



HEDGES AS METADISOURSE IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH NEWSPAPER EDITORIALS: A CORPUS-BASED STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Hedges are uncertainty markers that writers use to soften and make a writer's uncertain about the contents. Hedges as metadiscourse in Pakistani English Newspaper Editorials (PENE) have been analysed. This is a corpus-based study. A corpus of 1000 editorials in Pakistani English Newspapers such as Dawn News (DN), The Express Tribune (TET), The News (TN) and The Frontier (TF) has been developed for this research study. 250 editorials from each newspaper has been taken from online sources. The aim of research is finding frequencies out of PENE, and its comparison of frequencies on the basis of *propositional* and *non-propositional* materials. The purpose of this study is interpreting hedges as metadiscourse in PENE. The present study has proposed a new extensive scheme of *hedges*. A model on *hedges* has been proposed after listing of previous models on *hedges*. The current study has categorized the proposed model into the *Expression of uncertainty*, *Conditional clauses*, and *Impersonal Expressions* and *Reported Speech*. The results have revealed that the most frequent markers of 'Hedges' are seen only in the corpus of The Frontier (TF). In conclusion, the writers create uncertainty and make the readers uncertain about their stance. The writers let the readers to decide and make their minds about the issue. This sort of attitude of the writers makes the readers to generalize the results.

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INTRODUCTION

Hedges are the metadiscourse markers (MMs) which create uncertainty and negativity in the proposition. The role of hedges has been viewed through metadiscourse analysis of PENE. Hyland (2005) sees hedges as:

Hedges are devices such as possible, might and perhaps, which indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition. Hedges emphasize the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position for negotiation.

Taking this account into consideration, this study has distinguished the difference between *propositional* and *non-propositional* markers.

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This study proposes a model on *hedges* after listing of already existing models. The brief detail of considered model studies has been given ahead. First, Boncea (2014) has discussed the *hedging* structures which are helpful in construction of politeness strategies and mitigation in order to assess assertion's truth value. Secondly, Švárová (2008) has conducted a study on *hedges* as politeness markers in spoken discourse. Next, Willamova (2005) has defined that the function of hedging device is as 'typically used to express: disagreement, reservation, refusal, suggestion, uncertainty and indecision'. Furthermore, Yazdani, Sharifi and Elyassi (2014) has classified *hedges* into epistemic verbs, probability adjectives and probability adverbs. This study has classified *hedges* model into three sub-categories: *expression of uncertainty*, *conditional clauses*, and *impersonal expressions* and *reported speech*. These sub-categories have been applied on PENE. In this connection, this study has developed a corpus of 1000 editorials from Pakistani English Newspapers: DN, TF, TET and TN. The distribution of editorials has been devised 250 from each newspaper as discussed earlier. The purpose of the current study has been fulfilled in order to

calculate the frequencies of MMs out of PENE. Calculating the metadiscourse features (MFs), this study has proposed a list of MMs after taking assistance from Hyland's book (2005): *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing* and online software: *Textinspector.com*. This study has also compared the numerical results under the glance of *propositional* and *non-propositional* markers out of PENE. Lastly, the observed MFs have been interpreted functionally. On both the quantitative and qualitative levels the present study has been conducted to probe into the following speculated research questions: 1) What are the frequencies of Hedges in PENE? 2) What are the functions of Hedges in PENE? 3) What are the similarities and differences of Hedges among the national editorials of Pakistan: DN, TET, TF, and TN? This study has answered the speculated questions in this research. In a nutshell, this study has been set as a platform for the future researchers and scholars. The methodology developed in this study will be a great source of assistance for conducting future works on metadiscourse. The analysed MFs may be observed in other languages, disciplines and cultures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The term *Hedges* has been studied by researchers through different glances finding its features. In this section, the studies which have been conducted already focused on cross-disciplinary bases viewed through *Hedge* devices. The research study on *Hedges* as a sub-category: interactional metadiscourse has been taken for the purpose of developing a model of *Hedges*. A number of studies have been considered for this study.

Supporting Studies to the Proposed Model: In the development of the new model, a detail of the following researches has helped in this research. The following studies have been enlisted ahead. First, Boncea (2014) discussed the *hedging* structures which were helpful in construction of politeness strategies and mitigation in order to assess assertion's truth value. He also elaborated the distribution of hedging in form of lexical and grammatical patterns as MFs mentioned in the developed model. This study has assisted in modeling a model on *hedges*. Secondly, a research study by Švárová (2008) was conducted on *hedges* as politeness markers in spoken discourse in Brno, Czech. He was of the view that the hedge functions not only conveying information of certain meanings, but also connecting interaction between people. He highlighted *hedging* devices based on Willamova's (2005) categories mentioned broadly in developed model. As Willamova defined, the functions of *hedging* devices were typically used to express: *disagreement, reservation, refusal, suggestion, uncertainty* and *indecision*.

