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**Writing the Future: Metadiscourse and Voice in English and Arabic
Argumentative Writings of Qatari University Students**

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**The Analysis of the Writing Conversation Interviews:
A Technical Report**

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1.0 Introduction

This study is situated within the economic, educational and cultural context of Qatar and focuses on the use of metadiscourse in argument writing. Argumentation skills in reading and writing have been recognised as a key component in education (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996, 1999). To be able to communicate at a global level, Qatari students need to be competent users of written English, professionally, academically, and for study purposes. Academic writing, in particular, is essential, both for students as individuals and for Qatar's economic prosperity as it is a pathway to global educational and economic success. Many students struggle to master the expectations of academic writing and develop sound arguments, especially when writing in a second/foreign language, and despite a significant body of research into academic writing, the problem appears stubbornly resistant to change. This may be due to cultural, linguistic and gender differences between English and Arabic academic writing of L1 Arabic students. There is existing evidence that cultural, linguistic and educational differences affect writers' style of discourse organisation and their degree of rhetorical uncertainty or assertiveness, and the degree of their reader-oriented or writer-oriented discourse (Hyland 2004; Ädel, 2006; Hyland, 2015; Zhao, 2017).

Metadiscourse and voice, as rhetorical devices, refer to the various linguistic ways through which writers project themselves and their voice into their written arguments to signal their stance and orientation to the content of writing and engage with their readers. The concept of voice is assumed to be a western phenomenon which is challenging to L2 students, raising pedagogical issues about its viability of teaching and use in L2 contexts (Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1999; Zhao, 2012). Therefore, understanding the extent and nature of any influence which voice features have on argumentative writing scores is of clear importance to understanding the construct of argumentation in second language writing. As such, it is particularly subject to linguistic differences in the negotiation of relationships between writer, reader and text.

In the light of this contextual research problem, the *Writing the Future* study undertook a cross-linguistic and a cross-gender comparison of metadiscourse and voice employed by Qatari L1 Arabic university students writing parallel argumentative texts in English and Arabic in a university in Qatar. It focused on exploring the linguistic and gender differences in metadiscourse usage in argument writing and students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice. This was achieved through a mixed methods research design with two complementary strands:

1. a corpus analysis of a unique corpus of texts collated for this study;
2. a qualitative study of students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice.

The corpus analysis focused on eliciting the understanding of the textual features of students' argumentative writing; while the student writing conversation interviews focused on what students understand about the metadiscoursal aspects of their own writing. The study set out to answer the research questions below:

1. How do Qatari L1 Arabic students' argumentative texts compare and contrast with their L2 English argumentative texts in their use of metadiscoursal and voice devices?
2. What gender differences (if any) are there in Qatari L1 Arabic university students' use of metadiscoursal and voice features in argumentative writing in Arabic and English?
3. To what extent, and in what ways, do metadiscourse and voice elements contribute to the overall argumentative quality of texts, written by Qatari L1 Arabic university students, in Arabic and English?
4. To what extent, and in what ways, does the strength of voice contribute to the overall argumentative score of Qatari L1 Arabic writers' texts in Arabic and English?
5. How does the strength of voice vary across argumentative texts written by Qatari L1 Arabic students in Arabic and English?
6. What is the nature of Qatari L1 Arabic university students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice and their own use of the features in their writing?

It is the final question which this technical report addresses. The previous five questions are addressed in the Technical Report for the Corpus Analysis.

2.0 The Methodology for the *Writing Conversation* Interviews

The *Writing Conversation* interviews sought to elicit students' metalinguistic understanding of the linguistic choices made in composing their argument texts, with a specific focus on metadiscourse. The benefit of interviews, in general, as a research tool are that they are flexible, allowing the interviewer to '*press not only for complete answers but for responses about complex and deep issues*' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018: 506). They also allow for the possibility of '*an understanding of the world from the subjects' points of view, to unfold the meaning of peoples' experiences*' (Kvale 1996: 1). Of central importance to the value of interviews is that they allow participants to respond '*using their own words*' (Braun and Clarke 2013: 78), rather than the closed responses of, for example, a Likert scale or multiple choice questionnaire. In the context of researching writing and writers, standard semi-structured interviews can be problematic as questions and prompts about writing processes or writing decisions are framed as questions about the participant's writing in general and can often lead to rather bland, generalised responses. In the context of writing at school

and in the university, standard interviews about writing can also lead to a re-playing of what the students perceive to be the 'right' answer, based on what they have been taught. As a consequence of these limitations, this study uses an adapted interview tool, the *Writing Conversation* interview, as a way to elicit data more focused on linguistic decision-making and metalinguistic understanding.

The *Writing Conversation* interview draws on the discourse-based interview (Odell et al 1983; Lillis 2009) and Ivanic's notion of '*talk around texts*' (for example, Ivanic and Satchwell 2007). Both the discourse-based interview and the idea of talk around text uses the writer's own writing as the springboard for discussion. Odell et al (1983) saw the discourse-based interview as a way to draw out writers' implicit or tacit knowledge which they draw on for writing. Somewhat in contrast, Ivanic and Lillis emphasise the importance of giving space to writers' voices, '*seeking out writers' perspectives, including challenging the "taken for granted" conventions that they are expected to write within*' (Lillis 2009: 207). They conceive of the discourse-based interview as essentially ethnographic, connecting language use and writing practices to life experiences. Our use of the term 'writing conversation' is deliberate, because our interest is less ethnographic, and more concerned with the written text and the metalinguistic thinking and decision-making which may or may not have accompanied the composition of the text. It is a conversation between the researcher and the writer about the piece or pieces of writing being considered. In line with Lillis' description, the writing conversation:

'may focus on a text type, text, or section/feature of a text: the specific focus at any one moment in time may be something as small as a specific use of a full stop, to patterns of vocabulary or grammar, such as the use of particular pronouns across a text, to a specific convention emblematic of academic discourse, such as the use of citations'

(Lillis 2009:203)

For this study, then, the choice of a writing conversation interview was to maximise the possibility of eliciting students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse through close reference to their own writing, and the linguistic examples in it. It avoided some of the pitfalls of more generalised interviews about writing, particularly the declaration of espoused practices or metalinguistic understanding which are not realised in the written text itself. Thus, by using the students' own writing, present in front of them, as the focus for discussion, the data generated was, as far as possible, based on actual practice and understanding rather than idealised practice.

2.1 The Student Sample

The students involved in the writing conversation were a sub-sample of the 195 students whose written essays formed the corpus sample. They were all aged between 18 and 22, and represented students in different years of study in different colleges. They were, however, all taking the First-Year Seminar course: an English course which was a compulsory seminar course for undergraduate students across the university, designed to facilitate students' transition and retention, enhance students' academic, personal and professional success, and introduce students to the concepts of leadership and civic engagement to prepare them for a responsible life. The students are bilingual and are fluent in both Arabic (L1) and English (L2). The interview sample comprised a convenience sample of 41 students who were willing to participate, representing approximately 21% of the full corpus sample. This included substantially more females than males reflecting the university's dominantly female student population with a ratio of female to male students of 3 to 1. An overview of the sample characteristics is presented in Table 1 below.

	Gender	
	Male	Female
Number of students	5	36
Totals	41	

Table 1: The Characteristics of the Student Writing Conversation Interview sample.

2.2 The Writing Conversation Interview Schedule

The writing conversation interviews set out to answer the research question: *What is the nature of Qatari L1 Arabic university students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice and their own use of the features in their writing?* The interview schedule was semi-structured, (Cohen et al., 2011), giving the interview a focused framework for discussion, but with the necessary space to explore and follow-up participants' responses. The schedule was designed to align with the corpus analysis and the taxonomy of metadiscourse selected for investigation. Accordingly, the schedule had three main sections, as outlined below:

Engagement (Reader-Oriented)

Metadiscourse Features: *Directives; Interjections; Appeals to Knowledge; Questions; Reader Pronouns*

Interactive (Structural Organisation)

Metadiscourse Features: *Code Glosses; Endophoric Markers; Evidentials; Frame Markers; Transitions*

Stance and Attitude (Writer-Oriented)

Metadiscourse Features: *Attitude Markers; Boosters; Hedges*

As there was no expectation that the students would be familiar with the specific metalanguage of metadiscourse, as it does not form part of the teaching of writing in Qatar, the prompt questions had to be framed to tap into metadiscourse indirectly, using more familiar language. A key aspect of the interview, of course, was framing this discussion with close reference to the students' actual texts, and following up students' responses with invitations to expand, explain further or give examples. The full interview schedule is reproduced in Appendix A.

2.3 *The Interview Process*

In preparation for the interviewing process, a Google Sheet was created which invited students who had indicated a willingness to be interviewed to select their preferred date and time slots over a two-weeks duration. Once the booking was completed on Google Sheets, students attended their interviews. Each interview lasted for 30 – 40 minutes for each of the two essays they wrote. The interviews were conducted by one member of the research team, an English Language instructor fluent in both Arabic and English, but not one involved in teaching these students. This mitigated against the risk of tutor-student power relations affecting the interview. The interviews were audio-recorded using a digital voice recorder, with student permission, and were conducted in the interviewer's office at a university in Qatar.

Before the interview, each student was given a printed copy of his/her two written essays to re-read in advance so that they could draw on real examples from their own writing. Before the interview began, students were reminded about the research aims and the process of the interview, and were informed about the processes being taken to ensure anonymity, privacy, confidentiality, and the secondary use of data. Students were then invited to confirm their consent to participate by signing a written consent form, in line with the approved ethical procedures for the study.

During the interview process, the Writing Conversation Interview Schedule for the study (See Appendix A) was used as a guide to elicit students' responses to the different interview questions, paying attention to the prompts whenever needed. Throughout the interview, the student's own writing was the stimulus the interview drew on actual examples from the student's text as the basis for discussion. The interviewer used a desktop computer to read and highlight instances of metadiscourse features in students' written texts to which they referred. When the Writing Conversation interview for the first text was completed, a five-minutes break was taken before the research and the participants resumed the interview about the second text. Students were given the freedom to select the type of text with which they wanted to start the interview (i.e., Arabic text or

the English text) to feel more at ease when expressing their metalinguistic understanding of the metadiscourse features and voice in their Arabic and English writing. Students were also free to speak in L1 Arabic or L2 English during the interviews.

After the interviewing process was completed, each student was given a certificate of participation along with a small gift as a thank-you token for their participation. All audio-recorded interviews along with the interviewer's highlighted texts for each participant were uploaded to the interviewer's computer and then to the OneDrive to be stored safely and securely. This OneDrive is only accessible by the research team members in Qatar University, Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar, and University of Exeter in the UK.

2.4 Data Analysis processes

The first step in data analysis was the preparation of the data for analysis. A transcription was made of the audio recordings of the interviews, and then a subsequent translation into English. The interviews were then labelled with a unique identifier, a number for the student, and A and B to indicate if the interview related to the Arabic or the English essay. All interviews were imported into Nvivo and a classification sheet set up, which classified each interview by gender, Arabic or English essay, attainment in the essay. The interviews were then all read in full, a process of familiarisation with and immersion in the data (Wellington 2000:135) which helped the subsequent coding.

The coding process adopted a hybrid methodology (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane 2006) using two different procedures: the first, a top-down deductive coding; and the second, a bottom-up inductive coding. This hybrid approach recognises that a deductive analysis *'tends to provide less a rich description of the data overall, and more a detailed analysis of some aspect of the data'* (Braun and Clarke 2006:84), whilst an inductive analysis means *'the themes identified are strongly linked to the data themselves... without trying to fit it into a preexisting coding frame, or the researcher's analytic preconceptions'* (Braun and Clarke 2006:83). Thus, the hybrid approach ensured that there was firstly, a strong alignment between the qualitative coding and the corpus analysis, and secondly, that the nuances and richness of the qualitative data were fully explored.

The deductive coding adopted a predetermined framework of *a priori* codes, drawing on the taxonomy of metadiscourse used in the corpus analysis, and to design the interview schedule. As the corpus analysis preparations and refinements took place, revisions were made to the initial metadiscourse framework to better align with the evolving corpus analysis coding structure. Three

themes of Interactive, Engagement and Stance were set up, with corresponding codes within each theme. These codes were also modified to match changes made in the corpus analysis: *Reader Mentions* became *Reader Pronouns* and a new category, *Appeal to Knowledge* was added. The final codebook for this deductive analysis is outlined below (Table 2).

METADISCOURSE	Comments which show understanding of metadiscoursal features, using metalanguage or everyday language
Engagement	Reader-Oriented. Engagement markers are the involvement of readers explicitly in the text. They address readers explicitly, or make a relationship with the reader
Directives	Imperatives: <i>add, think about, examine ..</i> PLUS <i>It is important to; it is necessary to,...</i> Obligations: <i>must, have to...</i>
Interjections	<i>By the way; incidentally;</i> Personal asides...
Appeals to Knowledge	<i>As a rule; we know that; commonly; it is well-known that..</i>
Questions	Questions to the reader eg <i>How can this continue?</i>
Reader Pronouns	The use of personal pronouns to address the reader eg: <i>let us, we, our, you</i>
Interactive	Interactive Resources are those features which the writer uses to manage the information flow to guide the reader through the text.
Code Glosses	Reformulation: <i>in other words, this means...</i> and Exemplification: <i>for example, for instance...</i>
Endophoric Markers	Non-linear: <i>Fig(ure) X, Table X...</i> and Linear: <i>In Figure X, In Table X... In this paragraph/section</i>
Evidentials	Reference to other sources: eg <i>according to x</i>
Frame Markers	Sequencing: <i>first, lastly,</i> Label stages: <i>all in all, in conclusion...</i> ; Announcing goals: <i>In this essay, this essay aims to... my purpose...;</i> Topic shift: <i>now, move/moving on...</i>
Transitions	Connectives/Linking adverbials. Addition: <i>additionally, further/furthermore...;</i> Comparison: <i>although, at the same time...</i> Consequence: <i>as a result, even though, the result is...</i>
Stance	This refers to “writer-oriented features” which reveal the position of the writer toward the subject. For example, the ways writers comment on the accuracy of a claim, the extent they show their commitment to it, or the attitude they want to express to a proposition or the reader
Attitude Markers	Attitude verbs: <i>agree, disagree...</i> Sentence adverbs: <i>amazingly, shockingly...</i> ; Adjectives: <i>amazing, important...;</i> Self-mention flagging the explicit presence of the author eg <i>I, me...</i>
Boosters	Emphatics: <i>actually, obvious...</i> Amplifying adverbs: <i>certainly, never...</i>
Hedges	Attribute: <i>apparently, in general...</i> Reliability: <i>could, may...</i> Writer-oriented: <i>argue, claim,</i> Reader-oriented: <i>in my opinion, in my view...</i>

Table 2: The Codebook for the Analysis of Metadiscourse in the interviews.

When the initial coding was complete, it became evident that two codes, **Reader Pronouns** and **Transitions**, had a large number of data segments attributed to each of them, and a further layer of

inductive coding was undertaken to provide richer analyses of these substantial codes (see Appendix B).

The inductive coding, a bottom-up approach, sought to ensure that students' reflections on their writing were fully represented in the final analysis, even when they were only indirectly related or unrelated to metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse. In line with the principles of qualitative research, the analysis process sought to *'find patterns within those words and to present those patterns for others to inspect while at the same time staying as close to the construction of the world as the participants originally experienced it'* (Maykut and Morehouse 1994:18). The analysis broadly followed the six steps of analysis, outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006:87), although steps 2-5 were more iterative, than sequential.

1. Familiarizing yourself with your data: Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic 'map' of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes: Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Three researchers were involved in the coding process, so particular attention was devoted to generating shared understanding of the emerging coding framework, and regular meetings were held to discuss the coding framework and its appropriacy. In particular, the coding process sought to adopt a constant comparison approach which *'assures that all data are systematically compared to all other data in the data set. This assures that all data produced will be analyzed rather than potentially disregarded on thematic grounds'* (O'Connor et al. 2008: 41). As a consequence, the initial coding framework evolved through the data analysis process, rather than being a fixed, rigid framework from the outset.

