

**AN ANALYSIS ON METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN ENGLISH AND  
KISWAHILI DOCTORAL DISSERTATIONS IN KENYAN UNIVERSITIES**

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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Declaration

This thesis is my original work and has not been submitted for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in this or any other University.

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### Recommendations

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this work to my beloved daughters Mary Wambui, Priscilla Njeri and Ruth Wangui; to my late Brother Charles Kamau Mbugua, and to my late grandfather Charles Kamau Wanguhu.

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## ABSTRACT

Metadiscourse is a key feature in academic writing because among other uses, it holds different parts of a text together and it facilitates communication between writers and readers. Metadiscourse markers (MMs) are linguistic units that writers use to create cohesion and coherence, and to involve themselves and their readers in the texts. Studies have shown that good academic writers effectively use MMs. Lately, studies on aspects of academic metadiscourse have received considerable attention worldwide, especially in contexts involving academic writers using second or additional languages. However, in the Kenyan context, there is limited research on the use of metadiscourse in academic writing, bearing in mind that English and Kiswahili are second or additional languages to most Kenyans including those who write their academic work in these languages. Consequently, this dissertation set out to investigate the use of MMs in doctoral dissertations written in English and in Kiswahili by Kenyans in Kenyan universities. Based on Hyland's (2005) taxonomy of metadiscourse markers, the research showed that all categories of metadiscourse were used though with varying frequencies. The doctoral writers used more interactive MMs than the interactional MMs. Notably, Kiswahili writers employed more MMs than English writers, which may be traced to the nature of the language used, and the pressure on students to be understood. In both languages, transition, engagement, hedges and boosters were the most commonly used markers. Transitions enhanced coherence in the texts, engagements created interactions between the writers and the readers and hedges and boosters revealed the writer's certainty and uncertainty of their propositions. In terms of overuse and underuse, Kiswahili writers overused six sub-categories, while English writers underused six sub-categories of the markers. There was no overuse or underuse for the self-mention sub-category, which probably originates from the cultural and academic backgrounds of the writers, whether they are taught not to bring their opinions to the texts, or it is avoidance to exhibit personal authority. In summary, the results also showed significant correlations between MMs used by both English and Kiswahili doctoral students, which was not unexpected, since Kiswahili writer read academic books written in English and they translate the content into Kiswahili. For methodology, the study used a mixed-method design in the analysis of MMs. Random sampling was used to get the target population, and then stratified random sampling to select 40 linguistic dissertations written in English and Kiswahili. The concordance software, AntConc 4.1.4 examined the frequencies of the markers and all the occurrences of these markers in the corpus. Log-likelihood statistic detected co-occurrences, and overuse or underuse of metadiscourse in English and Kiswahili corpus. Chi-square tests revealed the relationship between categories of MMs and the two languages. The spearman rank correlation determined the correlations in metadiscourse usage in doctoral dissertations in the two languages. Wilcoxon sum rank test determined the significant difference in usage of MMs in English and Kiswahili doctoral dissertation. The findings of this study contribute to the larger field of applied linguistics, particularly writing in second or additional languages. More so, it provides evidence that Kiswahili has come of age as an academic metalanguage. Finally, this study provides valuable insight to universities' curriculum developers to consider incorporating writing centres and training programmes for academic scientific writing for undergraduate and post graduate students.