



Interpersonal Metadiscourse Markers in Opinion Articles: A Study of Texts Written by Indonesian Writers

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Abstract

Writers can apply interpersonal metadiscourse markers to encode an interaction and build a relationship with their readers. In some particular genres, such as newspaper discourse, they can even be used as means of attaining persuasive goals. Initiated by the idea, the present writer attempts to explore the use of interpersonal metadiscourse markers in Indonesian newspaper opinion articles. This present study aims to investigate interpersonal metadiscourse categories and subcategories applied and most predominantly occurring in the type of newspaper article. For the data, eleven selected articles of an Indonesian newspaper were taken to analyze by using Dafouz's (2008) classification of interpersonal metadiscourse markers. Results reveal that interpersonal metadiscourse categories (hedges, certainty markers, attributors, attitude markers, and commentaries) and subcategories (epistemic verbs, probability adverbs, deontic verbs, attitudinal adverbs, attitudinal adjectives, cognitive verbs, rhetorical questions, inclusive expressions, personalizations, and asides) were used in Indonesian opinion articles. It is also found that attitude markers and two subcategories, which are deontic and epistemic verbs, are most frequently present in the texts.

Keywords: Interpersonal metadiscourse markers, newspaper discourse, Indonesian newspaper, opinion articles

1. Introduction

Newspaper is one of the most popular written discourses in all over the world. It has already become a very important public media having a wide range of audience for a long time because of its significant role in serving people information related to their world. Even if nearly a decade of massive transition from paper use to paperless or digital era indicated by the occurrence of new media such as internet, especially in Indonesia, it never really loses its loyal readers. People in Indonesia, mostly the middle class, could never lose their interest in newspaper since they consider that the low-cost source of information is easy to carry and able to read for many times, yet still serves more in-depth information than the other media give (Kompas Center for Research and Developing 2012 survey).

As one of public sources of information, newspaper generally offers two kinds of text type, namely editorial and opinion article or column. Both of them have special characteristics. On one hand, they have similarity on serving topics which is "of particular societal importance at the time of publication" (Le, 2004, p. 688). On the other hand, the two kinds of newspaper text type also have some differences. While editorials are normally written by reporters and editorialists and represent the position of the newspaper, opinion articles are usually written by experts and do not reflect official viewpoint of the newspaper. Because of this characteristic, opinion article is regarded as an adequate example of persuasive writing in all countries setting standards for written persuasion (Connor, 1996).

In line with the argument, van Dijk (1988) proposes opinion article as one of subgenres of persuasive text aiming to persuade and convince the readers through the writing. Considering the purpose, it can be concluded then that the success of writing this kind of text will be very much determined by writer's skill in balancing between giving information and persuading the readers. A writer should have not only excellent skill in organizing ideas and arguments in order to shape an attracting content but also outstanding ability to build relationship and emotional ties with the readers. The better a writer interacts with readers, the easier he or she talks to them and attains persuasive goals.

One of linguistic features which can be applied to construct a good rapport with audience in text is interpersonal metadiscourse. This feature is closely related to persuasive writing since it specifically explores interpersonal relationship and interaction between addresser and addressee. Thus, interpersonal metadiscourse markers will be easy to find in persuasive text, especially opinion article.