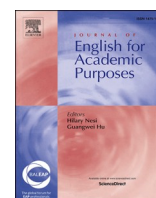


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Exemplification and reformulation in expert linguists' writings: Elaborative metadiscourse between disciplinarity and individuality

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ABSTRACT

Exemplification and reformulation are key elaborative strategies that empower clarity and argumentation in academic writing. Most research investigating their use in academic writing argues that writers' choices in terms of frequency and marker type are conditioned by disciplinary variations and the level of expertise of the writers. This has led to an understanding of discourse communities as being homogeneous groups of novice versus expert writers and of separate soft versus hard disciplines. Through the analysis of 90 research articles and book chapters single-authored by six leading linguists, this study shows that these successful authors deviate from the common practices in linguistics and their choices deviate from each other significantly. However, the data does not reveal any steady increasing or decreasing frequencies in the use of exemplification and reformulation throughout their career stages, which makes it hard to claim that the frequency of using the two discourse functions evolves with experience. The study argues that individuality and style preferences within the same discourse community should be acknowledged as an additional variable affecting discursive choices and calls for a more nuanced understanding of disciplinarity and writing expertise.

1. Introduction

Producing successful academic texts is often the outcome of several intervening conceptual and discursive variables some of which directly relate to scholarly clarity and rigour. Exemplification and reformulation are often considered two discourse functions that fruitfully contribute to the success of the produced texts. The value of these functions is their ability to render abstract incomprehensible ideas, concepts and arguments into clear and convincing prose, which explains their permanent use in all types of academic discourse in its oral and written forms. In various discourse approaches, they are often grouped together as elaborative discourse tools (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014; Triki, 2014, 2017), as forms of metadiscourse serving writer-reader interactive purposes (Hyland, 2005a), as markers of discourse reflexivity (Mauranen, 1993; Ädel, 2006), or simply as syntactic and semantic appositives (Meyer, 1992; Quirk et al., 1985). Other studies take a discourse marker approach and focus on the lexicalisation and grammaticalization properties of the words and expressions signalling instances of exemplification or reformulation such as *for example* and *in other words* (e.g., Del Saz, 2003; Fraser, 1999). With the wide spread of metadiscourse studies in discourse approaches, there has been an increasing number of studies that explore the use of exemplification and reformulation in academic discourse either as part of the package forming the interactional model (Hyland, 2005a) or as the sole focus of investigating what is

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commonly referred to as code glosses (e.g., Bondi, 2020; Guziurová, 2020; Hyland, 2007; Su et al., 2022; Triki, 2021). The insights of such studies stem from their comparative dimensions whereby exemplification and reformulation choices are studied either separately or in combination across disciplinary practices or across novice and expert academic texts, highlighting how disciplinarity and expertise can affect writers' choices.

Those disciplinary approaches to code glosses seem to be inherently driven by two assumptions. The first implicitly acknowledges the hegemony of disciplinary voice over the personal one (Hyland, 2007, 2012a), meaning that writers' choices to use first person pronouns, to mitigate or boost the weight of their claims or express personal attitudes are driven and conditioned by practices in the field. The resulting effect is that texts within the same discipline are considered as homogeneous groups rather than single points that can vary considerably. The second assumption positions writers along a cline of expertise where student writing is often contrasted to more advanced forms of writing, specifically, research article writing (RA) (Hyland, 2005b, 2020). This view situates student genres (e.g., undergraduate essays, MA and PhD dissertations) at one extremity and the RA genre at the opposite side making it the norm to be followed. The move on the cline is unidirectional, i.e., from the novice to the advanced, a process through which authors internalise and master disciplinary identities imposed by their communities of practice until they reach the expert position. Again, we end up with a distorted picture of reality where the individual authorial voices of each single author are suppressed and where novice and expert writers are understood as distinct groups marked by the lack of writing expertise in the texts produced at their initial academic careers as opposed to the acknowledged expertise their texts gain when they start producing RAs. Surprisingly, despite the extant literature on academic writing and on the use of interactive features in discourse, it remains unclear why elaborative discourse functions are used by the same author throughout the different phases of their career progress and whether the most successful academics use these functions similarly compared to other academics in the discipline. This study will try to address this gap by looking at the writings of six renowned linguists.

It is now established as a fact that the contexts of culture (genre) and the context of situation (register) are the main variables affecting linguistic choices in texts, such that texts sharing the same contexts would display very similar frequencies of use of the same linguistic and rhetorical features. In addition, if we trust Hyland's (2007: 283) conclusion that the frequency of code glosses parallels disciplinary routines in argumentation we would expect that the most successful and widely acknowledged linguists would stand out in their elaborative and argumentative skills, skills that are partly favoured by their mastery of exemplification and reformulation techniques. However, since the individuals who produce these texts differ socio-culturally (regional variation, academic practices, career paths) and perhaps also linguistically (L1 versus English L2 users), it is expected that individual authorial preferences would be reflected in the texts of those authors. To account for individuality in writing, this study explores authorial choices of exemplification and reformulation in a sample of RAs and book chapters single authored by six distinguished linguists and compares their frequencies to the common practices in comparable studies. A qualitative analysis of some observed stylistic preferences will substantiate the quantitative findings to further explain the syndromes of individuality in the corpus. The implication of the study resides in how it can shape our understanding of elaborative discourse functions and how they can be conditioned not only by disciplinary cultural norms but also by idiosyncratic individual preferences.

2. Exemplification and reformulation as elaborative discourse functions

The ability to present arguments persuasively and effectively is crucial for scholars to make an impact in their fields. Leading scholars often employ rhetorical techniques, logical reasoning, and evidence-based arguments to convince readers of the validity and significance of their research. Their writing style helps them effectively communicate their ideas, gain recognition, and shape the discourse within their disciplines. Previous studies have argued for the massive role played by exemplification and reformulation and their contribution in achieving clarity, coherence, accessibility, rigour, precision, persuasiveness, and effective argumentation in scholarly writing (Blakemore, 1993; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Hyland, 2007; Triki, 2017). Exemplification and reformulation are often considered two discourse functions that fulfil very similar goals in language despite the fact that they score as one of the least frequent types of interactional metadiscourse in academic papers (Hyland & Jiang, 2018). A main difference between the two discourse functions lies in their logical construction. While reformulating segments are related via equivalence relations to the reformulated ones and are, accordingly, very close in meaning to definitions, exemplifying ones are rather tied via metonymic relations where the exemplifying structure could be thought of as a member in the larger class of the exemplifying chunk (Triki, 2019). In various discourse approaches, they are often grouped together as elaborative and cohesive discourse tools in SFL (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; Thompson, 2014), as forms of code glosses (Hyland, 2005a, 2007; Mauranen, 1993; Adel, 2006) or simply as syntactic and semantic appositive relations between the constituents (Meyer, 1992; Quirk et al., 1985). Arguably, under these umbrella terms, other similar discourse functions may fall, as in elaborating clarifications within SFL or reformulating definitions in metadiscourse studies.