The first step of the coding process was open coding (Strauss and Glaser 1990), which seeks 'to develop categories from the first round of data reduction and further reducing and recoding allows possible core categories to emerge' (Fram 2013:3). Central to this open coding stage is the primacy of the data in determining codes, rather than using a predetermined set of codes. To achieve this, ten interviews from five students (ie both the interview on the English essay and the Arabic essay) were read closely to gain an initial impression of the nature of student responses and to establish a sense of initial codes. A tentative initial coding framework was devised with three top-level themes (*Metalinguistic Understanding of Writing; Writing Proficiency; The Role of the Teacher*), each with further sub-themes (See Appendix C: Codebook 1).

The coding framework was then set up in Nvivo and six interviews were coded using the framework. The codes of *Formulaic Response* and *Textual Organisation* were combined as they were being repeatedly double-coded. New codes of *Evidence and Examples; Position of the Writer; and Vocabulary* were created to reflect themes evident in the data. The code descriptions were refined further and a Research Journal set up in Memos (See Appendix D: Codebook 2). The final four interviews of the preliminary ten interviews were then coded and a further layer of refining occurred. New codes were added: *Comparison and Contrast; Revision; and Challenges in Writing*. The top-level theme, *Writing Proficiency*, was modified to *Writer Perspectives on their own Writing*. Finally, a category of *Other* was created as a Temporary category to capture comments which seemed relevant but did not fit the current coding. All definitions were refined to be more comprehensive (See Appendix E: Codebook 3).

At this stage, an additional coding meeting was arranged between all coders to discuss this initial phase of the coding and the sense of how appropriate the framework was, and to ensure an active process of constant comparison. The consensus was that the refined Codebook 3 was working well, and that the *Other* category was helpful in ensuring that potential further inductive codes could be captured. The remaining interviews were distributed amongst the three coders, and the full set of interviews were coded using the established coding framework.

When this initial coding was complete, coders double-checked the match of data segments to the code and its definition, and then another coding meeting was held to reflect on and discuss the outcomes of the coding and whether changes needed to be made to the coding framework. This meeting moved into the stage of axial coding (Strauss and Glaser 1990), and particularly considered the inter-relationships and clusters of codes in the data, and how these inter-relationships might best

be represented. This discussion led to substantial revision of the coding framework to better reflect the data thematically and to address identified problems with the naming of a code, the definition of a code, or the content of a code. The principal changes related to refinement of the thematic clustering into seven top-level themes: *Metadiscourse; Argumentation; Reader Awareness; Position of the Writer; The Role of Teachers; Writing; and Writer Perspectives*. This thematic re-organisation led to further coding of the new top-level themes of *Reader Awareness* and *Position of the Writer* as each of these had a large number of data segments attributed to them, and the generation of new codes within this theme provided a richer interpretation of the data. The new top-level theme of *Writing* involved the re-allocation of existing codes under former themes to this theme, and the re-coding of data segments under *Other* to this category where they were best suited. The Final Codebook is reproduced in Appendix F.

A final stage of checking of the data involved looking at the whole analysed dataset, checking that every data segment in a code was correctly attributed to that code. Thus the coding process was strongly iterative, involving repeated consideration and revision of the coding, and reflecting the principles of the constant comparative method, where *'the researcher simultaneously codes and analyses data in order to develop concepts; by continually comparing specific incidents in the data, the researcher refines these concepts, identifies their properties, explores their relationships to one another, and integrates them into a coherent explanatory model'* (Taylor and Bogdan 1984:126).

The following sections of this report present the outcomes of the analysis of the writing conversation interviews and will, firstly, address the top-down coding of how students discussed metadiscourse; and secondly, address the inductive coding of the interviews. In the tables which follow, a consistent pattern will be adopted of showing both the number of *occurrences* of the coding of a segment of data to a particular category, and the number of *interviews* in which the code was found. This ensures that the data presentation indicates both the frequencies of each code, and their representativeness of the full data set. When referring to students and reporting their verbatim comments, the student will be referred to using their alphanumeric identification number (S1; S2 etc) and A or E will be used to indicate whether they are commenting on their English or their Arabic essay. Thus, for example, S14A, indicates student 14 discussing their Arabic essay, whereas S49E refers to student 49 discussing their English essay. Where students cite examples from their own writing in their interviews, the text example is represented in normal typography, amidst the italics used for the students' voices. In quoting from the student interviews, their use of gender-specific pronouns is retained.

3.0 The Outcomes of the Deductive Analysis of the Interviews

As outlined in Table 2 above, a set of *a priori* codes were used to investigate students' metalinguistic understanding. Whilst there was no expectation that students would necessarily use the specialist terminology of metadiscourse reflected in the codes, the interviews had sought to explore their understanding of metadiscoursal features using more everyday or familiar language. In fact, the only student reference to a metadiscoursal term in the entire data set was a student who noted that it was '*possible to give the impression of hedging*' (S38A). However, the students did express their understandings, or misunderstandings, of the features of metadiscourse which provide an insight into their metalinguistic thinking about metadiscourse. Table 3 below shows the outcomes of the initial top-down deductive coding.

METADISCOURSE CODES	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Engagement	68	150
Appeals to Knowledge	0	0
Directives	4	4
Interjections	1	1
Questions	16	22
Reader Pronouns	65	124
Interactive	71	180
Code Glosses	8	9
Endophoric Markers	0	0
Evidentials	18	31
Frame Markers	23	29
Transitions	62	111
Stance	78	184
Attitude Markers	31	46
Boosters	50	69
Hedges	57	70
TOTALS:	82	516

Table 3: the outcomes of the initial top-down coding

There are several points to note in relation to this table. Bearing in mind that there were 82 interviews, the three themes of *Engagement*, *Interactive* and *Stance* are fairly evenly distributed across the coding with a high number of interviews (at least 75%) represented in each theme. The number of occurrences in each code indicates that some metadiscoursal features were unfamiliar to the students as part of their writing repertoire (**Appeals to Knowledge; Directives; Interjections; Code Glosses;**

Endophoric Markers). Equally, the number of occurrences of comments discussing **Reader Pronouns**; and **Transitions** accounts for approximately half (234) of all the comments on metadiscourse (514), suggesting much greater familiarity with these aspects. However, it is important to note that each occurrence of a comment does not necessarily represent metalinguistic understanding of that feature, as will be outlined in more detail below.

3.1 Engagement Markers

Engagement markers are fundamentally concerned with how the writer establishes a relationship with the reader, involving them explicitly in the text and engaging directly with the reader through interpersonal devices. Hang and Hyland argue that *'the most obvious indication of a writer's dialogic awareness occurs when he or she overtly refers to readers, asking questions, making suggestions and addressing them directly'* (2020:4). No comments were made relating to **Appeals to Knowledge**, and three of the four comments about **Directives** discussed the use of modal 'must', but focused more on the semantic meaning of 'must', rather than its modality and role in engaging with the reader. For example, one student said, without further explanation, that it helped to make the text *'clear'* and the reader *'empathise more'* (S6E). Another student believed that it helped to *'express the significance of the subject, and it is indisputable. It is not only important for the writer but important for the reader, the writer and everyone'* (S73A), perhaps signalling the emphatic function of 'must'. The single comment on **Interjections** does show some understanding of the relationship-building purpose, noting that her use of 'by the way' has a conversational tone, perhaps a transfer from speech, which *'puts the reader at ease sometimes. So, it feels like, you know, someone is talking to you'* (S9B).

There were more responses explaining the use of **Questions**, and these were strongly focused on the reader-writer relationship. Four students talked about how questions *'attract the reader's attention'* (S18A), including one who signalled this had been taught to them: *'Our course teacher has indicated to us that we put a question in the foreground to attract the reader's attention'* (S35B). In similar vein, one student felt questions invited the reader to *'to wonder how this is possible'* (S24A), whilst another felt questions made the text *'more interesting'* for the reader (S26B). Two students seemed to feel that the questions engaged the reader with the argument, signalling that *'there are two points of view and not only one'* (S26A), and that an essay opening with a question was *'to force the reader to think before and after reading, because he can agree with my position as a writer'* (S19B). However, three students expressed a view that using questions should be avoided because *'it is an argumentative text, and it would not be appropriate to start with a question in the essay'* (S5A); because *'there are no opportunities to present a talking point for the reader himself'* (40A); and because of a sense that

it is *'more professional'* not to use questions *'as my style is not a speech style directed to a reader. My presentation of issues and information was scientifically professional'* (27A).

In contrast to the relatively sparse number of comments on the Engagement markers discussed above, the code of **Reader Pronouns** prompted a high number of responses, and led to a further layer of coding of these responses to generate a more fine-grained understanding of these responses, as outlined in Table 4 below. Reader pronouns include both the inclusive pronouns (*we, us* and *our*) and the direct address pronouns, *you* and *your*, and are perhaps the most obvious, or common, method of reader engagement.

Reader Pronouns sub-codes	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Inclusive of the Reader	Comments which express a view that use of personal pronouns includes the reader as part of a shared community or view.	32	40
Direct and Indirect Address	Comments suggesting that use of personal pronouns relates to direct or indirect address, linked with formality and informality.	28	34
Giving Examples or Unelaborated Comments	Comments which simply identified examples of reader pronouns or made generalised statements about transitions.	13	14
Influence of Instruction	Comments which indicate that the choice of pronoun use is a response to what the student has been taught.	9	11
Conversational and Engaging	Comments which suggest that personal pronouns are more conversational or engaging.	10	10
Generalisation and Objectivity	Comments which explain choice of reader pronouns in terms of a generalised reader and objectivity.	7	8
Effect of Arab Culture and Language	Comments which explain the use of personal pronouns as a facet of Arabic language, and particularly the collectivist Arab culture.	7	7

Table 4: an overview of the coding of Reader Pronouns

Table 4 indicates that the most commonly-articulated understanding of reader pronouns shows metalinguistic understanding of the metadiscoursal function of reader pronouns – to be **Inclusive of the Reader**. In particular, the students felt the inclusive pronouns create a sense of shared experience or significance, where something *'is affecting all of us together. It's not just me'* (S1E) and where the pronouns serve *'to rally a community in a sense'* (S9E). Sometimes this relates to evoking a shared problem, *'this problem is not only your problem but also our problem—all of us'* (S4E), and the inclusive pronouns mean *'the reader and I are in the same place and in the same picture, we are all together'* (S8E). For others, the emphasis is more on shared responsibility – *'I need to include the*

community as a whole so that they feel responsible' (S20A). Students also felt the inclusive pronouns are a way of *'connecting with the reader'* (23E) to *'make the reader feel that he is with you'* (26E); or as very explicitly expressed by one student: *'I am using the our to convince the reader, to give them a sense of connection with me as a writer'* (S35A). Occasionally, however, the recognition of how the use of *we*, *our* or *us* was inclusive of the reader, bordered on being more about ideational, or propositional content than the metadiscoursal function: for example, one student said the pronouns were *'to show to the reader that he is a part of the community in which he lives and that everyone should pay attention, as harm can affect everyone'* (S33A), whilst another argued that *'I direct it to the people who will read it and the surrounding community and to feel that they are included in this concern, and this motivates them to take advice'* (S26A).

A second substantial category of response related to ***Direct and Indirect Address***, which in general referred to the use of the second person pronoun to address the reader, although some students also spoke of inclusive pronouns as direct address. The responses in this code, however, signal divided perspectives on the use of pronouns for direct address in argument, and their purpose in the text. Some students explicitly recognised the direct address created by 'you' pronouns, saying, for example, *'I was addressing the reader directly. I was talking with them'* (S4E) or that direct address can *'attract the reader and makes him pay attention to the subject and that this essay is addressed to him'* (S17E). One student saw it as a necessity: *'to be more direct, I have to address the public and the reader himself'* (S16E). Equally, however, some students eschewed using pronouns for direct address because they felt an *'indirect method'* (S1A) was more appropriate. For some, this was simply a statement of their practice, particularly the use of third person pronouns: *'I addressed him indirectly by using third person'* (S26A), and *'I use an indirect form to talk to the reader'* (S1A). Others expressed their use of indirect address more in terms of how they presented their writing to the reader, with one student noting that *'I presented the idea with credibility and transparency without speaking directly to the reader'* (S24A), and another saying *'I addressed the reader indirectly as humans, and I tried to attract the reader's attention to my writing, but I did not address him directly'* (S33A). For some, the choice not to use direct address pronouns seemed to be less related to the metadiscoursal aspect of engagement with the reader, and more connected to a notion of the implied reader. The students' perceptions of a general readership, that *'this article is written to people in general'* (S14E), that *'the subject is not addressed to a single reader'* (S32A), and that the writer had no *'particular reader in my mind'* (S5E) seemed to prompt the avoidance of reader pronouns.

Students' explanations regarding the use of direct address pronouns also raised issues of formality and informality, which were unrelated to the metadiscoursal engagement function of reader pronouns but linked to perceptions of the inappropriacy of informality in academic writing. Direct address of the reader was seen as an example of informality: *'They are not 'official' they are 'informal''* (S11E); they are *'informal or incorrect'* (S4A), and they should not be used in *'argumentative articles'* (S5E). One student signalled that they had been explicitly taught to avoid personal pronouns: *'this was counted as an informal language in high school. We learned that using you or me, or any type of these pronouns. Yeah. It can be counted as informal, so I did not use them'* (S4A). Another student felt that not using personal pronouns made the writing *'more professional and formal'* (S27B). In similar vein, one student explained the choice of the universal pronoun 'one' as being *'more formal'* (S40E).

Perhaps linked to these ideas of direct address, formality and informality are the notions of **Generalisation and Objectivity**, which formed a small set of responses. Students felt the use of third person, thus avoiding reader pronouns, made their writing *'more objective'* (S27E) and was more appropriate *'for generalization'* (S33E). Another student felt that using the third person tones down the potential of making the reader feel personally attacked: *'if I address someone, I will address him in a negative way. The reader can feel that the speech is negative, because I am going to address him using a pronoun you. But when I write in general, the reader will understand the topic in a comprehensive perspective and not accusing him of a certain point'* (S41A).

A cluster of comments conceived of reader pronouns as **Conversational and Engaging**, linking the metadiscoursal idea of engagement to the conversational style the reader pronouns establish. Students spoke of how the pronouns were like *'talking to the audience'* (S12E) or *'talking to the reader'* (S13E), suggesting that it was to attract the reader *'to my point of view'* (S37A) or *'to convince him with my message'* (S24A). One student elaborated her perspective on this in detail:

I find writing to be almost like a conversation. So I want to engage with the reader usually, and I want to address them because it's very easy to say a speech and be like, oh, I'm talking to, you know, just a general group of people. And I feel like that sometimes can be not necessarily impersonal because like, it is an impersonal essay. But it is kind of, it makes it easier to get the reader to be engaged because you are addressing them specifically, and it is like, you are talking to them. And so they begin to answer back, I feel, in their own heads. (S9E)

Given that these students are all learning English as a second or other language, and are on a language

course, it is perhaps not surprising that some students signalled that their beliefs about reader pronouns had been developed through the **Influence of Instruction**, and their writing practices are *'the effect of our education'* (S38E). Seven of the eight comments in this code reflected admonition against the use of personal pronouns: for example, *'the instructor told that do not use I directly - say, for example, it is believed'* (S15E); *'I was taught that I should not use the first and third person pronouns'* (S31E); and *'teachers warned us not to use it'* (S32B). However, none of these students explained *why* they should not use these pronouns.

One student offered a different position on using pronouns, in relation to writing in Arabic, noting his teachers *'were telling us that we should put our personal opinion and address the reader in person'* (S31A). This comment may connect to another cluster of comments which suggested that the decision about using reader pronouns in Arabic writing was an **Effect of Arab Culture and Language**. For one student, this seemed to be principally due to greater linguistic ease in Arabic, allowing him to *'explain my style and my point of view easier'* (S41A). However, five of the seven comments referred directly to their sense of an Arabic collectivist culture, giving primacy to the needs and interests of groups over individuals, with a strong group identity and sense of community: *'We are a collective culture who live together as a big family share happiness and grievances together. We live in a sense of community as Arabs; unlike the western culture who are not collective in nature'* (S35A). One student explained her perception of the link between Arab culture and choice of reader pronouns:

There is an effect in the Arabic language. In the Arabic language we use we a lot, and in the culture as well. In the West, there is individual culture, so one person speaks and says I, but in the Arabic language, in general, we have an idea that we are all together and it is a beautiful idea. Of course, the group has its pros and cons. The negatives, for example, limit thinking outside the box, but here, let me talk about my writing here. Here I was influenced by the Arabic language first thing, and the second concern is so that the reader is with me, we are all one unit. (S23E)

This view was repeated by other students who believed that *'in Arabic it is desirable to use - we, we can, we do, we see ... it can be due to the collectivism like if we mentioned any verse in the Quran, and it could be close to the reader like you and I or us'* (S5A), and that this choice to use 'we' is *'because our society likes plurality and collective action, and I am addressing the society as a whole -we'* (S18A).

