Functional Analysis of Engagement Markers in Academic Spoken Genre: Discussion Sessions in Focus

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ABSTRACT

The study investigates the use and functions of engagement markers in students' nine discussion sessions (making 74904 words) taken from the MICASE corpus which was analyzed using Hyland's (2016) taxonomy of engagement markers, including four main functions of listeners' mention, questions, appealing to shared knowledge, directives, and personal asides. The results showed that engagement markers were found to be frequently enough to be considered a significant feature in interactive spoken genres. Also, it was found out that about half of the engagement realizations were dedicated to the listeners' mention highlighting the engagement of the audiences and listeners adding an interactive sense to the discussion sessions. Moreover, within the four functions, some engagement markers were more frequent than others suggesting the importance of highlighting these features for students to use when participating in the similar genres. Thus, engagement markers can play a pivotal role in the realization of the interactive nature of spoken genres. The findings of this study could be used in teaching academic English spoken genres.

1. Introduction

Much has been done on academic spoken and written discourse. Regarding the former, most studies have paid attention to lectures (Richards, 1983), more specifically, the lecture comprehension process. As for the latter, academic writing is not considered an objective form of discourse anymore, rather viewed as a persuasive and rhetorical discourse imbued with the viewpoints of authors under the influence of the constructivist perspective. Additionally, academic discourse involves social communication between authors and their audience; the authors not only convey their ideas through the text but also try to establish an interpersonal relationship with the audience by expressing

attitudes, and certainty. Authors should consider the audiences' background knowledge, personal characteristics, processing limitations, and face needs. In this process, according to Hyland (2005), they usually attempt to claim solidarity with the audience, appraise previous works, and recognize alternative ideas; thus, in order to build a convincing argument, one should focus on the level of personality control in the text.

One of the devices used in academic discourse is meta-discourse, coined by Zelling Harris (1959) that is employed to describe words or phrases commenting on a sentence. It can be any phrase within clauses or sentences. More specifically, meta-discourse is used to show both the aim and the direction of a text. Hyland (2004) has defined it as linguistic devices used for organizing the text and presenting the authors' attitudes toward both content and the audience. Similarly, Crismore (1989) believes that meta-discourse can be referred to as a linguistic device in both written and spoken texts which helps the audience organize, decipher, and evaluate the information, but it does not add anything to the content. According to Vande Kopple (1985), researchers have divided meta-discourse markers into textual and interpersonal categories.

Through meta-discourse framework, communication can be understood as social engagement. It is the way one can project oneself within the discourse through focusing on the text content and its ultimate audience. Then, meta-discourse can be used as a welcoming facility by the writer to not only make the text more coherent and understandable through improving its readability, but it can also grasp the full image of the given context and how the text and its message can be conveyed and related through some other important factors (e.g. credibility, personality, and audience-sensitivity; Hyland, 2000).

As a multidimensional model which included the basic ideas of Thompson's model (1998), Hyland (2005) proposed a model of meta-discourse consisting of two major categories of interactive and interactional meta-discourse markers. The model added to the previous knowledge in that it included two main elements of stance and engagement markers as the focal points (Hyland, 2005). The way the text is organized and the readers' comprehension is enhanced deals with the interactive meta-discourse markers. If the writer is more concerned with the receiver of the message and tries to establish a satisfactory basis for his argument based on those targets and needs, he has highlighted the interactive part of the meta-discourse concerns. Contrary to this, through the interactional aspect, the writer's attitude and interest and how the reader can construct the text are made more explicit and hence, the reader can better anticipate his aims and predictions of the text (Hyland, 2005). Through Hyland's (2005) model, all of the necessary elements the justification of the interaction and the connection between the writer and his readers are elaborated. He believes that writing both illuminates an external reality and also constructs a social relationship with readers through producing some original texts. The main elements of stance and engagement enables the writer make interaction in academic writing. There are a variety of stance markers including the way one tries to make hedges and self-mentions and make use of some attitude markers and boosters. Engagement markers consist of how writers implement the shared knowledge, directives and questions and the way they utilize personal asides and reader pronouns (Hyland, 2005).

