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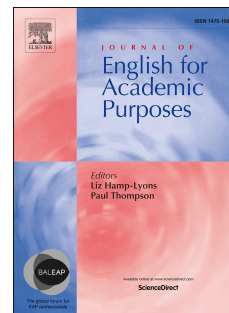
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Metadiscourse choices in EAP: an intra-journal study of JEAP

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1 **Metadiscourse choices in EAP: an intra-journal study of JEAP**

2

3 **Abstract**

4 Interest in language variation is a staple of English for Academic Purposes research and
5 underpins its distinctive character as a field of inquiry. It is the specific nature of
6 language use which defines EAP, yet this definition has been established almost entirely
7 on the basis of inter-discoursal studies, with comparisons of register, genre, discipline,
8 first language, etc. dominating our understanding. In this paper we take a different
9 approach and focus on variation within the field, and specifically within its flagship
10 journal, *JEAP*. Categorising every paper between volume 1 and 52 as principally taking
11 a textual, critical, contextual or pedagogical orientation, we explore writers' preferences
12 for metadiscourse use. The differences which emerge can be attributed to the
13 argumentation preferences of sub-fields and their knowledge-making practices. The
14 findings offer evidence of intra-disciplinary variation in discoursal preferences and
15 hopefully contribute to our understanding of both the journal and our field.

16

17 **Keywords:** metadiscourse, academic writing, intra-disciplinary variation, intra-journal
18 variation.

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29 **1. Introduction**

30 Central to the characterisation of English for Academic Purposes as a field of inquiry
31 and practice is the importance of inter-discoursal studies (Author 1, 2018; Author 1 &
32 Other, 2016). Comparisons of register, mode, genre, discipline, first language,
33 proficiency groups, etc. have played a key role in the emergence of the field's
34 descriptions of language use and disciplinary practices. Less studied, however, are the
35 discoursal differences *within* disciplines. Only rarely do we find studies of the ways
36 that individuals of different theoretical, professional or methodological hues vary the
37 tacit knowledge of disciplinary expectations in communicating with peers. EAP itself
38 has also escaped this kind of scrutiny. Yet the considerable range of interests and
39 approaches in EAP, as showcased in compendia such as Charles and Pecorari (2015)
40 and Author 1 and Other (2016), may conceal considerable rhetorical variations.

41

42 Such diversity, then, has rarely been the subject of empirical research. In fact, Ding
43 and Evans have recently suggested that the focus of EAP has been too outward-facing,
44 arguing that:

45 What needs to be added to this is an inward-facing orientation to the texts,
46 cultures, values, practices and epistemologies of the field and discipline of EAP.
47 Practitioners need to understand their own field as well as they strive to
48 understand the fields and disciplines of their students. (Ding & Evans, 2022: 4)

49

50 Ding's own work (Ding & Bruce, 2017) has taken a step in this direction by focusing
51 on the impact of neoliberalism on the roles and identities of EAP practitioners.

52 Similarly reflexive, although taking a different perspective, Author 1 and Author 2
53 (2021) used bibliometric techniques to track changes in EAP research and reveal the
54 most influential topics, authors and publications over the last 40 years.

55

56 We extend this reflexivity here by exploring the *discourse* of the field and the extent to

57 which topic foci influence the argument patterns and interactional preferences of
58 writers. To do so we take the main themes contained in the flagship publication of the
59 field: *The Journal of English for Academic Purposes*. Categorising every paper since
60 its beginning 20 years ago as taking either a textual, critical, contextual or pedagogical
61 orientation, we explore how writers employ metadiscourse to present their ideas and
62 engage with their readers in these different areas. Our purpose is to explore JEAP as a
63 rhetorical domain and determine linguistic variation in EAP. We believe evidence of
64 intra-disciplinary variation in discursual preferences can contribute to our
65 understanding of both the journal and the field.

66

67 **2. EAP: Homogeneity and heterogeneity**

68 While broadly concerned with research and instruction around the communicative
69 needs and practices of individuals in academic contexts (Author 1 & Other, 2016: 1),
70 English for Academic Purposes has always prided itself on a certain theoretical and
71 methodological eclecticism. It borrows, for example, from various genre models (e.g.
72 Swales, 1990; Evans, 2022), investigative approaches (e.g. Swales, 1998; Paltridge,
73 Starfield & Tardy, 2016) and theoretical perspectives (e.g. Kirk, 2022; Bruce, 2022).
74 We might, then, more accurately see EAP as a convenient umbrella term under which
75 like-minded people can gather and project a shared professional context.

76

77 Participation in the journals, conferences, classrooms and discourses of EAP, as well
78 as a general orientation to language use and the applied principles of the field is, to
79 some extent, underpinned by the professional, pedagogical and social proclivities and
80 experiences of active individuals. We all contribute to the daily re-construction of
81 something called EAP by gaining qualifications and teaching experiences, reading and
82 writing papers and materials, engaging in recognised social networks, enjoying shared
83 involvement in conferences, journals, learned societies and the other diversions of
84 academic activity.

85

86 But while this helps arrange knowledge and skills within the subject area and draw the
87 boundaries of cooperative action among practitioners, we come to this conceptual
88 edifice from different directions and with different interests and goals (e.g. Author 1,
89 2018). Like all fields of inquiry, EAP is a system in which multiple beliefs and
90 practices overlap and intersect. Some of us are interested in the cultures and values of
91 academic disciplines, some in the genres and discourses of these fields, some in
92 students' acquisition and use of specialised language, and others in the practical
93 applications of this knowledge to create materials, fashion classroom tasks or plan
94 further research. This rich mix comprises a diverse knowledge-base and motivations
95 for EAP practitioners, so while the borders of the field may be clear enough for
96 everyday purposes, there is considerable intra-disciplinary heterogeneity.

