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RHETORICAL MOVES AND METADISOURSE IN ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL AND
GOVERNANCE REPORTS OF LISTED COMPANIES IN HONG KONG

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PhD

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

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**Rhetorical Moves and Metadiscourse in Environmental, Social and Governance Reports of
Listed Companies in Hong Kong**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2019

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINALITY

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Ching Nok Hang

Abstract

The past few decades have witnessed the growing importance of corporate social responsibility (CSR). There is no consensus on the definition of CSR. In a general sense, the concept of CSR requires organisations, including listed companies, to go beyond profit maximisation and be more responsible for their impacts on society and the environment by integrating social and environmental concerns into their business strategy. Listed companies have to be accountable not only to shareholders, but also other stakeholders such as employees, consumers, suppliers, interest groups and the public. One of the ways for listed companies to demonstrate accountability to their stakeholders is through CSR reporting. CSR reports have become an important form of external corporate communication. They provide information about the CSR performance of a listed company in areas such as environmental protection, labour practices, community involvement, consumer issues and supply chain management. In the context of Hong Kong, CSR reports are referred to as environmental, social and governance (ESG) reports by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (2011a).

The present study aims to provide a two-level investigation of the genre of ESG reports by analysing two major parts of the report, namely the chairperson's statement and the main section. At the macro-textual level, the analysis concentrates on the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections. At the micro-textual level, the analysis focuses on the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections. Two corpora – the Corpus of Chairpersons' Statements (CCS) and the Corpus of Main Sections (CMS) – were compiled. The data for this study consists of 54 standalone ESG reports issued by ten listed companies in the industry of properties and construction between 2006 and 2016.

Move analyses were conducted to investigate the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections of ESG reports. The (part) genre of chairpersons' statements comprises 21 move types, while the (part) genre of main sections comprises 20 move types. The two (part) genres share 16 move types. Results show the recursive nature of the two move structures, with moves and steps occurring multiple times. Move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance', move type 5 'establishing credentials', move type 11 'stating values and beliefs' and move type 12 'showing commitment' are crucial in both chairpersons' statements and main sections. The combined use of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 is termed 'sequence' in this study. Various sequences used in the

CCS and the CMS are revealed. The use of sequences demonstrates the close relationship among the move types as well as the complexity of the two (part) genres.

Based on a critical evaluation of current literature on metadiscourse, the present study adapted Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. Interactional metadiscourse is used more heavily than interactive metadiscourse in the CCS, while the reverse is the case in the CMS. The metadiscourse items identified in both corpora are found to belong to all nine subcategories of metadiscourse in the model of metadiscourse for the present study. The exploration of metadiscourse reveals how interactive and interactional metadiscourse items are used in a variety of ways in chairpersons' statements and main sections. It also illustrates how the three means of persuasion, namely logos, ethos and pathos, can be realised with the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections. By identifying patterns of metadiscourse use in the moves in chairpersons' statements and main sections, the present study elucidates the interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use and show how the interplay contributes to the persuasiveness of the ESG report.

This study can help users of ESG reports, corporate communications professionals and applied linguists to gain a better understanding of ESG reports from the perspectives of rhetorical organisation and metadiscourse. Pedagogically, findings from the study can contribute to material design for English for specific purposes (ESP) courses and professional training programmes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This chapter is divided into four main sections. The first section presents the background to the present study (1.1). The rationale behind the study is then explained, highlighting the importance of the study of the chairperson's statement and the main section of the environmental, social and governance report, the study of move structure and the study of metadiscourse (1.2). It then describes the purpose and research questions of the present study (1.3). The last section outlines the organisation of the thesis (1.4).

1.1 Background to the study

The present study is motivated by the emergence of the corporate social responsibility (CSR) reports, also known as the 'corporate responsibility reports', 'corporate citizenship reports', 'sustainability reports', among others. The emergence of CSR reports is a result of the new attitude of the general public towards the role of business (Garzone, 2012). Organisations, including listed companies, are expected to do 'good deeds in society' (Johansen & Nielsen, 2011, p. 207). This is based on the belief that they have responsibilities toward society which go beyond their legal obligations and profit maximisation (Brown & Dacin, 1997; Carroll, 1991). Over the past few decades, the disclosure of information about how organisations fulfill such responsibilities has gained prominence and become a widespread phenomenon. CSR reports are crucial to this development. In Hong Kong where the present study was conducted, CSR reports are referred to as environmental, social and governance (ESG) reports by the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (2011a).

The CSR report has been the object of study in linguistic research (e.g., A. Bhatia, 2012, 2013; Bondi, 2016a, 2016b; Bondi & Yu, 2018; Catenaccio, 2010a, 2010b, 2011a, 2011b, 2012a, 2012b, 2013, 2014, 2017; Fuoli, 2012, 2013, 2017; Malavasi, 2011, 2012, 2014; Skulstad, 2005, 2008; Yu & Bondi, 2017). This research area has been expanding recently. Despite the increasing research effort, our understanding of CSR reports remains inadequate. The present study seeks to contribute to the research area by investigating the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in CSR reports in the context of Hong Kong – an international financial centre in Asia with the world's sixth largest stock market (Information Services Department, 2018).

CSR reporting is an organisational practice which is concerned with organisational disclosures on social and environmental performance and the social and environmental impacts of operations of the company. It has become an integral part of corporate communication. As suggested by Haski-Leventhal (2018, p. 283), ‘CSR reporting is a key tool for communication with stakeholders about CSR activities’. While CSR reporting has not been made mandatory by law¹, there has been considerable development of CSR reporting in Hong Kong with the regulatory initiatives of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited. In recent years, the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong Limited has promoted the practice of CSR reporting by developing, implementing and amending the Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide in its Listing Rules (Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, 2011b, 2012, 2015b, 2015c). Companies listed on the Hong Kong stock market are encouraged and expected to become more accountable for their actions.

The practices of CSR and CSR reporting of listed companies in Hong Kong have been investigated by scholars in the business field (e.g., Wong & Wong, 2015). However, little is known about the linguistic characteristics of CSR reports in this social context. To my knowledge, no study has yet reported the linguistic aspects of CSR reports issued by companies listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange. The present study represents an attempt to fill the gap in the literature. In particular, it examines the ESG reports issued by companies listed on the Hong Kong stock market over an 11-year period from 2006 to 2016. The listed companies chosen for the present study were companies with good CSR performance. More specifically, they were constituents of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index (see Section 3.1 for a description of the data). Examining the ESG reports of this group of listed companies is meaningful, as the reports place emphasis on achieving CSR excellence to seek to maintain the confidence of investors, including new and potential ones, and other stakeholders, which can offer insights into the creation of good impressions and positive corporate image. The index selected for data collection could enable potential comparisons with other sustainability indexes, such as the Dow Jones Sustainability Index (<https://www.sustainability-indices.com/>), in the future. This study is concerned with the listed companies in the industry of properties and construction. By limiting the dataset to ESG reports issued by listed companies of this particular industry category of the index, this study aims

¹It is still the case at the time of writing (August 2019).

to offer a comprehensive, industry-specific analysis of ESG reports issued by listed companies which were considered leaders in terms of their CSR performance.

1.2 Rationale for the study

The present study investigates the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in ESG reports through analysing two parts of the ESG report – the chairperson’s statement and the main section. The rationale for the focus of investigation will be discussed in the following sub-sections.

1.2.1 Why study the chairperson’s statement and the main section of ESG reports?

From a genre perspective, the CSR report can be seen as derived from ‘its antecedent genre’, the annual report (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 188). The two corporate disclosure genres² share some structural features, such as company profiles and CEOs’ letters.

It has been established that the CEO’s letter in the annual report is a powerful means of corporate communication. It is the most widely read part of the annual report (Bartlett & Chandler, 1997; Coutis, 1982, 2004; Fanelli & Grasselli, 2005; Jones, 1988; Kohut & Segars, 1992; Prasad & Mir, 2002). It is always placed at the beginning of the annual report as an introductory section, thus setting the tone for the entire report. It ‘present[s] a more substantial interpersonal component and provide[s] more direct and meaningful clues to understanding the interaction between a company and its investors’ and other stakeholders (Garzone, 2004, pp. 320-321). CEOs’ letters are also commonly found in CSR reports. However, our understanding of them is rather limited. There are only a few linguistic studies of the CEOs’ letters in CSR reports (Catenaccio, 2010a; Skulstad, 2005, 2008). In this study, the CEO’s letter in the CSR report is referred to as the ‘chairperson’s statement’ in order to distinguish it from the CEO’s letter in the annual report.

The CSR report normally contains the chairperson’s statement, the body of the CSR report and other sections or components including but not limited to the table of contents, the ‘about the report’ section, list of memberships and charters, list of awards and recognitions, data tables, assurance statement or verification statement, index(es) to the reporting standards and guidelines

²In this study, I follow V. K. Bhatia (2010, 2017) to use the term ‘corporate disclosure genres’ as an umbrella term to refer to a range of corporate disclosure documents, including CSR/ESG reports, annual reports, earnings and results announcements, press releases, shareholder circulars and notes from general meetings.

with which the preparation of the CSR report complies, appendix (-ces) and ‘feedback’³ (see Section 3.1.2 for a description of the components). In the present study, the body of the CSR report is referred to as the ‘main section’. It corresponds to the ‘main report’ in the study of Bondi (2016a), Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017). This key part of the CSR report can be divided into two sections, namely the Self-presentation section and the Performance-reporting section (Bondi, 2016a; Bondi & Yu, 2018; Yu & Bondi, 2017). The Self-presentation section emphasises corporate identity and approach to CSR, while the Performance-reporting section provides information on CSR performance in terms of economic, social and environmental aspects (Bondi, 2016; Bondi & Yu, 2018; Yu & Bondi, 2017). In the present study, the Self-presentation section and the Performance-reporting section were examined as a whole because the two sections are merged together in some of the ESG reports under investigation.

The present study examines the chairpersons’ statements and main sections of ESG reports as they are two important parts of the CSR report where information on CSR-related themes is presented. Both sections are meaningful resources for exploring how listed companies communicate their CSR performance and commitment with their stakeholders.

1.2.2 Why study move structure?

In the English for specific purposes (ESP) field, move analysis (V. K. Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1981, 1990, 2004) has been applied extensively to investigate different genres. The move structure of CSR reports does not seem to be thoroughly investigated, probably because it is ‘an emerging genre’ (Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 172) which arises due to the rapid development of CSR and CSR reporting in recent decades. Only a handful of studies have investigated the move structure of CSR reports (Bondi & Yu, 2018; Catenaccio, 2011b; Skulstad, 2008; Yu & Bondi, 2017) and only one study has paid attention to the move structure of the chairpersons’ statements of CSR reports (Catenaccio, 2010a). More research thus needs to be done to reveal how CSR reports are textually organised. The investigation of the move structure of the chairpersons’ statements is also motivated by the comment made by Catenaccio (2011b, p. 181) that the chairperson’s statement ‘could in fact be analysed as a genre in itself’ as the move structure identified for the genre of CSR

³In the ‘feedback’ section, a feedback form is often provided for the reader to give feedback on the CSR report and the CSR performance of the listed company. In the cases where there is no feedback form, the section provides information which shows the listed company asking for the reader’s feedback. This section also provides the contact details of the listed company.

reports seems ‘to be somewhat adapted’ (p. 184) in the chairperson’s statement. This topic thus warrants further investigation.

The present study aims to make available the discourse structure of chairpersons’ statements and main sections of ESG reports in the context of Hong Kong for practitioners in corporate communications who write and/or draft ESG reports and other CSR-related texts. It is believed that the investigation should also be of value to the users (i.e. readers) of the ESG reports, including (potential) investors, financial analysts and the media, to develop a greater understanding of how linguistic resources can be used to enable the writers of ESG reports to achieve various communicative goals. Such awareness and understanding can help them make more informed financial decisions and better evaluate the success of listed companies in terms of CSR performance.

1.2.3 Why study metadiscourse?

Metadiscourse plays a significant role in communication. It is ‘a fundamental property of human communication’ (Mauranen, 2010, p. 13), and thus ‘a crucial aspect of human communication, which deserves to be studied in its own right’ (p. 37). This is echoed by Hyland (2015, p. 1006) who comments that studying metadiscourse is ‘an important way of understanding language use and a significant means of analysing written and spoken texts’. The importance of metadiscourse is demonstrated by the huge amount of studies over the last decades (Hyland, 2017), especially after the publication of two seminal volumes on metadiscourse – Ädel (2006) and Hyland (2005a).

Investigating the use of metadiscourse in a genre is one of the ways to explore how the genre is similar and different from the others. According to Hyland (2005a, p. 88), ‘genres are distinguished by clusters of specific rhetorical features’ and ‘[o]ne such feature is metadiscourse’. The interpersonal model of metadiscourse proposed by Hyland (2005a) – probably the most widely used model for studying metadiscourse – emphasises the interpersonal role of metadiscourse. Metadiscourse encompasses a wide range of linguistic resources which facilitate the interaction between the writer and the reader (see Section 2.4 for details). Hyland (2005a, p. 63) also recognises the writer’s various uses of metadisursive resources as ‘strategies of persuasion’ which can enhance the persuasiveness of a text.

Previous research has revealed the metadiscoursal practices employed in various genres. Despite the growing body of literature on metadiscourse, research on metadiscourse has heavily

focused on academic genres, particularly on academic writing, such as research articles and student writing. The use of metadiscourse in corporate genres appears to be a research area which has yet to be explored adequately. Among the small number of studies in this area, the majority of them examine the CEOs' letters in annual reports (e.g., de Groot, 2008; de Groot, Nickerson, Korzilius, & Gerritsen, 2016; Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2011; Huang & Rose, 2018; Hyland, 1998b, 2005a; Liu, 2017). At the time of writing, Skulstad (2005) is the only study investigating the use of metadiscourse in CSR reports, which are referred to as 'corporate environmental documents'. The data of Skulstad's study consists of only one specific section of the corporate environmental documents, the chairmen's statements (which correspond to 'chairpersons' statements' in the present study), issued by British companies in 1993 – more than two decades ago. Therefore, it is rather unclear as to how metadiscourse is used in CSR reports. This line of research is of significance as it can unveil how readers of CSR reports are purposefully guided to understand and interpret the information presented in CSR reports in the way the report writers intend. Further research is needed to reveal the role of metadiscourse in the genre of CSR reports.

1.3 Purpose and research questions

The present study aims to provide a two-level investigation of the genre of CSR reports in the context of Hong Kong by analysing two major parts of the ESG report, i.e. the chairperson's statement and the main section, to further reveal the linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of this important genre. At the macro-textual level, the study investigates the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections. At the micro-textual level, the study investigates the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections.

This study seeks to achieve the following research objectives:

1. To identify the move structure of chairpersons' statements,
2. To identify the move structure of main sections,
3. To discuss the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements,
4. To discuss the use of metadiscourse in main sections, and
5. To explore the interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use in chairpersons' statements and main sections.

This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the rhetorical moves in chairpersons' statements?
2. What are the rhetorical moves in main sections?
3. What are the frequency and types of metadiscourse used in chairpersons' statements?
4. What are the frequency and types of metadiscourse used in main sections?
5. How does the interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use in chairpersons' statements and main sections contribute to the persuasiveness of the ESG report?

1.4 Outline of the thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Following this introductory chapter, a literature review of core areas and issues which are relevant to the study of CSR reports and the study of metadiscourse is provided in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the data and outlines the research methodology. Chapters 4 and 5 provide in-depth discussions of the findings from the study. More specifically, Chapter 4 discusses the move structure of the (part) genres of chairpersons' statements and main sections. Chapter 5 discusses the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections. The interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use in chairpersons' statements and main sections is discussed by examining the use of metadiscourse in various move types. The discussion reveals the role of metadiscourse in relation to the communicative purposes of chairpersons' statements and main sections. The chapter also discusses how patterns of metadiscourse use in particular move types contribute to the persuasiveness of the ESG report. Chapter 6 summarises the key findings, highlights the significance of the study, discusses the limitations of the study and suggests areas for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature review

This chapter reviews relevant research studies. It is divided into five main sections. The first section (2.1) begins with a description of corporate communication and then reviews previous studies of annual reports and CSR reports. The second section (2.2) considers the notion of genre and genre analysis research. This is followed by a review of previous studies of the move structure of corporate disclosure genres, including CEOs' letters in annual reports, chairpersons' statements in CSR reports and CSR reports (2.3). The fourth section (2.4) focuses on metadiscourse, including the concept of metadiscourse and approaches to metadiscourse, Hyland's (2005a) model of metadiscourse and the study of metadiscourse in various genres. This chapter ends with a discussion of how the present study could contribute to some areas and issues of the existing literature which deserve further research (2.5).

2.1 Corporate communication, the annual report and the CSR report

This section describes corporate communication and considers the annual report and the CSR report as key vehicles of corporate communication.

2.1.1 Corporate communication

Since the early 1990s, corporate communication has been an important organisational practice. The term 'corporate' is etymologically derived from the Latin word 'corpus', meaning 'body'. Based on this understanding, 'corporate communication' refers to the communication of an organisation as a whole (Christensen & Cornelissen, 2011; Cornelissen, 2011). Issues regarding corporate communication are relevant to many, if not all, types of organisations, including both public and private firms, companies, businesses and not-for-profit organisations (van Riel & Fombrun, 2007). A recent definition of corporate communication is as follows:

Corporate communication is a management function that offers a framework for the effective coordination of all internal and external communication with the overall purpose of establishing and maintaining favourable reputations with

stakeholder groups upon which the organization is dependent. (Cornelissen, 2011, p. 5; for an overview of definitions, see Hübner, 2007)

The integration of different internal and external communication activities in corporate communication is on the basis that this could result in more, if not the most, effective and efficient form of communication between an organisation – in the context of the present study, listed company, and hence profit organisation – and its internal and external stakeholders (Cornelissen, 2011; de Groot, 2014; Frandsen & Johansen, 2014; Goodman, 2004). The stakeholders include shareholders, investors, clients, suppliers, employees, media, local and national communities in which the listed company operates. The communication activities can vary across companies. They can involve ‘public relations; crisis and emergency communication; corporate citizenship; reputation management; community relations; media relations; investor relations; employee relations; government relations; marketing communication; management communication; corporate branding and image building; advertising’ (Goodman & Hirsch, 2010, p. 15). The purpose of corporate communication is ‘to build, maintain, change and/or repair positive images and/or reputations among the external and internal stakeholders of the company’ (Frandsen & Johansen, 2014, p. 224).

Annual reports and CSR reports are two key corporate disclosure documents through which a listed company communicates with its internal and external stakeholders. Despite the fact that the focus of the present study is on CSR reports, and not annual reports, the literature on annual reports is highly relevant as the annual report can be considered the ‘antecedent genre’ of the CSR report (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 188). In addition, it is common in standalone CSR report to provide an introductory section similar to the CEO’s letter in the annual report. Moreover, previous research has shown that both the annual report and the CSR report can do more than informing the stakeholders of the performance of the listed company. They are regarded as “‘hybrid” discourse genres’ (Fuoli, 2018, p. 877) consisting of both informative and promotional elements. In the two sub-sections below, I will highlight the promotional aspects of annual reports and CSR reports respectively.

2.1.2 *The annual report*

The annual report is regarded as one of the most important tools in corporate communication (Courtright & Smudde, 2009; de Groot, 2014; Stanton & Stanton, 2002). It is a statutory document (de Groot, 2014) in which the listed company provides information about its financial performance and prospects for its development in the future. It has developed over time from an informative document to an increasingly promotional one (Bartlett & Jones, 1997; Beattie, Dhanani, & Jones, 2008), which facilitates the establishment of favourable perceptions of the listed company among its diverse stakeholder groups.

The promotional function of annual reports is partly reflected by the language used in the letter to shareholders, also known as the CEO's letter (Garzone, 2004, 2005; Hyland, 1998b), the chairman's letter (V. K. Bhatia, 2010), CEO's statement (de Groot, Nickerson, Korzilius, & Gerritsen, 2016) and Chairman's statement (de Groot et al., 2016), among others. The CEO's letter is the most widely read section of the annual report (Bartlett & Chandler, 1997; Coutis, 2004; Fanelli & Grasselli, 2005; Jones, 1988; Kohut & Segars, 1992; Prasad & Mir, 2002). While it is a voluntary disclosure of information, it is usually included in annual reports (Beattie et al., 2008; Yuthas, Rogers, & Dillard, 2002). It is always placed at the beginning of the annual report as an introductory section, thus setting the tone for the entire report. It is the primary avenue for non-financial disclosures, that is, it contains narrative information (Arvidsson, 2011; V. K. Bhatia, 2010). The promotional role of the CEO's letter in annual reports has been noted in many studies (e.g., Anderson & Imperia, 1992; Bhana, 2009; V. K. Bhatia, 2008, 2010; Breeze, 2012; Clatworthy & Jones, 2001; Fuoli & Paradis 2014; Garzone, 2004, 2005; Hyland, 1998b; Kohut & Segars, 1992; Merkl-Davies & Brennan, 2007; Nickerson & de Groot, 2005). In his exploration of the interdiscursivity in professional communication, V. K. Bhatia (2010, p. 39; quotes in original) describes that the annual report is a combination of at least four different kinds of discourses which 'are cleverly exploited to "bend" the norms and conventions of "reporting" to promote a positive image of the company, even in adverse and challenging economic circumstance'. The four discourses are accounting discourse, discourse of economics, public relations discourse and legal discourse⁴. The public relations discourse – in the form of the CEO's letter – serves 'to promote a

⁴See also V. K. Bhatia (2017), Chapter 5, for a similar discussion.

positive image of the company to its shareholders and other stakeholders in order to sustain their confidence in future corporate performance’ (V. K. Bhatia, 2010, p. 43). This is consistent with the comment made by Hyland (1998b, p. 232) that ‘the CEO’s letter represents corporate communication decisions which involve attempts to influence the audience’. In addition, Nickerson and de Groot (2005, p. 340) found that the communicative purpose of the CEO’s letter ‘is to establish confidence on the part of the reader, i.e. the stakeholder, and in doing so, to project a positive image’. The CEO’s letter is typically characterised by an optimistic, rhetorical tone (Fuoli & Paradis, 2014; Garzone 2004, 2005; Hyland 1998b; Patelli & Pedrini, 2014) as it is used to establish credibility and gain trust from the readers. As Hyland (1998b, p. 224) suggests, the CEO’s letter ‘has enormous rhetorical importance in building credibility and imparting confidence, convincing investors that the company is pursuing sound and effective strategies’. Therefore, the CEO’s letter contributes significantly to investor confidence.

Given the importance of the CEO’s letter, it is no surprise that it has received a considerable amount of attention from linguists. In fact, both move analyses and metadiscourse analyses of annual reports tend to examine this specific section of the annual report, as will be discussed in Sections 2.3.1 and 2.4.5 respectively.

2.1.3 CSR and the CSR report

The origin of the concept of CSR can be traced back to as early as the 1950s (Carroll, 1999). CSR is basically concerned with ‘businesses’ good deeds in society’ (Johansen & Nielsen, 2011, p. 207). However, there is a lack of consensus on a definition for the concept (McWilliams, Siegel, & Wright, 2006; Moon, Crane, & Matten, 2005; for an overview of the development of CSR, see Carroll, 1999). The heterogeneity in CSR definitions is illustrated by, for instance, Dahlsrud (2008), who lists 37 definitions of CSR originated from journal articles and web pages of organisations, which can be classified into five dimensions, namely environmental, social, economic, stakeholder and voluntariness. While the definitions describe CSR as a phenomenon, they do not define what constitutes CSR (Dahlsrud, 2008). As a result, companies face the challenge of understanding ‘how CSR is socially constructed in a specific context’ when they develop and implement a business strategy (Dahlsrud, 2008, p. 6). In the literature, the meaning of CSR is shown to be different depending on a number of factors, including company size, industry type, profitability and social and political contexts.

Apart from the confusion arising from the definition of CSR, another subject for debate is the controversial topic of whether CSR is good or not. CSR could be seen as ‘a moral imperative for managers to “do the right thing”, without regard to how such decisions affect firm financial performance’ (McWilliams et al., 2006, p. 3, quotes in original) and a way to enable an organisation to generate favorable stakeholder attitudes, build corporate image, foster consumer loyalty (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2010), gain competitive advantage (Du, Bhattacharya, & Sen, 2011) and maximise business profitability. Nevertheless, CSR could also be considered a misuse of corporate resources (McWilliams et al., 2006), a strategy adopted by of managers to achieve career advancement or personal interests (McWilliams et al., 2006), an invention of public relations (Frankental, 2001) and even a smokescreen (Crane, Matten, & Spence, 2008) to hide unsustainable activities.

Despite the above disputes, CSR has become a major concern in the business world. This has led to the growing importance of organisational self-reporting of CSR activities, i.e. CSR reporting. CSR reporting has become an integral part of corporate communication. As pointed out by Haski-Leventhal (2018, p. 283), ‘CSR reporting is a key tool for communication with stakeholders about CSR activities’. It includes but not limited to the disclosure of CSR information in annual reports and standalone CSR reports and on corporate websites⁵. The annual report with disclosures of both financial and CSR (i.e. non-financial) information are referred to as the integrated report. This type of annual reports typically has a dedicated section for the disclosure of CSR information. It is also common for listed companies to disclose the information in separate reports, usually known as standalone CSR reports. Both integrated and standalone CSR reports are published once a year, and are made available on corporate websites, commonly presented in a section called ‘Investor Relations’, along with a range of other documents of the companies, such as corporate announcements and financial highlights.

CSR reporting has gained popularity over the past few decades, despite remaining largely ‘a voluntary, ambiguous and rather unrestricted form of external corporate communication’ (Malavasi, 2014, p. 303) as there is a lack of universal standards and requirements for CSR reporting in many parts of the world (Aiezza, 2015; Coombs & Holladay, 2012). Indeed, there are no legal requirements for CSR reporting in many countries (Ditlev-Simonsen & Wenstøp, 2011;

⁵CSR information can be communicated through other channels, including codes of ethics, codes of conduct, mission statements, social media, advertisements, newsletters and press releases (Goodman, 2004; Malavasi, 2014).

Galant & Cadez, 2017). However, thanks to the release of a number of international reporting standards and guidelines, such as the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) guidelines, the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) guideline, AA1000, SA8000 and ISO 14001 (for details, see Tschopp, 2005; Tschopp & Nastanski, 2014), organisations are given guidance on the content to be included in CSR reports. In Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (2011b, 2012, 2015b, 2015c) has introduced and updated the Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide to strengthen the practice of CSR reporting of listed companies. The emergence of reporting standardisation by means of reporting guidelines has contributed to the rapid development of CSR reporting worldwide.

CSR reports contain information covering a diverse range of environmental, social and corporate governance topics, such as environmental protection, labour practices, health and safety, human rights, anti-corruption, supply chain management, consumer issues and community involvement (e.g., Favotto, Kollman, & Bernhagen, 2016; Gao, 2011; Gomez & Chalmeta, 2011; Lock & Seele, 2016; Moreno & Capriotti, 2009; Tang, Gallagher, & Bie, 2015). The information is normally provided through narrative texts, quantitative data and multimodal elements, including graphs, diagrams, illustrations and photographs (e.g., Breitbarth, Harris, & Insch, 2010; Hraskey, 2012; Rämö, 2011). While the main target readers of CSR reports tend to be shareholders (Brennan & Merkl-Davies, 2014), the reports involve a broader readership, including (potential) investors, employees, suppliers, customers, consumers, the media, government authorities, interest groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), who are 'presumably less motivated for a systematic reading than the readers of the financial economic reports' (Filimon, 2009, p. 134).

Previous studies have shown that CSR reporting has a strong promotional concern (e.g., Brei & Bohm, 2014; Deegan & Rankin, 1996; Hahn & Lülfs, 2014; Jameson & Brownell, 2012; Lyon & Maxwell, 2011). The CSR report is not merely used to provide factual, informative descriptions of a listed company's actions and performance toward the improvement of society for stakeholders, but it can be an instrument for the listed company to create a favourable image through self-promotion. According to Malavasi (2011), the CSR report can be seen as an information-giving and public relations tool. This echoes the view of Mason and Mason (2012, p. 486) that the CSR report 'informs audience members of the company's actions and efforts to protect the environment and promotes an image of good environmental stewardship'. The marketing potential of CSR reports is huge. It is suggested that the CSR report provides opportunities for 'greenwashing'

practices, i.e. to make false or misleading claims of their positive social and environmental actions (Alves, 2009; Lyon & Montgomery, 2015). In this respect, the aim of the report is to influence stakeholders' perceptions that the company is a 'good' corporate citizen even when it is not (Adams, 2004; Mahoney, Thorne, Cecil, & LaGore, 2013; Noronha & Wang, 2015).

The language used in CSR reports is shown to be promotional and persuasive (e.g., A. Bhatia, 2012, 2013; Bondi, 2016b; Fuoli, 2012, 2013, 2018; Malavasi, 2011, 2012, 2014). In the study of A. Bhatia (2012), CSR reports are revealed to exhibit three distinct interdiscourses, namely discourse of promotion, discourse of goodwill and discourse of self-justification. More specifically, the discourse of promotion is used in the reports to establish companies' credibility and promote themselves at a competitive, social, national and international level. The discourse of goodwill is created to demonstrate and emphasise the companies' caring for society and issues which are of societal significance to promote their CSR engagement and make practices comprehensible to their stakeholders. The discourse of self-justification is provided by the companies to justify and legitimise their potentially harming practices which might arouse public criticism but cannot be amended due to external conditions and constraints on the companies. The integration of the interdiscourses with promotional elements suggests that the main function of CSR reports appears to be the promotion of the company and the building of a positive image (A. Bhatia, 2012).

CSR reports are shown to contain descriptions of good intentions to take desirable actions and the companies' commitment to improve different aspects of the communities toward greater sustainability, allowing companies to construct and promote a socially responsible image (A. Bhatia, 2013). According to A. Bhatia (2013), the CSR report provides the company with an opportunity to present itself as a socially responsible corporation which contributes to sustainable development without the reporting of relevant actions. It is 'often more an exercise in public relations than mere reporting of a company's practices and adherence to social obligations' (A. Bhatia, 2013, p. 329).

The study of frequent lexical words and keywords in CSR reports indicate some strategic uses of linguistic items by companies to promote themselves as responsible corporate citizens so as to build trust, enhance reputation and create goodwill with their stakeholders (Malavasi, 2011, 2012). In Malavasi's (2011) study, both the Finnish Nokia and the Swedish Ericsson are found to consciously place a considerable emphasis on their sustainable performance in terms of the environment, labor practices, economic and social issues and concerns. However, the CSR reports

of the two companies in the mobile telecommunications industry are characterised by different lexical features. Ericsson seems to praise itself as a company which pays much attention to the environment. It also highlights its role as a responsible member of the business world and global society. Nokia appears to focus more on social and human issues than its counterpart. It also emphasises its support for employees' satisfaction, development and collaboration as well as its commitment to social and environmental issues in the local, national and international community.

By analysing the CSR reports issued by Toyota and Fiat Group in the automotive industry, Malavasi (2012) shows that the two companies tend to orient their activities towards 'sustainable economic development, innovative performance, valuable and distinctive contribution to society' (p. 256). For example, they are motivated and committed to protect the environment and develop vehicles which are technologically advanced and environmentally friendly. Nevertheless, Toyota attempts to portray itself as a competent and reliable business entity by demonstrating its proactive role in the protection of the environment and development of innovative vehicles, illustrating the initiatives implemented and the ambitious goals and objectives to be achieved in the future. Fiat endeavors to assess and evaluate its CSR activities and reporting with reference to a variety of national and international standards, principles and criteria. The compliance with regulations and objective benchmarks guarantees the Italian group's CSR achievements, and therefore enhances the objectivity of the reporting and enables the company to be perceived as more credible and trustworthy.

In another study, Malavasi (2014) provides further support for the use of persuasive strategies in CSR disclosures. Lexical items such as *products*, *production*, *business*, *activities*, *employees*, *environmental* and *people* are frequently used by Italian companies in a range of CSR materials to portray themselves as business entities which undertake efforts to produce safe, high-quality and innovative products, improve employees' satisfaction and betterment as well as the community's rights, well-being and quality of life, and safeguard the environment. These linguistic strategies signalling some major aspects of the ethical and sustainable strategies and endeavors are deployed by the companies to leave a positive impression on stakeholders and gain their confidence.

Bondi (2016b) examines references to the future in CSR reports to identify their pragmatic function in relation to corporate image-building. They are shown to play an important role in the construction of corporate identity and legitimisation of companies. Forward-looking statements with *will* are found to be used to highlight the companies' commitment to CSR ethical values and

qualities and emphasise continuity of current practice in the future. They can also construct a shared background of values in the stakeholder-readers, showing authoritative prediction of the desired impact.

Fuoli (2012, 2013, 2018) investigates the evaluative language in CSR reports, providing insights into the rhetorical resources used by report writers. Fuoli (2012, 2013) conducted an Appraisal analysis to compare how BP (one of the largest oil and gas producer in the world) and IKEA (a Swedish-based international home product company), companies operating in two unrelated industries, construct their corporate identity and negotiate their relationship with their stakeholders through the use of evaluative language in the CSR reports issued by the companies. The results of the analysis show significant differences in the use of Appraisal resources in the two reports examined, revealing two substantially different approaches to the discursive construction of a responsible corporate identity and ways of approaching the readers of the reports. The variation in discursive uses indicate that BP deploys interpersonal resources to portray itself as a reliable, trustworthy and authoritative expert, while IKEA discloses itself as a sensitive, caring and progressive corporation. Concerning the companies' ways of approaching their reports' readership, BP is found to establish a detached, pragmatic relationship with its putative interlocutors, 'characterized by a lack of emotional display and an emphasis on technical excellence that conceals the company's "humanity"' (Fuoli, 2012, p. 56, quotes in original), whereas IKEA appears to empathise with the readers and seek to connect with them, 'establishing a common ground of shared values and optimism about the future' (Fuoli, 2013, p. 229).

In Fuoli (2012), the marked differences of the use of interpersonal resources of the two companies are interpreted in light of the legitimisation challenges the two companies face. It is proposed that the two companies devote communicative effort to different groups of primary interlocutors in order to maintain and enhance their legitimacy. In the case of BP, government regulators and financial stakeholders seem to be the most relevant public. BP's emphasis on its technical knowledge and expertise and its authoritative attitude can be interpreted as attempts to build trust and gain more credibility from its interlocutors so as to be better able to secure its financial support. In the case of IKEA, customers could be considered as the company's most relevant public. IKEA's focus on its tenacity of achieving desirable goals and ethical commitment enables the company to address customers' worries and concerns. This can create and enhance customers' goodwill. IKEA's emphasis on its progress instead of achievements serves as an

attempt to admit potential failure in an implicit way, minimising the impact of possible future negative events on its reputation and legitimacy.

In another study, Fuoli (2018) investigates the use of grammatical markers of stance to construct and promote a positive, trustworthy corporate identity in annual reports and CSR reports issued by 16 multinational corporations belonging to four industry sectors, namely financial services, oil and gas, pharmaceuticals and food processing. Significant differences in the use of stance expressions in annual reports and CSR reports are observed. CSR reports contains comparatively higher number of stance markers in general, and attitudinal expressions in particular. The results of the analysis of different stance constructions indicate that the companies employ different discursive strategies to convey distinct identities to address the specific expectations of the reports' target readers and gain their trust. In annual reports, companies use stance resources to seek to 'present themselves as unbiased, rational, and competent decision makers' (p. 31). In CSR reports, by contrast, they use stance resources to attempt to 'portray themselves as committed, honest, and caring corporate citizens' (p. 31). As far as CSR reports are concerned, the findings seem to be consistent with the remark made by Bondi (2016b, p. 75) that discursive resources can be strategically used by companies to create a 'consistent, caring, and collaborative image'.

From the above discussion, it is obvious that as with the annual report, the promotional purpose of the CSR report is indisputable.

This sub-section has discussed the annual report and the CSR report as key tools of corporate communication. They play an important role in promoting the company's image. The following sub-section will focus on the notion of genre and genre analysis.

2.2 Genre and genre analysis

The notion of genre can be traced back to Bakhtin (1986), who put forward the idea of 'speech genres'. According to Bakhtin (1986, p. 60; italics in original),

[l]anguage is realized in the form of individualized concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity. ... each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres*.

To Bakhtin (1986), speech genres are learned in a way similar to how the vocabulary and grammar of our native language is learned. We have a rich repertoire of oral and written speech genres, and we learn them through experience, when we hear other people's utterances and we produce ours (Bakhtin, 1986). Bakhtin's (1986) perspective of speech genre has offered insights into the inherently generic nature of language.

Genre has been defined in a number of ways. It is defined as 'a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture' by Martin (1984, p. 25; see also Martin, 1993; Martin, Christie & Rothery, 1987) from the Sydney School of genre analysis. It is defined in terms of typification of rhetorical action in Miller (1984), Bazerman (1994) and Berkenkotter and Huckin (1995) in the New Rhetoric School. It is defined as a conventionalised communicative event with particular communicative purposes by V. K. Bhatia (1993, 2004, 2014) and Swales (1990) in the field of English for specific purposes (ESP). In his seminal work, Swales (1990, p. 58) defines genres as 'a class of communicative events' whose members 'share some set of communicative purposes' which '[shape] the schematic structure of the discourse and [influence] and [constrain] the choice of content and style'. Similarly, V. K. Bhatia (2014, p. 27) provides the following definition of genre:

Genre essentially refers to language use in a conventionalized communicative setting in order to give expression to a specific set of communicative goals of a disciplinary or social institution, which give rise to stable structural forms by imposing constraints on the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discoursal resources.

Despite the different orientations among scholars, there exists 'a lot of common ground' between the views on genres (V. K. Bhatia, 2014, p. 26). V. K. Bhatia (2014) lists six features of genre upon which scholars generally agree. The ones which are more relevant to the present study are as follows:

1. Genres are recognizable communicative events, characterized by a set of communicative purposes identified and mutually understood by members of the professional or academic community in which they regularly occur.

2. Genres are highly structured and conventionalized constructs, with constraints on allowable contributions not only in terms of the intentions one would like to give expression to and the shape they often take, but also in terms of the lexico-grammatical resources one can employ to give discursal values to such formal features.
3. Established members of a particular professional community will have a much greater knowledge and understanding of the use and exploitation of genres than those who are apprentices, new members or outsiders.

(V. K. Bhatia, 2014, p. 26)

The first feature is relevant as the present study explores CSR reports which were written or drafted by members of the professional community of corporate communications. The second feature is of relevance as the study aims to investigate the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in the genre of CSR reports by focusing on the chairpersons' statements and the main section. As regards the third feature, this study will show how the established members in corporate communications in the context of Hong Kong construct CSR reports for the listed companies under investigation based on their knowledge and understanding of the genre and reveal how they use and exploit linguistic resources, i.e. rhetorical moves and metadiscourse. The results could allow apprentices and new members in corporate communications as well as outsiders such as (potential) investors to develop a better understanding of the use and exploitation of generic resources.

Considering the purpose of the present study and the relevance of the features of genre to the study, V. K. Bhatia's (2014) definition of genre (which is presented above) is adopted for the present study. This study investigates the 'stable structural forms' (V. K. Bhatia, 2014, p. 26), i.e. the move structure (V. K. Bhatia 1993; Swales, 1990), of the (part) genres of chairpersons' statements and main sections. It also contributes to the understanding of 'the use of lexico-grammatical as well as discursal resources' (V. K. Bhatia, 2014, p. 26) of the genre of CSR reports by investigating the use of metadiscourse in the (part) genres of chairpersons' statements and main sections.

As will be discussed in the next sub-section, the CEO's letter in annual reports has been studied as a genre, although it is part of the annual report (e.g., V. K. Bhatia, 2008; Garzone, 2004, 2005; Hyland, 1998b, 2005a, Nickerson & de Groot, 2005). In addition, there are also studies

(Bondi & Yu, 2018; Yu & Bondi, 2017) which investigate the generic structure of the body of CSR report, i.e. 'main section' in this study. In view of the relevant previous studies, I decided to use '(part) genre' to refer to the chairperson's statement and the main section of the ESG report, recognising that each of them could be studied as a genre on its own, and at the same time, indicating that each of them is in fact part of the ESG report.

Recently, new perspectives regarding the notion of genre have emerged to more fully capture its dynamic nature. Various ways to describe the types of relationships between genres have been proposed. These include genre sets (Bazerman, 1994; V. K. Bhatia, 2004; Devitt, 1991), genre systems (Bazerman, 1994; V. K. Bhatia, 2004; Yates & Orlikowski, 2002), genre chains (Fairclough, 2003; Swales, 2004), genre repertoires (Devitt, 2004; Orlikowski & Yates, 1994), genre networks (Swales, 2004) and genre colonies (V. K. Bhatia, 2002, 2004).

In the literature, different terms have been used to refer to the CSR report as a genre. Skulstad (2005) compares the use of metadiscourse in annual reports and CSR reports, referring to the former as an established genre and the latter as an emerging genre. This highlights the fact that CSR reports, in comparison with annual reports, are relatively new. 'Emerging genre' is also used by Catenaccio (2011b) in the title of her book chapter which reports on her study of move structure of CSR reports. Taking 'a short-term diachronic' approach (Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 169), she suggests that the CSR report 'has only just started to become standardized' (p. 171). The standardisation of the genre has been promoted by the introduction and development of various reporting guidelines for CSR reporting (Catenaccio, 2011b). In the title of her journal article which discusses the hybridisation of CSR reports, A. Bhatia (2012, p. 221, quotes in original) underlines CSR report as a 'confused' genre, highlighting the flexibility in the discursive construction of the genre. Similarly, as already noted, Fuoli (2018, p. 851) considers the CSR report as 'a hybrid discourse genre', emphasising the hybridity of the genre of CSR reports as it 'combines informative and promotional elements' (p. 851). This view is consistent with the findings from Malavasi (2011, 2012, 2014) and Bondi (2016b) (see Section 2.1.3 above). Finally, Yu & Bondi (2017) suggest that the CSR report is a 'reporting genre', and that it is a member of the colony of reporting genres, along with reports from different domains, such as business reports, police reports and medical reports. Given the promotional purpose of CSR reports (see Section 2.1.3), I would argue that the CSR report is also a member of the colony of promotional genres (see V. K. Bhatia, 2014, Section 3.2, for a discussion on this colony).

Move analysis (Swales, 1981, 1990, 2004) is an analytic approach within genre analysis (Cotos, 2012). It was originally introduced by Swales (1981), who conducted research into the introduction section of research articles. He proposed the Create a Research Space (CARS) model for pedagogical purposes, and in doing so, brought the notion of genre into the field of ESP. The general organisational pattern of the article introductions is described as a series of moves, which Swales (1990, 2004) sees as discursal or rhetorical units which perform coherent communicative functions. The individual communicative purpose of the moves contributes to the overall communicative purpose of the genre (V. K. Bhatia, 1993; Connor, Upton, Kanoksilapatham, 2007; Swales, 1990). Steps are the multiple elements which ‘together, or in some combination, realize the move’ (Connor, Upton, Kanoksilapatham, 2007, p. 24), that is, they help accomplish the communicative purpose of the move to which they belong. They can express ‘more fine-grained functional meanings’ (Cotos, 2012, p. 1) than moves. ‘Steps’ are referred to as ‘strategies’ by Bhatia (1993).

Move analysis is essentially a qualitative approach to analysing discourse. It requires the analyst to make cognitive judgement to identify and interpret the intention of a text and segment the text into discourse units. Traditionally, the analysis was conducted to examine a rather small number of texts. However, with the development of corpus linguistics, move analysis can be applied to a large corpus of texts. In Biber, Connor, & Upton (2007), top-down and bottom-up approaches to move analysis are described. The top-down approach requires the analyst to first develop the functional analytical framework, then apply the functional analytical framework developed to segment texts into discourse units (i.e. moves), describe the texts in terms of different discourse unit types (i.e. move types) identified, and finally employ linguistic analysis to investigate the systematic linguistic characteristics of the functionally-defined discourse units. In a top-down approach, functional analysis is primary, while linguistic analysis is secondary. As for the bottom-up approach, the linguistic analysis is primary, while functional analysis is secondary. Biber, Connor, & Upton (2007) illustrate ‘Vocabulary-Based Discourse Unit’ (VBDU) analysis as an example of analysis adopting a bottom-up approach. First, computational techniques are applied to segment texts automatically into discourse units, i.e. VBDUs. This is achieved based on vocabulary repetition, without any knowledge about the types of discourse units or the communicative functions served by the types of discourse units. Then, VBDUs are grouped into categories based on their lexico-grammatical characteristics. This is again conducted with the use

of automatic computational techniques. Next, the groupings of VBDUs are interpreted to identify their typical discourse meanings and functions. Finally, sequences of VBDUs indicating the functional discourse type of each VBDU represent the overall discourse organisation of texts.

Move analysis has been widely used as a methodology for analysing different genres. There is a vast number of studies of the rhetorical structure of the whole academic research articles and specific sections of research articles (e.g., Anthony, 1999; Bruce, 2008; Cortes, 2013; Hirano, 2009; Holmes, 1997; Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Li & Ge, 2009; Lim, 2010; Loi & Evans, 2010; Lorés 2004; Martín Martín 2003; Peacock, 2002, 2011; Posteguillo, 1999; Samraj, 2002, 2005; Stoller & Robinson, 2013; Tessuto, 2015; Yang & Allison, 2003). Previous studies have identified the move structure of other genres, such as grant proposals (Connor & Mauranen, 1999), job application letters (V. K. Bhatia, 1993; Henry & Rosenberry, 2001), sales promotion letters (Vergaro, 2004), advertorials (Zhou, 2012), white papers (Campbell & Naidoo, 2017) and online review response (Ho, 2017), to mention only a few.

Move analysis has also been applied to the study of genres in corporate settings, including press releases (Catenaccio, 2008; McLaren & Gurău, 2005), audit reports (Flowerdew & Wan, 2010), earning calls (Crawford Camiciottoli, 2010), strategic plans (Cornut, Giroux, & Langley, 2012), disclosure policy documents published on corporate websites (Koskela, 2017), leader messages published on corporate websites (Ngai & Singh, 2017), CEOs' letters (V. K. Bhatia, 2008; Garzone, 2004, 2005; Nickerson & de Groot, 2005), chairpersons' statements (Catenaccio, 2010) and CSR reports (Bondi & Yu, 2018; Catenaccio, 2011b; Skulstad, 2008; Yu & Bondi, 2017). The studies have enhanced our understanding of language use in the corporate world. The next sub-section will concentrate on the studies which investigate the move structure of CEOs' letters, chairpersons' statements and CSR reports.

2.3 Move structure of corporate disclosure genres

This section focuses on the previous studies which apply move structure analysis to examine CEOs' letters in annual reports (2.3.1), chairpersons' statements in CSR reports (2.3.2) and CSR reports (2.3.3).

2.3.1 Move structure of CEOs' letters in annual reports

Several studies have been conducted to investigate the move structure of CEOs' letters (V. K. Bhatia, 2008; Garzone, 2004, 2005; Nickerson & de Groot, 2005). The CEO's letter⁶ can be described as 'a highly conventionalized and standardized genre' (V. K. Bhatia, 2008, p. 169). Its purpose is to provide the company's perspective on its annual performance and to project future expectations (V. K. Bhatia, 2008). Analysing the CEOs' letters in annual reports of 15 Hong Kong listed companies from 1998 to 2005, V. K. Bhatia (2008, p. 170) reports that the CEO's letter 'often has a fairly standardized seven-move structure', as listed below, with moves 5 and 7 being 'not very common'.

Move 1: Looking back (overview of the review period)

Move 2: Identifying important themes (claims made)

Move 3: Elaboration on themes (evidence for claims)

Move 4: Expectations and promises (projections for future)

Move 5: Expressions of gratitude (thanks to staff and shareholders)

Move 6: Looking forward (revisiting Move 1)

Move 7: Positive and polite closing

(V. K. Bhatia, 2008, p. 170)

Each move is shown to have its own typical lexico-grammatical features (V. K. Bhatia, 2008).

Garzone (2004, p. 322) suggests that the CEO' letter is 'a typically hybrid discourse genre' which serves different communicative purposes, including the following:

1. To 'provide a concise account and justification for the company's activities and performance',
2. To 'demonstrate that the policies enacted are the best possible under the circumstances',
3. To 'get across to investors and potential investors the idea that the company's management deserves investors' confidence', and
4. To 'transmit a positive, attractive corporate image'.

(Garzone, 2004, p. 322)

⁶V. K. Bhatia (2008) uses the term 'Chairman's statement'.

The role of the CEO's letter as an instrument for promotion and persuasion can be reflected in the second, third and fourth purposes presented above (Garzone, 2004).