In the same vein, Halliday (1999) pointed out that textual meta-discourse shows how a cohesive and coherent text can be made through linking and making connections between different individual and isolated propositions and the way the building blocks of these propositions interact with other elements within the context to make a unified text. Hyland (2004) has provided a functional approach,

suggesting two kinds of meta-discourse: interactive and interpersonal. The former refers to linguistic devices associated with the ways of organizing texts and includes evidentials, coding words, and markers of frame and endophoric. The latter involves the audiences in the text by shifting their focus towards the information coming from the writer and the other audience. Interpersonal meta-discourse refers to using language to encode interaction, take roles, and express and understand feelings, explanations, and evaluations. It consists of makers, hedges and self-mentions and make use of some attitude and engagement markers, self-mentions, and boosters.

Then, Hyland (2005) asserted that engagement markers are different methods through which authors bring their audience into the text to involve them and wait for their probable reactions. He further states that they have two functions of acknowledging the audience using inclusion and disciplinary solidarity and positioning the audience. Regarding the former, using reader pronouns and interjections, the audiences are addressed as participants in the arguments. As for the latter, the authors attempt to pull the audience into the texts, predict their probable objections, and guide them to specific interpretations. Based on their function, engagement markers seek to both solicit the solidarity of the readers and craft their agreement (Hyland, 2005). The former could be conducted using pronouns of the reader and his personal asides; whereas, the latter can take the form of directives, appeals to common information and questions.

The features of the meta-discourse can also be taught to the learners which is highly valuable in three ways (Hyland, 2005); firstly, the cognitive demands of the texts and the way they can contribute to the understanding of the text becomes evident for them. Secondly, taking a sound and clear stance based on their assumptions is attained through the existing evidences. Thirdly, negotiation of the stance can be held with readers. Meta-discourse can also be prioritized within the classroom to have other benefits such as making context-related propositional information, improving the argumentativeness of the text and its comprehension and remembering, working on the text organization and its coherence, signaling writer's doubts and uncertainty based on the propositional information, giving readers some directions on where and how subjective ideas enter the text. It can also contribute to highlighting writers' interpretations and views to the readers, and the way he tries to help readers' processing system and parsing information through providing enough information and linkages.

1.1 Engagement Markers

According to Hyland (2005), language users can interact in written texts in the same way that they do in spoken text, however due to the use of different mediums, it would have different effects. This view is regarded as the perception of social engagement through the academic writing where writers can interact with readers. Therefore, the contexts in which the meta-discourse occurs, gives due importance to it as a cogent analytical tool (Hyland, 2005). It means that specific cultural, linguistic and professional communities with their particular needs and expectations are mutually connected with the ways writers engage and communicate with readers and negotiate meaning and argument. Based on such engagement, the writer evaluates the readers' expectations and needs for communication and provides enough cues to maintain communication with propositional content. As a result, in order to explore academic writing and its different genres and compare discourse communities with their specific rhetorical preferences, there is a need to refer to the findings of the metadiscoursal analysis.

Engagement markers are some text characteristics used to decipher the way writers recognize their potential readers and really interact with them based on their expectations and communicate and have argument with them, and direct them as their discourse partners and participants (Hyland, 2005). These engagement markers are categorized into following five categories as directives, reader pronoun, questions, imperative, and shared knowledge. Common to all of these meta-discourse features is the way the writer is aware of his audience; hence they should have good command of the pragmatic competence of discourse (Hyland, 2005).