Those comments attributed to the **Giving Examples and Unelaborated Comments** code were predominantly those where students simply identified the pronoun use in their writing with no

explanatory comments, or where they made comments which suggested very limited metalinguistic understanding of how reader pronouns function, either metadiscoursally or rhetorically. For example, one student said *'I do not differentiate between them much'* (S5E) and another commented on his use of direct address, noting *'there was not enough time, and I did not intend to use it'* (S36E).

3.2 Interactive Markers

Interactive markers are, to an extent, more text-focused features of metadiscourse, managing the communication of information to guide the reader through the text. It requires the writer to anticipate the reader's needs and accommodate these in organising the text, signposting and signalling the logic of the unfolding text. The analysis (see Table 3 above) of the five interactive markers discussed in the interviews (code glosses, endophoric markers, evidentials, frame markers and transitions) indicates that metalinguistic understanding varied significantly with no evident understanding of **Endophoric Markers** and very limited understanding of **Code Glosses**. Indeed, the nine comments attributed to the category of **Code Glosses** were largely about the use of 'for example', simply noting an occurrence of it in their writing: *'I used words like for example'* (S34E), with no evident awareness of any textual function in relationship to the reader. Two students, however, did make observations which touched on the idea of 'for example' acting as *'a sign that there is another example'* (S38E), and that *'if we do not mention for instance, people will not be informed that there is an example'* (S16E).

Although there were more comments coded to **Evidentials**, the responses tended to be less about the metadiscoursal function and more about the propositional fact that evidentials pointed to evidence to support their argument. Sometimes, having identified an example of an evidential feature, the students simply talked about the evidence itself: *'I used a study that says that a student cannot focus more than 10 minutes with any teacher'* (S15E). A number of students talked about the strength of the evidence, particularly that the use of sacred texts, such as the Quran, constituted *'the strongest evidence'* (S17A). In contradistinction to all the other comments, one student expressed the view that she did not use evidentials, because argument writing *'should be about a personal experience, and it is not like scientific research which requires quotation'* (S29E).

Although taxonomies of metadiscourse discriminate between **Frame Markers** and **Transitions**, the students frequently did not make these distinctions and there was some overlap between these two categories, particularly in the conflation of sequencing and linking. This will be discussed explicitly further below in the presentation of the analysis on **Transitions**. In terms of **Frame Markers**, a small

number of students recognised how frame markers had a purpose for the reader: *'to tell the reader that this is my first main idea'* (S15E) and to show *'the reader where I started and the idea that will come after'* (S26E). Some, however, described rather literally the sequencing function rather than the reader function, for example, in stating that *'I used all in all in the conclusion to summarize and clarify everything'* (S14E), or by explaining that *'Firstly is used when I will present the first idea, then secondly, thirdly and finally which means that this is the last idea and sum up which is the conclusion'* (S16E). Others articulated more explicitly the sequencing function, noting that *'firstly', 'secondly' and 'thirdly' 'add a structure and sequence'* (S31E) and *'these words help to arrange and move from one sentence and one idea to another through these links'* (S36E). One student felt the use of sequencing adverbials him as a writer, rather than being for the reader, because *'it benefited me a lot in the order of the text and I needed to use something to arrange my thoughts which has benefited me'* (S4A). Many students, however, simply identified where they had used frame markers and did not discuss their purpose at all. It is also noticeable that they talked predominantly about sequencing frame markers, with no comments at all on frame markers which announce goals or shift topics. The students did refer to frame markers which label stages, particularly *'finally'*, but tended to see these as part of the sequencing.

As evidenced in Table 3 above, comments in the category of **Transitions** were significantly more frequent than other categories, and as with **Reader Pronouns**, a further more detailed inductive analysis was made of data attributed to this code. The outcomes of this analysis are presented in table 5 below:

Transitions sub-codes	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Linking and Connecting	Comments which refer to the linking function of transitions, including references to sequencing	31	39
Awareness of Function	Comments which refer to the function of the transition words: eg to provide additional information, to contrast, or to express consequence	17	22
Ideational Focus	Comments which refer principally to transition words in relation to ideas and their arrangement, including moving between ideas	13	16
Coherence, cohesion and flow	Comments which refer to how transition words and phrases contribute to the overall cohesion, coherence or flow of the writing	11	13
Giving Examples or Unelaborated Comments	Comments which simply identified examples of the transition words or made generalised statements about transitions.	12	14
Conflation	Comments which discuss words and phrases from different metadiscoursal categories as part of discussion of transition words	6	7

Table 5: an overview of the coding of Transitions

Over a third of all comments referred in some way to the **Linking and Connecting** function of transition markers. Three students made a direct reference to the way linking supported the reader, helping *'the reader to understand and to link the ideas'* (S25E); to organize *'the reader's thoughts and makes his ideas sequential as he reads'* (S26E); and to avoid comprehension problems for the reader: *'if I did not choose linking words, as you mentioned before, the reader would not be able to understand what's the relationship'* (S4E). Others talked more generally about connectivity between ideas, sentences and paragraphs with no reference to their role in guiding the reader through the text. Typical comments maintained that linking words were *'to connect ideas and to move smoothly between ideas and collect all the sentences and connect them to each other'* (S8E), to make *'the text clearer and connected'* (S18E), and to *'connect an idea to another'* (S41B). One student saw the place of these transitions as writer-oriented *'because they help me to clarify my thoughts and the sequence of my ideas'* (S33A).

To an extent, those data segments attributed to **Cohesion, Coherence and Flow** build on the idea of **Linking and Connecting**, but specifically discuss notions of cohesion. Here, there was some awareness of a reader purpose for using transition words, particularly that *'it makes it easier to read and helps with the flow of reading and writing'* (S1E) and that it can *'facilitate reading and text flow'* (S31A) and *'connect the structure of the flow of information'* (S31E). Others drew attention to the cohesion created by transition markers, for example, to *'help me to have the subject coherent and easier to read'* (S14A), and that *'it adds cohesion and flow, so that reading get is easier. You are not kind of like struggling, so struggling to connect the pieces'* (S9E). One student talked of her personal desire for her writing to be *'complete and coherent'* because she does *'not like the ideas being scattered, and even when the person reads the article he knows exactly what I am talking about'* (S14E). There is reader awareness here, with the emphasis on ensuring the reader is clear about the writer's message. Two comments focused more on the barriers to communication when transition markers are not used, noting that the text *'would not be clear, and we will feel that there is something missing'* (S17E) and that *'the text will be disrupted'* (S29A).

Whilst comments on transitions which link within the text were the most frequent, students also demonstrated **Awareness of Function** of transitions which signal additionality, comparison and contrast, or consequence. Whereas the notion of linking is principally a textual function, and in metadiscourse plays a role in managing information flow for the reader, the student comments on these other transition markers pointed more to the semantic function of the transition word in relation to the ideas being communicated. One student did comment on additionality in terms of both

linking and expanding ideas: *'I have used stuff like "in addition" here, linking or to further develop on an idea'* (S12A). However, the majority explained solely the semantic function as the quotations below reflect:

- ❑ *As a result - I stated an idea and then explained its consequences.* (S8E)
- ❑ *Furthermore, in addition to, besides that are used to increase the number of points and additions.* (S14E)
- ❑ *I used on the one hand to highlight the first team and then on the other hand to talk about the second team, I explained that there is a contradiction.* (S26E)
- ❑ *When I wrote on the other hand he understood that this point is going to contrast the previous paragraph.* (S4E)

Only the final comment makes an indirect reference to a reader, suggesting that these students do not perceive these transition words as part of building a reader-writer relationship.

The category, **Ideational Focus**, captured comments which were more strongly focused on the ideas being expressed, suggesting for example, that transition markers *'emphasize my idea'* (S31E); *'help me arrange my ideas'* (S25A); or that they discriminate between ideas: *'this idea is different from the first idea, or here is an example, here is an explanation like this'* (S15E). For some, there was some grasp of how transition markers relate to readers, but with an emphasis on the ideas rather than navigation or information flow: *'To tell the reader where to find the place of supporting and opposing teams and their points of view'* (S18A). However, of the 12 data segments coded to this category, six specifically referred to the idea of transition or moving *'from one idea to another'* (S12A). Transition markers were viewed as *'a strategy used to facilitate the transition from one idea to another'* (S18A), acting as *'signals that show that I have moved from one idea to another'* (S28A). This included the notion of *'a smooth transition between ideas'* (S21A) and making *'it easier for the reader to move smoothly from one point to another'* (S36A).

There were occasions, particularly in relation to transition markers, where students conflated adverbials from across the metadiscourse categories into one comment. As the students did not know the metalanguage of metadiscourse, to an extent this is understandable. Data coded to **Conflation** shows students citing sequencing adverbials with additionality adverbials: *'In the topic sentence, I mentioned that there are many reasons for the opposing team and enumerate them using firstly, moreover, additionally, lastly'* (S26B); and considering sequencing adverbials as linking adverbials: *'at*

the beginning of each paragraph there is a link word - firstly, second, third' (S35E). One student, in describing their use of conjunctions and adverbials, talks in one sentence about code glosses, frame markers and transitions, explaining '*- but, however- for contrast; - also - for addition; - firstly, secondly, finally, to sum up - for sequence; and - for instance, for example - for giving examples'* (S16B). This pattern of response does suggest that these students group these adverbials together, perhaps as an umbrella grouping for words which link and organise text, accounting for the higher frequency of comments on **Linking and Connecting**. This may reflect the instructional context, and the strong emphasis in much ESOL teaching on the idea of 'connectives', which itself conflates all these words together.

As with the coding of **Reader Pronouns**, one cluster of responses was coded to **Giving Examples and Unelaborated Comments**, where students simply identified in their own writing their use of interactive resources, with no meaningful comment on that usage.

3.3 Stance

The concept of stance in metadiscourse refers to those aspects of discourse which are writer-oriented, in that they make visible to the reader the position of the writer towards the subject of the text. As Table 3 indicates, the number of responses coded to the three codes under this category were more evenly spread than was the case with *Engagement* or *Interactive*, tentatively suggesting greater awareness of the position of the writer.

The students' comments on **Attitude Markers** were strongly oriented towards consideration of the use of the first person singular pronoun, partly prompted by one of the interview questions. Only two of the coded data segments were not about the use of 'I'. Many of these comments were concerned with the appropriacy of using 'I', not about its effect as a marker of the writer's stance, and reflected a view that the 'I' should not be used in argument writing. One student noted that '*I tended to avoid that'* (S7E), whilst others argued that it was too '*informal'* (S40E), '*informal or incorrect'* (S4A) or not appropriate to use '*because it is not a personal essay'* (S40A). Some students indicated that this view of its inappropriacy stemmed from their instructional experiences:

- When we are writing argumentative essays, I remember we were asked not to use the first person. (S12E)*
- We do not mention them in the academic essay as they are not allowed to be used. (S32E)*

- *I have learned that even in academic essays, I do not talk about myself and in the academic side. When I write about a topic, I prove this topic, and not too biased and not to speak about myself, so I felt that the reference to the third person is better than the first-person pronouns.* (S14A)

The reference to bias in the final quotation above was also expressed by other students, though with more direct reference to the reader. These students avoided using the singular first person pronoun 'so as not to make the reader feel that I am biased' (S14E). This sense of bias was linked to the effectiveness of the persuasion which might be undermined because 'the reader will feel that this information is only from my side' (S26E). Instead using third person voice 'makes the reader imagine that I am using facts and is convinced of what I am saying' (S14E). These comments do suggest some metalinguistic understanding of the metadiscoursal function of 'I', though principally in concluding that they eschew revealing their position to the writer through first person voice.

Another cluster of comments focused on the idea of personal opinion expressed in writing. One lone voice justified her use of the first person voice 'because the topic was personal to me' (S34E), but more discussed their avoidance of 'I' because an argument text is not personal. For some, this meant restricting the use of 'I' to the introduction and conclusion where they felt their personal viewpoint was permissible: 'only at the beginning to clarify my personal opinion' (S29E); 'at the end of the essay' (S34E). One student, who had only used first person voice in the introduction and conclusion, connected this with objectivity and subjectivity, reflecting that 'the topic is not subjective, So I wanted to be objective, but I tried to make it clear that I agree with the subject in the introduction and then I added my findings in the conclusion' (S41E). Another student who had not used 'I' seemed to be explaining her decision on the degree of personal attachment to the topic, at the same time as suggesting she is expressing her opinion indirectly: 'I don't tend to use it that much in general, unless it's like a personal essay, but even in arguments to essays, I think for this one, in particular, it's because I'm not attached to the topic that much, so yes. So, I can have an opinion on this essay. Right. But it is, I do not necessarily, like, it is not a direct writer opinion' (S9E).

Two students felt that the first person singular pronoun engaged the reader: for one student, this was because the personal voice established a shared attitude between reader and writer, where 'what the author wrote represents an experience that the reader has to live as well' (S17E). The other student spoke directly of engagement – 'I used 'I' to give a direct example to the reader and engage him with me. Using 'I' relates my narration more to the reader' (S20E). To an extent, this links across to **Reader**

Pronouns as Engagement markers, rather than a self-mention, although the point that a first person voice might engage the reader more is a valid one.

This emphasis on the first person singular pronoun in students' responses meant that, in citing their use of 'I' in their own writing, they frequently also gave examples of verbs communicating an attitude, but it was unclear whether their comments are referring to the pronoun or to the attitude verbs. Two students, however, did note how their choices expressed their stance to the reader:

- ❑ *I used I see, I think to specify to the reader what is my stand towards the topic. (S33A)*
- ❑ *By adding words that illustrate my point of view such as as I see, I affirm and I am sure that. (S34A)*

The two comments which did not relate to the first person singular pronoun both discussed the use of adjectives, with one saying rather vaguely that she used '*attractive adjectives*' (S22E), with no further elaboration. The other student showed understanding of adjectives as attitude markers signalling stance, suggesting that this also helps to convince the reader:

When you are using such adjectives, you demonstrate the importance of your point of view. I mean, it is much more convincing when you use expressive words to tell the reader that understand the whole issue. (S12A).

The use of **Boosters** signals the writer's certainty in their arguments and ideas, and closes down the space for alternative perspectives. At the same time, they build a relationship with the reader, positioning the writer with authoritative confidence. In general, the students show considerable awareness of how they position themselves authoritatively, but with very little evidence of metalinguistic understanding of the role that boosters play in achieving this. Some students, however, did recognise how their use of boosters were closing down space for any doubt. One contrasted her use of a hedge with a booster, explaining the latter was a way '*to affirm the subject, but it is true that I use may, and I see that people will discuss the subject, but I used too, so there is no room for doubt*' (S14A). This was repeated almost verbatim by another student: '*to confirm my idea and even to let the reader have no room for doubt, which confirms the idea*' (S17A). Both of these students used the words 'affirm' or 'confirm', which were frequently linked to justification of the use of boosters. Indeed, the stems 'confirm/affirm' and related recurred 28 times in this code.

These ideas of confidence, confirmation of position, and expressing certainty seemed to be, in part at least, about avoiding the suggestion of hesitancy. One student explained that her use of 'no doubt' was *'to clarify my opinion and that I am confident and not hesitant'* (S11E). Other students talked more generally about how they communicated confidence without necessarily referring to boosters saying, for example, *'I explained the idea because I am certain about what I write'* (S35B) or *'I explained every reason and point, through which I explained my certainty of my point of view'* (S41E). Another student suggests that the absence of hesitation builds certainty: *'Through the language used. I am sure of my words, and there was no hesitation in the sentences, and I think that possibly the lack of hesitation and ambiguous words has proved this'* (S36E). Another elaborated on why she felt expressing hesitation might affect the reader's confidence in the writer:

If you're talking about the topic and you show hesitance a lot ... well, they will question your writing and be like, well, the writer is hesitant. Why should I believe them? Or why should I listen to them? I want to be more assuring or more believable. You should show a little bit of confidence. (12A)

Some students saw the boosters as relating more to the propositional aspect of their arguments, rather than the metadiscoursal. One student maintained that he *'wanted to highlight the importance of the topic'* (S33A), whilst another explained that she used 'too many' to *'clarify that to the reader that there are many books that may talk about this topic'* (S15E). Another wanted *'to remind the reader that there is no doubt about the importance of technology and that I support it significantly'* (S26E).