Garzone (2004) analyses the CEOs' letters in annual reports issued by multinational companies based in European countries and the US. According to Garzone (2004, p. 321), the CEO's letter features 'at least three characteristic moves':

1. Reporting on Company's performance, trends and results in the relevant year;
2. Providing a narrative of salient facts (events, operations, figures); and
3. Illustrating outlook and priorities for the future.

Garzone (2004, p. 322) also notes that the CEOs' letter contains optional moves, for example, 'the announcement of distribution of dividends (whenever it is the case)'. However, she does not provide other optional moves in her discussion. This is possibly because her aim is to discuss the cross-cultural variations in the use of personal pronouns and other lexico-grammatical features of the CEOs' letters to show how linguistic resources are exploited for rhetorical purposes.

In fact, both V. K. Bhatia (2008) and Garzone (2004) do not provide any examples of the moves they discuss.

Based on the same set of data described in Garzone (2004), Garzone (2005, p. 194) notes that the three moves which characterise the CEO's letters (see above) are 'three obligatory moves'⁷. She also reports that there are some optional moves, such as 'ending the text' and the following⁸:

1. Addressing the recipient;
2. Establishing company's credentials;
3. Announcing distribution of dividends;
4. Reporting on the situation of management;
5. Illustrating/committing to principles in corporate governance; etc.

(Garzone, 2005, p. 194)

⁷This seems to be different from what is described in Garzone (2004, p. 321) that there are 'at least three characteristic moves', which means that there could be more than three.

⁸Interestingly, the optional move 'the announcement of distribution of dividends (whenever it is the case)' provided in Garzone (2004) is not included in Garzone (2005).

In addition, Garzone (2005) suggests that the three obligatory moves could be realised by various steps. The following are the steps of the move ‘providing a narrative of salient facts (events, operations, figures)’:

1. Setting a background;
2. Summarizing previous history;
3. Narrating operations over the relevant year;
4. Describing financial performance and trends;
5. Narrating steps and measures taken; etc.

(Garzone, 2005, p. 195)

It seems obvious that Garzone (2005) only presents some tentative results of her analysis. She does not offer all the optional moves. She does not provide a comprehensive description of the steps of the three obligatory moves either. It seems that there are other steps of the move ‘providing a narrative of salient facts (events, operations, figures)’, and she does not present any steps of the other two obligatory moves. Nevertheless, one can observe that the move ‘expectations and promises (projections for future)’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008) appears to be similar to the move ‘illustrating outlook and priorities for the future’ in Garzone (2004, 2005). This indicates that text segments which serve the function seem to be common in CEOs’ letters in general.

It should be noted that Garzone (2005, p. 198) presents various steps of what she calls ‘conclusive move’ by showing excerpts of CEOs’ letters⁹. The step ‘thanking and/or praising staff and/or management for their performance’ and the step ‘thanking shareholders’ presented by Garzone (2005) seem to be consistent with the move ‘expressions of gratitude (thanks to staff and shareholders)’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008). Therefore, it appears that it is common to see the management expressing gratitude in CEOs’ letters.

Furthermore, Garzone (2005) shows the use of complimentary close and signature in the conclusive move, which is not reported by V. K. Bhatia (2008).

⁹Garzone (2005) does not describe the similarities or differences between the optional move ‘ending the text’ and the ‘conclusive move’.

In another study, Nickerson and de Groot (2005) make a distinction between the letters from Chairmen and those from CEOs. They analyse British English Chairman's Statement, British English CEO's Statement and Dutch English CEO's Statement, noting that 'they are three distinct communicative genres' (Nickerson & de Groot, 2005, p. 341). They find that the statements are constituted by six moves, as shown below:

1. Context,
2. Financial performance past year,
3. Financial performance future,
4. Operations,
5. Strategy, and
6. Credentials.

(Nickerson & de Groot, 2005, pp. 332-333)

It is also found that the moves are realised by the following 12 strategies:

1. Salutation (inclusion),
2. Close (inclusion),
3. Establishing credentials,
4. Setting the economic scene,
5. Providing corporate financial context,
6. Providing specific financial performance details,
7. Summarizing operational performance in the past,
8. Providing details on the Board,
9. Speculating on future performance,
10. Providing future objectives,
11. Emphasizing a strong workforce, and
12. Communicating business strategy.

(Nickerson & de Groot, 2005, p. 335)

Nickerson and de Groot (2005) report that ‘establishing credentials’ is crucial in the statements they analysed, indicating that it is an essential element for companies’ self-promotion. They also describe that salutations and signatures are frequently included in the statements.

To my interpretation, strategies 9 ‘speculating on future performance’ and 10 ‘providing future objectives’ in Nickerson and de Groot (2005) seem to perform similar functions as move 4 ‘expectations and promises (projections for future)’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008). Unfortunately, examples of the strategies and the move are not provided in the respective publications.

Moreover, based on Garzone (2005) and Nickerson and de Groot (2005), it appears that the use of salutation, complimentary close and signature is common in CEOs’ letters.

2.3.2 Move structure of chairpersons’ statements in CSR reports

Chairpersons’ statements are usually included in CSR reports. The Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) (2018) has included the ‘statement from senior decision-maker’ (102-14) as one of the reporting requirements in the GRI 102: General Disclosures, which is a set of ‘reporting requirements on contextual information about an organization and its sustainability reporting practices’. Organisations which disclose CSR information in compliance with the GRI reporting guidelines therefore provide a ‘statement from senior decision-maker’ in their CSR reports. This statement is often presented as ‘letter’ or ‘message’ from the CEO or Chairman, and as already noted, it is referred to as chairperson’s statement in the present study. Despite the importance and prevalence of chairpersons’ statements, little is known about the move structure of chairpersons’ statements. To the best of my knowledge, Catenaccio (2010a) is the only study undertaken in this largely neglected research area.

Catenaccio (2010a) investigates the move structure of chairpersons’ statements with reference to the move structure of CEOs’ letters as reported by Garzone (2004, 2005). Analysing 120 chairpersons’ statements, Catenaccio (2010a) finds that the three obligatory moves in CEOs’ letters can be found in chairpersons’ statements. The texts which do not belong to the three moves ‘can be divided into two nuclei, according to their rhetorical functions’ (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 195): one provides expository or justificatory information to conceptualise CSR from a theoretical viewpoint and in terms of practice, and the other emphasises the dialogic and interpersonal feature of the chairperson’s statement, asking the reader to provide feedback on the CSR report and the CSR performance of the listed company. According to Catenaccio (2010a, p. 196), these are the

communicative purposes of two ‘new, characterising moves’ which are identified in chairpersons’ statements in CSR reports but not in CEOs’ letters in annual reports. The move structure of the chairpersons’ statements can be described as follows. The two new moves are underlined.

1. Defining CSR/Justifying CSR involvement with a view to changing existing conceptions of the role of business in society;
2. Reporting on Company’s performance, trends and results in the relevant year;
3. Providing a narrative of salient facts (events, operations, figures);
4. Illustrating outlook and priorities for the future; and
5. Soliciting response

(Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 197; emphasis added)

Catenaccio (2010a, p. 193) reveals the similarities and differences between the genre of chairpersons’ statements and ‘its predecessor’, i.e. the genre of CEOs’ letters, in terms of move structure. However, her discussion of rhetorical moves focuses on one single chairperson’s statement in the CSR report issued by Fortis, the Dutch-Belgian bank and insurer. While the functions of the rhetorical moves in the chairperson’s statement are clearly presented, it is unclear as to how the moves appear in other chairpersons’ statements. In addition, Catenaccio (2010a) does not provide any information about the steps which can realise the moves. A detailed investigation of the move structure of chairpersons’ statements is needed to deepen our knowledge of this important section of CSR report. An examination of the rhetorical functions performed by smaller units of discourse is necessary.

2.3.3 Move structure of CSR reports

Skulstad (2008) is probably the first researcher who examined the generic structure of CSR reports. In the study of Skulstad (2008), the data involves corporate environmental documents, referred to as Environmental Performance Reports and Environmental Awareness Booklets, of British companies between 1991 and 1993. The corporate environmental documents can be considered as CSR reports which were published at a relatively early stage of emergence of the genre. Skulstad (2008, p. 187) describes that ‘[taking] Move-Step approach is not possible in the case of emerging genres due to the variation and heterogeneity that characterize such a genre. However, emerging

genres may demonstrate systematic variation as to rhetorical strategies chosen'. Therefore, 'rhetorical strategies' (Skulstad, 2008, p. 188) in the data were identified. The set of rhetorical strategies of Environmental Performance Reports is as follows:

1. Signalling commitment towards environmental and social issues
 - Announcing environment and social policy and objectives
 - Making "promises"
2. Signalling good business practices (business ethics)
 - Reporting on the company's environmental and social performance
 - Giving "evidence"

(Skulstad, 2008, p. 188)

Most of the Environmental Performance Reports are found to illustrate the companies' commitment to environmental improvement and give examples of their high levels of performance on environmental issues, rather than giving a comprehensive account of operations. This finding suggests that the reports tend to focus on the environmental advantages of the business, creating a favourable corporate image.

The Environmental Awareness Booklets is characterised by a different set of rhetorical strategies, as shown below:

1. Signalling environmental awareness (and commitment)
 - Putting the issue(s) into perspective
2. Signalling good business practices (business ethics)
 - Challenging/shaping public opinion

(Skulstad, 2008, p. 188)

In the booklets, very little space is devoted to report or review a company's environmental performance. The focus of the booklets is on one sensitive issue which is central to the company, such as the greenhouse effect, nuclear waste and deforestation.

Catenaccio (2011b) considers the rhetorical strategies identified by Skulstad (2008) as moves and steps, suggesting that 'Skulstad's move-step analysis of the environmental performance report

(one of the two types of texts she analyses) identifies two distinct moves in the genre [of CSR reports]' (Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 180). Based on a corpus of 150 social and environmental reports issued by European and North-American companies between 2000 and 2007, Catenaccio (2011b) identifies two additional 'moves'. The move structure identified by Catenaccio (2011b) is provided below. The new elements identified by Catenaccio (2011b) are underlined.

1. Signalling understanding of CSR as part of business operations
 - Describing the company and its core business
 - Justifying CSR involvement
 - Displaying an understanding of stakeholders' concerns
 - Describing and explaining
2. Signalling commitment towards environmental and social issues
 - Announcing environment and social policy and objectives
 - Making "promises"
3. Signalling good business practices
 - Describing CSR management process
 - Reporting on the company's environmental and social performance
 - Giving "evidence"
4. Establishing credentials
 - Providing and assurance statement made by independent auditors
 - Providing expert opinions
 - Making value statements (attributed to third parties)

(Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 180; emphasis added)

Catenaccio (2011b) notes that the CSR report is an emerging genre which 'has only just started to become standardized' (Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 171). However, the genre seems to be more stabilised, compared with the CSR reports at an early stage of emergence analysed by Skulstad (2008). Nevertheless, findings from Catenaccio's (2011b) study show the flexibility in the arrangement of textual and discursive resources in CSR reports. It is observed that some of the reports analysed are not structured in terms of moves and steps as described above, and that the communicative purpose which is usually realised by a particular move may be realised within

other moves. Such blurring of boundaries between the moves identified can be considered as a characteristic of CSR reports as an emerging genre.

It is also worth noting that Catenaccio (2011b, p. 184) reports that the move structure identified for the genre of CSR reports seems ‘to be somewhat adapted in’ the chairpersons’ statements of the CSR reports. Therefore, while the chairperson’s statement is part of the CSR report, it seems that it might have its own prototypical textual organisation and ‘could in fact be analysed as a genre in itself’ (Catenaccio, 2011b, p. 181). The present study attempts to explore this specific research area to ascertain the move structure of chairpersons’ statements (and main sections).

More relevant to the present study, however, are the studies of Bondi (2016a), Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017). According to Bondi (2016a), the CSR report consists of three parts, namely the Preamble, the Main report and the Corollary. The main element of the Preamble is the chairperson’s statement (Bondi, 2016a). The Preamble also contains other components such as table of contents, cautionary statement and auditors’ report (Bondi, 2016a). The Main report is the body of CSR report, which can be divided into two main sections, namely the Self-presentation section and the Performance-reporting section (Bondi, 2016a). The Self-presentation section introduces corporate identity and corporate governance and illustrates the role of CSR policy in the identity and governance of the company, while the Performance-reporting section presents CSR performance and outlook in economic, social and environmental terms (Bondi, 2016a). The Corollary contains components such as summary, appendices with key facts and indicators of international guidelines and standards (Bondi, 2016a).

In their comparative analysis of CSR Reports in Italian, Chinese and English, Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) identify 15 move types in the Main report of CSR reports. The move types are listed below:

1. Presenting corporate profile,
2. Presenting corporate governance,
3. Stating values and beliefs,
4. Stating missions,
5. Showing commitment,
6. Establishing credentials,

7. Stating strategies/methods/practices,
8. Previewing future performance,
9. Presenting performance,
10. Presenting an internal action,
11. Detailing an issue,
12. Presenting individual cases,
13. Describing external circumstances,
14. Introducing an aspect of CSR performance, and
15. Presenting risk and difficulties.

(Bondi & Yu, 2018, p. 190; Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 288)

Bondi and Yu (2018) discuss the move types mainly used in the Self-presentation section¹⁰, while Yu and Bondi (2017) discuss those mainly used in the Performance-reporting section. More specifically, Bondi and Yu (2018) focus on discussing four of the move types: ‘presenting corporate profile’, ‘presenting corporate governance’, ‘stating values and beliefs’ and ‘establishing credentials’. In Yu and Bondi (2017), the discussion concentrates on three of the move types: ‘presenting performance’, ‘describing external circumstances’ and ‘presenting individual cases’. In both Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017), various steps of the relevant move types are presented. The authors also discuss how the particular move types are used in the two sections of the Main report of the CSR report across cultures.

While Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) provide insights into the cross-cultural similarities and differences in rhetorical moves in the two sections of the Main report, the authors seem to offer rather brief discussions of the generic structure of CSR reports. I would like to point out a few issues. Firstly, although the authors present the 15 move types identified, they only provide illustrative examples of the selected move types under discussion in Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017). A description of the communicative purposes of all the move types is provided in one of the appendices in Yu and Bondi (2017). However, it is unclear as to how some of the move types are realised linguistically. Secondly, Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) discuss the steps of selected move types. However, they do not describe whether other

¹⁰Bondi and Yu (2018, p. 195) use the term the ‘self-(re)presentation section’ to refer to the section.

move types can be realised by any steps. Another issue is that the names of certain move types and steps are similar and even the same. For example:

1. ‘Stating mission’ is both a move type **and** a step of ‘presenting performance’ **and** a step of ‘stating values and beliefs’,
2. ‘**Presenting** an internal action’ is a move type, while ‘**detailing** an internal action’ is a step of ‘presenting performance’, and
3. ‘**Stating** strategies/methods/practices’ is a move type, while ‘**communicating** strategies/methods/practices’ is a step of three move types: ‘presenting corporate governance’, ‘stating values and beliefs’ and ‘presenting performance’.

The similarities and differences between the move types and steps are not discussed. Finally, there are cases where the same step is identified in different move types, for example, the step ‘stating mission’ and the step ‘communicating strategies/methods/practices’ described above. The authors do not discuss whether a step serves the same communicative purpose in different move types.

Nevertheless, Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) are two useful references for the present study. In Section 4.1, I will present the move types in chairpersons’ statements and main sections and discuss the relevance of Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) to the current study.

Another finding worthy of mention is the recursivity of moves. Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017) report that the genre of CSR report is characterised by generic recursive features. In the words of Yu and Bondi (2017, p. 286; quotes in original):

The results show that the CSR report as an extensive genre is characterized by rhetorical recursivity. This recursivity is reflected in the dominance of several moves such as “Presenting performance” and “Communicating strategies/methods/practices.”

This finding indicates that the same moves can be used in different positions of a CSR report. Moreover, ‘structural repetition is noticeable in the presentation of different specific topics on CSR performance’ (Bondi & Yu, 2018, pp. 181-182). Unfortunately, the authors do not provide

empirical evidence regarding which of the 15 move types are typically used recursively (except ‘presenting performance’ which is discussed in Yu & Bondi, 2017) and the extent to which the move types are used repeatedly.

An investigation exploring the aforementioned issues would undoubtedly offer additional knowledge about the genre of CSR reports.

The following section will focus on the concept of metadiscourse, Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse and some of the previous studies of metadiscourse.

2.4 Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse has been an interesting subject in linguistic research since the 1980s and has gained momentum since about 2004 (Hyland, 2017). In the literature, there is no general agreement on how the term ‘metadiscourse’ should be defined and how to delimit the concept. The divergent perspectives on the definitions and delimitations of metadiscourse are often presented as the narrow and broad approaches to metadiscourse. As will be discussed, much research work on metadiscourse in different genres has taken a broad approach to metadiscourse based on Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, which considers metadiscourse as interpersonal discourse features. This main section reviews some of the major studies in the field, with a focus on Hyland’s theoretical and definitional positions as well as his taxonomy of metadiscourse. This is followed by an overview of previous studies of metadiscourse in different genres. Finally, special attention is devoted to the research on metadiscourse in annual reports and CSR reports.

2.4.1 The concept of metadiscourse and the two approaches to metadiscourse

Metadiscourse (also known as ‘meta-talk’ in Schiffrin, 1980, ‘metatext’ in Bunton, 1999; Mauranen, 1993a, 1993b; Moreno, 1997; Valero-Garcés, 1996, and ‘discourse reflexivity’ in Mauranen, 2001, 2010) is an important aspect of language. It is ‘a fundamental property of human communication’ (Mauranen, 2010, p. 13), and thus ‘a crucial aspect of human communication, which deserves to be studied in its own right’ (p. 37). This is echoed by Hyland’s (2015) comment that that studying metadiscourse is ‘an important way of understanding language use and a significant means of analysing written and spoken texts’ (p. 1006). The term ‘metadiscourse’ was coined in 1959 by the linguist Zellig S. Harris to refer to passages of a text with ‘information of secondary importance’ (see Harris, 1959/1970, pp. 464-466, as cited in Beauvais, 1989, p. 11).

However, metadiscourse was not an area of research until it had been incorporated into style guides such as the one published by Williams (1985). The study of metadiscourse in applied linguistics began in the 1980s with the pioneering work of Beauvais (1989), Crismore (1984), Crismore and Farnsworth (1989, 1990), Crismore, Markkanen and Steffensen (1993) and Vande Kopple (1985). Metadiscourse has received a considerable amount of scholarly attention ever since.

It is generally agreed that the core concept of metadiscourse centers around ‘discourse about discourse’. For example, metadiscourse has been defined as ‘discourse about discoursing’ (Beauvais, 1989, p. 11), ‘discoursing about discourse’ (Crismore, 1984, p. 280), ‘discourse about discourse’ (Vande Kopple, 1985, p. 83) and ‘writing about writing’ (Williams, 1985, p. 226). These views highlight that metadiscourse is reflexive in nature, that is, metadiscourse concerns the aspect of language which refers to itself. However, these vague definitions of ‘discourse about discourse’ have led to disputes on how to precisely define the term ‘metadiscourse’ and draw definite boundaries around this core interpretation. According to Ädel (2006, p. 38):

[L]inguists who study written texts characterize metadiscourse as a specialized form of discourse and take the perspective that it can be distinguished from other types of discourse. At this point, however, the consensus ends.

Mauranen (1993a) and later Ädel (2006) suggest that the divergent perspectives on how to define and delimit metadiscourse in the literature could be divided into two major approaches, namely the narrow (reflexive or non-integrative) approach and the broad (interactive or integrative) approach (see also Ädel & Mauranen, 2010; Flowerdew, 2015). The major difference between the two approaches lies in the inclusion (or exclusion) of linguistic resources of stance as features of metadiscourse. The narrow approach to metadiscourse defines metadiscourse more restrictedly. The term ‘metadiscourse’ is basically used to refer to linguistic features which show how the text is organised or those which refer to the text itself. Pioneering work taking a narrow approach is Mauranen (1993a). Studies which are built on Mauranen’s (1993a) view of metadiscourse, directly or indirectly, include Ädel (2006, 2010, 2017), Bunton (1999), Salas (2015), S. E. Thompson (2003), Toumi (2009), Zhang (2016) and Zhang, Sun, Peng, Gan, & Yu (2017). The broad approach to metadiscourse involves the inclusion of stance. Metadiscourse is understood as both text organising and evaluative features. This approach was originated from the work of Vande

Kopple (1985). It is also represented by other researchers, including Crismore and Farnsworth (1989, 1990), Crismore et al. (1993) and Hyland (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000, 2005a). It is this approach that was taken in the beginning of the study of metadiscourse in the field of applied linguistics.

Despite the opposing views on whether or not stance should be a category of metadiscourse, the study of metadiscourse has flourished over the past two decades. Both approaches to metadiscourse have been advocated and developed in a parallel fashion over time. A considerable increase in the number of research studies of metadiscourse is observed since about 2004 (Hyland, 2017). This should largely be attributed to the publication of two influential books: Ädel (2006) and Hyland (2005a), each of which details the proposal of a model of metadiscourse in accordance with one of the approaches. Ädel (2006) primarily recognises metadiscourse as features which help organise the unfolding text. However, she extends Mauranen's (1993a) concept of reflexivity of language use to include the ways in which writers orient to themselves, their texts and their readers. The reflexive model she proposes based on Jakobson's (1980, 1998) functional model of language is consistent with the narrow approach to metadiscourse in that it excludes stance as a category of metadiscourse. Hyland (2005a; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004) advocates taking a broad approach to metadiscourse. In accordance with this approach, his interpersonal model of metadiscourse focuses on the interpersonal character of metadiscourse. Hyland sees metadiscourse as resources used by writers to organise a text, convey attitudes and stance towards the content produced and engage with the readers. For him (Hyland, 2005a, p. 41; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 161), 'all metadiscourse is interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and that it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this'.

While the emergence of their work has inspired a large body of research, Hyland's model has been the more popular one in the research community. I would argue that its popularity is in part due to Hyland's (2005a) analyses of metadiscourse use in different written genres, namely academic (research articles, postgraduate writing and introductory textbooks), business (CEOs' letters to shareholders and Directors' report in corporate annual reports) and journalistic (popular science articles). These insightful applications of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse presented in his volume, based on his previous research on metadiscourse, highlight the potential

the model offers in analysing texts within and across genres. I will return to this topic in Sections 2.4.4 and 2.4.5.

In contrast to Hyland (2005a), Ädel's (2006) volume, which provides an analysis of the use of metadiscourse between L1 and L2 university student writers, does not seem to demonstrate whether, the extent to which and how her reflexive model could be applied to other genres beyond academic essays. In fact, Ädel herself (2006, p. 185) explicitly acknowledges this issue as one of the limitations of her study of metadiscourse:

[The] main weakness [of the taxonomy] lies in being based on one single genre. It remains to be seen whether it can be generalized to other genres without major revisions. In other words, it is an empirical question how this taxonomy would fare outside of academic essay writing.

Regarding this weakness, Crawford Camiciottoli (2008, p. 293; italics in original) argued that:

In some genres, it may prove much more difficult to categorically exclude stance from metadiscourse. For example, when an academic lecturer explicitly signals what is important in the discourse (e.g., *This is the main point*), interpersonal and textual commentary seem to merge inextricably.

The uncertain generalisability of Ädel's model could explain, to a certain extent, the smaller amount of research studies of metadiscourse conducted using (both adopting and adapting) her model.

Hyland's (2005a) view on the concept of metadiscourse recognises metadiscourse as a means of understanding, describing and explaining the interaction dimension of language use. As will be shown in the following sub-sections, Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse has the advantage of identifying metadiscourse 'as a coherent set of interpersonal resources used to organise a discourse or express the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader' (Hyland, 2017, p. 20), which comprises two dimensions of interaction: interactive and interactional. The model is able 'to capture the essentially interpersonal nature of discourse' (Fu & Hyland, 2014, p.

125). In this model, metadiscourse is seen as resources which could contribute to a text in a number of ways, including increasing its persuasiveness.

Based on Hyland's view on metadiscourse, I argue that the use of metadiscourse could enhance the persuasiveness of ESG reports and, consequently, contribute to '[t]he building, maintenance, change and/or repair of positive images and/or reputations' (de Groot, 2014, p. 223) of listed companies. Hyland's view is considered useful in uncovering different metadiscourse uses in ESG reports in an attempt to 'persuade readers to accept [the listed companies'] claims' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 148). Having said that, I argue that some aspects of Hyland's arguments and his applications of the interpersonal model seem to be ambiguous. The present work, therefore, seeks to further develop Hyland's model. I will discuss his model in detail in the following sub-sections. Regarding the taxonomy of metadiscourse, I make adjustments to Hyland's categories. I will present the present model in Section 3.2.3.2. While the present model differs in some ways from Hyland's (2005a), the fact that it bears a resemblance to Hyland's makes it possible to interpret the patterns of metadiscourse use observed in the present study with reference to those reported by Hyland himself and others.

As will be discussed in Section 2.4.5, Hyland (1998b) investigates the use of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters to shareholders and Directors' reports in annual reports. While Hyland's (1998b) taxonomy of metadiscourse is different from his (2005a) one, his (1998b) study is presented in his (2005a) volume in the context of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse. Patterns of metadiscourse use observed in the present study are compared with those in Hyland (1998b, 2005a) to reveal the similarities and differences, if any, in the use of metadiscourse between CEOs' letters in annual reports (Hyland's study) and chairpersons' statements in ESG reports (the present study) (see Chapter 5).

In the following two sub-sections, I will first focus on Hyland's theoretical and definitional positions (2.4.2), and then his taxonomy of metadiscourse (2.4.3).

2.4.2 Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse: theoretical and definitional positions

As with Ädel (2006) and other metadiscourse analysts including pioneers in the field like Vandepol (1985) and Crismore and Farnsworth (1989), Hyland (2005a) adopts a functional approach to metadiscourse, identifying and classifying metadiscourse expressions according to the functions they perform in a text. According to Hyland (2005a, p. 14), the functional approach concerns the

ways in which metadiscourse is used by language users to achieve certain communicative purposes: metadiscourse is ‘a means of understanding the ways we project ourselves into our texts to manage our communicative intentions’. He points out the importance of context in identifying metadiscourse, which is a functional category:

Functional analyses recognize that a comprehensive and pragmatically grounded description of any text must involve attending to the use of language in relation to its surrounding co-text and the purpose of the writer in creating a text as a whole. The emphasis is therefore on meanings in context, how language is used, not what a dictionary says about it. So, when considering any item as a candidate for inclusion as metadiscourse, the question is not ‘what is the function of this item?’ but ‘what is this item doing here at this point in the text?’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 24)

Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 1994), which advocates three metafunctions of language, namely the ideational function, the interpersonal function and the textual function, is drawn on to help define and discuss the concept of metadiscourse in early research taking a broad approach to metadiscourse (e.g., Crismore & Farnsworth, 1989; Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000; Vande Kopple, 1985). The ideational function refers to the ways in which language is used to represent experiences and ideas; the interpersonal function refers to the way in which language is used to encode interaction between the writer and the reader in order to negotiate roles, express attitudes and stance and understand feelings; and the textual function refers to the way in which language is used to organise a text in a coherent manner. Metadiscourse is considered linguistic material which does not serve Halliday’s ideational metafunction – which is in line with the perspective of considering metadiscourse as non-propositional elements (as will be discussed below) – but performs either a textual or an interpersonal metafunction. Textual metadiscourse helps writers organise the text, show the relations between different parts of the text and signal how the text should be interpreted in a particular situation. Interpersonal metadiscourse allows writers to express their stance and evaluation towards the propositional content of a text and their readers. It should be noted that although Halliday’s terminology has been repeatedly used

in the metadiscourse literature, Halliday himself does not relate the metafunctions to metadiscourse (Ädel, 2006).

While Hyland adopts the textual/interpersonal metadiscourse distinction in his earlier models of metadiscourse (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000), he (2005a) later abandons such a distinction and proposes an interpersonal model of metadiscourse. In this interpersonal model, metadiscourse is considered a coherent set of explicit, interpersonal linguistic devices which are used to refer to the text, the writer and the reader. It concerns the ways in which writers organise a discourse and signal their stance towards its content and readers. Hyland (2005a, p. 37) defines metadiscourse in the following way:

Metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community.

The interpersonal model of metadiscourse is built on the following three key principles (2005a, pp. 38-48; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004, pp. 159-167):

1. Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse;
2. Metadiscourse expresses writer-reader interactions; and
3. Metadiscourse refers only to relations which are internal to the discourse.

Below, each of these principles will be discussed.

2.4.2.1 Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse

The view that metadiscourse is different from propositional content, i.e. that metadiscourse is (mainly) concerned with non-propositional meaning, can be found in early studies of metadiscourse taking the broad approach to metadiscourse, the origin of the study of metadiscourse. Closely related to this view is that metadiscourse functions on the secondary, rather than primary, level of discourse. Researchers make a two-level distinction of discourse: one primary and the other secondary. The primary level of discourse refers to the propositional material regarding the

subject matter in a text, while the secondary level refers to the language the writers use to indicate their presence and express their attitude and stance toward the subject matter in the text. Metadiscourse is the discourse at the secondary level. At this level, the writers ‘do not add propositional material’ but help readers ‘organize, classify, interpret, evaluate and react’ (Vande Kopple, 1985, p. 83) to the propositional material of the text. Crismore et al. (1993) take a similar view to Vande Kopple (1985). They define metadiscourse as ‘the linguistic material in texts, whether spoken or written, that does not add anything to propositional content’ but helps ‘the listener or reader organize, interpret and evaluate information given’ in the text (p. 40). Beauvais (1989) also holds the view that metadiscourse being secondary, describing that ‘[t]he role of metadiscourse is to signal a writer’s communicative intent in presenting primary discourse, to show how the primary discourse fits into a purposeful text’ (p. 17). Similarly, Crismore and Farnsworth (1990) assume the distinction between primary and secondary discourse. Metadiscourse, for them, fulfils the referential and expressive functions in that it, respectively, serves to direct readers in ‘how to understand the primary discourse message’ (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990, pp. 120-121) and ‘how to understand the author’s perspective or stance toward the content or structure of the primary discourse and the readers’ (p. 121). These similar perspectives on metadiscourse seem to establish a strict dichotomy between metadiscourse and propositional content. Metadiscourse is thus seen as non-propositional material, and it works on the secondary level of discourse.

However, these distinctions repeatedly used to define ‘metadiscourse’ in the literature remain controversial in the field. Researchers have argued against the view of the distinction. Ifantidou (2005) suggests that using the framework of Relevance Theory, metadiscourse at the semantic level may contribute to the propositional (i.e. truth-conditional) content of utterances. More specifically, evidential adverbials (e.g., *obviously*, *evidently* and *clearly*) and hearsay adverbials (e.g., *allegedly*, *reportedly* and *admittedly*), are shown to be propositional using the standard test for truth conditionality, and thus they contribute to the truth conditions of utterances containing them (Ifantidou, 2005). Ädel (2006, p. 212) contends that it is untenable to define metadiscourse as non-propositional material, suggesting that ‘[i]t is more feasible to relax the criterion and say that metadiscourse is most often distinct from the subject matter’. Hyland (2005a, p. 38, quoted in original) stresses that ‘the idea of “proposition” is under-theorized and rarely elaborated’, so ‘it has not provided researchers with an infallible means of identifying what is propositional and what

is not'. Hyland (2017, p. 18) 'sidestep[s] a rigid distinction [between metadiscourse and propositional content] and instead look[s] for rhetorical functions which writers and speakers use ... to shape propositional information with their evaluations of it'. He criticises the strict dichotomy between metadiscourse and propositional content, arguing that a differentiation between the two distinction is only 'a starting point for exploring metadiscourse' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 24). In a similar vein, in discussing the first principle of metadiscourse, Hyland and Tse (2004, p. 161) note that they do not uphold 'a rigid conceptual separation between proposition and metadiscourse'. Indeed, they (2004, p. 161; quotes in original):

blur [emphasis added] the unhelpful distinction between 'primary' propositional discourse and 'secondary' metadiscourse and seek to recover the link between the ways writers intrude into their texts to organize and comment on it so that it is appropriate for a particular rhetorical context.

It is important to note that Hyland (1998b, pp. 225-226, 1998c, p. 438, 1999, p. 5, 2000, p. 109) explicitly states that metadiscourse is non-propositional in his earlier studies, in which he draws a textual/interpersonal distinction in his models of metadiscourse. The fact that such description is not found in Hyland (2005a) – not even in the definition of metadiscourse – suggests that a different view is taken. What Hyland (2005a, p. 39) highlights is that '[m]etadiscourse does not simply support propositional content: it is the means by which propositional content is made coherent, intelligible and persuasive to a particular audience'. Here, Hyland (2005a) places emphasis on the idea of metadiscourse being resources used by the writer to organise texts, engage the reader and signal attitudes to the texts and the reader. For him (2005a), metadiscourse is thus 'not secondary but specialized' (p. 39) aspects of discourse, and is 'integral to the process of communication and not mere commentary on propositions' (p. 41). As will be seen later, this perspective is the essence of the second principle of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Hyland's (2005a) adoption of a less rigid separation between metadiscourse and propositional content is evidenced by his own identification of metadiscourse. Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013) notes that Hyland (2005a) regards the underlined items in the following examples as attitude markers, a sub-category of metadiscourse of Hyland's interpersonal model. According to Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013, p. 99), the linguistic expressions are part of the propositional content because each of them

is ‘integrated into the whole clause and its function is to qualify people, things or events in the real world rather than within the proposition’.

Example 1

The first clue of this emerged when we noticed a quite extraordinary result.

(Hyland, 2005a, p. 150)

Example 2

Homicide followed by suicide has been a neglected area in criminological theory and research. The work that exists is marked by a series of methodological limitations, such as small samples and lack of systematic multivariate analysis.

(Hyland, 2005a, p. 150)

Guziurová (2017) suggests that the attitude marker *enormous* in the following example, as given by Hyland (2005a), could be considered both propositional and non-propositional because ‘it could equally be argued that it contributes to the proposition expressed by the text’ (Guziurová, 2017, p. 230).

Example 3

The basis of the enormous productivity and affluence of modern industrial societies is their fantastic store of technological information.

(Hyland, 2005a, p. 164)

Both Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013) and Guziurová (2017) suggest that Hyland (2005a) sees metadiscourse as non-propositional and criticize the inconsistencies in his analysis. However, they seem to misinterpret Hyland’s position. If metadiscourse is considered strictly non-propositional, then the underlined expressions, which are propositional, should not be identified as attitude markers (metadiscourse). The fact that the expressions are identified as attitude markers indicates that Hyland’s analysis involves flexibility with regard to the strict separation between metadiscourse and propositional content.

In sum, while Hyland (2005a) and Hyland and Tse (2004) take a broad approach to metadiscourse like pioneers in the field such as Vande Kopple (1985) and Crismore et al. (1993), who regard metadiscourse as non-propositional material, and performs a supportive or ‘secondary’ role, they do not define metadiscourse in such a way. In outlining the first principle of metadiscourse, they put forward the position that flexibility is necessary with regard to the distinction between metadiscourse and propositional content. This position is reflected in Hyland’s (2005a) analysis.

Nevertheless, while Hyland (2005a, p. 39) argues that metadiscourse is ‘specialized’ (not ‘secondary’) discourse, and that it is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse, he does not seem to address the issue regarding whether (and the extent to which) metadiscourse is non-propositional material. Indeed, Hyland’s (2005a) definition of metadiscourse (provided at the beginning of Section 2.4.2 above) does not appear to involve the idea of metadiscourse being non-propositional. His definition of metadiscourse (2005a, p. 37; see above) appears to express the following two ideas:

1. Metadiscourse is related to reflexivity in language (based on Hyland’s conception of metadiscourse that it refers to *self-reflective expressions*), which corresponds to the **third** principle presented in Hyland (2005a) and Hyland and Tse (2004); and
2. Metadiscourse reflects interaction between the writer and the reader (based on Hyland’s conception of metadiscourse that it can *negotiate interactional meanings in a text*), which corresponds to the **second** principle presented in Hyland (2005a) and Hyland and Tse (2004).

Before moving on to discuss the next principle, I would like to make a point regarding the use of syntactic approaches to metadiscourse. Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013) argues that a purely functional approach, such as that taken by Hyland (2005a; see the above discussion), is not helpful in drawing a line between propositional and non-propositional material because of its dependence on the context and readers. She proposes and adopts both functional and syntactic approaches to metadiscourse, in which syntactical references are used in the analysis to clarify the propositional and non-propositional distinction. While Khabbazi-Oskouei (2013) attempts to address the

troublesome distinction between metadiscourse and propositional content, her consideration regarding the syntactical appearance of linguistic expressions in the analysis seems to suggest that metadiscourse is restricted to certain syntactic constructions or patterns. This perspective is problematic because in both narrow and broad approaches to metadiscourse, metadiscourse is seen as a linguistic phenomenon, which is highly context-dependent, but not a formal category.

I will now move on to Hyland's (2005a) second principle.

2.4.2.2 Metadiscourse expresses writer-reader interactions

This principle of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse concerns the view that metadiscourse refers to aspects of texts which embody writer-reader interactions (Hyland, 2005a; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004). According to Hyland (2005a), communication involves interpersonal interactions between the writer and the reader through the use of a text. The study of the use of metadiscourse in a text provides a perspective on the ways in which the writer perceive, construct and manage the interactions with the reader so as to achieve successful communication.

Metadiscourse is seen by Hyland as a set of interpersonal resources which perform 'rhetorical functions which writers and speakers use ... to shape propositional information with their evaluations of it' (Hyland, 2017, p. 18) to facilitate the interaction with the reader so as 'to secure the reader's understanding and acceptance of the propositional content' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 60). This view of metadiscourse leads Hyland (2005a; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004) to abandon the textual/interpersonal metadiscourse distinction adopted by most researchers, including himself (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000). Such a distinction suggests that textual resources are a separate aspect of language which could be distinguished from either propositional or interpersonal aspects. Hyland (2005a, p. 41; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 161) argues that:

all metadiscourse is interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and that it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this.

For Hyland (2005a), so-called textual metadiscourse is not only used to create textual connections between textual elements; it can be 'interactionally motivated' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 41) and function interpersonally to create and maintain relations with the reader. The explicit signaling

of connections and relationships between ideas in an argument reflects the writer's attempts to 'highlight certain relationships and aspects of organization to accommodate readers' understandings, guide their reading, and make them aware of the writer's preferred interpretations' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 45). What is referred to as textual metadiscourse in fact allows the writer to do interpersonal work. As Hyland (2005a, p. 45) puts it, so-called textual metadiscourse is 'actually another aspect of the interpersonal features of a text' which contributes to the interaction between the writer and the reader.

Therefore, it is perhaps not surprising to see subcategories of textual metadiscourse proposed in Hyland's earlier models of metadiscourse being included in his later interpersonal model. In fact, all the five subcategories of the 'textual' metadiscourse category in Hyland's (1998c, 1999, 2000) earlier models neatly correspond to the five subcategories of the 'interactive' metadiscourse category in his (2005a) interpersonal model, although there is a change in terminology: the subcategory of 'logical connectives' (Hyland, 1998c, 1999, 2000) is changed to 'transitions' (Hyland, 2005a). I will discuss Hyland's (2005a) taxonomies of metadiscourse in Section 2.4.3.

It is obvious that Hyland's second principle of metadiscourse is connected with the first one. As discussed earlier, Hyland (2005a, p. 39) suggests that metadiscourse is 'not secondary but *specialized* [emphasis added]'. Later in his volume, Hyland (2005a, p. 60) explains that metadiscourse is 'a *specialized* [emphasis added] form of discourse which allows writers to engage with and influence their interlocutors and assist them to interpret and evaluate the text in a way they will see as credible and convincing'. Following this logic, metadiscourse as 'a specialized form of discourse' is because of its interpersonal characteristics. If we take this further, what makes metadiscourse distinct from propositional aspects of discourse, which is underlined in the first principle, appears to be the interpersonal role of metadiscourse in communication. Thus, my interpretation of the two principles is that the first principle is related to the second principle, and it could be seen as a representation of the second one. In other words, the second principle entails the first one – 'all metadiscourse is interpersonal' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 41), and thus it is a 'specialized' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 39) form of discourse which is 'distinct from propositional material' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 38).

The following sub-section focuses on Hyland's third principle.

2.4.2.3 *Metadiscourse refers only to relations which are internal to the discourse*

According to this principle, metadiscourse should express text-internal relations, i.e. refers to something in the text itself, but not text-external relations, i.e. refers to something in the real world, which is outside the text (Hyland, 2005a; Hyland & Tse, 2004). In his discussion on the third principle of metadiscourse, Hyland (2005a, pp.45-48) gives examples of connecting devices *therefore, in contrast* and *then*, sequencing devices *firstly, secondly* and *thirdly* and modality *could be, possible* and *perhaps* to illustrate the distinction between text-internal and text-external relations. Hyland (2005a, p. 46) suggests that connecting devices function as metadiscourse when they are used to ‘construct logical relations which are internal to the steps in ... arguments’ – refer to text-internal relations, and they do not fulfill metadiscursive functions when they express ‘events in the world’ – refer to text-external relations. He highlights Bunton’s (1999) view on text acts and research acts, which distinguishes two writer roles, is a useful way to make the distinction between internal and external references in academic texts. According to Hyland (2005a), sequencing devices function as metadiscourse, i.e. refer to text-internal relations, when ‘the writer is making choices about presentation and how best to fashion material for a particular readership’ (p. 47) in his or her construction of an argument. Sequencing devices make text-external references when the writer ‘is acting as a researcher, not as a writer, reporting processes that would be carried out irrespective of how the research is eventually written up’ (p. 47), such as the process of an experiment, a process in the real world. In discussing modality, Hyland (2005a, p. 48) argues that the distinction lies in ‘the objectivity of the event, whether the outcome is related to the speaker’s assessments of possibility about something happening or to external circumstances which might make it possible’. Thus, based on Hyland’s (2005a) discussion, the distinction between text-internal and text-external relations can be made by considering (i) the role of writer – whether he or she is reporting events in the world or constructing an argument, and (ii) ‘the objectivity of the event’ (p. 48).

I would like to point out that the above two ways for distinguishing text-internal and text-external relations described by Hyland are shown to be relevant to the identification of transitions (realised by connecting devices), frame markers (realised by sequencing devices) and hedges (realised by modality), according to Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model. Hyland does not seem to explain whether the identification of other subcategories of metadiscourse in the interpersonal model could be accomplished based on these two ways. Therefore, it is uncertain as to whether

and how other subcategories of metadiscourse of Hyland’s interpersonal model could be identified in accordance with the third principle. I will return to this issue in Sections 2.4.3.2 and 2.4.3.3.

I have discussed Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse in terms of theoretical and definitional positions, i.e. the three key principles. The following sub-section will consider Hyland’s interpersonal model of metadiscourse by focusing on taxonomy.

2.4.3 Hyland’s interpersonal model of metadiscourse: taxonomy

As briefly described above, Hyland proposes models of metadiscourse before proposing his (2005a) interpersonal model. In the following, I will outline the models in his earlier research (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000) and highlight the similarities and differences between his earlier models and interpersonal model.

Based on Vande Kopple (1985) and Crismore et al. (1993), Hyland explores metadiscourse in academic discourse (Hyland, 1998c, 1999, 2000) and business discourse (Hyland, 1998b) using models of metadiscourse consisting of two main categories: textual and interpersonal metadiscourse. According to Hyland (1998b, 1998c), he further develops taxonomies of metadiscourse in previous research by eliminating categories identified purely by formal characteristics and minimising functional overlap. Table 2.1 below summarises the changes in Hyland’s different taxonomies of metadiscourse (1998b, 1999, 2000) with respect to the one used in Hyland (1998c). In the table, ‘ / ’ indicates that there are no changes.

Table 2.1: Changes in Hyland’s different taxonomies of metadiscourse

Hyland (1998c)	Hyland (1998b)	Hyland (1999)	Hyland (2000)
Textual metadiscourse			
Logical connectives	/	/	/
Frame markers	/	/	/
Endophoric markers	/	/	/
Evidentials	Referred to as ‘attributors’ and is a subcategory of	/	/

	interpersonal rather than textual metadiscourse		
Code glosses	/	/	/
N/A	Subcategory of 'sequencers' is added to the textual metadiscourse category	N/A	N/A
Interpersonal metadiscourse			
Hedges	/	/	/
Emphatics	/	/	Referred to as 'boosters'
Attitude markers	/	/	/
Relational markers	/	/	/
Person markers	Subcategory of 'person markers' is incorporated into the subcategory of 'relational markers'	/	/
N/A	Subcategory of 'attributors' is added to the interpersonal metadiscourse category	N/A	N/A

In his study of research articles from different academic disciplines (Hyland, 1998c) and another study of introductory textbooks from different academic disciplines (Hyland, 1999), Hyland uses a taxonomy of metadiscourse with ten subcategories. The textual category is comprised of five subcategories, namely logical connectives, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses, while the interpersonal category is comprised of another five

subcategories, namely hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers and person markers. A slightly different taxonomy consisting of ten subcategories was used in Hyland's (2000) study, although it is also an analysis of textbooks from different academic disciplines, like Hyland (1999). The taxonomy in Hyland's (1998b) study of CEOs' letters in company annual reports is different from those in Hyland (1998c, 1999, 2000) in several ways.

Hyland (2005a; see also Hyland & Tse, 2004) proposes an interpersonal model of metadiscourse with two categories of metadiscourse: interactive and interactional metadiscourse, based on the work of G. Thompson (2001) and G. Thompson and Thetela (1995), who draw a distinction between interactive and interactional aspects of interaction in academic writing. The interactive aspects are related to the management of the flow of information which 'guide readers through the content of the text' (G. Thompson, 2001, p. 59), while the interactional aspects aim to 'involve readers in the argument or ethos of the text' (G. Thompson, 2001, p. 59).

While G. Thompson (2001) and G. Thompson and Thetela (1995) do not relate the interactive and interactional aspects of interaction to metadiscourse, Hyland (2005a) recognises that metadiscourse can contribute to the interactive and interactional dimensions of interaction. According to Hyland (2005a, p. 50), these two dimensions of interaction 'are expressed through a range of rhetorical features which themselves perform more specific functions'. Interactive metadiscourse is related to the ways in which the writer seeks to guide the reader through the content to make the text coherent, or as described by Hyland (2005a, p. 49), 'the writer's awareness of a participating audience and the ways he or she seeks to accommodate its probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities'. The category of interactive metadiscourse is comprised of five subcategories, namely transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers, evidentials and code glosses (Hyland, 2005a). Interactional metadiscourse is concerned with the ways in which the writer involves the reader in constructing the text, or as Hyland (2005a, p. 49) describes, 'the ways writers conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. The writer's goal here is to make his or her views explicit and to involve readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text'. The category of interactional metadiscourse is also comprised of five subcategories, namely hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mentions and engagement markers (Hyland, 2005a). Table 2.2 presents an overview of the categorisation.

Table 2.2: Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (adapted from Hyland, 2005a, p. 49)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses	<i>in addition; furthermore; but; however; thus</i>
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences or stages	<i>first; finally; to conclude; my purpose is; aim to; concerning</i>
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	<i>noted above; see Table X; in section Y; in this paper</i>
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	<i>according to X; Y argue; Z suggests</i>
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meanings	<i>namely; e.g.; for instance; such as; in other words; that is</i>
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	<i>might; may; perhaps; possible</i>
Boosters	Emphasise certainty or close dialogue	<i>in fact; definitely; it is clear that; show; demonstrate</i>
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	<i>I agree; surprisingly; unfortunately; importantly</i>
Self mentions	Explicitly refer to author	<i>I; we (exclusive); my; me; our; us</i>
Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	<i>note; consider; you; your; we (inclusive)</i>

The interpersonal model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005a) bears a very close resemblance to Hyland's earlier models, except the one proposed and implemented in Hyland (1998b). Table 2.3 provides a comparison of five taxonomies of metadiscourse in Hyland's (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000, 2005a) research.