Hyland (2005) states that the first strategy of crafting reader agreement, directives, instructs the audience to perform actions or sets them the scene to view the author's expectations. He categorized directives into cognitive, textual, and physical acts. The first group guides the readers into another part or text, and the second one directs them to understand and be persuaded in a way determined by the author. Finally, the third one asks the readers to perform specific actions, which are done in the text. According to Hyland (2002a), directives can be identified in three ways, including the way an imperative is used, a modal referred to an addressee, and a predicative adjective that expresses the authors' statement of necessities. The second strategy appeals to the knowledge shared between the addressees and explains the audience's consent by making an obvious argument regarding what is relatively unchangeable (Hyland, 2001). The following is an example of the second strategy:

Physics as an important discipline is well known to be difficult for some students.

The third strategy, questions, is employed to establish a niche (Hyland, 2002b). As Webber (1994) declared:

Questions create anticipation, arouse interest, challenge the reader into thinking about the topic of the text, and have a direct appeal in bringing the second person into a kind of dialogue with the writer, which other rhetorical devices do not have to the same extent (p. 266).

Consider the following example:

Why do they believe in these issues?

Having the importance of engagement markers on board, the study intends to evaluate the realizations and functions of engagement markers in discussion sessions.

1.2 Previous Studies on Engagement Markers

Hyland (1999) investigated how meta-discourse markers were used in textbooks and studies on Applied Linguistics, Biology, and Marketing. He observed that more hedges were found in those of Biology, while more observing evidentials and features of relational markers in texts of Applied Linguistics. Fewer evidentials and endophorics were observed in texts related to Marketing. In a similar study, Hyland and Tse (2004) focused on how meta-discourse markers were used in post-graduate dissertations in different fields including Applied Linguistics. He found that Humanities and Social Sciences used meta-discourse markers more than non-Humanities disciplines.

Hyland (2005) investigated engagement markers in a study corpus from different fields. He also interviewed some reviewers to ensure the engagement functions of the linguistic features used

in the different research papers analyzed. He concluded his study by providing an improved model for the analysis of the engagement markers.

Dafouz-Milne (2008) explored four types of texts, including textbooks, student writings, science popularization advertisements, and research articles on how meta-discourse markers were used. He attempted to investigate the way meta-discourse markers were used in persuading the audience on a corpus consisting of 40 opinion columns. He found that two types of meta-discourse were used in columns of English and Spanish; however, logical markers and code glosses were used differently. Since he focused on the role of the use of the two types, persuasion was established.

In a study on 54 papers from natural and social sciences, Abdi (2011) observed that engagement markers were widely implemented in different studies. Furthermore, he found 39 engagement markers in the Introduction and 47 in the Method section, while there were 134 engagement markers in Result and Discussion. His research study proved engagement markers as one of the most common markers of meta-discourse in the Result and Discussion section.

Ayuni's (2015) study explored speech performance of the learners, and observed that they frequently implemented engagement markers of reader/audience pronoun, directives, questions, and common knowledge. It was shown that learners noticed audiences' presence and engaged with them in communication, while also reporting the reader/audience pronoun (62.66%) as the most widely used engagement marker. Thus, the researcher concluded that learners noticed the referents of their speech. The next category, questions, constituted 18.28%, followed by directives (14.38%) and appeal to shared knowledge (4.48%).

Hyland and Jiang (2016) investigated the engagement realizations over 20 years from four disciplines. They ran their study on a fairly large corpus of words as large as 2.2 million one selected from the five great journals in four fields at different time periods. They found that more explicit markers of engagement were used than in the past. However, they observed no relationships between the length of research articles and this increase. They also traced some changes concerning the use and types of engagement markers in sections of papers.

Zou and Hyland (2020) investigated how bloggers from various disciplines engaged their audiences. Accordingly, they explored soft and hard fiends of around 132 posts from different blogs and found that those of soft disciplines had significantly used more mentions by the readers and other markers as directives, and questions. On the other hand, hard blogs in hard disciplines were based on resources that claimed more authority of the author and needed much more common understanding.

In a study on markers in a grammar textbook (A Student Grammar of the English Language), Markovic (2021) found all of the five engagement markers. He also reported that directives, reader pronouns, and appeals to common knowledge were used much more than personal asides and questions. He further argued that this large use of engagement markers in the textbook could be justified on the basis that it acquired the primarily informal tone of involving the audience in the text.