Exemplification involves providing concrete examples or cases to support and illustrate abstract concepts or arguments. By including relevant examples, leading scholars can make their ideas more tangible and relatable to readers. This helps enhance clarity and accessibility while bridging the gap between theoretical concepts and real-world applications (Triki, 2021). Examples provide readers and listeners either with concrete instances that they can understand and relate to or, sometimes, may come in the shape of invented or hypothetical scenarios (Nesi & Alsop, 2021). Their ultimate goals would be to elucidate and facilitate comprehension and to make arguments more persuasive (Su et al., 2022; Younis et al., 2023). Reformulation, on the other hand, refers to the restatement or rewording of an idea or argument in a different way using alternative equivalent words, phrases, or sentence structures. By restating or rephrasing complex ideas, scholars can clarify their intended meaning, avoid ambiguity, and provide multiple perspectives on a concept. Hyland (2007) classifies reformulations based on their expanding or reducing functional properties. Under expansion, he

argues that explanations and implications widen up writers' intended meaning and guide the readers towards a specific understanding. With reductive types, instances of 'paraphrase' and 'specification' help generate the gist of an utterance or highlight one of its specific properties. Such a classification was previously criticised for being somehow confusing and for including definitions, a discourse function inherently distinct in its structural, semantic and pragmatic aspects (Triki, 2019, p. 107).

3. Genre, register and style features in academic discourse

The main concern in previous studies on exemplification and reformulation have focused on how they are used within and across various types of genres, registers, academic writing expertise, professional and social settings as well as languages. For example, Guziurová (2022) compared novice L2 master's theses across three disciplines (linguistics, literature and ELT methodology) to expert writers' RAs. Her results showed that code glosses were higher in the master's theses, that exemplification predominated over reformulation and that the highest frequencies were found in linguistics and the lowest in literature. Likewise, Su & Ye, 2023 found that MA and PhD EFL writers use exemplification similarly but may have different preferences for the marker choice and for the constituent patterns of exemplification acts. In oral academic genres such as 3-min presentations (Liu et al., 2023), exemplifications, reformulations and definitions are deployed to render technical scientific knowledge accessible to non-specialist audiences and are therefore considered fundamental tools in science popularisation. Molino's (2018) study showed that reformulation was quite frequent in teachers' lectures in English Medium Instruction contexts, but its use seemed conceptually different from its common functions in other academic settings. The deviation was explained by teachers' hesitation and their constant need to restate out of uncertainty rather than to guarantee better understanding for the students. The common denominator between these studies is their reliance on external variables such as genre and discipline to explain the similarities and variations, with little or no acknowledgement of internal or personal markers of individuality.

Using apposition is a characteristic of good writers (Macken-Horarik, 2006, p. 114) which makes clarity, coherence and concision rank in the top style elements agreed upon in academic style guides (Sword, 2012, p. 26). Much of the research on identity is centred around the notion of disciplinary identity, defined mostly as being "discursively constructed" (Thompson & Hunston, 2020, p. 6). It is divided into aspects of academic writing that follow the mainstream conventions in the discipline and those that demarcate the "enabling conditions for individuality" (Hyland, 2012a, p. 35). This approach to academic identity was reproduced in several studies, specifically the ones adopting genre and register perspectives. Personal identities and authorial voice can be easily detected in less rigid forms of text genres like personal webpages and blogs (Hyland, 2011, 2012b; Kirkup, 2010) or through the analysis of the transparent authorial presence in texts like the use of personal pronouns (e.g., Wang & Hu, 2023), attitude markers, hedges and boosters (Gillaerts & Van de Velde, 2010), and citation practices (Hewings et al., 2010). Hang and Hyland (2019), for example, restricted their study to the interpersonal language choices made by the same authors moving between blog posts and RAs, implying that, perhaps, variation between the texts would be sensitive to genre and communicative purposes without considering the possible influence of authorial preferences.

Studies on explicit authorial presence through self-mention in linguistics RAs point towards a decreasing tendency in using first pronouns (Hyland & Jiang, 2018; Wang & Hu, 2023). However, as argued for by Ivanić (1998: 331), authorial voice can also be reflected in "the sorts of words that the writer feels comfortable using". This understanding is acknowledged in relevance theory where reformulation is considered as "a decision about style, which like all decisions about style, is constrained by the search for relevance" (Blakemore, 1993, p. 119). Discourse markers of style may be more significant in expert academics' writings and their effect on the community could be decisive in shaping the conventions within the field. Duszak's (1997: 26) thoughts summarise the link between expert writing and style preferences:

It seems that expertise standards are negotiable among more competent members of the community, and that attributed levels of expertise are correlates of one's scope of readership. On the other hand, widely recognised experts may take the liberty to diverge from standardized patterns in academic communication. [...] an expert turns into an authority, and then may develop an idiosyncratic style of writing that is not to be imitated or criticized for its violations of academic standards.

Such a statement suggests that expert writers can deviate from the mainstream practices in their fields, however, it neither explains whether those deviations happen only when the author becomes an expert nor when they happen exactly. Part of this study will try to track the extent to which features of elaboration in discourse change along the path towards expertise and will suggest that the trajectories are not necessarily linear.

4. Methodology

4.1. Corpus selection

Exploring the writing style of a single author implies collecting different written texts over a period of time long enough to enable a scrutiny of the evolution process from the early stages of writing to the later ones. In science and academia, carving one's name can either take place through break through theories and findings or through an extensive number of publications over the years. For this reason, the best candidate authors were thought to be senior academics who have published a large number of texts throughout their careers. In addition, the notoriety of those writers and their potential impact on the disciplinary community could influence peers and novice researchers in their field. Keeping these ideas in mind, I have collected a corpus of 90 single-authored RAs (n = 69) and book chapters (n = 21) totalling over 870,000 words (Table 1). These texts were authored by six preeminent scholars who have made significant contributions to various fields of linguistics. Each scholar is represented by 15 texts from their initial, middle and late career

publication periods. Admittedly, the limited number of texts representing each period may not fully reflect the writing habits of each author, yet the choice was imposed by the fact that most authors have more co-authored publications than single ones. Moreover, the mixture of RAs and book chapters was a necessity rather than a choice as it allowed the compilation of the necessary number of publications per author and per career phase.

