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Metadiscourse Training: Does a Revised Introduction to Metatext Elements Improve EFL Learners' Skills in Academic Lectures Comprehension and Production?

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Abstract: Since metatext or metadiscourse is a major feature of the ways in which we communicate in a range of genres and settings, many scholars have conducted studies on the notion of this knowledge from different perspectives. Following such studies the present study investigated the impact of teaching metadiscourse on the Iranian EFL learners' ability to comprehend and deliver academic lectures. To achieve these purposes 54 homogeneous subjects were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups. The two groups were subjected to exactly the same procedures except that the control group did not receive any treatment. Prior to the treatment, both groups sat for a pretest on academic lecture comprehension, which was piloted in advance. Moreover, both groups were also pretested on their ability to deliver academic lectures. After the treatment both groups sat for two posttests, one on academic lecture comprehension and one on delivering academic lectures. The results of the t-test run to compare the gain scores of the control and experimental groups on comprehending academic lectures revealed that there was a significant difference between the two groups gain scores and thus, the treatment proved to have a significant impact on EFL learners' abilities for the production and comprehension of academic lectures. Similar results were found through t-test when the duration and number of words in lectures were taken into account, indicating that the experimental group used more discourse markers in their academic lectures due to the effect of the treatment. Finally, Chi-square analyses demonstrated that the experimental group significantly outperformed the control group with respect to the organization of their academic lectures in terms of including introduction and conclusion in their lectures.

Key words: metadiscourse, lectures discourse

1. Introduction

The general background against which this research has been conducted includes two major parts. The first part comprises the analysis of the effects of the awareness of metadiscourse on Iranian EFL learners' ability to comprehend academic lectures, in which the relation between discourse markers selection and lecturing styles is mainly considered. The second part refers to the research on the effects of using metadiscourse categories in delivering academic lectures and whether the use of such categories improves EFL learners' ability to produce

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more coherent, organized and interactive academic lectures.

1.1 Metadiscourse

The concept of metadiscourse refers to aspects of a text which explicitly organize the discourse, engage the audience and signal the writer's attitude. It reflects one way in which context and linguistic meaning are integrated to allow readers to arrive intended interpretations, and it provides writers with a means of constructing appropriate context and alluding to shared disciplinary assumptions. The study of academic metadiscourse can therefore offer insights into our understanding of this concept and illuminate an important dimension of rhetorical variation among disciplinary communities

This concept has traditionally focused on the written texts (Meyer et al., 1980; Schiffrin, 1980; Crismore, 1998/1999; Vande Kopple, 1985; Hyland, 1998/2004). Different classifications have been proposed, most of them sharing a functional, Hallidayian approach in which metadiscourse is divided into textual and interpersonal items. In studies such as the ones by Hyland (1998/1999) and Crismore (1984/1989) emphasis is on the facilitating role of metadiscourse elements, and it has maintained that "metadiscourse is known to be an effective technique for improving writing and enhancing critical reading, and a means to render textbooks more considerate and reader-friendly" (Hyland, 1998, p. 438).

While several studies have been conducted on the notion of metadiscourse and its effect on reading and writing skills, little has been said regarding the role of this knowledge in listening and speaking skills especially in EFL/ESL academic settings.

1.2 Hyland's Model of Metadiscourse Elements

The most comprehensive and rather simple classification of metadiscourse elements is the one proposed by Hyland. This classification is built on three key principles (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 159):

(1) Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse.

(2) The term "metadiscourse" refers to those aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions.

(3) Metadiscourse distinguishes relations which are external to the text from those that are internal.

Hyland (2004, p. 133) classifies metadiscourse categories into two major parts: a) Textual metadiscourse or interactive resources. They are devices that allow the recovery of the writer's intention by explicitly establishing preferred interpretations of propositional meanings. They enable readers to recover an interpretation consistent with their epistemological understandings and discipline-specific rhetorical expectations in terms of textual coherence, intertextuality and assistance with decoding ideational material. These resources include transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. b) Interpersonal metadiscourse or interactional resources. They alert to the author's perspective toward both the propositional information and the readers themselves, thus contributing to the writer-reader relationship and anticipating the subjective negatability of statements. Such resources include hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions.

