THE USE OF METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN ACHIEVING PERSUASION IN SHORT ADVERTISEMENTS WRITTEN BY ESP STUDENTS

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Tijana Vesić Pavlović[1], Danijela Đorđević[2]

[1]Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia
[2]Faculty of Agriculture, University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia

ORCID iDs: Tijana Vesić Pavlović   https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5786-975X
         Danijela Đorđević   https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8804-4037

Abstract. *The paper focuses on the metadiscourse markers used with the aim of persuasion in ESP student writing. The corpus consisted of 66 short advertisements (8,611 tokens) written by the first-year students of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade as part of their ESP course. Based on Hyland's model of metadiscourse, we analyse the frequency of use and different types of metadiscourse markers in students' advertisements. The aim is to explore whether ESP students use MD markers to persuade the audience to try out a new welding technique. The most frequently used markers overall were engagement markers, followed by attitude markers, whereas the least frequent were frame markers and code glosses. Interactional metadiscourse categories are used much more than the interactive ones, both in the body of the advertisement and the slogans. Based on the obtained findings on the use of MD markers in student-written advertisements, it can be concluded that some students successfully kept up with the trends found in similar research of advertisements written by experienced copywriters.*

Key words: *metadiscourse, persuasion, advertisements, ESP students, student writing*

1. INTRODUCTION

Advertising is omnipresent in the modern world, and all of us are familiar with its different forms. The aim of all forms of commercial advertising is still the same – to sell the product in question. Experienced copywriters develop the skill of writing advertisements that will persuade the buyers to purchase a certain product – the main purpose of commercial advertising thus being persuasion (Tanaka 2005). Copywriters usually aim at getting the audience to "register their communication either for purposes of immediate action or to make

us more favourably disposed in general terms to the advertised product or service" (Goddard 2002, 11).

Language plays a very important role in the process of persuasion. Previous studies argue that persuasive language has certain specific features; as pointed out by Labrador et al. (2014, 40), it "tends to be creative and attention-drawing, exploiting language resources to the maximum with catchphrases, emotive words, informal expressions and striking metaphors and comparisons to appeal to the readers". Copywriters use different linguistic devices to get their message across in text advertisements, and metadiscourse devices may be very helpful in shaping the way consumers perceive and engage with the content, as well as in establishing credibility.

Generally speaking, metadiscourse has the role of "establishing and maintaining contact between the writer and the reader and between the writer and the message" (Hyland 1998, 437). Thus, adequate use of metadiscourse markers, especially in academic writing, has been proposed as a feature of an author who successfully communicates with their audience (Hyland and Tse 2004). According to Hyland (2005, 72), "one of the clearest examples of the rhetorical role of metadiscourse is found in advertisements". In advertising, metadiscourse plays an important role in "organising the discourse" (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1291), as well as in "engaging the potential consumers, leading them to the desired behaviour, thus creating a successful persuasive communication between advertisers and consumers" (Al-Subhi 2022, 25). The features of interpersonal metadiscourse serve to enable copywriters "to adopt a kind of balance between informing and persuading" (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1295), thus reinforcing the persuasive role of an advertisement.

This paper focuses on the metadiscourse (MD) markers used with the aim of persuasion in ESP student writing. The corpus for the analysis consisted of 66 short advertisements written by the first-year students of the Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade as part of their ESP course. Students' task was to write an advertisement for the new welding technique based on the pieces of information presented in the text they had read during the class prior to writing. In our analysis, based on Hyland's model of metadiscourse, we aim at identifying the type of MD markers used in students' advertisements and finding out whether they were employed with the function of persuading the audience to try the new welding technique.

The paper has the following sections. In the second part, we provide an elaboration of the theoretical framework used in the analysis and present the findings of relevant previous studies on the use of MD markers as persuasive devices in student essays and in different types of advertisements. Section 3 outlines the materials and methodology used in the paper, while section 4 presents research results. In the final section, we summarise the study findings and provide a discussion.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

2.1. Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse and MD persuasive role

Hyland's model of metadiscourse (2005) is a prominent framework in the field of discourse analysis, particularly within the context of academic writing. It focuses on the ways in which writers use metadiscourse to establish their presence in the text and engage with their readers. Metadiscourse refers to the linguistic devices and strategies the authors employ to guide readers through a text, express their stance, and manage the flow of

information. Hyland's model identifies two primary classes of metadiscourse: interactive and interactional. Interactive metadiscourse includes the elements that provide a better organization and coherence of the discourse, and comprises transition markers, frame markers, endophoric markers, code glosses and evidentials. Interactional metadiscourse, on the other hand, encompasses elements that indicate the writer's relationship with the reader and engagement in the discourse, like hedges, boosters, self-mentions, attitude markers and engagement markers (Hyland 2005).