Table 2.3: Hyland's different taxonomies of metadiscourse

Hyland (1998c)	Hyland (1998b)	Hyland (1999)	Hyland (2000)	Hyland (2005a)
Textual metadiscourse				Interactive metadiscourse
Logical connectives				Referred to as 'transitions'
Frame markers				
Endophoric markers				
Evidentials	Referred to as 'attributors' and is a subcategory of interpersonal rather than textual metadiscourse	Evidentials		
Code glosses				
N/A	Subcategory of 'sequencers' is added to the textual metadiscourse category	N/A	Subcategory of 'sequencers' in Hyland (1998b) is incorporated into the subcategory of 'frame markers'	
Interpersonal metadiscourse				Interactional metadiscourse
Hedges				
Emphatics			Referred to as 'boosters'	
Attitude markers				
Relational markers				Referred to as 'engagement markers'

Person markers	Subcategory of 'person markers' is incorporated into the subcategory of 'relational markers'	Person markers	Referred to as 'self mentions'
N/A	Subcategory of 'attributors' is added to the interpersonal metadiscourse category	N/A	

As shown in Table 2.3, the categories of 'interactive' and 'interactional' in Hyland (2005a), in general, seem to correspond to the categories of 'textual' and 'interpersonal' in Hyland (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000) respectively. Each of the two main categories of metadiscourse has five subcategories across all five models. While changes in nomenclature are involved in several subcategories of metadiscourse in Hyland (2005a), there are no addition or removal of subcategories. However, the change from 'textual' to 'interactive' and that from 'interpersonal' to 'interactional' do not simply indicate a difference in terms of nomenclature – there is a difference in understanding what metadiscourse is. All the metadiscursive resources falling under the ten subcategories of metadiscourse are distinct from propositional material, perform interpersonal discourse functions and refer to relations which are internal to the discourse, in accordance with the three key principles of metadiscourse proposed by Hyland (2005a), as discussed earlier. Nevertheless, I would argue that evidentials, self mentions and attitude markers are in need of attention. Below, each of these three subcategories of metadiscourse will be discussed.

2.4.3.1 *The inclusion of evidentials in Hyland's interpersonal model*

Evidentials constitute a subcategory of interactive metadiscourse in Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model. They 'refer to information from *other texts* [emphasis added]' (Hyland, 2005a,

p. 49), and they ‘indicate the *external* [emphasis added] origin of material in the current text and give credence to that material by drawing attention to the credibility of its source’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 96). In comparing the use of evidentials in research articles and textbooks, Hyland found that evidentials are more frequently used in research articles than in textbooks because writers of the former tend to provide more citations. In his words:

For readers of research papers, claims are inseparable from their originators and a great deal of *explicit intertextuality* [emphasis added] is required from authors to show who first made the claim and how it relates to the current argument. More than this, however, *citations* [emphasis added] are also crucial to gaining approval of new claims by providing persuasive support for arguments and demonstrating the novelty of assertions (Hyland, 2005a, pp. 105-106).

It is obvious that, for Hyland (2005a), evidentials signal intertextual phenomena – outside the unfolding text. Hyland’s inclusion of evidentials as a subcategory of metadiscourse in the interpersonal model may be related to the possibility that he sees metadiscourse referring to information from all textual sources, including sources of information which are external to the current text. Another possible reason – perhaps a more important one – could be that evidentials are considered ‘interpersonal features of discourse’ (Fu & Hyland, 2014, p. 125). In the case of academic texts, for instance, the use of evidentials is a way for writers to establish a credible identity in their communication with readers, demonstrating a good knowledge of particular topics. It also reveals the writers’ attempt to guide the readers to understand the writers’ positions and arguments and the association between the views of the writers and those of other people in the academic or research area. To ensure that the concept of metadiscourse is separated from the concept of intertextuality, the subcategory of evidentials is excluded from the taxonomy of metadiscourse used in the present study.

2.4.3.2 Hyland’s identification of self mentions

Self mentions constitute a subcategory of interactional metadiscourse in Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model. They are ‘explicit reference to author(s)’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 49). They are ‘measured by the frequency of first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (*I, me, mine,*

exclusive *we, our, ours*)' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 53). Later in his (2005a) volume, Hyland reports on his study of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters, and he describes that there are '489 first-person pronouns in the letters' (p. 79). He provides a few examples of self mentions identified in his analysis. One of the examples, as shown below, deserves our attention.

Example 4

I know from my year as chairman of the Administration Board that budgeting has been a very delicate operation over the last two years. (Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank, 1994)
(Hyland, 2005a, p. 79; underlined in original)

According to Hyland (2005a), this example illustrates two instances of interactional metadiscursive resources – *I* functions as a self mention and *know* as a booster. However, I would like to argue that Hyland's third principle of metadiscourse does not seem to apply to his identification of *I* as a metadiscourse item. In my interpretation, the use of 'from my year as chairman of the Administration' in the example indicates that *I* is used to refer to a human being in the real world, not the writer of the unfolding text. The chairman is describing a situation in the real world that himself, as a chairman of the Administration Board, was aware of the issue of budgeting. I cannot see how *I* refers to 'relations which are internal to the discourse' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 38), according to the third principle. In addition, I would also argue that *my* does not function as an instance of self mention, although Hyland does not discuss the use of *my*. The fact that Hyland classes *I* as an instance of self mention in Example 4 suggests that he may adopt different standards in his identification of metadiscourse, at least in terms of self mentions.

To be regarded as a self mention in the present study, the linguistic item in question must refer to the writer persona. References to human beings in the real world are not considered as self mentions. This methodological issue will be discussed in Section 3.2.3.2, where the model of metadiscourse for this study is presented.

2.4.3.3 Hyland's identification of attitude markers

Like self mentions, attitude markers constitute a subcategory of interactional metadiscourse in Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model. They 'indicate the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 49). Some of the instances of attitude markers

identified by Hyland (2005a) do not seem to refer to ‘relations which are internal to the discourse’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 38). That is, his analysis of attitude markers does not seem to always conform to his third principle. Let’s revisit Example 1.

Example 1 (reproduced)

The first clue of this emerged when we noticed a quite extraordinary result.

(Hyland, 2005a, p. 150)

In my interpretation, *extraordinary* is used to modify ‘result’ obtained from a research study conducted in the real world, which is external to the discourse.

It is worth noting that relevant to Hyland’s (2005a) view on attitude markers is Fu’s (2012) approach to identifying attitude markers. Fu (2012) investigates the use of interactional metadiscourse in job advertisements based on Hyland’s (2005a, 2005b) model. In the study, adjectives are counted as attitude markers if they echo with the macro-proposition of the text as ‘they are used to contribute to the theme of the text’ (Fu, 2012, p. 407). For example, adjectives such as *excellent*, *leading* and *exciting* which describe the company or job opportunity in job advertisements are regarded as attitude markers. As she (2012, p. 407) explains, the linguistic expressions ‘are seen as instances of attitude markers because the writer uses these items to stress the motif of the text’. The example below shows the use of *exciting* as an attitude marker.

Example 5

... have you already graduated? If so, there may be an exciting future for you with A.P. Moller - Maersk.

(Fu, 2012, p. 407)

Exciting does not seem to refer to ‘relations which are internal to the discourse’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 38). The attitude is expressed by the writer as a recruiter in the real world who would like to attract potential applicants, not as the writer who creates the unfolding job advertisement.

In fact, Fu and Hyland (2014) seem to acknowledge that the interpersonal model places a greater emphasis on the interpersonal characteristics of metadiscourse and a lesser emphasis on metadiscourse as features making text-internal reference. In their study of interactional

metadiscourse in two journalistic genres, popular science and opinion articles, they (2014, p. 125; quotes in original) present the advantage of the interpersonal model over the reflexive model adopted by Mauranen (1993a) and Ädel (2006) in the following way:

While this ‘reflexive’ model has the advantage of restricting the identification of features to *clearly text-internal functions* [emphasis added], it lacks the breadth to describe the span of interactional features of discourse and fails to capture the essentially interpersonal nature of discourse.

Fu and Hyland (2014) highlight the advantage of the interpersonal model that it identifies ‘interactional features of discourse’ and ‘capture[s] the essentially interpersonal nature of discourse’, which is underlined by the second principle of metadiscourse. However, they appears to suggest that the interpersonal model, to some extent, does not result in the identification of features with ‘clearly text-internal functions’. They seem to suggest that in identifying metadiscourse with the use of the interpersonal model, the focus is chiefly on the interpersonal functions performed by the linguistic expressions in question. Their emphasis on the interpersonal role of the potential metadiscourse perhaps is not surprising. After all, at the heart of Hyland’s model is his (2005a, p. 41; bold in original) view that ‘**all** metadiscourse is interpersonal’. As highlighted by Hyland (2005a, p. 59), his model is concerned with ‘interpersonal resources’:

Essentially my argument has been that metadiscourse offers a way of understanding the *interpersonal resources* [emphasis added] writers use to organize texts coherently and to convey their personality, credibility, reader sensitivity and relationship to the message.

In the present study, I seek to further develop Hyland’s interpersonal model by identifying metadiscourse based on both the second and third principles. To be regarded as metadiscourse in this study, the linguistic item in question must fulfil an interpersonal function – in accordance with the second principle, and the item must also refer to the current text – in accordance with the third principle. I will explain the meaning of ‘current text’ in this study in Section 3.2.3.1. The model of metadiscourse for the present study, therefore, excludes evidentials (see Section 2.4.3.1) and

instances such as *extraordinary* in Example 1, since, to my understanding, they do not make reference to the current text. Therefore, my model of metadiscourse is similar but different from Hyland's interpersonal model – similar in that both recognise that 'all metadiscourse is interpersonal' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 41) and different in that my model emphasises that metadiscourse must make text-internal references, which does not seem to be the case in Hyland (2005a).

Having discussed the work of Hyland (2005a) from the perspectives of theoretical and definitional positions as well as taxonomy, the next two sub-sections will outline previous studies of metadiscourse in different genres, with a focus on those investigating the use of metadiscourse in annual reports and CSR reports. The purpose of these sub-sections is to situate the present investigation of metadiscourse in the wider context of the literature of metadiscourse (2.4.4) and the more specific context of the research on corporate disclosure genres (2.4.5).

2.4.4 *Metadiscourse and genres*

Previous research of metadiscourse has revealed the use of metadiscourse in various genres. The literature is abound with studies of metadiscourse in written discourse. Studies analysing spoken discourse are limited, although there has been an increase in the research of metadiscourse in academic speech recently (Ädel, 2010; Crawford Camiciottoli, 2004a, 2004b; Deroey, 2015; Deroey & Taverniers, 2012a, 2012b; Heino, Tervonen, & Tommola, 2002; Lee & Subtirelu, 2015; Mauranen, 2001; Pérez-Llantada, 2006; Swales, 2001; S. E. Thompson, 2003). Investigations of metadiscourse in other types of spoken genres include conversations (Schiffrin, 1980) and parliamentary debates (Ilie, 2003).

The majority of the metadiscourse literature has focused on written academic genres. In particular, there is a large number of studies on research articles, examining the whole research article (Dahl, 2004; Hyland, 1998c; Mu, Zhang, Ehrich, & Hong, 2015; Mur-Dueñas, 2010, 2011; Salas, 2015) or specific sections of the research article, including Abstracts (Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2010), Introductions (del Saz Rubio, 2011; Loi & Lim, 2013), Discussions (Abdi, 2002), post-method sections (Cao & Hu, 2014; Hu & Cao, 2015) and Introductions and Discussions (Pérez-Llantada, 2010) and Conclusions (Abdollahzadeh, 2011). Investigations of metadiscourse in other written academic genres have also been conducted, including student writing (Ädel, 2006; Cheng & Steffensen, 1996; Crismore et al., 1993; Intraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Ho & Li, 2018),

postgraduate theses and dissertations (Bunton, 1999, Hyland, 2004, 2010; Lee & Casal, 2014), introductory textbooks (Hyland, 1999, 2000) and academic books reviews (Tse & Hyland, 2006a, 2006b).

Apart from academic genres, previous studies have shown the use of metadiscourse in public genres, such as slogans and headlines in advertisements (Fuertes-Olivera, Velasco-Sacristán, Arribas-Baño, & Samaniego-Fernández, 2001), policy reform documents (Ho, 2016), as well as journalistic genres, such as editorials (Khabbazi-Oskouei, 2013; Kuhl & Mojood, 2014; Le, 2004), opinion columns in newspapers (Dafouz-Milne, 2008), ‘transition sentences’ in newspaper texts (Makkonen-Craig, 2011) and articles of popular science in magazine and opinion columns in newspapers (Fu & Hyland, 2014). Metadiscourse is found to contribute to the persuasiveness of public and journalistic discourses. For example, it is used to ‘organize the discourse, engage the audience, and signal their attitude’ in advertising slogans and headlines (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001, p. 1305), which helps copywriters to create solidarity with the readers and achieve rhetorical and persuasive objectives (Fuertes-Olivera et al., 2001). In newspaper opinion columns, metadiscourse assists writers in rendering the texts persuasive and reader-oriented (Dafouz-Milne, 2008). Other genres which have been explored in terms of metadiscourse use include early English medical writing (Taavitsainen, 2000), job advertisements (Fu, 2012) and online customer reviews (Vásquez, 2015).

As will be discussed in detail in the next sub-section, the recent years have witnessed an increasing number of studies of metadiscourse in corporate disclosure genres. However, the number accounts for only a small proportion of the metadiscourse literature. Research work conducted in this area has overwhelmingly focused on annual reports (de Groot et al., 2016; Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2011; Huang & Rose, 2018; Hyland, 1998b; Liu, 2017). To the best of my knowledge, only one study has been conducted to investigate the use of metadiscourse in CSR reports (Skulstad, 2005).

In his (2005a) volume (Chapter 5), Hyland examines metadiscourse in relation to genre, highlighting that metadiscourse is context-dependent. According to Hyland, when a text is produced within a genre, the use of metadiscourse by the writer reflects the purpose of the communication, the writer’s awareness of the norms and expectations of the social context in which the text is constructed and the writer’s assessments of the reader who is part of the social context. Hyland describes that ‘genres are distinguished by clusters of specific rhetorical features’

(p. 88), and that metadiscourse is one such feature. In his chapter dedicated to metadiscourse and genre, Hyland provides analyses of metadiscourse in three genres, namely research articles, popular science articles and introductory textbooks. Metadiscourse is shown to help writers achieve their rhetorical goals in specific contexts. In research articles, ‘metadiscourse contributes to a writer’s voice which balances confidence and circumspection, facilitates collegial respect, and seeks to locate propositions in the concerns and interests of the discipline’ (p. 112). In popular science articles, metadiscourse allows the writer to ‘present findings as relevant, newsworthy facts for a lay audience with potentially little detailed subject knowledge or interest in disciplinary practices’ (p. 112). In textbooks, ‘metadiscourse provides a means of presenting an authoritative authorial stance and of engaging with readers while setting out information as facts as explicitly as possible’ (p. 112).

Hyland’s (2005a) discussion on the close relationship between metadiscourse and genre as well as his applications of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse in different genres demonstrate possibilities of exploring writer-reader interaction in different contexts by using his interpersonal model of metadiscourse. Thus, it is not surprising that his interpersonal model of metadiscourse has gained its popularity within the research community. The model has been applied to many studies analysing both interactive and interactional metadiscourse (Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2011; Ho, 2016; Ho & Li, 2018; Huang & Rose, 2018; Lee & Casal, 2014; Lee & Subtirelu, 2015; Loi & Lim, 2013; Mu et al., 2015; Mur-Dueñas, 2011) and either interactive metadiscourse (Cao & Hu, 2014; Dahl, 2004) or interactional metadiscourse (Abdi, 2002; Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2010; Fu, 2012; Fu & Hyland, 2014; Hu & Cao, 2015; Liu, 2017; Mur-Dueñas, 2010), revealing writer-reader interaction in various genres, including corporate disclosure genres, as will be discussed in the next sub-section.

2.4.5 Metadiscourse in annual reports and corporate social responsibility reports

As briefly described above, relatively little research work has been conducted in analysing metadiscourse in corporate disclosure genres. In the following, I will review previous studies in this relatively unexplored research area.

The first study conducted in this specific research area is Hyland (1998b), a comparative analysis of the use of metadiscourse in CEOs’ letters to shareholders and Directors’ reports in annual reports. In this study, Hyland classifies the metadiscourse items identified into categories

of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse by adapting the taxonomy of metadiscourse proposed by Crismore et al. (1993), which originates from the taxonomy by Vande Kopple (1985). Analysing CEOs' letters in annual reports issued by international and Hong Kong companies from 1992-1994 and a sample of Directors' reports in the same set of annual reports, Hyland finds that textual metadiscourse is used more frequently than interpersonal metadiscourse in both sections. However, CEOs' letters contain 2.5 times more metadiscourse per 100 words and 6 times more interpersonal metadiscourse than Directors' reports. Hyland (1998b) suggests that the differences in the use of metadiscourse between the two genres¹¹ can be attributed to their different communicative purposes. As described by Hyland, the Director's report is 'a simple record of company particulars' (p. 232), whereas the CEO's letter 'represents corporate communication decisions which involve attempts to influence the audience' (p. 232). Metadiscourse is shown to 'help CEOs to engage their audience, signal propositional relationships, apprise readers of varying certainty, and guide their understanding of the information presented' (p. 233). The use of metadiscourse by CEOs, therefore, reflects the ways in which they 'portray their awareness of how best to represent themselves and their companies' (p. 241).

In addition, Hyland (1998b) examines metadiscourse in relation to rhetoric, suggesting that metadiscourse is a means of persuasion in the CEO's letter by realising rational, credibility and affective appeals, which respectively correspond to the concept of logos, ethos and pathos in ancient Greece. According to Hyland (1998b, p. 233):

Metadiscourse indicates rational appeals when it explicitly links ideas and arguments; it relates to credibility appeals where it concerns the writer's authority and competence and to affective appeals when it signals respect for the readers' viewpoint or that the message has direct relevance to the audience.

In CEOs' letters, rational appeals (i.e. logos) are established with the use of textual metadiscourse – frame markers, code glosses and logical connectives; credibility appeals (i.e. ethos) are built by using interpersonal metadiscourse – attributors, emphatics, first-person pronouns (which fall under 'relational markers') and hedges; and affective appeals (i.e. pathos) are created

¹¹Hyland (1998b, p. 230, 232, 234) uses the term 'two genres' to refer to the two sections of the annual report.

by using interpersonal metadiscourse – ‘the categories of relational markers, attitude markers, and hedges, together with the manipulation of pronoun reference’ (Hyland, 1998b, p. 238).

Hyland’s (1998b) work can be seen to contribute to the study of metadiscourse in at least two ways. Firstly, while Hyland’s (1998b) taxonomy classifies metadiscourse into textual and interpersonal categories (cf. Hyland, 1998c, 1999, 2000, 2005a; see Section 2.4.3), it allows Hyland to generate empirical evidence of the use of metadiscourse in the two sections of the annual report. Hyland’s study represents one of the first attempts of exploration of metadiscourse in business genres in general, and corporate disclosure genres in particular. Since the publication of Hyland (1998b), several investigations of metadiscourse used in CEO’s letters have been conducted (de Groot et al., 2016; Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2011; Huang & Rose, 2018; Liu, 2017), as will be discussed below. Secondly, Hyland’s study pays particular attention to metadiscourse as strategies to achieve persuasion by analysing metadiscourse as a set of resources used to realise rational, credibility and affective appeals. Based on Hyland (1998b), researchers have explored persuasion in terms of the concept of logos, ethos and pathos in not only CEOs’ letters (Huang & Rose, 2018; Liu, 2017), similar to Hyland (1998b), but also in other types of written texts, including education policy reform documents (Ho, 2016), hotel management’s responses to negative online comments (Ho, 2018a), workplace request emails (Ho, 2018b) and undergraduate argumentative essays (Ho & Li, 2018).

It is interesting to note that all metadiscourse studies described earlier in this sub-section which appear to be inspired by Hyland (1998b) are based on Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse¹², but not Hyland’s earlier models or models proposed by other researchers in the field. One possible reason for the use of Hyland’s interpersonal model is that the research work reported in Hyland (1998b) is presented in Hyland’s (2005a) volume (Chapter 4). In discussing the research on the use of metadiscourse in CEOs’ letters and Directors’ reports in annual reports in his (2005a) volume, Hyland uses the terminology of his (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse instead of his (1998b) model. For example, textual metadiscourse (Hyland, 1998b) are referred to as interactive metadiscourse (2005a), logical connectives (1998b) are referred to as transitions (2005a), etc. (see Table 2.3 in Section 2.4.3 for a comparison of the two taxonomies of metadiscourse). There is no difference between the two publications in terms of the illustrative

¹²It has to be noted that de Groot et al. (2016) and Liu (2017) cite the work of Hyland and Tse (2004), but not Hyland (2005a), although they adopt the interpersonal model of metadiscourse in their investigations.

examples of metadiscourse and the discussion on the rhetorical effects of metadiscourse. Another reason for the use of Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model among the researchers might be that this model represents the result of Hyland's refinement of the taxonomies of metadiscourse he proposed in his earlier studies (1998b, 1998c, 1999, 2000) by abandoning the textual-interpersonal metadiscourse distinction (as discussed in Section 2.4.2). It is apparent that researchers taking a broad approach to metadiscourse seem to find Hyland's (2005a) view on the interpersonal role of metadiscourse in communication appealing.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that although Hyland's interpersonal model has been applied to several investigations of the use of metadiscourse in annual reports, the source of data is always one specific section of the annual report, i.e. the CEO's letter. The model has not been used in analysing CSR reports or sections of CSR reports. To the best of my knowledge, there is only one study which explores metadiscourse used in CSR reports (Skulstad, 2005). Skulstad examines CEOs' letters in both CSR reports and annual reports – again, looking at this particular section in the reports – by adopting Mauranen's (1993a) model of metadiscourse, i.e. taking the narrow approach to metadiscourse. Before discussing Skulstad's study in more detail, I will review the studies which only examine CEOs' letters in annual reports.

Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) represents a rare attempt to explore metadiscourse from a diachronic perspective (for other diachronic studies of metadiscourse, see Gillaerts & van de Velde, 2010; Hyland & Jiang, 2016a, 2016b; Taavitsainen, 2000). As with Hyland (1998b), Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) illustrate that metadiscourse is used as a discursive strategy by CEOs to seek to influence the readers and convey a positive corporate image. Adopting Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) provide both synchronic and diachronic analyses of the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in CEOs' letters in annual reports of Fortis, a former biggest bank of Belgium. In the synchronic analysis, they compare their findings with those in Hyland (1998b) and find that there are more metadiscourse items in their data than in Hyland's data, while there are fewer interactive and more interactional metadiscourse items in their data than in Hyland's. In terms of rhetorical appeals, Fortis appears to display more credibility appeals (i.e. *ethos*) and less rational appeals (i.e. *logos*). The diachronic analysis involves an examination of the changes in the use of metadiscourse in the CEO's letters of the bank from 1996-2008. The diachronic pattern of the use of metadiscourse seems to reflect the ups and downs of the company due to external economic environment. The bank is shown to

devote more efforts in making the CEOs' letters more coherent and engaging with the readers in bad times, while it appears to display its self-assurance by emphasising its performance in good times.

Both Liu (2017) and Huang and Rose (2018) provide a contrastive analysis of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters in annual reports, written in English, issued by Chinese and Western companies. Despite the fact that Liu investigates interactional metadiscourse only, while Huang and Rose explore both interactive and interactional metadiscourse, these two cross-cultural studies indicate some general preferences for metadiscourse use in CEOs' letters of Chinese and Western financial institutions. Both studies are specific to the financial industry, offering insights into industry-specific use of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters and, to some extent, the norms and expectations of this particular industry in the selected cultures.

In a brief analysis of CEOs' letters of Chinese and American companies in the financial industry, including banks, insurance and investment companies, which ranked among world top 500 in 2014 and 2015, Liu (2017) shows that the American company data exhibit a greater use of interactional metadiscourse when compared with Chinese company data. While self mentions and engagement markers are the most frequently used in both sets of letters to shareholders, Liu reports that American companies seem to use the two subcategories of interactional metadiscourse more frequently and more flexibly, which help them establish credibility and affective appeals. For instance, the use of self mentions and boosters is regarded as one of the strategies to create credibility appeals. It is found that self mentions realised by *we* and *I* are frequently used together with boosters by American companies; however, the combination of *we* and boosters is rare and the combination of *I* and boosters is absent in the data from Chinese companies. Liu concludes that CEOs or presidents of Chinese companies should employ interactional metadiscourse more strategically 'in order to build up a positive personal or corporate image and then persuade the reader more effectively' (p. 240).

Focusing solely on companies in the banking industry, Huang and Rose (2018) examine CEOs' letters in annual reports issued by companies based in mainland China and Western countries from 1997-2008. All of the Western banks and some of the Chinese banks ranked among the Fortune Top 500 Global corporations in 2008. This study shows that both interactive and interactional metadiscourse is used more frequently in CEOs' letters of Western banks, which is consistent with Liu's (2017) finding regarding interactional metadiscourse. In terms of rhetorical appeals, this

study indicates that CEOs of Western banks are more inclined to use metadiscursive resources to establish more credibility and affective appeals, while CEOs of Chinese banks tend to resort to rational appeals. According to Huang and Rose, the difference in metadiscourse use is presumably due to reader-responsibility norms of the two groups of writers with different cultural backgrounds. The relative underuse of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in CEOs' letters of Chinese companies could be attributed to the reader-responsible writing convention assumed among Chinese speakers. Western writing is seemingly associated with writer-responsible convention. Since the English-version texts collected from Chinese banks are observed to be translated from Chinese, Huang and Rose (2018) argue that Chinese-to-English translators of CEOs' letters by Chinese companies do not seem to use metadiscourse effectively to create rhetorical appeals to Western readers. It is suggested that translators' lack of awareness of metadiscourse as a rhetorical feature could have a negative impact on the effectiveness of the communication between the Chinese-owned banks and their Western stakeholders and the development of businesses of the banks in the globalised market.

Based on Hyland and Tse's (2004) interpersonal model of metadiscourse and Kress and van Leeuwen's (2006) work on multimodal discourse, de Groot et al. (2016) develop a model of visual metadiscourse for analysing documentary photographs in management statements in English annual reports of listed companies originated in either the Netherlands or the United Kingdom reporting on the 2003-2004 financial year. This study generates national culture-specific findings by selecting Dutch and British companies in 15 industries, ranging from banking and finance, telecom and chemicals, to transportation, media and food. In this study, both similarities and differences in the visual metadiscourse in the photos used in Dutch-English and British management statements are identified, revealing both distinctive and non-distinctive use of visual rhetoric in the two neighbouring European cultures.

While the above studies on metadiscourse in CEOs' letters have unique research objectives, they share the view that textual (and visual) metadiscourse is an important resource for enhancing the persuasiveness of CEOs' letters. They provide further support that in the context of CEOs' letters, metadiscourse is used to 'influence readers and project a positive personal and corporate image in company annual reports' (Hyland, 1998b, p. 224).

The study of metadiscourse has been expanding over the past few decades. While the CSR report has become one of the most important tools for communicating CSR performance (see

Section 2.1.3), the use of metadiscourse in CSR reports is far from being thoroughly investigated – it has only been explored by Skulstad (2005), who takes a narrow approach to metadiscourse.

With the aim to compare textual practices in emerging genres and established ones, Skulstad (2005) investigates the use of metadiscourse in the chairpersons' statements in 16 corporate environmental documents (which can be considered as CSR reports) and the CEOs' letters in 19 annual reports issued by the same British companies in 1993. The study was conducted using Mauranen's (1993a) taxonomy of metadiscourse, which consists of four categories of metadiscourse: action markers, previews, connectors and reviews. The comparative analysis indicates that metadiscourse seems to serve different functions in the emerging genre (i.e. the chairperson's statement) and the established genre (i.e. the CEO's letter). The two genres are found to be different from one another mainly in terms of the use of action markers and local and global previews.

Although metadiscourse is explored with a narrow definition, Skulstad (2005, p. 84) acknowledges the important role of metadiscourse in both types of corporate reports: 'the use of metadiscourse provides an excellent opportunity for writers to guide readers in their processing of the content and aims of the report. This is particularly important in the case of new genres.' However, the narrow approach 'restricts the concept of metadiscourse too severely' (Ädel, 2006, p. 180). Skulstad's (2005) study fails to recognise that metadiscourse expresses writer-reader interactions (Hyland, 2005a; Hyland & Tse, 2004), and it does not capture how metadiscourse 'takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences, and processing needs' (Hyland & Tse, 2004, p. 161). Furthermore, the fact that the data of Skulstad's study consists of chairpersons' statements in corporate environmental documents issued by British companies in 1993 – more than two decades ago – suggests that the study provides little information about the textual practices in today's CSR reports. How metadiscourse is used in CSR reports is far from thoroughly explored.

While previous studies offer empirical evidence of how metadiscourse is used in various genres, they do not provide an adequate description of the use of metadiscourse in CSR reports as an important corporate communication tool to facilitate communication between a company and its stakeholders in today's globalised world.

2.5 The present study

With the growing importance of CSR, the CSR report has become a main corporate disclosure document in corporate communication. It provides readers with information about the CSR performance of a listed company. It also serves promotional purposes, allowing the listed company to construct and promote its image discursively. From a genre perspective, the CSR report is an emerging genre (Catenaccio, 2011b; Skulstad, 2005) which has come into existence due to changes in the contemporary society (Garzone, 2012). It has the annual report as ‘its antecedent genre’ (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 188). From the discussions above, it is clear that there are gaps in the study of CSR reports. Although chairpersons’ statements are commonly provided in CSR reports, like the case of CEOs’ letters in annual reports, chairpersons’ statements are far from thoroughly investigated (Sections 2.3.2 and 2.4.5). Research into the move structure of the body of CSR report appears to be minimal. There seems to be several issues regarding relevant previous studies (Bondi & Yu, 2018; Yu & Bondi, 2017), resulting in a rather unclear description of the move types in CSR reports (Sections 2.3.3). While the literature abounds with studies of metadiscourse in various genres (Section 2.4.4), examinations of how metadiscursive resources perform their functions in CSR reports seem to be lacking (Section 2.4.5).

In view of the above issues, the present study represents a modest attempt to further our understanding of the genre of CSR by filling gaps in previous research. By analysing both chairpersons’ statements and main sections in CSR reports in the context of Hong Kong (i.e. ESG reports), this study seeks to offer insights into the linguistic and rhetorical characteristics of CSR reports. Move analyses of chairpersons’ statements and main sections provide a comprehensive description of the rhetorical organisation of the two (part) genres. This study adapts Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse to provide a detailed investigation of the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons’ statements and main sections. Furthermore, the interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use in chairpersons’ statements and main sections is investigated through examining patterns of metadiscourse use in various move types. The data and research methodology of the present study will be presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Data description and research methodology

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section describes the data for this study. It presents the compilation of two specialised corpora, namely the Corpus of Chairpersons' Statements and the Corpus of Main Sections. In the second section, research methodology is presented. It describes the data analysis and discusses the taxonomies developed and implemented in this study.

3.1 Data description

3.1.1 The ESG reports and the listed companies

The present study aims to investigate the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in ESG reports by examining chairpersons' statements and main sections of the reports. For the purposes of the study, two specialised corpora, namely the Corpus of Chairpersons' Statements and the Corpus of Main Sections, were compiled on the basis of 54 standalone ESG reports. The ESG reports were issued by 10 listed companies over a 11-year reporting period from 2006 to 2016. The chosen listed companies were constituents of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index. They belonged to the industry category of properties and construction at the time of data collection, i.e. August 2017.

The Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index is one of the five indexes of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series launched by the Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited to provide benchmarks for sustainability investments (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b). The composition of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series is as follows:

Tradable Series

- Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index (HSSUS)
- Hang Seng (China A) Corporate Sustainability Index (HSCASUS)
- Hang Seng (Mainland and HK) Corporate Sustainability Index (HSMHSUS)

Benchmark Series

- Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Benchmark Index (HSSUSB)

- Hang Seng (China A) Corporate Sustainability Benchmark Index (HSCASUSB)
(Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b, p. 1)

HSSUS and HSSUSB include Hong Kong-listed companies, while HSCASUS and HSCASUSB include Mainland-listed companies (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016a, 2016b). The HSMHSUS is a cross-market index which includes constituent companies of HSSUS and HSCASUS (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016a, 2016b). HSSUS, HSCASUS and HSMHSUS were launched on 26 July 2010, whereas HSSUSB and HSCASUSB on 5 September 2011 (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016a, 2016b).

Constituent companies of the Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series are listed companies with good ESG performance. Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited (2016a, p. 5) recognises that being a constituent member of the index series ‘reflects high environmental, social and corporate governance standards in a company’. The selection of constituent companies is based on ‘a robust process that includes consideration of the results from a sustainability assessment undertaken by Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA), an independent and professional assessment body, using its proprietary sustainability assessment and rating framework’ (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b, p. 2). Changes in the constituent companies are effective in September every year (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016a, p. 4). Details of the selection criteria are provided in the brochure (a PDF document) on the website of Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited (2016b).

The HSSUS is the index involved in the present study. Its number of constituent companies, and hence securities, is fixed at 30 (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b). The securities are ‘the top 30 securities with the highest sustainability performance score in the eligible list’ (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b, p. 5). Details of the selection criteria of the securities are provided in the aforementioned brochure, as reproduced below:

Eligibility Screening

Market Capitalisation Screening

Eligible securities which rank in the top 150 stocks in terms of average month-end market capitalisation in the past 12 months from the Universe of HSSUSB.

Turnover Screening

1. Minimum requirement of turnover velocity is 0.1%.
2. New constituent entering the HSSUS must meet the minimum requirement for at least 10 out of the past 12 months and for all of the latest 3 months.
3. Existing constituent entering the HSSUS must meet the minimum requirement for at least 10 out of the past 12 months.

Listing History Requirement

Securities should be listed for at least one year by the review cut-off date.

Securities in the Universe that pass all of the above eligibility criteria form the Eligibility List for constituent selection.

(Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2016b, p. 5; underlined and in bold in original)

The present study focuses on the industry category of properties and construction. The selection was driven by practicality. At the time of data collection, the 30 constituent companies of the HSSUS belonged to a variety of industry categories, namely properties and construction (N=10), financials (N=7), utilities (N=4), consumer services (N=3), conglomerates (N=2), information technology (N=2), consumer goods (N=1) and telecommunications (N=1) (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2017). The industry categories are shown on the factsheet of Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index Series (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2017). The classification is based on the Hang Seng Industry Classification System, which 'is a comprehensive industry classification system designed for the Hong Kong stock market' (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, n.d.). The listed companies which belonged to the industry category of properties and construction formed the largest proportion of the 30 constituent companies in terms of number of constituents (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2017). They also accounted for the second largest proportion of the constituent companies (i.e. 19.60%) in terms of industry weighting (Hang Seng Indexes Company Limited, 2017). The ten selected listed companies were thus considered as important examples of key players of the Hong Kong stock market which performed well in terms of CSR.

It was decided to examine the standalone ESG reports issued from 2006 to 2016 because one of the ten selected listed companies issued its first report in 2006 and the others issued theirs subsequently during the period.

Table 3.1 presents the 10 listed companies in ascending order of their stock codes. All the listed companies are based in Hong Kong. Appendix 1 provides their respective company profiles which are available on the website of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited.

Table 3.1: The listed companies

Stock code	Company name
00004	The Wharf (Holdings) Limited
00012	Henderson Land Development Company Limited
00014	Hysan Development Company Limited
00016	Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited
00017	New World Development Company Limited
00083	Sino Land Company Limited
00101	Hang Lung Properties Limited
00688	China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd.
00823	Link Real Estate Investment Trust
01972	Swire Properties Limited

A total of 54 ESG reports (English language version), in PDF format, were downloaded from the corporate websites of the 10 listed companies under investigation. Table 3.2 shows the distribution of the 54 chairpersons' statements. '✓' indicates the presence of an ESG report.

Table 3.2: The distribution of ESG reports

Company name	Reporting year										
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
The Wharf (Holdings) Limited									✓	✓	✓
Henderson Land Development Company Limited									✓	✓	✓
Hysan Development Company Limited	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New World Development Company Limited								✓	✓	✓	✓
Sino Land Company Limited						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hang Lung Properties Limited							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd.							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link Real Estate Investment Trust					✓	✓	✓	✓			
Swire Properties Limited			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	1	1	2	2	4	5	7	8	8	8	8

It has to be noted that although all the ESG reports collected cover a one-year reporting period, their reporting period could vary in terms of the beginning and the end of the period. More specifically, 35 ESG reports cover from 1 January to 31 December of a particular year, 16 ESG reports from 1 July of a year to 30 June of the following year, while the other three ESG reports from 1 April of a year to 31 March of the following year. The 16 ESG reports concerned are those

issued by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (except its first ESG report, which covers the 2010 calendar year), New World Development Company Limited and Sino Land Company Limited. The three ESG reports were issued by Link Real Estate Investment Trust. Below shows how the reporting year was determined for the 19 ESG reports.

The first ESG report issued by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited is titled ‘Sun Hung Kai Properties Sustainability Report 2010’, and it covers the 2010 calendar year. The second ESG report of the listed company is titled ‘Sun Hung Kai Properties Sustainability Report 2011/2012’, and it covers the listed company’s 2011/12 financial year from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2012. It is decided to annotate the second ESG report with ‘2011’ to indicate the continuation of the publication of ESG reports.

The first ESG report issued by New World Development Company Limited is titled ‘Sustainability Report 2013’, and it covers the period from 1 July 2012 and 30 June 2013. Therefore, the report was annotated with ‘2013’.

The first ESG report issued by Sino Land Company Limited is titled ‘Sustainability Review 2011’, and it covers the period from 1 July 2010 and 30 June 2011. Therefore, the report was annotated with ‘2011’.

Concerning the three ESG reports issued by Link Real Estate Investment Trust, once again, attention was paid to its first ESG report. The ESG report is titled ‘Sustainability Report 2011’, and it covers the period from 1 April 2010 to 31 March 2011. It was annotated with ‘2011’.

After the reporting year of the aforementioned ESG reports had been determined, the reporting year of the other ESG reports issued by the listed companies were determined by following the logical order of the year.

3.1.2 The components of the ESG report

In the sample ESG reports, the following components were identified:

1. Chairperson’s statement – a message or letter typically signed by the management staff member(s) or team of the listed company,
2. Main section – the main body of the ESG report, which provides corporate information, including corporate profile and corporate governance, and reports on the CSR performance of the listed company,

3. Table of contents – a list of chapter or section titles of the ESG report with their commencing page numbers,
4. ‘About the report’ or ‘about this report’ – a description of the reporting approach adopted in the ESG report, which usually provides information about the scope of the report and reporting standards,
5. List of memberships and charters – a list of (selected) memberships and charters of the listed company,
6. List of awards and recognitions – a list of (selected) awards and recognitions received by the listed company¹³,
7. Data tables – a series of tables providing quantitative data of the CSR performance of the listed company¹⁴,
8. Assurance statement or verification statement – a statement of third party assurance of the ESG report¹⁵,
9. Index(es) – an index (or indexes) to the reporting standards and guidelines with which the preparation of the ESG report complies,
10. Appendix (-ices) – further information about particular issues of the listed company, and
11. Feedback – information which shows the listed company asking for the reader’s feedback on the ESG report and the CSR performance of the listed company, and the contact details of the listed company.

The present study examines the chairpersons’ statements and main sections of the ESG reports. The other nine components were excluded from analyses.

Based on the 54 ESG reports downloaded from corporate websites, the Corpus of Chairpersons’ Statements (CCS hereafter) and the Corpus of Main Sections (CMS hereafter) were compiled. The first step of compiling the two corpora was to convert each PDF document of ESG report to a Microsoft Word version by using the software Adobe Acrobat DC. After the file

¹³Components 5 and 6 are combined into one component in some ESG reports under investigation.

¹⁴Different labels are used to name the section of ESG report showing the tables, for example, ‘data tables’, ‘data performance’, ‘performance tables’, ‘performance data summary’ and ‘key facts and statistics’.

¹⁵The Environmental, Social and Governance Reporting Guide of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited does not require listed companies to obtain third party assurance (Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, 2015a). However, listed companies can choose to do so.

conversion, other steps were taken to continue compiling the CCS and the CMS, as presented respectively in Sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 below.

3.1.3 The Corpus of Chairpersons' Statements (CCS)

After obtaining 54 Microsoft Word files, all the ESG reports (in PDF format) were read carefully to identify chairpersons' statements. The relevant text of chairperson's statement (if any) in each of the Microsoft Word files was selected and then saved as a plain text (txt) file. Since the file conversion conducted by Adobe Acrobat DC at the earlier stage produced spelling errors, each text file was spell-checked so that errors were removed.

It is found that chairpersons' statements were included in 41 (75.93%) ESG reports. One chairperson's statement was identified in each of the ESG reports. The 41 chairpersons' statements comprise the CCS.

No chairpersons' statements were identified in the following 13 ESG reports:

1. The reports issued by Hysan Development Company Limited from 2007 to 2013 (its second to eighth reports),
2. The reports issued by Sino Land Company Limited from 2011 to 2015 (its first to fifth reports), and
3. The report issued by Link Real Estate Investment Trust in 2010 (its first report).

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of the 41 chairpersons' statements. '✓' indicates the presence of a chairperson statement.

Table 3.3: The distribution of chairpersons' statements

Company name	Reporting year										
	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
The Wharf (Holdings) Limited									✓	✓	✓
Henderson Land Development Company Limited									✓	✓	✓
Hysan Development Company Limited	✓										
Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited					✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
New World Development Company Limited								✓	✓	✓	✓
Sino Land Company Limited											✓
Hang Lung Properties Limited							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd.							✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Link Real Estate Investment Trust						✓	✓	✓			
Swire Properties Limited			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Total	1	0	1	1	2	3	5	6	7	7	8

Chairpersons' statements are always provided at the beginning of ESG reports, followed by corporate profiles. They are usually placed under a heading with *message* (N=35, 85.37%). Four (9.76%) chairpersons' statements are placed under a heading with *letter*. One chairperson's statement is placed under the heading *foreword* and another a heading with *introduction* (i.e. *Introduction by the Chief Executive Officer*), reflecting the introductory function of the

chairpersons' statements. In addition, all the headings, except *forward*, also contain linguistic expressions referring to management staff members or teams of the listed companies, including:

1. *CEO/Chief Executive/Chief Executive Officer* (N=13; 31.71%),
2. *Chairman/Chairmen and Managing Director(s)* (N=8; 19.51%),
3. *Management* (N=7; 17.07%),
4. *Chairman (without Managing Director(s))* (N=5; 12.20%),
5. *Managing Director (without Chairman/Chairmen)* (N=4; 9.76%), and
6. *Sustainability (Steering) Committee* (N=3; 7.32%).

In this study, all the messages and letters are referred to as 'chairpersons' statements'. This explains the name of the corpus.

The CCS contains approximately 23,600 words. The number of words of chairpersons' statements ranges from 296 to 912, with the average of about 577.

3.1.4 The Corpus of Main Sections (CMS)

After the CCS was built, the compilation of the CMS began. All the 54 ESG reports (in PDF format) downloaded from corporate websites were read carefully to identify the main section, i.e. the main body of the ESG report. The relevant text of the main section in each Microsoft Word file was selected and then saved as a plain text (txt) file. This step excluded texts such as headings, sub-headings, footnotes, endnotes, tables, figures, charts, diagrams, images, illustrations and captions. The final step of compiling the CMS involved spell checking. Each text file of the CMS was spell-checked so as to remove the errors produced by Adobe Acrobat DC during the file conversion process at the earlier stage.

The CMS contains 54 texts of main sections, with approximately 468,000 words. The texts vary greatly in terms of number of words, ranging from 1,350 to 17,187, with the average of about 8,668.

The following section will explain the research methodology of the present study.

3.2 Research methodology

In the present study, move analysis and metadiscourse analysis were conducted. Before providing details of the analyses, I would like to describe the use of UAM CorpusTool (version 3.3) (O'Donnell, 2018) in this study.

3.2.1 UAM CorpusTool

UAM CorpusTool is a software which is freely available on the Internet. Three of its main features, which were used in this study, are as follows:

1. Annotation of the corpora,
2. Searching for instances of a particular feature or a combination of features, and
3. Frequency of occurrence of a particular feature or a combination of features.

Below, I will present each of the features.

1. Annotation of the corpora

UAM CorpusTool allows analysts to select a text of a corpus or a segment of a text, and annotate it in various ways as the analysts wish to. Before conducting data analysis, all texts of the CCS and the CMS were studied and coded manually in terms of the following two features:

- I. Company name
 - 1) The Wharf (Holdings) Limited
 - 2) Henderson Land Development Company Limited
 - 3) Hysan Development Company Limited
 - 4) Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited
 - 5) New World Development Company Limited
 - 6) Sino Land Company Limited
 - 7) Hang Lung Properties Limited
 - 8) China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd.
 - 9) Link Real Estate Investment Trust
 - 10) Swire Properties Limited

II. Reporting year

- 1) 2006
- 2) 2007
- 3) 2008
- 4) 2009
- 5) 2010
- 6) 2011
- 7) 2012
- 8) 2013
- 9) 2014
- 10) 2015
- 11) 2016

The features are used to identify the texts of the two corpora in terms of the listed company to which they belong and the reporting year they cover. Since the ESG reports under investigation (and hence the chairpersons' statements and the main sections of the reports) are issued by ten listed companies over a 11-year reporting period, as explained in Section 3.1.1, there are ten values for the feature 'company name' and 11 values for 'reporting year'.

The annotation regarding the features 'company name' and 'reporting year' involved an entire text of the two corpora. Figure 3.1 provides a screenshot of the annotation of a chairperson's statement with '2016' for 'reporting year'¹⁶.

¹⁶In UAM CorpusTool, the use of space in naming is not allowed. 'Reporting year' was automatically changed to 'reporting_year', as shown at the bottom of the screenshot.

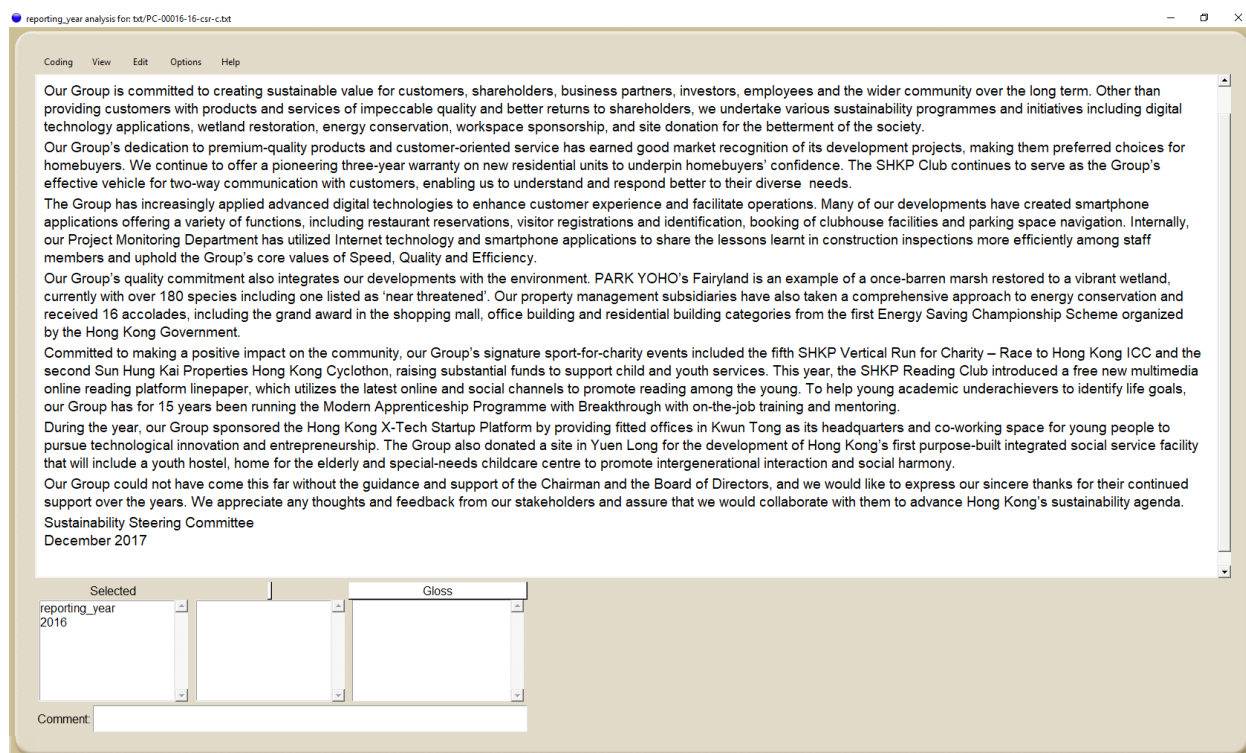


Figure 3.1: A screenshot showing the annotation of a text in UAM CorpusTool

After all the texts of the corpora had been annotated with respect to the features discussed above, data analysis began. Each of the texts of the CCS and the CMS was examined to identify rhetorical moves and steps and metadiscourse items according to the taxonomies developed in this study, which will be discussed later in this chapter. Text segments in chairpersons' statements and main sections were coded with features of 'moves', 'steps' and 'metadiscourse', based on the categories in the taxonomies.

Figure 3.2 provides a screenshot of the annotation of a segment (highlighted) of a chairperson's statement with one of the move types, i.e. move type 16 'indicating further information'. The text segment is (*see Sustainable Development Strategy Workshop in Chengdu*). At the bottom of the screenshot, the value '16_further_info' is shown.