There was a tendency in many of the student responses to discuss all aspects of their argument writing which they believed communicated certainty to the reader, and established confidence in the writer's authority. This was sometimes a list of strategies used, not necessarily including boosters; often talking about grammatical choices, such as the use of the simple present tense, which are not metadiscoursal; and often talking about propositional aspects of the text:

- ❑ *Among the things I used for affirmation he 9 times, and she 6 times - use of he or she in the whole essay is one of the methods used to affirm and express my personal relationship through two examples, the first at the beginning of the second paragraph, the fact that I have mentioned the meeting and the second example in the conclusion how a man allows, when I am talking to the reader. (S24A)*

- ❑ *I used factual evidence through examples and used simple arguments in the essay as a whole. I show how confident I am, like using the verb to be in there are many organizations, my use of is and my occasional use of comparison, comparing the school to the university, when I mentioned easier and quickly, these comparisons show how confident I am. (S29E)*

The category of **Hedges** was the only place in the full dataset where a student used a metadiscoursal term, when he described giving *'the impression of hedging'* (S38A). Nonetheless, there was very little evidence in the data that students understood the metadiscoursal function of hedging, although they did recognise their use of hedging words *'to express doubt'* (S6A), *'to express uncertainty'* (S16A) or *'being unsure'* (S22A). To an extent, students' comments on hedges overlapped with some of the responses to boosters, sometimes with similar points being made in both categories, but from opposite perspectives. Chief amongst these was the view that hedging is a weakness because it makes the reader lose confidence in the writer, mirroring similar comments made in relation to boosters. One student noted that she avoids *'terms or words that express doubt'* (S26B), whilst another explained that *'because your goal is to convince others there is no room for doubt'* (S38E). Another felt the use of hedging *'weakens your arguments and shows that you are not sure, unconfident, and unqualified'* (S36A). Linked to this was the avoidance of hedging because students were confident in their arguments and information:

- ❑ *I am presenting facts, and I am sure of what I am saying. (S6A)*
- ❑ *I was sure, so I think there was no unsure of something in the article. (S10E)*
- ❑ *I was talking about myself so I was sure and confident of what I was writing. (S30E)*
- ❑ *I am pretty sure about my arguments. (S31E)*

One student explained this by directly comparing the use of *'may'* and *'can'*: *'Because may represents uncertainty, possibly yes or no. But can means the certainty that it will happen. If I used it for doubt, the reader would feel uncertainty about my opinion'* (S8E). Two students, however, did discuss how they used hedges precisely because of their uncertainty about the topic or idea. One student observed that *'I use might when I have no experience of the subject'* (S14E), and another said *'Sometimes the writer is unsure of a particular idea, he uses this idea, and I used it a lot because I do not know to what extent people are affected by technology'* (S25A). It seems in these discussions of hedges and boosters, the ideas of certainty and uncertainty are being interpreted principally in terms of the authority, or credibility, of the writer, with a strong view of the inappropriacy of uncertainty. There is no consideration of the discursive management of boosters and hedges across a text, though this may

simply be attributable to the students' unfamiliarity with these specific concepts, as opposed to the more general concepts of certainty and uncertainty.

Another cluster of responses discussing hedges focused more on how they helped to avoid generalisation: 12 of the data segments coded to this category used the word 'generalise'. One student observed that *'you can't generalize to all people to say that'* (S1E), another justified her use of 'may' *'for uncertainty because we cannot generalize'* (S29A), and yet another commented that *'this experience is not universal to everyone'* (S9E). One student justified the her use of 'some people' because it confirmed *'that it does not apply to everyone'* (S16E), a view echoed by S18A who explained her use of 'may' in similar vein: *'it does not apply to everyone'* (S18A).

A small number of students appeared to reject the need for hedging in argumentative texts because these texts are presenting different viewpoints or opinions. One student asserted that her use of 'may' was not used *'for uncertainty ... it shows that there is more than one point of view'* (S11E), and another similarly maintained that there was no need to convey uncertainty because *'the text is expressing the two opinions'* (S10A). In contrast, one student advocated the use of 'may' because *'we studied at school that using may makes it more scientific'* (S4A). One unique comment seemed to express the view that using writer-oriented verbs could act to undermine a counter argument: the student explained his use of 'think' and 'believe' when presenting the opposing view as *'it's not my opinion, I'm trying as a kind of persuasion as what we learnt in Arabic. In Arabic, if I say think or believe, it means that I am not sure. In this way, I weaken other people's opinion and strengthen my opinion. Their opinion is questionable and not real'* (S35E).

3.4 Key Findings: Students' Metalinguistic Understanding of Metadiscourse

The students' responses regarding *Engagement* markers suggests limited awareness of **Appeals to Knowledge, Directives and Interjections**, but more understanding of the metadiscoursal function of **Questions** in an argument text, and considerable understanding of the purpose of **Reader Pronouns**. In particular, many students understood how reader pronouns are inclusive of the reader, inviting the reader to share a viewpoint or problem; and that the nature of a direct address to the reader, including a sense that this is a conversational tone, is engaging. In line with Hang and Hyland (2020:4) this is an indication that these writers have *'dialogic awareness'*. However, there were also a significant number of responses which point to reader pronouns being conceived as counter to the formality and objectivity which they believed are necessary in argument texts, and a preference for the use of third person pronouns to maintain formality. This does not reflect metalinguistic understanding of

engagement markers as metadiscourse, but rather metalinguistic understanding of the (perceived) textual expectations of argument as a genre. The inductive coding also surfaced an unexpected perspective from a small number of students expressing the view that the use of personal pronouns is linked to the collectivist Arab culture, reflecting cultural values through linguistic choices.

Students' metalinguistic understanding of *Interactive* metadiscoursal elements appears to be rather partial, with very limited awareness of **Code Glosses** and **Endophoric Markers**, and understanding of **Evidentials** seeming more associated with the propositional function of providing evidence in argument. The larger number of responses addressing **Frame Markers**, and particularly **Transitions** present a more complex picture. The students do not discriminate between frame markers and transitions, seeing them as united in terms of playing a linking function, of which sequencing is a part. For some students, this linking function is related to the reader, supporting readers and guiding them through the text. For others, it appears to have a more writer-oriented function, helping them to clarify and organise their own ideas as they write. But for many, frame markers and transitions serve a principally textual function in sequencing and connecting ideas across a piece of argument. It is also noticeable that students talked predominantly about sequencing adverbials, with no comments at all on frame markers which announce goals or shift topics, and that overall, students tended to identify adverbials in response to the *Interactive* questions, rather than some of the more grammatically diverse ways that *Interactive* is categorised in metadiscourse. Metadiscourse focuses on '*self-reflective expressions used to negotiate Interactive meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community*' (Hyland 2005: 37) – in other words, it is more concerned with the function of these constructions in establishing and building the reader-writer relationship. The teaching of argument writing in an ESOL context may be more concerned with the textual purpose of 'connectives' in organising and structuring a text – certainly these students have strong metalinguistic understanding of this aspect of argument writing, but more limited metalinguistic understanding of the metadiscoursal function.

The theme of *Stance* has more data segments coded to it, and the data segments are more evenly distributed across the three codes (**Attitude Markers**, **Boosters**, and **Hedges**), suggesting stronger awareness of how the position of the writer is marked in an argument text. However, the students' responses indicate that, although in general they do recognise how the stance they reveal in their writing relates to the reader, they interpret this principally in terms of how they communicate with authority to their readers, and see attitude markers, boosters and hedges largely in this light. As a consequence, there is little evidence of metalinguistic understanding of how the discursive

management of *Stance* markers functions across a text. The discussion of **Attitude Markers** was dominated by consideration of the use of the first person singular pronoun, mostly concerned with its avoidance because it made the text too informal, and might suggest a personal bias in the argument, which undermines the objectivity. A small number felt the first person 'I' engaged the reader more powerfully, and thus was not so much about stance as about engagement. This set of comments on self-mentions in argument does tend to show metalinguistic understanding of the metadiscoursal function of attitude markers, though its realisation in the students' texts may be reflecting a particular cultural discourse about the expectations of argument writing. This sense of a cultural discourse from a particular community of writers shaping how stance is interpreted is intensified in the students' responses regarding **Boosters** and **Hedges**. Here their comments focus principally on the need to present an authoritative stance to their readers in order to convince them of the credibility of their argument. In line with this, there is a strong tendency to operationalise this authoritative stance in terms of communicating certainty not uncertainty, and thus hedges are perceived as a language feature to avoid as they undermine certainty. A small group of responses did recognise that the use of hedges avoids inappropriate generalisation. Although all the comments in these codes do express understanding of how the position the writer adopts may shape the reader's response, there is little evidence of specific understanding of how metadiscoursal language choices affect that shaping, and frequently the students' comments relate to propositional aspects of argument writing. From the perspective of the metadiscourse literature, stance is concerned with how writers present themselves in their texts, and how their opinions and judgements are presented: the presentation of '*the writer's textual voice or community recognized personality*' (Hyland 2008: 5). In conveying a view that argument writing should not be informal, which is signalled by the use of 'I', and that the writer's voice must be authoritative, thus avoiding hedges, these writers may be voicing a community-recognised personality: the way argumentative writing is taught and assessed within this particular community of writers. It is a reminder of the importance of the social and cultural context in which writers establish their textual voice, and a reminder that authorial voice varies according to culture and discipline (Bruce 2016).

4.0 The Outcomes of the Inductive Analysis of the Interviews

The inductive coding process generated six themes which represent the nature of the students' responses in the *Writing Conversation* interviews. These themes do not all relate directly to the research question driving this analysis – the nature of Qatari L1 Arabic university students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice and their own use of the features in their writing. However, as the analysis below will illustrate, there are some important inter-connections between these themes and some of the findings concerning students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse presented in the previous section. It is worth noting, too, that far more of the interview data was coded to these themes than to the deductive Metadiscourse coding (2082 data segments compared with 516), suggesting that students are more vocal, and perhaps more comfortable, discussing their argument writing in general, rather than the specific functions of metadiscourse. The six over-arching themes are presented in Table 6 below: other than *The Role of Teachers* which was evidenced in 53 interviews, all the other themes are represented in almost all of the interviews.

Theme	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Argumentation	Comments which show understanding about the genre expectations of argument writing.	82	895
Position of the Writer	Comments which relate to the writer taking up an objective or a subjective stance, or expressing their own opinion or viewpoint.	79	203
Reader Awareness	Comments which show awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs.	76	202
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers.	53	116
Writer Perspectives on their own Writing	Comments which relate to the student's sense of competence as a writer (in L1 or L2); and the challenges and difficulties they face.	76	315
Writing	Comments which express metalinguistic understanding about writing in general.	79	351
Totals		82	2082

Table 6: the themes generated by the inductive coding.

4.1 Argumentation

The theme of Argumentation encapsulates students' consideration of argument writing as a genre, and their understanding of the typical elements and expectations of written argument. A summary of the codes generated within this theme is presented in Table 7 below.

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Argument and Counter-argument	Comments which refer to the concepts of arguments, points, counter-points, rebuttals, comparisons and contrasts	29	33
Emotional Appeal	Comments which refer to the use or avoidance of emotive language or emotional content in argument	70	111
Evidence and Examples	Comments which refer to the use of evidence, examples, and explanations without reference to the metadiscoursal features of evidentials or code glosses	66	162
Focus on content and ideas	Comments on argument writing which relate more to the knowledge, ideas and content of the argument (such as personal experience). This includes comments on reading sources and researching ideas and information for the essay.	80	235
Formality and Informality	Comments which show refer to the use of formal and/or informal language in argument	72	97
Rhetorical Features of Argument	Comments which refer to rhetorical devices such as hyperbole; repetition; figurative language etc	60	121
Textual Organisation	Comments which show understanding of the linguistic organisation of argument at text level, including thesis statement, introduction, or conclusion	72	136

Table 7: the codes and their definitions for the Argumentation theme

This theme includes codes which reveal metalinguistic understanding of the nature of argumentation itself (**Argument and Counter-Argument; Evidence and Examples, and Emotional Appeal**) including metalanguage describing argumentation, such as counter-points, rebuttals, evidence and emotive language. The codes of **Formality and Informality, Rhetorical Features of Argument, and Textual Organisation** reveal metalinguistic understanding of language choices in argument. The code of **Focus on Content and Ideas** captures students' responses which are not metalinguistic at all, but discuss the ideational content of the writing, including their knowledge of the topic and how they sourced their ideas.

Table 8 below gives some examples of student comments typifying each of these codes.

Code	Examples of Students' Comments
Argument and Counter-argument	<i>You should mention the counter-arguments along with like their rebuttals for them. ... body paragraphs, each one with an argument and then counterargument There must be different points of views, a supporting and opposing point of view.</i>
Emotional Appeal	<i>I use this kind of emotional language to influence the reader. I tried to relate the subject to something emotional so that it would attract and influence the reader.</i>

	<i>I do not think focusing on emotions is good. I like to focus on logic more maybe.</i>
Evidence and Examples	<i>I tried to make a justification and explain what I meant and gave an example. The evidence is one of the important things. I give examples and pieces of evidence to support my opinion and add realistic examples to support the topic that I address.</i>
Focus on content and ideas	<i>I focused on the benefits and perks of technology. If we use technology in a way that develops society, society will evolve, but people only see the technology on the one hand of the disintegration of society, so we have to use it in a way that benefits society and I like to emphasize only this point. I stated that it is a double-edged weapon with advantages and disadvantages, and we must be careful, and as I mentioned in English that we must be upright and to obtain the advantages of technology and stay away from its harms.</i>
Formality and Informality	<i>Well, it is an argumentative essay. I am not sure at the time I can use informal language. This is argument, and it is a formal essay, so I need to stay with my flow. I am going to write in formal - I am just going to, like, the whole essay, it is supposed to be formal. The exaggerated formal language is sometimes boring for the reader, so we must compress abbreviations and illustrations so as not to get bored and not to ignore the essay and read another one.</i>
Rhetorical Features of Argument	<i>Without eloquence, the text would be boring. [‘will slowly build up walls’] I mean, like it is a metaphor to say that, ‘Oh, isolation, I would stay away from people. I will stay in my room. These are the Walls which will hide me from individuals.’ The figurative language added more clarity. Metaphors embed an image in your mind. You understand the meaning better.</i>
Textual Organisation	<i>introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion At first, an introduction explaining the idea of the topic in general and followed by a presentation and then a conclusion. I started with the main idea, and then I wrote three main points where the first sentence in each point expresses the point. It is called Topic sentence.</i>

Table 8: the Argumentation codes exemplified with typical comments

The code, **Focus on Content and Ideas**, has no connection across to students’ understanding of metadiscourse, as it is wholly focused on the ideation of argument. Very often questions which were trying to elicit metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse were answered by talking about the ideas and content of the essay. The high number of data segments attributed to this code (235) highlights the primacy of content for these students – though, of course, until the subject matter for an argument is secure, it is hard to think about the linguistic aspects of the text. Students’ metalinguistic understanding of the metalanguage of argumentation in **Argument and Counter-Argument** also has no direct link to metadiscourse. Similarly, the code, **Textual Organisation**, illustrates students’ metalinguistic understanding of typical text structure in argument, and is not metadiscoursal. The comments in this code were predominantly a rather formulaic understanding of

argument structure, largely about the need for an introduction, body, and conclusion, and a thesis statement. Sometimes this included specifying the number of paragraphs required. However, all of the other codes in this theme connect in some way to students' comments on their use of metadiscourse.