These studies have supported in speculating research question no. 2. Another research study on *hedges* of interactional metadiscourse was taken for the developed model of metadiscourse. Yazdani *et al.* (2014), recently conducted a research on exploring hedges and boosters in 9/11 English front page news articles. He discussed further divisions of boosters and hedges in developed model. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, he presented numerical results by employing the latter method, while he concluded that journalists intentionally preferred to be conservative by engaging indirect strategies like adjectives and adverbs about the controversial issues 9/11. This study directly helped in developing a research question no.1 and 3.

A very broad study on metadiscourse was conducted in England by the Oskouei (2011) discussing the interactional variation in English and Persian. The researcher worked on explaining the *certainty* and *uncertainty* markers in Magazine editorials. The researcher also opened the distribution of attitude markers according to the analysis of the study. The researcher employed both quantitative and qualitative methods proving her study authentic and reliable for the readers. The researcher concluded that the use of interactional MFs by British and Persian editorialist reasonably varied because of different cultural backgrounds. British editorialists favoured the use of uncertainty markers. On the other hands, Iranian editorialists seemed in favour of the use of certainty markers. The said study was greatly in support of the current study.

Listing of Models for Developing a New Model: For the current study, the researcher has summed up multiple distributions of MFs which specifically have been established by the researchers in their previous studies. The researcher has figured out all of them as a parameter for analysis of the data. The detail has been above mentioned and the ultimate crux in the form of precise way has given below: After presenting a detail of taken models of the researchers, the study has established a model on hedges that has been practiced in the analysis. In conclusion of this section, this section has been devised intellectually after taking other researches as a part of the developed model. These studies have supported in the development of literature and research methodology.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Corpus Collection: The corpus of the present study has been developed after having 250 editorials from four Pakistani English newspapers such as Dawn News (DN), The Frontier (TF), The Express Tribune (TET) and The News (TN). These editorials have been extracted from online sources: Keeping in mind the aforementioned variable involved in the writing of the texts, namely topic, altogether a set of 1000 editorials has been chosen from four well-reputed Pakistani English newspapers: DN, TF, TET and TN. The corpora strength is given in the table below. In order to conduct data analysis, this study has proposed a model on *hedges* after evaluating the existing models as mentioned in table below. This developed model is based on qualitative component. It has covered hedges as a major category of MFs and its sub-categories: *Expression of uncertainty, Conditional clauses, and Impersonal Expressions* and *Reported Speech*. The detail of model has been given below. In order to analyse these sub-categories, a scheme of hedges as MFs has been proposed that has covered all MFs. This detail has been given below.

Formation of List of Hedges as Metadiscourse Markers: For conducting data analysis, the present study has proposed a list of hedges as MMs after borrowing from Hyland's (2005) book *Metadiscourse: Exploring Interaction in Writing* and online software: *Textinspector.com*. The taken devices of hedges from both sources have been merged and the duplicate markers have been ignored in developing the final list of hedges as MMs. The detail of hedges as MMs has been given below. The finalized list of Hedges has 107 MMs chosen for data analysis. The detail of hedge markers has been provided in Appendix. The frequencies of hedge markers have been counted and compared among the corpora as mentioned in table below. The numerical results are presented ahead.