97
98 The plurality of interests and orientations in EAP allow sub-groups and individuals to
99 innovate and combine within the margins of its practices without weakening its
100 direction and common actions. One area in which differences can manifest themselves
101 is in the preferred patterns of argument and language use which have been shown to
102 characterize different disciplines (e.g. Author 1, 2005; Author 1 & Other, 2006).
103 Writing as a member of a disciplinary group involves textualizing one's work as
104 biology or applied linguistics, for example, and oneself as a biologist or applied
105 linguist. As Foucault (1972) observed, there are disciplinary constraints on discourse
106 which are both restrictive and authorizing, allowing one to create successful texts
107 which display one's disciplinarity, or tacit knowledge of its expectations, for the
108 practical purposes of communicating with peers. Given the varied interests of those
109 working in EAP, it might be surprising if work was not discussed and presented in
110 different ways.

111

112 To minimize the effect of genre differences and journal proclivities, we have chosen to
113 take the unusual step of focusing on the papers in a single journal, although an

114 important one for those working in EAP. This is a forum where, for over 20 years,
115 theorists, researchers, practitioners, students, administrators and policy makers have
116 gathered to share ideas and shape a discipline. While not a picture of the field itself,
117 the input of a *JEAP* editorial team of some 60 of the world's leading EAP figures,
118 hundreds of reviewers, countless submissions and over 450 published articles, reviews
119 and editorials, has contributed to the ways we understand, and write, EAP. In the next
120 section we briefly offer a short profile of *JEAP* and outline the different strands of
121 work within its pages.

122

123 **3. JEAP and focal diversity**

124 The *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, like many good things, was conceived
125 in the back of a taxi. Liz Hamp-Lyons suggested the idea to Author 1 crossing the
126 Johor Bharu causeway to Singapore in 2001, having first gained the support of the
127 publisher Elsevier. The journal was launched the following year with an invited first
128 issue of five papers, an editorial overview of the field, and a book review. The journal
129 was an almost inevitable outcome of a field which had by then outgrown its
130 established home in the journal of *English for Specific Purposes*.

131

132 In a recent overview of published research in EAP, Author 1 and Author 2 (2021)
133 suggest this growth is the result of two main social changes: the increasing complexity
134 and diversity of EAP contexts with the commercial globalisation of academic activity,
135 and the efforts of practitioners to professionalise the field. Practitioners now find
136 themselves working with undergraduates, PhD students, academics writing for
137 publication and a myriad of other learners and situations, needing to understand these
138 contexts and students while working in environments which offer them little respect or
139 resources. By providing a professional forum for internationally recognised research in
140 the most prestigious indexing databases, *JEAP* has helped to establish professional
141 respectability for practitioners and academic credibility for the field. The most recent

142 figures, for example, show the journal as having an Impact Factor of 2.17 and ranked
143 in the first quartile of the Scimago journal rankings with a healthy average of 2.7
144 citations per paper. Another indication of the quality of a journal is the papers which
145 don't make it to publication, and here JEAP has an acceptance rate of only 14%, which
146 is less than many other social science journals (Herbert, 2020).

147

148 JEAP, then, has become a major force in the expansion and growth of EAP as a
149 disciplinary field, enabling practitioners and researchers to keep abreast of
150 developments and contribute to its continued updating. It has, moreover, contributed to
151 a movement away from an exclusive focus on discourse features to understand the
152 social practices of disciplines and of teaching and learning. It is this applied nature of
153 the journal, emerging out of concerns with revealing the constraints of academic
154 practices and how these might be used in classrooms, which helps account for the
155 diversity of interests found in the journal. Moreover, in 2016 the journal explicitly
156 sought to encourage the submission of more pedagogically-oriented papers by
157 introducing the 'Research into practice' section together with the Liz Hamp-Lyons
158 award for papers "judged to have the greatest potential to positively influence EAP
159 curricula, materials, or assessment at the classroom and programme level".

160

161 This diversity of the field has been described in various ways. Charles (2013)
162 distinguished three approaches to EAP, namely, "corpus-based work, genre analysis,
163 and investigation of the social context" (p. 137). In a recent study of JEAP papers,
164 Riazi et al (2020) classified articles according to a rather unwieldy 24 categories of
165 research focus and 9 of 'theoretical orientation'. This level of specification, however,
166 seems to risk overlap (e.g. 'features of discourse' vs 'discourse across disciplines', or
167 'L1 and L2' vs 'intercultural rhetoric'). In an earlier discussion, Author 1 (2009)
168 summarised EAP research as encompassing three broad areas: a textual orientation,
169 focusing on language choices and textual patterns; a contextual orientation,

170 encompassing wider situational aspects, such as the sociology of science, ethnography
171 and sociohistorical perspectives; and a critical orientation which brings an attitude of
172 scepticism and challenge to these contexts, embracing critical discourse analysis and
173 academic literacies.

174

175 In this paper we add another category, embracing the pedagogical orientation that
176 JEAP has often sought to champion. This comprises papers addressing teaching and
177 learning issues, classroom methods, feedback and review, assessment, materials,
178 engagement and attitudes, etc. So, in all, we characterise the research published in
179 JEAP as primarily having a textual, contextual, pedagogical or critical orientation. We
180 are, of course, aware of likely overlap among these categories but sought to discern the
181 main focus of each paper. While these areas comprise a coherent sum of EAP
182 endeavour, it is possible that they are composed and consumed by distinct groups
183 within the community. As a way into this issue, we explore how these different
184 interests are rhetorically elaborated through writers' choices of metadiscourse.

185

186 **4. Metadiscourse and academic interaction in writing**

187 Metadiscourse is now an established approach to the discourse analysis of academic
188 texts (e.g. Consonni, D'Angelo & Anesa, 2020; Author 1, 2017; Author 1 & Author 2,
189 2018). Successful writing rests on the assumptions writers make about the ability of
190 their audience to see arguments as coherent, intelligible and persuasive. Metadiscourse
191 assists our understanding of how this is accomplished by offering a model of the
192 resources available to writers to organise their texts and help readers interpret,
193 evaluate, and react to propositional information (Ädel & Mauranen, 2010; Author 1,
194 2005). Informed by the idea of 'recipient design' (Author 1, 2017), it allows us to see
195 how communication is shaped to guide readers to recognise the writer's stance, see
196 connections between ideas and feel involved in what is being discussed.

