

# **Metadiscourse in CSR Reports of Mass Media Giants: Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation**

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**Abstract:** The disclosure of information regarding how organisations fulfil their social responsibilities has gained significance and become a common phenomenon during the last few decades. This development necessitates the use of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) reporting as it is recognised as strategic tools for communication with stakeholders. Corporate leaders strategically incorporate metadiscourse resources in CSR reports to establish connections with readers, indicating a link between metadiscourse use and CSR reporting. The study aimed at determining the types and frequency of interactive and interactional metadiscourse resources in Walt Disney's and Comcast Corporation's CSR reports and they key metadiscourse devices and their functions in the reports. A corpus-based approach was adopted in analysing the data. A specialised corpus consisting of CSR reports from Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation with the tokens of 26624 was used as the corpus data. Hyland's Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse was adopted as the analysis parameters. The findings revealed that both companies strategically focused on transitions, particularly 'and' and self-mentions 'our,' 'we,' and company's names. The study concludes that the frequent use of transitions, aids readability and guides comprehension, while the prevalence of self-mentions indicates collective ownership, active involvement in CSR initiatives, and a strong commitment to accountability. The study has implications for ESP and EAP education, as findings can be used to aid in designing and developing effective communication skills in professional settings.

**Keywords:** Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), corporate communication, corpus-based, mass media, metadiscourse.

## **Introduction**

The rise of Corporate Social Responsibility (henceforth CSR) reports is a result of a shift in public perception in terms of the role of business (Garzone, 2012). Organisations are expected to perform good deeds in society (Johansen & Nielsen, 2011). This is premised on the idea that organisations have to fulfil societal responsibilities that go beyond their legal obligations and profit maximisation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Carroll, 1991). The disclosure of information regarding how organisations fulfil such responsibilities has gained significance and become a common phenomenon during the last few decades (Ching, 2020). This development necessitates the use of CSR reporting.

CSR initiatives can typically be divided into four categories, which are environmental, philanthropic, ethical, and economic. The type of CSR initiatives that organisations get involved with

or report on differs from one organisation to another depending on their specified goals and values (Stobierski, 2021).

In the realm of discourse analysis, CSR reports are recognised as strategic tools for communication with stakeholders (Higgins & Coffey, 2016). Corporate leaders strategically incorporate metadiscourse markers in CSR reports to establish connections with readers (Hyland, 1998; Pinying, 2018), indicating a link between metadiscourse use and CSR reporting. Metadiscourse plays a crucial role in understanding language use and its functions in verbal and written communication (Hyland, 2015).

According to Hyland (2017), the importance of metadiscourse is showcased based on the vast volume of research that has been done regarding it over the last few decades. Despite the rising quantity of metadiscourse literature, metadiscourse study has largely concentrated on academic genres, particularly academic writing such as research articles and student writing (Ching, 2020; Hyland, 2017). It has been found that there is a lack of studies done involving metadiscourse in business or corporate settings (Ching, 2020; Hyland, 2017; Nugroho, 2020). Studying metadiscourse in corporate genres, such as CSR reports, is essential as it addresses the critical need to understand how companies construct their narratives and engage with stakeholders. Metadiscourse elements, like transitions and self-mentions, play a vital role in shaping the perception of corporate identity, credibility, and responsibility. By analysing these elements, we can uncover the rhetorical strategies employed by corporations to convey their commitments and values, and the same time the study provides insights into the persuasive techniques used to align the company's message with stakeholder expectations, which is crucial in a world increasingly focused on corporate social responsibility. This analysis can reveal how companies navigate cultural differences in their communication strategies, offering a more understanding of global corporate discourse. Ultimately, studies on metadiscourse contribute to refining best practices in corporate communication, ensuring that messages are not only clear and effective but also ethically and socially responsible.

To address this gap and enhance our understanding of metadiscourse in corporate genres, there is a need for more studies specifically dedicated to exploring this area. Consequently, the current research was undertaken to fill this research gap, aiming to analyse the presence of metadiscourse markers in CSR reports produced by two mass media corporations.

The primary purpose of this study is to offer insights into how metadiscourse markers, specifically interactive and interactional resources, are utilised in CSR reports produced by mass media companies. It seeks to unravel the types and frequency of the interactive and interactional metadiscourse and applications of the metadiscourse within the CSR reports of the two selected companies, namely Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation.

The rationale for choosing CSR reports from these two companies lies in their positions as the top two largest media companies globally, determined by market value, sales, profits, and assets (Freeman, 2022). Comcast Corporation holds the number 1 ranking, while Walt Disney holds the number 2 position for the world's largest media companies in 2022. The outcomes of this research could prove beneficial for other organisations, offering insights into effectively employing metadiscourse markers to align their CSR activities with specific types and goals. The research objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine the types and frequency of interactive and interactional metadiscourse resources in Walt Disney's and Comcast Corporation's CSR reports.
2. To determine the key interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices used and their functions in the Walt Disney's and Comcast Corporation's CSR reports.

