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Ainsi, s'inscrivant dans la dynamique du temps et de l'espace, la revue « ***AKIRI*** » se présente comme un outil de promotion et de diffusion des résultats des recherches des enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs des universités et de centres de recherches de Côte d'Ivoire et d'ailleurs. Ce faisant, elle permettra aux enseignants-chercheurs et chercheurs de s'ouvrir davantage sur le monde extérieur à travers la diffusion de leurs productions intellectuelles et scientifiques.

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Exploring metadiscourse devices in george weah's inaugural speech

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Abstract

This research explores the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices in President George Weah's inaugural speech. Specifically, it offers insights into the rhetorical dynamics of political discourse used in the inaugural speech genre. By analysing the speech's structure through the lens of metadiscourse, as defined and categorised by Hyland (2005), this study investigates how President Weah employs these linguistic tools to engage with his audience, articulate his political agenda, and foster a sense of collective identity among Liberians. The research delineates interactive markers, such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses, highlighting their role in guiding the audience through the president's inaugural speech. Additionally, the study emphasises the significant presence of interactional markers, especially self-mentions and engagement markers, demonstrating how Weah uses them to personalise his address to the population and to enhance its persuasive impact. More exactly, the quantitative analysis reveals a dominant use of self-mentions, constituting 56.71% of interactional metadiscourse, and a strong reliance on transition markers, making up 58.41% of interactive devices. These findings underscore the speech's strategic construction to maximise coherence, clarity, and emotional resonance.

Keywords: Metadiscourse, Political Discourse Analysis, Inaugural Speech, Interactive markers, Interactional markers

Exploration des dispositifs métadiscursifs dans le discours d'investiture de George Weah

Résumé

Cette étude explore l'utilisation des dispositifs métadiscursifs interactifs et interactionnels dans le discours inaugural du Président George Weah. Plus précisément, elle offre un aperçu des dynamiques rhétoriques du discours politique employées dans le genre du discours inaugural. En analysant la structure du discours à travers le prisme du métadiscours, tel que défini et catégorisé par Hyland (2005), cette étude examine comment le Président Weah utilise ces outils linguistiques pour interagir avec son auditoire, articuler son agenda politique et favoriser un sentiment d'identité collective parmi les Libériens. La recherche met en évidence les marqueurs interactifs, tels que les transitions, les marqueurs de cadrage, les marqueurs endophoriques, les évidentiels et les gloses de code, soulignant leur rôle dans le guidage de l'auditoire à travers le discours inaugural du président. De plus, l'étude souligne la présence significative de marqueurs interactionnels, en particulier les auto-mentions et les marqueurs d'engagement, démontrant comment Weah les utilise pour personnaliser son discours à la population et renforcer son impact persuasif. L'analyse quantitative de ces structures linguistiques révèle une utilisation dominante des auto-mentions, constituant 56,71% du métadiscours interactionnel, et une forte dépendance aux marqueurs de transition, représentant 58,41% des dispositifs interactifs. Ces résultats soulignent la construction stratégique du discours pour maximiser la cohérence, la clarté et la résonance émotionnelle.

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Mots clés : Métadiscours, Analyse du Discours Politique, Discours inaugural, Marqueurs interactifs, Marqueur interactionnels

Introduction

In recent year, scholars have worked out several approaches to analyse discourse, which include: systemic functional analysis, speech act theory, pragmatics, conversation analysis, and variation analysis. These different methods have brought invaluable help in the analysis of both the linguistic features and contextual element of written texts. Many have given much heed to the field of Discourse Analysis by focusing on the interplay between textual elements and the broader cultural and social contexts. For example, Jorgensen and Philips (2002) define Discourse Analysis as the examination of patterns in people's speech across different social situations, focusing on the structure of language and its use to effectively convey meanings.

Specialised area of Discourse Analyse such as Political Discourse Analysis has gained momentum and the focus has been on the pivotal role that language play in shaping people's opinions and identities. Fairclough and Fairclough (2012:18) argue that analysing the structure of arguments in political speeches and understanding their intended goals are essential. This approach by considering political discourse as a process of negotiation and legitimation, aids in uncovering the deeper meanings and intentions behind political discourse, highlighting the significance of language in shaping political realities.

In addition to these traditional methods, Metadiscourse analysis has emerged as a critical tool. It offers insights into how discourse is shaped by social contexts and reflects them at the same time. Zellig Harris coined the term in 1959, highlighting it as a means to understand how language is used in practice, guiding the audience's interpretation of texts. Crismore et al. (1993) describe metadiscourse as linguistic elements in texts that, while not adding to the content directly, assist the reader or listener in organizing, interpreting, and evaluating the information presented.