197

198 While understood in different ways, we take a broad, integrative view of
199 metadiscourse here, seeing metadiscourse as a coherent set of interpersonal options
200 (Author 1, 2005). This means identifying both the ways writers organise a cohesive
201 text and convey their attitudes to what is discussed. Thus:

202 an awareness of the reader not only involves assisting their grasp of cohesive
203 connections but also the effect that their evaluation and assessments of material
204 might be understood.

205 (Author 1 & Author 2, 2018 p.19).

206

207 Author 1 (2005) therefore distinguishes *interactive* and *interactional* resources (terms
208 adapted from Thompson, 2001). The former refers to what the writer believes should
209 be made explicit to organise the discourse and guide readers' interpretation of the text.
210 The latter concerns the writer's efforts to control the level of personality in a text and
211 establish a suitable relationship to arguments and audience, marking the degree of
212 reader involvement and the expression of attitude and commitment. These purposes,
213 together with example realisations, are:

214

215 ***Interactive resources*** allow the writer to manage the information flow to establish his
216 or her preferred interpretations. They include:

217 • ***transitions*** - devices (mainly conjunctions) used to mark additive, contrastive, and
218 consequential relations (*in addition, but, thus, however*).

219 • ***frame markers*** - refer to text boundaries or structure, including items used to
220 sequence, label stages, announce discourse goals and indicate topic shifts (*finally,*
221 *to conclude, my purpose is*).

222 • ***endophoric markers*** - make additional material salient to help the reader recover
223 the writer's intentions by referring to other parts of the text (*noted above, see Fig,*
224 *in section 2*).

225 • **evidentials** - indicate the source of information from outside the text, mainly
 226 citations (*Smith argues*) and evidential markers (*according to*).

227 • **code glosses** - restates information (*for instance, in other words*).

228

229 **Interactional resources** focus on the participants of the interaction and display the
 230 writer's persona and a tenor consistent with community norms. They include:

231 • **hedges** - withhold the writer's full commitment to a statement (*might, perhaps,*
 232 *possible, about*)

233 • **boosters** - express certainty and emphasise propositional force (*in fact, definitely,*
 234 *it is clear*)

235 • **attitude markers** - state the writer's attitude to propositions, conveying surprise,
 236 agreement, importance, etc (*unfortunately, I agree, surprisingly*).

237 • **engagement markers** - explicitly address readers to focus their attention or include
 238 them in the text through second person pronouns, imperatives, questions and
 239 asides. (*you, consider, note that*)

240 • **self-mentions** - explicit reference to authors (*I, we, our, my*)

241

242 Essentially, the model captures the interpersonal character of communication, so that
 243 more features are found in soft than hard disciplines (Author 1, 2005), in the work of
 244 higher than lower proficiency students (Author 2, 2015) and in some spoken than
 245 written modes (Other & Author 1, 2022). Here we examine intra-journal differences to
 246 determine if metadiscourse use diverges in the presentation of topic areas.

247

248 **5. Data and analysis**

249 We created a *JEAP* corpus by gathering all empirical articles published in the journal
 250 from volume 1 in 2002 to volume 52 in July 2021. The collection included papers in
 251 all regular and special issues but excluded editorials, book reviews and brief reports.

252 This produced a corpus of 441 articles of over 3 million words. As noted above, we

253 followed Author 1 (2009) in identifying 4 groups, textual, critical, pedagogical and
 254 contextual orientations, each embracing a variety of methods. The key themes in these
 255 areas are:

- 256 • textual – discourse, text, linguistic, grammar, lexis
- 257 • critical – CDA, academic literacies, power, ideology, identity
- 258 • pedagogical – teachers, materials, tasks, learning, students, assessment
- 259 • contextual – context, sociohistorical, institution, community, university

260

261 We identified the primary research focus of the paper through a close reading of the
 262 article title, abstract and keywords, giving priority to the author(s)' perception of their
 263 principal approach. Where there was any uncertainty we turned to the research
 264 questions and then to the content of the paper itself. Where there was overlap we
 265 categorised the paper according to the predominant focus of the text as a whole. Both
 266 authors worked independently on all the papers and coded examples according to the 4
 267 categories, achieving a high inter-rater agreement of 97% before resolving
 268 disagreements through discussion. The outcome of this process is shown in Table 1.

269

Table 1 JEAP articles in different strands of research

	texts	words	words per text
Textual orientation	164	1,157,413	7057.4
Critical orientation	124	871,535	7028.5
Pedagogical orientation	112	740,736	6613.7
Contextual orientation	41	304,707	7431.9
Total	441	3,074,391	6971.5

270

271 JEAP, then, is predominantly a journal which addresses textual issues, with 37% of
 272 papers concerned with the discourse and grammar of EAP texts. This concurs with
 273 Riazi et al.'s (2020) recent review of JEAP. It is interesting to note that pedagogically-
 274 oriented papers are generally shorter than the average, while contextually focused ones
 275 tend to require far more elaboration.

276 Using the concordance software *AntConc* (Anthony, 2019), we searched each of the
277 four sub-corpora for the items in Author 1's (2005) list of most common
278 metadiscourse words and phrases in academic writing. As Author 1 observes, this is
279 not an exhaustive list. Metadiscourse is an open category which allows the use of
280 additional items according to need, while insider understandings mean that not all
281 *intended* metadiscoursal meanings are transparent to the analyst. These 500 items,
282 then, are the most *explicit* textual devices and provide a solid basis for examining
283 variations across research practices. It is also worth mentioning that metadiscourse
284 signals can stretch to clause or, occasionally, sentence length, so that frequency counts
285 are merely indicative of cases and are principally a way of comparing patterns of
286 *occurrence* of metadiscourse in different corpora.

287

288 Following Author 1 and Author 2 (2018), we omitted both *and* and *or* from the counts
289 of transitions, since these are typically default options of marking conjunctive relations
290 of addition and alternation rather than rhetorical strategies and produce thousands of
291 examples. We then manually checked each concordance line to ensure that the items
292 were functioning as metadiscourse as *first* and *second* in (1) and exclude extraneous
293 examples as *first*, *second*, *third* and *fourth* in (2).

294 (1) **First**, despite its macrostructure, the RA should have a separate
295 Discussion section. **Second**, the first available drafts had to have been
296 written by the students (the first authors) on their own.

297 (2) the sample encompassed the first, second, third, and fourth year
298 candidates along with graduate students.