1.3 Lecture Discourse

Academic lecture, as one type of academic discourse, is an important part of most university fields worldwide. Although lecture discourse has been conventionally known to be of a monological nature and traditionally a lecture has been considered as an institutionalized extended holding of the floor in which one speaker imparts his/her view on a subject using a slightly impersonal view (Goffman, 1981, cited in Fortanet, 2005, p. 161), it is moving toward more interactive procedures. Thus, the ability to comprehend and deliver

academic lectures is an important requirement for university students (Flowerdew & Miller, 1996), and the academic EFL context in Iran is no exception.

1.4 Research Questions

In the light of objectives mentioned earlier, the following research questions were posed, including two major questions followed by four minor questions:

(1) Does teaching metadiscourse have any significant impact on EFL learners' ability to comprehend academic lectures?

(2) Does teaching metadiscourse have any significant impact on EFL learners' ability to deliver academic lectures?

(3) Does teaching metadiscourse have any significant impact on the use of discourse markers by EFL learners in terms of the duration of their lectures?

(4) Does teaching metadiscourse have any significant impact on the use of discourse markers by EFL learners in terms of the total number of the words in their lectures?

(5) Does teaching metadiscourse have any significant impact on EFL learners' ability to develop introduction in their academic lectures?

(6) Does teaching metadicourse have any significant impact on EFL learners' ability to develop conclusion in their academic lectures?

2. Method

2.1 Participants

The final homogeneous sample of this study consisted of 54 students who were then divided randomly into the experimental and control groups.

2.2 Instrumentation

On the whole, four different instruments were used in this study: one general language proficiency test (TOEFL) for homogenizing the subjects, one academic lectures listening comprehending used twice as pretest and posttest, and a pretest and a posttest on delivering academic lectures.

To measure the impact of the treatment process which was in the form of teaching metadiscourse on the learners' ability to comprehend academic lectures, students were administered two listening comprehension tests which included tape recorded lectures followed by multiple choice questions, one as the pretest and the other as the posttest .

Moreover, in order to measure the impact of teaching metadiscourse on the learners' ability to deliver academic lectures, a pretest and posttest on academic lectures were administered. The pretest and posttest were in the form of two 15 minute lectures that subjects delivered. There was no interruption in their presentations and they were free in any kind of interaction they desired with the audience.

In order to rate the performance of the subjects in these two tests, Hyland (2004) and Vande Kopple's (1985) models of discourse markers were used. In order to rate the lectures delivered, first total number of words occurred in each lecture, duration of the lectures, and then frequency of occurrence of discourse markers including text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, epistemology markers, attitude markers, and commentary markers were measured.

2.3 Procedure

This research process began with piloting all tests intended to be used in the study. The preliminary steps were followed by the main experimental procedure.

Two procedures were followed in presenting the treatment to the subjects in the experimental group, one for the lecture comprehension phase, and the other for the lecture production phase. Before starting the treatment, listening comprehension pretest was administered, following which for the production phase, at the starting sessions all the subjects delivered a 15-minute lecture on predetermined topics as the pretest for delivering academic lectures.

During the treatment sessions the two Hyland (2004) and Vande Kopple's (1985) models of discourse markers were presented including some examples for each marker. Then, the transcription of the two lectures in the pretest were used as samples and the students were asked to manipulate the discourse marker models and revise the overall pattern of the two lectures by adding introduction and conclusion macro markers and also other micro inter-sentential markers (textual markers). They were also introduced with the interpersonal discourse markers that help them to have more interaction with their audience. At the end they were asked to consider all these discourse organizing and interactive markers in improving the patterns of their posttest lectures, reminding them how these markers make the styles of their lectures different. All lectures delivered in the pretest and posttest phases were recorded and transcribed. In order to rate the lectures delivered, first total number of words occurred in each lecture, duration of the lectures, and then frequency of occurrence of discourse markers including text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, epistemology markers, attitude markers, and commentary markers were measured. The final step in the experimental procedure was allotted to the listening comprehension posttest with the aim of examining any possible and important effect of the treatment on the subjects' ability to comprehend academic lectures. Similar procedures except the treatment phase were conducted in the control group.

2.4 Design

Although the subjects were not randomly selected, they were randomly assigned to the control and experimental groups; therefore, this study was conducted under the true-experimental pretestposttest design.