Hyland's model may help understand how writers establish rapport with their audience and convey their persuasive intent through the strategic use of language in various discourse contexts, including advertising. This author also provides an account of the three central persuasive elements when writing with the aim of persuasion, these being ethos, as "the personal appeal of one's character", pathos, as "the appeal to emotions", and logos, as "the appeal to reason" (Hyland 2005, 64). Metadiscourse projects "the rational appeals of Logos when it explicitly links elements of the argument; it conveys an Ethos where it refers to the writer's authority and competence; and it relates to Pathos when it signals respect for the readers' viewpoint or that the message has direct relevance to the audience" (Hyland 2005: 65).

Various studies that investigated MD features in different types of texts also commented on its persuasive role (e.g., Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen 1993; Dafouz-Milne 2008; Ho 2016; Hyland 2002; Longo 1994). Hyland's study (2002) provided valuable insights into how directives, as the expressions that instruct or guide the reader, contributed to the effectiveness of argumentation and engagement in academic writing. In his study on the use of persuasive MD in Hong Kong government policy documents, Ho (2016) specifically found that hedges, engagement markers and self-mentions served to establish credibility and achieve affective appeal, thus accomplishing ethos and pathos, while transition markers, endophoric markers, and code glosses were used in order to persuade with reasons, thus serving the function of logos (Ho 2016, 17). Liu and Zhang (2021) analysed the patterns of use of MD resources in the corporate press release genre, with the focus on those utilised in achieving persuasiveness. They found that interactional MD markers were used twice as much as interactive metadiscourse, with the most frequent type of markers used being attitude markers which served the function to promote a good image of the company. Another frequently used MD category comprised engagement markers, while other categories, such as evidentials or endophoric markers, were used much less.

2.2. Previous research on the use of MD as a persuasive device in ESL student writing

The importance of the correct use of metadiscourse markers in student writing in foreign languages has been greatly emphasised in the pertinent literature. A number of studies explored the use of MD features in ESL writing. For instance, a previous study on the use of MD markers in the essays of Serbian mechanical engineering students has shown that students dominantly employed interactional metadiscourse markers, compared to the categories of interactive metadiscourse; further, transitions were the most frequently used markers, followed by engagement markers and hedges (Vesić Pavlović and Đorđević 2020).

Several studies also focused on the use of MD with the aim of persuading the reader in author's opinions. In their study, Lee and Deakin (2016, 29–31) concluded that Chinese ESL students who used more interactional metadiscourse in their argumentative essays managed to balance caution and certainty appropriately and achieved a greater degree of

persuasion, which resulted in higher marks. This points to a strong relationship between effective persuasion and adequate use of interactional MD markers. Ho and Li (2018) reached a similar conclusion in their analysis of the essays written by first-year university students, L2 English learners. In this study, high-rated essays also contained a variety of MD markers, especially a greater number of hedges and attitude markers than the low-rated essays, which were used to balance arguments and to construct persuasive arguments (Ho and Li 2018, 58). Another thing observed by these authors was the fact that the MD features needed to be used appropriately in order to achieve the desired aim of persuasion, i.e., there had to be a "frequency-appropriacy combination" (Ho and Li 2018, 65).