299

300 Both authors worked independently and achieved an inter-rater agreement of 97% on
301 interactive and 96% on interactional metadiscourse before resolving disagreements.
302 We then normalised the raw frequencies of to 10,000 words so that the use of
303 metadiscourse could be compared across the four corpora of different sizes. We used

304 Rayson's spreadsheet¹ to calculate log-likelihood (*LL*) value to determine whether the
305 differences of normed frequency were statistically significant. The spreadsheet allows
306 a comparison between more than two corpora, so the raw frequencies and total words
307 of each corpus were entered with the resulting *LL* and significance (*p*) values as output
308 indicating whether the differences were significant.

309

310 **6. An overview of metadiscourse use in JEAP**

311 We identified 201,232 metadiscourse markers overall, averaging 654.5 cases per
312 10,000 words or about 456.3 cases in each paper. There were 103,751 interactive
313 devices (337.5 per 10,000 words) and 97,484 interactional devices (317.1 per 10,000
314 words). The distribution aligns with Author 1 and Author 2's (2018) findings for
315 applied linguistics overall, which showed a substantial decline in interactional
316 metadiscourse in recent years so that frequencies are now dominated by interactive
317 forms. The papers in JEAP, of course, cover a 20 year period and so our figures may
318 disguise this trend, but it is clear that interactional devices, which convey the writer's
319 stance and strength of engagement with readers, continue to play a hugely significant
320 role in these articles.

321

322 Turning to the use of these metadiscourse choices across the different topic foci, we
323 find that the authors of textually oriented papers make considerably more use of
324 metadiscourse overall, and particularly of interactive forms. Both the pedagogical and
325 contextual groups show a similar preference for cohesion constructing interactive
326 forms, but the critical papers have a remarkably low figures for interactive functions
327 (Table 2).

328

329

330

¹ <http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>

331 Table 2 Metadiscourse use across article topics (per 10,000 words)

Metadiscourse type	Textual	Critical	Pedagogical	Contextual
Interactional	329.7	323.9	284.9	327.8
Interactive	373.9	310.1	309.2	346.1
Total	703.6	633.0	594.1	673.9

332

333 We were surprised at the extent of the variation in the use of metadiscourse types as
334 we had assumed there would be greater similarities in such an apparently
335 homogeneous field. One possibility which occurred to us was the potential
336 influence of NNS authorship on the use of metadiscourse as Author 1 and Author 2
337 (2021a), for example, found that most papers in EAP are authored by Asian and
338 European authors and these may favour textual papers. However, there is little
339 evidence for this and reviewing and editing processes involved in a paper's journey to
340 publication appear to rule out the influence of NNS authorship on rhetorical choices
341 (Englander, 2006; Author 1, 2015). The journal itself is relatively non-directive in its
342 recommendations regarding style, with the guide to authors simply specifying the
343 need for inclusive language. But while writers have a certain leeway in creating
344 their connections between ideas and with readers, their choices appear to be
345 constrained by the topics they select, most obviously in the difference between
346 textual and pedagogical papers. In the following sections we explore these choices in
347 more detail.

348

349 **7. Interactional metadiscourse in different strands**

350 Interactional metadiscourse represents the writer's intrusion into the text to comment
351 on what is being discussed or directly address the reader. It concerns the participants
352 of the interaction. Table 2 shows that frequencies were very similar with three of the
353 strands close to an average of 32.5 per 100 words. The importance of these features
354 can be seen in this example:

355 (3) What varieties of accent are used? It **can be argued** that the introduction
 356 of multiple varieties into testing at lower levels **should** be avoided because it
 357 deprives listeners of a major set of phonetic cues. At an advanced level,
 358 however, **we might** argue that inclusion of accented varieties is **desirable** ...
 359 (Critical)

360

361 The use of a question helps to directly involve the reader in the text and encourages
 362 engagement with the issue which is then presented from a point of view which readers
 363 might accept or consider reasonable. This is then challenged as the author offers his
 364 personal view. The use of a question, modal verbs, inclusive *we* and an expression of
 365 attitude all combine effectively to hook the reader and carry the argument forward.

366

367 7.1 Expressing stance

368 Table 3 shows that epistemic markers dominate the expression of stance in JEAP
 369 articles, with hedges heavily predominating in every strand and all differences
 370 statistically significant. These figures broadly reflect practices in applied linguistics
 371 articles more generally (Author 1, 2005; Author 1 & Author 2, 2019).

372 Table 3 Stance features across research strands (per 10,000 words)

	textual	critical	pedagogical	contextual	<i>LL</i>	<i>p</i>
hedges	140.00	138.57	114.56	124.09	276.52	<0.0001
boosters	54.87	46.29	43.98	47.65	132.23	<0.0001
attitude	30.14	35.28	29.43	28.29	64.93	<0.0001
Self-mention	50.90	53.49	42.11	71.54	354.60	<0.0001
Totals	275.92	273.63	230.08	271.57	435.69	<0.0001

373

374 We also see in the table that textual and critical papers, which typically offer tentative,
 375 and often even speculative, explanations for the language patterns they report in texts,

376 are most heavily hedged. Thus trying to explain the decline of a language feature over
377 time can involve relatively tortuous prose:

378 (4) This *suggests* that writers *may have* less confidence in their readers'
379 ability to recover background knowledge about experimental practices.
380 *Possibly* as a result of changing audiences with less knowledge of specialist
381 techniques. (Textual)

382 Reporting pedagogical research, on the other hand, allows for greater assurance in
383 explaining results:

384 (5) *Indeed*, the answers to questions prompting the participants to
385 elaborate on measures they took to enhance validity *showed* that *most*
386 were unfamiliar with the validity evidence they needed to attend to in
387 order to address the types of validity that concerned them most.