3. Data Analysis

Statistical procedures in the study included the descriptive analysis of scores obtained on the listening comprehension pretest and posttest, and the data elicited from lecture transcriptions in pretest and posttest. Analysis of the collected data was fulfilled through SPSS software.

In main procedure of data analysis descriptive statistics of listening comprehension pretest and posttest in both experimental and control groups were calculated. Then gain score of each group — the difference between the mean scores in pretest and posttest — were obtained and at the end T-test and Levene test were used on the obtained mean gain scores of the experimental and control groups.

A comparison was accomplished with a t-test, modified to accommodate the difference between two sample gain scores of means. By t-test administration between the gain scores of means in the experimental and control groups, it was shown that the obtained p value was not higher than 0.05.

Therefore, the first null hypothesis was rejected. To this end, the dependent variable — lecture comprehension ability was influenced by the independent variable — namely, teaching metadiscourse.

In lecture production phase, considering metadiscourse model which comprises 6 main parts, the frequency of occurrence for all examples of each marker were obtained in pretests and posttests of the two groups. Then mean score, median, variance, standard deviation, standard error, minimum, and maximum of frequency of occurrences for each discourse marker were calculated and the gain scores for mean of observations — i.e., the difference of mean scores between pretests and posttests of the two groups — were calculated.

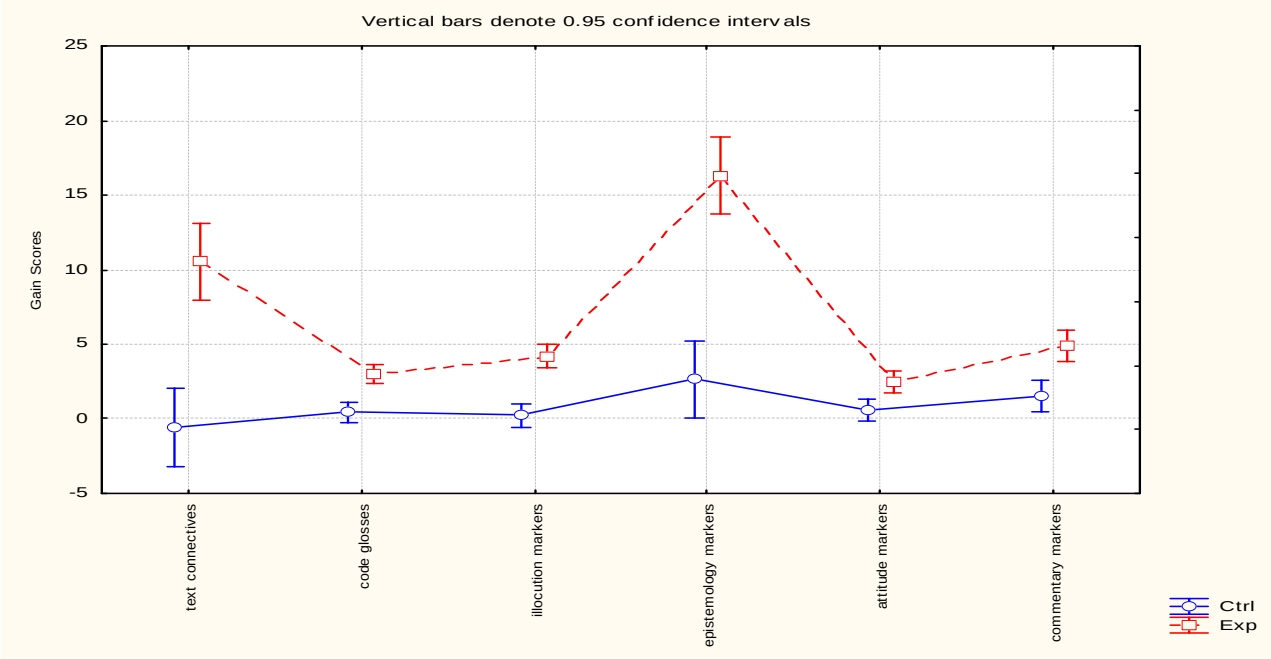

Figure 1 Mean of Discourse Markers Observation in Experimental and Control Group (Gain Scores)

Without considering number of words and duration of each lecture, the t-test and Levene test were administered on the data.