2.3 Previous research on the use of MD in constructing persuasion in advertising

Different studies emphasise the importance of the use of MD features in the advertising genre since it constitutes a specific type of persuasive writing (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001; Gustafsson 2017; Al-Subhi 2022). Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001) investigated the use of metadiscourse markers in slogans and/or headlines in print advertisements. The MD markers found in their study included hedges, emphatics, person markers, endophoric markers and evidentials. They also provided elaborate explanations as to why certain identified MD markers may be specifically important for achieving persuasion. Thus, they argue that the use of pronouns is aimed at giving the impression that the ads personally address a consumer. Person markers are used in advertising to signal a one-to-one relationship and create "a sense of solidarity with the potential customer" (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1298). Various pronouns were used for these purposes in the analysed advertising slogans and headlines (such as inclusive/exclusive *I* and *we*, *he*, *she*, *it*). Since the role of hedges is to show a certain degree of tentativeness, Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001, 1299) argue that copywriters use them to make "indirect reference to the qualities of the goods being advertised", since "social conventions deny copywriters the possibility of being frank and straightforward". Also, hedges help copywriters adhere to social conventions since "facts should be somehow disguised" (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1300), for example: *Never has it been so important to read the label*. The use of modal verbs in slogans and headlines implies that the message conveyed by the advertisement is true and based on the expert knowledge of the one compiling the advertisement, for example, *You just can't help yourself* (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1301). The function of emphatics in slogans/headlines is to emphasise that the key features of the advertised products are necessary and thus persuade consumers to buy them (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1302). The function of endophoric markers is to "persuade consumers by associating their messages to other cultural artefacts" (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001, 1303).

Using Hyland's model of metadiscourse, Gustafsson (2017) analysed metadiscourse features in advertisements found on web pages of make-up brands in order to ascertain whether companies resorted to MD to attract their customers and motivate them to buy their products. The most frequently used categories of MD in this study included engagement markers, followed by boosters and self-mentions. This author comments on the noticeable absence of hedges and attitude markers in the analysed advertisements, citing the fact that companies do not want to "withhold full commitment to the product that they want to sell", but wish exactly the opposite (Gustafsson 2017, 16) as a possible reason for this.

Al-Subhi's study (2022) explored the frequency and use of both the linguistic and the visual MD markers and their role in constructing persuasion, using the corpus of social media

advertisements obtained from Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter, relying on Hyland's stance and engagement metadiscourse model. It was shown that the categories of interactive MD were absent from the analysed ads, with the exception of transitions whose use was minimal. Overall, engagement markers had the highest frequencies of occurrence in the analysed corpus, which indicates that copywriters strived to establish interactionality and "an explicit relationship with the readers" (Al-Subhi 2022, 29). In the category of stance, attitude markers were used most commonly, most specifically, attitudinal adjectives, while self-mentions, boosters and hedges were not used often, with hedges being the least used. The author emphasises the significance of attitudinal adjectives that serve to strengthen "the persuasiveness of the ads as advertisers cast a positive light on the products through the inclusion of appropriate adjectives (Al-Subhi 2022, 37). In the category of engagement markers, directives (such as *do*, *start*, *get*, *shop*, *save*) were used most frequently in order to "instruct the targeted audience to perform certain actions arranged by the advertisers" (Al-Subhi 2022, 29). Copywriters used reader-inclusive pronouns such as *you*, *your* or *yourself* to address readers directly, as well as the inclusive *we*. Questions were also used in the ads as a means of building a direct relationship between the writer and readers, but to a lesser extent (Al-Subhi 2022, 29). This study also showed that the use of linguistic metadiscourse in constructing persuasion can be complemented by the use of different features of visual metadiscourse.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Course of research. The first-year students of two generations of the students of the study programme of Information Technologies in Mechanical Engineering, Faculty of Mechanical Engineering, University of Belgrade, wrote an advertisement for a new technique in the field of welding, the so-called vaporised foil actuator welding (VFAW). These short advertisements were collected in the fall semester of two consecutive academic years, 2021/22 and 2022/23.

Generally, during their university ESP course, students are taught how to effectively communicate within their future professional context. This includes reflecting on the use and importance of discourse markers in a written text, since they play a crucial role in enhancing coherence and cohesion of the text, with a special focus on understanding the functions of discourse markers in various contexts. Prior to completing this task, the students had read a text about this technique during their English class and then, together with the teacher, had a discussion about this issue. Finally, at the end of the class, they received brief instructions on writing the advertisement for the VFAW technique[1].

Corpus. A total of 66 essays were collected, which had 8,611 tokens. Students were given an option to formulate a slogan for their advertisement and the collected number of slogans was 38. The number of words in the body of the advertisement was 8,293, while the number of words in the subcorpus of slogans was 318.

