appropriately in research articles, being aware of the effects metadiscourse provokes on the reader, the way writers project their authorship and the type of interaction created between writer and reader.

Context/Importance of the course for the master degree

This course introduces students to the analysis of written academic discourse through the study and exploration of metadiscourse devices in English. Thus, it contributes to increase the students' competences to draft and interpret texts in their future professional and/or research career.

After completing the course, the student will be competent in the following skills:

- 1:**
1. Developing and applying original ideas in a professional as well as in a research context.

2. Handling complex information and applying the proper methodology and theoretical approach.
3. Understanding and applying acquired knowledge to solve problems related to a research context.

Once acquired the required critical and methodological skills, students are expected to possess the ability to carry out a piece of research in an autonomous way, in clear and appropriate English, aimed at both specialized and non-specialized audiences.

Relevance of the skills acquired in the course

Firstly, the learning results in this course will allow students to conduct research in English Studies. More specifically, the methodology and the theoretical background acquired in the course will provide students with the tools needed to analyze metadiscourse in written academic texts, which will allow them to interpret those texts appropriately. Moreover, such critical knowledge will allow them to write their own academic texts, taking into account the proper rhetoric and discursive features, using the English language in a clear and appropriate way. Thus, they will manage to project their authorship and interact with their readers in a way which is adequate to the rhetoric conventions specific of academic genres. Finally, the ability students are going to develop to identify metadiscourse features both in English and Spanish will allow them to be alert to avoid interferences and transferences between their native language and English, which is the lingua franca in which scientific knowledge is disseminated internationally.

Evaluation

Assessment tasks

The student will prove that he/she has achieved the expected learning results by means of the following assessment tasks:

- 1: Throughout the course students will carry out a series of learning activities mainly based on the analysis and discussion of theoretical aspects of the most relevant typologies and functions of metadiscourse devices in written academic English. These learning activities will entail to write short critical essays and make oral presentations for the teachers to be able to assess the students' appropriate learning progress. The aim of these learning activities is to familiarize students with the main rhetorical devices they can make use of to write and interpret academic texts in English. These tasks will help students acquire the competences needed to analyze metadiscourse in academic texts in a critical way as well as to draft their own texts, and will show that students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2 and 3. These activities will be assessed following the assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. The activities will be graded from 0 to 10 and represent 10% of the final grade of the student in this course.

Once metadiscourse taxonomies and functions are presented, students will be requested to write a 3,000 word essay in appropriate academic English. They should choose one or several analytical features among all the course contents, choose or select a corpus of academic texts and elaborate basic research questions such as the starting hypothesis and the relevant bibliography. All these aspects will become the discussion points of the last sessions in the course with the aim to contribute to the achievement of one of the main objectives in the course: to handle complex information and apply the methodology and theoretical frameworks presented. It is expected that throughout the drafting of the text and, most importantly, through the previous methodological research approach students will show that they have assimilated metadiscourse and its rhetorical functions, and that they have achieved all the objectives set in the course. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10 and this grade represents 90% of the final score of the student in the subject. A pass mark in the essay is a sine qua non condition to pass the subject.

This 3,000 word essay will comply with the requirements specified in the "Guidelines for preparing the essay".

- 1: These assessment tasks are meant especially for blended learning, or students who have not taken the regular exams and have to resit them in successive years. Basically, the tasks are of the same type as the exercises the rest of the students have been doing during the course, since these tasks are directly related to

the expected learning results of the course. However, in the case of blended learning, failure to attend practical classroom sessions will be compensated for through the writing of short essays the corresponding compulsory readings of the course. Students who have failed the course will be asked to write a certain number of short essays consisting on the critical comment of a selection of compulsory readings made by the teachers.

The assessment tasks will take place in a single day (see time table at the home page) and will be the following:

Assessment task 1

Learning activities. The student will analyze the most relevant aspects and functions of metadiscourse devices in English, as introduced by the teachers, and will discuss in written form about their theoretical and applied aspects. The aim of these activities is to familiarize students with the main rhetorical mechanisms they have at their disposal for the creation and interpretation of academic texts in English. It is also intended to follow up the students' progress in blended learning. These activities will also entail the draft of short critical essays and oral presentations with the aim to assess the students' learning progress. These tasks will show whether students have achieved learning objectives 1, 2 and 3. These activities will be assessed following the assessment criteria and the established level of exigency. The activities will be graded from 0 to 10 and represent 10 % of the final grade of the student in this course.