Students did not agree about the use of **Emotional Appeal** in argument, and their comments talked both about the use of emotional language and vocabulary, as well as emotional content in their arguments. What constituted 'emotional' also seemed very broad: for example, one student cited her use of *'here everyone has a treasure trove at their fingertips'* (S9E) as an example of emotional language, which seems to be more like figurative language. Another explained the use of 'tremendous' in *'Students can search for a tremendous amount of information'* (S24E) as emotional language, but seemed unaware that it was a booster. Some felt that the topic of the argument dictated whether it was appropriate or not to use emotional appeal: *'this topic is about technology and science. I feel that there is no room for emotion'* (S14E). However, in many of the comments in this code, there was strong awareness of the reader. Student arguments for and against the use of emotional appeal both marshalled the reader as evidence for their claims. Those who believed emotional appeal was appropriate in argument expressed the view that its use was important in engaging and influencing the reader. One student felt *'emotional language is important to attract the reader'* (S15A); another believed it helped *'to convey my feeling to the reader'* (S13A); whilst another explained that, through using emotional language, *'I want the reader to sense the same feelings'* (S20A). In contrast, those who eschewed emotional appeal tended to see it as less important than facts and evidence: *'the facts give the reader more confirmed information because this is considered a serious topic and may lead to serious stages for people, so there is no need to use emotional language'* (S26A). In similar vein, another student maintains that *'It is the evidence or argument that affects'* (S32A). In these comments, there seems to be a view that in argument writing the logic, the evidence, and the objectivity trump the subjectivity of emotional appeal. One student explained this in a way which seems very close to a metadiscoursal explanation: *'I used objective language more than emotion for a certain reason which is to increase the reader's confidence in the text and increase the author's credibility'* (S36E). There are some resonances here between the students' comments here on the use of emotional appeal, and their willingness or reluctance to reveal their stance in their writing.

The code of **Evidence and Examples** has a direct connection to the **Evidentials** code in metadiscourse analysis, and there is a significant contrast in the number of data segments coded to each of these (162 to the former and 31 to the latter). Students have a high level of awareness of the importance

of evidence and examples in argument writing, but their comments appear to relate this principally to methods of argumentation and the expectations of the argument genre. Comments on evidence and examples frequently collocated with reference to argumentation concepts such as arguments, points, justification and proof. One student explained that *'in the essay, I must give examples and evidence to support it until I prove my point'* (S8A); another observed that *'I am going to discuss my two arguments with evidence and back them up'* (S7E); and another that *'I take an idea, and I put its reasons, justifications and evidence'* (S25A). Many of the comments were similar to these, relating evidence to argumentation, and many were purely propositional, identifying the examples they had used. Nonetheless, there were also frequent comments on how the use of evidence and examples is linked to relationship-building with the reader. One student chose *'real-life examples that all people know and go through'* in order *'to create a relationship between the reader and me'* (S7A). Sometimes the use of evidence was positioned as a method of persuasion – *'you can give evidence so readers can be convinced'* (S3E), or as a way to support writer credibility: *'I used many pieces of evidence in the subject, so I don't give an opportunity to the reader to suspect that it is not true, because after I write a sentence or idea, I give him proof and an example'* (S14E). This analysis suggests that students metalinguistic understanding of evidencing an argument is grounded in the process of argumentation, and is well-aligned to understandings of how evidence is reader-oriented: but there is little evidence of metalinguistic understanding of evidentials and the way these point the writer to particular evidence.

Students' comments on **Formality and Informality** were principally concerned with views on whether argument writing should use formal or informal language, with the dominant perspective arguing that informality was inappropriate. Comments such as *'informal vocabulary is unnecessary language, the essay must be formal'* (S35A) were typical of data segments in this code, and many also explained they had been taught to use formal language in argument. For some students, a discussion of their own use of informal language led to an acknowledgement of inappropriacy: *'I did not realize that it is an informal language; it is considered misuse'* (S7A). Whilst the view that formal language was the correct choice for argument was the most prevalent, nonetheless many students made a connection between the choice of formal language and the reader. Some students linked the use of formal language with readability, for example, choosing to use formal language so *'the reader can easily comprehend it'* (S1E). Others linked formality with engaging the reader, arguing that *'the formal language attracts the reader's attention more than the informal language'* (S34E). A significant cluster of comments, particularly in relation to the Arabic texts, felt that formal language was more widely understood than

informal language, including slang and local dialects, and better suited to a general readership. This is summed up well in the response below:

When I learned to write in Arabic, I knew that it was not desirable to use slang because the text is generally inclusive. But if you use slang, the idea can be lost as non-native readers may not understand your language. I present my subject to the general reader, not just the Qatari reader so that the information reaches all. (S36A)

Although the students' reflections on the use of formality and informality are not directly linked to metadiscourse *per se*, their comments in this code do suggest some inter-connectedness in thinking between reader pronouns and formality. One student, talking about pronouns in general, stated that '*pronouns reduce formality*' (S6E), connecting across to their comments on **Reader Pronouns**. There some students talked about **Direct and Indirect Address** and **Generalisation and Objectivity**, explaining that a preference for an indirect address to the reader and a desire for objectivity made them avoid reader pronouns. In both these sub-codes, issues of formality and informality were raised in connection with objectivity and indirectness. This was also true in the **Attitude Markers** code, where some students felt that the use of pronoun 'I' was too informal.

The code, **Rhetorical Features of Argument**, captured discussion of some of the typical rhetorical tropes used in argument, particularly hyperbole and sarcasm. It also included the use of figurative language, mostly metaphor and simile, for rhetorical effect. A substantial number of responses simply explained literally what the rhetorical feature meant, showing metalinguistic understanding of the form, but no metalinguistic understanding of its meaning-making function. There was, however, a strand of comments which made an association between the use of rhetorical devices and their effect on the reader. One student claimed that figurative language in her Arabic essay added more clarity: '*Metaphors embed an image in your mind. You understand the meaning better*' (S9A). It is worth noting, however, that the same student made a very different observation in relation to her English essay: '*I am not sure. I thought about them. I do not think I necessarily deliberately put them in there. I just thought they sounded good. It is kind of adds like a nice flourish to the writing*' (S9E), suggesting that metalinguistic understanding of the rhetorical effect of figurative language is not secure or consistent. It may also be the case that there are different writer positions on rhetorical features in English and in Arabic which may be shaping these responses. Other comments were more explicit about the reader impact, mostly in terms of engaging the reader:

- ❑ *Rhetorical language and the use of emotion attract the reader to continue reading, which is ultimately a writing style and adds beauty to the text, while writing without rhetoric convey a feeling that it is a rigid and not a good thing. (S11A)*
- ❑ *It helps the reader, I think in my point of view it grabs the reader's attention again, once more and to assure this point. (S13E)*
- ❑ *When a reader reads the paragraph, he feels that he is touched by words as he lived with it, and he knows that this has many benefits despite its negatives, and the word obsession, for example, makes him live with the idea and bring the idea closer to the mind of the reader. (S17A).*

One student took a slightly different view, believing that the use of sarcasm could ‘weaken their arguments while strengthening of mine’ (S4A). There were some students, however, who were less sure that rhetorical devices, particularly sarcasm and exaggeration, were appropriate in an argument writing, with one student stating that ‘the fewer rhetorical expressions, the better’ (S16A). Others felt the use of sarcasm was inappropriate because it ‘causes hostility and alienation of the reader’ (S11E), or because it is not suited to argument: ‘There is no room for sarcasm; it is a purely scientific subject’ (S32E). Another student felt that exaggeration ‘cheapens the argument because if your argument is strong enough on its own, you do not really need to exaggerate anything’ (S9E). Indirectly, there are connections to metadiscourse here in that some students see a reader engagement function for rhetorical devices. Hyperbole, or exaggeration, indirectly links with **Boosters**, but the students do not perceive any ‘boosting’ function in exaggeration, and do not always agree that it has a place in argument writing. The students’ focus, although reader-aware, is much more on propositional aspects of the argument, than metadiscoursal functions.

4.2 Position of the Writer

The theme, *Position of the Writer*, captured students’ comments which relate to the writer taking up an objective or a subjective stance, or expressing their own opinion or viewpoint. This is aligned with student comments on *Argumentation*, but the latter focused on the genre expectations of argumentation in general, whereas this theme considers more specifically the role that the writer adopts in an argument. An overview of the codes and their definitions is provided below.

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
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Avoiding Expressing an Opinion	Comments which refer to avoiding communication of a point of view or an opinion	13	16
Being Objective	Comments which express the importance of being objective in argument and using facts	43	58
Communicating Different Viewpoints	Comments which indicate that the writer shows two or more sides to an argument	13	14
Expressing an Opinion	Comments which refer to the writer communicating their opinion or point of view in the essay	46	71
Where viewpoint is expressed	References which explain where in an argument the writer's point of view can be expressed	30	42

Table 9: the codes and their definitions for the Position of the Writer theme

There is a clear link between this code and the *Stance* theme in the Metadiscourse analysis: however, here, student discussion of their stance is more related to the propositional aspects of argument and their views of what kind of stance is most appropriate in argument writing. The students across the sample do not agree about what position the writer should take in an argument, with some espousing a view that a balanced argument should be presented, whilst others maintain it is important to express a personal viewpoint. Table 10 below offers some examples of student responses in each of the codes.

Code	Examples of Students' Comments
Avoiding Expressing an Opinion	<i>I didn't want to present my point and I liked people to understand it on their own.</i> <i>The most important thing is not to mention my opinion about the subject.</i> <i>I do not mention my opinion on the subject.</i>
Being Objective	<i>I'm objective as I am just stating facts and giving examples from actual daily life.</i> <i>the idea of objectivity should exist in this kind of essay</i> <i>I just presented the positives without presenting the negatives. I talked about reality, and reality made the reader convinced and that there was no bias.</i>
Communicating Different Viewpoints	<i>in conclusion, I mentioned both points expressing the supporting and opponent points of view to show the reader how objective I am.</i> <i>In the main body, I built a good reason and the advantages and disadvantages, I did not put one more, or I believe in something, No. ...it just so general. Not to me. You will never know my opinion.</i> <i>I did not write my point of view. I just clarified the views of the supporting and opponent teams and let the reader adopt what he wanted.</i>
Expressing an Opinion	<i>I expect the most important component is the writer's point of view. His point of view should be clear and supported so that he can convince the people around him of the idea he wants to convey, which is the most important element in the article.</i> <i>I adopted one point of view and neglected the other, I did not express the other point of view and I did not even compare between the two points of view.</i> <i>I mentioned my opinion clearly from my point of view.</i>
Where viewpoint is expressed	<i>I mentioned my point of view in the conclusion.</i> <i>In the introduction and then the conclusion.</i>

	<i>I mentioned my opinion officially in the Thesis statement when I said I clearly.</i>
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Table 10: the Position of the Writer codes exemplified with typical comments

A substantial number of comments maintained that **Expressing an Opinion** on the argument under consideration is a valid position to take as a writer. One student said *'the opinion of the writer should be clear'* (S13A), and another reflected that *'I am not afraid to express my opinion or my own emotion at my writing'* (S23E). Some were very certain of the validity of their stance – *'This is my position as a writer'* (S29A); but others were somewhat more concessionary, stating their own position but acknowledging possible differences of opinion: *'In the end, I mentioned that my essay and my point of view might not be the correct one'* (S17A). A significant cluster of comments maintained they had expressed their point of view, but indirectly. For some, this seemed to be more about the arguments and points made leading the reader to infer the writer's position. For example, one student said *'I think it is clear that I am pro the use of technology because all of my arguments are for technology use'* (S31E). Another writer explained her sentence 'YouTube education is a very excellent free method' was where *'I am indirectly telling the reader that this is my point of view and that I prefer using YouTube'* (S22E). However, this is propositional and she does not comment on her use of 'very excellent' as attitude markers. For some, however, the espousal of an indirect method of expressing an opinion seemed to be linked to the use of the third person, rather than the first person, as with the students who commented that she expressed her viewpoint *'Indirectly, and I did not use a pronoun, I'* (S14A). In contrast, another student stated that *'I mentioned I in the conclusion to express my opinion'* (S17A). These responses have some connections to the sub-code of **Direct and Indirect Address** in **Reader Pronouns**, even though here they are discussing stance and self-mentions through the use of the first person.

Counter to the view that expressing an opinion is appropriate in argument writing, the two codes, **Communicating Different Viewpoints** and **Avoiding Expressing an Opinion** adopted a different perspective. Student responses which suggested that it was important to communicate different viewpoints were largely talking about a balanced argument, which presents and discusses two or more sides to an argument. This involved presenting *'the counterargument'* (S9A), *'the advantages and disadvantages'* of an issue (S10E), and clarifying *'the views of the supporting and opponent teams and let the reader adopt what he wanted'* (S28A). However, students who felt you should avoid expressing an opinion were more oriented towards a view that it was inappropriate, because *'the point is to present the issue, and the reader thinks and concludes'* (S6A) and *'we have been trained not to mention our point of view'* (S2E). One student explained how he presented his opinion *'as a fact, but I did not say my opinion directly and I did not use the word - my point of view - in order to convince'* (S35A),

perhaps showing some implicit recognition of how 'my point of view' can operate as a hedge, though still tending to think propositionally about persuading his reader through factual presentation of arguments, rather than revealing his writer position. Another student adopted a rather different logic, saying that he avoided expressing an opinion in this essay because he was 'not sure' (S10E) of his own viewpoint in relation to the use of technology.

The code of **Being Objective** tended to represent the thinking of students who felt that an argument should be balanced and that expressing an opinion should be avoided, because *'the idea of objectivity should exist in this kind of essay'* (S5A). Many of the students felt that argument writing should be objective, *'stating facts'* (S1E), and being *'rational, you are trying to reason with the reader... Through the evidence, like just providing your arguments, and in the end, they have the right to accept it or reject it. But in the end, you don't force anything'* (S31E). One student believed *'I am objective because I have acknowledged the supporting and the opposing points of view'* (S18A). These responses focus mostly on ideational objectivity, but some students saw the importance of objectivity as more concerned with *'leaving it to the reader'* (S23E), or as one student conveyed it: *'I explained my idea, but I did not like to shove it down her throat'* (S7E). There was also a strand of comments which linked objectivity with the avoidance of emotional appeal because *'I must be objective as much as possible when I write an argumentative article as there is no room to use feelings to address a reader'* (S5E). Being objective was also conceived in terms of neutrality: *'I was neutral'* (S5A); *'I do not want to impose my opinion, but I want to present the issue impartially'* (S27A) and *'I have made many explanations, illustrations, and even the explanations I have inserted did not indicate a bias towards a particular opinion'* (S5E).

When students talked about **Where Viewpoint is Expressed**, there was a high degree of consistency in the responses maintaining that a viewpoint should be expressed at particular structural points in an argument essay, particularly the introduction and the conclusion. Some students referred here to a thesis statement and to articulating an opinion in each paragraph.

Whilst it is evident that students disagree about whether they should or should not express their own opinion in an argument essay, it is important to note that students were not always internally consistent in what they said, and sometimes clearly misunderstood, for example, objectivity, where one student said *'I am objective because I only mention my point of view'* (S21A), and another argued she was objective *'because at the beginning itself I wrote, in my point of view... I did not take sides.'* (S13E). The students seem somewhat uncertain about the idea of personal opinion, with a tendency

to see the use of the first person pronoun 'I' as an expression of personal opinion, but not to see that opinions can also be expressed in third person. This may be attributable to writing instruction which distinguishes between a direct and indirect method, which many refer to, which appears to describe the use of third person as indirect. From the point of view of metadiscourse, the students' comments show little understanding of the complexity of ways in which stance can be communicated, focusing rather dominantly on self-mentions. The students' comments in this theme about objectivity, neutrality and direct or indirect expression do connect across to some of the responses in the metadiscourse analysis, though here they are principally propositional.

4.3 Reader Awareness

The *Reader Awareness* theme encompasses comments from students in which they reveal their awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs. The codes attributed to this theme are outlined in Table 11, with their respective definitions.

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Clarity for the Reader	Comments which reflect the need to support the reader through being clear about points and arguments	49	81
Implied Reader	Comments which explain the writer's perception of the implied reader	65	72
Engaging the Reader	Comments which express a need to engage the reader by attracting their attention, or making things interesting for them.	26	39
Third Person Voice	Comments which refer to the use of the third person to address a general reader	10	10

Table 11: the codes and their definitions for the Reader Awareness theme

The code, **Implied Reader**, was a response to an interview question inviting them to consider who they thought they were writing for, but the other three codes arose both from questions which probed their reader orientation, and from their responses to other questions not directly about their readership. Some examples of student responses in each of these codes is presented in Table 12 below.

