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Analysis of the Use of Metadiscourse Markers in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Panama Case Verdict

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Abstract
The current paper aims at analyzing metadiscourse markers in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdict related to the Panama Case. The metadiscourse markers, the components of the language which structure the text and address the readers are essential in legal texts for improving comprehensibility, reasoning and convincing. From the Panama Case verdict analysis, this research seeks to find the types of markers of metadiscourse used by the judges and the goals of using such markers. Using Hyland's (2005) theoretical framework of metadiscourse, the study divides the markers into interactive and interactional means and thus sheds light on how these markers enable structuring of legal arguments as well as impacting the legal thinking of the judiciary. The results suggest that metadiscourse markers are employed consciously in order to lead the readers through the legal proofs and analyses, control the amount of information released at one time and build a relationship with the reader. This research provides practical recommendations for lawyers and academicians specializing in Legal Linguistics and the Rhetoric of Judicial Writing.

Keywords: Metadiscourse Markers, Supreme Court of Pakistan, Panama Case Verdicts, Clarity, Argumentation, Persuasiveness.

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Background of the Study:

Metadiscourse markers are definable features in the text that assist the writer in

the management and development of the discourse, interaction with the reader, signaling of the writer's positions and attitudes to the discourse content (Hyland, 2005). These are crucial hallmarks in writing for academic and occupational communication because in such writing clarity, logical progression and ability to engage the reader are critical. Indeed, contracts, statutes as well as judgments depend on contractual or legal language to present the legal/forensic and logical/philosophical analysis. Thus, it is imperative to study the introduction and distribution of metadiscourse markers in legal texts in order to gain insight into the processes that are occurring when a judge is making a rule.

The Panama Case which is related to the corruption and money laundering allegations against Nawaz Sharif, the then-Prime Minister of Pakistan concluded with a historic judgment in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. This has been said, due to the complexity and importance of the case, it perfectly suits the purpose of analyzing the practical application of metadiscourse markers in judicial text. These verdicts are not only vital legal decisions but also the complex text structures which contain rhetorics and aim as the legal opinions to numerous target audiences: the legal personnel, the mass and other interested media outlets. Studies on metadiscourse markers have mainly covered academic writing (Hyland, 2004; Adel, 2006), business communication (Zhang, 2016) and educational discourse (Crismore et al., 1993). Despite the growing interest in the academic community on metadiscourse markers and their effects in different written discourses, examination of their use in legal text especially in judicial decisions is sparingly implemented. Slepecki (2015), noted that research focusing on the practical interface of metadiscourse markers has been lacking in the literature. This is why there is lacuna in the effectiveness of how the metadiscourse marker is used in the enhancement of the readability, coherence and persuasive features of judicial opinions.

Hyland (2005) categorizes metadiscourse markers into two main types: conveyance interactive and interactional. These are further sub-divided into transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses which serve the purpose of interactive markers in distinguishing organisation of the discourse and the flow of the reader through the text. Interactional markers focus on the writer's communication with the reader and consist of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers and self-mentions. The following framework will be employed as a tool of analysis in discussing the Panama Case verdicts in order to elicit the manner in which the Supreme Court judges utilize these markers to build their legal arguments and to explain their decisions.

The analysis of metadiscourse markers used in the Panama Case verdicts will give an understanding of the specific patterns in the judiciary's rhetorical strategies. It will also have implications for the general topic of legal linguistics by pointing out the role of metalinguistic discourse in lawmakers' writing. This research will endeavour to meet the current literature gap and provide the following contributions to the discourse as well as solution, propositions for legal analysts, educators, law students, and scholars who are interested in language and law relationships.

Problem Statement:

The decree of the Supreme Court of Pakistan is particularly the one in important legal issues like Panama Case are legal opinions and it calls for the use of comprehensible, logical, and persuasive language to express legal findings and recommendations to a variety of stakeholders. Nevertheless, there is a lacuna in the literature regarding the specific uses of metadiscourse markers, which can be defined as referential or relational linguistic features that facilitate the organization of text and interaction of recipients with it in judicial texts. This gap is rather considerable, as the ability of working through legal communication

influences the public awareness, the media, and the perception of judiciary impartiality.

It is noteworthy that the Panama Case verdicts to the extent of the allegations of corruption against the then-Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are most complicated, and widely covered in terms of media visibility and public interest. Knowledge of the specific types of metadiscourse markers used in these verdicts can prove useful for analysis to comprehend the strategies of the discourse employed by the judges when formulating their decisions, predisposing the audience to certain types of reactions and regulating the process of legal argumentation.