The selection process of the top-ranking authors was based on three objective criteria. Firstly, I relied on authors' citation scores on Google Scholar to identify the top 30 most cited linguists in 2022 (Ioannidis, 2022, p. V5). Citation scores, as suggested by Teplitskiy et al. (2022), attract substantive readings and shape the attention given to specific texts, making the choice of the papers to read conditioned by the high citation number of those papers. Teplitskiy et al.'s findings also suggest an association between citation score and quality reputation of the authors. Yet, it was felt that high citation scores alone were not enough to select the authors. The second criterion was the number of publications by the same author which was set to a minimum of 120 publications encompassing RAs, book chapters, books, and other scholarly works. Lastly, the inclusion of authors with publications spanning at least 20 years, even if the standard is a ten-year rule (Dressen-Hammouda, 2014; Ericsson, 2006), ensured a rich and extensive body of work to compare potential variability in authorial choices as they gain experience and recognition. From the list of the top 30 cited linguists in 2022, the authors who met these criteria were Ken Hyland, Rod Ellis, Teun A. Van Dijk, Suresh Canagarajah, Douglas Biber and Ray Jackendoff.

These linguists' texts cover diverse subfields such as language teaching and learning, cognitive linguistics, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, EAP and ESP. The texts selected also apply different methodological approaches (quantitative, qualitative and conceptual or theoretical approaches), variables that can affect lexico-grammatical and rhetorical choices (Gray, 2015). The length of careers extends over different spans, with the shortest being Canagarajah's (29 years) and the longest being Van Dijk's (53 years). As such, the early periods for Hyland and Canagarajah date back to the early 1990s, Ellis and Biber's is the early 1980s while Jackendoff and Van Dijk's early phases refer to the late 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s. The late periods include publications in the last five to seven years (2017–2022) except for Biber and Jackendoff (texts from 2013 to 2019). The middle period of each author corresponds to their publications around their mid-career. This means that the three stages, especially the early and middle ones, span over different time periods. The interval between early-middle and middle-late also varies within the same author mainly because most of the other publications were not single authored.

4.2. Methods

The corpus was automatically searched for the most productive exemplification and reformulation markers using AntConc (Anthony, 2020). The search list was based on the markers that were repeatedly cited in the literature as the ones that would capture most of the occurrences of the two discourse functions (Halliday & Hasan, 1976; Hyland, 2005a, 2007; Quirk et al., 1985; Su et al., 2022; Triki, 2021). Markers (e.g., *to mention a few, put differently, to put it another way*) were not included in the final search list because they were not present in the whole corpus or resulted in 1 or 2 hits only. The final list includes ten items for exemplification (*as in, e.g, example (of), for example, for instance, include, like, such as, illustrat*, say*) and nine ones for reformulation (*especially, i.e, in other words, in particular, or, particularly, that is (to say), this/which mean(s), namely*). This list excludes all definitional search terms that are often included in the identification of code glosses. Following Murillo (2012), Triki (2019), Barabadi et al. (2021) and Liu et al. (2023), I adopt a narrower understanding of reformulation that excludes definitional meanings. This is an important remark because it will affect how quantitative results should be understood, and most importantly, how the comparisons with similar results in the literature should be perceived in the results sections. Rayson's log-likelihood tests¹ were applied to measure the significance of the differences.

While most of the markers had a straightforward meaning and would either signal an instance of exemplification or a reformulation, some specific ones needed manual checking to discard all usages that were irrelevant. In particular, the markers *like* and *or* needed special attention. In written academic prose, *like* could be used as a marker of comparison or as an exemplifier. Despite their similarities, exemplification and comparison functions are distinct. The former involves providing illustrations that support and clarify a general statement, argument or concept. The latter, however, highlights similarities and/or differences between two or more entities, ideas, or phenomena, elucidating the characteristics, qualities, or relationships between the compared elements. For instance, in example 1, Jackendoff aims at highlighting the similarities between *pronominalization* and *VP-Deletion*; in 2, however, Biber provides an illustrative instance of what is meant by *made-up dialogues*.

1. **Like pronominalization, VP-Deletion** can (at least sometimes) delete the left-hand verb phrase if it is in a subordinate clause. (Jackendoff-Early)
2. This belief is sometimes reflected in the overly frequent use of progressive verbs in *made-up dialogues* (**like those found in ESL/EFL coursebooks teaching conversation skills**). (Biber-Middle)

I used a simple test that proved helpful in deciding whether the function is primarily compare or exemplify. By looking for the closest agnate, if *like* could be replaced by *such as* it was considered exemplifying but if it is interchangeable with *similar to* it was considered comparative and therefore discarded from the concordance lines. Thus, in the two previous examples, only 2 was considered exemplifying.

¹ When LL = 3.84 significance is calculated at $p < 0.05$; When LL = 6.63 $p < 0.01$; When LL = 10.83 $p < 0.001$; When LL = 15.13 $p < 0.0001$. This means the higher the value of LL the more significant the differences between the scores. Rayson's log-likelihood tests are available at <https://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html>.

Table 1
The corpus.

Biber			Canagarajah			Ellis			Hyland			Jackendoff			Van Dijk			Total
Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	Early	Mid	Late	
5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	90
53,375	32,479	38,907	40,499	61,046	55,669	36,070	52,658	54,482	25,828	35,572	33,284	47,147	62,019	69,657	63,872	71,236	38,090	871,890
124,761			157,214			143,210			94,684			178,823			173,198			871,890

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Likewise, *or* is not always used to introduce elaborating alternative expressions of the form (x is y). Sometimes, it signals a choice between two entities (either x or y), in which case, it does not evoke reformulation meanings. As illustrated in 3, *governments* and *the general public* are not equivalent to each other and *or* simply means *and*. In 4, however, the words *Aims* and *Goals* are synonymous and can be used interchangeably. Thus, *or* is considered reformulating only in examples like 4.

