THE METATEXTUAL ROLE OF INTRODUCTIONS TO BA PAPERS

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Abstract: *This article builds on a comparative analysis based on a corpus of literature and linguistics BA papers submitted by students majoring in English and Romanian, at the University of Timişoara. The authors highlight the metatextual function of introductions, focusing on identifying, classifying, and commenting upon deictic and non-deictic linguistic elements through which this function is fulfilled, in an attempt to see how consistently they are used by the student writers and to raise awareness of their use and usefulness.*
Keywords: *deictic linguistic elements, non-deictic linguistic elements, introductions, metatextual function*

1. Introduction

Over the past twenty years, general interest in academic writing has undeniably increased so that research in the area has covered not only more and more diverse topics, but also new geographical (and, consequently, linguistic) territories. Special attention seems to have been devoted to contrasting various aspects of academic genres in L1 and English as L2, the latter having been constantly regarded as the model. Swales and Feak (2012:16) clearly point at this pervasive kind of approach:

> Because of the dominating position of academic English prose and because of the wish of many people to acquire this variety of the language, the great majority of studies to date have compared some other academic languages with English academic prose. These languages include Arabic, Chinese, Finnish, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Malay, Polish, Spanish and Swedish. Simplifying somewhat, the overall conclusions point in one basic direction: academic English, especially US academic English, has several features that place it toward one end of a number of continua.

One can notice that Romanian is not mentioned among the languages enumerated by Swales and Feak (2012). And neither are other Eastern European languages. This might be the consequence of the fact that, to our knowledge, the interest in academic writing in this part of the Old continent has most often taken forms other than comparative research–at university level, courses and seminars addressed mainly to students of foreign languages (especially English) and much less often to students majoring in other domains; at high school level, writing assignments for high school pupils, as part of Romanian or foreign language classes (again, especially English), usually, with no particular emphasis being placed on them and with little support being offered by teachers.

However, this is not to say that the trend Swales and Feak (2012) noticed has not generated insights into academic writing in Eastern Europe at all. Arvay and Tanko (2006) for

example, dealt contrastively with introductions to research articles in English and Hungarian, while Băniceru et al. (2012) compared introductions to BA theses written in English and Romanian. Articles like these paved the way to growing interest in another area–features of introductions to academic papers–that has not been much tackled so far by Eastern European researchers, though, in other parts of the world, it has been food for thought for many.

Among those who have explored them, Swales (1990) may be the most widely quoted. Other contributions in the area belong, for example, to Samraj (2005), Ozturk (2007), Johns (2008), Hirano (2009), Loi (2010), Soler-Monreal (2011) and Sheldon (2011) and focus either on introductions in general or, following the contrastive trend already mentioned, on similarities or/and differences between introductions written in English and those written in other languages (such as Portuguese, Chinese, Spanish, etc.). Authors point at cultural overlapping or variation, either motivated by writing introductions intuitively or by following models other than the prevailing Anglo-Saxon one, as the case may be. No matter whether the analysis is comparative or not, most of these contributions build on mapping the corpus analyzed to the CARS model suggested by Swales (1990).

According to him, "just as plants compete for light and space, so writers of RP [research papers] Introductions compete for acceptance and recognition. In order to obtain this acceptance and recognition, many writers will employ a widely used organizational pattern… This rhetorical pattern has become known as the create-a-research-space (or CARS) model" (Swales 1990:328, 331). Three "moves" are characteristic of this model: Move 1–Establishing a research territory; Move 2–Establishing a niche and Move 3–Occupying a niche.

2. Metatextual Elements in Introductions to BA Papers

2.1. Research Preliminaries

The CARS mode-related aspects aside, little attention has been paid to other features of introductions. To fill this gap, in this article, we set out to add to the previous rather discourse-oriented research, an analysis of the linguistic elements by which introductions fulfil their metatextual (metadiscursive) role of maps to the texts they open, starting from our strong belief that a successfully written introduction ensures a smooth reading and understanding of what follows. Our approach is thus restricted to those linguistic "elements which refer to the text itself, looking inward to those aspects of a discourse which help organize the text as text" (Hyland 2009:125). It does not take into consideration the elements whose metadiscursive function Hyland (2005) identifies as being that of engaging the readers and signalling the writers' attitudes towards their own work and their audience (although it is true that giving indications about the text as text presupposes a certain kind of engagement of the reader even if not at the level of their attitudes and emotions).