## **Literature Review**

Metadiscourse embodies the notion that communication is more than just the exchange of information, goods, or services; it also encompasses the personalities, attitudes, and presuppositions of those who are communicating (Hyland, 2005). According to Vande Kople (1985) metadiscourse is

"discourse about discourse," which describes how an author or speaker uses language to engage with the receivers. Ädel (2006) contends that metadiscourse encompasses both writer-oriented and reader-oriented aspects, involving references to the writer and the imagined reader. Beyond simply guiding the reader and commenting on language use, metadiscourse also addresses the writer's presence, text presentation, and reader guidance (Hyland, 2017).

Halliday (1994) believes that when humans use language, they typically attempt to accomplish three macro functions. They make an effort to communicate their experiences, engage with their audience, and arrange their ideas into coherent discourses. In other words, messages used in communication are integrated expressions of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meanings. The language functions of ideational, interpersonal, and textual can be described using Halliday's Metafunctions of Language Model (1994). The following is the description of the Metafunctions of Language Model:

- The ideational function: the representation of experience and ideas through language. This is similar to the idea of propositional content. It is a model of experience as well as logical relations.
- The interpersonal function: the use of language to code interpersonal interaction, which enables people to communicate with others, assume roles, and express and comprehend feelings and judgments.
- The textual function: creates relevance to context through coherence.

According to Hyland (2005) textual metadiscourse is used to organise propositional information in ways that will be coherent for a certain audience and appropriate for a given situation. Hyland claims that an author for a text anticipates the reader's challenges and needs and makes accommodations by employing specific devices. He adds that interpersonal metadiscourse allows authors to communicate a viewpoint toward their readers and the propositional material they present. It is primarily a type of evaluation and expresses the author's distinctive yet disciplinary-constrained persona.

Hyland proposed an interpersonal model that categorises metadiscourse features into interactive and interactional. The interactive dimension of metadiscourse involves resources that assist in guiding readers through the text by organising discourse, such as transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials, and code glosses. While, the interactional dimension focuses on how writers engage with readers by interjecting and commenting on their message, aiming to involve readers in the text through resources like hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers (Hyland, 2005). Table 1 illustrates an interpersonal model of metadiscourse based on Hyland (2005).

**Table 1.** Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse by Hyland (2005)

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Function</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<b>Interactive</b>	Help to guide reader through the text	Resources
Transitions	Express semantic relation between main clauses	<i>in addition/ but/ thus/ and</i>
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences, or text stages	<i>finally/ to conclude/ my purpose here is</i>
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	<i>noted above/ see Fig./ in section 2/</i>
Evidentials	Refer to source information from other texts	<i>According to X (Y, 1990)/ Z states/</i>

Code glosses	Help readers grasp functions of ideational materials	<i>namely/ e.g./ such as/ in other words</i>
<b>Interactional</b>	Involve the reader in the argument	Resources
Hedges	Withhold writer's full commitment to proposition	<i>might/ perhaps/ possible/ about</i>
Boosters	Emphasis force or writer's certainty in proposition	<i>in fact/ definitely/ it is clear that</i>
Attitude Markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	<i>unfortunately/ I agree/ surprisingly</i>
Engagement Markers	Explicitly refer to or build relationship with reader	<i>Consider/ note that/ you can see that</i>
Self-mention	Explicit reference to author(s)	<i>I/ we/ my/ our</i>

Studies on metadiscourse predominantly focus on academic writings (Hyland, 2017), as evidenced by research conducted by scholars such as Bal-Gezegin (2016) on academic book reviews, Farahani (2019) on academic English texts in BAWE, Zali et al. (2020) on ESL learners' expository essays, Erarslan (2021) on research-based essays, and Nugrahani and Bram (2020) on scientific journal articles. However, there has been relatively little emphasis on exploring metadiscourse within the realm of corporate communication.

Nonetheless, there have been several notable studies involving corporate written communication, among them include a study by Huang and Rose (2018) comparing CEO letters in banking annual reports written in Chinese and Western English, revealing that Western letters utilised a higher frequency of interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers. This suggests a tendency for Western CEOs to employ more credibility and affective appeals, while Chinese CEOs predominantly relied on rational appeals in their communication. Wangari and Maroko's (2023) study on the persuasive use of language in CEO letters of financial service companies listed in the Nairobi Securities Exchange examined the metadiscourse resources to represent the company positively and engage readers. The study reported a significant frequency of self-mentions and transitions was observed, which was attributed to the aim of fostering reader engagement and facilitating comprehension of the text.