3. To make their claims known to *governments* **or** the general public, social movements need to engage in many forms of text and talk. (Van Dijk-Late)
4. The very keyword mission may be the very name of the next category, and more generally refers to the name of the *Aims* **or** Goals of a/this movement. (Van Dijk-Late)

Another vital feature I considered while analysing elaboration acts is the boundaries of the unit being elaborated, the marker or signal used and the elaborating unit. This helped identify the kind of structural and semantic link tying the units together and gave a better understanding of whether the choice of the marker could also be conditioned by the structural and semantic properties of the elaborated units. Thus, all examples extracted from the corpus will include the unit being exemplified or reformulated (in italics), the marker (in bold), and the unit exemplifying or reformulating (underlined).

5. Findings and discussion

5.1. Exemplification and reformulation in the leading linguists' corpus

The general findings of appositive exemplifying and reformulating units explicitly introduced in the corpus confirm the recurrence of these functions in academic writing with a considerable higher density (more than 82 per paper) compared to all results reported so far in the literature. Quantitative results show dominance of exemplification over reformulation, a result somehow expected as some previous studies demonstrated the same patterns. What is noticeable, however, is the variation in density of these functions in comparable corpora. For example, Hyland's (2007) study, specifically the results of the linguistics section, also found dominance of exemplification over reformulation, yet, with a much lower density (roughly 55 per 10,000 words: Reformulation 21.0 and exemplification 32.0). Su et al.'s (2022) findings on exemplification in linguistics RAs score 23.63 per 10,000 words and less so in the less expert writings of MA dissertations (19.47). The tendency seems to be different in non-linguistic disciplines. For example, Bondi's (2020) study of exemplification and reformulation in the RAs of two leading economists found that the overall density is 52,19 per 10,000 words, with reformulation (30,55) density slightly exceeding exemplification (21,64). This is an important observation that marks the specificity of the corpus studied in this paper, which suggests that successful linguists seem to use both types of appositives much more frequently than other linguists and that the dominance of exemplification over reformulation could be sensitive to disciplinary practices rather than genre differences.

Table 2 shows variations in the frequencies of exemplification and reformulation among the six authors. Repetitive comparison of the sum frequencies between the six authors reveals significant differences marking particularly Van Dijk and Canagarajah (LL = 386.56, $p < 0.00$) as well as Van Dijk and Ellis (LL = 239.45, $p < 0.00$), whereas non-significant variation was found between Biber and Jackendoff and between Hyland and Ellis. Van Dijk stands out with the highest density (122.92) that equals more than the double of the last ranking linguist, Canagarajah, suggesting an overall strong presence of the two discourse functions in his corpus. Biber and Jackendoff show relatively high combined exemplification and reformulation frequencies, while Hyland, Ellis, and Canagarajah exhibit lower frequencies. When considering exemplification, Van Dijk maintains the highest density rate (71.59), Biber and Jackendoff also exhibit relatively comparable high frequencies of exemplification (66.12 and 63.35 respectively). On the other hand, Hyland and Ellis show similar medium frequencies, while Canagarajah ranks last with a low density (29.51) that represents less than half the densities in Van Dijk, Biber and Jackendoff. Turning to reformulation, we can notice that the variation between the authors is less striking. Van Dijk again takes the lead with the highest density rate (51.32) and a difference of 22.39 points per 10,000 words separating him from the second position taken by Hyland. Canagarajah follows suit with a 28.75 density that almost equals his frequency of exemplification, but which allows him to rank third in reformulation while he ranks last in exemplification. Biber, Jackendoff, and Ellis texts display moderate densities ranging between 23.43 and 25. These observations highlight authors' individual preferences and tendencies and reflect the distinct stylistic choices and rhetorical strategies employed within their respective corpora.

Table 2
General frequencies of exemplification and reformulation in the corpus.

Author	Exemplification		Reformulation		Total	
	N	/10,000 words	N	/10,000 words	N	/10,000 words
Van Dijk	1240	71.59	889	51.32	2129	122.92
Biber	825	66.12	311	24.92	1136	98.05
Jackendoff	1133	63.35	419	23.43	1552	86.79
Hyland	414	43.72	274	28.93	688	72.66
Ellis	640	44.69	347	24.23	987	68.92
Canagarajah	464	29.51	452	28.75	916	58.26
Whole corpus	4716	54.09	2692	30.87	7408	84.96

5.2. Exemplification and reformulation across career phases

The normalised frequencies of code glosses across the three career stages appear to vary in different ways. As Table 3 shows, Van Dijk has the highest frequency mean, followed by Biber, while Canagarajah ranks last with a mean frequency equalling half of Van Dijk's. The variation in standard deviation (SD) indicates the dispersion of those normed frequencies around the mean and reflects how they have changed across career stages. We can notice that Hyland and Ellis have the lowest SD values, which suggests some stability in their use of the two discourse functions. Biber and Van Dijk have the highest SD values, reflecting more significant changes in their use of code glosses. Canagarajah and Jackendoff, on the other hand, lie somewhere in between with relatively similar SD values.

During the middle phase, all authors increase their use of code glosses, except Hyland whose mid-career texts include slightly lower frequencies. These general features, however, do not hold true if we look at exemplification and reformulation separately.

Fig. 1 displays the frequency patterns of using exemplification and reformulation across the career phases of each author. The more distant the lines are from each other, the more the frequencies of exemplification and reformulation are imbalanced. As the figure shows, exemplification is almost always more frequent than reformulation throughout the three stages with Canagarajah exceptionally using both with very similar frequencies. The lines in the graphs suggest that there is no consistent pattern followed by the authors nor is there unique ascending or descending trajectories separating the initial, middle and late stages. A chi-square test of goodness of fit and independence (Preacher, 2001) performed on the scores of each author across the three career stages reveals significant differences ($X^2 = 29.257$; $P = 0.00113207$). Regarding exemplification, Biber, Van Dijk and Ellis exhibit a clear but uneven increase in exemplification frequencies from the early to the middle career stage, followed by a decrease in the late stage where frequencies become similar to the ones in the initial phase. Canagarajah's exemplification use is marked by a steady increase during the middle and late stages. Hyland and Jackendoff move in the opposite direction by reducing the number of examples during their middle stage career, then increasing them towards the late phase. Yet, in the late stage, Hyland's exemplification frequencies become similar to the ones in the initial stage while Jackendoff's clearly exceed the ones in the early texts by more than 15 points per 10,000 words. As for reformulation, there is no clear pattern of consistent change in reformulation frequencies across the three career stages for most authors. Ellis, Biber and Jackendoff's graphs indicate an increasing pattern in the middle stage, with the latter author exhibiting a remarkable increase of more than 12.5 points per 10,000 words. They then relatively maintain the same frequency or slightly lower their use towards the late stage. Van Dijk, Hyland and Canagarajah, on the other hand, slightly lower their use of reformulation towards the middle phase. During the late stage, Hyland and Canagarajah maintain roughly the same frequencies whereas Van Dijk lowers his use of reformulations by more than 25 points per 10,000 words. In a nutshell, it appears that reformulation is more stable than exemplification. This could be explained by the rhetorical function of each type. Reformulation is consistently used to reword and explain utterances and ideas and also to push argumentation forward regardless of the nature of the linguistic phenomena investigated. Exemplification, on the other hand, might be more sensitive to the nature of the linguistic phenomenon studied and to the approach paradigms that can change from one publication to another.