As shown in this table, before running the t-test, the homogeneity of variances needed to be checked by means of Levene test. In cases with homogeneous variances, like sequencing elements, the first *p* and t-value are accepted and in non-homogeneous cases, like reminders, 2-sided *p* values are considered as acceptable. Accordingly, students in the experimental group outperformed on text connectives, code glosses, illocution markers, attitude markers, commentary markers, and major epistemology markers.

So far, all the data were analyzed in the form of raw scores without considering the variables of the duration of the lecture and the number of words. As mentioned earlier, the number of words observed in each lecture and also the duration of each lecture in terms of seconds were computed so that all the previously stated analyses could be conducted again, this time taking these variables into consideration with the aim of disclosing any possible difference or vague point. Therefore, same analyses were repeated, this time including the duration and total number of words variables in both groups.

Table 1 T-test Results between Pretest and Posttest Gain Scores of Means in Experimental and Control Groups

Variable	T –tests; Grouping: Group (FinalData.sta) Group 1: Exp Group 2: Ctrl												
	Mean Exp	Mean Ctrl	t-value	df	p	T separ. var.est	df	P 2-sided	Std.Dev. Exp	Std.Dev. Ctrl	Levene F(1.df)	DfLevene	P Levene
1.text connectives-Gain	10.54	-0.56	6.07	49	0.00	6.07	49	0.00	6.49	6.56	0.73	49	0.40
a. sequencing elements-Gain	6.46	-0.88	4.11	49	0.00	4.11	48	0.00	6.07	6.67	0.69	49	0.41
b. reminders-Gain	1.85	0.20	5.09	49	0.00	5.16	34	0.00	1.49	0.65	11.71	49	0.00
c. topicalizers-Gain	2.23	0.12	6.53	49	0.00	6.63	31	0.00	1.53	0.53	28.12	49	0.00
2. code glosses-Gain	3.00	0.44	5.52	49	0.00	5.54	49	0.00	1.74	1.56	0.00	49	0.96
3. illocution markers-Gain	4.19	0.24	7.27	49	0.00	7.33	42	0.00	2.32	1.45	6.09	49	0.02
4. epistemology markers-Gain	16.31	2.64	7.54	49	0.00	7.61	40	0.00	7.89	4.55	9.53	49	0.00
A. modality markers-Gain	13.81	0.64	6.93	49	0.00	7.01	38	0.00	8.43	4.44	12.96	49	0.00
a. morphological system-Gain	1.27	0.24	3.51	49	0.00	3.54	42	0.00	1.25	0.78	5.10	49	0.03
b. adverbs-Gain	1.73	0.16	4.89	49	0.00	4.93	44	0.00	1.34	0.90	4.65	49	0.04
c. modal auxiliary verbs-Gain	4.69	-1.04	4.21	49	0.00	4.23	46	0.00	5.47	4.14	4.06	49	0.05
d. lexical verbs-Gain	1.65	0.24	3.80	49	0.00	3.84	38	0.00	1.65	0.88	6.84	49	0.01
e. verbs which show caution-Gain	1.88	0.48	2.67	49	0.01	2.69	43	0.01	2.23	1.42	3.83	49	0.06
f. phrases which show-Gain	1.85	0.20	4.40	49	0.00	4.48	29	0.00	1.80	0.50	31.32	49	0.00
g. clauses which show caution-Gain	0.38	0.36	0.11	49	0.91	0.11	48	0.91	.85	0.70	0.45	49	0.51
h. tag questions-Gain	0.35	0.00	3.08	49	0.00	3.14	25	0.00	0.56	0.00	75.04	49	0.00
B. evidentials-Gain	2.50	2.00	0.92	49	0.36	0.93	49	0.36	2.04	1.80	0.00	49	0.00
a. personal beliefs-Gain	0.42	1.00	-1.45	49	0.15	-1.46	49	0.15	1.50	1.32	0.01	49	0.96
b. induction based beliefs-Gain	0.46	0.16	1.61	49	0.11	1.63	40	0.11	0.81	0.47	6.84	49	0.91
c. sensory evidence-Gain	0.31	0.04	1.56	49	0.13	1.58	28	0.12	0.84	0.20	9.25	49	0.01
d. hearsay evidentials-Gain	1.31	0.80	1.70	49	0.10	1.70	49	0.10	1.05	1.08	0.03	49	0.87
e. deduction based beliefs-Gain	0.00	0.00		49					0.00	0.00			
5. attitude markers-Gain	2.46	0.56	3.64	49	0.00	3.70	31	0.00	2.49	0.82	5.86	49	0.02
a. adverbs-Gain	1.54	0.28	2.59	49	0.01	2.63	29	0.01	2.34	0.68	7.76	49	0.01
b. clauses-Gain	0.81	0.24	2.56	49	0.01	2.59	38	0.01	0.98	0.52	7.45	49	0.01
c. exclamatory remarks-Gain	0.12	0.04	0.99	49	0.33	1.00	42	0.32	0.33	0.20	4.25	49	0.04
6. commentary markers-Gain	4.88	1.56	4.58	49	0.00	4.62	43	3.06	3.06	1.98	3.74	49	0.06