Although much has been done on engagement markers in various discourses (both spoken and written), few, if any, studies have paid attention to these markers in the discussion sessions as a spoken genre. Besides written discourse, spoken discourse is important in the academic setting. Therefore, considering the importance of this discourse and the ignorance of this area by previous

studies, the current paper attempts to explore engagement markers in spoken discussions between students and speakers at the University of Michigan. More specifically, the current study explores the following research questions:

1. What kind of engagement markers are used in the discussion sessions as an interactive spoken genre?

2. What engagement markers are most frequently used in discussion sessions as an interactive spoken genre?

2. Methodology

To conduct the present study qualitative content analysis was employed. In this kind of analysis, as a systematic research method, textual and spoken data are used by researchers to explore different language aspects (Mayring, 2021).

2.1 Corpus

Based on the research objectives, discussions between students and instructors at the University of Michigan were analyzed. These discussions were selected from the Michigan Corpus of Academic Spoken English. The selected discussion sessions were 9 and only these discussion sessions were available in the MICASE. The recordings with a duration of 532 minutes were prepared. The total number of words was 74904. Speakers spoke much more than students.

Table 1
Corpus Characteristics

Title	Department	Source	Quality of Interaction	Participants		Date	Duration (min)	Word Count
				Students	Speakers			
Philosophy	Humanities	Michigan University	Mostly Interactive	20	10	1998/04/16	51	8355
Biology	Biological and Health Sciences	Michigan University	Mixed	16	13	1998/06/22	55	7424
Economics	Social Sciences and Education	Michigan University	Mixed	30	8	1999/04/15	61	8526
Intro Biology	Biological and Health Sciences	Michigan University	Highly interactive	21	22	1999/02/10	59	6899
Intro Anthropology	Social Sciences and Education	Michigan University	Mixed	22	18	1999/04/09	51	7893
History Review	Social Sciences and Education	Michigan University	Mostly interactive	22	20	2000/06/20	119	15679
Heat and Mass Transfer	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Michigan University	Mostly monologic	10	4	2000/07/17	48	7570
Intro to American Politics	Social Sciences and Education	Michigan University	Highly interactive	24	18	2000/07/27	55	7220
Intro Astronomy	Physical Sciences and Engineering	Michigan University	Mixed	20	4	2001/01/10	33	5338
Total							532	74904

2.2 Data Analysis

Based on the taxonomy presented by Hyland (2005, pp. 222-223), engagement markers were analyzed. These markers are presented in the following table:

Table 2

The Engagement Markers of the Study

Engagement Features	Items
Reader Mentions	(the) reader's, one's, our, us, we, you, your
Questions	?
Appeals to Shared Knowledge	integrate, notice, recall, order, use, imagine, key, see, let x = y, look at, mark, measure, consider, mount, must, note, refer, find observe, pay, picture, prepare, recover, remove, regard, remember, review, state, select, set, show, suppose, turn, take, think about, think of
Directives	add, need to, allow, analyze, apply, should, arrange, assess, calculate, ought, demonstrate, choose, classify, let us, compare, connect, consult, insert, contrast, define, develop, determine, do not, input, employ, ensure, estimate, evaluate, follow, go, have to, increase, assume, let's
Personal Asides	by the way, and, incidentally

2.3 Procedure

The first step included collecting the corpus. Accordingly, the researchers downloaded the discussion sessions from the MICASE corpus and saved them in word document format. The second step was allocated to data analysis. In this step, the researchers searched the discussion sessions for the realizations of engagement markers following the taxonomy proposed by Hyland (2005). The third step was the reanalysis of the corpus to make sure of the analysis as some engagement features could have had more than one function or lack an engagement function. This step was very demanding as, in some cases, it was necessary to go through the text and read it multiple times to make sure of the functions of engagement markers. In the fourth step, a sample of 3 discussion sessions was given to two experts doing research in the same area of study to check the analysis. The researchers were selected based on the fact that they had publications on metadiscourse markers. The fifth step included the tabulation of the findings and discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of the study were evaluated and discussed in the following order after the corpus analysis. First, the overall results concerning the realizations of engagement and its four categories are presented and discussed, following the evaluation and discussion of the study results related to each category and the most frequent engagement markers in the four categories. Finally, the possible pedagogical implications of the results are presented.