Liu and Zhang (2021) conducted a comprehensive examination of metadiscourse usage in enhancing persuasiveness within corporate press releases, analysing metadiscourse patterns in 99 press releases from companies such as Walmart, CVS, and Apple. The study found that interactional metadiscourse devices were used significantly more often than interactive ones in the analysed press releases, and it concluded that the selection of these devices contributed to enhancing persuasiveness. Ching (2020) conducted a study on metadiscourse and rhetorical moves in ESG (environmental, social, and governance) reports of listed companies in Hong Kong. The study emphasised that ESG reports in that region are regarded as CSR reports. The study found that interactional metadiscourse is more common in the Chairpersons' Statements, while interactive metadiscourse is more prevalent in the main section. Moreover, metadiscourse items from all nine subcategories were present in both sections, demonstrating their versatile use in chairpersons' statements and main sections to establish persuasion through logos, ethos, and pathos. In addition, Aziz and Baharum (2020) conducted a study on metadiscourse in Bank Negara Malaysia Governor's speeches. Using Hyland's Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (2005), the study revealed a prevalence of interactional metadiscourse resources, such as engagement markers, self-mention, hedges, boosters, and attitude markers, suggesting that the governor's speech texts serve an interpersonal function in establishing speaker-audience engagement, alignment of views, and conveying attitudes.

In general, these studies highlight the importance of metadiscourse in corporate communication, showcasing distinct patterns in rhetorical strategies across cultural backgrounds and emphasising its role in shaping corporate discourse and engaging audiences. Metadiscourse serves as a key tool for conveying attitudes, aligning views, and fostering reader engagement in various corporate contexts. Despite these studies, there remains a gap in applying metadiscourse analysis to corporate settings, particularly within the realm of CSR reports from media companies. Given the limited exploration in corporate settings, our proposed study aims to address this gap.

In addition, understanding the functions of CSR reports is paramount in contextualising the metadiscourse analysis that the study intends to conduct. Wu and Pupovac (2019) contend that a CSR report serves as a platform for organisations to demonstrate a commitment beyond financial performance. Pinying (2018) defines a CSR report as a document showcasing non-financial data covering business, environmental, community, marketplace, and workplace aspects. Ching (2020) adds that, beyond factual descriptions, organisations may use CSR reports for self-promotion, benefitting key stakeholders. CSR reports generally fall into four types: environmental, philanthropic, ethical, and economic responsibility (Stobierski, 2021).

An environmental CSR report highlights how firms manage environmental responsibility, emphasising sustainable business practices and environmental stewardship. Companies may engage in activities like tree planting, funding research, and donating to environmentally aligned organisations (Stobierski, 2021).

Philanthropic CSR reports detail organisations' charitable efforts, reflecting a commitment to bettering society. Stobierski (2021) notes that charitable donations often form a part of a company's philanthropic duty, with some companies establishing their charitable trusts or organisations.

Human rights CSR reports, synonymous with ethical CSR reports, outline how businesses embrace ethical responsibility in their operations. This involves fair and ethical business dealings with stakeholders, employees, suppliers, and customers. Companies may adopt ethical practices such as paying higher wages and sourcing goods through free trade principles (Stobierski, 2021).

The economic CSR report showcases an organisation's commitment to using its resources for positive impacts across various sectors. Stobierski (2021) emphasises that the primary goal is to demonstrate businesses' efforts to benefit the environment, people, and society while maximising profits.

Numerous micro-level studies have invested in identifying linguistic patterns in CSR and annual reports, exploring themes such as discourse connectives (Camiciottoli, 2010), metaphor (Ho & Cheng, 2016), sentiment analysis (Shi & Li, 2011; Twedt & Rees, 2012; Kim et al., 2018), strategies (Ocler, 2009) and readability (Laksmana et al., 2012; Lahtinen & Shipe, 2017). Ocler (2009) demonstrated that discourse analysis, specifically using a narrative approach, is a valid method for studying CSR communication, revealing insights into how firms construct corporate discourse to design CSR strategies. Camiciottoli (2010) investigated the use of discourse connectives in financial reports, revealing that phrases like 'although' and 'in addition' served diverse purposes, often emphasising positive aspects and downplaying negatives.

As most prior studies on CSR reports focused on micro-level analyses of specific themes, our proposed research aims to address this gap by adopting a corpus-based approach. The study conducted a comprehensive corpus analysis to explore interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers in CSR reports from Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation, thus unveiling the frequency and pattern of use of the metadiscourse resources and how they are strategically employed in the reports.

## **Methodology**

This study adopts a corpus-based approach in analysing the metadiscourse resources in the CSR reports of Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation, as this methodology enables both quantitative and qualitative analysis. By utilising a corpus-based approach, the research can quantitatively examine the frequency and percentages of metadiscourse markers in the texts. It also allows for qualitative analysis

through concordance analysis, providing deeper insights into how these metadiscourse markers are employed within the reports.