The corpus from which these elements have been selected is made up of 15 introductions to BA papers written in English by Romanian students majoring in English language and literature (L2), at the Faculty of Letters, West University of Timişoara (graduation in 2011) and 15 introductions to BA papers written in Romanian by Romanian students majoring in Romanian language and literature (L1), at the same faculty and at the same time.

The aim of our small scale research whose results are presented here is twofold: on the one hand, highlighting the use and usefulness of the linguistic elements we focus on, on the other, answering two questions prompted by our direct experience with supervising BA papers and with our students' frequent complaint that writing introductions is sometimes more difficult than writing the actual body of their graduation papers. These questions are: Do students prove that they are aware of the metatextual role of introductions to BA papers? In

the introductions, do they use linguistic phrases with a metatextual function consistently or not?

The metatextual linguistic elements that we have identified in the corpus analyzed may be grouped in three main categories:

a) elements related to the content/topic/purpose of the text introduced;

b) elements related to the structure of the paper as a whole or the structure of a particular chapter;

c) elements related to the logical relationships between certain parts of the text introduced.

We shall detail upon each of these categories in the following sections (the papers in our corpus have been numbered–the numbers in brackets following quotations represent the numbers the papers have been given in the corpus).

2.2. Elements Related to the Content/Topic/Purpose of the Text Introduced

A pretty frequent metatextual element mentioned in introductions is the title of the whole paper or of a particular chapter. It is introduced either directly or as an apposition, both in English and in Romanian texts.

English	Romanian
I have chosen *Characteristics of phrasal verbs* as the theme of my research… (E1)	Lucrarea mea de licență se intitulează *Literatură şi film. Ecranizări postmoderne.* (R3) (My BA paper is entitled *Literatură şi film. Ecranizări postmoderne.*)
Because this diploma paper is entitled *Verbal Aggression…* (E3)	
Structurally, *Sexual Expression and Repression in Victorian Literature* will be divided in three main chapters. (E8)	Acest punct de rezistenţă este însuşi titlul lucrării: *Daimonul eminescian.* (R7) (This focal point is the very title of the paper: *Daimonul eminescian.*)
In chapter one, entitled *A Brief Insight in the Theory of Narratives…* (E2)	Capitolul se numeşte *Biografii spirituale încrucişate* şi este împărţit în două subcapitole: *Emil Cioran, un eremit melancolic* şi *Octavian Paler – radiografia unui moralist solitar* (R12) (The chapter is entitled *Biografii spirituale încrucişate* and it is devided in two subchapters: *Emil Cioran, un eremit melancolic* and *Octavian Paler – radiografia unui moralist solitar*)
In chapter two – *Reading the Legacies of the Modernist Novel…* (E2)	
The third chapter, *Gender Issues in 'The Hours'* is symmetrically constructed… (E7)	
	Capitolul I, intitulat *India – Occident. Întâlniri (im)posibile...* (R14) (Chapter I, entitled *India – Occident. Întâlniri (im)posibile...*)

Besides the title, as the clearest and most direct way of pointing at the focus of the text, there are also morphological means of fulfilling the function of announcing the content, topic or purpose of the whole paper or of a particular chapter: the use of specific nouns and verbs and of the construction "subject clause+to be+predicative clause". They are illustrated and briefly commented on below.

Nouns such as *aim*, *analysis*, *purpose*, *topic*, in English; *analiză (analysis)*, *explorare (exploration)*, *obiectiv (objective)*, in Romanian are all correlated with strings of text with an explanatory or descriptive content.