Table 4.1. Listing of Models: Hedges

Hedge: (Milne, 2003)	Epistemic verbs	Grammatical Categories	Can, may, could, might		
	Probability		perhaps, probably		
Hedges: (Boncea, 2013)	Epistemic Expressions	Lexical Categories	It is likely that		
	Modal Auxiliaries	Epistemic Sense	may, can, could, might, would, should, must		
	Lexical-modal verbs	Speech Acts Verbs	appear, seem, also believe, suggest, assume, estimate, think, tend, argue, propose, indicate, speculate, I understand, suppose, as I believe		
	Epistemic: Adjective, Adverbial and Nominal phrases	Modal Adjectives	Epistemic: form predicate with the verb to be	probable, (it is) possible, un/likely	
		Modal Nouns	Epistemic certainty or doubt	claim, doubt, assumption, possibility, estimate, probability, likelihood, suggestion	
		Modal Adverbs	Epistemic functions	possibly, perhaps, probably, likely, practically, virtually, presumably, apparently	
	Approximates of degree, quantity, frequency and time	Adjectives	approximately, about, something somehow, between, some, kind of, often, sort of, a little bit, really, quite, a lot, much, somewhat, little, approximately, about, scarcely, roughly etc.		
		Adverbs			
	Discourse Epistemic Phrases	Indirect or hearsay	it has been said that, people say		
		Hesitation regarding the truth	to tell the truth, I dare say, I have a notion		
		High Degree of Certainty and Commitment	to our knowledge, upon my word, to be sure, it is view that, we feel that, I can tell you		
	if clauses	Uncertainly and Hypothetical Meanings	if anything...., if true...., should one...., Unless.... etc.		
	Negative Constructions	Litotes: Figure of Speech	not an ill-disposed		
	Compound and Multiple Hedging	Harmonic Combinations	should probably (medium modal harmony), must surely (strong modal harmony), may possibly (weak modal harmony)		
			Compound Hedge	modal auxiliary+ lexical verbs/ modal adverb	it would indicate that; It would seem/appear
Multiple Hedging		lexical verb followed by a reinforcing hedging adjective/ adverb Miss Smith is a very good sort of girl; and I should be happy to see her respectably settled. (a very good sort of girl, I should be happy)			
Hedges: (Yazdani et al. 2014)	Epistemic Verbs	appear, seem			
	Probability Adjectives	perhaps, probably, rather, maybe			
	Probability Adverbs	possibly, perhaps, probably, likely, practically, presumably, apparently, virtually			
Hedges: (Williamova, 2005)	Subjectivity Markers	Disagreement			
		Reservation			
		Refusal			
		Suggestion			
		Uncertainty			
		Indecision			
	Performative Hedge	Request			
		Suggestion			
		Apology			
		Disagreement			
	Pragmatic Idioms	maybe, please, perhaps, kindly			
	Clausal Mitigators	pseudoconditional: if-clauses	if you want to know, if you like, if you don't mind		
		but-clauses	but . . .		
	Downgrades	Sentential	just, just in case, a bit, a few, one thing, rather, scarcely, a little, more		
	Tentativizers	uncertainty, hesitation	I don't know, well		
Vagueness		sort of things, kind of			
Hedge on Politeness Maxims	Sentence adverbials	I must say, to tell you the truth, nothing personal, I'm afraid, unfortunately, you don't mean to tell me			
Hedge or Uncertainty Markers: (Oskour, 2011)	Expressions of Uncertainty	Modal verbs	can, may, might, could, would, must, should		
		Epistemic Verbs	Appear, seem		
		Probability Adverbs and Adjectives	perhaps, probably, rather, maybe		
		Epistemic Expressions	The likelihood is that, it is likely		
		Approximators	about, something around, almost		
		Auxiliary Modals	May		
	Conditional clauses	Verbal modals	It is possible		
		IF-clauses	If they fail to comply		
		Question forms	?		
		Passivisation	It is done		
	Impersonal Expressions and Reported Speech	Impersonal phrases	It is likely that		
		time-reference			
Impersonal Expressions and Reported Speech	Reporting verbs	Reporting Passives	reportedly		
	Impersonal Expressions	Impersonal statements	It is said		

NUMERICAL RESULTS

As for as numerical results are concerned, the list of hedge markers has been applied on PENE. The outcomes in frequencies have been noted and then compared among the corpora. The frequencies have been distributed on the basis of *propositional* and *non-propositional* markers. After having observed minutely, these counted frequencies have been decided whether these are *propositional* or *non-propositional*. The results have been presented in the form of *propositional* and *non-propositional* (metadiscoursal). The overall numerical results have been presented below. As above tabulated, the mutual results have been observed that all corpora have used hedges as MMs. In a nutshell, the excessive use of 'Hedges' as MMs is only seen in the corpus of The Frontier (TF) as compared to other corpora. Similarly, these results have been graphically presented in which both *propositional* and *non-propositional* markers' frequencies have been given above Figure 4.1. As far as results are concerned, it has been observed that all corpora have used hedges as *propositional* and *non-propositional* markers as MMs. The excessive use of hedges as *non-propositional* or MMs has been seen in the corpus of The Frontier (TF).