### *Corpus Data*

The corpus data obtained for the study is a compilation of CSR reports from Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation. The researchers were only able to obtain 1 CSR report from each company that were both published in 2019. CSR reports from other years were unavailable on the company's public domains. The samples were deemed sufficient for the study due to the difficulties of obtaining access to online CSR reports from large corporations like Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation. The reports were retrieved from the company's websites at the following address:

Walt Disney: <https://thewaltdisneycompany.com/disney-publishes-its-2019-corporate-responsibility-report/>  
Comcast Corporation: <https://corporate.comcast.com/values/report/2019>

The reports were available in PDF format, which were downloaded and converted to txt. files. Next, they underwent a cleaning process that included removing unwanted characters, special symbols, or non-standardised abbreviations to ensure the corpus consists of clean and readable texts to facilitate an accurate analysis. In addition, the contents of the CSR reports were also inspected for any misspelling or grammatical errors. Table 2 below summarises the word tokens of the corpus data:

**Table 2.** Composition of CSR Report Corpus

<b>CSR Report</b>	<b>Tokens</b>
Walt Disney	14016
Comcast Corporation	12608
Total	26624

In terms of size, with the tokens of only 26,662 the corpus is considered quite small. However, Biber et al. (1998) suggest that counts of any linguistic feature would be stable across 1000-word samples from a text. Considering that metadiscourse resources such as transitions (e.g. *and*, *or*), self-mentions (e.g. *we*, *our*) are abundant in the CSR texts chosen, as evidenced by the findings (refer to Table 3 and Table 4), this ensures that the analysis of the resources is reliable and meaningful despite the smaller corpus size.

### *Computational Tool*

Antconc 3.5.9 (Anthony, 2021) a free software corpus analysis toolkit for concordance and text analysis was used to analyse the corpus data. The software was chosen for its status as one of the leading corpus data analysis software. It has undergone several improvements over the years with various improvements and upgrades in terms of the functionality of the toolkit (Anthony, 2021). For this study, the Word List and Concordance tools were utilised to analyse the metadiscourse devices within the corpus.

### *Analytical Parameters*

Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse by Hyland (2005) was adopted to analyse the metadiscourse devices in the corpus data (refer to Table 2).

## Data Analysis

Using the Word List Tool, the CSR reports released by Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation were analysed according to Hyland's Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (2005) (refer to Figure 1). The unit of analysis comprises single words (i.e. he, she, so, etc.) and phrases (i.e. according to, in other words, etc.).

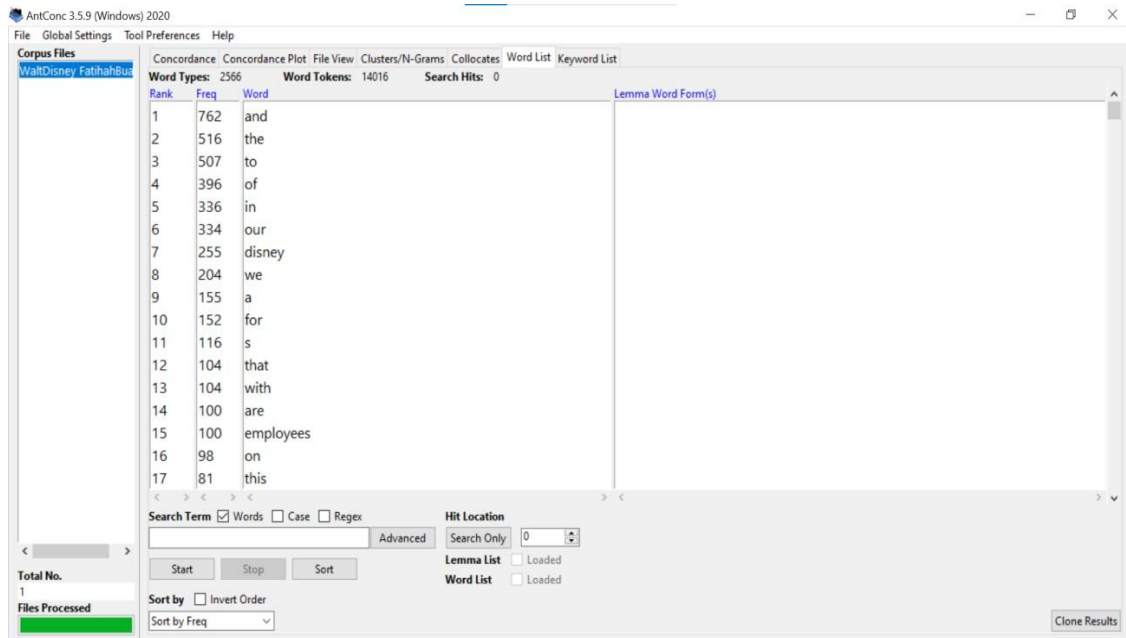


Fig. 1. Wordlist Generated from Walt Disney CSR Report

The list of devices derived from the Word List Tool then underwent a concordance analysis to determine if they functioned as metadiscourse devices as outlined by Hyland's Model as exemplified by Figure 2. In ascertaining further if the devices functions as metadiscourse, the device was then analysed in context using File View tool as exemplified by Figure 3.