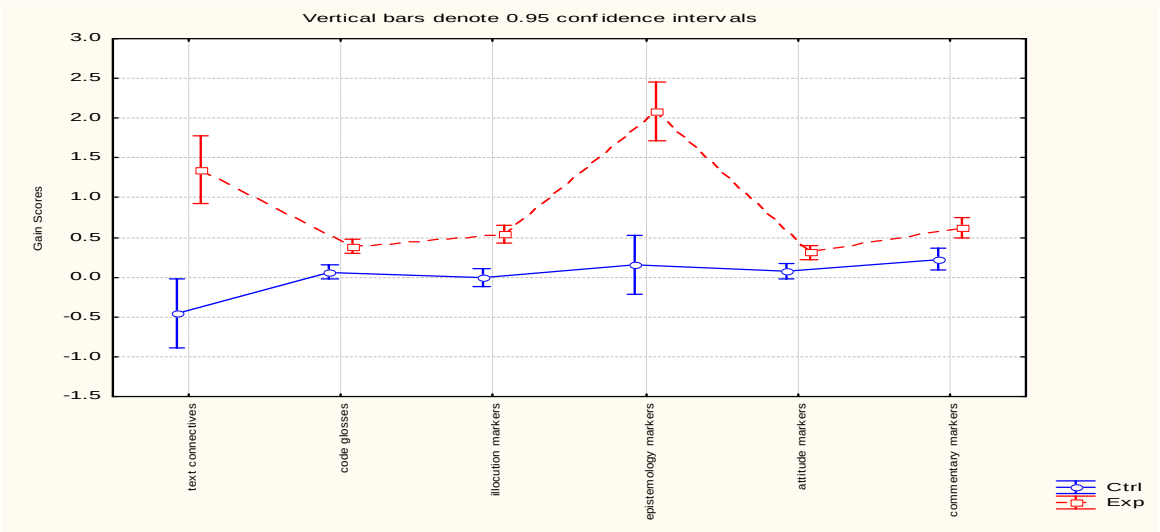

Figure 2 Gain Scores of Means for Discourse Markers Observation in Terms of Time Spent for Each Lecture Presentation