The study fills the gap is that there is no extensive previous study on the utilization and role of metadiscourse markers in the Supreme Court judgments, particularly in the Panama Case. Hence, the purpose of this research is to determine the role that these markers play in the comprehensibility, organization and persuasiveness of the writing done by a judge. Using Hyland's (2005) framework of metadiscourse, this research seeks to establish the specific form of metadiscourse used and its purpose in the Panama Case verdicts while contributing to the pertinent area of legal literature about the matter.

Research Questions:

1. What types of metadiscourse markers are used in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's verdicts in the Panama Case?
2. How do metadiscourse markers function to enhance the clarity and coherence of the Supreme Court's legal reasoning in the Panama Case verdicts?
3. In what ways do metadiscourse markers contribute to the persuasive and rhetorical strategies employed by the Supreme Court judges in the Panama Case verdicts?

Rationale of the Study:

Judicial opinions are a component of paralinguistic legal discourse that reveals the judiciary's power and influences the population's perceptions of legal matters. Consequently, peer reviewed articles that discuss the contexts of the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Panama Case verdicts require clear, ambiguous and ethical language because the verdicts are founded upon complex legal issues and significant implications. As with other texts, metadiscourse makers that assist in the organization of the discourse and involving the reader are of special importance to convey the mentioned communication aims. However, one will observe that there has been little, or no research carried out in metadiscourse markers and their functions in judicial verdicts, especially in important cases such as Panama Case.

Therefore, the rationale of this study lies in the fact that there is a lack of such research and thus aims to offer an essential approach to considering how metadiscourse marker works in legal discourse of the Supreme Court's verdicts. Therefore, it is the purpose of this paper to explore the flow of the Panama Case and attempt at understanding if and how the judges employed" persuasion artefacts" to build their case.

To that effect, analyzing the employment of metadiscourse markers in these verdicts has a few implications. In the first place, it may shed light on the target population's thinking to analyze what it does in its operation of language and the ways in which its occupants construct legal relations and reasons so that the latter are understandable, convincing or persuasive. Secondly, it can help legal practitioners and educators understand the strategies of communication, and thus enhance the writing of legal documents and the training of legal writing. Finally, it is a contribution to the legal linguistic research focusing on metadiscourse in legal texts and the development of the knowledge about judicial rhetoric.

Since the Panama Case is a major development in Pakistani politics and has

received wide coverage in the newspapers, studying metadiscourse markers in SC's decisions also has theoretical significance in relation to furthering the public's perception of legal decisions and discursive news reporting. Focusing on how these linguistic features help in effective communicating among the judges, this work is to improve the comprehension of legal wording, which in turn will expand common public's trust in the judicial system.

Literature Review:

MDs are linguistically encoded objects that support the development of practical textual structures aiming at readers' involvement and the expression of the writer's attitude (Hyland, 2005). These markers contribute significantly to making messages in a variety of written genres comprehensible, well-structured and convincing: academic, business and legal. There is a growing interest in metadiscourse markers over the years and as a result, there exist copious pieces of literature that discuss their uses, categories, and effects on the communication process.

The term metadiscourse in this case will relate to the acknowledgement by the writer of the reader, as well as the manner of controlling the informative flow in the writing. Textual metadiscourse refers to the general use of the discourse and interpersonal metadiscourse is specific to the writer and reader relationship. Textual metadiscourse supports organizing content and directing the reader, while interpersonal metadiscourse is the writer's approach. Hyland (2005) later on built on this by dividing metadiscourse markers into interactive and interactional. Transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses are the types of interactive markers that help in structuring the discourse. Hedging devices such as hedges and boosts, attitude indicators, endophoric references, and self-references entertain and inform the reader about the writer's stand.

Again, the studies on metadiscourse have mostly been done in the context of

academic writing. In the given background, Hyland (2004) employed the study on the employment of metadiscourse markers across several fields to illustrate discrepancies in their application due to the academic disciplines involved. Hyland discovered that humanities and social sciences integrated more of Interactional Markers, as these fields of study are considerably argumentative in contrast to sciences and engineering, which employed Interactive Markers due to the fact that they are expected to present details as they are.

In the aspect of business communication, Zhang (2016) identified metadiscourse in the context of Chinese professionals' business email writing to show how metadiscourse markers can improve business communication. Along the same line, Dahl (2004) examined the use of metadiscourse in research articles in English and Norwegian where he realised that there are cultural variations that are evident in the use of these markers and that influence the overall features of writing styles.

