

## THE USE OF BOOSTERS IN PERSUASIVE ACADEMIC WRITING

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In terms of pragmatics, propositional meaning can be conveyed with different degrees of strength, ranging from very weak, tentative statements to very strong and assertive ones. Linguistic items that can be used in writing to show strong conviction for a statement can be termed certainty markers, or boosters. According to Hyland, boosters are interactional metadiscourse markers of certainty, which allow projecting a “credible image of authority, decisiveness, and conviction in one’s views” [2: 221]. Among boosters we can distinguish such verbs as *show*, *demonstrate* and *find*, which claim that the truth they are discussing is evidential, modals *will* and *must* that are used to signal accepted truth, and a number of epistemic adjectives (e.g. *clear*, *considerable*, *definite*), adverbs and phrases (e.g. *of course*, *indeed*, *obviously*, *no doubt*, *the fact that*), which all imply that the readers do not need further explanation as they are already members of the relevant discourse community [1: 65]. In this manner, boosters create an impression of certainty, conviction and assurance, and as such they can serve as language tools to gain trust and confidence of readers. For that reason, boosters represent an important rhetorical element used by scholars in order to reach their communicative purpose.

The final communicative purpose of academic texts is to convince the readership of the truth-value of the propositions that contain new knowledge resulting from the research data provided by the author. Boosters can help enhance the propositions and make particular statements sound convincing to the audience, thus somehow influencing the interpretation of scientific information. For a long time it has been considered that persuasive rhetorical style is not appropriate in academic discourse. However, in the late 1990s it became apparent that authors of academic papers make use of boosters to show new pieces of information as true and to show their confidence in the truth of a particular proposition [1: 62-63; 2: 223-225]. Since then boosting has remained as an issue studied from cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural and comparative aspects.

For example, a recent study concerned with the occurrence of boosters in research articles of multiple disciplines, namely marketing, mechanical engineering and biology, has revealed that the frequency rate of boosters depends heavily upon the nature of

science. In fact, the number of boosters found in research articles of marketing is shown to be twice as much as in academic papers of two other disciplines under consideration, which proves a commonly known fact that soft sciences tend to make a wider use of interactional metadiscourse markers. However, the almost equal number of boosters in both mechanical engineering and biology research articles does not meet the expectation that in engineering authors do not need to apply any linguistic tools of persuasion in academic discourse as the physical principles and numerical data used for analysis are utterly reliable and evidential. It seems that in practice the new knowledge in the field of hard science is still subject to interpretation and therefore the use of boosters is required to increase the force of propositions [2: 227]. Another study has demonstrated that non-native speakers of English, such as Bulgarian scholars, tend to use a considerable number of boosters in the discussion section of research articles while English native speakers appear more confident in the concluding sections [2: 222; 3:13]. Furthermore, the cross-cultural study investigating the effect of author's nationality on the type of boosters used has arrived at a conclusion that English native speakers use epistemic adverbs and adjectives more often than epistemic verbs and modals. Also, Japanese authors are said to use booster more readily than English native speakers, while Turkish authors, on the contrary, use much fewer boosters [3], which indicates the importance of being aware of intercultural differences in rendering persuasion in academic discourse.

Hence, persuasiveness has become a primary task for authors of research articles, and boosters represent communicative resources to attain persuasion in different fields of both soft and hard science and consequently are essential for the development of advanced language competence of academic English and English for specific purposes.

### ***References***

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