388 (Pedagogical)

389

390 Pedagogical papers also contain significantly fewer self-mentions. This was surprising
391 as we had assumed that many of these studies would involve the writers' personal
392 experiences of classroom practice, but this does not seem to be the case. Instead, we
393 find discussions of textbook materials, tasks, programmes, curricula and classroom
394 methods which are not directly related to the reporting authors' experiences. This can
395 be illustrated by these brief extracts from two presentations of methods:

396 (6) A content analysis method was used to study the feedback comments.
397 Each sampled feedback comment was coded into a set of evaluative
398 statements relating to the Task Fulfilment and Organisation category, with
399 each coded evaluative statement assigned to a sub-category. All coding
400 was performed by the author, using Microsoft Excel. (Pedagogical)

401

402 (7) **We** adapted the original survey instrument and only incorporated two
403 further questions in Section A, as **we** found it of interest to identify the

404 multilingual background of the respondents... **We** also deemed it of interest
 405 to know their future publication plans in international English-medium
 406 journals. It was also **our** purpose to elicit perceptions on possible language
 407 burden.... (Contextual)

408

409 Attitude was most frequently expressed by writers presenting work from a critical
 410 perspective. Here the writers' affective assessments contribute to a general evaluative
 411 tone or, as here, can play an important role in establishing a critical context for the
 412 study:

413 (8) The **undeniable shortcomings** of EAP education in Iran, from
 414 **unformed** policies to **uninformed** choices of materials based on
 415 **unverified** assumptions to **flawed** methodologies and **haphazard**
 416 practices by **unqualified** teachers, has hitherto piqued the interest of
 417 several EAP specialists and researchers. (Critical)

418 Attitude markers seem to have been falling steadily over the past 50 years in applied
 419 linguistics (Author 1 & Author 2, 2019), but clearly they continue to play an important
 420 role. This is particularly the case where writers bring a more reflective and evaluative
 421 stance to texts and practices, as in critically-oriented papers.

422

423 Interestingly, boosters are most frequent in the textual papers, where they assist writers
 424 to ensure readers get the bottom line message of the study:

425 (9) The study has **shown** that local grammars can be a valid alternative to
 426 explore discourse acts in academic texts and that such research has
 427 **significant** pedagogical implications for EAP teaching. (Textual)

428

429 (10) This study **exhibits** the **additional** value of exploring epistemic stance
 430 more narrowly through the investigation of specific phenomena **beyond**
 431 **more general** investigations. (Textual)

432

433 Our study also concurs with Author 1 and Author 2's (2016) findings that boosters
 434 conveying objective, data-supported assurances, like *show, demonstrate* and *find*,
 435 greatly exceeded those expressing personal beliefs, such as *believe and know*. The
 436 need to convey epistemic judgements with some caution and reserve, as shown by
 437 more hedges, perhaps indicates a risk -averse academic culture in which strong
 438 commitments and definitive judgements might be counter-productive.

439

440 7.2 Expressing engagement

441 Engagement, the features writers use to rhetorically acknowledge the presence of their
 442 audience, tends to be less studied than stance and is always far less frequent in
 443 research articles. Despite this, it is a key means by which writers present themselves as
 444 sharing, or perhaps failing to share, attitudes with readers and how they manage
 445 solidarity and affiliation. Table 4 shows, once again, significant differences across
 446 topic strands in JEAP, with reader mention, knowledge appeals and directives
 447 dominating the frequencies.

448 Table 4 Engagement features across research strands (per 10,000 words)

	textual	critical	pedagogical	contextual	<i>LL</i>	<i>p</i>
asides	0.03	0.60	1.03	1.18	<i>138.33</i>	<i><0.0001</i>
directives	14.26	15.19	19.16	15.49	<i>69.53</i>	<i><0.0001</i>
knowledge appeals	21.63	14.88	13.55	15.95	<i>214.93</i>	<i><0.0001</i>
questions	0.56	3.17	2.03	0.82	<i>228.68</i>	<i><0.0001</i>
reader mention	17.28	16.48	19.09	22.74	<i>54.84</i>	<i><0.0001</i>
Totals	53.77	50.31	54.85	56.19	<i>23.32</i>	<i><0.0001</i>

449

450 Explicitly referring to the reader is the clearest signal that the writer is considering the
 451 presence of an active audience, and while second person *you* and *your* are the most
 452 explicit demonstration of this, inclusive *we* is the most common reference. In (11) we
 453 see it used in a contextual study to ensure readers are on board with the writer's

454 interpretation and seeing things in the same way. In (12) the pronoun shows an attempt
 455 to create a strong persuasive bond with readers in a pedagogical text.

456 (11) *We* can see that there is less variety in the NNES group. If *we* consider
 457 the total occurrences, shown in Table 2, NNES used 269 connectors fewer
 458 than NES. (Contextual)

459 (12) *We* need teaching materials to raise awareness of key features of
 460 academic discourse for teachers and learners alike. But *we* cannot rely on
 461 most textbooks to do this to an acceptable standard at present. However,
 462 this is not to say *we* should abandon the textbook altogether. Rather, *we*
 463 should strive to raise the quality of textbooks being produced.

464 (Pedagogical)

465

466 Another feature which stands out in Table 4 is the high use of appeals to shared
 467 knowledge in the textual papers. These devices are explicit ways of asking readers to
 468 recognise something as familiar or accepted, seeking to position readers within the
 469 seemingly unproblematic boundaries of disciplinary understandings. But while they
 470 mark what might be considered implicitly agreed, the notion of ‘sharedness’ is
 471 problematic and open to manipulation. Writers may misjudge or, more often,
 472 deliberately exploit what is controversial for rhetorical ends.

473

474 This appears to be a particularly attractive option for textual analysts seeking to create
 475 a connection with readers in order to prepare them for the argument to come:

476 (13) *Of course*, analysing a semi-technical list will only give a partial view
 477 of a disciplinary field's epistemology. (Textual)

478 (14) COCA-Academic is *of course* just part of the larger Corpus of
 479 Contemporary American English (COCA)... (Textual)

480

481 A more rhetorically incisive appeal to shared knowledge helps to influence readers'
482 perceptions of the argument itself, seeking to persuade readers of their interpretation of
483 discourse patterns:

484 (15) *Obviously*, these different types of ethos respectively correlate with
485 a higher use of hedges on the one hand, and a higher use of attitude
486 markers on the other hand. (Textual)

487 (16) Some situations *obviously* require writers to combine both rhetorical
488 steps in the same introduction without disrupting the logical flow in
489 establishing research niches. (Textual)

490 While jargon, familiar acronyms, etcetera all foreground a common frame for seeing
491 the world, these forms more directly help finesse reader agreement and solidarity.