Assessment task 2

3,000 word essay in which students will elaborate on one or several aspects of the course contents written in appropriate academic English. It is expected that throughout the drafting of the text and, most importantly, through the previous methodological research approach students will show that they have assimilated metadiscourse and its rhetorical functions, and that they have achieved all the objectives set in the course. This essay will be graded from 0 to 10 and this grade represents 90% of the final score of the student in the subject. A pass mark in the essay is a sine qua non condition to pass the subject.

This 3,000 word essay will comply with the requirements specified in the "Guidelines for preparing the essay".

1: Assessment criteria

Definition of key concepts. Initial hypothesis. Use of a theoretical framework and a methodology. Use of primary sources. Literature review. Argumentation and conclusions = 70%

Independence, originality and critical examination = 10%

Information organization structure of the essay. Layout of the text. Accuracy in the use of language and appropriateness of style = 20%

1: Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this subject is based on

This course has been designed to train researchers in applied linguistics, and more specifically, in the study of metadiscourse devices in written academic discourse. For this reason, the activities proposed (the analysis of written academic texts in English as lingua franca) are aimed at the application of the most relevant metadiscourse taxonomies to selections or corpus of English academic texts, representative of the most common genres, mainly the research article and the abstract. Thus, the course is organized in three stages: 1) Presentation and learning of the most relevant metadiscourse taxonomies and of the functions metadiscourse fulfills in written academic texts; 2) application of the concepts learnt to the analysis and discussion of a selection of texts in group sessions; 3) writing of an individual essay about one or several aspects of the course contents, which implies the use and application of the metadiscourse framework and the analytical methodology introduced in class.

Learning activities

The program offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities

Seminars on "Metadiscourse resources in English academic texts" (30 hours/20 sessions, 1,2 credits). Onsite.

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing and exploring the main metadiscourse frameworks and the rhetorical functions those devices fulfill.

Classroom activities (30 hours/20 sessions, 1,2 credits). Onsite.

Classroom activities will consist in the identification of the metadiscourse devices introduced and of the corresponding rhetorical features in written academic texts. These activities will be discussed individually or in groups.

Individual and group tasks (40 hours, 1,6 credits). Onsite.

These activities consist in the metadiscourse analysis of a selection of written academic texts from the most representative genres.

Tutorial activities (25 hours, 1,0 credits). Onsite.

The aim of these activities is the student's individual reflection and discussion with the teachers of the problems found in the learning development and in the application of the contents learned in the course to the drafting of the required essay.

Private study (62,5 hours, 2,5 credits).

Reference documents

Guidelines for preparing the essay and participating in seminars

The students may find it useful to follow the following guidelines:

"Documento de referencia para la elaboración del ensayo"/"Guidelines for writing the essay"

1. Define appropriate key concepts and apply them appropriately to the field of research.
2. Prepare the literature review (i.e. what other scholars have stated about the topic of the essay, or about related topics). Make sure that the literature review is sufficient in scope and relevant regarding the topic under investigation.
3. Define a thesis statement / Define the research questions.
4. State and justify the theoretical framework.
5. Define clearly the analytical categories (where appropriate, indicating overlapping or problematisation of those categories).
6. Describe the analytical methodology used for the study of the topic of the essay.
7. Provide an effective argument (factual evidence, exemplification, illustration, citations, etc.) in order to make convincing claims.
8. State a conclusion in accordance with your arguments and relate it to a wider context.
9. Show independence in reading and researching, originality and critical examination.
10. Follow the information and style conventions of the subdisciplinary field (literature, film studies, cultural studies or linguistics).

"Documento de referencia para el desarrollo de los seminarios teóricos y analíticos"/"Guidelines for the development of theoretical and analytical seminars"

1. The theoretical part of the seminar, imparted by the teacher, will provide an active learning environment in which students can develop the ability to read/view/analyze critically and conceptually, and therefore to speak and write in the classroom.
2. The seminar will provide general introductions to theoretical frameworks or an application of a given research methodology/framework to a selection of texts/films.
3. Students should bring to the seminar a draft or notes on the text or film under analysis and participate actively in the classroom discussion.
4. Questions can be posed to improve the quality of discussion.
5. Assignment of formal presentations and critical comment may also be requested for stimulating discussion.