English	Romanian
The purpose of my paper is *to take a brief insight in one of the most challenging novels of Virginia Woolf, The Waves.* (E2) *… the actual purpose* of this paper, which is *to present Tolkien's fabled saga in a new and unique light…* (E4) *The aim* of the present *analysis* is *to show how identity is rendered through the use of narrative techniques* (E11) …introduces the reader to *the topic of fantasy perceived as an ultimate form of escapism.* (E15)	…avem fixate câteva *obiective* generale, cum ar fi: *oferirea unei viziuni de ansamblu a termenului daimon, identificarea acestui motiv în literatura română, … alegerea unui text pentru analiză…* (R7) (…we have set several general objectives, such as: offering a general view of the term 'daimon', identifying this motif in Romanian literature… choosing a text for analysis…) Lucrarea de față propune *o analiză a modului în care India este abordată ca poetică a spațiului…* (R14) (The present paper aims at an analysis of the way in which India is approached as a poetics of space…) Acest studiu mi-a permis *explorarea modului în care diferite teme și motive din cadrul romanului sunt preluate și extinse de arta cinematografică …*(R3) (This study allowed for the exploration of the way in which various themes and motifs in the novel are taken over and extended by cinema)

Verbs are much more numerous than nouns in both languages: *to aim at/to, to analyze, to be interested in, to deal with, to depict, to discuss, to do away with, to emphasize, to explore, to focus on, to illustrate, to present, to question, to show, to study, to talk about,* in English; *a aduce în discuție (to discuss), a analiza (to analyze), a conține (to contain), a evidenția (to emphasize), a fi dedicat (to be dedicated), a ilustra (to illustrate), a insista asupra (to insist on), a prezenta (to present), a-și propune (to attempt at), a sintetiza (to synthesize), a trata (to talk about–approx.), a urmări (to deal with–approx.),* in Romanian. With very few exceptions, the English verbs are employed in the active voice, while the majority of the Romanian verbs are used in the passive voice. Thus, writing culture difference manifests itself at this level in that the human performer of the action (the writer of the paper/researcher) is less prominent in Romanian than in English (though, the human agent is left in the background in some cases in English, too, by using non-human subjects with active verbs–see, for example, "This paper *focuses on the notions of expression and repression in terms of sexuality* (7)" or "The paper *studies the escapist properties of fantasy within 'The Lord of the Rings'* (4)". Nevertheless, such examples are rather exceptions than the rule).

English	Romanian
The present analysis *deals with cultural identity and difference in a multicultural society.* (E11) The paper *aims to elucidate the structure and certain characteristics that are present in The Waves.* (E4) In my diploma paper I have *chosen to talk about three representative novels of*	*Jocul de-a trăi viața din text* este o lucrare care *își propune să descopere unele substraturi ale jurnalului intim.* (R6) (*Jocul de-a trăi viața din text* is a paper which attempts at revealing some hidden aspects of the diary.) În primul subcapitol *am evidențiat potențialul cinematografic al romanelor lui John Fowles…* (R3) (In

the Victorian age. (E5) In chapter three I *focus on the Innocent Eye Perspective...* (E3) In this paper, we *will discuss about euphemisms in English.* (E2)	the first subchapter, I have emphasized the movie potential of John Fowel's novels.) Cel de-al treilea subcapitol *este dedicat modului în care romanul Orele este reflectat în ... filmul cu acelaşi nume* (R3) (The third chapter is dedicated to the way in which the novel The Hours is reflected in the movie by the same title.) *.... temele, motivele şi elementele fantastice, dar şi miturile sunt sintetizate* în acelaşi capitol. (R4) (... the themes, motifs and fantastic elements are synthesized in the same chapter.)

The "subject clause+to be+predicative clause" construction was detected only in the texts written in English, mainly because, even if sentences of the type "subject clause+to be+predicative clause" are grammatically acceptable in Romanian, they are rejected due to belonging to a register that is too informal to be appropriate in a research paper.

English	Romanian
What I choose to do is *to analyze two novels with a concern for gender…* (E6) *What this paper does* is *to create a social background of the 19th century, in which it identifies two different poles of literature...* (E8)	_____

2.3. Elements Related to the Structure of the Paper as a Whole or the Structure of a Particular Chapter

The linguistic elements that give indications on how the whole paper or just a particular chapter is structured may be included in two broad categories: deictic elements and non-deictic ones.