492

493 Directives are the third most common type of engagement marker in the JEAP corpus
494 and are particularly popular among writers of pedagogically-oriented texts. These
495 papers often instruct readers not only what they should attend to in the argument (17),
496 but often to accept that what is being advocated is worth pursuing in their own
497 classrooms.

498 (17) *It is important to note* that reading speed was not a diagnostic
499 subcomponent in the CAEL. (Pedagogical)

500 (18) *We must acknowledge* that our students face social, economic,
501 and educational pressures to compose in SWE. (Pedagogical)

502 (19) In addition, more effort *should* be given to designing motivational
503 strategies for students of lower academic motivation and EFL
504 proficiency. (Pedagogical)

505 Because directives seek to engage and position readers, they carry strong connotations
506 of unequal power, claiming greater authority for the writer (Author 1, 2001). This
507 seems to be most apparent with necessity modals which seem to impose far more on

508 the reader than imperatives, yet despite this, modals remain a common rhetorical
509 option in our corpus.

510

511 Asides and questions are far less common in JEAP papers, although questions do crop
512 up in critical and pedagogical papers. Questions, of course, are at the heart of all
513 academic inquiry, but only occasionally surface in research papers. Their appearance
514 invites readers into the text by addressing them as having an interest in an issue and
515 the good sense to follow the writer's response to it (Author 1, 2016).

516

517 The use of questions seems to be particularly attractive to those working in critical and
518 pedagogical areas. In the former questions not only help capture readers' curiosity
519 (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011), but also provide an orientation for them; a frame
520 where they can be led to the writer's viewpoint (Author 1, 2002).

521 (20) Are language studies journals therefore accepting the use of *we* as
522 a means for single author self-reference? Should they do so? How about
523 sentences such as "This paper thinks/believes? (Critical)

524 In pedagogical papers, the questions posed appear to be more involving, posing
525 issues that readers might ask when considering their own classroom practices:

526 (21) How do participants in advanced academic writing courses learn
527 to analyze genre examples when they are introduced to the genre
528 analysis framework outlined in Swales (1990)? The answer to this
529 question seems unclear in Swales (1990). (Pedagogical)

530 So questions, while relatively rare in these JEAP papers, can play a useful rhetorical
531 role for writers in some areas.

532

533 **8. Interactive metadiscourse use in different strands**

534 Interactive features are those which organise a text to help readers recover the writer's
535 intentions, creating surface cohesion and influencing understandings of propositional

536 material. They function to link material, offer elaborations, signal text stages and refer
 537 to information elsewhere in the text. As such, they not only help glue the text together
 538 but also represent an internal dialogue with readers, reflecting the writer' assessment
 539 of what needs to be done to present information in the most comprehensible and
 540 convincing way for particular readers.

541

542 Table 2 shows significantly different frequencies of interactive features across the
 543 strands, with critical and pedagogical papers containing substantially fewer forms.
 544 Writers of the textual papers, it seems, often go to considerable lengths to spell out the
 545 connections between ideas when trying to explain reasons for their findings:

546 (22) *The last* reason why Persian writers overused 6-word lexical bundles
 547 may be because Persian writers often tended to avoid, **or** modify, the
 548 structures of particular lexical bundles which result in awkward use of
 549 them. *In other words*, Persian writers conveyed a particular function (*i.e.*,
 550 structuring signal), using an unnatural structure. *For instance*, the 6-
 551 word lexical bundles in *examples* (10), (11) are modified versions of as
 552 can be seen in *table* in *extract* 9, which English writers did not choose.

553 (Textual)

554 Here we see the authors pressing frame markers, transition signals, code glosses and
 555 endophorics into service to account for their results.

556

557 In contrast, this extract of similar length taken from an interpretive passage in a critical
 558 paper presents an argument with a sparse use of interactive forms. We see only an
 559 endophoric 'here' referring back to a previously discussed student text, a contrastive
 560 marker and an evidential.

561 (23) Zohra's writing decisions **here** do not stem from a critical incident
 562 or serve as an example of linear transfer often highlighted by studies
 563 that consider the role of students' prior knowledge in transfer. **Instead**,

564 she gives us an insight into the uptake that guided her ultimate transfer:
565 offering an expanded example of the metaphor for transfer that
566 **Alexander et al. (2016)** define as literacy linking, for Zohra works
567 toward expertise only by reshaping multiple literacies in a process of
568 “adaptive remediation” (p. 35). (Critical)

569 Clearly this is a very different kind of discussion with less reflexive signalling and overt
570 structuring. The interpretation is focused on a single case supported by a reference without
571 the need for greater elaboration.

572

573 We find similarly low frequencies of interactive forms in the pedagogical papers,
574 which, like many of the critical papers, are focused on particular case study subjects,
575 as here:

576 (24) Lee joined a group with two NSE students due to seating proximity.
577 She was a little nervous as she knew at least Diane was a very strong
578 student. “She's very serious to her study, and always has great points.”
579 **(weekly chat)** Lee's group decided to write a listening test for level III
580 students at the ELI. The entire test consisted of two parts focusing on
581 improving listening skills **such as** paraphrasing, inferencing,
582 understanding the main idea and listening for details. (Pedagogical)

583 This narrative-style account of a student's participation in a teacher education writing
584 group contains just one evidential, citing the ‘weekly chat’ record as the source of the
585 quote and a code gloss expanding ‘listening skills’. Despite the lack of reader
586 assistance, however, the extract is readable and easy to follow.

587

588 What many of the pedagogical and critical papers have in common is a shared
589 methodological orientation. While some of the critical papers are text focused, taking a
590 broadly Critical Discourse Analytic viewpoint, the majority adopt an academic
591 literacies stance. This generally involves exploring the perspectives of writers and

592 readers in a particular context, with issues of identity, power and authority central. As
 593 with a great deal of pedagogical research, this employs qualitative methods, focusing
 594 on the observation of individuals or groups and structured around interviews.