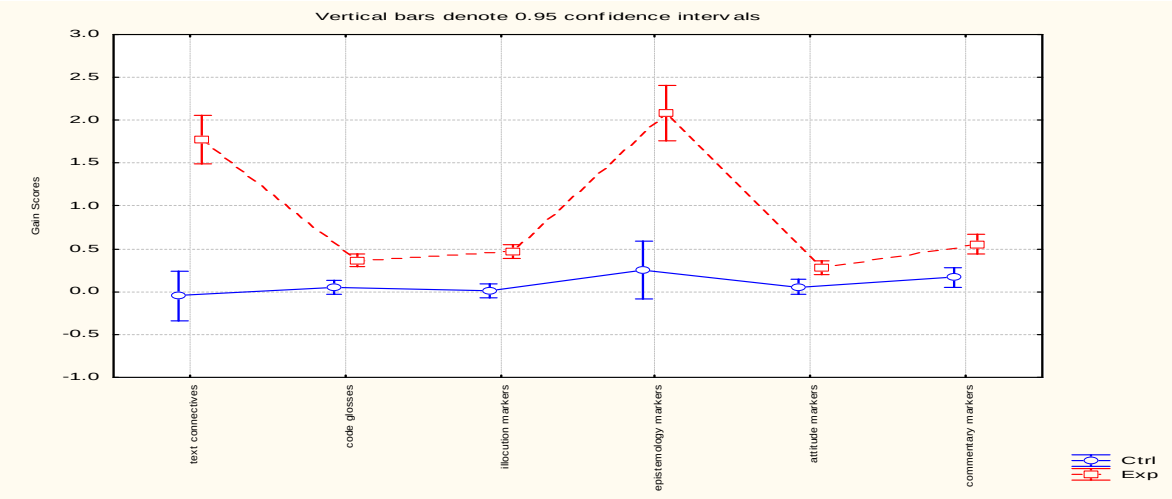

Figure 3 Gain Scores of Means for Discourse Markers Observation in Terms of Total Number of Words in Each Lecture Presentation

Table 2 T-test Results between Pre-test and Post-test Gain Scores of Means in Experimental and Control Groups (Based on Duration)

Variable	T –tests; Grouping: Group (Final Based On Time.sta) Group 1: Exp Group 2: Ctrl												
	Mean Exp	Mean Ctrl	t-value	df	p	T separ. var.est	df	P 2-sided	Std.Dev. Exp	Std.Dev. Ctrl	Levene F(1.df)	DfLevene	P Levene
1.text connectives-Gain	1.35	-0.46	6.02	49	0.00	5.98	43	0.00	0.88	1.24	2.48	49.00	0.12
a. sequencing elements-Gain	0.84	-0.50	4.47	49	0.00	4.44	40	0.00	0.81	1.28	2.45	49.00	0.12
b. reminders-Gain	0.23	0.02	5.09	49	0.00	5.14	40	0.00	0.18	0.10	7.74	49.00	0.01
c. topicalizers-Gain	0.28	0.02	6.75	49	0.00	6.84	33	0.00	0.18	0.07	24.57	49.00	0.00
2. code glosses-Gain	0.39	0.07	4.92	49	0.00	4.92	49	0.00	0.24	0.23	0.02	49.00	0.90
3. illocution markers-Gain	0.54	-0.01	6.70	49	0.00	6.75	44	0.00	0.34	0.23	3.58	49.00	0.06
4. epistemology markers-Gain	2.09	0.16	7.42	49	0.00	7.47	44	0.00	1.08	0.74	4.96	49.00	0.03
A. modality markers-Gain	1.76	-0.11	6.70	49	0.00	6.75	44	0.00	1.17	0.77	6.29	49.00	0.02
a. morphological system-Gain	1.16	0.04	3.15	49	0.00	3.17	45	0.00	0.16	0.11	3.28	49.00	0.08
b. adverbs-Gain	0.22	0.02	5.09	49	0.00	5.13	43	0.00	0.17	0.11	6.54	49.00	0.01
c. modal auxiliary verbs-Gain	0.60	-0.33	4.40	49	0.00	4.40	49	0.00	0.75	0.76	0.02	49.00	0.89
d. lexical verbs-Gain	0.21	0.03	3.66	49	0.00	3.70	38	0.00	0.21	0.11	5.78	49.00	0.02
e. verbs which show caution-Gain	0.24	0.06	2.54	49	0.01	2.55	47	0.01	0.29	0.23	1.33	49.00	0.25
f. phrases which show-Gain	0.23	0.03	4.30	49	0.00	4.37	30	0.00	0.23	0.07	23.17	49.00	0.00
g. clauses which show caution-Gain	0.05	0.05	-0.15	49	0.88	-0.16	48	0.88	0.11	0.09	0.27	49.00	0.61
h. tag questions-Gain	0.04	0.00	3.14	49	0.00	3.21	25	0.00	0.07	.00	89.27	49.00	0.00
B. evidentials-Gain	0.33	0.27	0.82	49	0.42	0.82	48	0.42	0.28	0.24	0.01	49.00	0.94
a. personal beliefs-Gain	0.05	0.13	-1.43	49	0.16	-1.44	49	0.16	0.21	0.18	0.10	49.00	0.75
b. induction based beliefs-Gain	0.06	0.02	1.69	49	0.10	1.71	40	0.10	0.11	0.06	8.00	49.00	0.01
c. sensory evidence-Gain	0.04	0.01	1.47	49	0.15	1.49	28	0.15	0.12	0.03	7.82	49.00	0.01
d. hearsay evidentials-Gain	0.17	0.11	1.39	49	0.17	1.39	47	0.17	0.14	0.16	0.19	49.00	0.66
e. deduction based beliefs-Gain	0.00	0.00		49					0.00	0.00			
5. attitude markers-Gain	0.31	0.08	3.61	49	0.00	3.67	32	0.00	0.31	0.11	4.92	49.00	0.03
a. adverbs-Gain	0.19	0.04	2.59	49	0.01	2.63	30	0.01	0.29	0.09	6.88	49.00	0.01
b. clauses-Gain	0.10	0.03	2.45	49	0.02	2.48	41	0.02	0.13	0.07	5.61	49.00	0.02
c. exclamatory remarks-Gain	0.02	0.01	0.84	49	0.40	0.85	46	0.40	0.04	0.03	2.89	49.00	0.10
6. commentary markers-Gain	0.62	0.23	4.13	49	0.00	4.15	47	0.00	0.38	0.30	1.70	49.00	0.20