Current trends tend to focus on classical analysis methods, often overlooking the importance of metadiscourse elements. However, scholars like Hyland (2007) and Vande Kopple (1985) have emphasised the significance of metadiscourse in deepening our understanding of discourse analysis. Many scholars find interest in applying metadiscourse analysis to various fields and texts such as book reviews (Soleimani and Mohammadkhah, 2022), Economics (Garces, 1996), newspaper editorials (Koutchadé, 2021), scientific journal articles (Nugrahani & Bram, 2020), etc.

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Based on the context described above, this study aims at exploring the rhetorical construction of President George Weah's inaugural speech through a special focus on metadiscourse markers. Specifically, the research seeks to (1) identify the types of metadiscourse markers present in the speech, (2) quantify their occurrence to understand their prominence, and (3) examine the role these markers play in influencing the speech's reception and overall effectiveness to allow a smooth implementation of his political agenda. Guided by these objectives, the research questions posed are twofold: Firstly, what metadiscourse devices are predominantly used in President Weah's inaugural address? Secondly, how are these devices strategically structured and utilised to articulate and advance the President's vision and objectives for Liberia? Through addressing these questions, this study intends to provide insights into the strategic use of language in political communication, (which consists in, among others, forming and informing the public, shaping public opinion, and promoting civic engagements) particularly within the context of inaugural addresses.

The analysis in the study is conducted manually, identifying and quantifying the different metadiscourse devices used in the speech and discussing their functions. While tools like AntConc concordance software (Corpus Linguistics) exist to aid in such analysis, I rely on manual estimation for this particular study.

1. Theoretical Framework

1.1. Definition of metadiscourse

Using a metaphor, we can say that metadiscourse is like the invisible threads that connect the fabric of our conversations and texts, weaving through the content without being the content itself. It is what makes communication not just a transmission of information but a rich interaction between people, filled with personality, attitudes, and underlying assumptions. Williams (1981) introduces us to metadiscourse by explaining it as the elements in our language that do not directly concern the subject matter but are crucial in organizing and making sense of it. Hyland (2005) expands on this, illustrating metadiscourse as the essence of communication that transcends mere information exchange. It is about how we, as communicators, involve our listeners or readers, drawing them into a shared space of understanding and community. He points out three major characteristics of a metadiscourse device. It stands apart from the core content or propositions. It embodies the interactions between the communicator and the audience. It finally focuses solely on the discourse's internal dynamics (ibid., p. 35).

Vande Kopple (1985) simplifies it further to "discourse about discourse," showing how it is the author's way of engaging with their audience linguistically. Beauvais (1986) adds another layer, describing metadiscourse as the guideposts that help readers navigate through an author's arguments, making a clear distinction between the message and its delivery. Echoing this, Crismore et al. (1993) view metadiscourse as the linguistic tools that, while not adding new facts, ensure the audience can sort, understand, and evaluate the information presented effectively.

1.2. Categorization of Metadiscourse Devices

Hyland's interpersonal model for understanding metadiscourse is akin to dissecting the layers of a conversation, identifying how each part plays a role in engaging and guiding the audience. This model distinguishes between two main types of metadiscourse markers: interactive and interactional.

Table 1: An Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005, p.49)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive Resources	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	in addition; but; thus; and
Frame Markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or stages	finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric Markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	noted above; see Fig; in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	according to X; Z states
Code Glosses	Elaborate propositional meanings	namely; e.g.; such as; in other words
Interactional Resources	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	Emphasize certainty or close dialogue	in fact; definitely; it is clear that
Attitude Markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self Mentions	Explicit reference to author(s)	I; we; my; me; our
Engagement Markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	consider; note; you can see that

Interactive Metadiscourse Markers

The interactive metadiscourse includes the ways by which the writer directs the readers, guides them throughout the text, and anticipates readers' knowledge and interests in order to help them comprehend the text. This includes using certain devices to set out an argument, accommodate readers' expectations, and formulate the text to adapt readers' needs. Examples of interactive markers include frame markers, transitions, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses.

Transitions

Tansitions are linguistic devices which act as the connectors or bridges between ideas, making the text flow smoothly. Examples include "furthermore" to add information, "however" to

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introduce a contrast, and "therefore" to show a consequence. These little words are powerhouses in linking thoughts and guiding the reader through the argument's progression.

Frame Markers

These markers act as the framework of the text, highlighting its structure. They include temporal markers like "firstly" and "finally," and purpose statements such as "the aim of this paper is." Frame markers help readers understand the organization of the text and what to expect from it.