The patterns emerging somehow contradict the findings in a comparable diachronic study by Hyland and Jiang (2020) where they found a steady increase in the use of code glosses in applied linguistics in three time periods with average frequencies much lower than the ones reported here. Despite the fact that the time periods in this study vary from one author to the other compared to Hyland and Jiang's study, they can still shed light on the unique stylistic choices made by single authors. These variations indicate that authorial style is dynamic rather than static. It evolves and changes over time but not necessarily in a linear way. The patterns reflect heterogeneous rather than homogeneous trends among the authors, which again diverges from the mainstream practices of other comparable peers' choices. However, the fact that there is no consistent pattern or association between the different stages does not mean that beginners/novices and experts use appositives similarly. This has been dealt with in several studies where some findings revealed fewer elaborative appositives in student writings (MA or PhD) compared to experts' RAs (Barabadi et al., 2021; Su & Ye, 2023) while others exposing the opposite tendency, i.e., students used more code glosses than experts (Guziurová, 2022). The findings here indicate that leading linguists are aware, right from the beginning of their research careers, of the value of appositives and use them very frequently. Moreover, the consistent high frequencies throughout the years may have contributed to the successful careers of the scholars and empowered their writing styles. The findings may also challenge the notion of expertise and how it could be inappropriately perceived as a linear process evolving in time. Regarding the variations observed between the authors, these could relate to several variables. On the one hand, various research topics, interests and sub-disciplinary fields may require different amounts of examples and reformulations to guarantee the desired clarity and persuasiveness. On the other hand, the research design and the methodological apparatuses (Gray, 2015) can also determine the frequencies and nature of the elaborative units. Additionally, individual writing styles and habits, personal experiences and L1 language backgrounds may as well affect the rhetorical and lexico-grammatical choices made, including the selection of apposition markers.

5.3. Exemplification markers

Table 4 illustrates the usage of exemplification markers in the corpus and across the six authors. The findings highlight the dominance of specific markers in introducing exemplification instances. The top three positions are occupied by e.g., *such as*, and *for example*, which together introduced more than 53% of all exemplification instances in the corpus. *Example of* ranks fourth with a frequency similar to *for example*, while *like* ranks fifth (6.29 occurrences per 10,000 words). Notably, Hyland aligns with the general order found in the corpus for the top three ranking markers. However, Biber and Ellis seem to favour *for example* more frequently than *such as*. Van Dijk stands out with a preference for *example of* in the third position, alongside clear preferences for *like* and *for instance*. Conversely, Jackendoff and Canagarajah exhibit a different pattern as both authors favour *such as* in the first position instead of e.g.,

Table 3
Distribution of exemplification and reformulation across career stages.

	Van Dijk	Biber	Jackendoff	Hyland	Ellis	Canagarajah
Early	119.57	81.28	67.21	74.67	61.78	47.12
Middle	134.17	132.05	76.39	66.86	73.63	48.42
Late	95.52	89.41	96.87	74.18	65.11	72.95
mean	116.42	100.91	80.16	71.90	66.84	56.16
range	38.65	50.77	29.66	7.81	11.85	25.83
SD	19.52	27.27	15.18	4.37	6.11	14.55

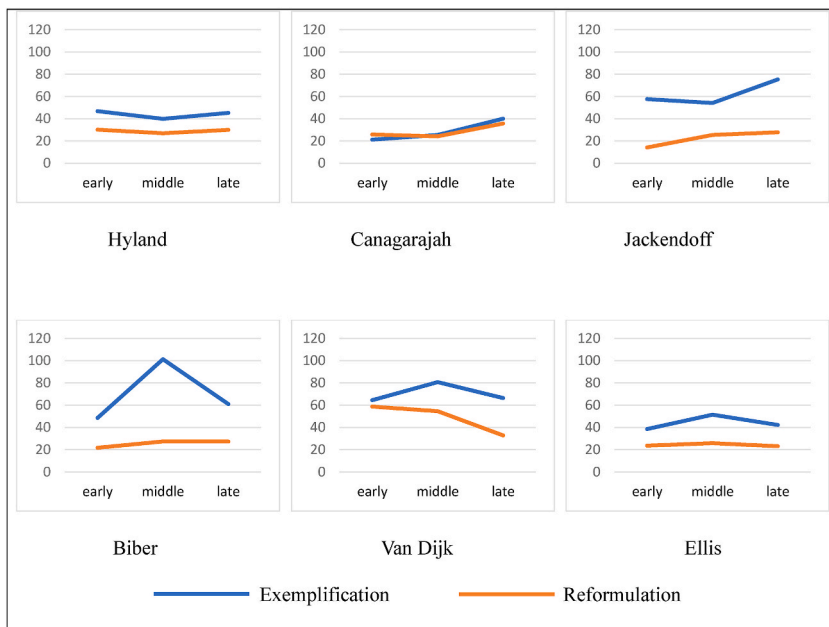


Fig. 1. Patterns of exemplification and reformulation in the three career stages.

which remains relatively infrequent compared to the other markers (3.19 and 1.34 occurrences per 10,000 words, respectively). Additionally, Jackendoff uses *like* in the second position, which scores the highest frequency in the entire corpus (11.52 occurrences per 10,000 words), while Canagarajah places *example of* before *like* in the third position. Examining the less frequent markers reveals interesting patterns, as some markers are favoured by specific authors while being absent or infrequently used by others. For instance, Biber frequently uses *illustrate*, which ranks fourth among his choices, while the markers *as in* and *say* are more prevalent in Jackendoff's texts but rarely used or absent in the texts of other authors. These variations hint towards some personalised choices made by each of the authors.