Code	Examples of Students' Comments
Clarity for the Reader	<p><i>I try to look at it from the reader's perspective and see if it is understandable or not and if it is not understandable, I make some language changes.</i></p> <p><i>I think only like to write my point directly without going into circles or something.</i></p>

	<i>The thesis ... you must follow the order and the pieces. So, the first idea you mentioned should be your first paragraph and so on. That is a guide for the reader.</i>
Implied Reader	<i>I was writing it for anyone who reads it. My teacher. I wrote in general, and I did not address a certain person</i>
Engaging the Reader	<i>I tried to relate the subject to something emotional so that it would attract and influence the reader. Firstly, I started with to get the reader thrilled to the article. I have used many real-life examples that all people know and go through, and most students to create a relationship between the reader and me</i>
Third Person Voice	<i>I like to write it in general, and I talk like this, and I like to express my words to a person, so he understands faster It may not be me as a reader and writer, but there is a third party, we are not alone in the experiment, but there is another party It was a safer way to include both genders and basically all ages.</i>

Table 12: the Reader Awareness codes exemplified with typical comments

The student responses concerning the **Implied Reader** shows that many of them were writing to a general readership, for 'the public reader' (S9E). One student explained that 'No specific reader was in my mind... Anybody can read it' (S1E), and another similarly claimed that 'it was a general audience, like the general readers, because it is a general topic' (S12E). A smaller number of students narrowed their audience more specifically, for example, to 'my classmates' (S3A) or 'the young generation that are using phones' (S10A). Some felt they were writing for their teachers or tutors, and this included students who recognised that college writing can have two audiences, the actual audience of the teacher who marks it and an implied or imaginary audience: 'It is possible for anyone to read it, but when I was writing it, I was writing it for the researcher. I am a student, and I hand over the assignment to the doctor who asked me' (S8E). A small number said they had no reader in mind: 'I wrote it without thinking in a particular reader' (S32A), and one writer disclaimed any reader orientation: 'I did not specify a particular reader, and I did not think a lot from the reader's point of view' (S11E). Another student explained in more detail his problem with the idea of an implied reader:

The problem is that these questions mostly do not occur when writing an essay, I do not think about them when writing the essay, I did not consider myself as a writer who writes to the reader or makes changes to him. When I think about it, I cannot find an answer. (S32A)

With the dominance in these responses of a sense of a general reader, it is interesting to consider what adaptations these students made to their writing to accommodate the perceived needs of a very generalised reader. Of course, it is important to acknowledge that the teacher as reader, as noted in many of the responses, may shape writers' decision-making to fit perceived assessment requirements. It may also be the case that audience awareness is a cultural issue, in terms of to what extent audience engagement is allowed, recognised or promoted.

Nonetheless, the two codes **Clarity for the Reader** and **Engaging the Reader** do provide some insights into students' thinking. Ensuring that the writing is clear for the reader is a strong priority for these students with the word 'clarify' occurring 10 times and 'clear/clearer' 15 times in the **Clarity for the Reader** code. Often this clarity was focused on the ideation and argument points made, rather than linguistic choices. Student S7A outlines her goal '*to write clearly*' and Student S1A sets out '*to clarify the idea and make the reader understand the subject more*'. Other students note how they use explanation and examples to provide clarity and comprehensibility. For example, one student tried '*to explain it extensively to ensure that the person who will read it will understand*' (S8E) and another '*added more examples to make my writing clearer*' (S33A). Linked to this was a strong cluster of comments which referred to the need for simplicity and easiness, using '*a straightforward and easy method for the reader*' (S20A) and writing '*in a simple way*' (S10E). Many of these comments related to vocabulary choices, as exemplified below:

- I used simple words; I did not use hard or vague words that an individual needs to look for their meaning. (S5E)*
- In a simple way. And a simple word that everyone and every age, whatever they are can understand them. (S10E)*
- I tried to simplify my words and make it clear. (S11E)*
- I did not use like complicated words. (S13E)*
- I simplify the words used in my writing to convey the topic to the reader. (S41A)*

Some of these comments suggest that having a generalised reader creates problems in knowing how much they can understand, so one student explains that '*if there are scientific terms I have, I think that the reader will not be familiar with them, so I write them in a simplified way for the public*' (S23A), whilst another explains she uses simple words '*Because I also learned to consider that the reader knows nothing and not to consider that he would understand intuitively*' (S11E). One writer, who said she was writing for younger people her own age justified the choice of simple vocabulary by direct reference to her implied readers: '*By using like words that are easy, that suits people younger than me*

as well' (S3E). Only one student extended the idea of linguistic simplicity beyond a lexical level, arguing that she used 'simple sentences' because 'sentences are supposed to be as simple as possible' (S6A).

A further cluster of comments showed awareness of structural choices in making the text clear for the reader. There were several references to the topic sentence of a paragraph: for one student this seemed to be more about a clear articulation of ideas - 'I tried to state them clearly as a topic sentence' (S9A). However, more of these comments linked the topic sentence to paragraph and textual structure, and how it could act as a guide for the reader:

- ❑ *This can guide them like, and this is the introduction. This is the two main ideas so, they do not get lost. (S3E)*
- ❑ *I tried to have arranged and sequenced ideas, so at first, I write in general, and then I specify gradually. (S5A)*
- ❑ *Basically, the thesis, you must follow the order and the pieces. So, the first idea you mentioned should be your first paragraph and so on. That is a guide for the reader. Another thing is that I always start with the topic sentence, develop on the topic sentence, and then there is an example, and it is in both paragraphs. So, I think that is a guide. (S12E)*
- ❑ *Here must be a sequence, and the more exact the serial is, the clearer the idea to the reader. (S16E)*

It is worth noting that these comments on how to structure a text to guide the reader draw principally on the genre expectations and metalanguage of argumentation – thesis; topic sentence; main ideas; serial. These might be set alongside the student comments on *Interactive* in the metadiscourse analysis, where the notions of linking and connecting dominated their understanding.

If the comments coded to **Clarity for the Reader** seem to emphasise clarification and simplicity in ideas and linguistic choices, then comments coded to **Engaging the Reader** seemed much more concerned with managing the affective responses of readers. Many of the students felt their role was to 'attract the reader more' (S4A) or 'to be interesting for the reader' (S6E): indeed, the phrase 'attracts the reader' occurred 12 times in this code. In similar vein, students wanted to prevent reader disengagement, and tried to write so the reader 'will not get bored' (S7E), and the word 'bored' recurred five times. For some students, the goal of engaging the reader's attention was to ensure they kept reading 'so that he completes the essay to the end' (S8E). Often the reader's attention was secured through the kinds of points, arguments and examples made, including 'real-life examples that

all people know and go through' (S7A). Some of the comments related to using emotional language or emotional appeal *'because it attracts the reader's attention'* (S2E) and because *'without these words, the text is devoid of feelings, and this brings me closer to the reader'* (S36A). One student noted the importance of the introduction in *'grabbing at the reader's attention'* (S13E).

The final code in this theme, **Third Person Voice**, collates a small cluster of comments but was retained because it inter-connects with students' comments in the metadiscourse analysis about **Reader Pronouns** and about self-mentions in **Attitude Markers**. Students expressed a view that third person voice was more appropriate for a general reader, for *'addressing a third party'* (S6E). Some linked this with the idea of *'talking in general'* (S24A), with one student explaining that *'I talk generally about students, universities, schools, and the educational process so this is theirs'* (S29E). In contrast to the more typical view that the use of 'we' is inclusive of the reader, there seems to be a sense with these students that the third person is more inclusive, particularly in terms of shared experiences and interests:

- ❑ *I wanted to tell him that there are other people who think that this topic is interesting.* (S22E)
- ❑ *I wanted to make it clear that we all live and share the same experience regardless of some of the differences that had a major role in my usage.* (S23E)
- ❑ *I have to talk about a realistic example, and when I talk, they have to be close to the community and the family, and that is the third party. It is not you or me, but a third party we know.* (S24A)

The comments here connect with students' comments on **Reader Pronouns**, in the sub-code **Generalisation and Objectivity**, where some of them explained why they did not use reader pronouns, and spoke of a preference for the use of third person because of its suitability for a general audience.

4.4 The Role of Teachers

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers.	53	116
Examples of Students' Comments			
<i>You have to have the structure that we've been taught in the essay writing. Teachers said something about, thesis statements, body paragraphs, topic sentences.</i>			
<i>I write the main points at first and then, on its basis, I write the paragraphs, and this is the way I trained in my school.</i>			

One of my instructors told me you should not be using you.

Table 13: the code, definition and student comments in *The Role of Teachers* theme

This theme is a single code which flags the role teachers and writing instructors play in shaping students' metalinguistic understanding about writing argument. There was a high degree of homogeneity in this code, with students explaining things they had been taught to include in an argument, and things they had been taught to avoid or '*are not allowed to use*' (S6E). Typical examples of writing instruction addressed essay structure and thesis statements; presenting the pros and cons of an argument, and counter-arguments; and punctuation. In contrast, these students reported being taught to avoid the use of informal language; first and second person pronouns; emotional language; and contractions. Consistent with the split of student opinion on whether a personal point of view should be expressed in the *Position of the Writer* theme, some students observed here that they had been advised to avoid expressing an opinion, whereas other students had been given the reverse advice. The comments in the code have no substantive connection with students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse, but they do perhaps explain the source of some of the students' thinking expressed in relation to **Reader Pronouns**, in particular, but also how students construct their understanding of stance, and their view on objectivity and formality.

4.5 *Writer Perspectives on their Writing*

Unsurprisingly, throughout the *Writing Conversation* interviews, the students made comments which reflected their thinking about themselves as writers, and the challenges they faced as writers, which is captured in this theme (see Table 14 below). The students are all bilingual, but are not necessarily equally confident as writers in both English and Arabic. It is worth remembering that written Arabic is a common form across all Arab countries, whereas spoken Arabic has many dialectal variations, particularly across different countries. Even for an L1 Arab speaker, mastering the written form can be challenging and the gap between spoken and written Arabic is greater than between spoken and written English.

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Challenges in Writing	Comments which express the difficulties students face when writing, either in English or Arabic.	70	130
Difference between Arabic and English	Comments which relate to student perceptions of the differences between Arabic and English, or no difference	56	137
Arabic influencing English	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from Arabic is used when writing English argument.	13	24

English Influencing Arabic	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from English is used when writing Arabic argument.	13	24
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Table 14: the codes and their definitions for the Writer Perspectives on their Writing theme

Whilst expressing concerns about what is difficult or problematic in writing argument is not unexpected, a substantial number of comments raise issues concerning differences between Arabic and English, and some specifically refer to transferring linguistic knowledge from one language to another. Examples of the kind of comments made are given in Table 15 below:

Code	Examples of Students' Comments
Challenges in Writing	<p><i>And sometimes I think my sentences are specific. I should like to make them longer and not specific and focus on one idea.</i></p> <p><i>I was not able to use a figurative language, although I was sure that they are important, but I did not because I was afraid to use them incorrectly or something.</i></p> <p><i>I did not have enough time to really edit.</i></p>
Difference between Arabic and English	<p><i>Writing the argumentative article in Arabic is different from English, I used subtitles and explained to them, but in Arabic, I wrote only two paragraphs.</i></p> <p><i>Arabs usually don't get persuaded much unless you state the source of information, and I tried to use the most reliable information from the Internet.</i></p> <p><i>The beauty of Arabic poetry and Arabic expressions, metaphor, eloquence and description are different from English.</i></p>
Arabic influencing English	<p><i>I feel that my mastery of Arabic helped me in English... as well as the use of conjunctions, Arabic has helped me a lot.</i></p> <p><i>I built my Knowledge of English from my knowledge of Arabic and not vice versa, and even I feel writing in Arabic is easier as I can extract the vocabulary by myself, but in English, I use Google to use the most appropriate vocabulary.</i></p> <p><i>I derived all my ideas from Arabic and translated them into English.</i></p>
English Influencing Arabic	<p><i>I do not usually read that much Arabic, I will admit. So that is why there is a lot of influence from English with that. I learned it.</i></p> <p><i>It is the influence of English on Arabic, what I have learned in English, I apply it in Arabic.</i></p> <p><i>I am bad at Arabic too. So I don't think it's like when you see my Arabic essay, you're going to find that I basically the essay is in English in my mind, and I tried to translate it.</i></p>

Table 15: the Writer Perspectives on their Writing codes exemplified with typical comments

The code **Challenges in Writing** encompassed a wide range of perceived problems in writing, with no single issue appearing to dominate. Students talked about their difficulties with vocabulary in relation to writing in both English and Arabic. One student reflected that *'lack of vocabulary is the biggest difficulty I have encountered'* (S29E), whereas another homed in on synonyms as a key issue: *'sometimes I feel that I want the same word to convey the information and if I reuse this word it will be boring for the reader, I have to use another synonym and use the Internet so I can choose another*

suitable one, so I diversify my writing' (S5E). Some students were aware that *'there are some words in English that I do not know its translation in Arabic'* (S12A). For others, the challenge in Arabic was the vocabulary of Standard Modern Arabic compared with local dialects: *'I used colloquial words because I speak colloquial Arabic in speaking, and in order to use formal language, using formal Arabic language in writing requires mental effort and time in order to avoid colloquial writing'* (S39A). This is a specific challenge in Arabic, reflected by one student who said *'Some words I can write in slang, but I cannot write them in standard, but of course, in English, it is not as we only learn standard English only'* (S38A). Students also noted challenges in mastering correct grammar, though often in rather general terms, such as *'I have a few problems with grammar'* (S22E). Several mentioned *'a problem with tenses'* (S23E), particularly aspect in English, and problems *'linking sentences together'* (S20A) and using linking words, including synonyms for linking words. Punctuation was occasionally mentioned, including the student who said *'I have problem with punctuation, and sometimes I use it and sometimes ignore it completely'* (S23A).

Some students were aware that they were differently proficient in written Arabic and written English. For example, one student, talking about why he had not used emotional appeal in his English essay, observed that *'I think my Arabic is stronger than the English, so I wasn't able to, even if I wanted to, to write the emotive language'* (S4E). In contrast, another student discussed a problem with writing in Arabic because *'I do not know how to elaborate that much on arguments in Arabic. So, I think I am a lot more concise in Arabic - I do not expand as much'* (S9A). For some students, the challenges related to the argument and ideation, and *'difficulty in arranging ideas'* (S4A) and the difficulty *'to explain my thoughts'* (S23E). A final cluster of comments addressed the nature of the argument task itself, particularly the challenges posed by the time limit and the word constraints, or lack of background knowledge of the topic. One student had a problem because she was unsure about the position she should adopt as a writer: *'I did not understand from the question whether to make the whole article tell my opinion or to make it argumentative'* (S5E), perhaps mirroring the uncertainty evident in students' comments on their stance in the *Position of the Writer* theme. There is little in this code, however, that illuminates students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse.

Student recognitions of the **Difference between English and Arabic** were the most frequently coded data segments in this theme, though only represented in about two-thirds of the interviews. Although the significant majority of comments in this code discussed perceived differences between Arabic and English, there were a cluster of comments expressing the view that in writing argument there was no difference. This seemed to relate particular to the structure of argument:

- ❑ *It's similar to English, introduction, body paragraph, and conclusion, and evidence to support your arguments. You should give examples. (S3A)*
- ❑ *In the end, it is the same idea of argument as in the English - we add a sentence that concludes the ideas mentioned in the essay in addition to stating my opinion. (S5A)*
- ❑ *I do not feel that there is a difference and I remember that I searched for points that I can write, and in Arabic, I know how to write, but in English, I believe that it is almost the same method. (S8A)*
- ❑ *I use the same structure in both Arabic and English. (S14A)*

One lone voice, however, felt that that Arabic and English differed, though the student does not say precisely what she feels the contrast is:

The structure of an essay differs from Arabic to English, as we have noticed a little while ago, in Arabic, there is an introduction, and then we divide the presentation into two teams, a supporting team, then an opponent team like a debate, and then it is followed by a conclusion in which we present a summary of the two opinions, and we mention the personal opinion that we support. (S15A)

A small number of students observed an intrinsic language difference between Arabic and English, suggesting that Arabic '*has a larger vocabulary than English*' and that '*Arabic is richer than English language*' (S8A), and that '*Arabic is more eloquent and has an eloquence that does not exist in English*' (S11E). Students did not always agree: for example, one student suggested that sentences in Arabic are '*supposed to be as simple as possible*' (S6A), whereas another student observed that she was '*used to sentences being very long in Arabic*' (S9A).