Table 3 displays how frequent the engagement markers are within the analyzed corpus. As shown, the realizations of engagement markers in this study are much more than the results reported in Hyland (2005; 2016). One possible reason for this difference could be related to the genres analyzed in these studies. It seems that engagement markers are more frequent in the spoken genres. Thus, it could be stated that spoken genres are more interactive compared to written genres. In spoken genres, the discourse is more listener-oriented, which is an aspect of interaction. However, writers are more inclined to have the readers follow the arguments and claims presented in written discourse. Thus, it is usual to have more realizations of engagement markers in spoken than written discourse.

Another justification comes from the presence of audiences in both discourses. In spoken discourse, the listener plays a pivotal role in the progress of discourse, making it necessary to use greater markers that could engage them in the interaction. Thus, in spoken discourse, especially in discussion sessions, we need to have the listeners' attention and complete engagement with the content to have the discussion continue.

Table 3
Realizations of Engagement Markers

	Frequency	Per 1000
Engagement Markers	7436	91.09

Pedagogically, students need to become aware that they should use engagement markers as a strategy for including and urging listeners to follow their discourse. They also need to know that they can use engagement markers to acknowledge and value the listeners' presence and guide them through the interaction as intended. The corpus was analyzed for the frequencies of categories of engagement markers and its results are provided in Table 4.

Table 4
Realizations of Engagement Markers' Subcategories

	Frequency	Per 1000
Reader/speaker mentions	4021	49.26
Questions	1537	18.82
Directives	1063	13.02
Appeals to shared knowledge	815	10
Total	7436	91.09

As Table 4 depicted, the speaker mentions category is the most frequent among other engagement categories, which is in line with earlier studies on engagement (Hyland, 2005, 2016). This result seems usual as listeners' mention is the most explicit and direct way to involve listeners in a discourse. This presence of the listener can be reached when different personal pronouns are used in a discourse.

Next on the list is the question category. It is found that we can expect more questions in spoken discourse for the sake of discourse flow, catching the listeners' attention, and ensuring their active participation.

The directives category has received greater attention compared with the appeal to the shared knowledge category. This result could suggest that we mostly need to ask the listener to perform actions or to follow the speakers' viewpoint in a spoken discourse. This kind of function could be realized through markers pointing to imperative, obligation, and the speakers' judgment of necessity or importance.

The results in Table 4 could suggest that speakers make a vast emphasis on binding listeners and speakers together by pronouns such as "we" and "you" in spoken genres such as discussion sessions. This engagement could signal the close relationship between speakers and listeners and treat them as discourse community members practicing the same level in discourse. Therefore, pedagogically, we should encourage participants in spoken genres to smooth the interaction by using pronouns and engage listeners by narrowing the broad distance between speakers and listeners.

It is important, pedagogically, to inform language learners that they need to use questions as a strategy to engage the listener in discourse. The answer to the question could show the comprehension of the content discussed in the sessions and guarantee the listeners' engagement in the discussion, which has a key role in the continuation of the discussion.

The listener's pronouns are the most explicit engagement markers that include listeners in the discourse (see Table 5). Accordingly, "you" and "your" (Examples 1-2) are the most explicit ways a speaker can regard the presence of listeners. The analysis of the corpus showed that these markers were the most frequently used engagement markers. It is worth mentioning that to keep the interaction moving, speakers use a self-mention pronoun to include listeners with them, treating claims, arguments, or common knowledge while simultaneously referring to themselves.