DISCUSSION

Hedges: Hedges refer to the uncertainty, possibility and negativity in the content. Hedges help the writer to create politeness, probability and ambiguity in order to pursue readers through his/her writing. In order to support the present study, the use of markers *hedges* expresses the reluctance of the writer to show the category of the propositional information (Hyland, 1996, 2010; Holmes, 1988), to allow the writers in order to show their knowledge in an intellectual way and to construct the dual authorial identity of 'humble servants' of their originators of new knowledge and disciplines (Myers, 1989, p. 4). The functions of hedges are expressed through MMs such as lexical verbs (e.g. appear, claim, suggest), epistemic modal verbs (e.g., may, might, could), nouns (e.g., possibility, likelihood), adverbs and adjectives (e.g., probably, plausible, perhaps), and other linguistic expressions (e.g., to some extent, in general). In the current study, hedges have been perceived as uncertainty markers that have been categorized into three sub-groups: *uncertainty expressions*, *conditional clauses*, and *impersonal expressions* and *reported speech*. Each sub-group is expressed and exemplified below:

Uncertainty Markers: Uncertainty markers show expressions which are helpful in conveying the writer's uncertainty about the content. In the same way, Milne (2003) practices an extensive grammatical categorization in order to make difference between MMs. The present study has focused on functional analysis as compared to grammatical analysis of metadiscourse. However, in order to deal the current problem-a sub-category has been proposed to cover the probability of an evidence through the examples given below:

Expressions of Uncertainty: The role of 'epistemic modality' is of great importance in indicating or signaling uncertainty. In different ways uncertainty can be expressed, such as using 'certain modal verb' is one of the ways to express uncertainty at what time they are employed to show tentativeness and possibility, e.g. can, could, may, might (see instances below).

Secondly, the use of 'epistemic verbs' may useful in constructing tentativeness and possibility by the author, e.g. appear, and seem (see instances below). Lastly, probability adjectives and adverbs such as probably, maybe, perhaps, rather and etc. are the means of expressing uncertainty. See examples below:

- 1) There **seems** to be an ever-present ruthlessness when it comes to the treatment of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. (The Express Tribune file no. 39)
- 2) The Taliban do not **appear** inclined towards either. (The Express Tribune file no. 19)

In an instances (1) and (2), the use of hedges *seems* and *appear* has been seen in this study. The hedges have been used to express the tentativeness and possibility at the writer's end in his/her writing. The editors bring into use hedges as MMs with parallel use of propositional markers in editorials, but the overabundance of hedges as MMs is seen in order to show the uncertainty of the editors about the current affairs. They let the readers to think personally and critically. Uncertainty expressions are perceived as modal adjectives and modal adverbs in this study. The above discussed examples, all are considered MMs because they show the uncertainty of the object regarding any current affair.

Modal Adjectives: The function of 'modal adjectives' shows the power of hedges when they are practiced epistemically reducing the strength of the nouns they are helpful in determining and forming a predicate with the help of verb to be: (it is probable/possible/likely/unlikely, and etc.). See examples below:

- 3) He was also the **probable** architect of the current spring offensive in Afghanistan that has seen scores dead and injured -- mostly civilians. (The Express Tribune file no. 98)
- 4) The figure is **somewhat** reduced from last year, when it was 66pc, but it nevertheless presents a serious problem in the sector, along with the reluctance of banks to move into private-sector lending. (Dawn News file no. 249)
- 5) GIVEN the increasing focus on Afghan refugees inside Pakistan, it is **often** forgotten by people here that this vulnerable group also finds itself displaced within its own borders. (Dawn News file no. 56)

In above mentioned examples, the use of *modal adjectives* is seen frequently in the corpora of editorials. The modal adjectives drag the attentions of the readers by injecting weak power to the nouns. The use of modal adjectives (i.e. probable) behaves epistemic ally and comes up before the noun (i.e. architect) in example (3). All above mentioned examples (4) and (5) show modal adjectives as MMs when they come up with helping verb but before the main verb. This kind of use of *epistemic modal adjectives* is used by the editors in order to get involved the readers with the help of soften tone. The editors very cleverly share the uncertain situation and matters with the readers.

