Metadiscourse in the cyberspace: Effects of hedges and frame markers on people's responses to masspersonal advice

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In everyday interactions, people often seek masspersonal advice from others on issues about personal relationships, self-development, or career development. How to convey clear, empathetic, and effective advice is a question receiving increasing attention in research on online communication. Researchers have shown that using politeness and facework in advice can shape recipients' responses to the advice message (Feng & MacGeorge, 2010; MacGeorge et al., 2016). Drawing on theories of politeness (Brown & Levinson, 1987), previous studies have mostly focused on examining the effects of politeness markers such as hedges (e.g., *probably*, *likely maybe*). Theories of interpersonal metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005, 2017) suggest that apart from linguistic politeness, communicators also regulate their message style by employing many other linguistic markers such as attitude markers (e.g., *fortunately*, *I agree*) and frame markers (e.g., *first*, *second*, *my point is*). These devices, however, have not been fully explored in the advice-giving context. To address this gap, I design a 2 (hedges: present vs. absent) * 2 (frame markers: present vs. absent) * 2 (scenario: pay raise, passion for work) between-subject factorial design to experimentally test the effects of hedges and frame markers on people's evaluations of the advice message which include clarity, politeness, quality, and implementation intention. Data are currently being collected from the online study panel Prolific and the analysis is expected to be finished by the end of February. This study seeks to contribute to the research community in two ways. First, it extends the message style construct in advice research by examining metadiscourse markers such as frame markers and their interactions with politeness markers (i.e., hedges). Second, in line with the recent corpus studies of metadiscourse (Al-Subhi, 2022; Yang, 2021), the present work responds to the call for more studies on metadiscourse in everyday social interactions (Hyland, 2017; Hyland et al., 2022) by offering an experimental account on the effects of metadiscourse markers.

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