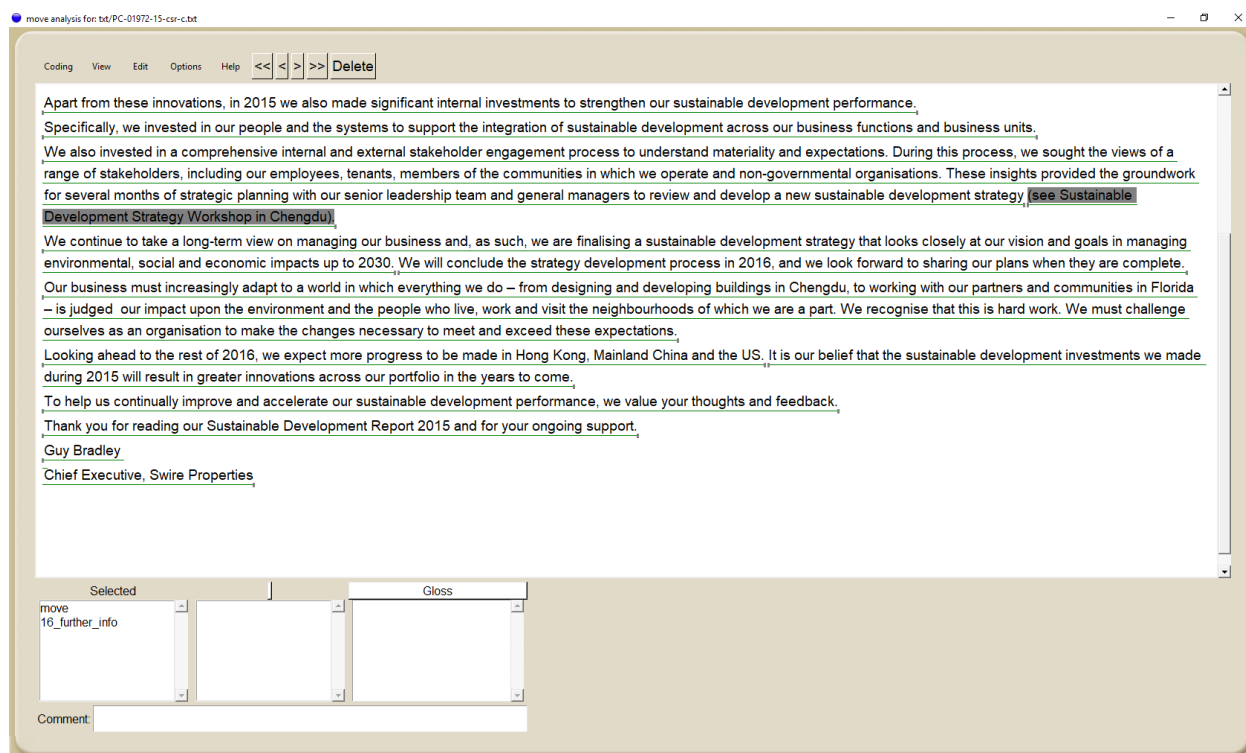


Figure 3.2: A screenshot showing the annotation of a segment of a text in UAM CorpusTool

Using UAM CorpusTool, all the texts of the CCS and the CMS were coded with various features. Before data analysis, the texts were coded with the features ‘company name’ and ‘reporting year’. During data analysis, segments of the texts were coded with the features of ‘moves’, ‘steps’ and ‘metadiscourse’.

2. Searching for instances of a particular feature or a combination of features

UAM CorpusTool provides a handy search function. With the ‘Search’ function, instances of various features can be searched for across different levels. Figure 3.3 provides a screenshot of the application of the ‘Search’ function. It shows the instances of engagement markers in move type 16 ‘indicating further information’ in the texts of the reporting year 2016 in the CMS. This specific search query involves the following features and values:

1. ‘Metadiscourse’ – engagement markers,
2. ‘Move’ – move type 16 ‘indicating further information’, and
3. ‘Reporting year’ – 2016.

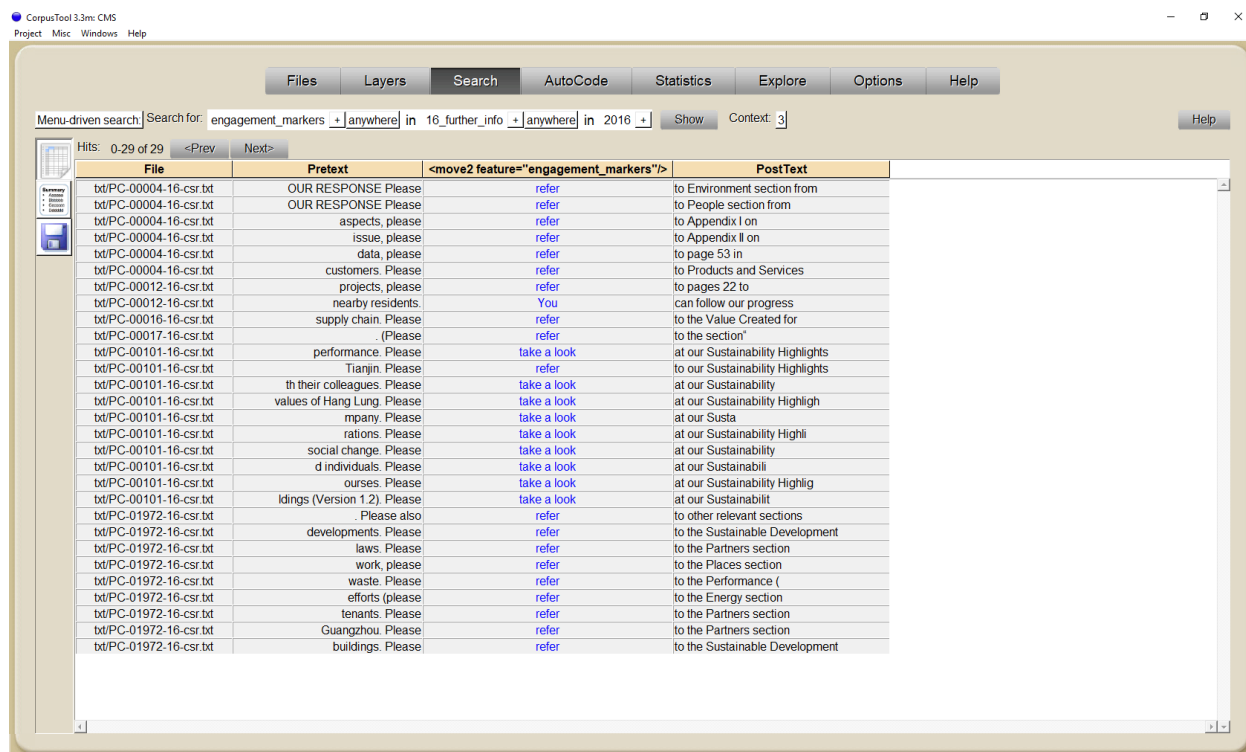


Figure 3.3: A screenshot showing a search query in UAM CorpusTool

The 'Search' function of UAM CorpusTool also provides the number of records satisfying the criteria specified by the analyst. The number is displayed at the top. In the above example, the number is 29.

In the present study, the coding schemes of moves and steps for the CCS and the CMS were developed, revised and refined by taking into consideration every occurrence of moves and steps in the corpus data. The searching function of UAM CorpusTool was useful for the identification and classification of moves and steps when the coding schemes were preliminary, before the categories of moves and steps were fully defined and established.

3. Frequency of occurrence of a particular feature or a combination of features

In addition to the 'Search' function, the 'Statistics' function of UAM CorpusTool can also be used to obtain the number of records satisfying the criteria specified by the analyst. It is possible to obtain figures regarding one or more than one features which are annotated in a corpus. In the

present study, the frequency information was useful for investigating the frequency distributions of categories of moves and steps and those of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS.

Figure 3.4 provides a screenshot of the application of the ‘Statistics’ function. It shows the frequency information of engagement markers in the CMS. As can be seen, UAM CorpusTool provides the frequency of occurrence of engagement markers as well as the frequencies of the five types of engagement markers in raw frequency count and percentage.

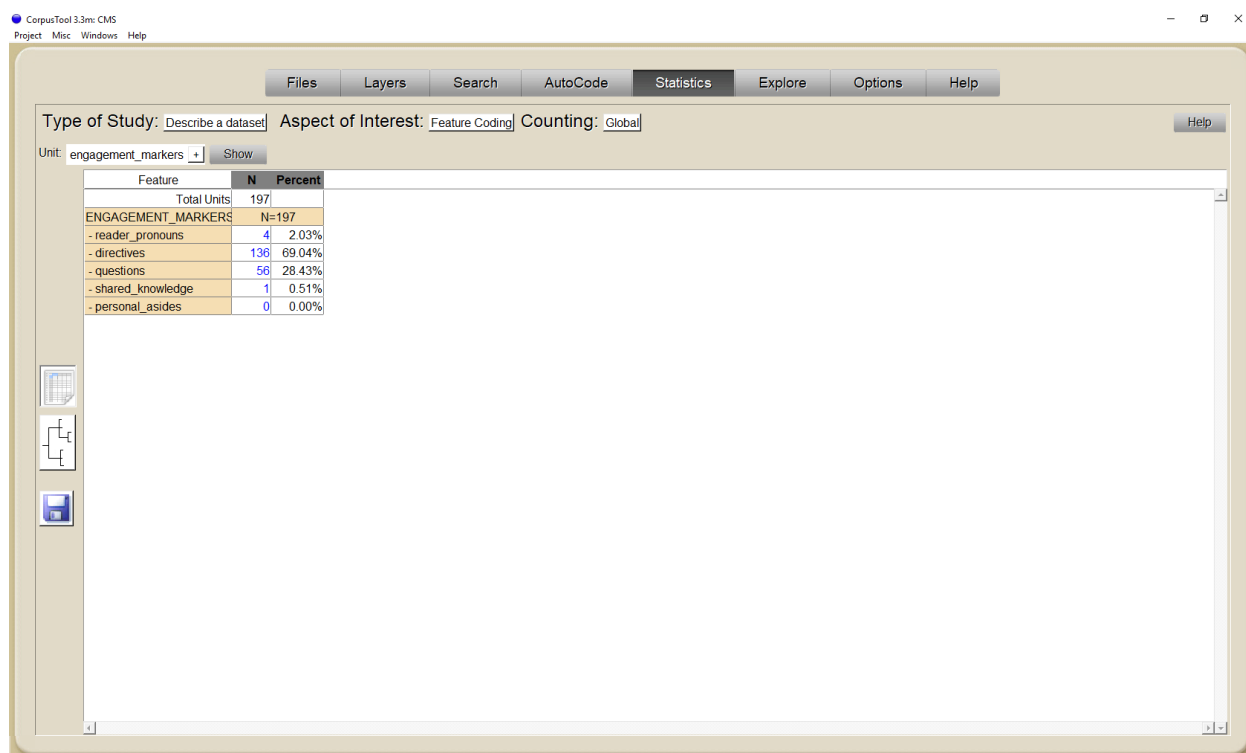


Figure 3.4: A screenshot showing frequency information in UAM CorpusTool

The following sub-section will present the details of move analysis in this study.

3.2.2 Move analysis

This study applied Swales’ (1990, 2004) approach to investigate the move structure of chairpersons’ statements and main sections of ESG reports. Two move analyses were conducted. The first move analysis concerned the CCS, while the second the CMS. In general, the same method was used in both analyses, as will be presented below.

The analysis began with identifying and coding a set of prototypical moves and steps in the texts of the corpus, i.e. the CCS or the CMS. The annotation was conducted manually using UAM

CorpusTool, as described above. To reflect the variety of moves and steps in the texts more fully, the identification of moves and steps was primarily based on the qualitative analysis of the communicative purposes of the different parts of a text, without using any pre-existing coding schemes. The categories of moves and steps were derived from the judgements made by the researcher through multiple readings of the texts. It is important to note, however, that when moves and steps were identified in the corpus data, the categories of moves and steps which have been identified in previous studies (see Section 2.3) were taken into consideration. This is because what have been proposed in the literature might be observed in the data of the present study. It is also worth mentioning that when labels were assigned to the moves and steps identified, reference was made to previous studies. The purpose was to provide an extension of earlier research. In other words, in devising the coding schemes for the present study, the definitions and labels of moves and steps proposed in the literature were adopted and adapted as deemed appropriate. Decisions made regarding labelling will be presented in the discussion of move types in Section 4.1. To achieve a clear and comprehensive description of coding categories, the preliminary coding scheme was applied to all texts for the second time. The coding scheme was fine-tuned until all texts of the corpus were coded for distinctive categories of moves and steps, which together reveal the communicative purposes of the (part) genre under investigation.

The second move analysis, i.e. the move analysis of main sections, was informed by the results from the first move analysis, i.e. the move analysis of chairpersons' statements. More specifically, when a particular move or step identified in the second analysis was found to conform to what had been observed in the first analysis, it was considered unnecessary to create a new category of move or step. The label which had been designed for the move or step in the first analysis was applied to the second one.

In the present study, 21 and 20 move types were identified respectively in the 41 chairperson's statements which comprise the CCS and the 54 main sections which comprise the CMS. The two (part) genres share 16 move types. Table 3.4 shows the move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections. In the table, '✓' indicates the presence of a specific category of move or step, while '×' indicates the absence of it. The table thus shows the similarities and differences in the move types in the (part) genres.

Table 3.4: Move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections

Move type		CCS	CMS
Move type 1:	Presenting corporate profile	✓	✓
Move type 2:	Reporting on financial performance	✓	✓
Move type 3:	Reporting on CSR performance	✓	✓
Step 1:	Describing actions and results	✓	✓
Step 2:	Describing strategies/methods/practices	✓	✓
Step 3:	Assessing CSR performance	×	✓
Move type 4:	Stating mission	✓	✓
Move type 5:	Establishing credentials	✓	✓
Step 1:	Referring to external evaluations	✓	✓
Step 2:	Self-praising	✓	✓
Move type 6:	Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks	✓	✓
Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR	✓	✓
Move type 8:	Introducing the current report	✓	✓
Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting	✓	✓
Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement	✓	✓
Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	✓	✓
Move type 12:	Showing commitment	✓	✓
Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances	✓	✓
Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises	✓	✓
Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future	✓	✓

Move type 16:	Indicating further information	✓	✓
Move type 17:	Presenting business highlights	✓	×
Move type 18:	Presenting bad news	✓	×
Move type 19:	Expressing appreciation	✓	×
Move type 20:	Soliciting feedback	✓	×
Move type 21:	Ending the statement politely	✓	×
Move type 22:	Presenting operational overview	×	✓
Move type 23:	Presenting corporate governance structure	×	✓
Move type 24:	Presenting individual cases and quotations	×	✓
Move type 25:	Indicating upcoming information	×	✓

Using the two coding schemes outlined in the table, all moves and steps in the CCS and CMS were identified and coded. A discussion of the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections of ESG reports will be provided in Chapter 4.

Some chairpersons' statements include texts that seem to have different functions than the communicative functions served by the 21 move types. The texts are salutation, signature and date lines. The functions of these texts 'are more structural in nature than communicative' (Upton & Connor, 2007, p. 53). Following the authors, the features of the chairpersons' statements are referred to as 'structural elements' (Upton & Connor, 2007, p. 52). A discussion of the structural elements of ESG reports will be provided in Chapter 4.

The next sub-section will present how metadiscourse items in chairpersons' statements and main sections were identified, classified and analysed in the present study.

3.2.3 Metadiscourse analysis

The analysis of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS was conducted after the completion of the two move analyses. A model of metadiscourse was developed by adapting Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. Metadiscourse items in the CCS and the CMS were

identified and classified using the model. As noted in Section 2.4.3, metadiscourse must refer to text-internal relations in the present study. In the following, I will first explain this principle by discussing ‘the realm of current text’ in the present study, i.e. what constitutes the current text. Then, I will present the interactive and interactional categories of metadiscourse of the present model.

3.2.3.1 The realm of current text

The present study examines the chairperson’s statement and the main section. These two sections of the ESG report are not considered as two separate current texts. Instead, this study recognises that each of the sections constitutes part of the current text of the ESG report, i.e. both sections are within the realm of one current text. This view is motivated by the fact that both sections are the main sources of information in the ESG reports, and that they are interconnected.

The interconnectedness of the chairperson’s statement and the main section can be seen in two aspects. Firstly, the chairperson’s statement provides opportunities for the writer to guide the reader’s understanding of the material presented in the main section of the ESG report. This role of the chairperson’s statement can be illustrated in the excerpt in Example 1, which is taken from a chairperson’s statement¹⁷.

Example 1

This report details the Group’s efforts and achievements in advancing sustainability in society and cementing business continuity to create long-term value for customers, employees, business partners, shareholders, investors and the wider community.

(CCS-00016-2015)

This example shows the use of *this report* and *details* as metadiscourse items. More specifically, they function as an endophoric marker and a frame marker respectively. *Details* is used to describe the purpose of the ESG report (referred to as ‘this report’ in the example). Using

¹⁷At the end of every example in this thesis, a code is provided to indicate the source of the example. The code shows the corpus to which the example belongs (i.e. CCS or CMS) as well as the listed company (represented by the stock code) and the reporting year associated with the ESG report from which the example is taken. For instance, the code CCS-00016-2015 indicates that the example is taken from the chairperson’s statement of the ESG report issued by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited in 2015, which is one of the texts of the CCS. Table 3.1 in this chapter shows the names of the listed companies under investigation and their respective stock codes.

this report, the writer does not refer to the information in a later part of the chairperson’s statement, but the information in the main section of the ESG report, i.e. a later part of the evolving ESG report. Although the information in the main section is outside the chairperson’s statement (i.e. external to the chairperson’s statement), it is provided in the ESG report (i.e. internal to the ESG report). In this example, a reference is made to the unfolding ESG report, not to the unfolding chairperson’s statement.

Secondly, in the main section, references can be made to the chairperson’s statement of the same ESG report, which is an earlier part of the text, although this kind of reference is used very rarely in the main sections under investigation. The excerpt in Example 2 is taken from a main section. In the example, the writer uses two metadiscourse items, i.e. *mentioned* (functioning as a frame marker) and *in “Message from Management”* (functioning as an endophoric marker) to refer to the chairperson’s statement of the ESG report.

Example 2

As mentioned in “Message from Management”, there is a wide spectrum of sustainability issues and New World Group has chosen to focus on certain issues to ensure the effectiveness of our efforts.

(CMS-00017-2013)

The two instances of metadiscourse items shown in the above example are the only ones used in the CMS which refer to chairperson’s statement.

As presented in Section 3.1.2 above, apart from the chairperson’s statement and the main section, nine other components of the ESG report are observed in the sample reports. The components are as follows:

1. Table of contents,
2. ‘About the report’ or ‘about this report’,
3. List of memberships and charters,
4. List of awards and recognitions,
5. Data tables,
6. Assurance statement or verification statement,

7. Index(es),
8. Appendix(-ices), and
9. Feedback.

These components are included in some of the ESG reports to offer different types of information. As with the chairperson's statement and the main section, each of the nine components constitutes part of the ESG report. Therefore, it was deemed necessary to consider references to the nine components as text-internal references. In this study, the nine components are regarded as structural elements of the ESG report. Their function seems to be structural in that they could be easily identified in the sample ESG reports as the layout of these parts appear to be standardised across the ESG reports.

Example 3 illustrates the use of two metadiscourse items, i.e. *refer* (functioning as an engagement marker) and *the data tables on page 33 to 34* (functioning as an endophoric marker) in a main section. In this example, a reference is made to the data tables in the ESG report, one of the structural elements.

Example 3

For detailed disclosure of the materials used in this reporting year, please refer to the data tables on page 33 to 34.

(CMS-00016-2013)

As explained in Section 2.4.3.1, references to other texts are regarded as intertextual in the present study. Evidentials signal intertextual phenomena, and thus are excluded from the model of metadiscourse developed for this study. The approach taken to the realm of current text in this study is therefore more restrictive than that in Hyland (2005a).

The excerpt in Example 4 is taken from a main section. After briefly describing the corporate governance of the listed company, the writer asks the reader to refer to the annual report issued by the listed company for more information. In this study, *refer*, *our* and *2012 Annual Report* are not regarded as metadiscourse items because the writer refers to a text, i.e. the annual report, which is outside the current text, i.e. the unfolding ESG report. However, there is high chance that they would have been regarded as metadiscourse items by Hyland or other analysts who adopt Hyland's

(2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. In that case, *refer*, *our* and *2012 Annual Report* would have been regarded as an engagement marker, a self mention and an evidential respectively.

Example 4

For more information on our corporate governance, please refer to our 2012 Annual Report.
(CMS-01972-2012)

I would also like to emphasise that as suggested by Hyland (2005a), metadiscourse is a cover term for ‘self-reflective expressions’ (p. 37) and ‘refers only to relations which are internal to the discourse’ (p. 38), as discussed in Section 2.4.2.3. Therefore, references to the real world are outside the current text.

Examples 5 and 6 illustrate the use of *could* in two different main sections. In the former example, *could* functions as a metadiscourse item, and more specifically, a hedge. The use of *could* reflects the writer’s uncertainty and tentativeness while making the assertion regarding the direct impact of municipal solid waste charging on the operational costs of the listed company. It indicates the writer’s assessments of possibility about what may happen to the listed company due to the specific external circumstance. In the latter example, *could* does not function as a metadiscourse item. It is used to describe the possibility of families in need enjoying free dinners in the real world. The writer provides information about an event in the real world during the reporting period – that the listed company made it possible for some families in need to enjoy free dinner.

Example 5

Waste management is high on the agenda for the Hong Kong community, with the HKSAR Government proposing municipal solid waste charging. This could have a direct impact on our operational costs.
(CMS-00101-2013)

Example 6

In addition, we gave away 2,000 “HK\$38 dinner coupons” to the People’s Food Bank of St James Settlement from May to August 2011 so that around 1,000 families in need could enjoy free dinners in our shopping centres.

(CMS-00823-2012)

In sum, the realm of current text of an ESG report includes the chairperson’s statement (if any), main section and structural elements of the ESG report. Only the linguistic items which perform a role internal to the current text can be considered as metadiscourse items in the present study.

Now, I will move on to present the model of metadiscourse developed and implemented in this study.

3.2.3.2 A model of metadiscourse

Based on the interpersonal model of metadiscourse proposed by Hyland (2005a), the model of metadiscourse for the present study is comprised of two broad categories, namely interactive and interactional metadiscourse. Given that evidentials were excluded from analysis, there are four (instead of five) subcategories of interactive metadiscourse in the model: transitions, frame markers, endophoric markers and code glosses. There are five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse, namely hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self mentions and engagement markers. Below, each subcategory of metadiscourse will be presented with illustrative examples. In the examples where more than one subcategory of metadiscourse are involved, only the metadiscourse item of the subcategory under discussion is underlined.

A. Interactive metadiscourse

Interactive metadiscourse provides insight into the ways in which the writer organises the discourse and assesses the reader’s comprehension needs and abilities (Hyland, 2005a).

1. Transitions

Transitions are linguistic resources which help the reader recover pragmatic and logical links between propositions (Hyland, 2005a). This category is labelled as ‘logical connectives’ (Hyland, 1998a, 1998b, 1999, 2000) and ‘logical markers’ (Mur Dueñas, 2011). Hyland (2005a) suggests

that transitions can play different discourse roles internally and externally, i.e. addition, comparison and consequence relations. To count as metadiscourse, the linguistic item ‘must perform a role internal to the discourse rather than the outside world, helping the reader interpret links between ideas’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 50). In the present study, transitions were classified into three types, namely additive, comparative and consequential transitions. They respectively signal addition, comparison and consequence relations which are internal to the discourse of chairpersons’ statements and main sections. The three types of transitions are illustrated in Examples 7-9 respectively.

(1) Additive transitions

Example 7

In this edition of Hysan’s Corporate Responsibility Report, we explain in detail how our Policy is implemented based on our Corporate Responsibility Model. In addition, we highlight our numerous community projects that took place in 2007.

(CMS-00014-2007)

(2) Comparative transitions

Example 8

Our operations will certainly be impacted by any waste policy. However the degree of the impact cannot yet be ascertained.

(CMS-00823-2013)

(3) Consequential transitions

Example 9

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), energy efficiency improvements in buildings represent the largest and least costly energy savings potential available to our planet. Continuously improving our energy efficiency is therefore one of the greatest contributions we can make, in both economic and environmental terms, towards growing our business sustainably.

(CCS-01972-2010)

2. Frame markers

Frame markers ‘signal text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 51). They make the organisation of the text clear to the reader. Frame markers can be broken down into four types according to the functions they serve, namely sequencers, topicalisers, discourse-labels and announcers (Hyland, 2005a).

(1) Sequencers

Sequencers organise the text into sequences and order an argument internally.

Example 10

Our Code of Ethics applies to Directors, officers and employees of Hysan, and is clearly communicated to all, including new recruits. It is based on three main guiding principles: firstly, respect for people; secondly, ethics and business integrity; and thirdly, meeting our responsibility. (CMS-00014-2012)

(2) Topicalisers

Topicalisers indicate the change of topic.

Example 11

Under these strategies, we are in the process of creating some model shopping centres in our portfolio. We successfully completed the renovation of Lok Fu Plaza, the model shopping centre under the “Regional Centre” category. As for our model market – Tai Yuen Market in Tai Po – it is expected to complete in late-2011.

(CMS-00823-2011)

(3) Discourse-labels

Discourse-labels label the stages of the text.

Example 12

In summary, the following key findings and insights emerged from this exercise:

(CMS-01972-2011)

(4) Announcers

Announcers signal discursive purposes.

Example 13

We have detailed several topics that deserve attention in the following pages.

(CCS-00101-2012)

3. Endophoric markers

Endophoric markers are linguistic expressions which are used to refer to different parts of the unfolding text to facilitate the reader's interpretation of the text (Hyland, 2005a). In the model of metadiscourse for the present study, endophoric markers were classified into two types, namely linear text references and non-linear text references, based on Bunton (1999). Taking a narrow approach to metadiscourse by adapting Mauranen's (1993a) taxonomy of metatext, Bunton (1999) draws a distinction between linear and non-linear text references in his study of metadiscourse in PhD theses. Linear text references are 'explicit references to other parts of the text' (Bunton, 1999, p. S45). Non-linear text references indicate explicit references to additional visual materials in the text, such as tables, figures, charts and appendices (Bunton, 1999). One of the pilot studies of the present study revealed the use of both types of text references in selected listed companies of ESG reports. Given that the notions of linear and non-linear text references have been proven useful in showing the textual resources in Bunton (1999) and the pilot study, the notions were incorporated into the model of metadiscourse for the present study with the aim to provide a more comprehensive analysis of endophoric markers in chairpersons' statements and main sections. The two types of endophoric markers are illustrated in Examples 14 and 15 respectively.

(1) Linear text references**Example 14**

Learn more about our environmental initiatives in 'Creating Green Environment'.

(CCS-00083-2016)

(2) Non-linear text references

Example 15

In 2014, we developed a Three-year Action Plan (Action Plan) in response to our stakeholders' expectations, under which we set the goal of implementing our Sustainability Vision by the end of 2017. The table below gives an update on our progress and indicates where amendments have been made to the Action Plan.

(CMS-00101-2016)

4. Code glosses

Code glosses are linguistic resources which are used to supply additional information, by rephrasing, explaining or elaborating what has been said in a text to assist the reader to recover the meaning intended by the writer (Hyland, 2005a, 2007). There are two types of code glosses, namely reformulation markers and exemplificatory markers (Hyland, 2007).

(1) Reformulation markers

Reformulation markers restate or re-elaborate previous discourse unit in different words to facilitate the reader's comprehension (Hyland, 2007).

Example 16¹⁸

Our core business – development of properties for sale and rental business of investment properties – incorporates our commitment to quality in all dimensions.

(CCS-00016-2014)

(2) Exemplificatory markers

Exemplificatory markers clarify or support previous discourse unit by citing an example (Hyland, 2007).

Example 17

At the Group's leasing properties, we aim to minimise wastage and manage waste properly in the daily operations through a range of measures including separation, reuse, recycling, disposal and

¹⁸The example illustrates the use of dashes as reformulation markers. Both the dashes and the reformulation are underlined for clarity.

storage. For example, waste is collected and separated by types, and recyclable waste is collected, labelled and stored for collection by recycling contractors on a regular basis.

(CMS-00012-2014)

B. Interactional metadiscourse

Regarding interactional metadiscourse, worthy of a particular mention is that Hyland (2005b) makes the distinction between stance and engagement resources when he proposes a model of interaction in academic discourse, which involves ‘the resources writers employ to express their positions and connect with readers’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 173). The model distinguishes two categories of interactional macro-functions which can help illustrate the ways by which interaction is achieved in academic discourse, i.e. stance and engagement. The macro-function of stance is realised by hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self mentions. These resources ‘refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 176), showing how they ‘intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 176). The macro-function of engagement is realised by reader pronouns, directives, questions, appeals to shared knowledge and personal asides. These are the features used by writers to acknowledge the presence of their readers and connect with them (Hyland, 2005b). They represent the writers’ efforts to overtly bring the readers into the text by ‘pulling them along with their argument, focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding them to interpretations’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 176). Obviously, the linguistic resources in this model focusing on stance and engagement (Hyland, 2005b) overlap with those in the interactional category of the interpersonal model of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005a). Following Hyland (2005a), I use the term ‘interactional metadiscourse’ to refer to all five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse. I do not use ‘stance’ and ‘engagement’ to refer to particular subcategories in this study.

The first two subcategories of interactional metadiscourse are hedges and boosters. They are important resources for expressing doubt and certainty (Hyland, 1998c). Since the two resources can function as complementary strategies, they have been studied as a pair (e.g., Holmes, 1982, 1984, 1988, 1990; Hu & Cao, 2011; Hyland, 1998c). They have also been under investigation within metadiscourse (and hence stance and engagement) frameworks (e.g., Fu, 2012; Fu &

Hyland, 2014; Gillaerts & Van de Velde, 2010; Hu & Cao, 2015; Hyland, 2005a, 2005b; Hyland & Tse, 2004; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012; Vande Kopple, 1985).

1. Hedges

Hedges are used to withhold complete commitment to propositional content (Hyland, 2005a), reduce the force of statements and show doubt (Hyland, 1998c). The use of hedges indicates the writer's recognition of alternative viewpoints in presenting assertions.

Example 18

The increase in the number of work injury cases was largely due to the switch from outsourced property management to direct management effective in late 2009.

(CMS-00823-2011)

2. Boosters

Opposing to hedges, boosters are used to enhance the writer's degree of certainty towards propositional content (Hyland, 2005a). They 'allow writers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 52).

Example 19

We believe a prerequisite for a listed company to create value effectively and continuously is a sincere appreciation of and support for the community where we work.

(CCS-00688-2013)

3. Attitude markers

Attitude markers are used to indicate the writer's affective and evaluative stance towards propositional content (Hyland, 2005a), conveying attitudes and position, such as 'surprise, agreement, importance, obligation, frustration' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 53) as well as 'judgements, views, and opinions, which need to be expressed in accordance with the value system of the particular community they address' (Mur Dueñas, 2010, p. 51). Similarly, as described by Hu and Cao (2015, p. 15), attitude markers 'can help writers to persuade readers by foregrounding shared attitudes and values'.

Example 20

Most importantly, we learned that we need to commence the studies earlier in the development programme, as late starts limit the scope of possible improvements, particularly those that are not tried and tested in largescale projects.

(CMS-01972-2009)

4. Self mentions

Self mentions indicate writer presence. They are used to explicitly mark authorial identity (Hyland, 2001). In the present study of ESG reports, self mentions were classified into the following types:

1. First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (e.g. *I, my, our, we*),
2. General company references (e.g. *the Board, the Group, the Group's*), and
3. Company name references (e.g. *Hang Lung's, New World Group, Swire Properties*).

The first type of self mentions is proposed by Hyland (2005a), whereas the second and third types are not. The second and the third types were identified in the CCS and the CMS, and thus were added to the model of metadiscourse. A general company reference is a reference to a specific listed company, the board of directors or the management of the listed company. The reference is made with the use of general terms, without mentioning the name of the listed company. A company name reference is a reference to a specific listed company by using the name of the listed company. Both general company references and company name references include possessive forms, as with the first type, which involves possessive adjectives.

In the present study, it is argued that general company references and company name references are used to convey meanings in a more impersonal style so that the role of the writer is reduced, and the focus is on the listed company. These two types of self mentions highlight the fact that the writer of chairpersons' statements and main sections constructs the discourse on behalf of the listed company.

As briefly described in Section 2.4.3.2, the definition of self mentions in the present study is more restrictive than that of Hyland (2005a). All instances of self mentions identified in the data make text-internal references. To be regarded as a self mention in the present study, the linguistic

item in question must refer to the writer of the current text (or in the possessive form). The three types of self mentions are illustrated in Examples 21-23 respectively.

(1) First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives

Example 21

We are pleased to present our 2012/13 Sustainability Report.

(CCS-00016-2012)

(2) General company references

Example 22

The Group believes that our responsibilities go far beyond direct economic contribution and recognises the impact that we have on society, both through our operations and community investment initiatives.

(CMS-00012-2016)

(3) Company name references

Example 23

This is Hang Lung's third stand-alone sustainability report.

(CCS-00101-2014)

The linguistic items underlined in Examples 24-27 below are possible realisations of self mentions. In the examples, the writer describes various acts related to the CSR performance of the listed companies. The acts take (or took) place in the real world regardless of the way in which the chairperson's statement or main section was constructed. Therefore, the underlined linguistic items refer to text-external relations, and are not regarded as self mentions in the present study.

Example 24

In our shopping malls and premises, we continue to enhance energy efficiency through retrofitting equipment and facilities as well as replacement of LED lights and more energy efficient chillers.

(CCS-00004-2016)

Example 25

As at the end of 2015, the Company had obtained over 40 green building certifications, promoting the development and practice of green properties.

(CMS-00688-2015)

Example 26

New World Group supports various green activities to promote environmental education and strive to build a more harmonious society.

(CMS-00017-2014)

Below, I cite an example provided by Huang and Rose (2018) in their study of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters to shareholders in annual reports. According to the authors, *my* and *me* function as self mentions in the example.

Example 27

My first nine months as Chairman, following the retirement of Leon Davis in March 2007, has been an extremely rewarding experience for me.

(Huang & Rose, 2018, p. 181)

In this example, the writer reports that there was a change in leadership of the listed company. I do not see how *my* and *me* make text-internal references. To my understanding, the Chairman (as the writer of the CEO's letter) expresses his positive attitudes towards his working experience in the listed company in the real world, which is external to the unfolding CEO's letter.

Therefore, it is argued that self mentions were identified in the present study in a way which is more restrictive than those in Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (2005a).

5. Engagement markers

The final subcategory of interactional metadiscourse is engagement markers. They concern how the writer engages with the reader. They represent various ways in which the writer acknowledges the presence of the reader and bring them into the unfolding discourse, for example, 'focusing their attention, acknowledging their uncertainties, including them as discourse participants, and guiding

them to interpretations’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 176). Following Hyland (2005b), engagement markers in the present model encompass five types of resources: reader pronouns, directives, questions, appeals to shared knowledge and personal asides.

(1) Reader pronouns

Reader pronouns refer to the reader’s presence and address the reader as a participant in the text (Hyland, 2005b).

Example 28

In the following pages, you will find highlights of our 2014 achievements, as well as our targets and expectations for the coming years.

(CCS-00101-2014)

(2) Directives

Directives command the reader to take an action in a particular way determined by the writer (Hyland, 2005b). According to Hyland (2005b), directives can be used to express three types of acts, namely textual, physical and cognitive. Textual acts ‘metadiscoursally guide readers through the discussion, steering them to another part of the text or to another text’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 185), physical acts ‘instruct readers ... to perform some action in the real world’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 185), while cognitive acts ‘guide readers through a line of reasoning, or get them to understand a point in a certain way’ (Hyland, 2005b, p. 185). It is important to note that since the approach taken by the present model of metadiscourse is that metadiscourse must refer to text-internal relations, only the textual acts which direct the reader to another part of the text and cognitive acts are relevant to the present study.

Example 29 illustrates the use of the directive *refer*. It is used to direct the reader to read a later part of the main section of the ESG report. The textual act is concerned with the unfolding main section, i.e. within the realm of current text.

Example 29

For further information on our products and services, please refer to P. 46 - 51 of Products and Services section.

(CMS-00004-2015)

As explained earlier, the current text involves the unfolding ESG report, including the structural elements. Therefore, references to the structural elements of the ESG report are also regarded as text-internal in the present study, as illustrated in Example 3 in Section 3.2.3.1 (reproduced below). The example shows the use of *refer* as a directive. The reader is directed by the writer to refer to the data tables of the ESG report, which are within the realm of current text.

Example 3 (reproduced)

For detailed disclosure of the materials used in this reporting year, please refer to the data tables on page 33 to 34.

(CMS-00016-2013)

Another type of acts which is relevant to the present study is cognitive acts. However, no directives identified in the CCS and the CMS were found to perform cognitive acts. Example 30, taken from Hyland's (2005b) study of research articles, shows the use of *consider* performing such a function in a research article in electrical engineering.

Example 30

Consider a sequence of batches in an optimal schedule.

(Hyland, 2005b, p. 185; emphasis added)

In this example, the directive *consider* is used by the academic writer to guide the reader to understand the writer's argument. This helps the writer to present his or her claims. According to Hyland (2005b, p. 185), such a way of inviting the reader to understand a point and pursuing the argument with the writer makes cognitive acts 'potentially the most threatening type of directives'.

Textual acts which ask reader to read other texts involve texts which are outside the realm of current text, and are not relevant to the present study. In Example 31, *refer* is not regarded as a directive in the present study.

Example 31

For further information on our corporate governance performance, please refer to the Corporate Governance Report of Wharf's Annual Report 2016.

(CMS-00004-2016)

As regards physical acts, the reader is instructed to act in the real world. The acts are also outside the realm of current text. In Example 32, *visit* and *use* are not regarded as directives in the present study.

Example 32

For more information about “The Link’s Hero Tenants”, please visit <http://www.thelinkreit.com/EN/news/Pages/Video-Gallery.aspx?keyword=The+Link’s+Hero+Tenants&column=Filter> or use this QR Code with your smart phone

(CMS-00823-2012)

(3) Questions

Questions refer to both rhetorical and real questions asked by the writer with the aim to bring the reader to participate in the dialogue of the unfolding text (Hyland, 2005b).

Example 33

How does Sino encourage its employees to volunteer and be involved in community initiatives?

(CMS-00083-2012)

(4) Appeals to shared knowledge

Appeals to shared knowledge are linguistic expressions for positioning the reader within shared understandings such that the reader is brought to agree with the writer (Hyland, 2005b).

Example 34

Sustainability, of course, is not only about the environment.

(CCS-00101-2012)

(5) *Personal asides*

Personal asides are comments made by the writer to directly address the reader by briefly interrupting the flow of text so as to give remarks on what has been said (Hyland, 2005b).

Personal asides were not identified in chairpersons' statements and main sections examined in the present study. Example 35 illustrates an instance of personal aside used in a research article in sociology as provided by Hyland (2005b).

Example 35

He above all provoked the mistrust of academics, both because of his trenchant opinions (often, it is true, insufficiently thought out) and his political opinions.

(Hyland, 2005b, p. 183; emphasis added)

The model of metadiscourse for the present study is displayed in Table 3.5.

Table 3.5: Model of metadiscourse

A. Interactive metadiscourse
1. Transitions
(1) Additive transitions
(2) Comparative transitions
(3) Consequential transitions
2. Frame markers
(1) Sequencers
(2) Topicalisers
(3) Discourse-labels
(4) Announcers
3. Endophoric markers
(1) Linear text references
(2) Non-linear text references
4. Code glosses
(1) Reformulation markers
(2) Exemplificatory markers

B. Interactional metadiscourse

1. Hedges
 2. Boosters
 3. Attitude markers
 4. Self mentions
 5. Engagement markers
 - (1) Reader pronouns
 - (2) Directives
 - (3) Questions
 - (4) Appeals to shared knowledge
 - (5) Personal asides
-

In the present study, metadiscourse items were identified manually through reading each of the chairpersons' statements and main sections closely. While Hyland (2005a, pp. 218-224) provides a list of potential metadiscourse items which allows analysts to identify potential metadiscourse items in a text in an efficient manner, I did not rely on the pre-defined set of linguistic expressions for identifying metadiscourse items in my data. I was aware that solely relying on the list would not be enough – it may lead to overlooking some linguistic expressions which in fact perform a metadiscursive function in the chairpersons' statements and main sections but are not included in Hyland's (2005a) list. In view of this potential limitation of using Hyland's list, the words, phrases, clauses and punctuations in the chairpersons' statements and main sections were examined in their contexts to determine whether they function as metadiscourse items. When a linguistic expression was found to perform a metadiscursive function, the expression was classified with respect to the model of metadiscourse discussed above. All metadiscourse items identified in this study were found to belong to one of the nine subcategories (and one of the types of a specific subcategory, when necessary) in the model, which was developed prior to data analysis. No new subcategories (and types) of metadiscourse were created. As described in Section 3.2.1, the texts of the CCS and the CMS were coded with various subcategories and types of metadiscourse in UAM CorpusTool during the analysis.

I would like to acknowledge that due to limited resources, the identification and classification of metadiscourse items were not verified by a second rater. To ensure the accuracy of the data

analysis, the process of identifying and classifying metadiscourse items in the CCS and the CMS was conducted twice by the researcher.

The use of metadiscourse in the chairpersons' statements and main sections will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Summary

This chapter first describes the data for this empirical study. The selection of the ESG reports and the listed companies is explained, and the compilation of the two corpora, i.e. the CCS and the CMS, is described. The chapter then moves on to discuss the use of UAM CorpusTool in this study, move analysis and metadiscourse analysis. In the discussion, taxonomies of move types and metadiscourse developed and implemented in this study are presented.

Chapter 4

Move structures

This chapter discusses the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections of ESG reports. It starts with a detailed description of the move types in the (part) genres of chairpersons' statements and main sections (4.1). Then, it presents the structural elements in chairpersons' statements (4.2). This is followed by a discussion of the distribution of move types in the two (part) genres (4.3). Finally, the chapter takes a closer look at four move types, focusing on their reappearance and use in combination (4.4). As the chapter unfolds, we will see that the four selected move types are of great importance in both (part) genres, and therefore deserve further attention.

4.1 Move types

As presented in Section 3.2.2, 21 and 20 move types were identified respectively in the 41 chairperson's statements which comprise the CCS and the 54 main sections which comprise the CMS. In addition, the two (part) genres share 16 move types. Table 3.4 (presented in Section 3.2.2) which shows the move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections is reproduced below.

Table 3.4: Move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections (reproduced)

Move type	CCS	CMS
Move type 1: Presenting corporate profile	✓	✓
Move type 2: Reporting on financial performance	✓	✓
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance	✓	✓
Step 1: Describing actions and results	✓	✓
Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices	✓	✓
Step 3: Assessing CSR performance	×	✓
Move type 4: Stating mission	✓	✓
Move type 5: Establishing credentials	✓	✓
Step 1: Referring to external evaluations	✓	✓
Step 2: Self-praising	✓	✓

Move type 6:	Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks	✓	✓
Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR	✓	✓
Move type 8:	Introducing the current report	✓	✓
Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting	✓	✓
Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement	✓	✓
Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	✓	✓
Move type 12:	Showing commitment	✓	✓
Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances	✓	✓
Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises	✓	✓
Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future	✓	✓
Move type 16:	Indicating further information	✓	✓
Move type 17:	Presenting business highlights	✓	×
Move type 18:	Presenting bad news	✓	×
Move type 19:	Expressing appreciation	✓	×
Move type 20:	Soliciting feedback	✓	×
Move type 21:	Ending the statement politely	✓	×
Move type 22:	Presenting operational overview	×	✓
Move type 23:	Presenting corporate governance structure	×	✓
Move type 24:	Presenting individual cases and quotations	×	✓
Move type 25:	Indicating upcoming information	×	✓

Before describing each of the 25 move types, several comments need to be made:

1. To achieve concise, instead of presenting the 21 move types identified in the chairperson's statements and then the other 20 in the main sections, the following discussion begins with the move types shared by both (part) genres of chairperson's statements and main sections (Section 4.1.1), followed by those identified in chairperson's statements only (4.1.2), and finally, those in main sections only (4.1.3). Because of this arrangement, the numbers assigned to the move types and the constituent steps (if any) do not reflect the order in which they appear in the texts.

2. Segments of text in each text of the CCS and the CMS were coded as separate moves (and steps) based on the coding frameworks as shown in Tables 3.4. The frameworks recognise the possibility of cyclical reoccurrence of the move types in a text. Cyclical patterns were ‘dealt with by considering each appearance of a particular move as a separate occurrence’ (Connor, Upton, Kanoksilapatham, 2007, p. 31). Therefore, a single move type could be represented by multiple moves in a text. This study identified a total of 624 moves in the CCS and 5,281 moves in the CMS. As will be discussed in Section 4.3, the move types differ from one another in terms of the number of moves representing them in chairpersons’ statements and main sections.
3. Examples of move types will be provided for illustrative purposes. Numbers and the names of the move types are inserted to mark the beginning of a move in the examples. For instance, <MT1: Presenting corporate profile> indicates the beginning of a move of move type 1. The end of a move is marked by ‘/’ and the number of the move type. For instance, </MT1> indicates the end of a move of move type 1. As will be discussed, two move types are realised by steps. In the examples illustrating these two move types, numbers and the names of the steps are indicated to mark the beginning and the end of the steps. For instance, <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> indicates the beginning of step 1 of move type 3 and </MT3S1> indicates the end of the step. In some examples, ‘...’ is used to signal an incomplete move or step whenever necessary.

4.1.1 Move types in both chairpersons’ statements and main sections

Based on the results of the move analyses of chairperson’s statements and main sections, the two (part) genres share 16 move types. Below, each of the 16 move types will be presented.

Move type 1: Presenting corporate profile

The communicative purpose of this move type is to introduce the listed company to the reader. In the CCS, this move type provides brief information about the listed company’s areas of business (see Examples 1 and 2). It also announces the anniversary of the listed company (see Example 2).

Example 1

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> Property development is one of our core businesses. </MT1>

(CCS-00017-2014)

Example 2

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> This year marks the fifth anniversary of The Link Real Estate Investment Trust (“The Link”). Since our listing in November 2005, the focus of The Link has been to improve the facilities and services of our 180 commercial properties in Hong Kong. </MT1>
(CCS-00823-2011)

In the CMS, the move type provides information about the listed company, such as history, areas of business, assets, business strategies and business outlook.

Example 3 shows two moves representing the move type, with the first one providing general information about the listed company, i.e. Swire Properties Limited (referred to as ‘Swire Properties’ in the example), and the second one presenting its business strategy. Other move types appear between the two moves, and the texts in-between are not shown here.

Example 3

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> Established in Hong Kong in 1972, Swire Properties develops and manages office, retail, hotel and residential properties, with a focus on mixed use developments in prime, accessible locations across Hong Kong, Mainland China and the US. Swire Properties is listed on the Main Board of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong. </MT1> [...] <MT1: Presenting corporate profile> our strategic objective is sustainable growth in value over the long term. To achieve this, whether we are developing a site or revitalising an existing building, sustainable development is central to our strategy. We take great care to consider the health, safety and well-being of our communities, to reduce negative impact on the surrounding environment. </MT1>
(CMS-01972-2015)

Move type 1 corresponds to the move type ‘presenting corporate profile’ in Yu and Bondi (2017).

Move type 2: Reporting on financial performance

This move type discloses information about the listed company's financial performance for the past year(s). Example 4 and 5 illustrate the move type in the CCS and the CMS respectively.

In Example 4, the writer presents information about the 'sales, turnover and profit' of the listed company.

Example 4

<MT2: Reporting on financial performance> During 2013, sales, turnover and profit attributable to equity shareholders of the Company once again climbed to record-setting heights. This outstanding result was attributable to the commitment to our sustainable development strategy. Over the past 12 years from 2002 to 2013, our net profit growth exceeded 20% each year. ...
</MT2>

(CCS-00688-2013)

In Example 5, the writer makes a general statement about the financial performance of the listed company i.e. Hang Lung Properties Limited (referred to as 'Hang Lung Properties' in the example), and then reports on its 'property sales revenue' and 'rental income'.

Example 5

<MT2: Reporting on financial performance> Hang Lung Properties recorded a strong financial performance in 2016, confirming the success of our prudent management strategies. Year on year, property sales revenue grew by 345% and rental income increased by 3% (excluding the 6% depreciation in the renminbi (RMB)). </MT2>

(CMS-00101-2016)

It has to be noted that move type 'presenting performance' in Yu and Bondi (2017, p. 288) is concerned with the disclosure of 'information about the listed company's financial, social, or environmental performance during the report period'. The present study makes a distinction between the disclosure of financial information (move type 2) and the disclosure of CSR information (move type 3).

Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance

This move type discloses information about the CSR performance of the listed company. In chairperson's statements, the move type could be expressed by one or both of the following steps:

Step 1: Describing actions and results, and

Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices.

Examples 6-8 illustrate the move type in the CCS. Example 6 shows a move with step 1 only. The writer describes the K11 Art Foundation and the New World Springboard sustainable community programme, which are two initiatives of the listed company, i.e. New World Development Company Limited. They represent two examples of what the listed company did (or has done) in the area of community involvement in CSR.

Example 6

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The K11 Art Foundation provides a creative incubation platform to nurture young artists in Greater China, while promotes art appreciation in the community. The New World Springboard sustainable community programme demonstrates our commitment to improving social mobility of under-resourced youths through professional sports training and mentorship. It is encouraging that a record number of young swimmers finished New World Harbour Race 2015, an iconic annual event that promotes sports for all. </MT3S1>
(CCS-00017-2015)

Example 7 shows a move with step 2 only. The writer describes the strategy implemented by the listed company to 'address climate change'. The strategy is to enhance the energy efficiency of the premises of the listed company.

Example 7

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We address climate change by creating and managing more energy efficient developments that will be of enduring value to our customers, tenants and business partners – as well as our investors. </MT3S2>
(CCS-01972-2008)

Example 8 shows a move with both steps 1 and 2. The writer firstly states that the listed company always maintains effective communication with its employees and provides ‘an inclusive and supportive workplace’, which are general practices of the listed company, i.e. The Wharf (Holdings) Limited. The writer then describes that the listed company has promoted work-life balance by organising social activities for its employees and their family members. The writer also describes an event organised for its hotel staff members. Finally, the writer reports that the listed company provided professional training for its employees. Promoting work-life balance, organising the event for hotel staff members and providing professional training are actions taken by the listed company in enhancing the well-being of its employees.

Example 8

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We continue to maintain an open dialogue with staff and create an inclusive and supportive workplace across our operations. </MT3S2>

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The Wharf Staff Recreation Committee has taken an active role to foster work-life balance through an array of social activities for staff and their families. In 2014, Wharf Hotels launched the “3 hotels, 1 family” culture to enhance the connectedness among the hotel staff. During the year, over 73,000 hours of training were delivered to our employees across the Group to enhance their knowledge and awareness in different aspects.

</MT3S1>

(CCS-00004-2014)

In main sections, move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ could be expressed by one or more of the following steps:

Step 1: Describing actions and results,

Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices, and

Step 3: Assessing CSR performance.

Example 9 shows a move with all three steps in the CMS. Firstly, the writer describes that the listed company has made use of technologies to contribute to the community. Then, the writer

presents information about how the listed company helped the visually impaired with the use of technology. Finally, the writer evaluates the actions of the listed company, suggesting that the listed company created a positive impact on the visually impaired.

Example 9

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We have been exploring technologies to better serve the community. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We made use of the audible function of a smart phone to voice out messages by scanning the QR code. For instance, we used QR code to promote mini concerts of The Eden Trio, a visually impaired choir from Taiwan. </MT3S1> <MT3S3: Assessing CSR performance> This was particularly useful to the visually impaired. </MT3S3>

(CMS-00823-2012)

The communicative purpose of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ is to report on CSR performance by providing information about the actions taken by the listed company and the results of the actions. It corresponds to the step ‘reporting actions and results’ of the move type ‘presenting performance’ in Yu and Bondi (2017).

According to Yu and Bondi (2017, p. 283), ‘reporting actions and results’ is a core step ‘which corresponds most closely to the communicative intention’ of the move type ‘presenting performance’. The authors suggest that the following steps are supplementary to the core step:

- Communicating strategies/methods/practices,
- Assessing performance,
- Stating missions, and
- Detailing an internal action.

Yu and Bondi (2017) provide examples showing that the core step ‘reporting actions and results’ can be introduced in various ways, such as by ‘stating missions’ and ‘communicating strategies/methods/practices’. The core step can also be followed by ‘assessing performance’ and ‘detailing an internal action’. However, while ‘communicating strategies/methods/practices’ is one of the five steps of the move type ‘presenting performance’, the appendix of Yu and Bondi (2017)

shows that ‘stating strategies/methods/practices’ is one of the 15 move types of CSR reports. The authors do not explain to what extent the step and the move type with similar labels are similar or different from one another. They also do not provide any examples of the move type ‘stating strategies/methods/practices’. In the present study, ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ is identified only as a step (i.e. step 2). The communicative purpose of the step is to report on CSR performance by describing the listed company’s general strategies, methods, measures, practices, initiatives and approaches to achieve its specific CSR objective.

Step 3 ‘assessing CSR performance’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ identified in main sections in the present study corresponds to the step ‘assessing performance’ of the move type ‘presenting performance’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). This step involves an assessment of the listed company’s CSR performance. The communicative purpose is to highlight the positive impact of the actions taken by the listed company.

The other two steps of the move type ‘presenting performance’ reported by Yu and Bondi (2017) are ‘stating missions’ and ‘detailing an internal action’. However, ‘stating missions’ and ‘presenting an internal action’ are also identified by the authors as two of the 15 move types of CSR reports. As with the case of the step ‘communicating strategies/methods/practices’ discussed earlier, no explanations are provided as to the similarities and the differences between the step ‘stating mission’ and the move type ‘stating mission’, and the step ‘detailing an internal action’ and the move type ‘presenting an internal action’. These steps and move types need some further elaboration. Here, I will discuss the step ‘detailing an internal action’ and the move type ‘presenting an internal action’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). ‘Stating mission’ is identified as a move type (i.e. move type 4) and not a step in the present study. I will discuss it later in this sub-section.

Example 10 below is the only example illustrating the step ‘detailing an internal action’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). The step is marked as INT.ACT by the authors. The example also shows two other steps, ‘stating missions’ and ‘reporting actions and results’, and they are marked respectively as MISSION and ACT.RES by the authors.

Example 10

In 2013, to increase awareness of the types of information that must be communicated to the EWC, <MISSION> we issued a global policy governing the flow of information between the parent company and any parties responsible for transnational Group initiatives that significantly affect

the interests of our employees; <ACT.RES.> the policy specifies procedures to follow when the information in question is germane to the EWC. <INT.ACT.>

(Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 283; underlined as original)

Yu and Bondi (2017) note that the step ‘detailing an internal action’ provides greater details of the policy mentioned. Therefore, the text segment concerned could be seen as an elaboration of the previous piece of information which is about ‘a global policy’ issued by the listed company, an action taken by the listed company. I would argue that the text segment coded as ‘detailing an internal action’ by the authors could be interpreted as part of the prior step ‘reporting actions and results’.

As one of the 15 move types of CSR reports, ‘presenting an internal action’ ‘describes and specifies internal actions that are managed, directed, organized, or produced by the listed company (e.g., projects, regulation, standards)’ (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 288). As already noted, no examples of this specific move type are provided by the authors.

In the present study, the information about ‘an internal action’ of a listed company is regarded as a portion of the reporting of the listed company’s CSR performance. What Yu and Bondi (2017) call ‘detailing an internal action’ (a step) and ‘presenting an internal action’ (a move type) constitute part of step 1 ‘reporting actions and results’ (see Example 11) or step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ (see Example 12) of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance.

Example 11 shows the step ‘reporting actions and results’. The text segment highlighted in italics provides details of the ‘standards’ of occupational safety and health managed by the listed company, i.e. Hysan Development Company Limited (referred to as ‘Hysan’ in the example), and its partners and contractors. The stringent selection of contractors and independent safety consultancy demonstrate the ‘endeavours to achieve high standards of occupational safety and health’ of the listed company, and thus are considered as actions taken by the listed company to promote occupational safety and health in the workplace of the redevelopment project.

Example 11

<MT3S1: Reporting actions and results> ... On our Hennessy Centre redevelopment project, we have continued our endeavours to ensure that Hysan’s partners and contractors achieve high standards of occupational safety and health. *Contractors for various phases of the construction*

project were selected based on their track record in the quality of work and ability to complete the project with due regard to safety at work, as well as the environment. We have also engaged an experienced independent safety consultant to offer advice to the contractors and to monitor performance. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00014-2009)

Example 12 illustrates the step ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’. In this example, information about the whistle-blowing policy and grievance-handling procedure of a company is provided. Descriptions of the internal policy are italicised. The policy and procedure are considered as general strategies against corruption and misconduct.

Example 12

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> ... We have a whistle-blowing policy in place and grievance-handling procedure is explained in our staff handbook. *The whistle-blowing policy is accessible to all employees and it states that no individual should experience any form of intimidation or retaliation when reporting a concern and all disclosures are treated in a confidential and sensitive manner.* </MT3S2>

(CMS-00016-2011)

Move type 4: Stating mission

As noted earlier, ‘stating mission’ is a step of the move type ‘presenting performance’ as well as a move type in Yu and Bondi (2017). As a step, it ‘states the listed company’s motivation for [an] action’ (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 284). Example 10 above is the only example illustrating the step provided by the authors. As a move type, ‘stating mission’ ‘[s]tates the company’s missions, which guide the company’s decision-making process, actions, and CSR strategies’ (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 288). The authors do not provide any examples of this move type. Based on the above descriptions given by the authors, the communicative functions of ‘stating mission’ as a step and as a move type appear to be very similar. It is unclear as to whether and to what extent they are different.

In the present study, ‘stating mission’ is identified only as a move type. It states the listed company’s mission, vision, philosophy and principles, which guide the listed company’s decision-making processes and ensure that the listed company can reach business and/or CSR objectives. Examples 13 and 14 illustrate this move type in the CCS and the CMS respectively.

Example 13

<MT4: Stating mission> Building Homes with Heart is the philosophy that lies at the foundation of our culture and guides everything we do at Sun Hung Kai Properties. </MT4>
(CCS-00016-2014)

Example 14

<MT4: Stating mission> “Building for Tomorrow” has been our long-standing mission in creating a solid pathway to sustainable development. </MT4>
(CMS-00004-2016)

As illustrated in the two examples, the mission acts as a guideline for making decisions in various aspects of the listed company. It facilitates the development of the listed company in terms of business and/or CSR. In Example 13, the writer even uses ‘everything we do’ to indicate that the ‘philosophy’ of the listed company, i.e. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (referred to as ‘Sun Hung Kai Properties’ in the example), is crucial for all the actions taken by the listed company.

In the above examples, the missions carry a ‘general’ meaning in that they guide the companies to act, behave and perform in a certain way in different situations. In Example 10 presented above (reproduced below), the step ‘stating mission’ serves to state a goal the listed company intends to accomplish. The introduction and implementation of the ‘global policy’ are actions taken by the listed company to achieve the goal. In this sense, the mission seems to be specific to the policy; it is not relevant to other CSR or business actions of the listed company.

Example 10 (reproduced)

In 2013, to increase awareness of the types of information that must be communicated to the EWC, <MISSION> we issued a global policy governing the flow of information between the parent company and any parties responsible for transnational Group initiatives that significantly affect

the interests of our employees; <ACT.RES.> the policy specifies procedures to follow when the information in question is germane to the EWC. <INT.ACT.>

(Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 283; underlined as original)

Cases of missions which are ‘specific’ in nature identified in the CCS and the CMS are considered different from the ones in Examples 13 and 14, which are more ‘general’ in nature. The text segments which present ‘specific’ missions are considered part of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ or step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of the move type ‘reporting on CSR performance’, as illustrated in Examples 15 and 16 below respectively. It follows that the step ‘stating missions’ reported by Yu and Bondi (2017) is not identified in the present study.

In the two examples below, the text segments expressing ‘specific’ missions – what would have been identified as the step ‘stating missions’ by Yu and Bondi (2017) – are italicised.

Example 15

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... *In order to enhance public participation in recycling, we collaborated with welfare organisations to organise different types of community recycling programmes. We made use of our extensive network to provide convenient collection points to encourage the public to participate in recycling initiatives.* ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00823-2012)

Example 16

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> *To bring out the best in our people, we provide internal and external training programmes as well as sponsorships through our Corporate and Talent Development Department and Human Resources Department. These include new staff orientations, regular risk workshops, job-specific training and voluntary courses on topics such as public speaking and design thinking. Leadership development programmes are also offered for all levels of management.* ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-00017-2016)

Move type 5: Establishing credentials

This move type presents the strength, ability, expertise and achievements of the listed company. It is realised by one or both of the following two steps:

Step 1: Referring to external evaluations, and

Step 2: Self-praising.

Step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ presents the external awards, accolades, certifications, accreditations and other recognitions received by the listed company as well as the charters and memberships of the listed company. Step 2 ‘self-praising’ highlights the potential of the listed company by proudly expressing what the listed company did or describing the contribution it made. Both steps are identified in the two corpora.

Example 17 illustrates a move with step 1 in the CCS. In this example, the writer reports that the listed company received ‘over 20 awards’ in different areas during the reporting period.

Example 17

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> In 2015 we were honored to receive extensive external recognition, garnering over 20 awards in areas such as green building design, sustainability reporting, people, community and corporate governance. We see these awards as testimony to our commitment to sustainability and meeting stakeholders’ expectations. </MT5S1>
(CCS-00101-2015)

Example 18 illustrates a move with step 2 in the CCS. In this example, the writer praises the listed company by referring to it as one of the pioneering developers in Hong Kong which integrates environmental considerations into its operations.

Example 18

<MT5S2: Self-praising> As one of the first developers to apply internationally recognised green building standards and adopt new sustainable building technologies, we have been at the forefront of green building in Hong Kong. </MT5S2>
(CCS-00012-2014)

A move with both steps 1 and 2 in the CMS is illustrated in Example 19. After describing that the listed company maintains effective communication with its stakeholders, which is a strategy adopted by the listed company, the writer appraises the performance of the listed company, suggesting that the stakeholders continue to have confidence in the listed company. Finally, the writer reports that the listed company has ‘been recognized by the investment community’ and has been praised by an external organisation, Euromoney magazine.

Example 19

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> The Group maintains an open and transparent relationship with our stakeholders through effective communication, </MT3S2> <MT5S2: Self-praising> and has continued to earn their confidence. </MT5S2> <MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> Our efforts in transparent communication and robust corporate governance have been recognized by the investment community, earning the accolade Asia’s Best Managed Company in the Real Estate / Property Sector by Euromoney magazine since 2013. </MT5S1>
(CMS-00016-2015)

It is worth mentioning that step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ also applies to cases where the listed company is nominated for an award or has applied for pre-certification etc. but has not received the award or obtained certification at the time of reporting. The text segments are considered performing the function of ‘referring to external evaluations’ because the writer attempts to highlight the CSR performance of the listed company by referring to the potential positive results of external evaluations or assessments. Examples 20 and 21 illustrate two such cases.

In Example 20, the writer presents information about the community involvement of the listed company, i.e. Hysan Development Company Limited (referred to as ‘Hysan’ in the example). The writer reports that the listed company and some of its volunteer team members have the chance to receive awards from the Government.

Example 20

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> With the number of volunteer hours achieved, Hysan is in the process of applying for the Gold Award from the Hong Kong Government's Volunteer Movement. A number of team members are also being nominated for Social Welfare Department's continuous volunteer service awards, having taken part in many volunteering activities over the past five years. </MT5S1>

(CMS-00014-2013)

In Example 21, the writer describes that the office complex called KCC, i.e. Kowloon Commerce Centre, of the listed company is designed to high standards and is expected to obtain a certification.

Example 21

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> KCC is a grade-A twin tower office complex in Kowloon West. The first phase was finished in 2008 and the second phase is scheduled for completion in 2013. It was the first Hong Kong commercial development to get LEED gold pre-certification in recognition of the building's environmental and health-related performance. </MT5S1>

(CMS-00016-2010)

In their study of the self-(re)presentation section of CSR reports, Bondi and Yu (2018) discuss the move type 'establishing credentials'. The move type 'is mainly realised' by the steps below (Bondi & Yu, 2018, p. 199):

- Assessing performance,
- Showing the company's strength, and
- Referring to external evaluation, by displaying awards or by citing voices.

A number of issues regarding the move type can be raised. First, as noted in the discussion of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance', Yu and Bondi (2017) report that 'assessing performance' is one of the steps of the move type 'presenting performance' in CSR reports. Since the step 'assessing performance' is presented in two separate publications, i.e. Bondi and Yu (2018)

and Yu and Bondi (2017), it is unclear as to whether the step performs the same function in the two move types. Second, while Bondi and Yu (2018) provide examples of the move type ‘establishing credentials’, they do not seem to explain clearly how the move type could be realised by the steps. For instance, they do not describe whether all the three steps could appear in one single move. Third, the example illustrating ‘assessing performance’ in the move type ‘establishing credentials’ provided by Bondi and Yu (2018) is written in Italian without English translation. There is also a lack of explanation of the steps. For researchers who do not know Italian, including myself, it is rather difficult to fully understand the function of the step ‘assessing performance’. Finally, both examples illustrating the step ‘referring to external evaluation, by displaying awards or by citing voices’ given by Bondi and Yu (2018) appear to involve ‘displaying awards’ only and not ‘citing voices’. It is unclear how ‘voices’ are cited. For instance, it is not clear whether the step is concerned with citing the words of authoritative organisations or stakeholders of the listed company such as (potential) employees or customers. Step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ of the present study partly corresponds to the step ‘referring to external evaluation, by displaying awards or by citing voices’ in Bondi and Yu (2018), which explains the nomenclature of the step. In this study, the purpose of ‘citing voices’ is excluded due to the issue stated above.

It is important to note that ‘establishing credentials’ is one of the strategies of CEOs’ letters in the study of Nickerson and de Groot (2005). The following example shows the only case of the use of ‘establishing credentials’ in the CEOs’ letters provided by the authors.

Example 22

The Corporate and Social Responsibility (CSR) Committee, formed at the end of 2000, was firmly up and running in 2001.

(Nickerson & de Groot, 2005, p. 336)

As can be seen in the example, the writer reports on the development of the CSR Committee of the listed company. External evaluation and self-praising are not involved in the example. Therefore, the function of ‘establishing credentials’ (as a move type) in the present study is different from that of ‘establishing credentials’ (as a strategy) in Nickerson and de Groot (2005).

In another study, Garzone (2005) reports that ‘establishing Company’s credentials’ is an optional move of the genre of CEOs’ letters. However, she does not provide any examples of the move type. It is therefore unclear as to whether move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’ in the present study is similar to the move type in Garzone (2005).

Move type 6: Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks

This move type presents the CSR policies, approaches and frameworks implemented by the listed company which guide its actions, strategies and practices in terms of CSR.

Example 23 illustrates the move type in the CCS. In this example, the writer provides a brief description of the ‘sustainability framework’ of the listed company.

Example 23

<MT6: Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks> Our sustainability framework puts sustainable business growth, stakeholders’ interests and responsible business practices at the heart of our operations. </MT6>

(CCS-00823-2013)

Example 24 illustrates the move type in the CMS. In this example, information about the ‘approach to sustainable development’ of the listed company is provided. The writer describes how the listed company handles CSR issues, including environmental protection, health and safety, employees’ well-being and development as well as community investment initiatives.

Example 24

<MT6: Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks> Our approach to sustainable development is guided by our Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) policy, which outlines our commitment to ethical business practices and our responsibility to our stakeholders and the wider community. Understanding that our influence extends beyond our own operations, we work with suppliers, tenants and residents to reduce our environmental footprint, promote health and safety and raise awareness of sustainability issues. We value employees and emphasise their wellbeing and development. Through community investment initiatives, we adopt a three-pronged approach to CSR, namely Reading & holistic development, Healthy & sustainable living and Care for the

underprivileged. We strive to leverage our core competencies to create long-term benefits for the community. </MT6>

(CMS-00016-2012)

Move type 6 ‘presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

Move type 7: Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR

This move type presents information about the establishment and/or development of the management structure of the listed company which is responsible for its CSR development. It also describes the composition, roles, functions and responsibilities of the units, teams, groups and (sub-)committees associated with CSR practices of the listed company.

Example 25 illustrates the move type in the CCS. The writer provides the information about the formation of a dedicated CSR committee of the listed company and the responsibilities of the committee.

Example 25

<MT7: Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR> During the year we enhanced our sustainability efforts through the formation of a Sustainability Committee to oversee policies and practices on issues relating to our social and environmental performance. Responsibilities of the Committee include setting our priorities, guiding our practices and setting targets for sustainability issues. </MT7>

(CCS-00823-2012)

Example 26 illustrates the move type in the CMS. The writer describes the responsibilities and composition of the sustainability development structure (i.e. Sustainable Development Steering Committee, SDSC) of the listed company.

Example 26

<MT7: Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR> Our Sustainable Development Steering Committee (SDSC) is responsible for balancing social, economic and environmental risks and benefits in our business decision-making process and for monitoring performance. The Committee is convened by the Head of Technical Services and Sustainability and also includes representatives from Human Resources & Administration, Marketing & Communications, Development & Valuations, Projects, Portfolio Management and Swire Hotels. The Head of Sustainable Development of John Swire & Sons (H.K.) Ltd. is also a member of the Committee, to aid the sharing of best practices across the Swire Group. ... </MT7>

(CMS-01972-2010)

It should be noted that another move type associated with corporate governance was identified in the CMS (i.e. move type 23 ‘presenting corporate governance structure’). Move types 7 and 23 are different in that move type 7 provides information specifically about the management structure associated with CSR, while the purpose of move type 23 is to present the structure of corporate governance of the entire listed company. As will be discussed in Section 4.1.3, move type 23 presents information about units such as the Board of Directors and the internal audit department.

Move type 7 of the present study appears to be similar to the move type ‘presenting corporate governance’ reported by Bondi and Yu (2018). However, what I refer to as move type 23 does not seem to be identified in Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017).

Move type 8: Introducing the current report

This move type introduces the unfolding ESG report and welcomes the reader of the report by describing the aims of the report, providing an overview of the report and/or stating the scope of the report.

Example 27 illustrates the move type in the CCS. The writer firstly expresses the pleasure in presenting the ESG report. Then, the writer states that the report serves to celebrate the achievements and ‘communicates the impacts’ of the listed company in terms of its CSR development. Next, the theme and the main contents of the report are provided. Finally, the writer briefly describes the structure of the report.

Example 27

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am delighted to present our fourth Group Sustainability Report, which celebrates our achievements and communicates the impacts we have made in our sustainability journey over the past year. Under the theme “From Inspiration to Innovation”, this Report focuses on our unique brand personality of The Artisanal Movement, which underpins everything we do at New World Group. Accordingly, our Report is divided into sections named after the five elements of The Artisanal Movement – Imagination, Bespoke, Craftsmanship, Heritage and Contemporary. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2016)

Examples 28 and 29 illustrate the move type in the CMS. In the former example, the writer offers an outline of the ESG report, introducing the various topics covered in the report.

Example 28

<MT8: Introducing the current report> In this edition of Hysan’s Corporate Responsibility Report, we explain in detail how our Policy is implemented based on our Corporate Responsibility Model. In addition, we highlight our numerous community projects that took place in 2007. These include the “Arts Tour”, a follow-up to our successful “Music in the Green City”, with Tin Shui Wai students exploring the performing arts; “Ethnic Youth Enhancement Scheme” or “EYES”, the life skills programme for ethnic minority youngsters; and a number of other activities linking Hysan staff and partners with underprivileged youths. On the environmental front, we showcase our substantial energy savings through upgrades and efficiency enhancements. On health and safety, we note our latest safety initiatives, as well as our assistance towards industrial accidents victims’ families. </MT8>

(CMS-00014-2007)

The excerpt in Example 29 is taken from part of a main section which reports on the business of the listed company, i.e. New World Development Company Limited (referred to as ‘New World Group’ in the example). After providing a description of the hotels owned and managed by the listed company, the writer states that the reporting of hotel operations is beyond the scope of the ESG report.

Example 29

<MT8: Introducing the current report> This report excludes hotel operations due to certain hotels are not operated by New World Group. </MT8>
(CMS-00017-2013)

Move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

Move type 9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting

This move type tells the reader the CSR reporting practices of the listed company. It provides information about the preparation and publication of the unfolding ESG report and/or previous ESG reports, the purposes of the ESG report(s) and the use of reporting guidelines for disclosure. It also presents the listed company’s plans in relation to CSR reporting, including reporting methodology and quality of reporting.

Example 30 illustrates the move type in the CCS. The writer explains that the listed company, i.e. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (referred to as ‘Sun Hung Kai Properties’ in the example) prepared sections of the unfolding ESG reports based on the feedback from its stakeholders ‘through the annual engagement process’, indicating that the reporting quality is enhanced by including ‘more aspects’ of its business. The writer also informs the reader of the aim of the practice of CSR reporting from the listed company’s perspective, which is ‘to provide stakeholders with an accurate measurement of our efforts to improve social and environmental performance’.

Example 30

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> We have been guided in each section by advice from our stakeholders through the annual engagement process, which allows us to understand their expectations of Sun Hung Kai Properties and the actions we must take. We have broadened this Report to include more aspects of our business and aim to make this an annual practice to provide stakeholders with an accurate measurement of our efforts to improve social and environmental performance. </MT9>
(CCS-00016-2011)

Examples 31 and 32 illustrate the move type in the CMS. The excerpt in Example 31 is taken from part of the main section of the first ESG report issued by Hang Lung Properties Limited. In the example, the writer describes the listed company's perception of the preparation and publication of its first ESG report. The writer also states that the listed company adopted the G4 Sustainability Reporting Guidelines published by Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) as the reporting framework.

Example 31

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> The publication of our first sustainability report, “The Honest Advantage”, in 2013 was the first step in making our honest way forward in sustainability. Providing an honest account of our achievements and challenges enables our stakeholders to assess fairly our business performance. More importantly, the process of reporting our sustainability performance has enabled us to better understand our strengths and weaknesses as we further develop our sustainability agenda. The alignment of this year's report with the international reporting guideline, GRI G4, demonstrates our commitment to aligning our practices with international best practice and standards. </MT9>

(CMS-00101-2013)

In the following example, the writer acknowledges the limitation of the ESG report in terms of the reporting of environmental data and expresses the intention to improve the reporting quality in the following year.

Example 32

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> Other environmental data such as water usage or waste production is not yet available in a standardized reporting format across all properties, and will not be reported this year. The aggregation and alignment of our environmental data is a major commitment for 2013. </MT9>

(CMS-00101-2012)

Move type 9 ‘describing the practice of CSR reporting’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

Move type 10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement

This move type is concerned with the disclosure of stakeholder engagement of the listed company. Stakeholder engagement is a widely employed method for listed companies to identify the ESG issues which are material to their operations (Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited, 2015a). Ngu and Amran (2018, p. 3) note the importance of stakeholder engagement in the following way:

Stakeholder engagement is a key part of the corporate reporting process, as it provides the opportunity to identify and manage emerging material matters from the perspective of stakeholders; improves the understanding concerning how business activities impact on the environment and society; promotes productive collaboration with the stakeholders; and enhances the operational performance and decision-making.

The move type ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’ presents information about stakeholder engagement of the listed company, including the identification of stakeholders, the mechanism or framework of stakeholder engagement, key topics and concerns raised by the stakeholders and the listed company’s responses to stakeholders.

Example 33 illustrates the move type in the CCS. The writer reports that the listed company engaged its stakeholders during the reporting period, and that the stakeholders’ feedback obtained from the stakeholder engagement process contributed to the CSR reporting and development of the listed company.

Example 33

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> During the year, we conducted a comprehensive stakeholder engagement exercise with internal and external stakeholders, to gain a fuller understanding of their perceptions on our sustainability performance and their expectations on our CSR disclosure. Their feedback is reflected in this Report and continues to guide our development of longer-term objectives. </MT10>

(CCS-00012-2015)

Examples 34-36 illustrate the move type in the CMS. In Example 34, the writer identifies the listed company's stakeholders and describes how the listed company engages with them.

Example 34

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... The Group engages a wide variety of stakeholders including employees, customers, business partners, industry associations, the government, NGO partners and the community on a regular basis. It also conducts designated stakeholder engagement exercises to better understand their priorities, expectations and perceptions with regard to our sustainability approach. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2015)

The excerpt in Example 35 is taken from part of a main section which presents information resulting from stakeholder engagement exercise with selected stakeholder groups. It shows stakeholders' views on CSR performance of the listed company, i.e. The Wharf (Holdings) Limited, in five different focus areas as well as the response of the listed company. Example 35 shows the feedback from the stakeholders (*Stakeholders suggested ... good quality products and services*) and the listed company's response (*We review our operational performance ... please refer to P. 46 - 51 of Products and Services section*) in the focus area 'product and services'.

Example 35

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> Stakeholders suggested Wharf explore more opportunities to improve its premises by hardware and software upgrade for delivering good quality products and services.

We review our operational performance regularly and identify areas for improvement. Our business units attain various international standards and provide appropriate training to our staff for operational excellence. We will continue to benchmark our performance against local and international industry standards to ensure our customers receive the best products and services.

</MT10> <MT16: Indicating further information> For further information on our products and services, please refer to P. 46 - 51 of Products and Services section. </MT16>

(CMS-00004-2015)

In Example 36, the writer defines material issues of the listed company, and then describes the stakeholder engagement exercises and their positive effects on the CSR development of the listed company.

Example 36

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... We regard matters as material when they reflect our significant economic, environmental and social impacts, substantially influence the assessments and decisions of our investors and other stakeholders, or have a significant impact on our business. We have conducted stakeholder engagement exercises since 2004 to help us understand our stakeholders' priorities, expectations and perceptions with regard to our sustainable development approach. This has helped us understand materiality, and focus our sustainable development strategies and activities. ... </MT10>

(CMS-01972-2016)

Move type 10 'reporting on stakeholder engagement' does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs' letters, chairpersons' statements and CSR reports.

Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs

This move type states the issues the listed company considers important and cares about, and the listed company's views, opinions, attitudes and beliefs in terms of CSR. It also indicates the listed company's awareness of CSR issues.

Example 37 illustrates move type 11 'stating values and beliefs' and step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' in the CCS. The writer expresses the belief of 'the best way to reward customers', and then describes the actions taken by the listed company which are guided by the belief.

Example 37

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that better product and service is the best way to reward customers. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results>In 2016, the Company strengthened its production concept of "each and every detail of each and every project", improved

the quality management, and made quality inspection on all projects under construction, reducing greatly the quality problems caused by inadequate process control. ... </MT3S1>

(CCS-00688-2016)

Example 38 illustrates move type 11 and step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ in the CMS. The writer firstly states the opinion on the important role of construction workers. Then, the writer presents information about the listed company’s strategies of ensuring the health and safety of construction workers.

Example 38

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Construction workers are the cornerstone of the Group’s property development business. </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> The Group’s concern over health and safety however goes beyond its operations; it takes good care of contractors’ health and safety with well-defined protocols in this area in which contractors are required to follow strictly. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-00016-2015)

Example 39 illustrates move type 11 and the two steps of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ in the CMS. The writer firstly expresses the listed company’s awareness of ‘the importance of minimising waste’. Then, the writer describes the listed company’s practice of ‘introducing initiatives in recycling various materials’ in an attempt to reduce waste. Finally, the writer presents information about the establishment of fluorescent lamps recycling stations, which is an action taken by the listed company, and reports that ‘over 30,000 fluorescent lamps and tubes were collected for recycling’, which is the result of the action taken.

Example 39

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We recognise the importance of minimising waste </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> and have been introducing initiatives in recycling various materials to minimise our impact on the environment. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> In 2015, we set up fluorescent lamps recycling stations in 35 of

our buildings, where over 30,000 fluorescent lamps and tubes were collected for recycling.

</MT3S1>

(CMS-00083-2016)

As shown in Examples 37-39, the listed company's values, beliefs and awareness could explain and justify the listed company's CSR performance. They seem to form the basis which motivates the listed company's CSR actions and strategies in different areas of CSR, such as quality of products and services, health and safety at work and waste reduction as illustrated in the examples.

There are, of course, cases where move type 11 is not immediately followed by move type 3. I will return to this issue in Section 4.4, in which move type 11 and other move types will be further discussed.

In Yu and Bondi (2017), 'stating values and beliefs' is identified as one of the 15 move types of CSR reports. The authors note that the move type '[s]tates what the company cares about, as well as the company's opinions, attitudes, and beliefs in terms of CSR. A company may hold values such as "responsibility," "truthfulness," "charity," "service," "transparency," "creative energy," "consistency," and many others' (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 288). The purpose served by the move type 'stating values and beliefs' in this study seems to be in line with the purpose of the move type 'stating values and beliefs' as reported by Yu and Bondi (2017), which explains the nomenclature of the move type in the present study. However, it has to be noted that the authors do not provide any examples of 'stating values and beliefs'.

Bondi and Yu (2018) report the use of the move type 'stating values and beliefs' in the self-(re)presentation sections of CSR reports. The authors note that the move type provides 'general statements about the values and beliefs [which] constitute the basis of a company's missions, behaviour and motivation (e.g. "responsibility", "truthfulness", "charity", "transparency", "creativity", "consistency", etc.)' (Bondi & Yu, 2018, p. 198). Interestingly, the descriptions of the communicative purpose of 'stating values and beliefs' are not entirely the same in Bondi and Yu (2018) and Yu and Bondi (2017).

Bondi and Yu (2018) note that the move type 'stating values and beliefs' can be realised by the following steps:

- Stating values and beliefs,
- Communicating strategies/methods/practices, and
- Stating missions.

Examining CSR reports written in Italian, Chinese and English, Bondi and Yu (2018) provide examples of the move type ‘stating values and beliefs’ in the three languages. While English translation is provided in the example in Chinese, no translation is given in the example in Italian. Based on my interpretation of the examples written in English and Chinese (with translation), I would argue that the step ‘stating values and beliefs’ could be interpreted as move type 4 ‘stating mission’ (see Example 40¹⁹) and step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ (see Example 41²⁰). Therefore, I would argue that the move type ‘stating values and beliefs’ in the present study is different from the step ‘stating values and beliefs’ (hence the move type ‘stating values and beliefs’) in Bondi and Yu (2018).

Example 40

The bank implements the responsibility philosophy of “placing responsibility above everything to benefit the general public, determinedly assuming responsibility to benefit the whole society”; (Bondi & Yu, 2018, p. 199)

Example 41

We require high standards of behaviour from all our employees and expect them to act with courageous integrity in the execution of their duties at every level. (Bondi & Yu, 2018, p. 199)

In short, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ in the present study seems to serve a similar purpose as ‘stating values and beliefs’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). However, move type 11 appears to be different from ‘stating values and beliefs’ in Bondi and Yu (2018).

¹⁹The excerpt in the example is English translation provided by the authors. The example is taken from a CSR report written in Chinese.

²⁰The excerpt in the example is taken from a CSR report written in English.

Move type 12: Showing commitment

This move type demonstrates the listed company's dedication and commitment to CSR. It shows that the listed company makes efforts to achieve CSR objectives and improve its CSR performance.

Example 42 illustrates move type 12 and step 2 'describing strategies/methods/practices' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' in the CCS. The writer states that the listed company tries hard to achieve an objective in relation to climate change, and then describes the methods or practices the listed company implements in order to achieve the objective.

Example 42

<MT12: Showing commitment> We endeavour to help the Hong Kong property sector to shape its response to climate change </MT12> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> through active participation in leading interest groups, including the HK-BEAM Society (which founded Hong Kong's own green building standard, BEAM), and through engagement with key stakeholders in programmes such as free energy audits for tenants. </MT3S2>
(CCS-01972-2008)

Example 43 illustrates move type 12 and step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' in the CMS. The writer firstly states the listed company's dedication to energy management. Then, the writer describes the action of the listed company, i.e. the implementation of an energy efficiency programme, to achieve the goal of enhancing energy efficiency and reducing electricity consumption. Finally, the writer reports on the result of the action, i.e. that there was a reduction in electricity consumption during the reporting period.

Example 43

<MT12: Showing committee> We are dedicated to implementing concrete actions and developing innovative ideas to enhance the energy efficiency of our buildings and reduce electricity consumption by 5% in 2015, using 2010 as the baseline. </MT12> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> To achieve this target, we have implemented an energy efficiency program in our buildings. In 2013, we have already recorded a 7.7% reduction in electricity consumption as compared with the 2010 baseline. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00101-2013)

The nomenclature of move type 12 is based on the move type ‘showing commitment’ in Yu and Bondi (2018). According to the authors, the move type ‘emphasizes the company’s availability and willingness to dedicate time and energy to CSR because it is important’ (Yu & Bondi, 2018, p. 288). Nevertheless, Yu and Bondi (2018) do not provide any examples of ‘showing commitment’. I would argue that the information presented by move type ‘showing commitment’ in the present study has a wider scope. Apart from the ‘availability and willingness’ of the listed company (Yu & Bondi, 2018, p. 288), the move type also presents the aims and objectives of the listed company, which could be the listed company’s driving force for improvement or success in CSR. In the two examples above, the writer clearly presents the aims and objectives, i.e. ‘to help the Hong Kong property sector to shape its response to climate change’ and ‘to enhance the energy efficiency of our buildings and reduce electricity consumption’. These aims and objectives guide the listed companies’ actions and strategies to promote environmental protection and improve energy conservation. It seems clear that move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ not only highlights the availability and willingness of the listed company, but also helps explain the rationale behind the listed company’s actions and strategies.

Move type 13: Describing external circumstances

This move type describes the economic, legal or social context in which the listed company operates. It indicates how particular circumstances or issues could influence the development of listed company in terms of its business and CSR-related decision-making, actions and strategies.

Example 44 illustrates move type 13 ‘describing external circumstances’ and move type 17 ‘presenting business highlights’ in the CCS. The writer describes the tough market conditions in Hong Kong during the reporting period, which was a challenge faced by the listed company (and other listed companies), and then provides information about the listed company’s business in investment properties, indicating that the business remained strong.

Example 44

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> Despite a challenging economic environment in Hong Kong in 2015, </MT13> <MT17: Presenting business highlights> our business performance

remained robust, underpinned by the resilience of our core operation: Investment Properties. Our three Hong Kong shopping malls – Harbour City, Times Square and Plaza Hollywood – reported solid rental growth amidst difficult trading conditions. Performance of our investment properties in China exceeded our expectation. </MT17>

(CCS-00004-2015)

Example 45 illustrates move type 13 ‘describing external circumstances’ and step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ in the CMS. The writer suggests that Hong Kong faces an imminent food waste problem and describes how the government handles the issue. Next, the writer describes that NWS Holdings (NWS) organised an event which aims ‘to address waste issue’. NWS Holdings (NWS) (full name: NWS Holdings Limited) is one of the listed companies of New World Development Company Limited, which provides infrastructure facilities and public service in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Macau.

Example 45

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> Every day, Hong Kong produces more than 3,300 tonnes of food waste, accounting for 40% of the city’s municipal solid waste. The HKSAR government has proposed to address this environmental issue with a variety of policies and measures, including a municipal solid waste charging scheme which aims to reduce waste at source by the polluter pays principle. </MT13> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> As part of its corporate efforts to address waste issue, NWS Holdings (NWS) held a Foodwise Cooking Challenge in August 2014 as a finale to its “3R Formula” campaign that promotes the concept of reduce, reuse and recycle to employees. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00017-2014)

The two examples above show the move type 13 ‘describing external circumstances’ describing the local context, i.e. the context of Hong Kong. In Examples 46 and 47 below, move type 13 is concerned with the global (international) context. In Example 46, the writer states the importance of preserving biodiversity, and then describes that the listed company implements practices (i.e. support and participate in biodiversity conservation programmes and activities) to address the issue.

Example 46

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> As biodiversity awareness rises on the global agenda, </MT13> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> the Company is strengthening its relationships with stakeholders and environmental organisations by supporting and participating in biodiversity conservation programmes and activities. </MT3S2>
(CMS-00083-2012)

In Example 47, move type 13 ‘describing external circumstances’ provides information about climate change as a global concern. After stating the issue, the writer describes the listed company’s awareness to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Example 47

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> Climate change has been increasingly an issue of concern among the global community. </MT13> <MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The Link is fully aware of our responsibility to reduce greenhouse gas (“GHG”) emissions from our daily activities to lessen our carbon footprint. </MT11>
(CMS-00823-2011)

Move type 13 is labelled based on the move type ‘describing external circumstances’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). The authors note that it ‘sets the economic, political, legal, or material context in which the company operates’ (Yu & Bondi, 2017, p. 288). Again, no examples of the move type are provided by the authors. In the present study, the move type is not associated with any political contexts. As far as legal context is concerned, the move type presents information about the introduction and amendment of ordinances, as illustrated in Example 48.

Example 48

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance has been effective from 29 April 2013. </MT13> <MT5S2: Self-praising> As a responsible company, </MT5S2> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> we fully comply with

the newly launched ordinance including the requirements on sales brochures, sales arrangements, price lists, show flats, advertisements and registers of transactions. ... </MT5S2>

(CMS-00083-2013)

Move type 14: Projecting future performance and making promises

This move type presents the listed company's plans and intentions in terms of CSR, as well as the expected results of certain actions or strategies. It indicates the listed company's expectations for the future and its promises.

Example 49 illustrates move type 19 'expressing appreciation' and move type 14 'projecting future performance and making promises' in the CCS. The writer expresses gratitude to the employees for their contribution, and then outlines the future actions of the listed company in relation to its human resources.

Example 49

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> It is thanks to the Group's many employees that we are able to deliver high quality properties and communities for our customers, creating lasting positive economic, social and environmental impacts. </MT19> <MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> We will therefore continue to invest in our employees and their safety to ensure that we remain an employer of choice. We will also continue to focus on recruiting and retaining talent by nurturing our reputation as a caring employer and offering opportunities for our employees to grow. </MT14>

(CCS-00012-2015)

Example 50 illustrates step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' and move type 14 'projecting future performance and making promises' in the CMS. After reporting on the revamping of the corporate website to accommodate the visually impaired or physically-disabled, the writer describes that the revamping of the website is expected to be completed in the short-term future.

Example 50

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> In addition to upgrading physical facilities in our properties and car parks, The Link has redesigned our website with widely-used web accessibility software tools to facilitate browsing by people who are visually impaired or physically-disabled such as neuromuscular impaired. </MT3S1> <MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> The revamping of the website will be completed by June 2011. </MT14>
(CMS-00823-2011)

In the following example taken from the CMS, the writer describes what the listed company will do to reduce carbon emissions in the long-term future.

Example 51

<MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> ... By 2020, we plan to conduct climate risk assessments for all our portfolios and establish a comprehensive carbon accounting framework. We also plan to conduct a pilot study to measure carbon emissions from construction activities at One Taikoo Place, including emissions from the embodied energy of major building and construction materials. </MT14>
(CMS-01972-2016)

Move type 14 is similar to the move type ‘previewing future performance’ in Yu and Bondi (2017) in that both of them present information about ‘what the company will do or will achieve in the short-term or long-term future’ (p. 288). However, the authors also note that ‘previewing future performance’ previews ‘what will happen in the external circumstances’ (p. 288). Move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ in the present study does not serve this purpose. No examples of ‘previewing future performance’ are provided by Yu and Bondi (2017).

In addition, move type 14 performs similar function as the following move types and strategies in CEOs’ letters in annual reports as reported in previous studies. Move type 14 is therefore named based on the labelling of the move types and strategies.

1. The move type ‘expectations and promises’ (V. K. Bhatia, 2008),
2. The strategy ‘speculating on future performance’ (Nickerson & de Groot, 2005),

3. The strategy ‘providing future objectives’ (Nickerson & de Groot, 2005), and
4. The move type ‘illustrating outlook and priorities for the future’ (Garzone, 2004, 2005).

Move type 14 corresponds to the move type ‘expectations and promises (projections for future)’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008). V. K. Bhatia (2008, p. 171) notes that the move type provides ‘detailed accounts of future actions’, ‘measures to be taken’ and ‘intended and expected outcomes’ in CEOs’ letters. Although the study of V. K. Bhatia examines CEOs’ letters, and thus is not related to the disclosure of CSR information, segments of texts serving the aforementioned purposes are found in chairpersons’ statements and main sections in the present study. It should be noted however that V. K. Bhatia (2008) does not provide any examples of to the move type ‘expectations and promises (projections for future)’.

Nickerson and de Groot (2005) report that ‘speculating on future performance’ and ‘providing future objectives’ are two of the 12 strategies in CEOs’ letters. However, they do not discuss the communicative purposes of the strategies. Based on the nomenclature of the strategies, the strategies seem to perform similar rhetorical functions to ‘expectations and promises’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008), and therefore they are considered to be of relevance to move type 14.

According to Garzone (2004, 2005), ‘illustrating outlook and priorities for the future’ is one of the three obligatory moves in CEOs’ letters. Unfortunately, Garzone (2004, 2005) does not provide any examples of ‘illustrating outlook and priorities for the future’. The present study makes a distinction between the function of illustrating priorities for the future and the function of illustrating outlook for the future. These two functions are performed respectively by move types 14 and 15 in the present study. Therefore, both move types 14 and 15 correspond partly to ‘illustrating outlook and priorities for the future’ in Garzone (2004, 2005). Move type 15 will be discussed below.

Move type 15: Illustrating outlook for the future

This move type expresses an outlook on the listed company’s future. It highlights opportunities and prospects for CSR, demonstrating confidence in the future performance of the listed company. Although there may be challenges and risks, positive outlook is always expressed because ‘businesses often downplay any indications of negative performance to highlight positive aspects for future growth’ (V. K. Bhatia, 2008, p. 172).

Example 52 illustrates the move type in the CCS. The writer suggests that the listed company's business will remain robust in the future, regardless of 'the broader industry's uncertainty'.

Example 52

<MT15: Illustrating outlook for the future> Looking ahead, we remain optimistic about our future. We believe that our business practices will deliver sustainable social value despite the broader industry's uncertainty – especially in Mainland China. </MT15>

(CCS-00101-2014)

Example 53 illustrates the move type in the CMS. The excerpt in the example constitutes the last paragraph of the section called 'Way Forward', which is also the last paragraph of the main section of the ESG report. In 'Way Forward', the writer describes plans and future objectives of the listed company, i.e. Hysan Development Company Limited (referred to as 'Hysan' in the example). In the example, the writer states that the listed company will contribute to the society by implementing the plans.

Example 53

<MT15: Illustrating outlook for the future> These plans for 2007 stem clearly from our wish to form long lasting and mutually beneficial partnerships with different sectors of the community, including some we are familiar with and others with whom we hope to soon connect. We believe that Hysan, together with its partners, can contribute a great deal of energy and resources and make our society a better place. </MT15>

(CMS-00014-2006)

As described earlier, move type 15 is similar to the move type 'illustrating outlook and priorities for the future' in Garzone (2004, 2005) to some extent. Move type 15 is named by removing *and priorities* in *illustrating outlook and priorities for the future*.

Move type 16: Indicating further information

'Indicating further information' is the final move type shared by the (part) genres of chairpersons' statements and main sections. This move type indicates the existence of related material on

particular topics, telling the reader that further information is provided in other parts of the ESG report, other corporate documents such as annual report or on the corporate website. The move type encourages the reader to refer to further information to understand more about the listed company and helps the reader obtain the information efficiently.

Example 54 illustrates move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’ and move type 16 ‘indicating further information’ in the CCS. The writer firstly introduces the ESG report by stating that the report (referred to as ‘Sustainable Development Report 2015’ in the example) provides information about ‘recent sustainable development innovations’ of the listed company. Then, the writer informs the reader that a particular section of the ESG report called ‘Sustainability in Action’ offers a detailed description of Brickell City Centre, which is a project of the listed company in Miami.

Example 54

<MT8: Introducing the current report> In our Sustainable Development Report 2015, we highlight a number of our recent sustainable development innovations. These include a detailed description of our people-centred, integrated design approach to large-scale urban development, as illustrated by the Climate Ribbon™ at Brickell City Centre </MT8> <MT16: Indicating further information> (see Sustainability in Action). </MT16>
(CCS-01972-2015)

The excerpt in Example 55 is taken from part of a main section which describes the customer service of the listed company. In the example, the writer firstly gives an opinion on ‘customer experience’. Then, the writer reports that the listed company provides a platform for its employees to help them ‘constantly enhance customer experience’. Finally, the writer states that further information about the platform is provided in a particular section of the ESG report, i.e. Value Created for People.

Example 55

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Customer experience hinges on quality and responsiveness to market needs. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The SHKP Quality Academy is a platform to foster our customer first culture and help our employees better anticipate customer

needs, in order to constantly enhance customer experience. </MT3S1> <MT16: Indicating further information> Please refer to Value Created for People in this report for more information about the SHKP Quality Academy. </MT16>
(CMS-00016-2014)

Example 56 illustrates step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 16 ‘indicating further information’ in the CMS. The writer presents information about the Environmental Policy of the listed company, and then indicates that the policy is publicly available on the corporate website.