Metadiscourse in Legal Writing:

Legal analysis entails use of legal language especially in formulating judgements; wherein even the casual language used in drafting a judgement needs to upfront present and articulate arguments coherently relating to a complex legal issue and would need to be understood by a range of people. Despite this, investigations related to the use of metadiscourse markers in written legal texts are still limited. Another one of the works explored by Bhatia in his work published in 1993 is on the language of law, and the author paid a lot of attention to the fact that legal texts should be clear and coherent to influence the readers. Thus, by reviewing key aspects of Bhatia's work, it becomes clear that metadiscourse plays a crucial part in these communicative objectives.

Research Methodology:

This research work adopts qualitative method in the examination of the

metadiscourse markers with specific reference to the Panama Case verdicts of the Supreme Court of Pakistan. The main interests of the research are metadiscourse marker classification, its functions in the context of the given analyses, as well as the impact of metadiscourse on the decision-making of the verdicts' clarity, coherence, and persuasion. The nature of the primary data for this study pertains to the written judgement of the Panama Case in the Supreme Court of Pakistan. These are official papers which are open to the public and give a detailed account of judicial logic and outcomes of such a widely discussed trial. The verdicts will be collected from the official legal databases and website of the Supreme Court of the country in consideration. Because of their nature and length, purposive sampling technique shall be employed in the analysis by which specific sections of the Panama Case verdicts shall be sampled and analyzed in detail. The sampling will equally focus on sections containing major legal talking and arguing so that a general sweap of the integrate use of metadiscourse markers all over the textual matter could be acquired.

The theoretical foundation for this study relies on Hyland's (2005) taxonomy of metadiscourse, which divides metadiscourse markers into interactive and interactional types. This model is particularly useful for understanding texts of a high level of difficulty such as judicial decisions as it covers both organizing functions of metadiscourse and addressing the readers.

Data Analysis:

The analysis of metadiscourse markers includes identifying the markers present in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Panama Case verdicts and then categorizing them following Hyland's (2005) model. Because of space constraints, only exegetic passages from the considered verdicts will be annotated to exemplify the employment of both types of metadiscourse markers. Following each example, an inference of the role and effect of the analysed item on the text will be made.

Example: "However, the evidence presented does not conclusively prove the allegations of money laundering."

The word that implies the relation between the statements is a transition marker "however" which shows the contrast. It guides the reader through the change of the progression of the argument, indicating the difficulty of the task in deciphering the legal nature of the cases. This marker is helpful in keeping the connective thread of the talk going, as the function of the marker can easily signify the nature of the link between the ideas discussed.

Frame Markers:

Example: "Firstly, we must consider the admissibility of the evidence. Secondly, the credibility of the witnesses is crucial. Finally, the legal implications of the findings must be addressed."

The epicene 'firstly,' 'secondly,' and 'finally.' divide the text into stages, making the reader follow the line of thinking of the court analytically. These markers improve the coherence and improvement of the argumentation by serving as guides for the reader to be able to understand the judiciary's rationale.

Endophoric Markers:

Example: "As discussed in Section 2, the financial records were incomplete and inconsistent."

The endophoric marker 'As we previously discussed in section 2' takes the reader back to an earlier section of the text to combat this; it gets the reader to refresh their memory on the evidence presented. Thus, this marker enhances a sense of unity that enables the reader to refer to the location of information in the document with ease.

Evidentials:

Example: "According to the expert witness testimony, the transactions were conducted through offshore accounts."

The integrating word “as” in the context of “according to the expert witness testimony” shifts the direction of the information and indicates the source of it; thus, makes it more credible and reliable. This marker echoes the requirement to substantiate the case by referencing authoritative sources, enhancing the court’s conclusions.

Code Glosses:

Example: "The term 'beneficial owner' refers to the individual who ultimately owns or controls the asset, regardless of whose name it is in."

Looking at the mentioned code gloss, there can be identified a usage of the definition for a certain legal term; thus, the reader can realize a particular meaning of the term in connection with the verdict. This marker helps to make the meaning clear where it might be vague or unclear because of specialist terminology.

Hedges:

Example: "It appears that the funds may have been transferred to offshore accounts, but further investigation is needed."

‘May have been’ is used to hedge and perhaps the caution used by the court to arrive at a decision can also be seen here. Since this action is embedded by the adverb, the statement is uttered conditionally and its verity is questionable, which means that there are other legitimate points of view.

Boosters:

Example: "Clearly, the evidence shows a pattern of financial misconduct that cannot be ignored."