Example 1: Um w- what were the kinds of things _**you**_ worried about or what are the things that _**you**_ can think of right now, that may not have given _**you**_, as accurate a picture as _**you**_ wanted, of,

Example 2: Okay you could, you could make **_your_** points further apart, number one, you can also do what about the distance you're collecting data? This is what Mary was worried about too. You can put what?

Table 5
Realizations of Listeners' Mention Category of Engagement Markers

	Frequency	Per 1000
You, Your	2308	28.27
Me, Mine, My	900	11.02
Our, Us, We	813	9.95
Total	4021	49.26

The use of the pronoun "we" could highlight that in such a corpus as discussion sessions, most of the participants are students. Thus, they need such marker to clearly show that they are sharing similar understanding and goals (Examples 3-4).

Example 3: Um, well **_we_** didn't have any set [S1: okay] distances because **_we_** were doing spot mapping.

Example 4: **_We_** typically see those in the evening. How about owls? Did **_we_** sample owls? No, **_we_** didn't.

All the above pronouns act as devices that could show the dialogic nature of discussion sessions. To express their view or share them or ask for clarification, they need to refer to pronouns "I", "we", and "you" (Examples 5-7).

Example 5: - **_I_** did this the same this time as **_I_** did last time.

Example 6: **_We_** don't have a point count, but **_we_**'re recording everything that that **_we_** see and hear along that.

Example 7: And then, following summer, **_you_** can tell them what the job was, tell them how many people were involved.

The current study results seem to be different from what Hyland (2005, 2016) found and it could be devoted to the dialogic nature of discussion sessions as a spoken genre. Hyland (2005, 2016) focused on written discourse, suggesting that in written discourse a pronoun such as "you" is absent as writing does not have dialogic nature.

Pedagogically, learners should understand that the use of such terms is linked to the discourse. The use of pronouns "you" and "your" could show that their application is necessary because such pronouns naturally show that the participants are not sharing the

same ideas. It seems that in discussion sections, participants prefer to keep a firm stance concerning their comments, claims, arguments, or statements.

The results in Table 6 indicate that the question category of engagement has revived noticeable attention for speakers in the discussion sessions. This result is significantly different from and greater than the results reported by Hyland (2005, 2016), probably because raising questions is a favorite strategy to engage the listener actively in the discussion.

Table 6
Realizations of Question Category of Engagement Markers

	Frequency	Per 1000
Question/?	1537	18.82

As in example 8, it is clear that raising questions and providing answers could explicitly keep the listener's attention to the content of the discussion and have the listener following the track.

Example 8: What the bird community is? Let's say that the ……

In some parts of the corpus, speakers used questions to address the listener directly, which could result in more interactive discussion sessions (see Example 9).

Example 9: Anything else Mary?

In some examples (see Example 10), speakers include listeners with themselves, raise questions, and point out that they are both at the same level. In such cases, speakers do not intend to show the power of their knowledge but to decrease the distance between the speaker and listener. Sometimes the listener could be a student.

Example 10: What would we put this under?

Some of the questions in the corpus analysis function as clarifying the curiosity of listeners (see Example 11). Speakers notice this curiosity and present it in a form of a question. This strategy is very helpful as sometimes students are not brave enough to raise their questions.

Example 11: Mary, Con: put you on the spot? This is what make ….

Some questions are raised to seek agreement from the listeners and guarantee they are following the discourse (see Example 12).

Example 12: I emailed you, Okay?

Thus, pedagogically, we need to show this multi-functionality to students to help them use the question for these functions rather than merely for its general function of seeking information. It is also necessary to show clearly to students how a question is treated differently in spoken and written discourse. They should be provided with examples of how functions of questions are realized in spoken discourse.

Directives include utterances that require the listener to perform actions or understand everything as the speaker determines (Hyland 2001, 2002) (see Example 13). The results in Table 7 showed that the engagement markers directives are more frequently used in spoken compared to written genres. This higher rate of use could be due to the function of this kind of engagement marker, as imperatives and obligation modals are more needed in face-to-face relationships to ask listeners to perform actions in authentic context.