Example 56

</MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> The Group’s Environmental Policy encourages the consideration of environmental aspects in our decision making process, management and organisational culture. The Policy applies to every stage of our business operations, from project planning and design, construction to completion, and also to our property management function. The Policy also pertains to our people and across our supply chain, covering aspects such as green building labelling, nature and resource conservation, optimised energy performance and green purchasing. </MR3S2> <MT16: Indicating further information> The Policy can be accessed online at: <http://www.hld.com/en/csr/envpolicy.shtml>. </MT16>
(CMS-00012-2015)

Move type 16 ‘indicating further information’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

The move analysis of chairperson’s statements identified 21 move types, 16 of which are already discussed. The next sub-section will explore the other 5 move types.

4.1.2 Move types in chairperson’s statements only

In the following, the focus is on move types 17-21 which are specific to the (part) genre of chairperson’s statements.

Move type 17: Presenting business highlights

This move type presents the listed company's business performance by highlighting some of the notable developments and achievements.

The move type is illustrated in Example 57. The writer briefly describes the listed company's business performance during the reporting period, and then emphasises an investment property and a residential development of the listed company.

Example 57

<MT17: Presenting business highlights> In 2011, our business continued to grow and evolve. Notably, in September we opened TaiKoo Hui, our largest investment property in Mainland China, and in October, we completed construction of OPUS HONG KONG, the first residential development in Asia designed by architect Frank Gehry. </MT17>

(CCS-01972-2011)

Move type 17 'presenting business highlights' does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs' letters, chairpersons' statements and CSR reports.

Move type 18: Presenting bad news

This move type communicates bad news.

This move type is used in only two chairpersons' statements examined in the present study. The chairpersons' statements were produced by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited and Hang Lung Properties Limited. In the chairperson's statement of Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (see Example 58), the writer makes reference to the resignation of the listed company's co-chairman Thomas Kwok Ping-kwong and executive director Thomas Chan Kui-yuen after they were found guilty of bribery during the reporting period. The chairperson's statement of Hang Lung Properties Limited involves the reporting of a fire incident at a tenant's premise of the listed company (see Example 59).

Example 58

<MT18: Presenting bad news> While Mr Thomas Kwok and Mr Thomas Chan resigned after the verdict of the court case was delivered in December 2014, business continues as usual. </MT18>

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> Our A1 senior unsecured rating from Moody’s has been retained, reflecting investor confidence in the stability of the Group, </MT5S1> <MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> and we will continue to deliver on our plans and commitment to our stakeholders. </MT14>
(CCS-00016-2013)

Example 59

<MT18: Presenting bad news> To give an overview on the last fiscal year, one shall never forget the memories of the two brave firefighters who lost their lives in the tragic fire incident at one of our tenants’ premise. While our crisis management protocol has effectively dealt with the situation and minimized the adverse impacts, we value the lessons learned from the incident, and we pledge ourselves through our investments, planning and training for our staff, tenants and customers to impart the crisis management strategies that protect everyone from any possible crises in the future. </MT18>
(CCS-00101-2016)

It is observed that in both cases, the writer seems to undermine the bad news by structuring the relevant texts strategically – starting with the bad and then moving on to the good. In Example 58, the writer makes a contrast between the resignation and the business of the listed company with the use of the conjunction *while*, highlighting that ‘business continues as usual’. The writer describes that Moody’s Investors Service (referred to as ‘Moody’s’ in the example) assigned an A1 senior unsecured rating to the listed company, indicating that the changes to its board of directors had no impact on the rating and outlook of the listed company. The writer also expresses the listed company’s intention to continue to develop as planned. Similarly, in Example 59, the writer attempts to instil confidence in the reader by referring to the crisis management system of the listed company. The writer also explains ‘the lesson learned’ and the listed company’s plan to make improvements.

It has to be noted that while accidents and serious incidents at work are reported in the main sections of ESG reports, the related text segments are considered to belong to step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ instead of move type 18, because the information presented is concerned with the listed company’s performance in the area

of health and safety. One of the cases is illustrated in Example 60. The writer reports on a fatal accident.

Example 60

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... Although safety and risk management measures are in place, it is with extreme regret that fatal accident happened in June 2016. A subcontractor's worker of Modern Terminals was suspected to have received electrocution during the heightening works of quay crane and he was later certified dead. Labour Department having investigated the case laid no charge against Modern Terminals for this accident. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00004-2016)

Move type 18 'presenting bad news' does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs' letters, chairpersons' statements and CSR reports.

Move type 19: Expressing appreciation

This move type expresses appreciation to the stakeholders of the listed company, such as employees, partners and investors, and/or the reader (who is also the stakeholder of the listed company) for their support and contribution.

In Example 61, the writer expresses gratitude to staff members, clients, partners and other stakeholders for their 'involvement and contribution'.

Example 61

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> Our CSR achievements could not be possible without the support of our staff, as well as the trust from our clients, partners and other stakeholders. I would like to convey my warmest gratitude for their involvement and contribution. </MT19>

(CCS-00004-2016)

In Example 62, the writer thanks the reader for reading the ESG report (referred to as 'Sustainable Development Report 2015' in the example) and supporting the listed company.

Example 62

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> Thank you for reading our Sustainable Development Report 2015 and for your ongoing support. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2015)

Move type 19 is similar and different from the move type ‘expressions of gratitude (thanks to staff and shareholders)’ in V. K. Bhatia (2008) to a certain extent. As one of the move types in CEOs’ letters, ‘expressions of gratitude’ shows ‘appreciation to management team, sometimes workers’ as well as ‘congratulations to management for successful period’ (V. K. Bhatia, 2008, p. 171). The similarity lies in that move type 19 is concerned with appreciation to management team and workers. The move types differ from each other in two aspects. First, move type 19 does not involve ‘congratulations to management for successful period’. This specific rhetorical function is perhaps relevant to CEOs’ letters when the listed company reports on financial performance at good times. Second, texts segments of move type 19 are often associated with the employees rather than management teams. For instance, in some chairpersons’ statements, the writer reports on the employees’ participation in volunteering activities and thanks the employees for their contribution. The writer of chairpersons’ statements seems more likely to attribute the performance and achievements of the listed company to its employees in comparison to the writer of CEOs’ letters.

Move type 20: Soliciting feedback

This move type asks for the reader’s feedback on the CSR report and the CSR performance of the listed company. It demonstrates the listed company’s willingness to listen to the target audience of the ESG report and its commitment to improve CSR reporting and performance.

Example 63 illustrates the move type. The writer encourages the reader to provide feedback by stating that ‘feedback and suggestions’ are welcomed.

Example 63

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> We welcome any feedback and suggestions on this report for further improvement. </MT20>

(CCS-00004-2014)

Move type 20 ‘soliciting feedback’ always appears at the end of chairpersons’ statements, in either the last or second last paragraph. It is usually close to move type 21 ‘ending the statement politely’ (discussed below) when move type 21 is used in the chairpersons’ statement. As will be shown, move types 20 and 21 appear to be components of the move type ‘soliciting response’ in Catenaccio (2010a).

Move type 21: Ending the statement politely

This move type signals that the writer is ending the chairperson’s statement in a polite way. It shows an optimistic outlook, asks for the reader’s support and expresses hope for the reader’s enjoyment of the ESG report.

In Example 64, the writer asks for the reader’s feedback, and then projects a positive outlook of the listed company, i.e. New World Development Company Limited (referred to as ‘New World’ in the example).

Example 64

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> We value your feedback on this report. </MT20> <MT21: Ending the statement politely> Together, we can create a better New World for all. </MT21>
(CCS-00017-2015)

In Example 65, the writer invites the reader to provide feedback and asks for the reader’s continuous support of the listed company.

Example 65

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I welcome your feedback </MT20> <MT21: Ending the statement politely> and look forward to your support as we continue our journey. </MT21>
(CCS-01972-2009)

In Example 66, the writer solicits the reader’s feedback and hopes that the reader will enjoy reading the ESG report.

Example 66

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I would welcome any feedback, </MT20> <MT21: Ending the statement politely> and hope that you will enjoy reading this report. </MT21>

(CCS-00101-2012)

As described in Section 2.3.2, Catenaccio (2010a) reports that the move structure of chairpersons' statements is different from that of CEOs' letters in that there are two new and characterising move types in the former, one of which being 'soliciting response'. Catenaccio (2010a) provides the excerpt in Example 67 to illustrate 'soliciting response', suggesting that it has the 'interpersonal function' as it 'clearly emphasises the dialogic component which is a typical feature of the letter genre' (p. 195). In addition, it 'also has the rhetorical function to solicit response' as it focuses on engaging the reader (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 195).

Example 67

I hope that you will enjoy reading our second Sustainability Report, which has been prepared using the 2002 Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines. We believe it represents a balanced and reasonable presentation of our organisation's economic, environmental and social performance. [...] We do not operate in isolation; rather, we engage with our stakeholders in shaping our business at every level. We are therefore looking forward to receiving your feedback. Finally, I would encourage you to visit our website at www.fortis.com to find out more about what we are doing.

(Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 195)

Below, I analyse the above excerpt using the coding framework of move types in chairperson's statements in the present study. In my interpretation, the excerpt involves five different move types, namely move types 9, 11, 16, 20 and 21. I would argue that *I hope that you will enjoy reading our second Sustainability Report* seems to serve the communicative purpose of move type 21 'ending the statement politely', like Example 66 above. Nevertheless, move types 20 and 21 are adjacent to each other in Example 66, but they are not here.

Example 68

<MT21: Ending the statement politely> I hope that you will enjoy reading our second Sustainability Report, </MT21> <MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> which has been prepared using the 2002 Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines. </MT9> <MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe it represents a balanced and reasonable presentation of our organisation's economic, environmental and social performance. </MT11> [...] <MT20: Soliciting feedback> We do not operate in isolation; rather, we engage with our stakeholders in shaping our business at every level. We are therefore looking forward to receiving your feedback. </MT20> <MT16: Indicating further information> Finally, I would encourage you to visit our website at www.fortis.com to find out more about what we are doing. </MT16>

(adapted from Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 195)

I have discussed all 21 move types in chairpersons' statements. In the following sub-section, I will concentrate on the move types which are specific to the (part) genre of main sections.

4.1.3 Move types in main sections only

Apart from the 16 move types discussed in Section 4.1.1, the move analysis of main sections identified 4 other move types, i.e. move types 22-25. The four move types will be discussed below.

Move type 22: Presenting operational overview

This move type provides a brief description of key activities or milestones of the listed company's operations.

This move type only appears in the main sections of ESG reports issued by one listed company, i.e. Swire Properties Limited, from 2009 to 2013. This result suggests that the texts serving this specific communicative purpose may not be common in the main sections of ESG reports. Further research is needed to investigate this issue.

Occasionally, move type 16 'indicating further information' appears between two moves of move type 22. Examples 69 and 70 illustrate move type 22 in two different main sections, with and without move type 16 respectively.

In Example 69, the writer describes a development project, i.e. INDIGO. The writer also asks the reader to refer to further information about the project in another section of the ESG report, i.e. Sustainability in Action.

Example 69

<MT22: Presenting operational overview> ... INDIGO in Beijing, our mixed-use development featuring a mix of shopping, leisure, business and hospitality, marked its grand opening </MT22>
 <MT16: Indicating further information> (see Sustainability in Action). </MT16> <MT22: Presenting operational overview> INDIGO is the first joint venture project between Swire Properties and Sino-Ocean Land, and it comprises a total of 1.89 million sq ft, including a 935,000 sq ft shopping mall, a 25-storey Grade A office tower, and EAST Beijing, a lifestyle business hotel offering 369 rooms and suites. ... </MT22>

(CMS-01972-2012)

In Example 70, the writer describes the listing of Swire Properties Limited (referred to as ‘Swire Properties’ in the example) on the Main Board of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong.

Example 70

<MT22: Presenting operational overview> ... On 18 January 2012, trading in Swire Properties shares commenced on the Main Board of the Stock Exchange of Hong Kong following our successful listing by way of introduction. The listing further strengthens our position as a leading developer of and investor in mixed-use commercial properties. ... </MT22>

(CMS-01972-2011)

Move type 22 ‘presenting operational overview’ seems to correspond to the strategy ‘summarising operational performance in the past’ in the study of move structure of CEOs’ letters by Nickerson and de Groot (2005). This strategy and other strategies are shown to realise the move type ‘operations’ in their study. The move type ‘operations’ offers ‘specific details on operational performance over the past year, again to maintain investor confidence’ (Nickerson & de Groot, 2005, p. 333).

Move type 23: Presenting corporate governance structure

This move type presents information about the corporate governance structure of the listed company, including the development of corporate governance, corporate governance practices, the

composition, roles, functions and responsibilities of Board of Directors and different Board committees as well as risk management and internal control policy or framework.

Example 71 illustrates move type 23 ‘presenting corporate governance structure’, move type 7 ‘presenting corporate governance structure for CSR’ and move type 16 ‘indicating further information’. The writer provides information about the two corporate governance structures (move types 7 and 23), and then asks the reader to refer to relevant pages of the listed company’s annual report for more information about ‘the composition of the Group’s Board of Directors and related details’ (move type 16). For the sake of convenience, the texts of move type 23 are underlined.

Example 71

<MT23: Presenting corporate governance structure> Our Board is responsible for the Group’s business strategy and overall management of our business activities. To ensure we adhere to sound management practices, the Board has five committees, namely the Standing Committee, the Audit Committee, the Remuneration Committee, the Nomination Committee, and the Corporate Governance Committee. The Corporate Governance Committee consists of three independent non-executive directors and is the Group’s highest governance body tasked with developing and reviewing the Company’s policies and practices in relation to corporate governance. The Committee also monitors such policies and practices in compliance with legal and regulatory requirements. The Audit Committee assesses the effectiveness of the Group’s risk management and internal control systems. </MT23> <MT7: Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR> The Corporate Social Responsibility Committee comprises several directors and department heads and is chaired by the Group’s Vice Chairman, Mr Lee Ka Shing. It is responsible for overseeing issues with respect to sustainability and corporate social responsibility. </MT7> <MT23: Presenting corporate governance structure> The Board of Directors provides clear directions to the management team and entrusts the day-to-day management, administration and operations of the Group to the management team. </MT23> <MT16: Indicating further information> Further information on the composition of the Group’s Board of Directors and related details can be found in the Corporate Governance Report on pages 88 to 103 of the Group’s Annual Report 2015. </MT16>

(CMS-00012-2015)

As illustrated in the above example, while both move types 7 and 23 are concerned with corporate governance, they present different kinds of information. Move type 7 offers information specifically about corporate governance in terms of CSR, while move type 23 provides information about corporate governance at a more general level. In fact, texts of the move types are often placed in different areas in main sections. Texts of move type 7 are usually found under the headings containing *sustainability*, such as *sustainability governance*, *sustainability governance structure* and *sustainability management structure*, while the texts of move type 23 are typically placed under the headings of *corporate governance* and *corporate governance structure*.

Move type 23 ‘presenting corporate governance structure’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations

This move type presents information about individuals as testaments to aspects of the listed company’s CSR performance. It involves the texts produced by the writer of the main section as well as the texts produced by other individuals which can be considered ‘individual cases’ or ‘quotations’. ‘Individual cases’ are concerned with narratives of individuals’ experience (i.e. written language of individuals), while ‘quotations’ refer to direct and indirect quotations (i.e. spoken language of individuals) from individuals such as management staff members, employees, tenants, non-governmental organisations which collaborated with the listed companies and participants of activities or events organised by the listed companies.

There are two ‘individual cases’ in the CMS. They are two management trainee journals written by Cherry Lau and Jimmy Lai, who were participants of the management trainee programme of New World Development Company Limited in 2013 and 2014. The management trainee journals form two sub-sections of ‘Our People’ in two different ESG reports issued by the listed company (CMS-00017-2014 and CMS-00017-2015). They provide information about how the listed company provides formal training and learning opportunities for its new management employees. The management trainee journals serve as a tool to highlight that the listed company pays attention to the professional development of its employees and demonstrate the strong workforce of the listed company.

The excerpt in Example 72 is taken from the management trainee journal written by Cherry Lau. In this example, Cherry Lau states that the listed company cares about the work-life balance of its employees and describes her experience in playing volleyball with other staff members of the listed company.

Example 72

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... The Group values work-life balance. A lot of diverse extra-curricular activities are organized for the staff, including sports training, voluntary services and interest classes or workshops, to name but a few. I enjoy participating in various extra-curricular activities as I can meet staff from different business units to enhance a sense of belonging to the Group. It was an unforgettable experience for me to be playing side by side in the Group's volleyball team with the Captain of Hong Kong Volleyball Women Team who joined the Group through the Hong Kong Athletes Career and Education Programme. ... </MT24> (CMS-00017-2014)

Almost all quotations in the main sections are direct quotations. A smaller proportion of direct quotations are provided in what I refer to as 'sections of questions and answers'.

In the sections of questions and answers, different pairs of questions and answers are presented. Eight sections of questions and answers were identified in six of the ESG reports under examination. The ESG reports were issued by two listed companies, namely Hysan Development Company Limited (three sections in three reports) and Hang Lung Properties Limited (five sections in three reports). Some sections are placed under headings containing *Q&A* and *dialogue*. Except one section, all sections shows interviews with staff members of the listed companies. The exceptional case involves a winner of an award of the listed company.

The excerpt in Example 73 is taken from a section of questions and answers presented in an ESG report issued by Hysan Development Company Limited. There are four pairs of questions and answers. The listed company's Director of Design and Project, Dr. L. K. Chan, is asked to share the listed company's thoughts on sustainable development. The example shows one pair of question and answers.

Example 73

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Why is Hysan leading the trend here in Hong Kong? What drives Hysan to go this route? What are the benefits for the shareholders and for the community in general?

“Hysan believes in contributing to the community through its daily business activities. Our late Chairman, Mr. Peter T.C. LEE was a firm believer in achieving financial results that can also bring benefit environmentally and socially, and his legacy lives on. In the short term, a sustainable building cuts down on energy use, which clearly helps the ‘triple bottom line’; in the long run, a good and efficient design will ensure the building does not easily become obsolete in both a commercial and social sense. Hysan stands to benefit when the overall environment improves and the community becomes truly sustainable.” ... </MT24>

(CMS-00014-2009)

I would like to point out that while it is clear that it is Dr. L. K. Chan who provided the answer, it is unknown as to who asked the question. The interview with Dr. L. K. Chan is introduced to the reader in the following way:

Example 74

<MT25: Indicating upcoming information> In the following section, Dr. L. K. CHAN, Hysan’s Director of Design and Project, shares the Group’s thoughts on sustainable development. </MT25>

(CMS-00014-2009)

In fact, in all sections of questions and answers, no information about the interviewers is provided. It seems obvious that both questions and answers are arranged in a specific format such that the information in the questions and answers is presented to the reader. I would argue that the sections of questions and answers appear to arouse the reader’s attention to information on particular topics by providing the reader with the role of the ‘interviewer’. While reading the questions and answers, the reader is invited to ‘ask’ the individual different questions as structured by the writer and receive response from the individual. Eventually, the reader would be aware of the arguments and positions of the individual, which are in fact related to various CSR issues of the listed company. Each section of questions and answers could be considered an episode of communication between the reader and an individual. It creates a more personal experience for the

reader to understand more about the listed company. It also provides an opportunity for the listed company to build interpersonal relationship with the reader.

A larger proportion of direct quotations scatter throughout main sections. Most of them are presented as texts separated from paragraphs (see Examples 75-77). The others are integrated into paragraphs (see Example 78).

Example 75 shows a direct quotation from Wong Yinwan, an employee of Hang Lung Properties Limited, who was one of the winners of the Emerald Award of the listed company in 2015. The award was launched during the reporting period (i.e. 2015) to recognise frontline employees of the listed company for their excellent customer service. Quotations from two award winners are incorporated into the main section of the ESG report. By integrating the quotations into the ESG report, the writer emphasises the high level of customer service of the listed company.

Example 75

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... “The Emerald Award helps encourage me and the rest of the team to provide the best service we can, to serve every customer from the heart, and to try to understand all situations from their perspective. It is important to be prepared and to always strive to keep learning and be better service providers.”

Wong Yinwan, Senior Guest Service Supervisor of Kornhill Plaza in Hong Kong – 2015 Emerald Award Winner </MT24>

(CMS-00101-2015)

The direct quotation illustrated in Example 76 is taken from part of the main section of an ESG report issued by Swire Properties Limited (referred to as ‘Swire Properties’ in the example). In the specific part of the main section, the writer reports that the listed company has offered free energy audits to its office tenants since 2008 to help them understand their energy usage patterns and identify energy-saving opportunities. The writer presents information about the progress of the energy audits and the listed company’s future actions and objectives. A quotation from one of the tenants who had participated in the energy audit is provided in the main section, as illustrated in the example below. The quotation shows that the energy audit provided the tenant with ‘comments and opportunities for improvement of lighting’, highlighting the contribution made by the listed company.

Example 76

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> Swire Properties did an energy audit for tenants for free. They helped us with comments and opportunities for improvement of lighting.

Katherine Lau, General Manager, Corporate Quality & Sustainability, Fuji Xerox (Hong Kong) Limited </MT24>

(CMS-01972-2010)

The excerpt in Example 77 is taken from part of a main section which presents information about the involvement of community of Hysan Development Company Limited (referred to as ‘Hysan’ in the example). Two direct quotations are included in the reporting of activities organised by the listed company and its partners. One of the quotations is from a participant who joined the study-and-career programme called ‘Project Exploration’. The other is from the Founder and Artistic Director of Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation, which is illustrated in Example 77. The quotation is used to show that the listed company has partnered with the organisation to promote youth development in Hong Kong.

Example 77

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation (YAF) is a charity that provides high quality, non-competitive arts experiences for all young people aged 5 to 25. Hysan partnered with YAF and Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) to bring the Arts in the Park Night Parade to Lee Gardens. “Over the years, Hysan has been hugely supportive of our work in empowering the young people of Hong Kong through art, including the Hysan Environmental Art Project, as well as through our Art Angels programme. In 2013, Hysan was instrumental in allowing us to present Hong Kong’s very first and greatly successful Arts in the Park Night Parade of illuminated artworks at the heart of Causeway Bay. We look forward to collaborating on many more meaningful projects.”

Lindsey McAlister, OBE

Founder and Artistic Director, Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation </MT14>

(CMS-00014-2013)

Example 78 illustrates step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. In the move of move type 24, both direct and indirect quotations are provided. The quotations are from Ah Lung, a participant of the Modern Apprenticeship programme organised by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited and Breakthrough, which is ‘an organization that serves youth to promote culture and education’. The quotations show that the participants learn about ‘the importance of self-awareness and goal-setting’ through training and seminars of the programme, highlighting that the listed company provides career guidance for youngsters and contributes to youth development.

Example 78

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The Group has been partnered with Breakthrough, an organization that serves youth to promote culture and education, in nurturing those being labeled as academically underachievers or deprived youth through the Modern Apprenticeship programme for almost a decade. Around 300 students participated in the latest two-year programme held during the period from September 2010 to May 2012. The programme offered soft skill training and career talks, integrated on-the-job training as well as individual mentoring by experienced staff from the Group. The objective is to help youngsters prepare for transition, explore the direction of their future career and identify key life goals. </MT3S1>

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> One participant named Ah Lung said that he used to think salary was the only factor he had to consider before accepting an offer. The training and seminars taught him about the importance of self-awareness and goal-setting. He hopes to learn more about everyday workplace situations and explore his abilities and interests to find an ideal career. He encouraged young people to work hard and realize their aspirations, saying: ‘Set your goals and make them happen!’ </MT24>

(CMS-00016-2011)

It has to be noted that some of the texts belonging to move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’ is produced by the writer of the main section and not the individuals themselves. These texts provide background information about the individuals and the events in which they were involved. Examples 77 and 78 are reproduced below. The texts produced by the

writer are underlined. In Example 77, the underlined texts offer information about the charity Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation and its collaboration with the listed company, i.e. Hysan Development Company Limited, and introduce the individual from whom the quotation is taken. In Example 78, the texts produced by the writer introduce the individual from whom the quotation is taken. I would argue that the indirect quotations are produced by the writer based on what the individual had said, and thus are not entirely produced by the writer.

Example 77 (reproduced)

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation (YAF) is a charity that provides high quality, non-competitive arts experiences for all young people aged 5 to 25. Hysan partnered with YAF and Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) to bring the Arts in the Park Night Parade to Lee Gardens. “Over the years, Hysan has been hugely supportive of our work in empowering the young people of Hong Kong through art, including the Hysan Environmental Art Project, as well as through our Art Angels programme. In 2013, Hysan was instrumental in allowing us to present Hong Kong’s very first and greatly successful Arts in the Park Night Parade of illuminated artworks at the heart of Causeway Bay. We look forward to collaborating on many more meaningful projects.”

Lindsey McAlister, OBE

Founder and Artistic Director, Hong Kong Youth Arts Foundation </MT14>

(CMS-00014-2013)

Example 78 (reproduced)

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> One participant named Ah Lung said that he used to think salary was the only factor he had to consider before accepting an offer. The training and seminars taught him about the importance of self-awareness and goal-setting. He hopes to learn more about everyday workplace situations and explore his abilities and interests to find an ideal career. He encouraged young people to work hard and realize their aspirations, saying: ‘Set your goals and make them happen!’ </MT24>

(CMS-00016-2011)

The move type ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’ was identified based on the move type ‘presenting individual cases’ in Yu and Bondi (2017). The authors note that the move type ‘narrates the experience, actions, or achievement of an individual as a testimony to support a specific aspect of the company’s performance’ (Yu & Bondi, 2017). I would argue that the management trainee journals appear to serve such a function by focusing on the experience of the management trainees. Since Yu and Bondi (2018) do not provide any examples of the move type, it is unclear as to whether the ‘individual cases’ in their data are similar to those identified in the present study, i.e. the management trainee journals. The move type proposed by the authors does not seem to involve quotations from individuals. Given the use of direct and indirect quotations in the main sections analysed in the present study, it is decided that *quotations* has to be added to the name of move type 24. Therefore, the move type is labelled as ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’.

Move type 25: Indicating upcoming information

This move type guides the reader’s attention by expressing what kind of information is forthcoming in the main section. It typically involves the information presented in tables, diagrams, charts and the following paragraph(s).

In Example 79, the writer firstly states the importance of ‘investing in employee training and development’, and then describes that the listed company provides ‘a wide variety of internal and external training programs’ for its employees. Finally, the writer informs the reader of the information in the table placed lower on the page. The writer seeks to facilitate the reader’s understanding of the training and development programmes by describing the purpose of the table.

Example 79

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Investing in employee training and development is crucial to enhance our internal capacity and to support our staff in fulfilling their career aspirations. </MT11>
 <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices>We provide a wide variety of internal and external training programs to help employees expand their knowledge and skills in a fast-changing business environment. </MT3S2> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The following table outlines the major categories of training and development programs available to different groups of staff. </MT25>

(CMS-00101-2016)

In Example 80, the writer describes that the listed company attempts ‘to reduce electricity consumption’ in various ways, and that ‘below’ (which means the following paragraphs) provides information about ‘the electricity saving initiatives’ of the listed company. Here, the reader is guided by the writer to read the following paragraphs to understand the electricity saving initiatives.

Example 80

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> To reduce electricity consumption across our business units, we continued to upgrade our equipment with more energy efficient ones and optimise the standby and in-service time of our facilities. In addition, where appropriate, we use renewable energy to power our operations. </MT3S2> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The electricity saving initiatives of our business units are outlined below: </MT25>

(CMS-00004-2014)

Move type 25 ‘indicating upcoming information’ does not seem to be reported in previous studies of the move structure of CEOs’ letters, chairpersons’ statements and CSR reports.

There are 21 move types in chairpersons’ statements and 20 move types in main sections. The two (part) genres share 16 of the move types. Examples of 25 move types and a detailed description of their communicative functions have been provided. The next section will discuss the structural elements in chairpersons’ statements.

4.2 Structural elements in chairpersons’ statements

Following Upton & Connor (2007, p. 52), the present study identified ‘structural elements’ in the 41 chairpersons’ statements (as explained in Section 3.2.2). There are three structural elements in the chairpersons’ statements, namely salutation, signature and date line.

Structural element 1: Salutation

This is the opening greeting of the chairperson’s statement.

Salutation is used in only one (2.44%) of the chairpersons’ statements under examination, as illustrated in Example 81. The salutation is followed by a comma.

Example 81

Dear Readers,
(CCS-00823-2013)

The single instance of salutation is used in the chairperson's statement of the third ESG report issued by Link Real Estate Investment Trust. In fact, it is the final standalone ESG report issued by the listed company. The listed company decided to provide its CSR reporting on its 'Sustainability Website' (<https://www.linkreit.com/en/sustainability/>) and annual reports since its 2012/2013 financial year. Salutation is not used in its first and second ESG reports. The inclusion of salutation in the third ESG report perhaps is motivated by the writer's desire to build a closer relationship with the reader.

Structural element 2: Signature

This is the penned and/or typed signature(s) of the management staff member(s) or management team.

Example 82 illustrates a typed signature.

Example 82

LEE KA SHING

Vice Chairman and Chairman of Corporate Social Responsibility Committee
(CCS-00012-2014)

All, except three, chairpersons' statements (i.e. 92.68% of the 41 chairpersons' statements) include a signature (or signatures). The exceptional cases are the chairperson's statement in the first ESG report issued by Hysan Development Company Limited ²¹ and the chairpersons' statements in the first and second ESG reports issued by Hang Lung Properties Limited. However, while there are no signatures in these three chairpersons' statements, all the chairpersons' statements are presented together with photographs of the Chairman (in the case of Hysan

²¹The present study examined eight ESG reports issued by Hysan Development Company Limited. Chairperson's statement is only found in its first ESG report.

Development Company Limited) and the Managing Director (in the case of Hang Lung Properties Limited). The names of the Chairman or Managing Director are provided as captions of the photographs. Therefore, it is obvious that the chairpersons' statements were (partly) produced by the Chairman or Managing Director.

Of the 38 chairpersons' statements with the use of signatures, 22 (57.89%) only contain a typed signature. Another ten (26.32%) chairpersons' statements contain both penned and typed signatures. The remaining six (15.79%) only contain a penned signature.

Structural element 3: Date line

This is the date when the chairperson's statement was written or produced.

Twelve (29.27%) of the 41 chairpersons' statements under examination contain a date line. In three of the chairpersons' statements, the date line includes the day, the month and the year, as illustrated in Example 83. In addition, in one of these three chairpersons' statements, *Hong Kong* is shown before the day.

Example 83

29 August 2015

(CCS-00101-2014)

In nine chairpersons' statements, the date line includes the month and the year, excluding the day, as shown in Example 84.

Example 84

December 2017

(CCS-00016-2016)

All instances of the three structural elements constitute 467 words, making up 1.97% of all the words in the CCS.

Garzone (2005) and Nickerson and de Groot (2005) report the use of salutation, complimentary close and signature in CEOs' letters in annual reports. Complimentary close is not used in all 41 chairpersons' statements analysed in the present study.

The next section will discuss the distribution of move types in the chairpersons' statements and main sections.

4.3 Distribution of move types

Using the two coding frameworks presented in Section 4.1, text segments of each chairperson's statement and main section were coded as separate moves which represent different move types. A total of 624 and 5,281 moves were identified in the CCS and the CMS respectively.

4.3.1 Distribution of move types in chairperson's statements

Table 4.1 summarises the distribution of move types in the 41 chairpersons' statements, including the frequency of use of each move type, the number of chairpersons' statements which contain each move type and the number of words of each move type.

Table 4.1: Distribution of the 21 move types in chairperson's statements

Move type	Moves		Chairpersons' statements (CS)		Words	
	Total number	% of total moves	Total number	% of total CS	Total number	% of total words
1 Move type 1: Presenting corporate profile	5	0.80	5	12.20	103	0.44
2 Move type 2: Reporting on financial performance	11	1.76	8	19.51	462	1.99
3 Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance	139	22.28	40	97.56	8,809	37.97
4 Move type 4: Stating mission	19	3.04	18	43.90	507	2.19
5 Move type 5: Establishing credentials	76	12.18	34	82.93	2,306	9.94
6 Move type 6: Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks	3	0.48	3	7.32	49	0.21

7	Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR	8	1.28	8	19.51	329	1.42
8	Move type 8:	Introducing the current report	37	5.93	29	70.73	1,239	5.34
9	Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting	27	4.33	20	48.78	1,420	6.12
10	Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement	9	1.44	9	21.95	619	2.67
11	Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	96	15.38	37	90.24	2,782	11.99
12	Move type 12:	Showing commitment	54	8.65	31	75.61	1,154	4.97
13	Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances	25	4.01	18	43.90	479	2.06
14	Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises	38	6.09	26	63.41	1,188	5.12
15	Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future	11	1.76	10	24.39	290	1.25
16	Move type 16:	Indicating further information	11	1.76	7	17.07	132	0.57
17	Move type 17:	Presenting business highlights	9	1.44	6	14.63	468	2.02
18	Move type 18:	Presenting bad news	2	0.32	2	4.88	116	0.50
19	Move type 19:	Expressing appreciation	17	2.72	15	36.59	400	1.72

20	Move type 20:	Soliciting feedback	18	2.88	18	43.90	243	1.05
21	Move type 21:	Ending the statement politely	9	1.44	9	21.95	104	0.45

Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ is the most common move type. It appears 139 times, representing more than one-fifth (22.28%) of all the moves appearing in the CCS. Only one chairperson’s statement does not contain the move type. The move type appears at the average rate of 3.48 times per chairperson’s statement. The second most common move type is move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’, which appears 96 times, accounting for 15.38% of the total number of moves in the CCS. This move type is found in 37 (90.24%) of the 41 chairperson’s statements. It is used at the average rate of 2.59 times per chairperson’s statement. Move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, the third most frequently occurring move type in the chairpersons’ statements, appears 76 times. The moves constitute 12.18% of all the moves appearing in the CCS. This move type appears in 34 (82.93%) chairpersons’ statements and at the average rate of 2.24 times per chairperson’s statement. Move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’, move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ and move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ appear fairly regularly in the CCS. Move type 12 appears in 31 (75.61%) chairpersons’ statements, move type 8 appears in 29 (70.73%) of the 41 chairpersons’ statements, while move type 14 appears in 26 (63.41%) chairpersons’ statements.

In terms of frequency of use, the least common move type is move type 18 ‘presenting bad news’. The two moves of this move type appear in two different chairpersons’ statements. In terms of size, i.e. total number of words, the least common move type is move type 6 ‘presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks’, constituting 49 (0.21%) words.

Regarding the average length of each of the 21 move types, move type 10 ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’ is the longest, averaging 68.8 words per occurrence. Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 18 ‘presenting bad news’ are the second and third longest respectively. The former appears at the average of 63.4 words per occurrence, while the latter at 58 words per occurrence.

Move type 16 ‘indicating further information’, move type 20 ‘soliciting feedback’ and move type 21 ‘ending the statement politely’ are the shortest. These three move types display a similar average number of words, with move type 21 averaging 11.6 words per occurrence, move type 16 averaging 12 words per occurrence and move type 20 averaging 13.5 words per occurrence. The average number of words of the other 15 move types ranges from 16.3-52.6 words.

Given the importance of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, the following discusses the constituent steps of the respective move types.

Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance

As discussed in Section 4.1.1, an individual move of move type 3 can be expressed by one or both of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ and step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’. Of the 139 moves of the move type, 58 are formed by only step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’, accounting for 41.73% of the total number of moves. Forty-two (30.22%) moves are constituted by only step 1 ‘describing actions and results’. The smallest proportion (28.06%) of the moves is formed by the combination of the steps (39 cases).

In the CCS, the 139 moves of move type 3 are formed by 200 steps. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of the steps.

Table 4.2: Distribution of the steps of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’

Step of move type 3	Steps		Words	
	Total number	% of total steps	Total number	% of total words
Step 1: Describing actions and results	93	46.50	5,648	64.12
Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices	107	53.50	3,161	35.88

More than half (53.50%) of the steps are step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’. In terms of the number of words, a larger proportion (64.12%) is constituted by step 1 ‘describing actions and results’.

Move type 5: Establishing credentials

An individual move of move type 5 can be expressed by one or both of step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ and step 2 ‘self-praising’ (as discussed in Section 4.1.1). Most of the 76 moves (49 moves; 64.47%) of move type 5 are formed by only step 2 ‘self-praising’. Twenty-three (30.26%) moves are constituted by only step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’. There are only four cases of combination of the steps, accounting for 5.26% of the total number of the moves.

In the CCS, the 76 moves of move type 5 are formed by 80 steps. Table 4.3 shows the distribution of the steps.

Table 4.3: Distribution of the steps of move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’

Step of move type 5	Steps		Words	
	Total number	% of total steps	Total number	% of total words
Step 1: Referring to external evaluations	27	33.75	1,000	43.37
Step 2: Self-praising	53	66.25	1,306	56.63

Almost two-thirds (66.25%) of the steps are step 2 ‘self-praising’. The steps make up more than half (56.63%) of the total number of words of the move type. It could be concluded that in terms of both frequency of use and size, step 2 ‘self-praising’ is comparatively more prominent than step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ in chairpersons’ statements.

Obligatory and optional move types

Following Ding (2007), Ho (2017) and Yang (2015), the present study considers the move types which appear in at least 60% of the chairpersons’ statements as obligatory. As Table 4.1 shows, there are six obligatory move types:

1. Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’,
2. Move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’,
3. Move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’,
4. Move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’,

5. Move type 12 ‘showing commitment’, and
6. Move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’.

The other 15 move types appear in lower than 60% of the chairpersons’ statements (Table 4.1), and therefore are regarded as optional. More specifically, they are used in two (4.88%) to 20 (48.78%) chairpersons’ statements.

Obligatory and optional structural elements

The structural elements in the chairpersons’ statements are discussed in Section 4.2 above. A vast majority (92.68%) of the 41 chairpersons’ statements exhibit a penned and/or typed signature. Therefore, signature is considered as obligatory structural element in the chairpersons’ statements. Salutation and date line are used relatively less frequently, recording 2.44% and 29.27% occurrence in the chairpersons’ statements respectively. Therefore, they are regarded as optional.

The next sub-section will focus on the distribution of move types in main sections.

4.3.2 Distribution of move types in main sections

Table 4.4 summarises the distribution of move types in the 54 main sections.

Table 4.4: Distribution of the 20 move types in main sections

Move type	Moves		Main sections (MS)		Words	
	Total number	% of total moves	Total number	% of total MS	Total number	% of total words
1 Move type 1: Presenting corporate profile	103	1.95	44	81.48	17,432	3.72
2 Move type 2: Reporting on financial performance	17	0.32	16	29.63	2,015	0.43
3 Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance	1,946	36.85	54	100.00	311,931	66.64
4 Move type 4: Stating mission	36	0.68	23	42.59	1,024	0.22
5 Move type 5: Establishing credentials	755	14.30	54	100.00	30,706	6.56

6	Move type 6:	Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks	55	1.04	42	77.78	6,805	1.45
7	Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR	39	0.74	35	64.81	4,646	0.99
8	Move type 8:	Introducing the current report	13	0.25	10	18.52	602	0.13
9	Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting	9	0.17	5	9.26	458	0.10
10	Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement	114	2.16	39	72.22	17,244	3.68
11	Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	572	10.83	54	100.00	13,172	2.81
12	Move type 12:	Showing commitment	570	10.79	54	100.00	12,695	2.71
13	Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances	94	1.78	35	64.81	2,916	0.62
14	Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises	325	6.15	44	81.48	1,3862	2.96
15	Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future	10	0.19	8	14.81	463	0.10
16	Move type 16:	Indicating further information	273	5.17	39	72.22	3,454	0.74
17	Move type 22:	Presenting operational overview	11	0.21	5	9.26	1,653	0.35
18	Move type 23:	Presenting corporate governance structure	79	1.50	37	68.52	7,300	1.56

19	Move type 24:	Presenting individual cases and quotations	169	3.20	37	68.52	18,233	3.90
20	Move type 25:	Indicating upcoming information	91	1.72	30	55.56	1,457	0.31

Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ is the most common move type in terms of both frequency of use and size. It appears 1,946 times. The moves of the move type make up more than one-third (36.85%) of the total number of moves appearing in the CMS. The move type is used at the average rate of 36.04 times per main section. All the 54 main sections analysed contain this move type. Apart from move type 3, move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ and move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ also appear in all the 54 main sections. Move type 5 represents 14.30% of the total number of moves, move type 11 represents 10.83%, while move type 12 represents 10.79%. Respectively, they appear at the average rate of 13.98, 10.59 and 10.56 times per main section.

The frequent use of move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 in the main sections corresponds to the preference for these move types by the writer of chairpersons’ statements. In fact, in terms of frequency of use, number of moves the move type contains and average rate of occurrence, move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 are the four most common move types in the chairpersons’ statements, with the degree of preference being move types 3, 11, 5 and 12 (in descending order). Therefore, these 4 move types are of high significance in both (part) genres of chairpersons’ statements and main sections.

Excluding move types 3, 5, 11 and 12, move type 1 ‘presenting corporate profile’ and move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ are the most frequently used. Both appear in 44 (81.48%) main sections.

Move type 9 ‘describing the practice of CSR reporting’ and move type 22 ‘presenting operational overview’ are the least common move types. They appear in five (9.26%) main sections. Move type 9 is the least frequently used move type in terms of size. The moves of move type 9 are constituted by 458 (0.10%) words.

As far as the average length of the move types are concerned, move type 1 ‘presenting corporate profile’ is the longest, averaging 169.2 words per occurrence. The second and third

longest move types are move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 22 ‘presenting operational overview’ respectively, appearing at the average of 160.1 and 150.1 words. Move type 16 ‘indicating further information’ is the shortest, averaging 12.7 words per occurrence.

Below, the constituent steps of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 5 ‘stablishing credentials’ will be discussed.

Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance

An individual move of move type 3 can be expressed by one or more of the steps (as discussed in Section 4.1.1). Of the 1,946 moves of the move type, 797 are constituted by the combination of the steps, making up 40.96% of all the moves. Six hundred and thirty-three (32.53%) moves are formed by only step 1 ‘describing actions and results’. Another 18.68% of the total number of the moves (i.e. 515 moves) are formed by only step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’. One single move is formed by step 3 ‘assessing CSR performance’, accounting for 0.05% of the moves.

In the CMS, the 1,946 moves of move type 3 are formed by 3,619 steps. Table 4.5 shows the distribution of the steps.

Table 4.5: Distribution of the steps of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’

Step of move type 3	Steps		Words	
	Total number	% of total steps	Total number	% of total words
Step 1: Describing actions and results	1,874	51.78	221,608	71.04
Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices	1,713	47.33	89,448	28.68
Step 3: Assessing CSR performance	32	0.88	875	0.28

More than half (51.78%) of the steps are step 1 ‘describing actions and results’. The steps make up more than 70% of the total number of words of move type 3. Step 3 ‘assessing CSR performance’ appears the least frequently among the three steps. The steps of step 3 make up the smallest percentage of the number of words, with only 0.28% of the total. The results reveal that step 1 is the most prominent among the 3 steps of the move type, indicating the importance of the information about the actions and results in the reporting on CSR performance.

Move type 5: Establishing credentials

An individual move of move type 5 can be expressed by one or both of the steps (as discussed in Section 4.1.1). Of the 755 moves of the move type, 426 (56.42%) are formed by only step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’. Two hundred and ninety-three (38.68%) moves are constituted by only step 2 ‘self-praising’. The remaining 37 moves are formed by the combination of the steps, accounting for 4.90% of all the moves.

In the CMS, the 755 moves of move type 5 are formed by 798 steps. Table 4.6 shows the distribution of the steps.

Table 4.6: Distribution of the steps of move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’

Step of move type 5	Steps		Words	
	Total number	% of total steps	Total number	% of total words
Step 1: Referring to external evaluations	466	58.40	21,500	70.02
Step 2: Self-praising	332	41.60	9,206	29.98

Nearly 60% of the steps are step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’. The steps account for slightly over 70% of the total number of words of the move type. Clearly, step 1 ‘referring to external evaluations’ is comparatively more important than step 2 ‘self-praising’ in main sections. This result regarding move type 5 in the main sections is in contrast with that in the chairpersons’ statements.

Obligatory and optional move types

Table 4.4 above shows that the following 13 move types record a 60% or above occurrence in the 54 main sections. Therefore, they are obligatory move types of the (part) genre of main sections.

1. Move type 1 ‘presenting corporate profile’,
2. Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’,
3. Move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’,

4. Move type 6 ‘presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks’,
5. Move type 7 ‘presenting corporate governance structure for CSR’,
6. Move type 10 ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’,
7. Move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’,
8. Move type 12 ‘showing commitment’,
9. Move type 13 ‘describing external circumstances’,
10. Move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’,
11. Move type 16 ‘indicating further information’,
12. Move type 23 ‘presenting corporate governance structure’, and
13. Move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’.

In fact, all 13 move types appear at least in two-third of the 54 main sections (i.e. 36 main sections), and as previously stated, four of the move types – move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 – are used in all the main sections.

There are seven optional move types. Their occurrence in the main section ranges greatly, from 9.26% (recorded by move type 9 ‘describing the practice of CSR reporting’ and move type 22 ‘presenting operational overview’) to 55.56% (recorded by move type 25 ‘indicating upcoming information’). Therefore, some optional move types often present in main sections, while others are quite rare.

In this section, the distribution of move types across the texts in the CCS and the CMS is presented. Using the cut-off frequency of 60% of occurrence, obligatory and optional moves in the (part) genres of chairpersons’ statements and main sections were identified. Obligatory and optional structural elements of chairpersons’ statements were also identified. As noted earlier, move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 are of great importance in both (part) genres. The following section will center around these four move types, illustrating how they are used in the two parts of the ESG report.

4.4 Four selected move types

As discussed above, move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’, move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ and move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ represent four of the obligatory move types in both (part) genres, and they are used in almost every

chairperson's statement in the CCS and in every main section in the CMS. The following two subsections will discuss the use of these four move types in chairpersons' statements (4.4.1) and main sections (4.4.2) respectively, by concentrating on their reappearance and use in combination.

4.4.1 Four selected move types in chairperson's statements

Table 4.7 summarises the information about the use of move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 in the 41 chairpersons' statements which comprise the CCS, providing the number of moves of each move type (including the total, minimum and maximum numbers and the average rate of occurrence of each move type), the number of chairpersons' statements which contain at least one move of each move type and the number of chairpersons' statements which contain at least two moves of each move type.

Table 4.7: Selected move types in chairpersons' statements

Move type		Moves				Chairpersons' statements	
		Total number	Minimum number	Maximum number	Average rate of occurrence	≥ 1 occurrence	≥ 2 occurrences
Move type 3:	Reporting on CSR performance	139	0	7	3.48	40	38
Move type 5:	Establishing credentials	76	0	5	2.24	34	24
Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	96	0	6	2.59	37	26
Move type 12:	Showing commitment	54	0	4	1.74	31	17

Move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 do not appear in all chairpersons' statements. However, it is not uncommon to see the move types more than once in the chairpersons' statements. From Table 4.7, it can be observed that move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' always reappear in chairpersons' statements. Thirty-eight (92.68%) chairpersons' statements contain at least two

moves of move type 3. Move types 5, 11 and 12 often reappear in chairpersons' statements. They occur more than once in 17 (41.46%) to 26 (63.41%) chairpersons' statements. In addition, the average rate of occurrence of the move types ranges from 1.74-3.48 times per chairperson's statement, with move type 3 appearing at the highest rate. It is not surprising that move type 3 is the most prominent among the four move types. The purpose of the chairperson's statement is to introduce the reader to the ESG report which discloses information about the CSR performance of the listed company during the reporting period. The chairperson's statement inevitably provides highlights of CSR performance. This function is accomplished by move type 3.

Below, I will discuss the four move types in detail. I will begin by focusing on the excerpt in the following example, which shows the use of move types 3, 11 and 12. The excerpt contains three paragraphs.

Example 85

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> For our existing portfolio, we have focused on narrowing the gap in environmental performance between our old and new properties. Investment in asset enhancements has achieved positive results in meeting our targets of reducing electricity and water intensity in our Hong Kong and mainland China properties. </MT3S1>

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Health and safety is a critical component of property construction management. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Since our last report, we have made significant progress in enhancing the health and safety management systems at our project construction sites in mainland China. </MT3S1> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> This was achieved through the adoption of a sophisticated approach that meticulously identifies and mitigates health and safety risks at each phase of development during construction. </MT3S2> <MT12: Showing commitment> To sustain our progress, we have committed to helping our contractors to build their health and safety capacity. </MT12> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Through taking proactive measures with long-term objectives, we are addressing the underlying challenges faced by our contractors and instilling safe practices and procedures.