595

596 This may help explain the variations in our data as Cao and Hu (2014) found clear
 597 cross-paradigmatic differences in the incidence of five types of interactive
 598 metadiscourse in 120 research articles. They explain their findings in terms of the
 599 contrasting epistemologies underlying qualitative and quantitative research paradigms,
 600 So, because it takes a more positivist stance in uncovering generalisable statements,
 601 quantitative research tends to employ more interactive metadiscourse which signpost
 602 logical relationships and statistical links between hypothesized causes and effects. In
 603 contrast, qualitative research is underpinned by a more interpretivist epistemology that
 604 prioritizes participant meanings in order to develop contextualized understandings of
 605 experience. As a result, there are fewer opportunities, and less need, to compare results
 606 with prior expectations, while its analysis of examples, excerpts, and episodes requires
 607 fewer references to tables or numeric structuring devices (Cao & Hu, 2014: 26-7).

608

609 The differences in individual interactive features can be seen in Table 5. While all
 610 differences are significant, we note that textual and contextual papers contain more
 611 code glosses, frame markers and transitions and that writers of critical and contextual
 612 papers used fewer endophorics and evidentials.

613 Table 5 Interactive metadiscourse across strands (per 10,000 words)

Interactive forms	textual	critical	pedagogical	contextual	<i>LL</i>	<i>p</i>
code gloss	65.4	46.9	47.7	53.1	399.3	<0.0001
endophoric	47.2	25.7	31.0	29.9	731.2	<0.0001
evidentials	42.5	30.1	36.2	30.4	244.0	<0.0001
frame markers	53.0	46.5	46.9	57.6	90.0	<0.0001
transition markers	166.0	160.9	147.4	175.1	142.3	<0.0001
Totals	374.1	310.1	309.2	346.10	825.7	<0.0001

614

615 Table 5 suggests that writers of textual and contextual papers are more likely to use code
 616 glosses, devices which help explicate or reformulate material for readers. This finding
 617 might be explained in terms of the often more technical and abstract nature of these
 618 papers. Concepts are sometimes clarified by the use of examples (25) or,
 619 overwhelmingly more often, by reformulations to spell out a technical term (26):

620 (25) Factive verbs *such as* ‘hold’, ‘state’, ‘note’ and ‘require’ were
 621 prevalent for courts and legislation while non-factive verbs *such as* ‘claim’
 622 and ‘comment’ were used to report academics' views. (Textual)

623 (26) Quoted segments consisting of less than a one T-unit were marked as
 624 “phrasal” and then coded according to their phrasal structure: “verb phrase,”
 625 (*defined* as one or more inflected verbs plus any modifiers, objects or
 626 complements accompanying them), “noun phrase,” (*defined* as one or
 627 more nouns plus any modifiers accompanying them) or “adjective phrase”
 628 (*defined* as one or more adjectives plus any modifiers accompanying them).
 629 (Textual)

630 Such highly theoretical, technical knowledge often requires elaboration to assist
 631 comprehension, but is far less common in the generally more accessible critical and
 632 pedagogical papers.

633

634 Endophoric and evidential markers are also more highly represented in the textual
 635 papers. Endophorics aid comprehension of detailed arguments by directing readers
 636 around the text, pointing them towards examples or other parts of the discourse:

637 (27) Consider the italicized expressions of attitude in **example 6**, which
 638 were flatly declared and thus presented as “not at issue.” (Textual)

639 (28) Table 13 **below** shows the frequency of the two semantic motives
 640 discussed **above** across the four sub-corpora. (Textual)

641 (29) Nursing and agriculture journals, as noted **earlier** in this paper,
642 often have required sections. (Textual)

643

644 Argument and interpretation in the other strands, however, seem to involve less
645 redirection of this kind, with more linear structuring and fewer tables and visual data
646 presentations. This example is typical of such papers:

647 (30) Although ‘local’ knowledge may refer to anything from key course
648 information to incidental facts, it is evident from these interviews that
649 international students want to know more about what is going on around
650 them so that they can successfully complete the tasks required of them
651 and at the same time, feel they can contribute to general discussions. It is
652 therefore important that lecturers and students try not to assume local
653 knowledge which may exclude overseas students. (Pedagogical)

654

655 Similarly, textual papers make greater use of citational support with evidential markers.
656 This is the key way in which writers integrate their claims into current knowledge and
657 signal their disciplinary credentials:

658 (31) A key interest of many of the studies **cited** above is how authors
659 adopt various “roles” (*Ivanič, 1998, Tang and John, 1999, p. 25*) such
660 as a meta-textual guide, who directs the reader through the text, and a
661 conductor of research, who outlines methodological procedures (*e.g.*
662 *Harwood, 2005b, Hyland, 2001, Hyland, 2002a, Starfield and*
663 *Ravelli, 2006*). (Textual)

664 In this textual extract we see considerable rhetorical effort invested in establishing the
665 significance of author roles, drawing on six sources to support the point. This kind of
666 evidential backing is far less a feature of critical, pedagogical and contextual papers, again,
667 perhaps because of a greater focus on less generalisable local contexts.

668 The often narrative style of contextually-oriented papers, however, means that these
669 often contain a greater number and range of transition markers, particularly those
670 signalling addition and contrast. We see this in the extracts below:

671 (32) Genres produced include book chapters, journal articles and conference
672 proceedings; *however*, none of the five informants produced a journal article
673 in Swedish, *whereas* all have written journal articles in English. The
674 linguists are **also** less visibly active than historians in terms of outreach
675 genres; *nonetheless*, English and Swedish have been used in this domain by
676 at least one informant. ***On the other hand***, they have been more active than
677 historians in using digital media such as blogs, which have appeared in both
678 English and Swedish. (Contextual)

679 (33) ***Additionally***, awareness-raising activities led by writing professionals
680 were found to effectively reduce instances of text-based plagiarism in
681 students' writing (Huang, 2014). ***However***, writing professionals sometimes
682 encounter difficulties in teaching discipline-specific EAP courses. ***In***
683 ***addition***, writing in such EAP courses taught by language instructors may
684 lack authenticity. (Contextual)

685

686 We can see here a very different argument style than that in (31). Instead of pointing
687 outside the text for supporting testimony for an argument, these writers lay out an
688 account of connected events in a linear way. In both cases information is presented
689 almost as a story. In (32) concessive connectives predominate as the writer holds our
690 interest by confounding our expectations while in (33) there is a preference for
691 additive markers with a concessive used to shift the focus of the argument.