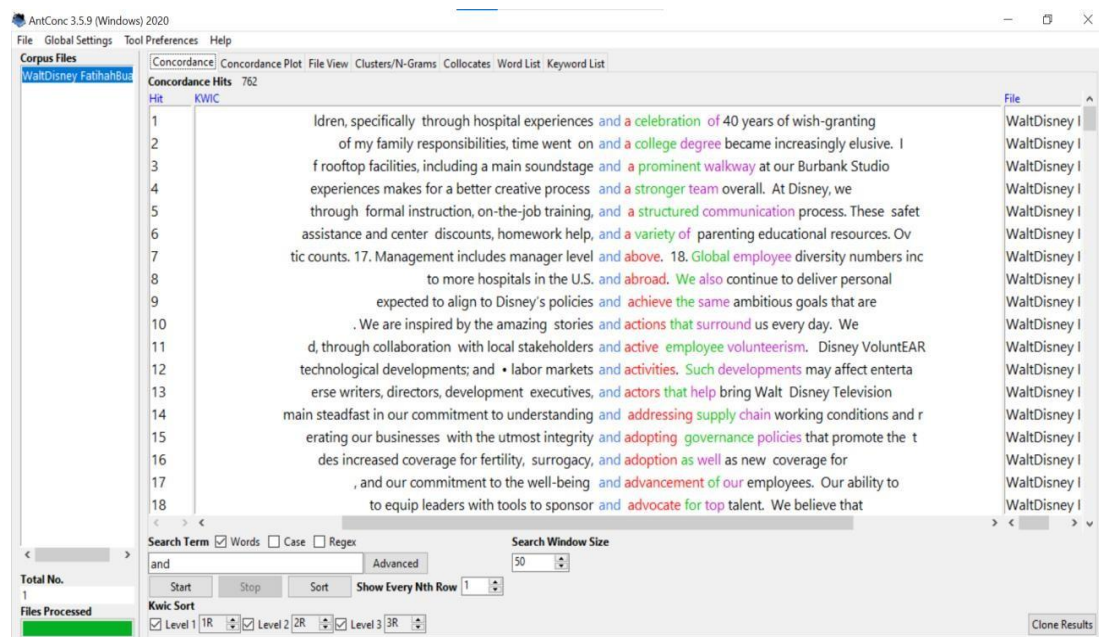
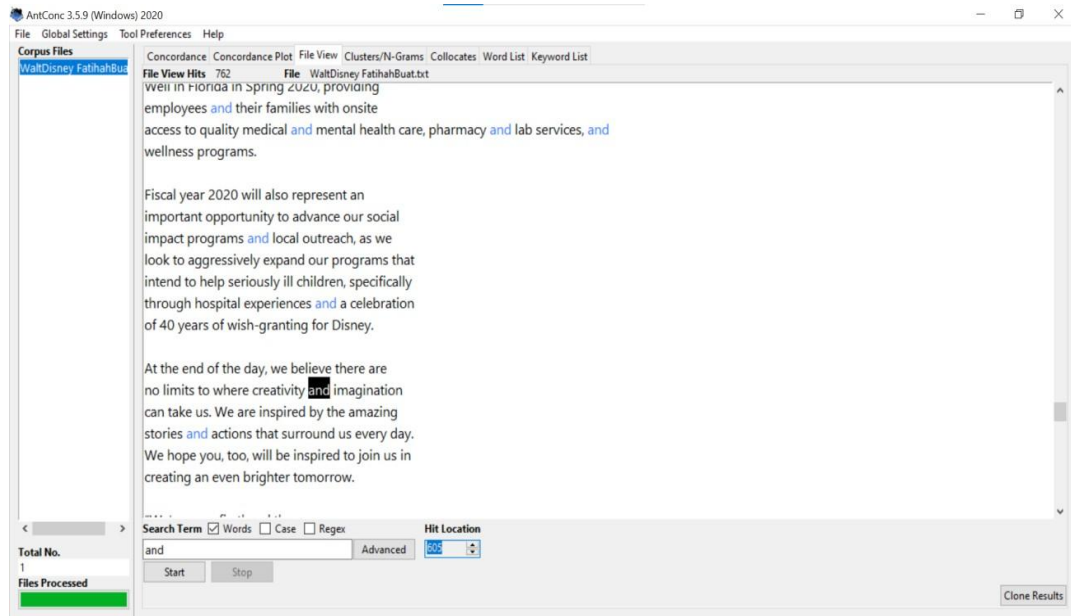


Fig. 2. The Concordances of *and* in Walt Disney CSR Report



**Fig. 3.** The File View of *and* in Walt Disney CSR Report

Next, the outputs of the wordlist were saved in google sheets for further analysis. Frequency counts and percentages were then generated on the google sheet platform for the devices in obtaining the overall occurrence of the metadiscourse sub-categories. A focus analysis was also conducted on the most prominent devices under each metadiscourse dimension by conducting concordance analysis of the devices. This analysis uncovered how the devices are used and what functions they perform in the CSR reports.

## Findings and Discussion

This section presents and discusses the findings that are sequenced according to the established research questions.