Although there existed some shades of difference, but the obtained results confirmed the previous analyses about more occurrence of text connectives and epistemology markers considering lectures duration.

Repeating the same analyses in terms of the total number of words in each lecture presentation reconfirmed the earlier results.

Another procedure in the study was the observation of pretest and posttest lectures by the researcher and checking the overall pattern and organization of them in terms of introduction, body, and conclusion.

To this end, the researcher compared the lectures of the control and experimental groups after the treatment with respect to the existence of introduction in their lectures as a feature of lecture organization. That is, those lectures which followed rules of discourse organization by having clear cut introductions were assigned number 1 and those which did not received number 0. In administering the Pearson Chi-square formula on the total results between the two groups the x^2 came out to be equal to 10.591, df = 4 and the *p* value equalled to 0.031571 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be inferred that the treatment had positive impact on the organization of the lectures in terms of containing introduction. Same process was conducted, this time focusing on the lectures conclusions. In administering the Pearson Chi-square formula on the total results between the two groups the x^2 came out to be equal to 48.547, df = 4 and the *p* value < 0.05. Therefore, the researcher was able to infer that the treatment had positive impact on the organization of the lectures in terms of containing conclusions.

Table 3 T-test Results between Pre-test and Post-test Gain Scores of Means in Experimental and Control Groups (Based on Total Number of Words in Each Lecture Presentation)