We continued to invest in information technology through our Experience, Service and Technology (EST) framework in order to enhance and enrich the ways in which we interact with our customers. We have placed significant emphasis on innovative features that support our evolution from a conventional mall operator to an integrated services provider. </MT3S2> (CCS-00101-2015)

As described above, move type 3 generally appears more than once in the chairpersons' statements. In Example 85, move type 3 (which is represented in one or both of the steps) appears recursively. Both step 1 'describing actions and results' and step 2 'describing strategies/methods/practices' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' appear twice, in three different moves. Both move types 11 and 12 appear once in the example. For the sake of convenience, the order of (re)appearance of the three move types is shown as follows:

Move type 3 (step 1)

Move type 11

Move type 3 (steps 1 and 2)

Move type 12

Move type 3 (step 2)

Using three moves of move type 3, the writer provides information about the CSR performance of the listed company on different topics. In the first paragraph, the writer describes the 'positive results' of the listed company's efforts in 'reducing electricity and water intensity'. In the second paragraph, the writer describes the 'significant progress' the listed company has made 'in enhancing the health and safety management systems', and then the listed company's approach as well as its 'proactive measures' to ensure health and safety. In the third paragraph, the writer presents information about the listed company's investment in technological innovation in enhancing customer service. The use of multiple moves of move type 3 allows the writer to report on CSR performance of the listed company in areas of environmental protection, health and safety as well as customer service.

It is also noticeable that in the second paragraph of the above example, move type 11 is immediately followed by move type 3. Later in the paragraph, move type 12 is also immediately

followed by move type 3. In fact, the combined use of move types 3 and 11 and the combined use of move types 3 and 12 are quite common across chairpersons' statements. In the second paragraph of Example 85, both combined uses of move types are associated with one topic, i.e. health and safety. It is observed that cases of combined use of move types could present information on different topics, as shown in Example 86 below. Example 86 contains two paragraphs. The first paragraph shows the combined use of move type 12 and move type 3 (with both steps 1 and 2), while the second paragraph shows the combined use of move type 11 and move type 3 (with step 2).

Example 86

<MT12: Showing commitment> The Group aims to be an employer of choice. </MT12> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We continue to maintain an open dialogue with staff and create an inclusive and supportive workplace across our operations. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The Wharf Staff Recreation Committee has taken an active role to foster work-life balance through an array of social activities for staff and their families. In 2014, Wharf Hotels launched the “3 hotels, 1 family” culture to enhance the connectedness among the hotel staff. During the year, over 73,000 hours of training were delivered to our employees across the Group to enhance their knowledge and awareness in different aspects. </MT3S1>

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Quality of our products and services and safety of our customers are paramount. </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We engage frequently with our customers and review our performance in order to satisfy their needs. Maintenance work, safety audit and risk assessments are conducted regularly to ensure safety of our premises and facilities. </MT3S2>

(CCS-00004-2014)

In the first paragraph of Example 86, the writer firstly states that the listed company strives to ‘be an employer of choice’, expressing the listed company’s commitment to attract and retain its employees and provide a supportive work culture and workplace environment. The writer then reports on the listed company’s related performance, describing its strategy to ‘continue to maintain an open dialogue with staff and create an inclusive and supportive workplace’ as well as

its actions to promote work-life balance of its employees and professional training for the employees. The writer also presents the results of the professional training, providing the total number of hours of training.

In the second paragraph of the example, the writer firstly states the value held by the listed company regarding product and service quality and customer safety, i.e. that they ‘are paramount’. The writer then describes that the listed company has various practices to satisfy the needs of the customers and ensure safety of its premises and facilities.

In the present study, I use ‘sequence’ to refer to a specific pattern of the combined use of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 identified in chairpersons’ statements and main sections. The text segment of a sequence always involves the same topic. The first paragraph in Example 86 shows the combined use of move type 12 and move type 3. The text segments provide information about the well-being of the employees. This pattern of the combined use of the move types is referred to as ‘MT12-MT3 sequence’. The second paragraph in Example 86 shows the combined use of move type 11 and move type 3. The text segments present information about customer satisfaction and safety. This pattern of the combined use of the move types is referred to as ‘MT11-MT3 sequence’.

Examples 37 and 42 presented in Section 4.1.1 illustrate how move types 11 and 12 are used together with move type 3 in chairpersons’ statements. They therefore are also examples which illustrate what I call MT11-MT3 and MT12-MT3 sequences.

I would argue that the two sequences express various cause-and-effect relationships. Both move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ and move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ in the sequences enable the writer construct logical arguments of the CSR performance of the listed company. They help explain the reason for the behaviour of the listed company, including its strategies, actions and the results of actions. They facilitate the reader’s understanding of the purposes of the different new and usual actions and strategies of the listed company.

It is found that MT11-MT3 sequences appear in 27 (72.97%) of the 37 chairpersons’ statements containing move type 11. MT12-MT3 sequences are used in 24 (77.42%) of the 31 chairpersons’ statements containing move type 12.

It is observed that in one chairperson’s statement, move type 12 is preceded by move type 3, forming a MT3-MT12 sequence, as shown in Example 87.

Example 87

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We also extended our guarantee on newly sold residential units to three years from November 2013. </MT3S1> <MT12: Showing commitment> Purchasing property is a big decision and we endeavour to give potential customers confidence in the SHKP promise of premium quality and great customer service. </MT12>
(CCS-00016-2012)

In this example, the writer firstly describes the action of the listed company, i.e. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (referred to as ‘SHKP’ in the example), that the ‘guarantee on newly sold residential units’ is extended to three years by the listed company. Then, the writer explains why the listed company does so, that is, the listed company strives to provide excellent customer service to attract potential property customers. Once again, the listed company’s commitment (presented by move type 12) seems to offer an explanation for the action taken by the listed company (presented by move type 3), similar to the case of the MT12-MT3 sequence.

As shown in Table 4.7, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ reappears in 26 (63.41%) of the 41 chairpersons’ statements. While the above discussion shows that move type 11 often appears together with move type 3 to form the MT11-MT3 sequence, it should be noted that move type 11 can be immediately followed by other move types, as exemplified in the following example.

Example 88

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> I firmly believe that interaction with our stakeholders is essential for gauging the Group’s progress towards our ongoing sustainability and CSR objectives and for ensuring we pursue appropriate future strategies. </MT11> <MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> In 2014, we conducted a comprehensive engagement exercise, involving key internal and external stakeholders, to gain a thorough understanding of their expectations on our CSR disclosure as well as their perceptions and concerns on key social and environmental issues relevant to our business and operations. Their feedback is reflected in this Report and has helped us to begin to develop our longer-term objectives. </MT10>
(CCS-00012-2014)

There are also cases where move type 11 appears at the end of a specific part of a chairperson’s statement. That is, move type 11 constitutes the final text segment of a specific topic. Example 89

illustrates the combined use of move types 11 and 12 in part of a paragraph in a chairperson's statement. The paragraph is ended with move type 11.

Example 89

<MT12: Showing commitment> While we certainly endeavour to create economic value, </MT12>
 <MT11: Stating values and beliefs> we believe equally in the importance of creating social value that has a positive effect on the people who live and work in our communities. </MT11>
 (CCS-01972-2013)

The reappearance of move type 12 'showing commitment' is less common than move type 11 'stating values and beliefs'. It reappears in 17 (41.46%) chairpersons' statements (Table 4.7). As with move type 11, it is possible for move type 12 to be immediately followed by move types other than move type 3. Example 89 above illustrates one of the cases, with move type 12 being followed by move type 11.

Move type 12 can also appear as the final text segment of a specific topic. The excerpt in Example 90 below constitutes a paragraph in a chairperson's statement. The paragraph is ended with move type 12.

Example 90

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We recognize that we could not have achieved this success without the dedication and commitment of our employees over the past four decades. </MT11>
 <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We value talented individuals and care about our staff. </MT3S2> <MT12: Showing commitment> Together we strive to stay at the forefront of quality and market position. </MT12>
 (CCS-00016-2011)

Having discussed move types 3, 11 and 12, I will move on to move type 5 'establishing credentials'.

As shown in Table 4.7, move type 5 reappears in 24 (58.54%) of the 41 chairpersons' statements. It is found that move type 5 is commonly used in combination with move type 3 in the chairpersons' statements. Three sequences emerge from the combined use of the two move types,

namely MT3-MT5, MT5-MT3 and MT3-MT5-MT3 sequences. The text segment of each of these sequences is concerned with the same topic. Given the communicative purposes of move types 3 and 5 (see Section 4.1.1), the sequences function to report on CSR performance in terms of actions, results and/or strategies and, at the same time, emphasise the strength, ability, expertise and achievements of the listed company by referring to external evaluations or self-praising. The sequences are exemplified respectively below.

Example 91 illustrates a MT5-MT3 sequence, focusing on the listed company's efforts in CSR in general. The writer praises the listed company that it always operates in a socially responsible way, and then outlines what the listed company has done in relation to CSR.

Example 91

<MT5S2: Self-praising> We have always tried our best to be a socially-responsible corporation.
</MT5S2> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We have supported charities, education and the arts in the community for many years, and our business operations have long incorporated the principles of conservation, respect for the environment and sustainable development. </MT3S2>
(CCS-00016-2010)

Example 92 illustrates a MT3-MT5 sequence, focusing on the community involvement of the listed company. The writer describes the listed company's general strategy that it places emphasis on 'education, arts and culture, and community care' and highlights the volunteering team of the listed company. Then, the writer suggests that the listed company plays 'a leadership role in sustainability in Asia' and expresses happiness and satisfaction regarding the achievements of the listed company.

Example 92

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Our corporate social responsibility efforts focus on education, arts and culture, and community care – the latter of which is best represented by our staff-driven volunteering team, the Community Ambassadors. </MT3S2> <MT5S2: Self-praising> This expansive long-term approach has helped us take a leadership role in sustainability in Asia, and we're very proud of what we have accomplished so far. </MT5S2>

(CCS-01972-2014)

Example 93 illustrates a MT3-MT5-MT3 sequence, focusing on how the listed company enhances the energy-efficiency of its premises. Firstly, the writer describes that the listed company implements ‘on-going asset enhancement and optimization initiatives’ with the aim to achieve greater resource-efficiency and adaptability ‘to a changing climate and business environment’. Then, the writer presents information about the listed company receiving an accreditation, which is an external recognition. Finally, the writer reports on the result of the reduction in electricity intensity and states that the listed company has decided to renew its target of reducing electricity intensity.

Example 93

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... On-going asset enhancement and optimization initiatives across our portfolio make our properties more resource-efficient and adaptive to a changing climate and business environment. </MT3S1> <MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> Our headquarters, the iconic Standard Chartered Bank Building attained BEAM Plus V1.2 Existing Building Platinum Rating, the first office building to receive such an accreditation in Hong Kong. </MT5S1> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We also made a notable reduction in our electricity intensity, and renewing our target to cut another 12% by 2020 against our 2015 baseline. </MT3S1>

(CCS-00101-2016)

MT3-MT5 sequences appears in 12 (50.00%) of the 24 chairpersons’ statements which contain move type 5, MT5-MT3 sequences in 9 (37.50%) of the chairpersons’ statements, while MT3-MT5-MT3 sequences in two (8.33%) of the chairpersons’ statements.

In this sub-section focusing on move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 in chairpersons’ statements, I have discussed the reappearance and the use in combination of the four move types. The importance of the move types lies in the fact that not only do they appear in most of the chairpersons’ statements, but they are also often used repeatedly in the chairpersons’ statements. An exploration of the data in the CCS shows some meaningful patterns of the combined use of move types, i.e. what I call ‘sequences’, revealing that some of the move types tend to appear in juxtaposition to each other.

The next sub-section will discuss the four move types in main sections.

4.4.2 Four selected move types in main sections

As reported in Section 4.3.2, move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’, move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ and move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ appear in all 54 main sections under examination. They are also four of the 13 obligatory move types in main sections.

Table 4.8 summarises the information about the use of the move types in the 54 main sections which comprise the CMS.

Table 4.8: Selected move types in main sections

Move type		Moves				Main section	
		Total number	Minimum number	Maximum number	Average rate of occurrence	≥ 1 occurrence	≥ 2 occurrences
Move type 3:	Reporting on CSR performance	1,944	2	86	36.04	54	54
Move type 5:	Establishing credentials	755	1	35	13.98	54	53
Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs	572	1	25	10.59	54	53
Move type 12:	Showing commitment	570	1	26	10.56	54	51

All 54 main sections display the reappearance of move type 3. The other three move types reappear in almost all of the main sections. Move types 5 and 11 reappear in all, except, one (98.15%) main sections. Move type 12 reappear in 51 (94.44%) main sections. The average rate of occurrence of move type 3 is considerably higher than that of the other move types. Move type 3 appears 36.04 times per main section. The other three move types record a similar average rate of occurrence, ranging from 10.56-13.98 times per main section. The finding reflects the great

importance of ‘reporting on CSR performance’ in main sections. This is not surprising. Essentially, the purpose of the main section is to provide an account of what the listed company did in various areas of CSR during the reporting year. The frequent reappearance of move types 5, 11 and 12 seems to show the promotional purposes of the main report. It appears obvious that the writer of main sections repeatedly highlights the listed company’s strength, ability, expertise and achievements of the listed company (move type 5), its opinions, attitudes, values and beliefs (move type 11) as well as its dedication and commitment to CSR while informing the reader of the CSR performance of the listed company (move type 3).

In the previous sub-section, MT11-MT3 and MT12-MT3 sequences in chairpersons’ statements are discussed. The two sequences are also common in main sections. More specifically, MT11-MT3 sequences appear in all 54 main sections, while MT12-MT3 sequences appear in 50 (92.59%) main sections.

Examples 38, 39 and 43 provided in Section 4.1.1 also show MT11-MT3 and MT12-MT3 sequences in main sections respectively. As discussed previously, these two sequences serve as effective tools for the writer to describe, explain and justify the listed company’s CSR performance. In fact, such functions of the sequences are sometimes explicitly reflected from the use of certain linguistic expressions in the sequences, such as *which is why*, *in view of this* and *to achieve this target*, as can be seen in the Examples 94-96 below. The linguistic expressions are underlined in the examples.

Example 94

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The knowledge, experience and judgement of our employees is crucial to our success as an organisation, </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> which is why we provide financial assistance, reimburse membership fees for employees who join professional organisations recognised by Swire Properties, grant leave to take relevant courses or achieve professional qualifications, provide on-the-job training and internal job rotations, arrange mentoring opportunities, promote secondments overseas, and offer internal and external educational courses. </MT3S2>
(CMS-01972-2014)

Example 95

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The Group believes that sourcing sustainable materials and using them responsibly is essential to providing environmentally responsible goods and services. </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> In view of this, the Group has developed effective procurement processes and has monitored closely material consumption to ensure sustainable provisioning. </MT3S2>
(CMS-00016-2015)

Example 96

<MT12: Showing commitment> We are dedicated to implementing concrete actions and developing innovative ideas to enhance the energy efficiency of our buildings and reduce electricity consumption by 5% in 2015, using 2010 as the baseline. </MT12> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> To achieve this target, we have implemented an energy efficiency program in our buildings. In 2013, we have already recorded a 7.7% reduction in electricity consumption as compared with the 2010 baseline. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00101-2013)

While MT3-MT12 sequence appears in only one chairpersons' statement, as discussed in Section 4.4.1, the sequence is more common in main sections. It is used in 28 (51.85%) main sections. Example 97 illustrates the sequence.

Example 97

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> On the property development front (500 Hennessy Road is Hysan's current project), we continued our drive to ensure partners and contractors achieve high safety standards similar to our own through pre-selection reviews and contractual requirements. Lessons learnt from past accidents involving contractors are incorporated into their safety plans and training. </MT3S2> </MT12: Showing commitment> In this way, Hysan together with our partners strive to achieve as safe an environment as possible for all stakeholders. </MT12>
(CMS-00014-2008)

In addition to MT11-MT3, MT12-MT3 and MT3-MT12 sequences, other sequences of move types 3, 11 and/or 12 are also observed in the CMS. Table 4.9 shows the sequences which are used in at least two main sections (in descending order of frequency).

Table 4.9: Other sequences of move types 3, 11 and/or 12

Sequence	Main section (MS)	
	≥ 2 occurrences	% of total MS
(1) MT3-MT12-MT3	32	59.26
(2) MT11-MT12-MT3	20	37.04
(3) MT11-MT3-MT12-MT3	7	12.96
(4) MT11-MT3-MT12	6	11.11
(5) MT12-MT3-MT12	5	9.26
(6) MT3-MT11-MT12	4	7.41
(7) MT3-MT12-MT3-MT12	4	7.41
(8) MT12-MT3-MT12-MT3	4	7.41
(9) MT11-MT12-MT11-MT3	3	5.56
(10) MT3-MT11-MT12-MT3	2	3.70

The variety of the combined use of move types 3, 11 and/or 12 demonstrates the close relationship among the move types in main sections. It also reveals the complexity of the move structure of the (part) genre of main sections.

Now, I will discuss move type 5 in main sections.

Similar to the case of move type 5 in chairpersons' statements, move type 5 is usually used together with move type 3 in main sections. I have discussed in the previous sub-section that the combined uses of the two move types in chairpersons' statements can be represented by three sequences, namely MT3-MT5, MT5-MT3, MT3-MT5-MT3 sequences. In the main section, the use of these sequences is also prevalent. The sequences appear in 45 (83.33%), 39 (72.22%) and 34 (62.96%) of the 54 main sections respectively. The following provides examples of the sequences in main sections.

Example 98 below illustrates a MT3-MT5 sequence, focusing on the community involvement of the listed company. The writer describes that the listed company has supported community and

charity events and highlights that its employees and their family members participated in various activities to address the needs from the community during the reporting period. Then, the writer notes that the listed company received recognition from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, which is ‘a federation of non-government social service agencies of Hong Kong’ (The Hong Kong Council of Social Service, n.d.).

Example 98

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The Group has been a long-standing supporter of the Community Chest of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society, the Hong Kong Young Women’s Christian Association, Hong Chi Association, Agency for Volunteer Service and Operation Santa Claus. During the reporting period, our staff and their family members have supported community and charity events including ‘New Territories Walk’, ‘Hong Chi Climathon’, ‘AVS Charity Walk & Run for Volunteering’ and ‘2013 Santa on the Beach’.

</MT3S1> <MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> The Group has received ‘10 Years PLUS Caring Company Logo’ from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service for the 11th consecutive year in 2014 as a recognition to its commitment on contributing to the community. </MT5S1> (CMS-00083-2014)

Example 99 illustrates a MT5-MT3 sequence, focusing on occupational health and safety. Firstly, the writer praises the listed company, indicating that it is ‘a responsible property developer emphasizing project quality’. Then, the writer describes that the listed company implements strategies to maintain occupational health and safety management at project sites under construction. Finally, the writer reports the result of the occupational health and safety management, i.e. that ‘there was no major safety accident’ during the reporting period.

Example 99

<MT5S2: Self-praising> As a responsible property developer emphasizing project quality, </MT5S2> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> the Company actively promotes occupational health and safety supervision at project sites under construction to its business partners, in particular contractors and subcontractors. They are required to conduct stringent safety checks, training and third party safety risk assessment to ensure safe construction operations.

</MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> There was no major safety accident in 2016.
 </MT3S1>
 (CMS-00688-2016)

Example 100 illustrates a MT3-MT5-MT3 sequence, focusing on green property management. In the example, the writer firstly describes that the listed company has developed its ‘Environmental Policy and Management Systems’ for its long-term sustainability. The writer then reports that ‘flagship properties’ of the listed company have received certification, implying that the environmental management systems of the listed company achieves a high standard. Finally, the writer presents information about the listed company’s practice of further promoting ‘a green corporate culture’ and reports that the listed company conducted ‘a comprehensive review’ of its environmental impacts to identify ways to improve its environmental performance.

Example 100

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Our strategic approach towards long-term sustainability is incorporated in our Environmental Policy and Management Systems. </MT3S2>
 <MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> Our flagship properties have been certified to ISO 14001 Environmental Management System or Hong Kong Green Mark. </MT5S1> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Through the Sustainability Committee, we further promote a green corporate culture throughout our operations, businesses and services. </MT3S2>
 <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Based on a comprehensive review of our environmental impacts across our business lines, we have identified several areas where our efforts can make a significant change. These priorities are reviewed on an annual basis in order to update the goals and objectives as necessary. </MT3S1>
 (CMS-00083-2013)

Apart from the above three sequences, other sequences of move types 3 and 5 are also observed in main sections. In some main sections, move types 3 and 5 are found to be used consecutively, resulting in MT3-MT5-MT3-MT5, MT5-MT3-MT5-MT3 and MT3-MT5-MT3-MT5-MT3 sequences. Furthermore, since move type 3 is often used in combination with move

types 11 and 12, as discussed earlier, the CMS displays various combined use of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12. Table 4.10 shows the other sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 used in at least two main sections (in descending order of frequency).

Table 4.10: Other sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12

Sequence	Main section (MS)	
	≥ 2 occurrences	% of total MS
(1) MT11-MT3-MT5	13	24.07
(2) MT5-MT12-MT3	12	22.22
(3) MT12-MT3-MT5	12	22.22
(4) MT5-MT3-MT5	10	18.52
(5) MT12-MT3-MT5-MT3	9	16.67
(6) MT3-MT5-MT3-MT5	8	14.81
(7) MT3-MT5-MT3-MT5-MT3	7	12.96
(8) MT5-MT3-MT5-MT3	7	12.96
(9) MT12-MT5-MT3	7	12.96
(10) MT5-MT11-MT3	6	11.11
(11) MT11-MT3-MT5-MT3	6	11.11
(12) MT11-MT5-MT3	5	9.26
(13) MT3-MT12-MT3-MT5	3	5.56
(14) MT3-MT12-MT5	3	5.56
(15) MT3-MT12-MT5-MT3	3	5.56
(16) MT3-MT5-MT11	2	3.70
(17) MT3-MT11-MT3-MT5-MT3	2	3.70
(18) MT5-MT12-MT3-MT12	2	3.70
(19) MT12-MT3-MT12-MT3-MT5	2	3.70

As Table 4.10 shows, the 19 sequences are used relatively less frequently in comparison to MT3-MT5, MT5-MT3 and MT3-MT5-MT3 sequences. However, such sequences demonstrate the interrelationship between move types 5 and the other three move types. They also reflect the flexibility in the combination of the use of the four move types. The 22 sequences identified in

main sections show the possibilities of how move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 can be used in combination in various ways.

Based on the results of the different sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 in chairpersons' statements and main sections, it seems clear that the four move types often appear in juxtaposition to each other. The move types play an important role of informing the reader of how the listed company performed (move type 3), why the listed company behaved in particular ways (move types 11 and 12) and the strengths and achievements of the listed company (move type 5). The reappearance of the four move types reflects the recursive nature of the rhetorical resources in chairperson' statement and the main section. The recursive patterns of use of move types support the finding from Yu and Bondi (2017, p. 286; see also Bondi & Yu, 2018) that 'the CSR report as an extensive genre is characterized by rhetorical recursivity'. With the use of sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12, the reader of both chairpersons' statements and main sections is asked to repeatedly process information about the listed company's CSR performance in relation to its values and beliefs, commitment to CSR, as well as ability and accomplishments. The use of the sequences is in line with previous research of CSR reports that CSR reports do not merely provide factual CSR information; they are promotional and persuasive (A. Bhatia, 2012, 2013; Bondi, 2016b; Fuoli, 2012, 2013, 2018; Malavasi, 2011, 2012, 2014). The informative function of the CSR report is mainly concerned with the (repeated) use of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance'. The promotional and persuasive purposes of the report are demonstrated by the (repeated) use of move types 5 'establishing credentials', 11 'stating values and beliefs' and 12 'showing commitment'. The four move types are frequently used in combination so that the reader has to repeatedly process both informative and promotional materials together while reading different topics of CSR as presented in an ESG report.

Summary

This chapter has provided a comprehensive description of the move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections, the structural elements in chairpersons' statements and the distribution of move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections, as well as a discussion of four of the obligatory move types of the two (part) genres.

In the (part) genre of chairpersons' statements, there are a total of 21 move types, and six of them are obligatory. As regards the (part) genre of main sections, there are a total of 20 move types,

13 of which are obligatory. The two (part) genres share 16 move types, indicating the similarity between the two parts of the ESG report in terms of communicative purposes. There are three structural elements in the (part) genre of chairpersons' statements, namely salutation, signature and date line. Signature is obligatory.

Move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance', move type 5 'establishing credentials', move type 11 'stating values and beliefs' and move type 12 'showing commitment' are four obligatory move types with the highest frequencies of use in the two (part) genres. They express that a listed company performs in terms of CSR in accordance with the values and beliefs of the listed company, that the listed company is passionately committed to CSR, and that it continues building on its strengths and achievements to improve CSR performance. The four move types appear recursively in both chairpersons' statements and main sections. They are shown to be used in combination in various ways. Such uses are identified as 'sequences' in this study. The text segment of a sequence offers information on a specific topic in a chairperson's statement or main section. The sequences reveal the patterns of how the move types tend to be used together, demonstrating the close relationship among the move types in both (part) genres. The use of the sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 indicates the informative and promotional purposes of the genre of CSR reports.

The next chapter will present and discuss the findings regarding the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections.

Chapter 5

Metadiscourse

This chapter presents and discusses the use of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS. It begins with an overview of the frequency distribution of metadiscourse in the two corpora (5.1). This is followed by an in-depth analysis of the use of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS. Each subcategory of interactive (5.2) and interactional metadiscourse (5.3) will be explored in turn. Finally, this chapter will discuss how metadiscourse is used in chairpersons' statements and main sections in an attempt to persuade readers (5.4). More specifically, the section reports on an investigation of how three means of persuasion, namely logos, ethos and pathos, can be realised with the use of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS.

5.1 Overview

This section presents the frequency distribution of metadiscourse in the CCS and that in the CMS.

5.1.1 Metadiscourse in the CCS

In the CCS, a total of 477 instances of use of metadiscourse were identified. On average, one metadiscourse item occurs in about every 49.7 words in the CCS (20.16 per 1,000 words). Table 5.1 summarises the distribution of metadiscourse in the corpus.

Table 5.1: The distribution of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in the CCS

Category	RF ²²	NF ²³	%
Interactive	218	9.21	45.70
Transitions	9	0.38	1.89
Frame markers	80	3.38	16.77
Endophoric markers	55	2.32	11.53
Code glosses	74	3.13	15.51
Interactional	259	10.94	54.30
Hedges	8	0.34	1.68

²²'RF' refers to 'raw frequency' in this thesis.

²³'NF' refers to 'normalised frequency per 1,000 words' in this thesis.

Boosters	60	2.54	12.58
Attitude markers	37	1.56	7.76
Self mentions	125	5.28	26.21
Engagement markers	29	1.23	6.08
Totals	477	20.16	100.00

In this thesis, the frequency of metadiscourse items is normalised to occurrences per 1,000 words to facilitate comparisons of the use of metadiscourse. As noted by Hyland (2005a), the standardised figures reported are meant to allow comparison of occurrence of metadiscourse of different categories in the corpus, rather than conveying the amount of metadiscourse of different categories. It is important to note that metadiscourse can be realised by a wide array of linguistic features ranging from punctuations or phrases to clauses or sentences.

As discussed in Section 4.1, the chairperson's statement in ESG report bears resemblance to the CEO's letter in annual report in terms of move structure. It is therefore considered reasonable to examine the two (part) genres in terms of the use of metadiscourse. Examining CEOs' letters in annual reports issued by international and Hong Kong listed companies from various industries, Hyland (1998b) reports that the frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters is 20.6/1,000 words²⁴. In their cross-cultural study of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters, Huang and Rose (2018) find that the frequencies of occurrence of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks are 24.354/1,000 words and 36.580/1,000 words respectively²⁵. All these three figures related to CEOs' letters are higher than that (i.e. 20.16/1,000 words) in chairpersons' statements found in the present study. It should be noted that the subcategory 'evidentials' is excluded from the taxonomy of metadiscourse for the present study (as discussed in Sections 2.4.3.1 and 3.2.3.2). However, this subcategory is included in the studies of Hyland (1998b) and Huang and Rose (2018). The lower frequency of use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements in the present study could partly be a result of the exclusion of evidentials. In Hyland

²⁴In Hyland (1998b), the number of instances of metadiscourse is normalised to occurrences per 100 words. In Huang and Rose (2018), the number is normalised to occurrences per 10,000 words. For the sake of convenience, the normalised frequencies reported in the two studies are represented as occurrences per 1,000 words in this thesis.

²⁵In their study of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters from the bank of Belgium, Fortis, Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) do not provide the normalised frequencies of occurrence of metadiscourse. In this Chapter, many comparisons of the use of metadiscourse between chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters are made in terms of normalised frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse. The comparisons do not involve the findings from the study of Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) for the reason stated above.

(1998b), ‘evidentials’ are referred to as ‘attributors’, and is a subcategory of ‘interpersonal metadiscourse’, with normalised frequency of 1.00. In Huang and Rose (2018), ‘evidentials’ is a subcategory of ‘interactive metadiscourse’, which is the case in Hyland’s (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, with normalised frequencies of 0.16 (Chinese banks) and 0.096 (western banks).

Chairpersons’ statements in ESG reports contain more interactional metadiscourse items (10.94/1,000 words) than interactive ones (9.21/1,000 words). This pattern of use of metadiscourse can also be observed in CEOs’ letters from western banks (Huang & Rose, 2018) – 18.666/1,000 words (interactional) vs. 17.914/1,000 words (interactive). Nevertheless, a different pattern of the frequencies of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse items emerges in other sets of business data. Interactive metadiscourse is used more frequently than interactional metadiscourse in the CEOs’ letters in Hyland’s (1998b, 2005a) study – 12.9/1,000 words (interactive) vs. 7.7/1,000 words (interactional) – as well as in the CEOs’ letters from Chinese banks in the study of Huang and Rose (2018) – 14.755/1,000 words (interactive) vs. 9.599/1,000 words (interactional).

Therefore, in terms of the total use of metadiscourse and the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse, the findings regarding chairpersons’ statements in ESG reports are both similar and different from those in previous studies of CEOs’ letters in annual reports. The similarities and differences perhaps could be attributed to two reasons: (i) the similarities and differences in nature between the chairperson statement in ESG report and the CEO’s letter in annual report, and (ii) the similarities and differences in the criteria for identifying metadiscourse items among the studies, for example, the inclusion/exclusion of evidentials, and the categorisation of evidentials as interactive/interactional metadiscursive resources.

Based on the above findings, it seems rather difficult to pinpoint the extent to which the chairperson statement in ESG report and the CEO’s letter in annual report are similar or different from one another in terms of the use of metadiscourse. However, it is obvious that both (part) genres are constructed by a quite high number of metadiscourse items when compared with other (part) genres, such as Directors’ reports in annual reports (Hyland, 1998b, 2005a) and the main sections of ESG reports. Hyland (1998b, 2005a) reports that the frequency of the total use of metadiscourse in Directors’ reports is 8.3/1,000 words, and in terms of interactive and interactional metadiscourse, the frequencies of use are 7.8/1,000 words and 1.3/1,000 words respectively. As will be presented below, the main sections of ESG reports exhibit a comparatively lower frequency

of the total use of metadiscourse as well as lower frequencies of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse compared with those of chairpersons' statements.

Of all metadiscourse markers identified in the CCS, slightly more than half (54.30%) are interactional metadiscourse items. This result suggests that the writers appear to interact with their readers than to guide them through the texts. Among the five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse, self mentions are used far more frequently (NF: 5.28). The number of self mentions accounts for over a quarter (26.21%) of all metadiscourse items identified in the CCS. The next most frequently used subcategory is boosters (NF: 2.54). This is followed by attitude markers (NF: 1.56), engagement markers (NF: 1.23), and finally hedges (NF: 0.34).

As regards interactive metadiscourse, the most frequently occurring items are frame markers (NF: 3.38). The instances of frame markers make up the second largest proportion (16.77%) of metadiscourse items in the corpus. Code glosses are the second most common interactive metadiscourse items (NF: 3.13). This is followed by endophoric markers (NF: 2.32) and transitions (NF: 0.38).

5.1.2 Metadiscourse in the CMS

A total of 3,679 instances of use of metadiscourse were identified in the CMS. On average, one metadiscourse item occurs in about every 127.2 words in the corpus. As briefly described above, the frequency of occurrence of the total use of metadiscourse in the CMS, i.e. 7.86/1,000 words, is lower than that that in the CCS, i.e. 20.11/1,000 words. The distribution of metadiscourse in the CMS is displayed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2: The distribution of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in the CMS

Category	RF	NF	%
Interactive	2,331	4.98	63.36
Transitions	52	0.11	1.41
Frame markers	186	0.40	5.06
Endophoric markers	290	0.62	7.88
Code glosses	1,803	3.85	49.01
Interactional	1,348	2.88	36.64
Hedges	546	1.17	14.84

Boosters	401	0.86	10.90
Attitude markers	47	0.10	1.28
Self mentions	157	0.34	4.27
Engagement markers	197	0.42	5.35
Totals	3,679	7.86	100.00

In the main sections of ESG reports, interactive metadiscourse is used more heavily than interactional metadiscourse, with normalised frequencies being 4.98 and 2.88 (63.36% and 36.64%) respectively. The predominance of interactive metadiscourse items underlines the writer's preference to make use of explicit signals to guide the reader through the text. The writer seems to have a stronger desire to mark the organisation of the unfolding discourse than to express evaluation and engage with the reader. For the writer of chairpersons' statements, the reverse is the case; there is a stronger preference for interactional than interactive metadiscourse. The contrastive patterns of the frequency of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse observed in the CCS and the CMS could be explained by the different functions performed by the chairperson's statement and the main section as parts of the ESG report, although they share a certain level of similarity in terms of communicative purposes (as discussed in Chapter 4).

The CMS shows a more frequent use of code glosses (NF: 3.85; 49.01%), hedges (NF: 1.17; 14.84%) and boosters (NF: 0.86; 10.90%). The instances of these three subcategories of metadiscourse account for almost three quarters (74.75%) of all metadiscourse items identified in the corpus. As for the other six subcategories of interactive and interactional metadiscourse, the normalised frequencies range from 0.10 to 0.62, with the percentages ranging from 1.28% to 7.88%. Among the four subcategories of interactive metadiscourse, transitions (NF: 0.11; 1.41%) is the least frequently used. As far as interactional metadiscourse is concerned, attitude markers (NF: 0.10; 1.28%) have the smallest number of occurrences.

Below, Sections 5.2 and 5.3 will respectively discuss the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in the two corpora.

5.2 Interactive metadiscourse

This section discusses the use of interactive metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS. It first focuses on transitions (5.2.1), then frame markers (5.2.2), followed by endophoric markers (5.2.3), and lastly code glosses (5.2.4).

Each of the four sub-sections begins with the overall results of the subcategory of interactive metadiscourse concerned. It then discusses the use of the subcategory of interactive metadiscourse in the CMS, focusing on linguistic realisations of the subcategory of interactive metadiscourse and its use across move types in the corpus. Next, the sub-section explores the subcategory of interactive metadiscourse in another corpus, the CCS, and again focus on linguistic realisations of the subcategory of interactive metadiscourse and its use across move types in the corpus. To reduce unnecessary repetition of discussion of results, each sub-section presents the findings in the CMS before moving on to those in the CCS due to the fact that the CMS, compared with the CCS, exhibits a greater variety in the use of interactive metadiscourse.

Appendices 2 and 3 provide all linguistic realisations of interactive metadiscourse items identified in the CCS and the CMS respectively, with their raw frequencies of occurrence.

5.2.1 Transitions

A small number of instances of transitions is used in both chairpersons' statements (RF: 9) and main sections (RF: 52). The instances of transitions constitute the smallest proportion of interactive metadiscourse items identified in both the CCS and the CMS. The infrequent use of transitions suggests that in general writers of ESG reports do not seem to have an urgent need to explicitly indicate internal connections between ideas for their readers. Compared with main sections (NF: 0.11), chairpersons' statements (NF: 0.38) are constructed with a greater use of transitions.

As explained in Section 3.2.3.2, transitions identified in the present study were classified into three types, namely additive transitions, comparative transitions and consequential transitions. Table 5.3 compares the distribution of the three types of transitions in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.3: The distribution of transitions in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
Additive transitions	0	0.00	0.00	6	0.01	11.54

Comparative transitions	3	0.13	33.33	26	0.06	50.00
Consequential transitions	6	0.25	66.67	20	0.04	38.46
Total	9	0.38	100.00	52	0.11	100.00

In the CCS, there are no additive transitions. Consequential transitions (NF: 0.25; 66.67%) are used relatively more frequently than comparative ones (NF: 0.13; 33.33%). All three types of transitions are found in the CMS, which suggests that the main section appears to involve a higher degree of complexity in argumentation, when compared with the chairperson's statement. Among the three types of transitions which occur in the CMS, comparative transitions are used the most frequently (NF: 0.06), accounting for half of all the instances of transitions identified. Given the rather low normalised frequencies, it is difficult to determine whether particular types of transitions play a more important role in the CCS and the CMS.

Previous studies of CEOs' letters in annual reports have shown a heavy use of transitions. In Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011), Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b, 2005a), transitions are found to be the most frequent interactive devices²⁶. In their cross-cultural analysis of CEOs' letters, Huang and Rose (2018) find approximately 9.479 and 11.4 transitions per 1,000 words in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks respectively. Hyland (1998b, 2005a) reports that there are about 9.1 transitions per 1,000 words in his sample of CEOs' letters of listed companies from various industries. However, transitions are found to be much less common in the chairpersons' statements in the present study, with the frequency of 0.38/1,000 words. The different patterns of the frequency of use of transitions in CEOs' letters and chairpersons' statements indicate the difference in nature between the two (part) genres. Since transitions are connectors which signal relations to help readers interpret links between ideas, the greater preference for the use of transitions in CEOs' letters in comparison to chairpersons' statements suggests the relatively stronger desire to show connections between arguments in the former. This could result from the greater complexity in the arguments presented in CEOs' letters as the writer often has to describe and explain the increase and decrease in profits of the listed company and other aspects of company financial performance in order to satisfy investors and other stakeholders.

In terms of the types of transitions, there is a striking contrast between the findings from the present study regarding chairpersons' statements and those from Huang and Rose (2018) and

²⁶In Hyland (1998b), 'transitions' are referred to as 'logical connectors'.

Hyland (1998b, 2005a) regarding CEOs' letters²⁷. In the present study, there is an absence of additive transitions in chairpersons' statements. However, in both Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b, 2005a), additive transitions are used the most frequently among the three types of transitions. In Huang and Rose (2018), additive transitions occur the most frequently in CEOs' letters from both Chinese and western banks. In contrast, the reader of chairpersons' statements appears to be more likely to encounter explanations, conclusions and justifications for particular issues in the past or the future.

It seems that the use of transitions in chairpersons' statements is quite different from that in CEOs' letters. However, it has to be noted that only a small number of instances of transitions were identified in the CCS. This means that the results discussed above (and below) have to be interpreted with caution. Future research could compare the use of transitions in chairpersons' statements in ESG reports and that in CEOs' letters in annual reports – and perhaps more preferably, the ESG reports and annual reports issued by the same listed company or the same group of listed companies – to provide further insights into the use of transitions as well as the preferences for the types of transitions in chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters.

In the following sub-section, I will discuss the use of transitions in the CMS.

5.2.1.1 Transitions in the CMS

Table 5.4 shows the linguistic realisations of transitions which occur twice or more in the CMS. They are listed in descending order of frequency. Except *however*, *therefore* and *although*, all the linguistic realisations of transitions shown in the table are used two or three times.

Table 5.4: Transitions occurring twice or more in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- however	11	0.02	21.15
- therefore	9	0.02	17.31
- although	5	0.01	9.62
- as	3	0.01	5.77
- in addition	3	0.01	5.77

²⁷Gillaerts and van de Velde (2011) do not provide any findings of the use of transitions by type.

- because	2	0.00	3.85
- but	2	0.00	3.85
- moreover	2	0.00	3.85
- nevertheless	2	0.00	3.85
- so	2	0.00	3.85
- thus	2	0.00	3.85
- while	2	0.00	3.85

The comparative transitions identified in the CMS are typically realised by *however* (RF: 11; 21.15%) and *although* (RF: 5; 9.62%). These two linguistic realisations are respectively the most and the third most commonly used transitions in the CMS. The second most frequently used transition is *therefore* (RF: 9; 17.31%), which is a marker of consequence relations. Examples 1-3 illustrate the use of these three transitions respectively²⁸.

Example 1

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> An effective risk management system is essential for an organization to be able to identify and assess risks in a way that ensures they can be avoided, mitigated or controlled to a tolerable level. However, even the most robust risk management system cannot anticipate every eventuality. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> In late 2015, we formalized our crisis management structure, as codified in our corporate-wide Crisis Management Manual, for dealing with emergency or major unexpected events that may have an adverse impact on our business operations. </MT3S1> (CMS-00101-2016)

In Example 1, the writer describes the importance of an effective and robust risk management system for an organisation and its functions – that it can ‘identify and assess risks’ in a desirable manner. Using the comparative transition *however*, the writer points out the limitation of the system – that it ‘cannot anticipate every eventuality’. This was the rationale for formalising the listed company’s crisis management structure, which could facilitate the handling of emergency

²⁸As with the examples in the previous chapter, the examples provided in this chapter show the move types and steps to which the texts belong. All metadiscourse items used in the examples are underlined.

situations or unexpected events. *However* signals the contrast between what risk management system can and cannot do.

Example 2

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Although climate change presents numerous risks, we also see opportunities for innovation. We have taken our knowledge and experience to create new products and services to improve energy efficiency beyond our own operations.

</MT3S2>

(CMS-01972-2009)

In Example 2, the comparative transition *although* is used to express an argument regarding climate change. According to the writer, climate change brings about ‘numerous risks’. However, climate change also provides ‘opportunities for innovation’. Such opportunities led to the creation of ‘new products and services to improve energy efficiency’. *Although* serves as a marker of the contrast made by the writer concerning the positive and negative impact of climate change on the listed company. The writer counters the argument of the negative impact of climate change (i.e. risks) and emphasises the positive side of the issue (i.e. opportunities).

Example 3

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Our employees interface with thousands of customers each day, including residents and tenants of our managed properties, shoppers and retailers in our malls, and hotel guests. It is important therefore, that the service provided by our frontline staff is of a consistently high standard. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The SHKP Quality Academy is a learning platform to enhance the skills and know-how of our employees and reinforce our quality culture across all levels of operation. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00016-2013)

In Example 3, the writer firstly presents the information that the employees of the listed company ‘interface with thousands of customers each day’, and then uses the consequential transition *therefore* to mark a conclusion that ‘a consistently high standard of service’ is important. After drawing the conclusion, the writer moves on to describe the learning platform which is

designed for the employees. *Therefore* allows the writer to assist the reader's understanding of the text, showing the consequence relation in the arguments and telling the reader the reason for establishing and developing the learning platform to achieve continual enhancement of services.

In the CMS, the most common transition for adding elements to an argument is *in addition* (RF: 3; 5.77%), as exemplified below. The excerpt in Example 4 is taken from part of a main section which describes the increasing needs of creating sustainable cities in the mainland China and Hong Kong. After explaining the situation in the mainland China, the writer uses *in addition* to signal the addition of information of the situation in Hong Kong, which is another element to the argument of the development of sustainable cities.

Example 4

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> ... In addition, with the HKSAR Government and the Chinese Central Government actively promoting and supporting the development of sustainable cities to address the adverse impact of rapid urbanization, there is an expectation for property developers to support the development of sustainable cities through the buildings they build and manage. </MT13>

(CMS-00101-2013)

I will move on to discuss the use of transitions across move types in the CMS.

Transitions across move types in the CMS

Table 5.5 shows the information about the move types in which the 52 instances of transitions occur. More specifically, the table provides two kinds of information. Firstly, the move types which contain the three largest proportions of transitions in the CMS, the raw frequency of occurrence and the percentage of the respective move types. Secondly, the total number (i.e. raw frequency of occurrence) and the percentage of transitions which are used in other move types.

Table 5.5: Transitions across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	21	40.38
Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations	8	15.38

Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	7	13.46
Others	16	30.77
Total	52	100.00

Table 5.5 aims to provide an overview of the distribution of transitions in the CMS in terms of move types. As presented in the table, about 70% (RF: 36) of all instances of transitions identified in the CMS are used in the texts for the communicative purposes of ‘stating values and beliefs’, ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’ and ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ in reporting on CSR performance. The other instances of transitions (RF: 16; 30.77%) are used in other move types. Tables in the above format (unless stated otherwise) are provided in subsequent discussions on the use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS. It is hoped that the tables can show various tendencies of the use of metadiscourse in the texts of the CCS and the CMS for different communicative purposes, and when taken together, the tables can paint an overall picture of the genre of ESG reports from the perspective of metadiscourse.

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the use of metadiscourse in the (part) genres, whenever move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’ are involved, the information about metadiscourse use is presented in terms of the specific steps of the move types. This could reveal the writer’s preference for metadiscourse across the steps of the two move types, showing the ways in which metadiscourse is used to accomplish the functions of the constituent steps of move types 3 and 5. For example, in Table 5.5 above, the instances of transitions which occur in the texts of ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ are shown to constitute the third largest proportion of transitions in the CMS. Step 2 of move type 3 is specified in the table. This reveals that transitions are more preferred in step 2 of move type 3 than the other two steps of the move type in the CMS.

It can be observed from Table 5.5 that the largest proportion (40.38%) of transitions in the CMS are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’. This suggests that comparatively the texts of this move type appear to require more explicit indications of the connections between elements in the texts. This is perhaps explained by the nature of the move type that it presents values, beliefs, opinions and viewpoints, which are less factual, but more persuasive when compared with other move types. The transitions denote how the texts should be

understood as intended by the writer. They allow the reader to follow the writer's arguments more easily. As noted by Hyland (2005a, p. 76), they can 'ensure clarity of exposition and assist readers to recover the writers' reasoning'. The use of transitions in the texts of the move type 'stating values and beliefs' is illustrated in Example 1 above, which is reproduced below.

Example 1 (reproduced)

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> An effective risk management system is essential for an organization to be able to identify and assess risks in a way that ensures they can be avoided, mitigated or controlled to a tolerable level. However, even the most robust risk management system cannot anticipate every eventuality. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> In late 2015, we formalized our crisis management structure, as codified in our corporate-wide Crisis Management Manual, for dealing with emergency or major unexpected events that may have an adverse impact on our business operations. </MT3S1>
(CMS-00101-2016)

In Example 1, the writer expresses the view that all risk management systems (including the most robust one) have certain limitations, which is the reason for the listed company to take action to address the limitation, i.e. to formalise a crisis management structure.

The second largest proportion (15.38%) of transitions across move types in the CMS is constituted by the transitions which occur in the texts for the communicative purpose of 'presenting individual cases and quotations'. The excerpt in Example 5 is taken from a management trainee journal written by a management trainee, Jimmy Lai. His management trainee journal is included in the ESG report as part of the contents of the section 'Our People' (see Section 4.1.3). In the management trainee journal, Jimmy Lai describes the training process he participated and some key business and CSR initiatives of the listed company. In Example 5, Jimmy Lai provides information about the digital marketing of the listed company.

Example 5

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... In order to attract netizens to our brand page, our content must be compelling and innovative. But the interactions with customers are of utmost importance. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00017-2015)

In this example, the comparative transition *but* marks the contrast of the importance of ‘compelling and innovative’ content on digital platforms and the importance of interactions with customers. The writer uses *but* to introduce and highlight the latter, arguing that it is the more important one between the two and that it is ‘of utmost importance’.

The seven instances of transitions used in the step ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ form the third largest proportion (13.46%). Example 2 presented above and reproduced below illustrates the use of transition in the step. Through the contrast of the positive and negative impact of climate change with the use of the comparative transition *although*, the writer provides information about the listed company’s strategy of taking ‘knowledge and experience to create new products and services to improve energy efficiency’, which helps promote environmental protection and the listed company’s business development.

Example 2 (reproduced)

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Although climate change presents numerous risks, we also see opportunities for innovation. We have taken our knowledge and experience to create new products and services to improve energy efficiency beyond our own operations.
</MT3S2>

(CMS-01972-2009)

Now, I will turn to the use of transitions in the CCS.

5.2.1.2 Transitions in the CCS

Table 5.6 shows all four linguistic realisations of the nine instances of transitions identified in the CCS. Among the linguistic realisations, *therefore* which marks consequence relations is used the most frequently. It is used five times (55.56%). The other three linguistic realisations occur once or twice.