2.3.1. Deictic Elements Related to the Structure of the Paper as a Whole or the Structure of a Particular Chapter

The identified deictic elements that fulfil the role of giving details about the structure of the paper or of a certain chapter are: numerals, demonstrative adjectives (and pronouns) and adverbs. Of these, numerals (both ordinal and cardinal) with an attributive value are most often used in both languages, but they are much better represented numerically in the BA papers written in English.

English – ordinal numerals	Romanian – ordinal numerals
The first chapter of the paper, then, introduces the reader to the topic of fantasy… (E4)	*Primul capitol* al lucrării este unul introductiv ... (R12) (The first chapter of the paper is an introductory one…)

In *the second chapter*, I will make a presentation of the theoretical aspects. (E1)	În *cel de-al treilea capitol* se va face trecerea spre romantismul de tip Biedermeier. (R13) (In the third chapter, the transition is made towards the Biedermeier romanticism.)
In the latter half of the second chapter I will take a closer look at Holden… (E12)	
The third chapter focuses on the image of the vampire in movies (E1)	*Ultimul capitol* se numeşte … şi are ca subcapitole… (R12) (The last chapter is called... and its subchapters are...)
In *the 4th chapter* I talk about a Late Victorian novel… (E3)	La începutul *primei părţi*, lucrarea tematizează ambivalenţa comportamentală a românilor ...în faţa ţiganilor...; *Partea a doua* a lucrării urmăreşte prezenţa ţiganului şi imaginea acestuia în literatura română; *Ultima parte* a lucrării ... este destinată operelor... al căror protagonist este personajul-ţigan. (R10) (At the beginning of the first part, the paper deals with the behavioral ambivalency of Romanians against Gipsies... The second part of the paper concentrates on the presence and the image of the Gipsy in Romanian literature... The last part of the paper is dedicated to works whose main character is the Gipsy.)
The fifth chapter includes Toni Morrison's view on the role of African American writings in the American culture. (E11)	
In *the last chapter*,… I will approach the notion of time… (E2)	
English – cardinal numerals	**Romanian – cardinal numerals**
My research paper is structured in *four chapters.* (E1)	Pasul următor este acela de a stabili în câte capitole va fi divizată lucrarea. În cazul nostru, aceasta va fi divizată în *patru secvenţe (capitole)* majore…(R7) (The next step is to establish in how many chapters the paper will be divided. In our case, this will be divided in four major (chapters) sequences.)
My paper is structured in *three chapters*… (E2)	
My paper contains *five chapters*… (E3)	
In *chapter one*, … I will discuss the narrative approaches… (E2)	În ceea ce priveşte structura lucrării, aceasta este compusă din *trei capitole*. (R3) (As far as the structure of the paper is concerned, this is made up of three chapters.)
In *chapter two*… I will present how the novel changed… (E2)	
In *chapter three* I focus on the Innocent Eye Perspective… (E3)	
I have structured my thesis on human nature in *five sections*. (E5)	

Demonstrative adjectives represent an equally frequent choice in the two types of introductions in the corpus under consideration.

English	Romanian
In *this paper*, we will discuss… (2)	*... această lucrare* se vrea a fi un veritabil studiu de sinteză. (8) (... this paper is meant as a synthesis study.)
Upon *this premise*, in *this paper*, I am at…. (2)	
Throughout *this paper*… (5)	Prin *acest studiu* mi-am propus să analizez modalităţile prin care se realizează trecerea de la un tip de artă la

English	Romanian
This paper also comes in complete contrast to other works… (4)	altul. (3) (My intention in this study is to analyze the means by which the passage from one type of art to another takes place.)
I chose to dedicate *this paper* to James Joyce's *Ulysses*… (5)	
Because *this diploma paper* is entitled… (5)	În *acest capitol* m-am concentrat mai ales pe inteligența Ancăi… (1) (In this chapter, I concentrated especially on Anca's intelligence.)
The first chapter of *this research* starts with a minimal definition of the term *dystopia*… (9)	

One instance of a demonstrative pronoun used with the same structure-reference function as the demonstrative adjectives was identified in the introductions written in Romanian: "Al doilea capitol al lucrării se numește… și în cadrul *acestuia* vom aborda…" (12) ("The second chapter of the paper is called … and in this we will look at…"). Though such use of demonstrative pronouns is possible in English as well, it was not resorted to in the papers we analyzed.