Modal Adverbs: Modal adverbs as hedges show some degree of probability and tentativeness about the proposition what the author keeps it forward using *probability adverbs* such as *probably* and *apparently*. Under the category of met a discourse, such type of adverbs play a vital role in constructing

Table 4.2. List of Online Sources

No. of Newspapers	Online sources	No. of editorials
Dawn News	www.dawn.com/authors/2677/editorials	250
The Frontier	www.thefrontierpost.com/category/33/editorials	250
The Express Tribune	www.tribune.com.pk/author/79/editorials	250
The News	www.thenews.com.pk/print/category/editorials	250

Table 4.3. Corpora Length

No. of Newspapers	Token Words	Type Words
Dawn News	103,596	10,053
The Express Tribune	93,048	9,737
The Frontier	172,878	14,812
The News	103,860	9,633
Total Corpora Length	473,382	44,235

Table 4.4. Developed Model for this Study

Categories	Sub-categories
Hedge: Uncertainty Markers	Expressions of Uncertainty
	Impersonal Expressions and Reported Speech
	Conditional clauses
	Modal Adjectives Modal Adverbs Modal Auxiliaries Epistemic Verbs Approximators Modal Nouns Passivisation Discourse epistemic or evidential phrases Hesitation If-clauses but-clauses Question forms

Table 4.5. Formation of final lists of Hedges as Metadiscourse Markers

Category	Sub-Category	Textinspector.com	Ken Hyland's Book	Merged Markers
Interactional	Hedges	47	101	107

Table 4.6. Mutual Results of all Corpora

Category	Sub-Category	The Frontier		The Dawn		The Express Tribune		The News	
		Pro	Meta	Pro	Meta	Pro	Meta	Pro	Meta
Interactional Markers	Hedges	76	2,232	283	1,626	68	1,335	123	1,161

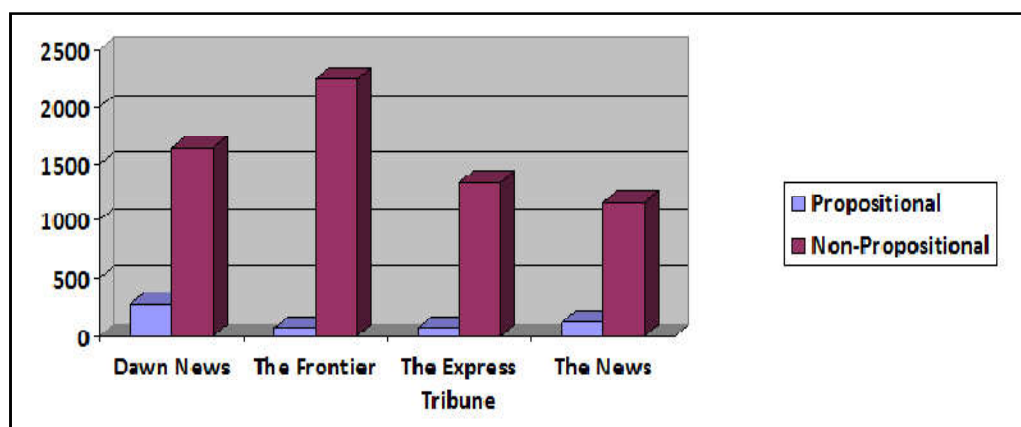


Figure 4.1. Graphical Representation of Frequencies of Hedges as Metadiscourse Markers

tentativeness on the behalf of the author. A type of adverbs of indefinite frequency is used by the author with the purpose of showing his/her likeness or wish to provide readers information in an exact way regarding the occurrence of an event in time. By using such adverbs, they can be helpful for the authors, preventing to provide exact statistical information. The following are examples below:

- 6) That program was launched in 1978 and will continue till 2050, and is **possibly** the largest ecological engineering project in the world today. (Dawn News file no. 224)
- 7) The **relatively** restrained reaction of the Afghan government appears to indicate that talks will restart soon. (Dawn News file no. 231)

All above taken instances, show an appropriate use of *epistemic modal verbs* in order to create uncertainty. The right place of *epistemic modal adverbs* as MMs are presented with examples (6) to (7). They are all considered as MMs because of right place in the sentences. The above mentioned examples represent the locations of MMs in the sentences. All corpora, what have been chosen for the current study show the distribution of propositional and MMs in editorials. Which after taking into account, they are manually and critically separated under the criteria of set methodology.