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[1] The text of the instruction was as follows: "Read the text *VFAW: A New Technique for Joining High-Strength Metals* on pages 77 and 78. Based on the facts provided in the text, do the following task: write a short advertisement in which you should offer this technique to potential customers. In the advertisement, you need to point out the advantages of this method of welding compared to other methods and try to rouse interest in the potential user. You can use bullets or boldfaced or italics to emphasise certain facts. The advertisement should contain text only! The title should read: Advert for the VFAW technique – UNDER this general title, you can write down a short slogan to attract the attention of the company you are advertising this technique to. The advertisement should be approximately 150 words long."

Data analysis. In the process of analysis, the advertisements were carefully read by both researchers and the MD expressions were recorded. In the next step, they were grouped into the categories contained in Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, namely, interactive and interactional MD markers. In the upcoming results section, we provide an analysis of the frequencies and types of the employed MD markers in the entire corpus, as well as a separate analysis of their presence in the body of the advertisement and the slogans.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

Upon reading the collected advertisements, it was noted that students frequently engaged in direct audience interaction. In the opening parts, they would query whether the reader(s) had grown fatigued with the conventional welding practices, and then they would go on to present the product they were advertising, the VFAW. Generally speaking, the use of MD markers for the purposes of persuasion was fairly prominent in the analysed advertisements, while students also typically employed conspicuous typographic features such as bold text or uppercase letters to accentuate the significance of their innovative offering.

In the text of the advertisement as a whole (Table 1[2]), interactional metadiscourse (with the normalised frequency at 75.95 per 1,000 words) was used much more than interactive metadiscourse (with the normalised frequency at 20.67 per 1,000 words). Some interactive MD marker categories, such as endophoric markers and evidentials, were not used at all. The most frequently used types of MD markers, engagement markers (30.54 per 1,000 words) and attitude markers (19.97 per 1,000 words), both belong to interactional metadiscourse.

Table 1 Metadiscourse markers by category and type in the whole text of the advertisement

Interactional metadiscourse			Interactive metadiscourse		
Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency	Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency
Engagement markers	263	30.54	Transition markers	142	16.49
Attitude markers	172	19.97	Code glosses	18	2.09
Self-mentions	81	9.41	Frame markers	18	2.09
Hedges	81	9.41	Endophoric markers	0	0
Boosters	57	6.62	Evidentials	0	0
Total	654	75.95	Total	178	20.67

Since previous studies have shown that there may be some peculiarities in the use of MD markers in the slogans and in the body of the advertisement, we will present the types and frequencies of the MD markers in the body of the advertisements and the slogans separately and elaborate on the findings in more detail.

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[2] To illustrate the frequency of occurrence of different types of markers in the analysed texts, we provide both the absolute frequencies, i.e., the total number of metadiscourse markers in the analysed texts, and the normalised frequencies, i.e., the number of markers per 1,000 words.

The same as in the case of the advertisement as a whole, interactional metadiscourse categories (71.63 per 1,000 words) were used much more than the interactive ones (21.34 per 1,000 words) in the body of the advertisement (Table 2). The most frequent markers found in the body of the advertisement were engagement markers (28.94 per 1,000 words), followed by attitude markers (17.36 per 1,000 words). Transitions, belonging to the category of interactive markers, were the third most used category (17.00 per 1,000 words), while other categories of interactional discourse, namely, hedges, self-mentions and boosters, were present moderately.

Table 2 Metadiscourse markers by category and type in the body of advertisements

Interactional metadiscourse			Interactive metadiscourse		
Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency	Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency
Engagement markers	240	28.94	Transition markers	141	17.00
Attitude markers	144	17.36	Frame markers	18	2.17
Hedges	80	9.65	Code glosses	18	2.17
Self-mentions	76	9.16	Endophoric markers	0	0
Boosters	54	6.51	Evidentials	0	0
Total	594	71.63	Total	177	21.34

Engagement markers serve to capture the attention and interest of consumers, and may be deemed as essential tools for persuasion in advertising (Fuertes-Olivera et al. 2001). In the analysed advertisements, they were mostly realised by the following means: reader pronouns, directives and questions. In examples (1) and (2), we have the use of the reader pronoun *you*, which serves to engage the audience directly, fostering a sense of personal connection. Apart from including the pronoun *you,* example (1) is also an illustration of the question as a metadiscourse marker, which serves to invite the audience to consider the product or service being promoted. In example (3), we note the use of directives that serve as persuasive tools, urging consumers to take specific actions such as *Keep up with it* or *Try it out*.