The category of adverbs of place, represented by the adverbs *here* and, respectively, *aici*, its equivalent in Romanian, is employed in the same way in both languages.

English	Romanian
Here, focalization is also internalized… We speak *here* about character-bound focalization… (3)	Tot *aici* am realizat o definire a romantismului de tip Biedermeier... (13) (Here, I have also defined the Biedermeier romanticism...)
Here I analyze Tolkien's text in-depth and dwell at length on the setting of Arda… (4)	*De aici* am făcut trecerea spre eșuarea comunicării în comediile lui I.L. Caragiale. (1) (From here, I have moved on to the failure of communication in Caragiale's commedies.)
Here I depict magic as the most important element that separates Tolkien's world from ours and also *here* I render the wizardry of Middle-Earth as a staple … (4)	*Aici* am recurs mai ales la studiul lui Titu Maiorescu ... (1) (Here, I have mainly resorted to Titu Maiorescu's study...)
I will *here* explain how the concepts of id, ego and superego are applied in the novel. (10)	

2.3.2. Non-Deictic Elements Related to the Structure of the Paper as a Whole or the Structure of a Particular Chapter

Both cardinal numerals and demonstrative adjectives, as deictic elements, alternate with non-deictic variants with a similar structure-related function.

In English, *first* and *last* are used interchangeably with the non-deictic adjectives *initial* and *final*, while in Romanian, *primul* (first) finds itself a counterpart in the adjective *introductiv* (introductory) and the non-deictic matching part of *ultimul* (last) is *final* (final).

English	Romanian
The initial part of the first chapter deals with the mythology behind the vampire. (1)	În *capitolul final* … am tratat singurul personaj feminin… (1) (In the final chapter, I have dealt with the only feminine character…)

The final part of this diploma paper is a brief conclusion… (8)	*Capitolul introductiv* este de factură teoretică. (3) (The introductory chapter is a theoretical one.)

Besides the non-deictic adjectives just mentioned, other such linguistic elements that refer to the structure of the text, more exactly, to its progress, are employed in both languages, though unevenly–there is variation between *following* and *next* in English, while in Romanian, *următorul/următoarea* is used invariably (the absence of choice being motivated by the inexistence of synonyms in this case).

English	Romanian
Varieties of the English language are described in *the following section*… (3) *The following subchapter* suggests that characters express more freely their sexuality… (7) *The next* two *chapters* represent entirely my personal contribution to the paper… (8) All of this theoretical background will be used in *the next* two *chapters*, where I will apply it to the novel… (9)	În *următorul subcapitol* am ilustrat trăsăturile specifice literaturii postmoderne (3) (In the following chapter, I have illustrated the peculiarities of postmodern literature.) Vom discuta în *paginile următoare* despre trei perioade nefaste din istorie… (9) (In the following pages, we will discuss three unfortunate periods in history…)

The demonstrative adjectives *this* and, respectively, *acest/această* are paralleled by similar synonymous non-deictic elements in both languages: on the one hand, the possessive adjective *my* in English and its equivalent, *mea*, in Romanian; on the other hand, the adjective *present* in English and its Romanian equivalent, *de față*.