Modal Auxiliaries: Modal auxiliaries such as *can, could, may, might, would, should, and must* specifically are seen in form of modal verbs which show the attitude of the writer or speaker and assist them in order to express ideas in an indirect way. These modal verbs may act as *hedging* devices. Using these devices, the authors seem fuzzy about propositional content. As far as functions of *modal auxiliaries* are concerned, they display degree of tentativeness and hesitation on the part of the author or speaker for having complete accuracy of his/her statement. Therefore, they are considered to be *hedging* devices. The following are examples below:

8) *The Panama Papers could be only the tip of the iceberg. A two-year-old promise by the prime minister that he would put Indian Rs1.5 million from a separate tranche of retrieved money in everyone's account has lapsed. (Dawn News file no.18)*

9) *Maybe I am asking for too much from an establishment that is too occupied with looking busy and doing nothing. (Dawn News file no. 15)*

10) *Democracy ought to be about rules, systems and processes -- and an ironclad commitment to transparency. (Dawn News file no. 72)*

In above instances, the underlined words as *modal auxiliaries* behave epistemically. These markers are used to deliver an idea indirectly. They are all considered as MMs because of epistemic sense. For this study, all taken examples (9) to (10) show the use of MMs than propositional markers. The use of devices expresses the hesitation and tentativeness of the editors in their editorials. The use of all hedges as metadiscourse shows writer's stance in propositional material.

Epistemic Verbs

Epistemic verbs as speech act verbs perform functions such as *assuming, evaluating* or *doubting* as compare to merely describing using epistemic devices such as *seem, appear, assume, estimate, think, speculate* and etc. when these verbs work in epistemic senses they show the strong belief of the writer or speaker about the truth of propositional content. On the other hand, they function to express unwillingness of the writer or speaker to assure for understanding the existing issues as compared to personal opinion. The following are examples below:

11) *The city administration claims it is prepared for the heatwave, having set up numerous first response centres and other relief facilities. (Dawn News file no. 33)*

12) *It seems that seven officials of the Fata Development Authority, who had recently been kidnapped from South Waziristan, were also recovered in the same operation. (Dawn News file no. 130)*

In above mentioned examples, the editors have employed lexical verbs in their editorials because of showing the personal opinions on the behalf of propositional stuff. They are all considered as MMs. The use of lexical verbs as hedge devices in the above mentioned examples (11) to (12) shows the assumption of the editors who express through modal verbs (i.e. claims) the propositional material in the chosen corpora.

Approximators

Approximators as degree, frequency, quantity and time can happen in the form of adverbs and/or adjectives in order to weaken the meaning of the text they comprise such as *somehow, somewhat, much, about, little, roughly, scarcely* and etc. These *approximators* function as hedges for the purpose of highlighting the exact amount unknown or is unrelated, at what time the writer or speaker wishes to make undecided quantity fuzzy which are used. See examples below:

13) *Around 2,000 Pakistanis languish in Saudi jails, according to Justice Project Pakistan, subject to notorious judicial systems. (Dawn News file no. 4)*

In example (13), the use of *around* is used to tell uncertain figure and is showed as *approximator*. The editorialist has brought this *approximator* to weaken the complete and discrete figure in proposition. In conclusion, this type of marker as *approximator* has been categorized under *Expressions of Uncertainty*. This new category is covered under sub-category of *hedges*. This sub-category is coming under major category '*Interactional metadiscourse*'.

Modal Nouns

The functions of *modal nouns* are seen as in the forms of epistemic certainty and doubt: *claim, assumption, estimate, doubt, likelihood, suggestion, probability, possibility, etc.* See examples of the present study below:

14) *It is anybody's guess what game plan Finance Minister Ishaq Dar has for this feat. (Dawn News file no. 135)*

15) *The Rangers' claim that Ahmed had been brought alive to the hospital suffering from chest pains and had died after 25 minutes of admission stood in stark contrast to the hospital authorities' statement that the patient had "no pulse and no blood pressure" on arrival. (Dawn News file no. 150)*

In above mentioned instances, the practice of *modal nouns* has created doubt and uncertainty in order to present claiming by the editors.

They are all considered as MMs because they have shown *claiming, possibility* and *probability* in above mentioned examples (14) and (15). In the following examples, the use of *modal nouns* as MMs performs the editorialists' functions of doubt and personal opinions as well.

Impersonal Expressions

Impersonal expressions refer to uncertainty about the actual things. These expressions are used to ask and share general arguments in propositional material. According to Hyland (1994) and Markkanen and Schroden (1997), study some certain passive's forms (using reporting verbs) and impersonal expressions in the forms of *hedging* devices in the discipline of scientific writing. The present study has studied passives with

reporting verbs and impersonal phrases or statements. These expressions are taken as uncertainty markers come under the category of metadiscourse, because in which the writer's intention is taken as a way of expression in a discussion of ideas this purpose is to keep the writer's intent away where he accepts the responsibility for any considered claim by using ignorance about the mean of information being at 'on the safe side'. See examples below:

16) ***It is not possible*** to view this arms build-up across the border without deep concern. (Dawn News file no. 111)

17) It is ***unlikely*** that the next budget will break from this trend, and although the new revenue required for the next year is likely to be slightly lower than what it was last year... (Dawn News file no. 69)

In this current study, the use of *impersonal expressions* is practiced by the editors in their editorial's writing in order to expose the uncertainty and impersonal. This kind of passives and indirect expressions creates probability with not showing the source of information in propositional stuff. In above mentioned instances (16) and (17), the use of *impersonal expressions* and *passives* are considered as MMs. The location of *impersonal expressions* is seen mostly at the initial of the sentences.