692

693 Finally, frame markers. These extend transitions by helping to organise the text and
694 reduce the readers processing effort by explicitly marking the structure of the
695 argument and labelling boundaries. Cao and Hu (2014) found that frame markers

696 served similar functions in their quantitative and qualitative RAs and, once again they
 697 are most frequent in contextual papers and least common in pedagogical ones. Table 6,
 698 however, shows there are some variations in this broad generalisation.

699 Table 6 Categories of frame markers across strands (per 10,000 words)

	textual	critical	pedagogical	contextual	<i>LL</i>	<i>p</i>
state goals	14.0	13.9	14.9	14.7	539.1	<0.0001
label stages	5.3	4.8	5.3	8.2	214.4	<0.0001
sequencing	22.6	23.3	26.2	21.8	1119.9	<0.0001
shift topics	11.1	4.4	0.5	13.0	836.9	<0.0001

700 Announcing the goal of the research is a function used in all four areas of study, an
 701 unsurprising finding as the need for clear objectives is crucial to encourage readers to
 702 engage with the paper and evaluate its effectiveness.

703 (34) The **aim** of this study is to shed some light on whether it is
 704 beneficial to devote classroom time to the explicit teaching of a limited
 705 number of academic FS and how this might be best achieved.

706 (Pedagogical)

707 (35) In order to address the issues outlined in the introduction, ***the study***
 708 ***aimed to*** uncover the processes through which the three writers
 709 completed their assignments. (Contextual)

710

711 Sequencers are also heavily used by writers irrespective of the topic orientation of
 712 their paper with pedagogical authors making particular use of them. These devices act
 713 like transitions in explicitly linking steps in the argument or clarifying points. As can
 714 be seen, they are particularly useful in setting out the organisation of the paper, or part
 715 of it (36), or to summarise key findings (37):

716 (36) ***In this section*** we ***first*** describe the student participants' reports of
 717 their experiences and their perceptions of their EAP classes, and ***then*** the
 718 teachers' perceptions. (Pedagogical)

719 (37) **First**, a supportive online environment should enable learners to take
 720 charge of their online actions...**Second**, resonating with previous
 721 findings ...**Finally**, to increase students' engagement and motivation,
 722 online writing tools could incorporate popular gaming elements.

723 (Pedagogical)

724

725 Our data show that authors of critical papers rarely indicate that they are shifting
 726 topics during the course of their discussion and pedagogical authors almost never do
 727 so. While the numbers are relatively small, this may indicate something of the
 728 preferred argument patterns taken by the different authors. The contextual and textual
 729 papers often address multiple issues and authors take considerable pains to lead their
 730 readers through the complexities of different topics:

731 (38) **Returning to** the more frequent referential discourse function,
 732 normalized mean per-text counts of the subfunctions between sub-
 733 corpora are displayed in Table 7. (Textual)

734 (39) We **now** look at our results in more detail, beginning with moves.

735 (Contextual)

736

737 Finally, the contextual papers contained substantially more frame markers which serve
 738 to label stages in the unfolding discourse or mark particular pragmatic acts. Once again,
 739 these assist readers to follow the discussion by providing explicit signposts of the
 740 writer's direction:

741 (40) **To summarize**, the concept of parallel language use is not
 742 transparent. (Contextual)

743 (41) **Overall**, we believe that the concepts of linguistic capital and
 744 performative competence complement each other by allowing us to see
 745 how professional capabilities and practices are construed in discourse.

746 (Contextual)

747 The pervasiveness of these features in the contextual papers perhaps suggests a sense among
748 writers that their topic, or argument form, requires more explicit elaboration than normally
749 found in JEAP papers.

750

751 **9. Conclusions**

752 This study has taken a novel approach to discourse variation by exploring the intra-
753 journal use of metadiscourse in the *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, the
754 flagship journal of EAP. Classifying every one of the 441 papers published between
755 volume 1 and 52 as taking a textual, critical, contextual or pedagogical orientation, we
756 have identified significant differences in the preferences for metadiscourse use.

757

758 We found that textually-oriented papers contained the highest density of metadiscourse
759 markers with both interactive and interactional types exceeding the frequencies in the
760 other areas. Pedagogical papers, of which there are substantially fewer, contained the
761 least metadiscourse per 10,000 words. Stance markers were broadly similar across
762 three areas but significantly fewer in the pedagogical papers, indicating, perhaps, a
763 more descriptive and less argumentative style of discussion. Writers of pedagogical
764 and contextually-oriented papers, however, appear to make greater efforts to engage
765 their readers, with significantly more directives in the former and reader mentions in
766 the latter. Both invite readers to share the writer's experience of the situation observed
767 and accept the interpretation offered. Regarding interactive metadiscourse, which help
768 smooth readers' experience and comprehension of a text, we found critical and
769 pedagogical papers contain substantially fewer forms. We attribute this to the often
770 qualitative approaches of these papers and the more narrative style they adopt.

771

772 These differences in metadiscourse practices, then, are more than the proclivities of
773 individual authors but can be seen as representing different methodological and
774 epistemological practices. They indicate that while we can identify a broad

775 disciplinary community of EAP scholars and practitioners, there are clear strands of
776 interests within this community and that these interests are characterised by discursal
777 variations. We believe that these findings help to reveal the rich complexity of our
778 field and something of the range of interests and discourses which the journal
779 represents. We hope also to have pushed metadiscourse research into a new direction
780 and encourage further work in intra-disciplinary metadiscourse variation. Finally, this
781 evidence of intra-disciplinary differences may raise the awareness of students and
782 teachers of EAP regarding variability within even a single journal and reinforce their
783 efforts to reveal and teach specific forms of language use.

784

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Journal Pre-proof

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Metadiscourse choices in EAP: an intra-journal study of JEAP

Dear Zak,

Thank you for the comments and for taking the trouble to get a third reviewer. I know how hard it is to get people to read papers so we appreciate this. Thanks to for the opportunity to resubmit.

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