English	Romanian
My work focuses on different critical points of view. In *my* work I tried to discuss Virginia Woolf's methods of writing her unique novels (2) *My* paper is structured in three chapters… (2) *My present* research is going to discuss dystopia… (9)	Lucrarea *mea* de licență se intitulează… (3) (My final paper is entitled…) În lucrarea *de față* se încearcă să se traseze liniile majore ale teoriei demonicului. (8) (In the paper that you can see (approx.), we try to trace the main lines of the theory of the demonic.) În lucrarea *de față* prezentăm momente ale istoriei în care copiii au avut parte de un univers nefast. (9) (In the paper that you can see (approx.), we present the moments in history when children lived in an unfavourable universe.) Astfel, a luat naștere *Hermeneutica fantasticului*, cel de-al doilea capitol al *prezentei* lucrări. (3) (The second chapter of the present paper, *The hermeneutics of the fantastic*, was created in this way.)

The progress/sequencing of the text is also indicated by non-deictic verbs, adverbs/adverbial phrases and prepositional phrases.

Only one verb of the type mentioned was identified in the introductions written in English, while the Romanian texts proved richer from this point of view.

English	Romanian
My paper is structured in three chapters preceded by the introduction and it *ends* with the conclusion and the bibliography. (2)	*Urmează* apoi să fie explicate concepte ca *postcolonialism, decolonizare, literatură postcolonială* …(14) (The explanation of concepts such as postcolonialism, decolonization, postcolonial literature follows.)
	…acest prim capitol are un subcapitol în care voi prezenta viaţa autorului, *urmând* ca mai apoi să fac o prezentare în amănunt a..." (12) (… this first chapter has a subchapter in which I will present the author's life, a more detailed presentation of… following.)
	Continuând analiza noastră axată pe opera lui Eminescu şi Byron, în cel de-al treilea capitol se va face trecerea spre romantismul de tip Biedermeier. (13) (Continuing our analysis of the works of Byron and Eminescu, we will move to the Biedermeier romanticism in the third chapter.)

Like verbs, adverbs and adverbial phrases are used as progress/sequencing related non-deictic elements in both languages, even if they are numerically imbalanced.

English – adverbs	Romanian - adverbs
Secondly, I want to analyze sexuality in the novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (7lit)	Urmează *apoi* să fie explicate concepte ca postcolonialism, decolonizare, literatură postcolonială... (14) (Then, concepts such as postcolonialism, decolonization, post-colonial literature will be explained…)
Firstly I will add the social and cultural context… (9lit)	
Then, the analysis will proceed to look at the psychological and sociological reasons for producing humor (6lit)	
Next, I will follow the impact of gender on Modernism… (7lit)	
Afterwards we will focus on the relationship between gender and Postmodernism… (7lit)	
English – adverbial phrases	**Romanian – adverbial phrases**
Last, but not least, I want to outline the influence of a male writer on a female writer and conversely… (7lit)	*În cele din urmă* se va lua în considerare şi viziunea unor autori britanici (14); (Last…the vision of certain British authors will be considered.)
	În continuare, lucrarea urmăreşte istoria ţiganilor… (10) (In what follows, the

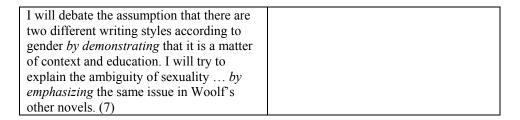| English	Romanian
	paper talks about the history of the Gipsies…)
	Acestea fiind spuse, vom intra în miezul analizei… (7) (This being said, we will get into the heart of the analysis…)

The use of prepositional phrases indicating the progress/sequencing of the text is also imbalanced, however, less so if compared to the use of verbs, adverbs and adverbial phrases with an analogous metatextual function in the corpus analyzed.

English	Romanian
After seeing how the communicative process can make or break the relationship between the interlocutors, I will look at physical and verbal aggression… (3)	*După ce am poziţionat* acest pilon literar va trebui să construim pe el analiza (7); (After we have positioned this literary milestone, we will have to build our analysis on it.)
Throughout the research of the present paper (2)	

2.4. Elements Related to the Logical Relationships between Certain Parts of the Text Introduced

A number of words and phrases are employed both in the introductions written in English and in those written in Romanian (though obviously more often in the former) to clarify the logical relationships between certain parts of the text. As such, they anticipate the succession of ideas and arguments in the body of the text and help the readers to better follow and understand them.