Again, the booster “clearly” adds to the impact of the court’s unequivocal conviction. This marker amplifies the robustness of the assertion since they explain why the court arrived at such a conclusion.

Attitude Markers:

Example: "Unfortunately, the lack of transparency in the financial records

complicates the case."

The attitude marker unfortunately suggests the stance of the agent succeeding the court as an assessment of the given situation. This marker brings evaluation in the details of the discourses pointing out difficulties which the court goes through.

Engagement Markers:

Example: "Consider the implications of this finding on future regulatory policies."

The actual engagement marker “consider” is used to involve the reader in contemplating the implications of the court’s ruling. This marker creates a dialogic interaction between the court and the reader, thus changing their roles, and attracting their attention to the judicial thinking process.

Self-Mentions:

Example: "We conclude that the evidence is insufficient to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt."

The self-mention “we” is strategically used as an authoritative collective voice of the judges looming over the defendant and vicariously involved in the pronouncement of the verdict. This marker makes the discourse individual, returning the next focus on the judicial, and responsibility.

Thus, the present paper establishes that through managing various markers of metadiscourse, the Supreme Court of Pakistan establishes an appropriate and coherent narrative in the Panama Case verdicts. All these items are important to assist the reader in following the flight of legal argumentation throughout the text and, at the same time, asserting the authoritativeness of the text.

The following table presents the types and frequencies of metadiscourse markers identified in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Panama Case verdicts. Each category of markers is illustrated with examples from the text, followed by an interpretation of their functions and impacts.

Table 1: Types and frequencies of metadiscourse markers identified

Metadiscourse Category	Marker	Frequency	Textual Example	Interpretation
Interactive	Transitions	15	"However, the evidence presented does not conclusively prove the allegations of money laundering."	Indicates a contrast, guiding the reader through shifts in the argument, enhancing coherence and clarity.
	Frame Markers	10	"Firstly, we must consider the admissibility of the evidence. Secondly, the credibility of the witnesses is crucial. Finally, the legal implications of the findings must be addressed."	Organizes the discourse into clear stages, aiding the reader in following the logical progression of the court's analysis.
	Endophoric Markers	8	"As discussed in Section 2, the financial records were incomplete and inconsistent."	Refers to other parts of the text, maintaining cohesion and helping the reader locate and verify information.

Metadiscourse Category	Marker	Frequency	Textual Example	Interpretation
	Evidentials	12	"According to the expert witness testimony, the transactions were conducted through offshore accounts."	Attributes information to authoritative sources, lending credibility and supporting the court's findings.
	Code Glosses	7	"The term 'beneficial owner' refers to the individual who ultimately owns or controls the asset, regardless of whose name it is in."	Clarifies technical terms, ensuring the text is accessible to a broader audience.
Interactional	Hedges	14	"It appears that the funds may have been transferred to offshore accounts, but further investigation is needed."	Conveys uncertainty and caution, reflecting the court's careful consideration of evidence and acknowledging alternative interpretations.
	Boosters	9	"Clearly, the evidence shows a	Emphasizes certainty and confidence,

Metadiscourse Category	Marker	Frequency	Textual Example	Interpretation
			pattern of financial misconduct that cannot be ignored."	reinforcing the strength and persuasiveness of the court's conclusions.
	Attitude Markers	5	"Unfortunately, the lack of transparency in the financial records complicates the case."	Expresses the court's evaluation, highlighting the challenges faced and adding an evaluative dimension to the discourse.
	Engagement Markers	6	"Consider the implications of this finding on future regulatory policies."	Directly addresses the reader, engaging them in the judicial reasoning process and fostering a dialogic relationship.
	Self-Mentions	11	"We conclude that the evidence is insufficient to establish guilt beyond a reasonable doubt."	Indicates the collective voice of the judges, personalizing the discourse and emphasizing judicial authority and responsibility.