Endophoric Markers

These refer back to something mentioned elsewhere in the text, like "as discussed earlier" or "refer to Figure 2." They are essential for maintaining coherence and ensuring the reader can follow the argument without getting lost.

Evidentials

These markers cite sources or other authoritative references, adding credibility to the text. Phrases like "according to Koukpossi (2020)" or "as evidenced by" signal to readers that the information is supported by research or expert opinion.

Code Glosses

Code Glosses provide additional explanations or clarifications, often necessary for understanding complex ideas. They can rephrase a concept ("in other words"), elaborate ("for instance"), or define specific terms ("namely"). Code glosses ensure that the writer's intended meaning is clear to the reader.

Interactional Metadiscourse Markers

Interactional metadiscourse device are of pivotal interest in exploring the interpersonal dimension of language use. These devices are words, phrases or specific linguistic patterns that help the speaker/writer to make his/her text more engaging by involving him/her directly in the text. They help creating a dialogical tone in text. Interactional markers include:

Hedges

Hedges are markers that introduce a tone of uncertainty or openness in the text. Hyland (2005: 52) defines them as markers "which indicate the writer's decision to recognise alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition." Using words like "might," "could," or "perhaps" softens statements, making them less absolute and more approachable to be presented not as a fact but as an opinion (ibid.)

Boosters

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The opposite of hedges are boosters. They express certainty and close down any counterarguments. Words like "clearly," "definitely," and "indeed" signal strong confidence in the presented information.

Attitude Markers

Attitude markers according to Hyland (2005) are used to indicate the speaker/writer's affective involvement in his/her text. They reflect his/her personal feelings or evaluations concerning the topic, using phrases like "unfortunately," "interestingly," or "importantly." Attitude markers add a subjective layer to the text, inviting readers to share in the writer's perspective.

Self-Mentions

Self-mentions, as the name indicates, are the explicit mentions of the writer/speaker in the text by using first-person pronouns such as "I," "we," "me" or possessive adjectives or pronouns such as "my", "our," "mine" "ours", etc. They ultimately help text producers to insert themselves directly into the discourse, making it more personal and engaging.

Engagement Markers

Engagement Markers are devices that help the speaker/writer to address the reader/listener directly through phrases like "consider this," "note that," or questions that invite them to think or respond. This mechanism is achieved either by including the readers/listeners directly as participants in the text or calling their attention on the unfolding text.

In short, metadiscourse devices are important tools in communication. Understanding them and using them effectively can transform a piece of writing from a simple monologue into a dynamic dialogue, inviting readers into a shared space of exploration and understanding.

2. Methodology: Data Collection and Method of Analysis

This study adopts both qualitative and quantitative approaches. It consists of engaging in a detailed examination of linguistic elements as well as employing statistical analysis to quantify their occurrences. The focal point of the investigation is the inaugural speech delivered by George Weah. Firstly, I have conducted a swift reading of George Weah's inaugural speech to get an overall sense of the discourse and to count all the sentences. This preliminary step was crucial for setting the stage for a more focused analysis.

Subsequently, I have embarked on a meticulous examination of the text, with a particular focus on identifying metadiscourse markers. The analysis is structured around two primary categories: interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers. In the interactive category, the

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study takes into account transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. After thoroughly documenting these elements, the investigation shifts to the interactional category, which encompasses hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers.

Following the data collection phase, the metadiscourse markers are organised into ten distinct categories, as outlined by Hyland (2005). This categorization served as the foundation for a quantitative analysis. Utilising Excel 2010, I calculated the frequencies of occurrence for each metadiscourse marker category. This quantitative assessment was not only instrumental in understanding the prevalence of each category but also in facilitating a comparative analysis among them.

The culmination of the methodology used in this paper involves the presentation of the findings through tables and figures. These visual representations detailed the categories of metadiscourse markers and their respective frequencies, providing a clear and accessible overview of the analysis. Finally, I have engaged in a comprehensive discussion of these findings, offering interpretations that shed light on the significance and implications of metadiscourse usage in George Weah's inaugural speech. This holistic approach, combining qualitative insights with quantitative data, enriched the understanding of the speech's rhetorical and communicative dynamics.

3. Results

The findings from a comprehensive analysis of interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers within President Weah's inaugural speech are presented in this section. As said earlier, the investigation seeks to explore how these rhetorical devices function not only to structure the speech and guide the audience through the discourse but also to foster engagement, express attitudes, and reflect his commitment and personal presence within the text. By examining the use linguistic units such as transition markers, frame markers, evidentials, code glosses, endophoric markers, hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mention, and engagement markers, this study reveals the strategic use of metadiscourse to achieve coherence, persuasion, and relational goals. these metadiscourse devices are therefore presented and classified following Hyland's (2005) framework.