English	Romanian
…. theoretical aspects of phrasal verbs. *In order to point them out,* I will start with an introduction into phrasal verbs… (1)	Concluziile studiului vor devia într-o oarecare măsură de la rostul obişnuit *pentru a lansa premisele* unei noi cercetări… (5) (The conclusions to the study will somehow deviate from their usual purpose in order to make room for the premises of a new research…)
… the transitivity and intransitivity of phrasal verbs and their literal and idiomatic meaning. *To illustrate* all these aspects, I will give examples …. (1)	
It is my belief that…. *In this regard*, the paper does away with the allegorical scrutinies of *The Lord of the Rings* saga found in literary criticism… (4)	Această lucrare îşi propune mai întâi un itinerariu prin istoria ţiganilor, prin prezenţa lor în literatura română, *analizând* opere cunoscute care au personaje ţigăneşti… (10) (This paper aims at tracing a route through the history of the Gipsies, through their presence in Romanian literature, by analyzing well-known works where Gipsy characters are present…)
In the last chapter, I will point out how communication can be established in a dystopian society. *In this sense*, on the one hand, I will focus on presenting how language functions as a propaganda tool… (9)	
Humor also connects '*Portnoy's Complaint*' and '*Zuckerman Bound*', *which is why* humor will be analyzed from the same theoretical perspectives… (6)	

I will debate the assumption that there are two different writing styles according to gender *by demonstrating* that it is a matter of context and education. I will try to explain the ambiguity of sexuality … *by emphasizing* the same issue in Woolf's other novels. (7)	

3. Conclusion

The identification and classification of the linguistic elements with a metatextual function in the introductions to the BA papers we focused on, and our (admittedly limited) comments on them have hopefully brought the importance of these elements to the fore.

The results of our analysis prove that most of the student writers are aware of the metatextual role of introductions, at least in the particular case of BA papers, and that they employ linguistic devices that support the fulfillment of this role. However, there are also exceptions to this general trend–one of the introductions written in English and three of the ones written in Romanian completely lack reference to the structure of the papers (the introductions in Romanian are, by and large, rather essayistic and subjective, with elements referring to the author of the paper favoured to the detriment of metatextual elements, some of which are used incorrectly at places).

Quantitative and qualitative differences have also been noticed between introductions that do contain metatextual elements, within the limits of the same language as well as across English and Romanian. In both languages, some of the introductions are obviously richer in metatextual linguistic devices than others and some subcategories of such devices are better represented numerically in one of the languages as compared to the other. For example, numerals referring to the structure of the paper, adverbs connected to sequencing and phrases that guide the readers through the logic of the text are more often employed in English than in Romanian, while the situation is reversed in the case of demonstrative pronouns connected to structure and verbs and adverbial phrases with a sequencing indicating role. Numerical imbalances between certain subcategories of metatextual elements triggered qualitative disimilarities, too–those that are better represented in terms of number of items are also better represented in terms of variety of these items. For instance, we could identify only one adverb of place that was connected to the structure of the papers, both in English and in Romanian: *here* and, respectively, its correspondent *aici*, while the range of verbs that announced the topic/content/purpose of papers was much wider in both languages: *to aim at/to, to analyze, to be interested in, to deal with, to depict, to discuss, to do away with, to emphasize, to explore, to focus on*, etc. in English and *a aduce în discuţie (to discuss), a analiza (to analyze), a conţine (to contain), a evidenţia (to emphasize), a fi dedicat (to be dedicated), a ilustra (to illustrate), a insista asupra (to insist on), a prezenta (to present), a-şi propune (to attempt at)*, etc. in Romanian. In English, only one non-deictic equivalent of the demonstrative adjective *this* was used, while in Romanian, there was a choice between three such equivalents: *mea, de faţă*, and *prezentă*.

The inconsistent use of metatextual elements prompts us to suggest that there is still room for raising awareness of their importance and for improvement in the way they are used, at least in the context in which our analysis was carried out. A more systematic approach to these elements in the academic writing training (lectures, seminars, workshops) offered to our students and in the printed materials that support it would, therefore, be more than welcome.

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