1) *Do you know how to weld metals without actually melting it?[3]*
2) *If you want to have the best welders in town then you are at the right place.*
3) *Keep up with the greatest companies and try it out!*

Attitude markers are also very important when compiling advertisements since they show writer's emotional stance towards propositions, focusing on affect rather than knowledge, and expressing emotions such as "surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, frustration, and so on" (Hyland 2005, 53). Thus, they may influence the consumers' perceptions and convince them of the product's effectiveness and uniqueness (Gustafsson 2017). The most frequently used attitude markers in the body of the advertisement included adjectives and exclamation marks, followed by adverbs and verbs, but to a lesser extent. As underlined in a previous study by Al-Subhi (2022, 28), adjectives such as *great*, *new*, *ultimate* or *perfect*, which are often used in the descriptions of different products in advertisements, are actually instances of attitude markers since the advertisers "use these items to stress the

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[3] The examples taken from students' advertisements are provided verbatim, without the (sometimes necessary) corrections of grammar or spelling errors.

qualities of the advertised products and the message of the text". In example (4), we can see that the use of *perfect* positively evaluates the product, suggesting that it will certainly meet the needs of the audience. In example (5), the adjective *new* highlighted in uppercase letters draws attention to the novelty of the product, while the exclamation mark further intensifies the claim. The adjective *great* in ex. (6) conveys a highly positive evaluation, suggesting that the audience is about to experience something highly beneficial. Again, the exclamation mark adds emphasis on the VFAW technology.

4) *Well, this so called "VFAW" technique is <u>perfect</u> for you.*
5) *But that changes now with the introduction of our <u>NEW</u> product<u>!</u>*
6) *Well, today is going to be a <u>GREAT</u> day for you then, because you're about to find out what VFAW technology is<u>!</u>*

Transition markers serve as signposts that aid in structuring the discourse and navigating the reader's experience; hence, they may be important in realising "cohesion and coherence of a text, without which the purpose of any persuasion can be crippled" (Liu and Zhang 2021, 9). In our corpus, these markers were typically realised by conjunctions and adverbs/adverbial phrases implying addition, comparison and consequence. In example (7), the transition marker *so that* serves to indicate the result of the action described in the previous clause. Then, in example (8), the transition marker *moreover* implies an additional idea. These transition markers help to increase the coherence of the advertisement by clarifying the relationships between ideas and guiding the reader through the key points.

7) *We join the metal without melting, <u>so that</u> the metal does not weaken.*
8) *<u>Moreover</u>, it produces new material structures.*

Hedges serve to signal the writer's acknowledgment of alternative perspectives and reluctance to fully commit to a proposition; they also suggest that statements are based on plausible reasoning rather than absolute certainty (Hyland 2005). If we look at the following examples (9, 10, 11), we can see that the hedges *can be fitted* and *can be installed* suggest possibility rather than certainty. They soften the statement, indicating that fitting/installing the product to robots is a potential application rather than an absolute guarantee. Also, by using *potential* in example (9), the advertisement suggests that the product can be used for work on the manufacturing line, but it does not make a guarantee. In example (11), the use of *that is possible* suggests a cautious assertion rather than a certain claim.

9) *It also <u>can be fitted</u> to robots for <u>potential</u> work on the manufacturing line too.*
10) *VFAW <u>can be installed</u> on robots as needed.*
11) *With our VFAW technique, <u>that is possible</u>.*

Self-mentions in writing refer to the author's explicit inclusion in the text, assessed through the occurrence of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (Hyland 2005). In example (12), the use of *me* emphasises the role of the speaker in providing information, thus enhancing trust. Similarly, in example (13), the self-mention *our* connects ownership with the brand promoting the welding technology and increasing credibility.

12) *Let <u>me</u> introduce you to VFAW also known as vaporized foil actuator welding.*
13) *<u>Our</u> brand-new welding technology relies on vaporizing foils.*

Boosters include words like *clearly*, *obviously*, or *demonstrate* that writers use to eliminate alternatives, anticipate conflicting viewpoints, and assert their certainty in their statements (Hyland 2005). In example (14), *completely* highlights the novelty and innovation of the method being described. It suggests that the technique being advertised is not just an improvement, but a significant advancement in the field. The booster *certainly* in example (15) adds assurance to the claim being made. In both advertisements, the use of boosters contributes to the persuasive power of the messages by emphasising the novelty, efficiency and potential benefits of the described welding techniques.