Passivisation

Passivisation is a passive technique to create politeness and softening the tone in the content. In this study, the writers have practiced *passive forms* and *impersonal expressions* at what time they are uncertain of the factual mean of statement, or in other words, they practice such forms and expressions where they like to be in the safe zone and keep avoiding to disclose the source. Although, they may be uncertain about statements. This feature is marked under the category of *uncertainty markers* by given cases. See example below:

18) ***It is estimated*** that around two million cases remain pending in various courts across the country, especially at the lower court level. (Dawn News file no. 23)

In example (18), the passive form *It is estimated* shows politeness in presenting propositional content. In the above instance, the writer has used a *passive form* to make his statement general and making his tone softer in this example.

Discourse Epistemic or Evidential Phrases

Discourse epistemic or evidential phrases are used to express the meaning of knowledge as hearsay or indirect (i.e. The people of Pakistan say, it has been said that), the hesitation and doubt of attitude about the truth what follows (i.e. I need say, To tell the truth, I have an opinion) or, on the contrary, a high degree of commitment and certainty regarding the utterance (i.e. to our knowledge, upon my word, I can tell you, it is our view that, to be sure, we feel that). The following are examples below:

19) They ***feel*** better when they run private clinics as they are highly demoralized by the conditions in which they have to work. (Dawn News file no. 163)

20) For instance, it is still ***unclear*** whether the US-Afghan forces had any idea they were on a rescue mission or whether they stumbled upon the captives in a stroke of good fortune; or for that matter. (Dawn News file no. 69)

The above mentioned instances hide the origin of knowledge and let the situation as indirect for the readers. In the following examples (19) and (20), the editors get the readers involve what they actually want to transform their ideas. The used markers in the above mentioned examples are considered as MMs.

Hesitation

Hesitation is also named as vagueness and uncertainty in the content. In order to show hesitation, the writer chooses uncertainty, vagueness and even negative markers (e.g. do not) which inject possibility in propositional material shaping reader's perspective. Through such markers, the reader is put in a circle to let him think with parallel to the writer. These markers also show the writer's anxiety (e.g. well) and his intention that either he is intentionally showing his uncertainty or unintentionally disclosing his vagueness toward the content. The following examples are mentioned below:

21) I ***do not*** want to be at home like other women.... (The Express Tribune file no. 51)

22) And if a few political noses get bloodied in the process, ***well***, so be it. (The Express Tribune file no. 36)

The above mentioned instances (21) and (22), *do not* and *well* have shown an uncertainty and an anxiety of the writer in the content. The writer has employed such markers to get involve the attentions of the reader. In the above example, the writer has disclosed that she is unable to behave like other women what they do at home. She has made aware indirectly the other women by saying this statement. The use of *well* has shown the writer's anxiety in propositional material. This marker is also accounted for MF.

Conditional Clauses

The function of *conditional clauses* is expressing uncertainty which is expressed through uncertainty markers. In the words of Milne (2008), she studies '*conditional forms*' which are prototypical of discourse of the media when they make users able to show an opinion or view or state a reality in the absence of full commitment to it, to allow some space for discussion. She has considered these conditional as '*uncertainty markers*' (p. 107-108). In this connection, Hyland (1996) studies readers' difference using hypothetical conditionals. In 1994, He has mentioned conditionals: *questions forms, if-clauses, impersonal phrases, passivisation, and time-reference* (as mentioned in a study of Perkins, 1983) can be helpful in the expressing the lack of confidence of the writer. (p. 240)

If-clauses

The function of *If-clauses* give hypothetical meaning or interpretations, this function is performed through epistemic markers which may happen in an *if-clause* enhancing the distrust of the writer or speaker in the truth of the content. The most frequent and preferred choice of if clause in order to rend the hypothetical meanings with certain actions which are supposed possible under the required conditions are satisfied. The ultimate logic behind the use of *if-clause* as hedging devices by the writer to invoke potential problems in the way of their past or future actions which can assist them denial responsibility for the completeness of their statements. These conditional clauses may have implicit and explicit conditions such as if anything ..., if true ...etc. See examples below.