Most of the comments, however, referred specifically to differences in aspects of argument writing. There was a sense that the nature of evidence needed was different because '*foreigners feel that they are convinced of your point of view when you give more illustrations, but the Arabs need evidence and proof so that they can get the idea more and be convinced*' (S2A). Similarly, a repeated view was that emotional appeal was more appropriate in Arabic than in English, summarised by one student who said '*I did it in Arabic, but not in English*' (S4E). Avoiding emotion appeared to be associated with academic writing in English, with one student choosing '*not to use emotional words in the English essay as I wanted it to be more academic writing without any emotion. I used a lot of emotional words*

in the Arabic essay to influence the reader and transfer the idea easier' (S33A). But for others the use of emotional appeal was linked more to matters of expression: *'when I express in Arabic, I use passion more than in English, and I don't know why. I do not have a sense of creativity, but I am able to express my feelings emotionally'* (S14A).

The students' views on the use of rhetorical techniques and figurative language seemed to be connected with this idea of the expression of emotion, and that *'we as Arabic people in our Arabic essays we tend to do it more than English ... the Arabic people use lots of metaphorical language'* (S21E). One student was aware that she *'used rhetorical methods in Arabic more than in English'* (S20A) and another contrasted his use of similes and *'eloquent analogy'* in Arabic with a view that *'in English this is not necessary, English requires the transfer of meaning seriously without analogies'* (S35A). The same student then elaborated on this perspective, drawing together figurative language and emotional appeal as distinct from a more academic style in English:

In Arabic, I feel that you have to be a little passionate and use a lot of literary techniques, but in English I see that this is not necessary as I learned that it must be scientific and practical but in Arabic be a little emotional. (S35A)

One student felt that *'writing in English is easier than Arabic because it does not need eloquence or analogy'* (S30E), whilst another noted that *'English is just direct and gets to the point'* (S21E).

These comments on perceived linguistic differences in argument between Arabic and English point to culturally different expectations for the genre, and although not about metadiscourse, may explain some of the implicit metadiscoursal decisions they make. However, a substantial number of comments linked more directly to metadiscourse, or to students' comments in the metadiscourse analysis. For example, one student's observation *'they do not put citations in Arabic as they believe that it is not necessary for Arabic'* (S5E) may partly explain the relatively low number of comments on **Evidentials**. A significant cluster of comments suggested that English is more direct than Arabic, with implications for language choices. One student argued that *'in Arabic, the thesis statement is not necessary, but in English, we must add it, and that is what I learned. In English, it is necessary'* (S6A), pointing to the perceived importance of an explicit statement of the argument. Another explained that in her Arabic text, the supporting and opposing ideas *'are not direct as English'* and then notes her use of *firstly, secondly* and *on the other hand* in English *'which was clear'* (S10A). These comments possibly connect with decisions made about *Interactive* elements of written argument, and the degree

to which metadiscourse elements such as code glosses, evidentials, frame markers and transitions are necessary in Arabic, though they do not distinguish between them. One student maintained that, in English, *'the existence of linking words is the most important'* (S30E), just as in the **Transitions** code in the metadiscourse analysis, students tended to use the idea of linking as an umbrella concept. Another student took a different view, though similarly conflates various Interactive elements (and refers to conjunctions in an unconventional way):

I think there is a similarity between Arabic and English essays where conjunctions should be used. As for the essay in Arabic here, I used, for example, first and moved from the opinion of the first team and the second team, for example, I used on the contrary. In conclusion, it was the same thing as well. In order to move from the opinion of the second team to the conclusion, I used in conclusion. (S15A)

Similarly, the students discussed perceived differences between Arabic and English in terms of taking up a position and communicating that to the reader, which may illuminate some of the students' comments on *Stance*. Just as in the theme of *Position of the Writer*, the students expressed conflicting views about how a writer should reveal their position to the reader. Some students suggested that in Arabic, it was important that *'the evidence was strong and clear'*, which *'left the reader to conclude my point of view'*; whereas in English *'I made my opinion clear directly, and I mentioned I strongly agree because I have strong evidences to convince the reader'* (S17A). Another student observed that *'we have learned in English that it is necessary to write a clear point of view, but in Arabic, they teach us to try to be neutral, and to mention our opinion but in partial'* (S8A). Others felt that the expression of opinion was more of a characteristic of writing in Arabic, with one student reflecting that *'I used to write like this in Arabic at school, to add and clarify my opinion. But in English, I explain it but indirectly'* (S6E) and another explained that *'in Arabic we learned that at the end of the essay there must be a personal speech for the reader, unlike English, in a course (Arabic 2) they were telling us that we should put our personal opinion and address the reader in person'* (S31A).

Students' reflections on how **Questions** are used in argument writing were also linked to perceived differences between Arabic in English, with some observing they used questions in Arabic, but not in English. One student noted, with reference to questions, that *'I did not in my English essay, but I did in Arabic'* because she *'did not feel like it would be suitable'*, whereas she used questions in Arabic *'to hook the reader more'* (S7E). However, in contrast, another student suggested the reverse: *'unlike English, I don't think I asked the reader questions in Arabic'* (S35A). Students also made some

comments which pointed to perceived difference in how reader pronouns and self-mentions are used in English and Arabic. In explaining her avoidance of the first person singular, one student said *'it is informal in English if you use your own voice. In English, that would be seen as being exactly too personal and biased, but in Arabic, that is you asserting yourself in your writing'* (S9A). Another student who had used first person singular and plural pronouns in her Arabic argument said that she *'preferred using it in Arabic'* (S10A), but linked this to greater confidence writing in Arabic.

Students' comments on **Arabic influencing English** and **English influencing Arabic** in their writing were made by a smaller number of students, though by coincidence the number of data segments in each code are exactly the same. Some are simply generalised statements suggesting cross-linguistic support from the stronger language:

- ❑ *'My mastery of Arabic helped me in English.'* (S5A)
- ❑ *'I do not usually read that much Arabic, I will admit. So that is why there is a lot of influence from English with that.'* (S9A).
- ❑ *'It is the influence of English on Arabic, what I have learned in English, I apply it in Arabic.'* (S14A)

Others explain that they think and develop their arguments in one language and translate them to the other: *'I derived all my ideas from Arabic and translated them into English'* (S22E) and *'basically the essay is in English in my mind, and I tried to translate it'* (S31A). This signals how, for some students, ideas are generated in their most familiar language, acting as a resource for idea generation in the less familiar language. Few of the comments are specific about aspects of argument, but one student did reflect that *'I write long sentences because I feel that the reader won't understand what I mean, so I strengthen my sentence by giving more explanation. I think this is the effect of Arabic on my English writing'* (S22E). In terms of English influencing writing in Arabic, another student felt that *'I learned to write an argumentative essay in English, and I don't remember what I learned in Arabic exactly'* (S35A) and two students commented on the thesis statement as an English feature transferred into Arabic, *'from my English learning'* (S11A) and *'I wrote the thesis statement in the introduction. I learned that from English language'* (S33A). However, none of these reflections link directly to aspects of metadiscourse.

4.6 Writing

The theme of *Writing* captures student comments which indicate metalinguistic understanding about writing argument, excluding those comments coded in the metadiscourse analysis.

Code	Definition	Number of Interviews	Number of Occurrences
Influence of Reading	Comments which refer to how reading has helped with ideas, or understanding the text type.	8	10
Paragraphing	Comments which refer to the paragraphing demands of argument writing	42	66
Punctuation	Comments which refer to student thinking about punctuation and its usage.	18	22
Revision	Comments which refer to the revision of writing and the nature of changes made	63	82
Text Layout	Comments which refer to visual aspects of text layout such as the use of bullet points, diagrams etc.	58	73
Vocabulary	Comments which relate to word choices, including noun phrases such as 'mobile phones'; and to revising words in a sentence.	57	98

Table 16: the codes and their definitions for the *Writing* theme

The codes in this theme reflect relatively standard aspects of writing, not necessarily specific to written argument, and they may reflect the particular emphasis given in teaching to these aspects. They do not illuminate anything relating to metadiscourse, so will not be discussed further here: however, Table 17 below gives examples of typical comments made by the students.

Code	Examples of Students' Comments
Influence of Reading	<p><i>I used to see cartoons and other things, all in classical Arabic, and I was imitating them, and this affected me a lot.</i></p> <p><i>I have read it from the Internet, I have been browsing argumentative essays and learning how to put present ideas and how to argumentatively express.</i></p> <p><i>Once I read an English article, and it was weird, and they do not insert bullet points.</i></p>
Paragraphing	<p><i>In the presentation, I inserted one lengthy paragraph, and I felt that if I separated it, the reader would be distracted because the two ideas are very connected, and it is difficult to separate them into two paragraphs.</i></p> <p><i>The most important thing is to arrange the paragraphs at levels.</i></p> <p><i>It should be divided into paragraphs, and each paragraph expresses a particular idea.</i></p>
Punctuation	<p><i>These are phrases, and therefore it was necessary to be between brackets to make it clear that they could change from country to country, and from region to region and not 100% fixed, it is not a hypothesis.</i></p> <p><i>Because in Arabic, we know, in Arabic, we know cause and effect. When we use a semi-colon, the cause comes before the semi-colon, and conclusion comes after.</i></p>

	<i>I remember that in school if there is an important term or a name like sites, I have to put them between two commas.</i>
Revision	<i>I keep rereading for the whole essay, just reading it and then reading it, just, you know, proofreading, and editing.</i> <i>I review every paragraph from its beginning after I finish its writing. Once I review, I feel that I have a problem that the paragraph does not convey the meaning or sentence in which there is a grammar mistake, so I change the wording of the sentence to be clearer.</i> <i>I did some linguistic changes to make it clear to the reader.</i>
Text Layout	[not using bullet points] <i>I do not use "steps or advice", ideas must be sequential and integrated, and they are interpretations. This type does not include points.</i> <i>I feel like the essay needs to be clear. I want it to be easy to read. I do not want to include graphs that are complicated me as a reader. I am just reading this essay. I don' care much about the graph.</i> <i>The essay does not have tables or graphs, and if it does, it is not considered an essay.</i>
Vocabulary	<i>I believe that 'see' is more relevant, but basically it is the most expressive word, and I do not have a closer vocabulary.</i> <i>I used some technological terms such as What's app and several words about education and other academic words.</i> <i>I have tried to choose smooth and easy words that can be quickly conveyed to the reader.</i>

Table 17: the Writing codes exemplified with typical comments

4.7 Key Findings from the Inductive Analysis

The inductive analysis of the students' *Writing Conversations* suggests that they do have strong metalinguistic understanding of the genre expectations of *Argumentation*. To an extent, this is a rather formulaic, or compliant, understanding of particular conventions in writing argument, particularly in relation to a required structure for an argument text, but also in relation to many other linguistic aspects, such as the use of emotive language, or the use of argument and counter-argument. These are often expressed in rather binary ways concerning what is or is not appropriate in argument writing, and the theme, *The Role of Teachers*, indicates that this metalinguistic understanding is almost certainly strongly derived from writing instruction. This is not surprising, given the tendency in many international contexts for academic writing (which is frequently interpreted as argument writing) to be strongly supported through writing instruction. Nevertheless, the students do not always agree on genre expectations, particularly in relation to the place of emotional appeal. Their comments on formality and informality, and on rhetorical hyperbole may explain some of their comments on metadiscoursal features such as reader pronouns, attitude markers and boosters, but the students are generally more focused on these in terms of propositional aspects, rather than metadiscoursal aspects.

Similarly, students do show considerable metalinguistic awareness of reader- and writer-oriented features of written argument. In the theme, *Position of the Writer*, they reveal different understandings of writer positionality, particularly concerning the expression of a personal opinion, or not. To an extent, the points they make highlight that argument is a problem genre, and is probably best considered as a macro-genre, encompassing various types of argument, from a balanced argument presenting differing viewpoints; an argument developing the writer's point of view; through to overtly persuasive arguments, such as that evident in political or campaign material, and advertising. However, the lack of consensus on the degree to which a writer of an argument text should reveal or withhold his or her opinion, does connect to stance as a concept in metadiscourse, and the extent to which writers feel they should be making their stance visible through attitude markers and boosters. Here they discuss issues of subjectivity and objectivity in writer positioning, and indirect communication rather than direct address. Student comments on the *Reader Awareness* theme indicate clear awareness of a reader, predominantly a universal or general reader, though often with simultaneous awareness of a teacher as reader and marker. The students are able to talk about how they shape their argument texts to address potential reader needs and interests: however, this is principally concerned with the ideas and arguments communicated, and ensuring linguistic clarity in expressing arguments and engaging the reader through, for example, emotive language. Their comments on the use of third person voice to address the reader indirectly and to be more objective, and their parallel comments in *Position of the Writer* on objectivity and indirect address, have direct connections to their metalinguistic choices about the use of reader pronouns and self-mentions. There is some evidence that student perceptions of *Differences between Arabic and English* are also influencing decisions which might link to the use, or not, of features of metadiscourse.

5.0 Conclusions

As noted earlier, the research question addressed by the *Writing Conversation* interviews was: *What is the nature of Qatari L1 Arabic university students' metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse and voice and their own use of the features in their writing?* The principal findings in relation to this question are outlined below.

- The deductive analysis reveals very little metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse. Of itself, this is not surprising as it is unlikely these students have been taught about the features of metadiscourse and their functions. However, the interviews have elicited comments which show they are using features of metadiscourse in their own writing, and identify them when

asked questions in everyday language which invites consideration of them. But their reasons for using them do not always align well with the metadiscourse functions – for example, many students explained that they avoided using hedges because they did not want to appear uncertain or lacking authority in the topic.

- There is a stronger propositional emphasis in the interviews, even when talking about metadiscoursal elements: the students, in general, do not see the metadiscoursal function. Instead, they frequently relate discussion of a metadiscoursal element to the communication of the ideas in an argument, for example, in seeing transition markers principally as making argument points clear.
- The codes of Reader Pronouns and Transitions generated significantly more comments than other aspects of metadiscourse, and there was some evidence of metalinguistic understanding here. Some students did understand that reader pronouns were more inclusive of the reader, and that they engaged the reader with the argument. But their consideration of reader pronouns tended to be conflated with the use of first person I (self-mention) and with the use of the third person for objectivity and indirect address. Likewise, some students recognised that transition markers aided the flow of the text, and helped to link or connect ideas for the reader. However, they showed no understanding of the broader set of *Interactive* metadiscourse features which signal and signpost the reader, tending to talk more generically about ‘linking and connecting’, with no discrimination between, for example, a transition marker and a frame marker. It may be true to conclude that students grasp the interpersonal function of reader pronouns and the textual function of transition markers, though from the perspective of genre expectations, rather than metadiscoursal functions.
- Students’ metalinguistic understanding of the genre expectations of writing was strong, reflected in the large number of data segments coded to *Argumentation*, and as suggested above, it may be this understanding which is shaping their responses. Their metalinguistic understanding of genre, however, tends to be somewhat formulaic, highly dependent on taught aspects, and perceptions of what they should or should not include, as evidenced in *the Role of the Teacher* theme. It appears that students are being taught to use, or avoid, metadiscoursal elements, but not from a metadiscoursal perspective.
- Aligned with the evidence of metalinguistic understanding of argument as a genre, the inductive analysis illustrates these students have high levels of awareness of the reader and awareness of how they position themselves in relation to the writer. Potentially, this provides a solid

foundation for supporting them in thinking more explicitly about metadiscourse as a resource for managing this reader-writer relationship.