3.1. Interactive Metadiscourse

Table 2 encapsulates the interactive marker found in the speech in terms of numbers and percentages of occurrence.

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Table 2: Interactive Metadiscourse Markers in Weah's Inaugural Speech

Interactive Markers	Number	Percentage
Transition	59	58.41%
Frame markers	29	28.71%
Evidentials	3	2.97%
Code glosses	8	7.92%
Endophoric markers	2	1.98%
Total	101	100%

Table 2, which details the distribution of interactive metadiscourse markers in President Weah's inaugural speech, exhibits several observations and insights. All five interactive markers suggested by Hyland (2005) are present in the speech. These are transition markers, frame markers, evidentials, code glosses, and endophoric markers. Transition markers are the most prevalent category, constituting 58.41% of all interactive metadiscourse markers used in the speech. This dominance suggests a strong organisational structure, with the speaker frequently guiding the audience through the discourse, connecting ideas, and signalling shifts in topic or perspective. The high use of transition markers is indicative of a carefully crafted speech aimed at maintaining coherence and ensuring the audience can easily follow the progression of ideas.

Frame markers account for 28.71% of the interactive metadiscourse, highlighting the president's effort to structure the speech clearly and signal different sections or phases of the discourse. This includes marking the beginning of new sections, summarising points, and indicating the speech's logical sequence. It is also observable that evidentials and endophoric markers are used sparingly, at 2.97% and 1.98%, respectively. The low percentage of evidentials suggests that direct references to external sources or authoritative evidence were minimal, which may be typical for inaugural speeches that focus more on vision, unity, and the future rather than on detailed argumentation or citation of past research or data. Similarly, the minimal use of endophoric markers indicates that the speech was designed to stand alone, with few references to other parts of the text or previous statements. With 7.92% of the total, code glosses play a modest but significant role in ensuring clarity and elaborating on key points. This usage suggests that the speaker aimed to make certain ideas more accessible to the audience, providing explanations, rephrasings, or examples to enhance understanding.

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3.2. Interactional Metadiscourse markers

Table 3: Interactional Markers in George Weah's Inaugural Speech

Interactional Markers	Frequency	Percentage
Hedges	15	4.47%
Boosters	15	4.47%
Attitude markers	39	11.64%
Engagement markers	76	22.68%
Self-mentions	190	56.71%
TOTAL	335	100%

Table 3 displays the statistics concerning the distribution of interactional metadiscourse markers in President Weah's inaugural speech. It is clear that the most dominant markers are the self-mentions. The most striking feature is the high frequency of self-mentions, which comprise over half of the interactional markers used (56.71%). This indicates a strong personal presence in the speech, with the speaker frequently referencing their own experiences, thoughts, and commitments. This high level of self-mention is characteristic of inaugural speeches, where establishing personal credibility and connection with the audience is crucial with mostly the use of inclusive pronoun "we".

Engagement markers make up 22.68% of the interactional elements, underscoring a deliberate strategy to involve the audience directly. This includes addressing the audience collectively, posing rhetorical questions, or invoking shared experiences and values. Such markers play a vital role in creating a sense of inclusivity and dialogue between the speaker and the audience. With 11.64%, attitude markers are used significantly to express feelings, evaluations, or stances towards the content being discussed. This usage reflects the speaker's intent to convey emotions such as pride, hope, or concern, thereby enriching the speech with an affective layer that resonates with the audience. As far as hedges and boosters are concerned, they are used equally, each making up 4.47% of the interactional markers. This balance indicates a nuanced approach to expressing certainty and caution where appropriate. Hedges are used to soften claims or acknowledge potential alternative perspectives, while boosters strengthen the speaker's assertions, reflecting confidence in the messages being delivered.

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4. Discussion

The exploration of President George Weah's inaugural speech, focusing on the utilisation of interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers, disclose one of the existing linguistic analysis approaches to political communication. This section integrates quantitative and qualitative findings derived from the analysis to discuss the strategic use of metadiscourse markers and their implications within the broader scope of political discourse analysis. Consequently, some linguistic and communicative features like how engagement and personalization are expressed through metadiscourse devices, strategies for clarity and coherence, the balanced use of between boosters and hedges to establish certainty and openness. The new elected president's engagement and ethical appeals and the direct implication of this study for political discourse analysis are also discussed.