Based on the comparison, it is possible to highlight the differentiation of the results in the use of the number of original and simplified metadiscourse markers in the Panama Case verdicts. For instance, interactive markers including the transitions and frame markers are quite famous as they give the structure to the rather complex reactions of the legal argumentation of the discourse. For example, the words 'however' help to indicate the differences and framework words like 'firstly' and 'second' to define the phases of the court's conclusion. Evidentials and code glosses are useful and relevant to ascertain that the specifics are properly supported before the details are explained. Label evidential such as the following: 'as stated by the expert witness' link the information to a believable source while code glosses provide meanings to the several technical terms used making the text easier and believable. For this reason, hedges and boosters can be employed by the judges in order to retain assertiveness as well as to be careful when they express themselves since decisions in legal affairs are made dependent on the evidence which is not very certified in terms of its reality. This is something that needs to be done when attempting to promote judicial logic trying to gain ownership among the target groups. Self-mentions reveal to the readership that the judges' idea is collective and that they are inclusive of the readership while at the same time the authoritativeness and individuality of the judge is affirmed. Some samples like "we conclude" can also affirm the functions of the judges in the delivery of the verdict in this case. Hence, it has been identified that the use of metadiscourse markers in the Panama Case verdicts reveals that metadiscourse enhances the overall expository coherence, the logical coherence and the argument integration of the legal judgments and the ways by which complex and technical legal rationales are explained to different groups of people. From this analysis, it is evident that metadiscourse is a critical feature of how legal documents are constructed and written as well as communication in the legal

context to other entities.

Discussion:

The study identified several pertinent findings regarding the use of metadiscourse markers in the Supreme Court of Pakistan's Panama Case verdicts. Thus, the findings underscore how metadiscourse markers enhance the content's comprehensibility, logical organization, and rhetorical appeal. In this discussion, the major findings will be discussed with an emphasis on the findings concerning different types of metadiscourse markers and how they affected the overall persuasiveness and strengths/weaknesses of the verdicts.

Depending on the category, such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidential, as well as code glosses, the use of interactive metadiscourse markers featured in the Panama Case verdicts. Some words like 'however', 'therefore', 'moreover' etc. that are used to signal shifts and the nature of the shifts in the argument help to unambiguously signal contrasting positions/contentions or conclusions. This also improves the coherence of the outcomes of the verdicts, in that a logical presentation of some legal issues becomes easy to understand. This way of the construction of the text supports the readers by separating the key statements addressing the case into stages such as firstly, secondly, and finally. This structuring makes it easier for the person going through the decision to follow the logical progression of the court's thought.

Such transitional phrases as "as pointed out in Section 2," is an effective way to refer to other sections of the text and keep it coherent. These markers help the readers in finding and relating the information so that the argument is well backed up and inclusive.

Mention of evidential such as "based on expert witness testimony", and code glosses like "beneficial owner means" gives the document a stamp of authority and explication respectively and the latter also helps in legibility of the text. This

is especially important in legal writing where both, grasp and clarity are of utmost importance. These are the interactive markers that present a very important function in the structuring of legal arguments to ensure that the verdicts delivered are well laid down logically. These markers increase the cohesiveness of the judicial reasoning by stating how the parts within the text are connected.

The result of the study suggests moderate use of all categories of the interactional metadiscourse markers such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, and self-mentions. Terms such as ‘’may have been’’ are used to ensure that the court does not go overboard with some of its conclusions because of the existing realizations that the evidence may be interpreted in numerous ways. It is useful to stay reserved in the legal discourse, as the profession entails high risks and obligations to make accurate decisions to serve clients’ interests. Such expressions as ‘as is clear’, ‘it is thus clear’, or ‘clearly’ are used to assert the evident conclusions of the court. Booster are applied for signaling the affirmativeness of the evidence and contribute to the effectiveness of the findings and also help in increasing the persuasiveness of the verdicts.

Conclusion:

In this research, a detailed analysis has been made on how the different metadiscourse markers especially the interactive and interactional ones can help give legal texts the appropriate cohesiveness.

Key Findings

1. Enhanced Discourse Organization: Transitional marker, frame marker, endophoric marker, evidential and code gloss as the interactive markers help in structuring the verdicts. These markers help the reader to follow the legal reasoning and be aware of the movement from one step to another as the court brings out its standpoint.

2. Balancing Certainty and Caution: Hedging and boosting are used by the court to keep the amount of uncertainty and the degree of assertiveness in the number of interactional markers appropriately moderate. It is necessary to maintain it as the main aspect of the legal argumentation, while marking at the same time the solidity of the evidentiary base and conclusions.
3. Engaging the Reader: The court and the reader engage through engagement marker's usage and self-mention. Overall, intentionality is revealed in these markers as they seek to directly engage the reader and personify the legal discourse to give the reader an inclination to read the judgment more closely and to be persuaded by the court's reasoning.
4. Improving Clarity and Precision: It must also be mentioned that metadiscourse markers make a very considerable contribution to the cumulativeness and distinctiveness of the verdicts. Bulks up and specifies technical terms and lends authenticity to the arguments and makes them less ambiguous and well supported by codes glosses and evidentials.

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