Variable	T-tests; Grouping: group (Final Based on Words.sta) Group 1: Exp Group 2: Ctrl												
	Mean Exp.	Mean Ctrl.	t-value	df	p	tsepar. var. est.	df	p 2-sided	Sed. Dev. Exp.	Sed. Dev. Ctrl.	Levene F(1,df)	dflevene	p levene
1. text connectives —gain	1.78	-0.05	9.15	49	0.00	9.09	44	0.00	0.59	0.82	3.09	49	0.09
a. Sequencing elements-gain	0.84	-0.50	4.47	49	0.00	7.15	39	0.00	0.51	0.85	5.11	49	0.03
b. Reminders—gain	0.20	0.02	5.48	49	0.00	5.56	34	0.00	0.15	0.07	10.49	49	0.00
c. topicalizers— gain	0.24	0.01	7.03	49	0.00	7.15	30	0.00	0.16	0.05	32.66	49	0.00
2. code glosses—gain	0.36	0.05	5.98	49	0.00	6.00	48	0.00	0.20	0.17	0.20	49	0.66
3. illocution makers —gain	0.47	0.01	7.92	49	0.00	7.97	45	0.00	0.24	0.17	4.45	49	0.04
4. epistemology makers — gain	2.09	0.25	7.89	49	0.00	7.98	38	0.00	1.04	0.53	10.17	49	0.00
A. modality makers — gain	1.78	0.05	7.31	49	0.00	7.40	37	0.00	1.07	0.52	12.41	49	0.00
a. morphological system — gain	0.14	0.03	3.16	49	0.00	3.20	40	0.00	0.16	0.09	4.07	49	0.05
b. adverbs — gain	0.20	0.01	5.48	49	0.00	5.55	37	0.00	0.15	0.08	12.61	49	0.00
c. modal auxiliary verbs — gain	0.75	-0.11	4.91	49	0.00	4.94	45	0.00	0.72	0.51	2.32	49	0.13
d. lexical verbs — gain	0.19	0.02	4.32	49	0.00	4.38	36	0.00	0.17	0.08	10.05	49	0.00
e. verbs which show caution — gain	0.22	0.04	3.22	49	0.00	3.25	42	0.00	0.23	0.15	4.31	49	0.04
f. phases which show caution — gain	0.21	0.02	4.40	49	0.00	4.48	28	0.00	0.21	0.05	28.58	49	0.00
g. clauses which show caution — gain	0.04	0.04	0.27	49	0.79	0.27	47	0.79	0.09	0.07	0.93	49	0.34
h. tag question — gain	0.04	0.00	3.09	49	0.00	3.16	25	0.00	0.06	0.00	77.89	49	0.00
B. evidentials— gain	0.31	0.20	1.63	49	0.11	1.64	43	0.11	0.28	0.18	0.83	49	0.37
a. personal beliefs — gain	0.07	0.10	-0.79	49	0.43	-0.80	43	0.43	0.20	0.13	0.44	49	0.51
b. induction based beliefs — gain	0.05	0.02	1.76	49	0.08	1.78	37	0.08	0.10	0.05	8.74	49	0.00
c. sensory evidence — gain	0.04	0.00	1.56	49	0.13	1.59	28	0.12	0.10	0.02	9.25	49	0.00
d. hearsay evidentials— gain	0.15	0.08	2.35	49	0.02	2.35	49	0.02	0.12	0.11	0.21	49	0.65
e. education based beliefs — gain	0.00	0.00		49					0.00	0.00			
5. attitude makes — gain	0.28	0.06	3.74	49	0.00	3.80	29	0.00	0.29	0.08	8.10	49	0.01
a. adverbs — gain	0.18	0.03	2.71	49	0.01	2.76	28	0.01	0.27	0.07	8.81	49	0.00
b. clauses — gain	0.09	0.02	2.91	49	0.01	2.95	34	0.01	0.11	0.05	10.13	49	0.00
c. exclamatory remarks — gain	0.01	0.01	0.75	49	0.46	0.75	48	0.46	0.03	0.03	2.18	49	0.15
d. commentary makers — gain	0.55	0.17	4.79	49	0.00	4.83	41	0.00	0.35	0.21	7.59	49	0.01

4. Conclusion and Pedagogical Implications

4.1 Conclusion

The quantitative investigations of the present study resulted into two major conclusions:

(1) Being aware of metadiscourse knowledge helped EFL learners to have better understanding of the academic lectures they listened to, in terms of their sequence and style.

(2) The speech production skills of Iranian EFL learners were also directly influenced by the treatment process- namely instruction of the major metadiscourse models. Having a detailed view on the obtained data, it is beneficial to consider that some of the discourse markers present in Vande Kopple and Hyland's models, including text connectives and epistemology markers had been used more than others by learners, showing the treatment was more effective in fostering the use of above mentioned discourse markers. On whole, the treatment process affected the participants lecture production abilities positively in that students produced more organized lectures in terms of having introduction and conclusion, and using more discourse markers which made their lectures more coherent.

4.2 Pedagogical Implications

Apart from those who are concerned with EFL research, most of the Iranian EFL learners at lower or upper levels of proficiency are not familiar with metadiscourse knowledge and to them it is really a vague and perplexing concept. It becomes even more complicated if being implemented in courses which focus on production and comprehension skills, since it deals with issues of ideology, presentation, and interaction with audiences. We may find there are lots of attempts in disclosing the impact of metadiscourse knowledge on making reading texts as well as various types of writings more and more coherent and reader friendly, yet the role of this knowledge in improving major skills being required in any language learning/teaching setting — namely speaking and listening comprehension skills — have received little attention and even to some extent have been ignored. The major purpose for which the researcher conducted the present study was providing a preliminary investigation to see whether this knowledge could be used in EFL/ESP courses with paying more attention on production and comprehension skills. Bringing the research findings in operational settings, it seems necessary to include metadiscourse markers, including textual and interpersonal ones in courses teaching speech production and listening comprehension skills, as well as those intended for writing and reading skills.

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