(Adapted from www.oid.ucla.edu/students/cutf/cutfguidelines.doc)

Activities and resources

Course methodology

The learning process that has been designed for this course is based on the following activities:

This course has been designed to train researchers in applied linguistics, and more specifically, in the study of metadiscourse devices in written academic discourse. For this reason, the activities proposed (the analysis of written academic texts in English as lingua franca) are aimed at the application of the most relevant metadiscourse taxonomies to selections or corpus of English academic texts, representative of the most common genres, mainly the research article and the abstract. Thus, the course is organized in three stages: 1) Presentation and learning of the most relevant metadiscourse taxonomies and of the functions metadiscourse fulfills in written academic texts; 2) application of the concepts learnt to the analysis and discussion of a selection of texts in group sessions; 3) writing of an individual essay about one or several aspects of the course contents, which implies the use and application of the metadiscourse framework and the analytical methodology introduced in class.

Outline of the Programme

The programme offered to the students to help them achieve the learning results includes the following activities :

- 1:** Seminars on “Metadiscourse resources in English academic texts” (30 hours/20 sessions, 1,2 credits). Onsite.

Theoretical and analytical seminars aimed at introducing and exploring the main metadiscourse frameworks and the rhetorical functions those devices fulfill.
- 2:** Classroom activities (30 hours/20 sessions, 1,2 credits). Onsite.

Classroom activities will consist in the identification of the metadiscourse devices introduced and of the corresponding rhetorical features in written academic texts. These activities will be discussed individually or in groups.
- 3:** Individual and group tasks (40 hours, 1,6 credits). Onsite.

These activities consist in the metadiscourse analysis of a selection of written academic texts from the most representative genres.
- 4:** Tutorial activities (25 hours, 1,0 credits). Onsite.

The aim of these activities is the student’s individual reflection and discussion with the teachers of the problems found in the learning development and in the application of the contents learned in the course to the drafting of the required essay.
- 5:** Private study (62,5 hours, 2,5 credits).

Course planning

Calendar of actual sessions and presentation of works

Course planning for onsite sessions

Dr. Ignacio Vázquez Orta

Week 1 (sessions 1 and 2): Introduction and overview of academic discourse analysis.

Week 2 (Sessions 3 and 4): Introduction to theoretical frameworks: genre studies, corpus studies and intercultural rhetoric. An application to EAP.

Week 3 (Sessions 5 and 6): An introduction to metadiscourse. Definitions and taxonomies

Week 4 (Sessions 7 and 8): On metadiscourse: Vandepol's model.

Week 5 (Sessions 9 and 10): On metadiscourse: Hyland's model (2005).

Week 6 (Sessions 11 and 12): Introducing interactive metadiscourse: types and functions.

Week 7 (Sessions 13 and 14): On interactive metadiscourse: Transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses.

Week 8 (Sessions 15 and 16): Introducing interactional metadiscourse: types and functions.

Week 9 (Sessions 17 and 18): On interactional metadiscourse: Hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions.

Dr. Rosa Lorés Sanz

Week 10 (Sessions 19 and 20): The practical view I: an intercultural (contrastive) approach to the RA in the humanities (English versus Spanish): (I)

Week 11 (Sessions 21 and 22): The practical view I: an intercultural (contrastive) approach to the RA in the humanities (English versus Spanish): (II)

Week 12 (Sessions 23 and 24): The practical view II: an interdisciplinary approach to the RA in English (soft vs hard disciplines). (I)

Week 13 (Sessions 25 and 26): The practical view II: an interdisciplinary approach to the RA in English (soft vs hard disciplines). (II)

Week 14 (Sessions 27 and 28): Further explorations: Metadiscourse in abstracts, book reviews and other (minor) academic genres.

Week 15 (Sessions 29 and 30): Further explorations: the intergeneric contrast. RAs vs abstracts.

Presentation of assignments

Assignment 1a Perspectives on metadiscourse: models and frameworks. Differences and similarities.

or

Assignment 1b Interactive and interactional metadiscourse. Applications to the RA.

Assignment 2a. The intercultural approach to the study of metadiscourse.

or

Assignment 2b. The interdisciplinary approach to the study of metadiscourse..