23) *As conventional wisdom illustrates, many honest officials in the state's machinery are put to pasture **if they fail to toe the party line**, or lock horns with their political bosses. (Dawn News file no. 62).*

In an instance (23), the writer has used *conditional clause* in which honest officials who fail to lock horns with their political bosses will be dishonoured as per conventions. The use of *conditional clause* is known as an uncertainty markers. Therefore, for example, *conditional clause* is not known as a marker, but this comes under category of metadiscourse.

But-clauses

But-clauses refer conditional meanings, thus they show uncertainty in the sentences. The following example is seen below:

24) *The budget today will show how much new thinking there is, **but** it is safe to say nobody is holding their breath. (Dawn News file no. 63)*

In example (24), the writer using *but-clause* has shown conditional meanings in the propositional content suggests uncertainty until the reason is given. The *but-clause* has been employed by the writer as a source of creating uncertainty. The *but-clause* is known as MFs.

Question forms

Question form is a technique to gain the attention of the audience or readers. In this study, question forms have been seen as a way to catch the minds of the readers. The following example taken from the corpus is seen below:

25) *Why have there been no enrolment drives? (Dawn News file no. 77)*

In example (25), the use of *question form* has been observed in the propositional content by the writer to involve the readers towards the serious matter as to get their opinions and letting them to judge. This technique has been accounted for holding opinions of the readers. This technique is considered as MFs.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study has focused on investigating the metadiscoursal features (MFs) out of Pakistani English Newspapers Editorials (PENE). The results have revealed that the corpus TF has used more hedges as compared to other corpora: DN, TN and TFT. The excessive use of hedges has showed that the writer's uncertainty towards the truth. The corpus of TF has depicted that the corpus TF is considered to be a text in which the writer has interacted with the readers personally and exposed the uncertainty about the matter. This kind of attitude of the writer in editorials has appealed the reader to generalize the matter personally. This study has revealed that the PENE writers have expressed uncertainty through modal adjectives, modal adverbs, modal exercise, epistemic verbs, approximators, modal nouns; they become impersonal reporting their stance through passivisation, discourse epistemic or evidential phrases and hesitation; they have also expressed their conditional stance to readers through if-clauses, but-clauses and question forms. This study has also suggested in the future studies.

In conclusion, the writers create uncertainty and make the readers uncertain about their stance. The writers let the readers decide and make their minds about the issue. This sort of attitude of the writers makes the readers to generalize the results. The pertinent results of this research could make the basis for further future research. Firstly, other than PENE language or even languages of other disciplines have greater attention in metadiscoursal studies.

The categorization proposed in this study could be applied in other disciplines languages or even other cultural communities for having interesting outcomes in proving and checking the validity and reliability of the framework of the study. Secondly, for sake of further study, non-computerized corpora might be taken to find out rhetorical features in different languages, different genres and even on different cultural communities. Thirdly, for more precision in further studies the size of data could be reduced in order to avoid computerized analysis. Next, the most interesting area in metadiscourse is the analysis of spoken language has greater importance and may be the further area of research. In addition, another less-explored areas in metadiscourse are advertisements, e-mails, promotional letters and mission statements. Moreover, the categorization proposed in this study could be used in comparison of native and non-native languages, texts and spoken languages as per cultural differences. Finally, another research area such as headlines in newspapers would have interesting outcomes and it would open the agendas of media and press media through metadiscourse.

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Appendix

Table 3.1. Expression of list of hedge devices

Expression for Hedges: Uncertainty Markers	almost about apparent apparently appear appear to be appeared approximately appears argued argue around argues assumed assume believed certain amount broadly certain extent claim certain level claimed could claims couldn't doubtful doubt estimate essentially fairly estimated feels feel frequently felt from my perspective from this perspective from our perspective guess in general generally in most cases in my opinion in most instances in our opinion in my view in this view in our view indicate largely indicated likely indicates little may maybe mainly mostly might often on the whole not understood perhaps plausible ought plausibly possibly postulate possible postulated presumable postulates presumably probably probable rather x quite roughly seems relatively should somewhat suggest sometimes suggests suppose suggested supposed suspect supposes suspects tended to tend to tends to typical to my knowledge typically uncertainly uncertain unclearly unlikely unclear would usually wouldn't
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