14) *This is a <u>completely</u> new and modern way to join the new materials without melting.*
15) *This way of joining high-strength metals <u>certainly</u> to bring with it many changes and holds a lot of promises.*

Frame markers are signals within a text that indicate its boundaries or the structure of the content, serving various functions such as sequencing, labelling, predicting, and shifting arguments, thereby enhancing the clarity of the discourse for readers or listeners (Hyland 2005). Still, while they enhance clarity and organisation, they may not directly contribute to capturing attention, which is one of the key goals in advertising. As a result, frame markers may be used to a lesser degree in advertising compared to other types of markers that focus more directly on engaging consumers, such as engagement markers. In example (16), the frame marker *so far* implies that the statement is situated within a temporal frame, indicating that up to the present moment, no solution has been found. The frame marker *firstly* in example (17) indicates the beginning of a sequence of points. In both examples, the frame markers contribute to the organisation of the text.

16) *<u>So far</u> no one was able to find the perfect solution for this problem.*
17) *<u>Firstly</u>, the hot gas pushes the pieces of metal together at high speed instead of joining them by melting.*

Code glosses provide supplementary details to aid the reader in understanding the intended meaning conveyed by the writer (Hyland 2005). In both examples (18, 19), the use of code glosses (e.g., *for example* and *such as*) clarifies the points made in the advertisement, making it more effective in communicating the advantages of the promoted welding technique.

18) *Metals, <u>for example</u> aluminum, welded by VFAW are two to three times stronger or better welded than by using other old methods.*
19) *Many flaws of traditional welding, <u>such as</u> overheating sensitive materials, have been completely removed*!

Table 3 shows the types of MD markers and the frequency of their use in the formulated slogans. When interpreting the results in Table 3, it should be borne in mind that the total number of tokens in the corpus of slogans was very small, since slogans are meant to be short and striking; thus, very high frequencies of certain types of MD markers indicate that student writers extensively relied on the persuasive power of these devices in slogans to get their message across to potential consumers.

Table 3 Metadiscourse markers by category and type in advertisement slogans

Interactional metadiscourse			Interactive metadiscourse		
Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency	Type of marker	Num. of tokens	Norm. frequency
Attitude markers	28	88.05	Transition markers	1	1
Engagement markers	23	72.33	Code glosses	0	0
Self-mentions	5	15.72	Frame markers	0	0
Boosters	3	9.43	Endophoric markers	0	0
Hedges	1	3.14	Evidentials	0	0
Total	60	188.67	Total	1	3.14

It can be seen that students almost solely used the category of interactional metadiscourse (with the normalised frequency at 188.67 per 1,000 words) rather than interactive metadiscourse (3.14 per 1,000 words). Attitude markers (88.05 per 1,000 words) and engagement markers (72.33 per 1,000 words) were used with a very high frequency in these slogans. Other MD categories were utilised sparsely (e.g., self-mentions, boosters and hedges). Examples of the use of MD markers in the analysed slogans are given below (ex. 20−26).

20) *Vaporize all your problems away!*
21) *VFAW the new age of better welding!*
22) *Weld more efficiently!*
23) *Are you looking for faster, cheaper, more efficient way of welding your materials?*
24) *March into the future!*
25) *TO REDUCE WELDING FLAWS, USE VFAW!*
26) *We offer a solution for your problem!*

In example (20), we have the engagement markers *vaporize* (a directive) and *your* (a reader-inclusive pronoun), directly involving the audience, as well as the exclamation mark as an example of attitude markers. In ex. (21), the attitude marker *new*, as well as the exclamation mark, indicate advancement, showing a positive attitude towards the product/service. Further, ex. (22) contains direct addressing of the audience (the use of the engagement marker, the directive *weld*) involved in welding. In example (23), the question directly engages the audience by addressing their needs related to welding. The use of directives (*march into the future*, *use*) in ex. (24) and (25) again serves to directly address and draw attention of those interested in advancements in the field. The use of the self-mention *we* and the engagement marker *your* in ex. (26) demonstrates confidence in the product or service's capacity to address customer requirements. Based on the analysis, it may be argued that the advertisement slogans mostly employ attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions in order to convey assurance, engage the audience, and promote the advertised product/service.