Course Syllabus and Bibliography

Course Syllabus

1: Course syllabus

1. Introduction: a theoretical approach to the concept of metadiscourse
 - a) Theoretical frameworks: genre studies, corpus studies and intercultural rhetoric. An application to EAP.
 - b) Metadiscourse: from Vande Kopple to Hyland. Definitions and taxonomies.
 2. Interactive and interactional metadiscourse: from types to functions.
 - c) Interactive metadiscourse: types and functions. Transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses.
 - d) Interactional metadiscourse: types and functions. Hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions
 3. The practical view: an intercultural and interdisciplinary approach.
 - e) The practical view I: an intercultural (contrastive) approach to the RA in the Humanities (English versus Spanish).
 - f) The practical view II: an interdisciplinary approach to the RA in English.
- Further explorations: metadiscourse in abstracts, book reviews and other academic genres

Bibliography

1: Bibliography and supplementary resources

- a) Compulsory Readings

Ädel, Annelie. 2005. "On the boundaries between evaluation and metadiscourse". In Tognini-Bonelli, E. and G. Del Lungo Camiciotti (eds). *Strategies in Academic Discourse*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins: 153-162.

Atkinson, Dwight. 2004. "Contrasting rhetorics/contrasting cultures: Why contrastive rhetoric needs a better conceptualization of culture" *Journal of English for Academic Purposes* (3): 277-289.

Hyland, Ken. 2000. *Disciplinary discourses: social interactions in academic writing*. London: Longman.

Hyland, Ken. 2005. *Metadiscourse*. London: Continuum.

Hyland, Ken and Polly Tse. 2004. "Metadiscourse in academic writing: A reappraisal." *Applied Linguistics* 25 (2): 156-177.

Markkanen, Raija, Margaret S. Steffensen and Avon Crismore. 1993. "Quantitative contrastive study of metadiscourse. Problems in design and analysis of data." *Papers and Studies in Contrastive Linguistics* 23: 137-151.

Mauranen, A. 1993. *Cultural differences in academic rhetoric*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

McEnery, T. & A. Wilson. 2001. *Corpus Linguistics. An Introduction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Stubbs, M. 1996. *Text and Corpus Analysis*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Swales, J. 1990. *Genre analysis: English in academic and research settings*. Cambridge University Press: C.U.P.

Vande Kopple, William J. 1985. "Some exploratory discourse on metadiscourse." *College Composition and Communication* 36: 63-94.

b) Supplementary Readings

Breivega, K.R., T. Dahl and K. Fløttum. 2002. "Traces of self and others in research articles. a comparative pilot study of English, French and Norwegian research articles in medicine, economics and linguistics". *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 12(2): 218-239. Crismore, Avon, Raija Markkanen and Margaret S. Steffensen. 1993. "Metadiscourse in persuasive writing: A study of texts written by American and Finnish University students." *Written Communication* 10 (1): 39-71.

Dafouz Milne, Emma. 2003. "Metadiscourse revisited: A contrastive study of persuasive writing in professional discourse." *Estudios Ingleses de la Universidad Complutense* 11: 29-52.

Hyland, Ken. 1999. "Disciplinary discourses: Writer stance in research articles." In C.N. Candlin and K. Hyland. (eds.). *Writing: Texts, Processes and Practices*. London: Longman: 99-121.

Hyland, Ken. 2004. "Disciplinary interactions: Metadiscourse in L2 postgraduate writing." *Journal of Second Language Writing* 13 (2): 133-151.

Hyland, Ken. 2005. "Stance and engagement : a model of interaction in academia discourse". *Discourse Studies* vol. 7 (2): 173-192.

Markkanen, R. and H. Schröder. 1997. *Hedging and Discourse. Approaches to the Analysis of a Pragmatic Phenomenon in Academic Texts*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.

Salager-Meyer, F. 1994. "Hedges and textual communicative function in medical English written discourse". *English for Specific Purposes* 13(2): 149-170.

Swales, J. 2004. *Research genres: Exploration and Applications*. Cambridge: C.U.P.

Swales, J. and C. Feak. 2000. *English in today's research world. A writing guide*. Michigan: Michigan University Press.

Varttala, T. 1999. "Remarks on the communicative functions of hedging in popular scientific and specialist research articles on medicine". *English for Specific Purposes* 18(2): 177-200.

Vande Kopple, William J. 2002. "Metadiscourse, discourse and issues in composition and rhetoric." In Barton, Ellen and Gail Stygall (eds.). *Discourse Studies in Composition*. New Jersey: Hampton Press: 91-113.

Ventola, E. and A. Mauranen (eds.). 1996. *Academic writing: intercultural and textual issues*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

E-learning platform:

Moodle Universidad de Zaragoza

<http://moodle.unizar.es/>

In this electronic platform for virtual learning students will be provided with the course contents and bibliographical resources. They will also be able to carry out their learning tasks online.

Bibliographic references of the recommended readings