To understand whether such frequencies are unique to those leading authors or whether they represent a general trend in academic writing, we can compare the frequencies to those found in other studies. Comparing the present findings to those of 'expert' writers who represent peers in the field of linguistics, we can notice that the leading linguists have used e.g. almost twice more than those found in Su et al. (2021) and Guziurová (2022) and 45% more than those reported in Su et al. (2022). The use of *such as* is also much more frequent in the present corpus as it is about 80% more frequent than the results reported in Su et al. (2021) and about 68% more than those in Su et al. (2022). Likewise, the over-reliance on e.g. and *such as* resonates in Su et al. (2021) on the evolution of exemplification use in applied linguistics in two time periods. The authors found that e.g. increased considerably, *for example* decreased and *such as* increased with statistical significance for the variation in the two time periods.

Despite having a very similar meaning to *for example*, *for instance*'s use remains rather limited with one exception marking Jackendoff's texts. Strangely, this author uses *for instance* more than twice his use of the top-ranking marker *e.g.* In several previous studies, *for instance* was found to be far less frequent than *for example* (e.g., Biber et al., 1999; Hyland, 2007; Triki, 2021) and a plausible explanation for this imbalance was given by Rodriguez-Abruneiras, (2017) who suggested that it was "because the noun *example* is also more common than the noun *instance*". Jackendoff, however, seems to use both markers with similar frequencies (6.10 for *example* and 7.61 for *instance*).

Looking at the less frequent markers, *including*, *illustrate* and *say*, results reveal some variation across authors with *including* being favoured by Biber (3.85) and Van Dijk (3.18) where they turn to be more frequent than *as in*. Likewise, the marker *say*, which gives the impression that the example is invented or hypothetical, is completely absent from Ellis and Canagarajah's texts but has relatively

Table 4
Exemplification markers.

Marker	Biber		Canagarajah		Ellis		Hyland		Jackendoff		Van Dijk		Total	
	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed
e.g	285	22.84	21	1.34	173	12.08	94	9.93	57	3.19	316	18.25	946	10.85
such as	79	6.33	164	10.43	110	7.68	76	8.03	238	13.31	274	15.82	941	10.79
for example	182	14.59	46	2.93	152	10.61	64	6.76	109	6.1	69	3.98	622	7.13
example of	50	4.01	71	4.52	78	5.45	60	6.34	171	9.56	189	10.91	619	7.1
Like	67	5.37	67	4.26	7	0.49	31	3.27	206	11.52	170	9.82	548	6.29
as in	24	1.92	30	1.91	60	4.19	22	2.32	119	6.65	50	2.89	305	3.5
for instance	13	1.04	3	0.19	11	0.77	26	2.75	136	7.61	88	5.08	277	3.18
including	48	3.85	39	2.48	28	1.96	16	1.69	33	1.85	55	3.18	219	2.51
illustrate	76	6.09	23	1.46	21	1.47	20	2.11	35	1.96	12	0.69	187	2.14
say	1	0.08	0	0	0	0	5	0.53	29	1.62	17	0.98	52	0.6
Total	825	66.12	464	29.52	640	44.7	414	43.73	1133	63.37	1240	71.6	4716	54.09

higher frequencies in Jackendoff and Van Dijk texts. *Illustrate*, on the other hand, substantially mark Biber's corpus with a frequency almost as high as his use of *such as*.

A closer look at how authors use the markers inside their texts also revealed some interesting observations. For example, Biber and Van Dijk turned out to be the ones who over relied on the use of *e.g.* more than the other authors. Yet, the way they use them indicates some striking differences as illustrated in examples 5–8.

5. *The preposition between most commonly occurs as a noun modifier in written English (e.g., difference between, relationship between, agreement between), in contrast to the preposition through, which more often has an adverbial function (e.g., go through, pass through, come through). (Biber-Late)*

Example 5 illustrates the common syntactic position of the marker *e.g.* and how it is often used inside clauses and phrases to introduce expressive examples structured as NPs, PPs, VPs or clauses. This is based on the idea that there are some forms of syntactic collocations where one would expect to find an NP or a clause after a specific linguistic form.

6. Intersentential relations not only are subject to rules for (existential) truth values and for *modal and temporal coherence* (where, e.g., tense logic will be of importance) ... (Van Dijk-Early)
7. Alternatively, *ideologically based condescension, e.g., with respect to immigrants who do not speak the language well*, may be expressed by various forms of simplified foreigner talk. (Van Dijk-Middle)
8. ... but these too focus on *linguistic analysis, e.g., of word frequencies or syntactic structures of sentences*, without a broader focus on distinctive properties of the genre. (Van Dijk-Late)

In examples 6–8 from Van Dijk, however, it becomes challenging to immediately identify the exact exemplified units. The reader would expect the marker *for example* to fit more in those contexts as it is the one that can have the flexibility which allows it to be inserted inside the exemplifying unit. While *e.g.* and *such as* definitely come inside the sentence, their position is rather rigid as they immediately precede the exemplifying unit, *for example* and *for instance*, however, can precede the exemplifying unit, can immediately follow it or can simply be positioned inside it. Such structures were almost exclusively found in Van Dijk's corpus and across the three stages of his career. Van Dijk uses *e.g.* as an alternative to *for example* rather than an alternative to its closest agnate *such as*. Thus, while for the rest of the authors it is often possible to use *e.g.* or *such as* in the same position, in Van Dijk's texts, the situation is different because *e.g.* and *such as* cannot be interchanged.

The marker *as in* is used to introduce an example that illustrates a context where meaning or argument/claim can be exhibited and realised. It tends to be followed by a number referring to the enumeration formatting of examples inside a paper, which is a common practice in linguistic studies. These are situational, often linguistic, settings where the linguists give an illustrative utterance or structure from texts investigated or from testimonies offered by language users and would refer to them as example + number or simply using the number. In rare cases, those exemplars can be referred to as extracts or samples, with the latter being a preferred option in Biber's texts.² The advantage of this exemplification technique is that it allows the exemplifying unit to be referred to multiple times: once in the adjacent context of exemplification and later in more distant places in the paper where the number itself becomes a substitute for the actual example as in 9 where (16) refers to an illustrative language structure used and explained two pages before.

9. What is interesting is that they allow us to formalize a morphological rule like the *-al* rule as a *piece of linguistic structure containing variables, as in (16)*. (Jackendoff-Late)

In general, the emerging results indicate that authors do have varied preferences for the exemplification markers they insert in their texts. Some of them over rely on one or two specific ones, others have a more balanced use of the markers, and a third group selects from a restricted spectrum of choices.