*ROI: Types and frequency of the interactive and interactional metadiscourse resources*

### Walt Disney

**Table 3.** Types and frequency of interactive and interactional metadiscourse used in Walt Disney's CSR report

Resource	Walt Disney	
	Token	Percentage
<b>Interactive</b>	<b>1071</b>	<b>51.37</b>
Transitions	810	38.85
Frame Markers	22	1.06
Endophoric Markers	67	3.21
Evidentials	122	5.85
Code Glosses	50	2.4
<b>Interactional</b>	<b>1014</b>	<b>48.63</b>
Hedges	62	2.97
Boosters	41	1.97
Attitude markers	20	20



Engagement Markers	92	4.41
Self mentions	799	38.32
<b>Total</b>	<b>2085</b>	<b>100</b>

As shown in Table 3 interactive metadiscourse markers account for approximately 51.37% (n=1071) of tokens in Walt Disney's CSR report. Transitions represent the highest percentage (38.85%) followed by evidentials (5.85%), endophoric markers (3.21%), code glosses (2.40%) and frame markers (1.06%). Interactional metadiscourse markers recorded a total of 1014 occurrences, constituting 48.63% of the total. Among these self-mentions (38.32%) are the most prominent, followed by engagement markers (4.41%), hedges (2.97%), boosters (1.97%) and attitude markers (0.96%).

The results suggest that Walt Disney prioritises the benefit achievable through the optimisation of interactive metadiscourse markers. Nugrani and Bram (2020) and Aziz et al. (2023) observed in their analysis that writers tend to enhance the readability of their texts by employing interactive metadiscourse. The pattern is evident in the Walt Disney CSR write-up. Interactive metadiscourse markers, including transitions, evidentials, endophoric markers, code glosses, and frame markers, are commonly used to guide readers and facilitate comprehension. Table 3 illustrates that all these interactive markers were employed in the Walt Disney CSR report, with transitions being the most frequently utilised resource.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that interactional devices in particular self-mentions are also prominently used in Walt Disney CSR write-up. They may be used to indicate collective ownership and involvement in CSR initiatives and reinforce their brand identity.

### Comcast Corporation

**Table 4.** Types and frequency of interactive and interactional metadiscourse used in Comcast Corporation CSR report

Resource	Comcast Corporation	
	Token	Percentage
<b>Interactive</b>	<b>804</b>	<b>49.60</b>
Transitions	597	36.83
Frame Markers	22	1.36
Endophoric Markers	47	2.90
Evidentials	121	7.46
Code Glosses	17	1.05
<b>Interactional</b>	<b>817</b>	<b>50.40</b>
Hedges	136	8.39
Boosters	61	3.76
Attitude markers	20	1.23
Engagement Markers	90	5.55
Self mentions	510	31.46
<b>Total</b>	<b>1621</b>	<b>100</b>

As presented in Table 4, the overall percentage of interactional metadiscourse the Comcast Corporation's CSR is slightly higher than the interactive metadiscourse, with a total percentage of 50.40% (817 tokens) used throughout the report. Out of all the interactional resources, the most prominent is self-mentions (31.46%), followed by hedges (8.39%), engagement markers (5.55%), boosters (3.76%), and the least is attitude markers (1.23%). Meanwhile, the total percentage of interactive metadiscourse used in Comcast Corporation's CSR report is slightly lower at 49.60% (804 tokens). Transitions are found to be the most prominent interactive resource used with the highest percentage (36.83%), followed by evidentials (7.46%), endophoric markers (2.90%), frame markers (1.36%), and the least used interactive resource is code glosses (1.05%).

The findings show that interactional metadiscourse is slightly more prevalent than interactive metadiscourse in the Comcast Corporation's CSR report. The prominent use of self-mentions indicates a focus on referring to the corporation as a mean to indicate commitment to the CSR initiatives. Similar results were also obtained by Wangari and Maroko (2023) and Liu and Zhang (2021) who found that self-mentions to be very prominent in CEO letters and press releases they examined. According to Ho (2016), self-mentions are often used as a mechanism to establish authority, while Liu and Zhang (2021) stressed that self-mentions are used by writers to project accountability. In this study, self-mentions also appear to be used as a strategy to strengthen the company's brand identity.

*RO2: Key interactive and interactional metadiscourse devices and their functions*

This subsection presents and discusses the findings of the focus analysis on the key resources used in both Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation's CSR reports. As presented in Table 3 and 4 both companies demonstrated a predominant use of transitions and self-mentions. Thus, the focus analysis involves analysing the concordances of the most frequently occurring transitions and self-mentions to discern the patterns of use in the CSR reports. *Transition*

Among the many transitions used, 'and' was the most prevalent. Table 5 displays the tokens and percentage of occurrences for 'and' in both Comcast Corporation and Walt Disney's CSR reports, which was used 91.4% and 94.1%, respectively.

**Table 5.** The occurrences of the transition 'and'

	Comcast Corporation		Walt Disney	
	Token	Percentage	Token	Percentage
and	496	91.4	762	94.1

The transition 'and' used in CSR reports falls under the subcategory of addition (Hyland, 2005; Martin & Rose, 2003) and as sentence coordinator to help facilitate readers' comprehension of the pragmatic connections between ideas (Hyland, 1998).

Extracts 1 and 2 below illustrate the use of 'and' to indicate additions, whereas Extracts 3 and 4 demonstrate its function as a sentence connector.