The analysis reveals a notable predominance of self-mentions, constituting 56.71% of interactional markers, paired with a significant presence of engagement markers at 22.68%. This high usage of self-mentions underscores President Weah's strategy to forge a direct, personal connection with his audience, highlighting his individual commitment and the personal stakes he associates with the nation's trajectory. The following phrases include examples of self-mentions: "I am humbled" and "I promise to do everything in my power," "I am humbled," "I am thankful," "I am filled with joy," "I have spent many years," "I am overwhelmed," "I guarantee you," "I promise to do everything in my power," "I cannot do it alone;" etc. Combined with attitude markers, as is the case in some of those instances, not only do they personalise the political message but also aim to build trust and credibility with the Liberian population. The frequent engagement with the audience, through direct addresses like "My fellow citizens," "to all our citizens and international guests, we thank you for coming," "it is to you we are responsible," "I call upon" further endeavours to foster a communal spirit, emphasising solidarity and collective effort in national development.

Transition markers and frame markers appear to play the function of structural clarity and Coherence. Transition markers emerged as the dominant category among interactive metadiscourse markers, representing 58.41% of their total use, followed by frame markers at 28.71%. This dominance suggests a meticulously structured speech designed to guide listeners through a cohesive narrative. The strategic employment of transition markers such as "but" and "and" alongside frame markers like "first" and "indeed" serves to delineate the speech's structure, marking shifts in topic or focus and organising content into a logical sequence. This

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structural clarity is instrumental in enhancing audience comprehension and engagement, ensuring the speech's message is conveyed effectively.

The balanced utilisation of hedges and boosters, each accounting for 4.47%, illustrates a deliberate adoption of a rhetorical approach that balances certainty with openness. Hedges introduce a degree of uncertainty, acknowledging the complexities and challenges ahead, while boosters reinforce confidence in the articulated vision and commitments of the president. This rhetorical balancing act is crucial in presenting a vision that is ambitious yet realistic, encouraging optimism among the Liberians while maintaining credibility.

Attitude markers, accounting for 11.64% of the interactional markers, play a significant role in the speech's emotional and ethical appeals. Through expressions of gratitude, pride, hope, and acknowledgment of historical challenges, these markers engage the audience on an emotional level. The invocation of shared historical narratives and collective aspirations works to unify the audience, cultivating a sense of shared identity and purpose. This emotional resonance is pivotal in mobilising public support and fostering a sense of national unity.

All in all, the strategic use of metadiscourse markers in Weah's speech underscores the critical role of rhetorical strategies in shaping political discourse. This analysis contributes to the understanding of how political leaders leverage language to not only inform and persuade but also to construct and negotiate identities and relationships. The findings highlight the importance of personalisation, structural clarity, emotional engagement, and ethical appeals in effective political communication.

Conclusion

The detailed examination of interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers in President George Weah's inaugural address offers a deep understanding of the rhetorical fabric of political speeches especially in this inaugural speech genre. By dissecting the frequency and function of these metadiscourse devices, this research has demonstrated the "explanatory power of metadiscourse" (Hyland, 2005: 85). It has underscored the different strategies employed by Weah to engage with his audience, assert authority, and foster a sense of collective identity and purpose. The findings of this analysis reveal a dynamic use of interactive markers such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. These devices have actually allowed the new elected president to manage the flow of his speech and guide his audience in his political agenda. Moreover, the significant prevalence of interactional metadiscourse markers, particularly self-mentions (56.71%) mainly through the use of personal

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pronouns (I and we) and engagement markers (22.68%), highlights the personalised approach President Weah takes to connect with his audience. Not only does this strategic use of language serve to humanise the president but also builds a narrative of unity and shared goals, emphasising the role of the individual in the collective progress of Liberia.

This study has contributed to the overall debate in Discourse Analysis, especially in political communication by illustrating how metadiscourse can serve as a pivotal tool for politicians to explore the complex landscape of public discourse. Throughout the analysis, this paper suggests that metadiscourse markers play a vital role in effective political communication. They allow speakers to strategically structure their discourse, clarify their goals, and build emotional resonance with their audience.

Pedagogically, this research has significant implications for students in applied linguistics and communication studies. Being trained on using interactional metadiscourse markers (e.g., hedges, boosters, attitude markers, engagement markers, self-mentions), students could explicitly build a relationship with the reader, express the author's attitude, withhold author's commitment, establish presence in the text and emphasise their point of view. By integrating these findings into academic curricula, educators can enhance students' analytical skills, fostering a critical appreciation of the power of language in shaping public opinion and political realities.

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