5.4. Reformulation markers

The top three reformulation markers identified in the corpus (Table 5) are *or*, *i.e.* and *that is*, collectively constituting approximately 65 percent of all instances of reformulation in the findings. Among these, the reformulator *or* is used as a top choice by all authors except Ellis, who places it second after *i.e.* The prevalence of *or* appears particularly prominent in the writings of Van Dijk with a high density of 18.36, and also in the works of Hyland (12.88) and Canagarajah (11.26). Authors exhibit more diversified choices in their second and third most frequent reformulators, both in type and density. For instance, *that is* ranks second in Van Dijk's texts with a density of 10.68, Biber favours *especially*, Hyland leans towards *this means*, while Jackendoff and Ellis show a preference for *that is*. The remaining reformulators maintain limited occurrence, often representing around or less than one instance per ten thousand words. However, some exceptions include *particularly*, ranking third in Hyland's selections (4.75), and *in particular* securing the third spot in

² Despite the fact that *sample* was not included in the list of search items, a close reading of the corpus showed that Biber uses it to mean *example* or *extract* from a corpus and it was very frequent especially in his earlier texts where a simple search resulted in 105 hits compared to his middle career texts (32 hits) and his late career texts (16 hits). None of the other authors use *sample* to mean *example*.

Table 5
Reformulation markers.

Marker	Biber		Canagarajah		Ellis		Hyland		Jackendoff		Van Dijk		Total	
	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed	Raw	Normed
or	96	7.69	177	11.26	34	2.37	122	12.88	109	6.1	318	18.36	856	9.82
i.e	51	4.09	133	8.46	137	9.57	1	0.11	33	1.85	94	5.43	449	5.15
that is	69	5.53	59	3.75	57	3.98	8	0.84	65	3.63	185	10.68	443	5.08
especially	77	6.17	42	2.67	27	1.89	12	1.27	26	1.45	126	7.27	310	3.56
mean	3	0.24	14	0.89	10	0.7	48	5.07	48	2.68	51	2.94	174	2
in other words	3	0.24	20	1.27	34	2.37	23	2.43	42	2.35	44	2.54	166	1.9
in particular	8	0.64	2	0.13	24	1.68	15	1.58	63	3.52	32	1.85	144	1.65
particularly	3	0.24	4	0.25	14	0.98	45	4.75	10	0.56	20	1.15	96	1.1
namely	1	0.08	1	0.06	10	0.7	0	0	23	1.29	19	1.1	54	0.62
Total	311	24.93	452	28.75	347	24.23	274	28.94	419	23.43	889	51.33	2692	30.88

Jackendoff's preferences (3.52).

Comparing the findings with the ones found in previous published studies, we can notice huge differences between the leading linguist's choices compared to other ones in the same field or in other disciplines. The use of *or* in Hyland's (2007) corpus represented only 3.6% of all markers in the applied linguistics section, amounted to 13% of reformulators in the expert writers' corpus in Kafes (2022) whereas it represents around 32% of the findings in the present study. The marker *i.e.*, on the other hand, was found to be the most frequent reformulator in Hyland (2007) corpus (30% of all markers in AL section) followed by *that is* (22.1%) while their use by the leading scholars amounts to less than 17% each. In Kafes's corpus, *i.e.* also ranked first representing 19% of all reformulators in the expert writers' texts but was totally absent in the novice writers' corpus, whereas the reformulator *that is (to say)* was more frequently used by novice writers (23% versus 2% in the expert writers). The frequencies of *i.e.* in this study, however, seem to be skewed by the rather unexpected low density in Hyland's texts where only one instance was found. Being the top cited linguist in 2022, and the one who, presumably, studied elaborative markers more than any other scholar, Hyland stands as an outlier in the pool of linguists, confirming the deviation of some leading experts from the general practices in their fields (Duszak, 1997). Bearing in mind that this particular reformulator ranks as the most frequently used marker in linguistics and in other disciplines (e.g., Barabadi et al., 2021; Hyland, 2007), the findings strongly suggest an association with the author's own stylistic preferences. In addition, the observed variation from one study to the other proves that the specificities of the texts making the corpora in each study also affect the patterns of choice. In other words, there is strong indication that the choice of the marker is favoured by authorial choices and style preferences.

Most reformulation instances are used to clarify terms, concepts and sometimes whole ideas by providing syntactically parallel structures. In other words, the reformulating unit structure tends to be grammatically equivalent to the reformulated unit such that an NP will be reformulated by an NP as in 10, a PP by a PP in 11, a (non)finite clause by an equivalent structure in 12.

10. It becomes necessary to take account of *the abilities that will allow the learner to adjust to changing circumstances, that is, the development of a 'general capacity'*. (Ellis-Late)
11. We need more studies on *the new contexts of communication spawned by globalization—i.e., in the domains of diaspora, outsourcing, and business and production networks*. (Canagarajah-Middle)
12. Next suppose instead *that Group II members are articles, i.e. that every one of the men is represented as (101)*. (Jackendoff-Early)

Semantically speaking, however, the spectrum of variation between the constituents of reformulation acts is much broader and may imply various semantic equivalence patterns binding the reformulated and reformulating units. For example, reformulating units following *or* can provide an alternative synonymous words and expressions recognised as different appellations in other approaches or by different authors as in 13. Additionally, they can enable word meanings to move from the general to the specific (technical) or in the reverse mode as in 14 or can affect the semantic and pragmatic intensity (stronger or weaker) of lexical words (15).

13. Describing this as *metatext or text reflexivity* (Mauranen, 1993) ... (Hyland-Late)
14. As well as a *foundational text or Manifesto* ... (Van Dijk-Late)
15. They simply state relations that *may or must* obtain between various parts of two (or more) independent structures. (Jackendoff-Late)

These equivalent meanings are rooted in the premise that code glosses fundamentally serve interpersonal meanings (Hyland, 2005a; Hyland & Jiang, 2022). Such an understanding suggests that novel terminologies emerge to elucidate obscure and intricate concepts or to direct readers "towards the writer's preferred interpretation" (Hyland, 2007, p. 277). While this might be the case in the texts of the six authors, a closer look at *or* in Van Dijk's corpus indicates that it is used more regularly to alternate and embellish rather than to clarify opaque meanings. Van Dijk's use of *or* often involves synonymous words that have straightforward meanings (illustrated in 16–20) where the reformulating units are very similar to the original ones (Younis et al., 2023, p. 22) and play little or no role in elaborating the meaning.