Extract 1:

*Marc Morial, President **and** CEO of the National Urban League, **and** Janet Murguía, President **and** CEO of UnidosUS, advise Comcast NBCUniversal on efforts to expand access to technology and training, particularly within communities of color. CC*

Extract 2:

*Teams from every line of business across the company came together to deliver solutions that are simple for hospitals to implement, sustain, **and** scale. WD*

Extract 3:

*We are committed to having the best thinkers, dreamers, and doers on our team. That means attracting, developing, **and** retaining brilliant minds from all backgrounds and giving them paths to grow and reinvent their careers. CC*

Extract 4:

*Our commitment to environmental stewardship focuses on using resources wisely **and** protecting the planet as we operate and grow our business. WD*

Huang and Rose (2018) found similar results in their analysis of CEO letters in banking annual reports. Aziz et al. (2023) reiterated in their study that logical connectives such as ‘and’ are used predominantly in risk management reports aligning with the functions outlined by Hyland (1998) that is to coordinate sentence elements and facilitate readers’ comprehension of the pragmatic connections between ideas.

#### *Self-mentions*

Further analysis of the self-mentions devices reveal that ‘our,’ ‘we,’ and company’s name i.e. ‘comcast/disney’ were most frequently used in the CSR reports. According to Hyland (2001, 2005), self-mentions involve the utilisation of first-person pronouns (e.g., I, we) and possessive adjectives (e.g., my, mine, our) by a writer to directly engage readers, thereby establishing alignment with readers’ perspectives and conveying confidence and interpersonal assurance of conviction. Table 6 below summarises the key self-mentions used in the CSR reports.

**Table 6.** The occurrences of self-mention ‘our,’ ‘we,’ and ‘comcast/disney’

	Comcast Corporation		Walt Disney	
	Token	Percentage	Token	Percentage
our	230	45.1	319	39.9
we	146	28.6	202	31.9
comcast/disney	124	24.3	255	25.3

As presented in Table 6, ‘our’ was predominantly used in both reports; 45.1% in Comcast Corporation and 39.9% in Walt Disney, followed by inclusive ‘we’; 28.6% (Comcast), 31.9% (Disney) and the company’s name; 24.3% (Comcast), 25.3% (Disney). This finding aligns with Liu and Zhang (2021) that reported prevalent use of self-mentions in the press releases they analysed. Past studies indicate the use of self-mentions such as ‘I’ and ‘we’ as means to establish authority and accountability (Ho, 2016) and credibility (Liu & Zhang, 2021).

#### *Our*

The possessive pronoun ‘our’ is frequently employed in the companies’ CSR reports to stress the companies’ efforts in inclusivity, incorporating employees, society, minorities, environment and the less fortunate as integral components of the company. The pronoun is often used to modify terms such as ‘team,’ ‘employees,’ ‘workforce,’ ‘aspiration,’ ‘contribution,’ ‘impact’, and ‘commitment’ as shown in Extracts 5 and 6 below, indicating the company’s collective ownership and involvement in various CSR initiatives. Its consistent use throughout the reports emphasises a shared responsibility and commitment toward achieving CSR objectives.

Extract 5:

*We are committed to having the best thinkers, dreamers, and doers on **our** team. That means attracting, developing, and retaining brilliant minds from all backgrounds and giving them paths to grow and reinvent their careers. **Our** aspirational goal is to have 50% women and 33% people of color at every level of **our** workforce. CC*

Extract 6:

*To this end, **our** measures of success include **our** impact on the environment and efforts to protect **our** planet, how we operate **our** businesses, **our** contributions to local communities*

*and other worthy causes, the value we place on diversity and inclusion, and **our** commitment to the well-being and advancement of **our** employees.* WD

We

Hyland (2005) categorised the first-person plural form 'we' into inclusive and exclusive usages, considering it as either reader-inclusive or reader-exclusive (Hyland, 2005). In our research, however, the term 'we' is exclusively classified within the self-mention category similar to that reported in Liu and Zhang (2021), whereby 'we' was used to refer to the corporate entity and represented the institutionalised voice (Jacobs, 1998 as cited in Liu & Zhang, 2021).

Extracts 7 to 10 below show that 'we' was used as the agent of the clause, putting the companies as the sole agent of action thereby establishing an identity as an accountable and reliable entity similar to that suggested by Liu and Zhang (2021). It was also observed that 'we' would be followed by verbs that convey commitment and responsibility such as 'committed', 'dedicated', 'achieved' to convey the company's dedication to CSR initiatives. This practice contributes to the creation of a resolute, confident, and optimistic company image, similar to findings outlined in Hyland (1998) and Liu and Zhang (2021). It was also observed that 'we' co-occur with strong adjectives like 'rich', 'better', 'positive', and 'tremendous', suggesting the intentional effort by the companies to highlight their achievements and strengths, contributing to a favourable portrayal of its endeavours in CSR initiatives and outcomes.