- Throughout the interviews, and evident in both the deductive and inductive analysis, were three concepts which seemed to interact in student explanations of their use, or avoidance, of particular metadiscoursal elements. These were: the *objectivity or subjectivity* appropriate to an argument; whether the language should be *informal or formal*; and whether the reader should be addressed *directly or indirectly*. Student thinking about both Engagement and Stance in particular appeared to be influenced by their perceptions of how these three concepts should be evident in argument. So, for example, many students explained their avoidance of reader pronouns and self-mentions in favour of the use of a third person voice which was perceived to be more formal, more objective and an indirect address. The three concepts were discussed in binary terms – a writer was objective or subjective, formal or informal, direct or indirect – with no evident recognition that these represent continua and that one aspect of argument writing is how these continua are managed throughout a text. No student discussed the idea that a written argument can have both direct address through the use of ‘you’ and third person voice; or how over-use of self-mentions may shape a reader’s response; or how the balance between the use of boosters and hedges is critical in managing the reader-writer relationship. These are, however, sophisticated aspects of written argument.

In conclusion, the interview analysis indicates that, whilst explicit metalinguistic understanding of metadiscourse is not generally evident, these students understand the genre expectations of written argument as a form, and have both reader and writer awareness. This is heavily influenced by writing instruction, and from the student comments it would appear that this instruction is form-focused, rather than function-focused. In other words, students tended to be more concerned with what should or should not be present in an argument, rather than why. Even considerations of objectivity, formality and direct address tended to be framed in terms of compliance to genre expectations, rather than considered in terms of when and why a writer might choose to be objective, formal or to address the reader directly. There is little sense of authorship or authorial decision-making, and a tendency to focus on forms used, rather than their functions. A key question, then, is whether including metadiscourse in writing instruction might help these students to be more metalinguistically aware of how to manage the reader-writer relationship, and to make more deliberative authorial decisions.

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APPENDIX A: WRITING CONVERSATION INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Preliminaries

We are conducting a large study of argumentative writing by undergraduate students in Qatar. We look at texts, but we are also interested in how you see this process. We are seeking your views on argumentative writing. It shouldn't take more than 50 minutes.

General

Before we look at your writing, I just want to explore some of your thinking about writing argument:

1. What do you think makes a good argument?
2. Have you seen models of argumentative essays before? From teachers? Authentic texts?
3. Where do your ideas for your arguments tend come from? (books, journal articles, instructor, friends?)

Audience (Reader-Oriented)

[Metadiscourse Features: Directives; Interjections; Appeals to Knowledge; Questions; Reader Pronouns]

1. Who would you say is the reader?
 - Implied reader/teacher as reader?
2. To what extent are you thinking about the reader as you write?
 - How did you make ideas/claims clear for your reader?
 - How did you make *language choices* to take account of your reader?
Probe for emotive language; similes; metaphors; hyperbole; irony; sarcasm; quotations; formal and informal language, inviting students to give examples from their writing and to explain their choices.
 - Did you make changes for your reader? *Give details*
 - How did you address your reader? Did you address the reader as 'you'? *Give example?*
 - Did you ask questions of your reader?

Interactive (Structural Organisation/Text-Oriented)

[Metadiscourse Features: Code Glosses; Endophoric Markers; Evidentials; Frame Markers; Transitions]

1. How have you organised and structured your essay?
 - Did your structure help the reader?
 - Did you use any of linguistic devices? Why? Give Example
 - *If there are lists, bullet points, boxes, or other visual structural devices, probe why they used them?*
 - *If there are references, probe why they used them? The purpose do they serve in an argument essay?*

Stance and Attitude (Writer-Oriented)

[Metadiscourse Features: Attitude Markers; Boosters; Hedges]

1. In an argument you express your own judgments: we are interested in what you think about how you communicate this to your reader. What do you think about:
 - How did you communicate being neutral or letting your reader know your position?
 - How did you express your emotions or stay objective?
 - How did you express uncertainty if you are unsure about an idea or a claim?
 - How did you communicate being very confident and assertive about your point?
 - How did you express your personal comments or personal opinion?
 - Did you use first person 'I'/'we' or third person (He/She/They)? Why?
 - Did you tell your reader where to look or how to understand your meaning or opinions?

APPENDIX B: FINAL METADISOURSE CODEBOOK

Name	Description
ENGAGEMENT	Reader-Oriented. Engagement markers are the involvement of readers explicitly in the text. they address readers explicitly, or make a relationship with the reader
Appeals to Knowledge	<i>As a rule; We know that; commonly; it is well-known that...</i>
Directives	Imperatives: <i>add, think about, examine ...</i> PLUS <i>It is important to; it is necessary to...</i> Obligations: <i>must, have to ...</i>
Interjections	' <i>By the way</i> '; ' <i>Incidentally</i> '; and other personal asides
Questions	Questions to the reader eg <i>How can this continue?</i>
Reader Pronouns	The use of personal pronouns to address the reader eg: let us, we, our, you
<i>Conversational and Engaging</i>	Comments which suggest that personal pronouns are more conversational or engaging
<i>Direct and Indirect Address</i>	Comments suggesting that use of personal pronouns relates to direct or indirect address, linked with formality and informality
<i>Effect of Arab culture and language</i>	Comments which explain the use of personal pronouns as a facet of Arabic language, and particularly collective culture of Arabic
<i>Generalisation and Objectivity</i>	Comments which explain choice of reader pronouns in terms of a generalised reader and objectivity
<i>Giving Examples or Unelaborated Comments</i>	Comments which simply identified examples of reader pronouns or made generalised statements about transitions.
<i>Inclusive of the Reader</i>	Comments which express a view that use of personal pronouns includes the reader as part of a shared community or view.
<i>Influence of Instruction</i>	Comments which indicate that the choice of pronoun use is a response to what the student has been taught
INTERACTIVE	Interactive Resources are those features which the writer uses to manage the information flow to guide the reader through the text.
Code Glosses	Reformulation: <i>in other words, this means...</i> and Exemplification: <i>for example, for instance...</i>
Endophoric Markers	Non-linear: <i>Fig(ure) X, Table X...</i> and Linear: <i>In Figure X, In Table X...</i>
Evidentials	Reference to other sources: eg according to x
Frame Markers	Sequencing: <i>first, lastly</i> , Label stages: <i>all in all, in conclusion...</i> ; Announcing goals: <i>In this essay, this essay aims to... my purpose...</i> ; Topic shift: <i>now, move/moving on...</i>
Transitions	Connectives/Linking adverbials. Addition: <i>additionally, further/furthermore...</i> ; Comparison: <i>although, at the same time...</i> Consequence: <i>as a result, even though...</i>
<i>Awareness of Function</i>	Comments which refer to the function of the transition words: eg to provide additional information, to contrast, or to express consequence
<i>Coherence, cohesion and flow</i>	Comments which refer to how transition words and phrases contribute to the overall cohesion, coherence or flow of the writing

Name	Description
<i>Conflation</i>	Comments which discuss words and phrases from different metadiscoursal categories as part of discussion of transition words
<i>Giving Examples or Unelaborated Comments</i>	Comments which simply identified examples of the transition words or made generalised statements about transitions.
<i>Ideational Focus</i>	Comments which refer principally to transition words in relation to ideas and their arrangement, including moving between ideas
<i>Linking and connecting</i>	Comments which refer to the linking function of Transitions, including references to sequencing
STANCE	This refers to “writer-oriented features” which reveal the position of the writer toward the subject. For example, the ways writers comment on the accuracy of a claim, the extent they show their commitment to it, or the attitude they want to express to a proposition or the reader
Attitude Markers	Attitude verbs: <i>agree, disagree, believe...</i> Sentence adverbs: <i>amazingly, shockingly...</i> ; Adjectives: <i>amazing, important...</i> ; Self-mentions: flagging the explicit presence of the author eg <i>I, me, ...</i>
Boosters	Emphatics: <i>actually, obvious...</i> Amplifying adverbs: <i>certainly, never...</i>
Hedges	Attribute: <i>apparently, in general...</i> Reliability: <i>could, may...</i> Writer-oriented: <i>argue, claim</i> , Reader-oriented: <i>in my opinion, in my view...</i>

APPENDIX C: CODEBOOK 1

Code Name	Description
Metalinguistic Understanding	This theme captures comments by students which show metalinguistic understanding about writing, but which are not specifically related to metadiscourse.
Emotive Language	Comments which refer to the use or avoidance of emotive language in argument
Focus on content and ideas	Comments on argument writing which are not metalinguistic, but relate more to the knowledge, ideas and content of the argument.
Focus on error correction	Comments which relate to correction of grammatical errors, or punctuation and spelling errors.
Formality and Informality	Comments which show understanding of the use of formal and/or informal language in argument
Formulaic Understanding of Argument	Comments which suggest a formulaic approach to argument writing eg five paragraph theme; Introduction; body paragraphs; conclusion
Linguistic Features of Argument	Comments which show understanding of specific linguistic features of argument, both using metalanguage or everyday language
Paragraphing	Comments which refer to the paragraphing demands of argument writing
Reader-writer relationship	Comments which show awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs
Textual Organisation	Comments which show understanding of the linguistic organisation at text level
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers, both positive and negative
Writing Proficiency	Comments which relate to the student's sense of competence as a writer (in L1 or L2)
Arabic influencing English	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from Arabic is used when writing English argument.
Concern about standard of writing	Comments which express concerns or anxieties about the quality of their written English or Arabic
Difference between Arabic and English	Comments which relate to differences, or similarities between written English and Arabic
English Influencing Arabic	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from English is used when writing Arabic argument.

APPENDIX D: CODEBOOK 2

Name	Description
Metalinguistic Understanding	This theme captures comments by students which show metalinguistic understanding about writing in general, and argument in particular.
Emotive Language	Comments which refer to the use or avoidance of emotive language in argument
Evidence and Examples	Comments which refer to the use of evidence and examples, without reference to the metadiscoursal features of evidentials or code glosses
Focus on content and ideas	Comments on argument writing which are not metalinguistic, but relate more to the knowledge, ideas and content of the argument (such as personal experience). This includes comments on reading sources and researching ideas and information for the essay.
Focus on error correction	Comments which relate to correction of grammatical errors, or punctuation and spelling errors.
Formality and Informality	Comments which show understanding of the use of formal and/or informal language in argument
Linguistic Features of Argument	Comments which show understanding of specific linguistic features of argument, both using metalanguage or everyday language
Paragraphing	Comments which refer to the paragraphing demands of argument writing
Position of the Writer	Comments which relate to the writer taking up an objective or a subjective stance, but without reference to metadiscoursal features of stance.
Reader-writer relationship	Comments which show awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs
Textual Organisation	Comments which show understanding of the linguistic organisation at text level, including thesis statement, introduction, or conclusion
Vocabulary	Comments which relate to word choices, including noun phrases such as 'mobile phones'
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers, both positive and negative
Writing Proficiency	Comments which relate to the student's sense of competence as a writer (in L1 or L2); the challenges and difficulties they face; and their strengths.
Arabic influencing English	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from Arabic is used when writing English argument.
Concern about standard of writing	Comments which express concerns or anxieties about the quality of their written English or Arabic
Difference between Arabic and English	Comments which relate to student perceptions of the differences between Arabic and English, or no difference
English Influencing Arabic	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from English is used when writing Arabic argument.

APPENDIX E: CODEBOOK 3

Name	Description
Metalinguistic Understanding	This theme captures comments by students which show metalinguistic understanding about writing in general, and argument in particular.
Emotive Language	Comments which refer to the use or avoidance of emotive language in argument
Evidence and Examples	Comments which refer to the use of evidence and examples, without reference to the metadiscoursal features of evidentials or code glosses
Comparison and Contrast	Comments which refer to the use of comparison or contrast as a way to develop an argument including pros and cons in argument
Focus on content and ideas	Comments on argument writing which are not metalinguistic, but relate more to the knowledge, ideas and content of the argument (such as personal experience). This includes comments on reading sources and researching ideas and information for the essay.
Focus on error correction	Comments which relate to correction of grammatical errors, or punctuation and spelling errors.
Formality and Informality	Comments which show understanding of the use of formal and/or informal language in argument
Linguistic Features of Argument	Comments which show understanding of specific linguistic features of argument, both using metalanguage or everyday language
Paragraphing	Comments which refer to the paragraphing demands of argument writing
Position of the Writer	Comments which relate to the writer taking up an objective or a subjective stance, but without reference to metadiscoursal features of stance.
Reader-writer relationship	Comments which show awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs
Textual Organisation	Comments which show understanding of the linguistic organisation at text level, including thesis statement, introduction, or conclusion
Revision	Comments which relate to the revision of writing and the nature of changes made.
Vocabulary	Comments which relate to word choices, including noun phrases such as 'mobile phones'
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers, both positive and negative
Writer Perspectives on their own Writing	Comments which relate to the student's sense of competence as a writer (in L1 or L2); and the challenges and difficulties they face.
Challenges in writing	Comments which discuss particular challenges the students encounter with writing
Arabic influencing English	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from Arabic is used when writing English argument.
Difference between Arabic and English	Comments which relate to student perceptions of the differences between Arabic and English, or no difference
English Influencing Arabic	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from English is used when writing Arabic argument.
Other	A temporary category to hold comments which seem relevant but do not fit any existing category.

APPENDIX F: CODEBOOK 4 (FINAL)

Name	Description
Argumentation	This theme captures comments by students which show understanding about the genre expectations of argument writing
Argument and Counter-argument	Comments which refer to the concepts of arguments, points, counter-points, rebuttals, comparisons and contrasts
Emotional Appeal	Comments which refer to the use or avoidance of emotive language or emotional content in argument
Evidence and Examples	Comments which refer to the use of evidence and examples, without reference to the metadiscoursal features of evidentials or code glosses. Includes explanations.
Focus on content and ideas	Comments on argument writing which relate more to the knowledge, ideas and content of the argument (such as personal experience). This includes comments on reading sources and researching ideas and information for the essay.
Formality and Informality	Comments which show refer to the use of formal and/or informal language in argument
Rhetorical Features of Argument	Comments which refer to rhetorical devices such as hyperbole; repetition; figurative language etc
Textual Organisation	Comments which show understanding of the linguistic organisation of argument at text level, including thesis statement, introduction, or conclusion
Position of the Writer	Comments which relate to the writer taking up an objective or a subjective stance, or expressing their own opinion or viewpoint.
Avoiding Expressing an Opinion	Comments which refer to avoiding communication a point of view or an opinion
Being Objective	Comments which express the importance of being objective in argument and using facts
Communicating Different Viewpoints	Comments which indicate that the writer shows two or more sides to an argument
Expressing an Opinion	Comments which refer to the writer communicating their opinion or point of view in the essay
Where viewpoint is expressed	References which explain where in an argument the writer's point of view can be expressed
Reader Awareness	Comments which show awareness of the reader and how writing needs to accommodate reader needs
Clarity for the Reader	Comments which reflect the need to support the reader through being clear about points and arguments

Engaging the Reader	Comments which express a need to engage the reader by attracting their attention, or making things interesting for them.
Implied Reader	Comments which explain the writer's perception of the implied reader
Third Person Voice	Comments which refer to the use of the third person to address a general reader
The Role of Teachers	Comments which relate to learning or experiences derived from teachers
Writer Perspectives on their own Writing	Comments which relate to the student's sense of competence as a writer (in L1 or L2), including the challenges and difficulties they face.
Arabic influencing English	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from Arabic is used when writing English argument.
Challenges in Writing	Comments which express the difficulties students face when writing, either in English or Arabic.
Concern about standard of writing	Comments which express concerns or anxieties about the quality of their written English or Arabic
Difference between Arabic and English	Comments which relate to student perceptions of the differences between Arabic and English, or no difference
English Influencing Arabic	Comments which indicate linguistic knowledge from English is used when writing Arabic argument.
Writing	Comments which express metalinguistic understanding about writing in general
Influence of Reading	Comments which refer to how reading has helped with ideas, or understanding the text type; or references to not reading.
Paragraphing	Comments which refer to the paragraphing demands of argument writing
Punctuation	Comments which refer to student thinking about punctuation and its usage.
Revision	Comments which refer to the revision of writing and the nature of changes made
Text Layout	Comments which refer to visual aspects of text layout such as the use of bullet points, diagrams etc.
Vocabulary	Comments which relate to word choices, including noun phrases such as 'mobile phones'; and to revising words in a sentence eg 'I really agree' to 'I prefer'