16. The name of the *Aims or Goals* of a/this movement ... (Van Dijk-Late)
17. The *Opponent or Enemies* of the movement ... (Van Dijk-Late)
18. Violate communicative *rules or principles* ... (Van Dijk-Middle)
19. Including possible *causes or reasons* ... (Van Dijk-Early)
20. In the *context or situation* of international political interaction ... (Van Dijk-Early)

It is also noticeable that in these examples, the syntactic property of the reformulated units seems to constraint the reformulator choices available to writers. Thus, if another reformulator is placed in the position of *or*, the structures become somehow awkward (**the name of the Aims, that is, goals, *the opponents, in other words, the enemies, *including possible causes especially reasons*).

6. Conclusion and final thoughts

This study has explored how exemplification and reformulation are quantitatively and qualitatively used by leading linguists. Data showed that expert scholars have demonstrated conventional (un-marked) and non-conventional or marked frequencies in the use of exemplification and reformulation functions as well as the set of explicit signals they opt for to introduce them. The overall results and their comparison with findings in the literature indicate that they use the two forms much more frequently than other linguists, novice

and expert alike, which makes them stand out compared to their peers. Thus, as apposition is appropriately used to guarantee clarity and rigour in academic writing in general, it reflects more advanced forms of expert writing skills that distinguish the most successful ones. Interestingly, those reputable writers used these discourse functions quite differently from each other, both quantitatively and qualitatively. The choice of markers also revealed some clear variation between the authors who opted for one or more types, reflecting again some stylistic preferences. With such significant variations between them, it would be wise to consider each author separately and consider how far away they deviate from the average score of other 'expert' linguists. The expertise cline, however, seems not to be affected by temporal dimensions as the findings exhibited no linear evolution in the use of exemplification and reformulation from the early published papers to the latest ones. In fact, each single author displayed quite unique choices in early, middle and late career stages and when compared to other expert writings in the field they did not align. While it is hard to generalise such an observation to all academics, it still indicates that the six linguists exhibit varied patterns in their respective careers and may raise questions about the stylistic characteristics of other linguists. Bearing in mind that early career researchers, including PhD students, can and do publish research in highly reputed journals and edited volumes, the long-existing asymmetry between expert writers' discourse versus novice or less expert types of academic writing should be relativised.

Looking into the patterns of variation between the six linguists, I have argued that the less salient personal forms of language choices, such as the ones whereby authors elaborate on discourse via exemplification and reformulation, can reveal profound insights about authorial voice. In other words, the ideational and textual choices made in a text can construct identities (Ivanić & Camps, 2001). Thus, appositive elaborative discourse functions can be considered markers of style in academic writing, at the level of the choice of the marker, the frequency of the appositives, the preferred neighbouring syntactic and semantic co-texts but also the nature of the exemplifying or reformulating units (a feature to be further explored in future research). Academic writing style in this context is to be understood as the set of authorial writing habits, the repetitive syntactic and discursive patterns that they replicate from one text to another. The unique peculiarities in authors' choices, for example, not using *i.e.* in several texts of the same author, despite its high frequencies in other expert and non-expert academic texts, or the abundant use of *or* across different texts by the same author while the use of the same reformulator is significantly lower in comparable texts, point towards idiosyncratic tastes and writing habits that should be considered additional factors to disciplinary conventions as well as other dimensions that can affect textual variations such as the ones considered in Omidian et al. (2021). It becomes, therefore, valuable to go beyond the "situational variables" (Gardner et al., 2019, p. 649) while accounting for novice and or expert writing texts and corpora by acknowledging the personalised stylistic choices or what could be termed individuality syndromes. Although implicitly acknowledged that "research writing practices could be also influenced by internal variables related to certain author characteristics" (Omidian et al., 2021: 2), those individuality syndromes are often restricted to authors' L1 influence without admitting personalised writing habits or authorship fingerprints. Similarly, Gray's (2015) explanation of the variations observed within the same academic discipline was somehow restricted to the impact of the research method variable, leaving out the potential influence of authorial writing styles. Like other lexical and syntactic features that mark authorship style, the recurrence of specific discourse functions (e.g., exemplifying, reformulating, defining, comparing and contrasting, citing and reporting) and their respective lexico-grammatical manifestations can add further insights into authorship style.

The results of this study are not to be understood as 'the more you exemplify and reformulate the more successful your writing will be', neither do they suggest that whenever you choose to include such discourse functions you have to use an explicit marker or a specific one. In fact, procedural meanings tying the units of the discourse function can still be retrieved by the readers (Jiménez, 2022, p. 215). Although clearly admitted by Sword (2012: 99) that "nearly all stylish academic writers ply their readers with well-chosen *examples*, *examples*, and more *examples*" (italics in original), the findings of this study simply point towards the general tendency and the actual practices by some of the most prominent linguists and how their use of these functions significantly differ from other linguists and from novice researchers in the field. More significantly, such observations suggest that there is more disparity than conformity within the single discipline. Accordingly, exemplification and reformulation could be viewed as empowering tools in successful academic writing. The findings also show that some significant variations exist between the same successful linguists as some of them would have personal preferences for specific markers over others and would exemplify or paraphrase in a structural way that would demarcate them from the common trends. The implication of these facts can be fundamental for less experienced or novice researchers and writers specifically if we consider implicit or incidental learning forms of effective elaborative strategies. Through frequent exposure to leading linguists' writings, other researchers can indirectly acquire and replicate their felicitous elaborative techniques, a method valued in Flowerdew (2011: 525) who stresses that "it is essential that learners see what resources they may draw upon to establish the types of meaning – action, propositional content, and identity". Exposing learners to the practices of the most successful academics in their field would represent those adequate and convenient resources that Flowerdew refers to.

This study is obviously limited in scope as it addresses only six authors and focuses on a limited number of mixed genre texts. In addition, further qualitative research focusing on the functional variation between authors and between career periods would certainly complement the findings reported here. Another limitation is imposed by the explicit or transparent nature of metadiscourse units, rendering it hard to capture exemplification and reformulation units that are implicitly integrated or juxtaposed within and across clauses. As such, it would be intriguing to investigate how authors exemplify and reformulate ideas without using explicit markers, and to determine if this affects the patterns observed. Additionally, this could provide further insights into individual style preferences. Another line of investigation would be to study these elaborative features of the same authors in different situational contexts, i.e., different registers and text-types, and see how much variation is related to individual user-related style versus how much is context use-related.

CRediT authorship contribution statement

Nesrine Triki: Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft, Visualization, Validation, Methodology, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization.

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