Example 13: **_Let's_** write it down in this room, in your very own room.

Table 7
Realizations of Directive Category of Engagement Markers

	Frequency	Per 1000
Directive	1063	13.02

In the written genre, we mostly report on an action or actions carried out in the experiment that has been done to make the discourse listener-oriented. Thus, in spoken genres, speakers are required to use more directives to make the interaction more meaningful.

This engagement marker helps to realize the interactive function based on the fact that it has three functions: a) imperative, which requires doing or performing an action; b) modal obligation to address the importance of utterance; and c) a predicative objective which express the writers' evaluation of the necessity to control a complement to a clause.

According to the results, the most frequent engagement markers that perform directive functions are "do not, go, let's, have to, and should" (see Table 8). These items could perform three functions. Directives "do not and go" were used to serve the functions of directives by ordering the listener to perform an action (see Example 14). This function is natural in spoken discourse to have the listeners' attention and keep them following the discourse.

Example 14: Okay? But do not try to guess in multiple choice.

In Example 15, "do not" was used to set speakers and listeners at the same level. This is naturally slowed in sentences with the subject pronoun "we".

Example 15: because we do not know what the distribution of a lot of …

In example 16, we have the obligation function realized through the use of "should and go" in the same sentence. This could show the obligation concerning the performance of action.

Example 16: You should do the essay first, and you should you should spend an hour on it.

Table 8

The Most Frequent Directive Markers

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Do not	304	28
Go	181	17
Let's	105	10
Have to	104	10
Should	86	7
Others	282	27
Total	1063	100

Less than other engagement markers' categories, the appeal to shared knowledge is realized in at least 10 per 1000 words. This category was found greater in this study compared to those carried out on written discourse by Hyland (2005, 2016). These results could be due to the fact that speakers intend to position the listener within the authentic realm of dialogic shared knowledge (Hyland, 2001). Taking the listener agreement into account as an important interactive factor, the speakers need to build their speech on what is implicitly agreed. The decision on what to be considered as shared knowledge between the speaker and listener is a challenging issue. Thus, it is important to give a list of terms and markers, which could involve a direct and explicit call for the listener to recognize that something talked about or referred to is common and shared knowledge to the discourse community.

Table 9

Realizations of the Appeal to Shared Knowledge Category of Engagement Markers

	Frequency	Per 1000
Appeal to shared knowledge	815	10

The most frequent engagement markers in appeal to shared and knowledge are "see, use, take, and remember", all of which refer to the shared knowledge (See Example 17).

Example 17: So, *__take__* Germany for example ……….

4. Conclusion and Future Directions

The present study explored the way engagement markers were used in discussions between speakers and students at the University of Michigan. It was found that some markers were not used, while some – such as the reader mentions – were used more than others. Furthermore, some engagement markers such as directives were not used much. This may be associated with the fact that speakers prefer a humbler and friendlier way of talking in the academic setting. However, it is noteworthy that by 'academic setting', we mean spoken rather the written discourse. There are some differences between the written and spoken discourse. Generally, speakers prefer an informal pattern, which can enhance social support, affectivity, and shared goals (Bondi, 2018; Luzon, 2013).

Findings of this study could suggest the following implications. First, consciousness raising concerning the use of engagement markers and its multifunctionality in language education contexts in academic spoken genres should be considered. Second, speakers, especially novice writers, should be familiar with the most frequent engagement markers used in academic spoken genres.

Despite these implications, however, there are some limitations and suggestions. First, the corpus analyzed in this study is not large enough to be representative. Moreover, further research can be suggested to analyze discussions in different universities, especially universities from different cultures, to explore the role of culture. Besides, further studies can be suggested to investigate the role of gender, age, and experience to provide a more comprehensive view. Furthermore, future studies can be suggested to investigate the role of history. In other words, these discussions can be explored diachronically, investigating and comparing discussions of various decades.

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