Extract 7:

***We** are committed to having the best thinkers, dreamers, and doers on our team.* CC

Extract 8:

***We** also dedicate significant resources and intellectual capital to lead and partner on collaborative initiatives intended to address global labor conditions and expectations of the business community.* WD

Extract 9:

***We** have a rich tradition of giving back and ensuring our employees have the opportunity to serve their communities. And through our products, technology, and entertainment experiences, and especially through our employees, **we** continually seek new and better ways to make a positive difference and do what's right for our customers, our viewers, and our world.* CC

Extract 10:

*In 2019, **we** diverted 57% of operational waste. In fact, **we** sent less waste to landfills in 2019 than **we** did in 2014, despite the tremendous growth in our operations over that same time period. **We** achieved these results through a series of waste management initiatives that aim to reduce, reuse, recycle, and compost materials; utilize non-thermal and thermal waste-to-energy programs; and focus on behavior change initiatives with our guests and employees.* WD

## Comcast/Disney

It is also interesting to highlight the consistent use of company's names as self-mentions. The use indicates strategies aimed at enhancing brand recognition and reinforcing the companies' identities. This strategy is seen in Extract 11, whereby it highlights that Comcast Corporation, as a company, has played a pivotal role in addressing the digital divide by offering affordable internet access to over 8 million individuals through its Internet Essentials program since 2011 through its \$650 million

investment. Similarly, Extract 12 illustrates Disney's commitment to fulfilling the wishes of critically ill children, a tradition that spans 40 years, thereby solidifying its corporate identity and values through its brand, Disney.

Extract 11:

*Since the launch of Internet Essentials in 2011, **Comcast** has connected more than 8 million individuals to low-cost, high-speed internet and to a wealth of knowledge and opportunity. **Comcast** has invested \$650 million in support of initiatives designed to raise awareness about the importance of the internet and boost digital skills, reaching 9.5 million people, and has provided 100,000 computers at a highly subsidized price. CC*

Extract 12:

***Disney** also has a long legacy of granting wishes for children with critical illnesses. In fact, **Disney** granted Make-A-Wish's very first wish 40 years ago, which was a wish to go to Disneyland. Since then, **we**'ve grown to grant more than 11,000 wishes per year with multiple wish granting organizations around the world. WD*

The analysis of self-mentions in CSR reports of both Comcast Corporation and Walt Disney reveals the prevalent use of possessive pronouns like 'our,' 'we,' and company's names. The frequent use of 'our' indicates a collective ownership and involvement of the companies in various CSR initiatives, highlighting a shared responsibility towards achieving CSR objectives aimed at benefiting employees, society, minorities, the environment, and the less fortunate. Comcast Corporation and Walt Disney are conscious of the impact that they have on various aspects, specifically ones that relate to society, economic, social, and environmental (Fernando, 2023). 'We' is exclusively categorised within the self-mention category, representing the corporate entity's institutionalised voice and emphasising the companies' commitment and accountability towards CSR initiatives. The deliberate use of strong adjectives with 'we' suggests an intentional effort to highlight achievements and strengths, contributing to a favourable portrayal of CSR endeavours and outcomes. Additionally, the consistent use of company names as self-mentions reflects strategies aimed at enhancing brand recognition and reinforcing corporate identities.

## Conclusion

The analyses of both Walt Disney's and Comcast Corporation's CSR reports highlight a strategic focus on interactive metadiscourse markers, particularly transitions and interactional metadiscourse markers, specifically self-mention. The transition 'and' is extensively used in both reports, predominantly to indicate additions and serve as a sentence connector. The analysis of self-mentions in the CSR reports of both companies reveals a prevalent use of possessive pronouns like 'our,' 'we,' and company's names, indicating collective ownership and involvement in CSR initiatives, indicating commitment and accountability. The deliberate use of strong adjectives with 'we' highlights achievements, contributing to a favourable portrayal of CSR endeavours, while consistent use of company names reflects strategies aimed at enhancing brand recognition and reinforcing corporate identities.

The findings of the study have implications for teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). They highlight the importance of exposing learners to specialised language used in corporate social responsibility contexts. By studying the language features and communication strategies employed in the CSR reports, learners can develop the language skills necessary for effective communication in professional settings. Instructors can use the information to design and develop teaching materials for professional writing skills in ESP/EAP with an emphasis on the proficient use of metadiscourse in corporate communication.

Overall, the study has shed some lights on the communication practices of media corporations, particularly regarding the use of metadiscourse in their CSR reports. However, the findings may have

limitations due to the relatively small size of the corpus. Thus, the findings from the study could not be generalised to all media communication contexts.

### Suggestion for Future Research

The research acknowledges the limited scope of its corpus that comprises only one CSR report from each of two companies (Walt Disney and Comcast Corporation), which may restrict the depth of the findings. Future studies are encouraged to use larger and more diverse corpora to yield more comprehensive results.

Future studies can also expand the scope by comparing CSR reports across different countries, providing valuable insights into cross-cultural variations in metadiscourse usage and corporate communication practices.

### Co-Author Contribution

The authors confirmed that there is no conflict of interest in this article. Author 1 carried out the prepared the literature review, performed the corpus analysis and interpret the results, while Author 2 wrote the introduction, research methodology, and conclusion.

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