5. CONCLUSION

The focus of the current study was to investigate the use of MD markers for the purposes of persuasion in a sample of short advertisements written by ESP learners, first-year students of the University of Belgrade. The analysis was conducted within the frame

of Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse, on the set of advertisements written as a part of students' tasks during their ESP course.

Study results show that students relied on MD markers as linguistic cues to emphasise the key selling points and encourage a favourable response from their readers. Interactional metadiscourse prevailed both in the body of the advertisement and the advertisement slogans, while interactive metadiscourse was present to a certain (lower) extent, mostly in the body of the advertisement. This finding is consistent with the results of previous studies, which pointed that, due to the relatively short nature of advertisements, the use of interactive metadiscourse was not dominant (Al-Subhi 2022, 37).

The most frequently used MD markers, in both the advertisement body and slogans, belong to the categories of engagement markers and attitude markers, since these markers play a crucial role in capturing the audience's attention, maintaining their interest, and ultimately influencing their purchasing decisions. There is a difference in the use of different types of MD markers between the body of the advertisement and slogans since other MD types apart from engagement markers and attitude markers were rarely used in slogans, which was to be expected, given that slogans are very short. Generally speaking, students used attitude markers to encourage consumer trust and used engagement markers to draw their readers' attention and create a sense of participation. Hedges were employed to provide a sense of caution on the part of the writer, while the function of boosters was to increase the value of the advertised product. Self-mentions were used to reinforce brand identity, and transition markers to facilitate smooth shifts. Frame markers were employed to maintain focus on product benefits, while code glosses were utilised successfully clarify technical terms.

It should also be noted that students relied on the devices such as caps lock, questions and parts of the text boldfaced as the ways to draw potential customer attention. The role of a specific layout, e.g., using particular typographical features, for achieving persuasion in advertisement has been pointed out already by Goddard (2002). Thus, it can be concluded that some students successfully kept up with the "trends" found in similar research of ads written by experienced copywriters.

This study may bear practical relevance for ESP teachers in terms of the possibilities of enhancing students' pragmatic competence. The task of writing advertisements for the specific products relevant to students' future professions may serve as a good exercise for practicing pragmatic skills in a foreign language, as well as demonstrating creativity in practical tasks. The quality and outcome of the task could be enhanced by an introduction given by the teacher, elaborating on the specific linguistic features and structures typical of the context of an advertisement and providing the text of authentic advertisements written in the English language, which could serve as good examples of the features of this genre. The major limitation of the study lies in its scope. Namely, it was conducted on a relatively small number of essays written by students of one faculty only. Thus, future similar research might focus on ESP students of different profiles, primarily for the purposes of complementing the findings of this study and comparing the strategies students of different vocations use when writing advertisements in a foreign language.

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UPOTREBA METADISKURSNIH MARKERA SA CILJEM UBEĐIVANJA U KRATKIM REKLAMNIM OGLASIMA STUDENATA KOJI UČE ENGLESKI JEZIK STRUKE

U radu se bavimo metadiskursnim markerima koji se koriste sa ciljem ubeđivanja u esejima studenata koji uče engleski jezik struke. Korpus na kome je izvršena analiza obuhvatio je 66 kratkih reklamnih oglasa (8611 reči) koje su pisali studenti prve godine Mašinskog fakulteta Univerziteta u Beogradu u okviru kursa engleskog jezika. Koristeći Hajlandov model metadiskursa, analizirali smo učestalost upotrebe i različite tipove metadiskursnih markera u ovim reklamnim oglasima. Cilj je bio da se istraži da li studenti koriste metadiskursne markere da ubede publiku da isproba novu tehniku zavarivanja. Generalno gledano, najčešće korišćeni markeri bili su markeri angažovanja, a za njima markeri stava, dok su najređi bili okvirni markeri i objašnjivači. Interakcioni metadiskurs se koristi mnogo više od interaktivnog, kako u glavnom delu oglasa, tako i u sloganima. Na osnovu dobijenih nalaza o upotrebi metadiskursnih markera u reklamnim oglasima koje su pisali studenti koji uče engleski jezik struke, može se zaključiti da su neki studenti uspešno ispratili „trendove" uočene u sličnim istraživanjima reklamnih oglasa koje su pisali iskusni pisci reklamnih tekstova.

Ključne reči: *metadiskurs, ubeđivanje, reklamni oglas, studenti koji uče engleski jezik struke, studentski eseji*