Table 5.6: All transitions in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- therefore	5	0.21	55.56
- but	2	0.08	22.22
- although	1	0.04	11.11
- as	1	0.04	11.11

The use of the consequential transitive *therefore* is illustrated in Example 6. In this example, *therefore* ‘tells readers that a conclusion is being drawn or justified’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 50). The continual investment of the listed company in its employees and their safety is justified for the reason that from the perspective of the listed company, its employees play an important part in ‘creating lasting positive economic, social and environmental impacts’ on the community in which the listed company operates. The use of *therefore* helps make the investment seem more logical and reasonable. It indicates the efforts of the writer to persuade the reader to take the writer’s view of the investment.

Example 6

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> People are at the heart of our business. </MT11> <MT19: Expressing appreciation> It is thanks to the Group’s many employees that we are able to deliver high quality properties and communities for our customers, creating lasting positive economic, social and environmental impacts. </MT19> <MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> We will therefore continue to invest in our employees and their safety to ensure that we remain an employer of choice. We will also continue to focus on recruiting and retaining talent by nurturing our reputation as a caring employer and offering opportunities for our employees to grow. </MT14>

(CCS-00012-2015)

Finally, the following discusses the use of transitions across move types in the CCS.

Transitions across move types in the CCS

The use of transitions across move types in the CCS is similar to that in the CMS in that the largest proportion (RF: 5; 55.56%) of transitions in the CCS is also formed by the transitions which occur in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’. The other four instances of transitions are used in the texts for ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ (RF: 2), ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ in ‘reporting on CSR performance’ (RF: 1) and ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’ (RF: 1). Given the small number of transitions used in the CCS, all four move types are showed in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7: Transitions across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	5	55.56
Move type 14: Projecting future performance and making promises	2	22.22
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	1	11.11
Move type 10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement	1	11.11
Total	9	100.00

The five instances of transitions which occur in the texts of move type 11 are linguistically realised by *therefore* (RF: 3), *as* (RF: 1) and *but* (RF: 1). The two instances of transitions identified in the texts of move type 14 are *therefore* and *but*. *Therefore* and *although* are used in the texts of move types 3 and 10 respectively.

The use of transitions in move type 11 and that in step 2 of move type 3 is discussed in Section 5.2.1.1 above. In the following, I will focus on the use of transitions in move types 14 and 10.

One of the two instances of transitions which occur in move type 14 is shown in Example 6 above. In the example, *therefore* is used to indicate the conclusion drawn by the writer, i.e. the listed company’s continual investment in its employees and their safety. The investment is one of the actions the listed company takes and intends to continue to take in the future. The investment can also be considered a promise made and reinforced by the listed company regarding the health, safety and well-being of its employees.

Example 7 below illustrates the use of the comparative transition *although* by the writer in reporting on the findings from the stakeholder engagement exercise conducted by the listed company (i.e. Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited; referred to as ‘SHKP’ in the example).

Example 7

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... One of the main concerns raised by our stakeholders is the shortage of affordable housing in Hong Kong. *Although* this is a complex issue that involves many parties in society, at SHKP we are taking steps to contribute to a solution.

</MT10>
(CCS-00016-2012)

In this example, the writer argues that the listed company plays a part to alleviate the housing shortage in Hong Kong where the listed company operates despite the fact that it is ‘a complex issue’. *Although* helps the writer to introduce the information about what the listed company has done in relation to this specific concern of the stakeholders of the listed company. The use of *although* therefore facilitates the writer’s construction of the argument of the listed company’s contribution ‘to a solution’ which could be considered a contribution to the betterment of Hong Kong.

Before ending this sub-section, I would like to acknowledge that the tendencies of the use of transitions across move types in the CCS revealed above are based on a very small number of instances of transitions identified in the corpus. Future research is needed to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the functions transitions perform in chairperson’s statements.

In Section 5.2.2 below, I will provide a discussion on the use of frame markers in the two corpora.

5.2.2 Frame markers

In the present study, 80 and 186 frame markers were identified in the CCS and the CMS respectively. Frame markers (NF: 3.38) are the most frequently used among the four subcategories of interactive metadiscourse in the CCS. In contrast, the frame markers found in the CMS (NF: 0.40) are much less frequently occurring. One may argue that the use of frame markers is rather infrequent in both corpora. However, the results suggest that chairpersons’ statements appear to

require more explicit signals to refer to ‘text boundaries or elements of schematic text structure’ (Hyland, 2005a, p. 51) than main sections.

The relatively less frequent use of frame markers in the CMS seems quite surprising. Since main sections (8,668 words in average) are longer than chairpersons’ statements (577 words in average) in length, it is reasonable to expect that frame markers in the CMS would occur as frequently as, if not more frequently than, in the CCS, given that frame markers function to structure the unfolding discourse. A careful examination of the texts in the CMS reveals that the writer of main sections has other means to indicate the structure of the text, for example, headings, subheadings and text boxes. These visual elements act as signposts throughout a lengthy main section, allowing the writer to provide clear orientation to and guidance for the reader as various kinds of information is presented. While headings are also used in chairpersons’ statements, they can be found in only five chairpersons’ statements. No chairpersons’ statements contain subheadings and text boxes. These explain the relatively heavier use of frame markers to structure the discourse in the CCS.

As explained in Section 3.2.3.2, the present study distinguishes four types of frame markers, namely sequencers, discourse-labels, announcers and topicalisers. Table 5.8 compares the distribution of the four types of frame markers in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.8: The distribution of frame markers in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
Sequencers	6	0.25	7.50	25	0.05	13.44
Discourse-labels	1	0.04	1.25	3	0.01	1.61
Announcers	73	3.08	91.25	138	0.29	74.19
Topicalisers	0	0.00	0.00	20	0.04	10.75
Total	80	3.38	100.00	186	0.40	100.00

From Table 5.8, it is observed that the CCS and the CMS share similar preferences for announcers and sequencers; however, there are differences in the proportions and normalised frequencies of these two types of frame markers between the CCS and the CMS. In both corpora, most of the instances of frame markers identified are announcers. Comparatively, the announcers

in the CCS account for a larger proportion (91.25%) than those in the CMS (74.19%), and the normalised frequency of announcers in the CCS (NF: 3.08) is greater than that in the CMS (NF: 0.29). The second most frequently occurring frame markers in the two corpora are sequencers. Sequencers respectively make up 7.50% and 13.44% of the total number of frame markers in the CCS and the CMS. The normalised frequency of sequencers in the CCS (NF: 0.25) is greater than that in the CMS (NF: 0.05). While there are no topicalisers in the CCS, this type of frame markers constitute the third largest proportion (NF: 0.04; 10.75%) in the CMS. There is only one discourse-label in the CCS, and there are three in the CMS.

The similar patterns of the frequent use of announcers and sequencers in the two corpora indicate that announcing goals of the text and sequencing parts of the text are important in both chairpersons' statements and main sections. Particularly, the prevalence of announcers in both corpora suggests that the writer of the two parts of ESG report perceives the need to provide explicit signal to help guide the reader identify the aims of various segments of the chairpersons' statements and main sections. Therefore, understanding the goals of the discourse seem to be essential to the reading, interpretation or acceptance of the discourse of ESG reports from the perspective of the writer.

Before moving on to discuss the use of frame markers in chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters, it is important to note that what Hyland (2005a) calls 'frame markers' is represented by two subcategories of metadiscourse in Hyland (1998b), namely 'sequencers' and 'frame markers'. 'Sequencers' in Hyland (1998b) indicate the sequence of the text. This subcategory of metadiscourse corresponds to one of the four types of frame markers proposed by Hyland (2005a), i.e. 'sequencers' in the present study. 'Frame markers' in Hyland (1998b) is an umbrella term to refer to metadiscourse items which serve the functions of signalling stages of the texts, discourse goals and topic shifts, i.e. 'discourse-labels, 'announcers' and 'topicalisers' in the present study. In order to compare the findings of frame markers in chairpersons' statements from the present study with those of frame markers in CEOs' letters from Hyland's (1998b) study, it is necessary to understand the frequency of use of frame markers in Hyland's study. It is decided to obtain the average figure from the normalised frequency of 'sequencers' (0.6/1,000 words) and that of 'frame markers' (1.1/1,000 words). This gives us the frequency of 0.85/1,000 words. This figure for CEOs' letters is much lower than that for chairpersons' statements in the present study (3.38/1,000 words). Compared with the average figure in Hyland (1998b), higher frequencies of use of frame markers

are found in the two sets of CEOs' letters in the study of Huang and Rose (2018). The authors report that frame markers are used in the CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks at the rate of 3.029 and 4.202 per 1,000 words respectively. The frequency of frame markers in chairpersons' statements falls in the middle between the two figures. Based on the above comparisons of normalised frequencies, it could be concluded that the issue of whether frame markers are used more (or less) frequently in chairpersons' statements or CEOs' letters remains to be determined. Further research is needed to provide a more detailed picture of the issue.

As regards the types of frame markers, the CEOs' letters from both Chinese and western banks in the study of Huang and Rose (2018) exhibit the same order in terms of the frequency of occurrence of the four types of frame markers²⁹. The frequency of occurrence of frame markers in descending order are announcers, sequencers, followed by topicalisers, and finally discourse-labels. The findings from the present study regarding chairpersons' statements are similar to those from the study of Huang and Rose (2018) regarding CEOs' letters in that announcers and sequencers respectively make up the largest and second largest proportions of frame markers. This similarity indicates the importance of announcing goals and sequencing in chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters. In addition, labelling stages and shifting topics seem to be relatively less important in chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters.

While both chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters show preferences for announcers and sequencers among the four types of frame markers, there are differences in terms of the proportion and frequency of use of the two types of frame markers. In the study of Huang and Rose (2018), the announcers found in the CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks constitute 64.57% and 67.89% of all instances of frame markers respectively. In the present study, the announcers identified in the chairpersons' statements account for a greater proportion (91.25%) of the total number of frame markers. The proportions of sequencers in the CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks are 22.85% and 23.39% respectively (Huang & Rose, 2018), which are greater than that in the chairpersons' statements analysed in the present study (7.50%). As far as frequency of occurrence is concerned, announcers seem to have a higher frequency in chairpersons' statements than in CEOs' letters. The frequency of announcers in chairpersons' statements, i.e. 3.08/1,000 words, is higher than those in the two sets of CEOs' letters of Huang and Rose (2018) – 1.956 (Chinese banks) and 2.852 (western banks) per 1,000 words. Sequencers appear to be used more

²⁹Hyland (1998b) does not classify frame markers into different types.

frequently in CEOs' letters than in chairpersons' statements. Huang and Rose (2018) find that sequencers in the CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks occur with the frequency of 0.692 and 0.983 per 1,000 words respectively. The figures are higher than that for the sequencers in chairpersons' statements found in the present study, i.e. 0.25/1,000 words.

5.2.2.1 Frame markers in the CMS

Table 5.9 shows the top 11 linguistic realisations of frame markers in the CMS, each occurring 7 times or more. As described previously, the most common type of frame markers in the CMS is announcers. Except *as for*, *finally* and *on X*, all linguistic realisations function as announcers.

Table 5.9: Eleven most common frame markers in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- outline/outlined/outlines	17	0.04	9.14
- illustrate/illustrated/illustrates	12	0.03	6.45
- as for	10	0.02	5.38
- highlight/ highlighted/ highlights	10	0.02	5.38
- focus/focuses	8	0.02	4.30
- listed/lists	8	0.02	4.30
- show/shows	8	0.02	4.30
- finally	7	0.01	3.76
- on X	7	0.01	3.76
- report/reported/reports	7	0.01	3.76
- would like to (*d like to)	7	0.01	3.76

In addition, the two most common frame markers in the corpus are both announcers, and they are *outline/outlined/outlines* (RF: 17; 9.14%) and *illustrate/illustrated/illustrates* (RF: 12; 6.45%). Examples 8 and 9 show the use of *outlined* and *illustrates* respectively.

Example 8

<MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The electricity saving initiatives of our business units are outlined below: </MT25>

(CMS-00004-2014)

In Example 8, *outlined* signals the goal of the unfolding text, telling the reader that the following information in the main section is an outline of ‘the electricity saving initiatives’ of the listed company.

Example 9

<MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The diagram on the next page illustrates the safety management structure of our construction sites and the corresponding responsibilities of different key parties. </MT25>

(CMS-00101-2016)

In Example 9, the writer announces the aim of the diagram provided on the next page of the main section with *illustrates*.

Apart from the use of frame markers, both above examples also involve the use of endophoric markers (*below* in Example 8 and *the diagram on the next page* in Example 9). I will discuss the combination of frame markers and endophoric markers in Section 5.2.3.

In Table 5.9, there are only two topicalisers (*as for* and *on X*) and one sequencer (*finally*). The following examples shows the use of the three frame markers respectively.

Example 10

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> As for community development, the Company is leveraging its expertise as a property developer to participate in affordable housing projects. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-00688-2016)

In Example 10, *as for* is used by the writer to shift the topic to the community involvement of the listed company.

The excerpt in Example 11 below is taken from an early part of a main section which previews the unfolding main section (hence the ESG report). It is placed under the heading ‘Overview’. The writer uses two topicalisers – *on the environmental front* and *on health and safety* – to show

changes of topics from one topic (not shown in the example) to environmental protection and then from environmental protection to health and safety while introducing the contents of the report. This example also shows the use of two announcers – *showcase* and *note* – which signal the goal of the specific parts of the ESG report as well as two instances of the self mention *we* which refer to the writer of the current text.

Example 11

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... On the environmental front, we showcase our substantial energy savings through upgrades and efficiency enhancements. On health and safety, we note our latest safety initiatives, as well as our assistance towards industrial accidents victims' families.

</MT8>
(CMS-00014-2007)

Finally is the most frequently used sequencer in the CMS. Its use is illustrated in Example 12. The excerpt in the example is taken from part of a main section which describes a new property of the listed company, which is a 19th-century building. The writer presents information about how the listed company preserve the building while making renovations and additions. Before providing the last piece of information about what had been done by the listed company, which involves the listed company's volunteer team, the writer uses *finally* to signal the final part of the entire text.

Example 12

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> ... Finally, several hotel staff members comprise a volunteer “green team”, which oversees the environmental impact of the hotel along with researching and implementing ways to reduce the hotel's carbon footprint through energy efficiency. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-01972-2013)

Linguistic realisations of discourse-labels are not shown in Table 5.9 above due to the small frequency of occurrence of this type of frame markers. The three discourse-labels which occur in the CMS are linguistically realised by *in summary* (RF: 2) and *in short* (RF: 1).

The excerpt in Example 13 is taken from part of a main section which reports on how the listed company involved its employees in implementing the ‘SD 2030 Strategy’, a strategy of the listed company to help improve its CSR performance over time in relation to its 2020 and 2030 CSR goals. The discourse-label *in short* signals the writer’s intension to put the information presented previously in a brief description with a few words. At the same time, it allows the writer to reiterate the idea that the implementation of the SD 2030 Strategy requires the involvement of the employees, which is at the beginning of the excerpt.

Example 13

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... The successful implementation of our SD 2030 Strategy requires the involvement of our employees. In May 2016, we began a video-based internal campaign on Yammer, a social media platform for businesses, entitled #SDStartswithMe. The objective was to introduce the new strategy to employees and emphasise that sustainable development is relevant to every part of our business. In short, all employees are responsible for implementing our SD 2030 Strategy. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-01972-2016)

The above example illustrates another interactive metadiscourse item *a social media platform for businesses*, which functions as a code gloss. A discussion on code glosses will be provided in Section 5.2.4.

Frame markers across move types in the CMS

Table 5.10 shows the use of frame markers across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.10: Frame markers across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 25: Indicating upcoming information	83	44.62
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	23	12.37
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	21	11.29
Others	59	31.72

Total	186	100.00
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The largest proportion (44.62%) of the frame markers across move types in the CMS are concerned with the instances used in the texts for the communicative purposes of ‘indicating upcoming information’. In fact, all 83 frame markers concerned are announcers. Examples 8 and 9 above illustrate the use of announcers in the texts of this move type. This common use of frame markers in the corpus demonstrates the writer’s attempts to explicitly signal the aim of the upcoming information in the unfolding main section for the reader to guide their interpretation. It also indicates that a main section appears to comprise pieces of information about the listed company with various discourse goals.

The second largest proportion (12.37%) of the frame markers are those which occur in the texts for ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ in ‘reporting on CSR performance’. Among the 23 instances of frame markers concerned, there are ten sequencers, ten topicalisers, two announcers and one discourse-label. The heavier use of sequencers and topicalisers suggests the writer’s preference for structuring the text regarding the CSR strategies, methods and practices of the listed company by highlighting the sequencing and topic shifts of the unfolding main section. It indicates the multiple aspects of the reporting of CSR performance of a listed company in terms of the strategies, methods and practices it adopted and implemented. The disclosure of the information requires explicit ordering of different strategies and changing the topics from one strategy to another. The use of the topicaliser *as for* in the step ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ is illustrated in Example 10 above.

The frame markers used in the texts of the move type of ‘introducing the current report’ constitute the third highest percentage (RF: 21; 11.29%) of frame markers across move types in the CMS. All, except three, instances of the frame markers are announcers. Example 11 above (reproduced below) illustrate the use of *showcase* and *note* which function as announcers in this move type. The pervasive use of announcers in the move type suggests that the writer introduces the unfolding main section (hence the ESG report) to the reader by explicitly indicating its goal, allowing the reader to have an idea about the purpose of the current ESG report. It is found that the announcers usually co-occur with endophoric markers, as noted earlier. The endophoric markers point the reader to particular parts of the unfolding text. Most instances of the endophoric

markers contains *report*, and they refer to later parts of the main section, i.e. the unfolding ESG report, as illustrated in Example 14 below.

Example 11 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... On the environmental front, we showcase our substantial energy savings through upgrades and efficiency enhancements. On health and safety, we note our latest safety initiatives, as well as our assistance towards industrial accidents victims' families.

</MT8>

(CMS-00014-2007)

Example 14

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... This Report also highlights the Group's promotion of healthy living amongst our staff, as well as the construction safety programmes that take place in our main development site. </MT8>

(CMS-00014-2009)

5.2.2.2 Frame markers in the CCS

Table 5.11 shows the top 11 linguistic realisations of frame markers in the CCS, each occurring three times or more. All of them function as announcers.

Table 5.11: Eleven most common frame markers in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- present	12	0.51	15.00
- would like to	7	0.30	8.75
- encourage/encouraging	5	0.21	6.25
- outline/outlined/outlines	5	0.21	6.25
- highlight/highlights	4	0.17	5.00
- report/reporting/reports	4	0.17	5.00
- detailed/details	3	0.13	3.75
- introduce	3	0.13	3.75

- offer/offers	3	0.13	3.75
- provides/providing	3	0.13	3.75
- wish to	3	0.13	3.75

As can be seen, the most frequently occurring announcer in the CCS is *present*. An exploration of the data reveals that all 12 instances of this announcer are used in the first sentence of chairpersons' statements, as exemplified below.

Example 15

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report.

</MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

In Example 15, the writer uses *present* to announce that the unfolding ESG report is being presented to the reader. Other metadiscourse items – both interactive and interactional – are also used in the example, namely the self mentions *I* and *our*, the attitude marker *pleased* and the endophoric marker *2014/15 Sustainability Report*. Sentence like the one in Example 15 serves as the introduction of the chairperson's statement, providing an opportunity for the writer to express the pleasure to welcome the reader of the current ESG report. Naturally, all the instances of *present* are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of 'introducing the current report'.

The second most common frame marker in the corpus is *would like to*. This announcer is used to signal the writer's aim to express gratitude to groups of people who are involved in the development of CSR of the listed company. Unsurprisingly, all seven instances of *would like to* occur in the move type 'expressing appreciation'. In addition, all, except one, instances are used in the final paragraph of chairpersons' statements. Example 16 illustrates the use of *would like to* and the self mention *I* which is the subject of the sentence.

Example 16

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> I would like to thank all our people as well as our stakeholders who have helped us in the development of this report for the contribution they have made towards strengthening our strategies and practices. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2008)

Frame markers across move types in the CCS

Table 5.12 shows the use of frame markers across move types in the CCS.

Table 5.12: Frame markers across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	44	55.00
Move type 19: Expressing appreciation	11	13.75
Move type 9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting	8	10.00
Others	17	21.25
Total	80	100.00

More than half (55%) of the total number of frame markers in the corpus occur in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘introducing the current report’. All 44 instances of the frame markers are announcers, typically realised by *present* (see Example 15 above) and *outline(s)*. The use of frame markers in the texts of the move type ‘expressing appreciation’ contributes another 13.75%. Ten of the eleven instances are announcers, and they are linguistically realised by *would like to* (RF: 7; see Example 16 above), *wish to* (RF: 2) and *outlined* (RF: 1). The remaining instance is a sequencer, linguistically realised by *finally*. The third largest proportion (10.00%) of frame markers in the CCS are formed by those which are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘describing the practice of CSR reporting’. All eight instances of frame markers are announcers. Example 17 below shows the use of *announce* and *reporting on* in the texts of this move type. The example also illustrates the use of the self mention *I* and the attitude marker *pleased*.

Example 17

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> I am pleased to announce that our Sustainability Report 2013 has achieved a GRI 3.1 Level A+ rating, reporting on over 100 indicators. ... </MT9>

(CCS-00823-2013)

In this example, the writer presents information about the practice of CSR reporting. Using *announce*, the writer indicates that an announcement is being made. Another announcer *reporting on* is used to signal the discursive purpose of the unfolding ESG report, which is to disclose CSR performance of the listed company in compliance with the Global Reporting Initiative's (GRI) reporting guidelines.

5.2.3 Endophoric markers

The present study identified 55 and 290 endophoric markers in the CCS and the CMS respectively. Endophoric markers in the CCS (NF: 2.32) are the second least frequently occurring among the four subcategories of interactive metadiscourse. In comparison, endophoric markers constitute the second largest proportion of interactive metadiscourse, although they are less common in the CMS (NF: 0.62) than in the CCS.

I would like to emphasise here again the realm of current text for the present study of metadiscourse, as discussed in Section 3.2.3.1. In this study, current text of an ESG report includes the chairperson's statement (if any), main section and structural elements. Such a view means that endophoric markers used in a chairperson's statement can refer to other textual or visual materials of the chairperson's statement, the main section and structural elements of the ESG report. Similarly, endophoric markers used in a main section can refer to other textual or visual materials of the main section, the chairperson's statement and structural elements of the ESG report. In other words, the present study maintains that endophoric markers in a chairperson's statement and a main section can indicate explicit references to other textual or visual materials in the unfolding ESG report, not just to other textual or visual materials in the chairperson's statement or main section in which the endophoric markers occur.

As explained in Section 3.2.3.2, endophoric markers identified in the present study were classified into two types, namely linear text references and non-linear text references. Table 5.13 compares the distribution of the two types of endophoric markers in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.13: The distribution of endophoric markers in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
Linear text references	55	2.32	100.00	218	0.47	75.17
Non-linear text references	0	0.00	0.00	72	0.15	24.83
Total	55	2.32	100.00	290	0.62	100.00

All endophoric markers used in the CCS are linear text references. Of all the 290 instances of endophoric markers in the CMS, 218 are linear text references, making up slightly more than three quarters (75.17%) of the total. Non-linear text references in the CMS constitute a much smaller proportion, accounting for 24.83% of all instances of endophoric markers in the corpus.

When compared with the CMS (NF: 0.47), the CCS contains more linear text references (NF: 2.32). Analyses reveal that all 55 linear text references which occur in chairpersons' statements are used to indicate explicit references to other textual materials in the respective main sections of ESG reports. This use of linear text references highlights the role of chairperson's statement as the introductory section of the ESG report. The linear text references inform the reader of chairpersons' statements the kinds of information they are going to receive as they continue reading the ESG report. In this way, the writer gives the reader a general understanding of the information covered in the body of the ESG report which is yet to come, and thus manages the reader's expectation of the contents of the unfolding ESG report. Since the linear text references point the readers to additional information on a particular topic, the use of this type of endophoric markers also enables the reader of chairpersons' statements to refer to related information in another part of the ESG report effectively and efficiently. The topics highlighted in the chairpersons' statements, especially those which involve the use of linear text references, could be considered the main themes of ESG reports. They are the topics which demand the readers' further attention.

All 218 instances of linear text references which occur in main sections signal explicit references to other textual materials in the main section, except one instance which refers to the chairperson's statement. The use of the single instance is illustrated in Example 2 in Section 3.2.3.1 (in the discussion on the realm of current text). The example is reproduced below³⁰.

³⁰Information about the move type is added to the reproduced example.

Example 2 in Section 3.3.3.1 (reproduced)

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... As mentioned in “Message from Management”, there is a wide spectrum of sustainability issues and New World Group has chosen to focus on certain issues to ensure the effectiveness of our efforts. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00017-2013)

Of all the 72 instances of non-linear text references found in main sections, only five (6.94%) refer to visual materials in the structural elements of ESG reports, and they involve data tables (RF: 3) and appendices (RF: 2). The other 68 instances of non-linear text references indicate visual materials in the respective main sections.

Clearly, the linear and non-linear text references used in main sections mainly function to refer to materials in the main sections, rather than those in the chairpersons' statements and structural elements. They are used to invite the reader to refer to another part of the main section to gain a better understanding of the text. This result indicates the close relationship among the different parts of the main section.

Although distinction between linear and non-linear text references is not made in Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b), we can still see that endophoric markers seem to be used more frequently in chairpersons' statements than in CEOs' letters. Huang and Rose (2018) report that there are more endophoric markers in CEOs' letters from Chinese banks (0.391/1,000 words) than those in the letters from western banks (0.308/1,000 words). Endophoric markers occur less commonly in the CEOs' letters analysed by Hyland (1998b), with the frequency of 0.2/1,000 words. The frequency of occurrence of endophoric markers in chairpersons' statements found in the present study is much higher (2.32/1,000 words). This finding suggests that endophoric markers appear to play a more important role in chairpersons' statements than CEOs' letters. In contrast with the writer of CEOs' letters, the writer of chairpersons' statements seem to have a higher tendency to indicate the connection among the pieces of information in different parts of the unfolding text to guide the reader's interpretation of the text.

5.2.3.1 Endophoric markers in the CMS

Table 5.14 shows the top ten linguistic realisations of endophoric markers in the CMS, each occurring five times or more. The other linguistic realisations which are not shown in the table occur only once or twice in the corpus. It has to be noted that all 30 instances of *below* in the table are linear text reference. The single instance of *below* which functions as a non-linear text reference is not included in the table.

Table 5.14: Ten most common endophoric markers in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- (in) X (a particular section or particular sections)	149	0.32	51.38
- table(s)	33	0.07	11.38
- below	30	0.06	10.34
- (in) this report	13	0.03	4.48
- page(s)	10	0.02	3.45
- chart(s)	7	0.01	2.41
- picture	7	0.01	2.41
- matrix	6	0.01	2.07
- (in) (the) X report	5	0.01	1.72
- diagram	5	0.01	1.72

In Table 5.14, four of the ten linguistic realisations are linear text references – *(in) X*, *below*, *(in) this report* and *(in) (the) X report*. The others are non-linear text references. More than half (RF: 149; 51.38%) of the endophoric markers identified in the CMS are linguistically realised by *(in) X*, which refers to a particular section or particular sections of the main section (hence the ESG report). In most cases, the writer specifies a particular section, as illustrated in Example 18. The example also shows the use of *provided* which functions as an announcer (i.e. frame marker).

Example 18

<MT16: Indicating further information> A map of our building portfolio and green building certifications is provided in the ‘About Hang Lung’ section found on page 7. </MT16>

(CMS-00101-2015)

A very small number of instances of *(in) X* are concerned with more than one sections of the main section, as can be seen in Example 19 with the use of *the following sections*. This example also shows the use of the announcer *describe*.

Example 19

<MT12: Showing commitment> We are dedicated to creating lasting value for our stakeholders and work diligently to do so. </MT12> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The following sections describe how we interact with our employees, customers, supply chain, community and the environment, and the positive outcomes of our work. </MT25>

(CMS-00016-2014)

The frequent use of *(in) X* indicates that the writer tends to explicitly point the readers to the information in particular section(s) of the unfolding main section. It is found that the writer refers to later material (see Example 19) more frequently than earlier material (see Example 18). Another important finding is the co-occurrence of endophoric markers and announcers, i.e. frame markers (see Examples 18 and 19). The combination of endophoric marker referring to earlier material and frame maker could help the reader process the current material in relation to earlier material and connect different parts of the texts together to have a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. The co-occurrence of endophoric marker referring to later material and frame maker indicates that the writer will explain, emphasis or elaborate on certain material later in the text, allowing the reader to have a clear idea of the contents and the aims of the following parts of the unfolding main section. As shown in the examples above and below, announcers combine with both linear and non-linear text references in the CMS.

The most frequently used non-linear text reference in the CMS is *table(s)*. *Table(s)* is also the second most common endophoric maker in the CMS. The use of this endophoric marker is illustrated in Example 20.

Example 20

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... Our business units regularly review the effectiveness of the training programme to ensure those align with business development and enhance

employees' professional growth. </MT3S1> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> The table below outlines the key training programmes for staff of our business units. </MT25>
(CMS-00004-2015)

In Example 20, the writer provides the reader with a table which contains information about the training programmes for employees of the listed company. To invite the reader to take a look at the information in the table, the writer uses the non-linear text reference *the table below* and the announcer *outlines* to refer to the table and describe its function.

The third most frequently occurring endophoric marker is *below*. The instances of *below* account for 10.34% of all endophoric markers identified in the CMS. Given that *below* has the meaning of 'lower position', it refers to the material which is lower on the page or in a later part of the unfolding main section. As mentioned previously, all 30 instance of *below* in Table 5.14 refer to textual material and do not refer to visual material in the CMS. Example 21 illustrates how *below* is used. Once again, this endophoric marker co-occurs with an announcer, *outlined*. The writer informs the reader that the following part of the main section is an outline of some of the employee engagement programmes.

Example 21

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We implemented a series of employee engagement programmes in 2008 to stimulate employee awareness of sustainable development issues, </MT3S2> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> some of which are outlined below. </MT25>
(CMS-01972-2008)

The linear text reference (*in*) *this report* is the fourth most common endophoric marker in the CMS (RF: 13; 4.48%). All instances of (*in*) *this report* co-occur with announcers.

At this point of discussion, I would like to argue that what is referred to as 'global preview' by Skulstad (2005) appears to be concerned with the combination of a linear text reference referring to later material and an announcer in the taxonomy of metadiscourse for the present study. Example 22 is provided by Skulstad (2005).

Example 22

This booklet gives readers some background facts about the main environmental policies and practices followed by Shell companies in their own attempts to maintain this balance and to improve their environmental performance. (Shell International Petroleum Company Ltd, Shell and the Environment 1992: 1, EPR)

(Skulstad, 2005, p. 77; emphasis added)

In the study of Skulstad (2005), the ‘global preview’ summarises what the environmental report aims to do. In my interpretation, *this booklet* serves as a linear text reference (endophoric marker) and *gives* functions as an announcer (frame markers), according to the taxonomy of metadiscourse for the present study. Let’s return to Example 14 which has been presented in Section 5.2.2.1 (frame markers in the CMS). The example is reproduced below. I would argue that in Example 14, the linear text reference *this Report* and the announcer *highlights* are used together to introduce the unfolding ESG report. As a combination, they seem to perform the discourse function of a ‘global preview’, which is to ‘guide the readers at a global level of the text’ by signalling ‘an anticipation of the global function and aim of the document’ (Skulstad, 2005, p. 77).

Example 14 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... This Report also highlights the Group’s promotion of healthy living amongst our staff, as well as the construction safety programmes that take place in our main development site. </MT8>

(CMS-00014-2009)

However, it is important to note that not all instances of (*in*) *this report* in the CMS which co-occur with announcers are used in combination to perform the function of ‘global previews’. In addition, (*in*) *this report* is not the only linguistic realisation of endophoric markers which could contribute to the function of ‘global previews’. The purpose of the above discussion is to provide evidence of the existence of ‘global previews’ in the CMS. In fact, Skulstad (2005) only examines CEOs’ letters in annual reports and chairpersons’ statements in environmental reports and identifies ‘global previews’ in the data. In the present study, ‘global previews’ are identified in

both chairpersons' statements and main sections, although this terminology is not used in the taxonomy of metadiscourse for the present study. The findings regarding the use of 'global previews' in chairpersons' statements will be presented later.

Endophoric markers across move types in the CMS

Table 5.15 shows the use of endophoric markers across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.15: Endophoric markers across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 16: Indicating further information	147	50.69
Move type 25: Indicating upcoming information	91	31.38
Move type 10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement	17	5.86
Others	35	12.07
Total	290	100.00

Slightly more than half (50.69%) of the endophoric markers identified in the corpus are used in the texts of the move type 'indicating further information'. This finding suggests that it is common for the writer to tell the reader that further information of a specific topic is provided in another – both earlier or later – part of the main report. All, except three, of the 147 endophoric markers are linear text references, as illustrated in Example 18 above. The following example illustrates the use of the non-linear text reference *the Data Tables* in the texts for the communicative purpose of 'indicating further information'.

Example 23

<MT16: Indicating further information> For more details on our health and safety performance, please refer to the Data Tables. </MT16>

(CMS-00016-2014)

In this study, data tables are considered structural elements of ESG reports (see Section 3.2.3.1). In this example, the writer invites the reader to read this visual material of the report to obtain more information concerning the listed company's health and safety performance. The

engagement marker (more specifically, directive) *refer* is used to direct the reader to perform such an action within the current report (Section 5.3.5 will discuss the use of engagement markers, including the combination of endophoric markers and engagement markers).

The second largest proportion of endophoric markers across move types in the CMS is concerned with the endophoric markers used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘indicating upcoming information’. The 91 instances make up 31.38% of the total number of endophoric markers. This particular use of endophoric markers are exemplified in Examples 19-21 above. Forty-two (46.15%) of the instances of endophoric markers are linear text references (see Examples 19 and 21) and the other 49 (53.85%) instances are non-linear text references (see Example 20). As the examples show, the writer uses the endophoric markers to indicate certain forthcoming information. They help draw the reader’s attention to the information, allowing the reader to understand what is coming next as the text unfolds.

The endophoric markers which occur in the texts of the move type ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’ constitute the third largest proportion (5.86%). There are nine (52.94%) linear text references and eight (47.06%) non-linear text references. Example 24 below illustrates the use of the linear text reference *this report*. The writer describes that the unfolding main section, i.e. the ESG report, presents information about the issues which are material to the listed company, and that the issues were identified through conducting ‘stakeholder engagement exercises’ with internal and external stakeholder groups. In the example, the announcer *focuses* is also used³¹.

Example 24

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> This report focuses on the environmental, workplace, community, value chain and governance issues that we believe are most important to our company and stakeholders. Swire Properties’ stakeholders include internal and external groups who have a significant impact on our business or who experience significant impact from our operations. We have conducted stakeholder engagement exercises since 2004 to help us understand our stakeholders’ priorities, expectations and perceptions with regard to our sustainable development approach. This has helped us understand materiality, and ... </MT10>
(CMS-01972-2015)

³¹I would argue that this example also illustrates an instance of ‘global preview’ (Skulstad, 2005).

As for the eight non-linear text references, all the visual elements are figures and diagrams showing information such as findings of materiality assessments of the listed company (which are usually visualised in materiality matrices) and frameworks of stakeholder engagement. Example 25 illustrates the use of *the Materiality Matrix below*.

Example 25

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... The Materiality Matrix below serves as a tool to visualise the relative importance of each sustainability aspect with regard to our stakeholders as well as our businesses. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00083-2016)

5.2.3.2 Endophoric markers in the CCS

Table 5.16 shows the top six linguistic realisations of endophoric markers identified in the CCS, each occurring twice or more. As already noted, all instances of endophoric markers in the corpus are linear text references.

Table 5.16: All endophoric markers in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- (the) X report	25	1.06	45.45
- (in) this report	12	0.51	21.82
- (in) X (a particular section)	7	0.30	12.73
- (in) the report	4	0.17	7.27
- in later chapters of this report	2	0.08	3.64
- in the following pages	2	0.08	3.64

The most frequently occurring endophoric marker is *(the) X report* (for example, *Sustainable Development Report 2014* and *third stand-alone sustainability report*). The instances account for 45.45% of the total number of endophoric markers in the CCS. Example 15 provided in Section 5.2.2.2 (frame markers in the CCS) is reproduced below. It illustrates the use of one of the forms of *X report*, i.e. *2014/15 Sustainability Report*.

Example 15 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report.
</MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

As explored in the sub-section on frame markers, this example involves the use of other metadiscourse items. In addition, sentences like the one in the above example are used at the very beginning of chairpersons' statements. The linear text reference *2014/15 Sustainability Report* indicates the unfolding ESG report.

Several instances of *(the) X report* co-occur with announcers in the CCS. In combination, the two metadiscourse items perform the discourse function of 'global previews' termed by Skulstad (2005), that is, they indicate the aim of the unfolding ESG report. Below shows the use of the combination of the linear text reference *third Sustainability Report* and the announcer *offers*.

Example 26

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are very pleased to present our third Sustainability Report, which offers detailed information about our approach to corporate sustainability, key initiatives and achievements during the past year. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2015)

The example also involves the use of the self mentions *we* and *our*, the attitude marker *pleased* and another announcer *present*. By using these metadiscourse items together in the first sentence of the chairperson's statement, the writer introduces the unfolding ESG report by expressing the pleasure to welcome the reader and indicating the discourse goal of the report. These two ways of introducing the current report can be conveyed separately by two sentences, as illustrated in Example 27. The second sentence of the example with the use of the linear text reference *this report* and the announcer *details* could be considered a 'global preview' (Skulstad, 2005). Example 27 involves other metadiscourse items. The first sentence in the example shows the use of the self mentions *we* and *the Group's*, the attitude marker *pleased*, the announcer *present* and the endophoric marker *2015/16 Sustainability Report*.

Example 27

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are pleased to present the Group's 2015/16 Sustainability Report. This report details the Group's efforts and achievements in advancing sustainability in society and cementing business continuity to create long-term value for customers, employees, business partners, shareholders, investors and the wider community. </MT8>
(CCS-00016-2015)

In fact, *(in) this report* is the second most common linguistic realisation of endophoric marker in the CCS. The instances of *(in) this report* account for 21.82% of all endophoric markers in the corpus. The combination of the linear text reference *(in) this report* and announcer, which serves the discourse function like the 'global preview', is used at the beginning and also other parts of the chairperson's statement. Example 28 illustrates the co-occurrence of the linear text reference *this Report* and four announcers in the body of a chairperson's statement.

Example 28

<MT8: Introducing the current report> This Report describes our business approach to sustainable development, explains our policies and performance, chronicles our major achievements and maps out our vision for the future. ... </MT8>
(CCS-00016-2010)

Apart from *(in) this report*, there are other instances of linear text references in the CCS which are concerned with the function of 'global previews'. Since the present study does not aim to identify 'global previews', further discussion is not provided.

Endophoric markers across move types in the CCS

Table 5.17 shows the use of endophoric markers across move types in the CCS. It is observed that move type 16 'indicating further information' is shown in this table and Table 5.15 in Section 5.2.3.1. This finding suggests that endophoric markers are quite commonly used in the texts for the communicative purposes of 'indicating further information' in ESG reports in general.

Table 5.17: Endophoric markers across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	36	65.45
Move type 16: Indicating further information	11	20.00
Move type 19: Expressing appreciation	3	5.45
Others	5	9.09
Total	55	100.00

Most of the instances of endophoric markers in the CCS occur in the texts of the move type ‘introducing the current report’, making up the largest proportion (65.45%) of endophoric markers across move types in the corpus. The frequent use of endophoric markers in the texts of this move type demonstrates the introductory function of the chairperson statement in ESG report. As the writer introduces the unfolding ESG report to the reader, the report is always mentioned, as illustrated in Examples 15 (reproduced), 26-28 above. The endophoric markers are typically realised by *(the) X report* (for example, *first Sustainability Report* and *Sustainable Development Report 2015*) and *(in) this report*.

One-fifth (20.00%) of the instances of endophoric markers in the CCS are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘indicating further information’. The instances account for the second largest proportion of endophoric markers across move types in the CCS. Example 29 below illustrates this use of endphoric markers. After describing a charity project and a mentorship programme which had been organising for children, the writer asks the reader to ‘learn more about’ the ‘social care programmes’ of the listed company by reading further information about the programmes in the section ‘Caring Our Community’. In this example, *in ‘Caring Our Community’* is a linear text reference which refers to a particular section of the current ESG report. This example also involves the use of *learn* as a directive (i.e. engagement marker).

Example 29

<MT16: Indicating further information> Learn more about our social care programmes in ‘Caring Our Community’. </MT16>

(CCS-00083-2016)

Once again, the use of endophoric markers in the move type ‘indicating further information’ reflects the function of the chairperson’s statement as an introduction of the ESG report in which it occurs. The chairperson’s statement allows the writer to provide information on selected topics of CSR performance concisely and then informs the reader that more information on the topics is detailed in later parts of the ESG report. The use of endophoric markers shows the writer’s effort in highlighting particular topics of the report and arousing the reader’s interest in the topics. In fact, the co-occurrence of linear text references and directives, as illustrated in Example 29, is common in both the CCS and the CMS. This use of metadiscourse will be discussed in the subsection on engagement markers (Section 5.3.5).

The third largest proportion (5.45%) of endophoric markers only involves three instances. The endophoric markers are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘expressing appreciation’ in the last or second last paragraphs of three different chairpersons’ statements. In two of the chairpersons’ statements, the writer thanks the reader for reading the ESG report, as illustrated in Example 30 below. In the remaining chairperson’s statement, the writer thanks the employees and other stakeholders of the listed company for their support and for making contribution to CSR practices of the listed company.

Example 30

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> Thank you for reading our Sustainable Development Report 2014. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2014)

In this example, the linear text reference *Sustainable Development Report 2014* is used to refer to the unfolding ESG report. Apart from the linear text reference, the writer also uses three interactional metadiscourse items: the attitude marker *thank*, the engagement marker *you* and the self mention *our*. By using these four metadiscourse items, the writer explicitly engages with the reader as active participant of the discourse, i.e. the current ESG report, and expresses gratitude to the reader who is reading the report.

Let’s move on to the discussion on the final subcategory of interactive metadiscourse, code glosses.

5.2.4 Code glosses

There are 74 and 1,803 instances of code glosses in the CCS and the CMS respectively. In the CCS, code glosses (NF: 3.13) make up the second largest proportion of interactive metadiscourse items and constitute 15.51% of the total number of metadiscourse items in the corpus. In the CMS, code glosses (NF: 3.85) account for the largest proportion of all metadiscourse items identified in the corpus. In fact, the proportion (49.01%) is even greater than the total proportion of all five subcategories of interactional metadiscourse (36.64%). The above findings indicate that code glosses are of great importance in ESG reports, particularly in the main sections.

Following Hyland (2007), the present study distinguishes two types of code glosses, namely exemplificatory markers and reformulation markers, as explained in Section 3.2.3.2. Table 5.18 compares the distribution of the two types of code glosses in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.18: The distribution of code glosses in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
Exemplificatory markers	21	0.89	28.38	748	1.60	41.49
Reformulation markers	53	2.24	71.62	1,055	2.25	58.51
Total	74	3.13	100.00	1,803	3.85	100.00

There are more reformulation markers than exemplificatory markers in both corpora, with the contrast between the use of exemplificatory markers and the use of reformulation markers in the CCS (NF: 0.89 vs. 2.24) being more striking than that in the CMS (NF: 1.60 vs. 2.25). This suggests that the writer of both chairpersons' statements and main sections tends to pay more attention to rephrase, explain or elaborate what has been said than providing specific examples of prior information. In addition, similar normalised frequencies of reformulation markers are found in the corpora (2.24/1,000 words in the CCS vs. 2.25/1,000 words in the CMS). This implies that reformulation markers enjoy similar levels of popularity in both parts of the ESG report. There is a higher percentage of exemplificatory markers in the CMS (41.49%) than in the CCS (28.38%). Exemplificatory markers occur more frequently in the CMS (NF: 1.60) than those in the CCS (NF: 0.89). They are used in the CMS about 1.8 times greater than those in the CCS.

It appears that code glosses are used more frequently by the writer of chairpersons' statements in comparison to the writer of CEOs' letters. The frequency of occurrence of code glosses in chairpersons' statements found in the present study (3.13/1,000 words) is higher than those in CEOs' letters analysed by Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b). Huang and Rose (2018) report the frequencies of 1.695 and 1.908 per 1,000 words in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks respectively. In Hyland's (1998b) study, the normalised frequency of code glosses is found to be 1.9. The heavier use of code glosses in chairpersons' statements indicates that it is more likely for the writer of chairpersons' statements than the writer of CEOs' letters to provide the reader with additional information for what has already been said by exemplification and reformulation. It follows that, as far as the introductory sections are concerned, the reporting of CSR performance seems to require more explanations and elaborations than the reporting of financial performance.

Unfortunately, Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b) do not draw the distinction between exemplificatory markers and reformulation markers in their investigations. Relevant findings from the present study cannot be compared with those from their studies.

5.2.4.1 Code glosses in the CMS

Table 5.19 shows the top ten linguistic realisations of code glosses in the CMS. It can be seen from the table that code glosses are most frequently realised by the punctuation comma and the form *such as/(such as X)*. The former function as a reformulation marker, while the latter an exemplificatory marker. Added together, the instances of the two code glosses make up more than 60% of the total number of code glosses in the corpus. The instances of the other eight linguistic realisations of code glosses shown in the table constitute much smaller proportions, ranging from 1.55% to 6.38% of the total. Six of the linguistic realisations function as reformulation markers. The other two which function as exemplificatory markers are *for example/(for example X)* and *e.g./(e.g. X)*.

Table 5.19: Ten most common code glosses in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- ,	600	1.28	33.28
- such as/(such as X)	540	1.15	29.95

- for example/(for example X)	115	0.25	6.38
- –	93	0.20	5.16
- ()	89	0.19	4.94
- :	77	0.16	4.27
- namely	59	0.13	3.27
- particularly	34	0.07	1.89
- e.g./(e.g. X)	31	0.07	1.72
- especially	28	0.06	1.55

It should be noted that while code glosses are linguistically realised by parentheses in the CMS, they are also realised by *(such as X)*, *(for example X)* and *(e.g. X)*, as illustrated respectively in Examples 31-33. In classifying these three linguistic realisations which are combinations of two code glosses, it was decided to neglect the use of parentheses and consider them performing the same functions as *such as*, *for example* and *e.g.* respectively. Therefore, the frequency of occurrence of parentheses, i.e. 89, does not include the number of instances of *(such as X)*, *(for example X)* and *(e.g. X)*.

Example 31

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... In our property management business, we manage the environmental impact of our resource consumption (such as energy, water and paper) and waste generation. </MT3S1>
(CMS-00016-2012)

Example 32

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... The new intranet system, completed in 2013, has proved to be a valuable tool for sharing the Company's latest information (for example quarterly messages from senior management, staff events and activities, and special offers from tenants), as well as supporting team-building. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00014-2013)

Example 33

<MT7: Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR> ... Business functions are responsible for formulating sustainability goals and targets related to their areas of interest and designated members of staff to implement the necessary action plans. Cross-functional working groups are formed for sustainability aspects that require significant input across different business functions (e.g. occupational health and safety issues). ... </MT7>

(CMS-00101-2016)

As a reformulation marker, comma signals that the writer provides a second unit for restating or elaborating on what has been said in different words. Commas are used throughout main sections. They are usually used to explain or elaborate on specific entities while reporting on CSR performance of the listed company. The use of commas helps the reader understand what the entities are as the reader may not be familiar with them. A wide variety of entities is involved, including activities, events, projects, programmes, campaigns, initiatives, organisations, business units, buildings, places, individuals and objects such as systems, platforms and newsletters. In Example 34, the writer describes that the listed company was working with a social enterprise ‘to support sustainable farming in Hong Kong’ and provide opportunities for people to ‘experience the enjoyment of organic farming’. The writer offers the second unit *a social enterprise* to explain to the reader that ‘Blessing Farm’, i.e. an organisation mentioned in the immediately prior text, is a social enterprise. The reformulation, which is signalled by the use of a comma, helps the writer secure the reader’s understanding of the information³².

Example 34

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... To support sustainable farming in Hong Kong, the Group is collaborating with Blessing Farm, a social enterprise, through the provision of a parcel of land at Fanling in the New Territories at fully subsidised rent for use as an organic farm. ... Blessing Farm has made good use of the approximately 180,000 sq. ft. of land before land use conversion and has brought many people together to experience the enjoyment of organic farming. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00012-2016)

³²In examples illustrating the use of punctuations as reformulation markers, both the punctuation and the reformulation are underlined for clarity.

The reformulation function of the above example is ‘explanation’ (Hyland, 2007). By using the second unit *a social enterprise*, the writer gives ‘clarifications which elaborate the meaning of a preceding unit to make a concept more accessible’ (Hyland, 2007, p. 274). In this example, the preceding unit is ‘Blessing Farm’.

Apart from the use of commas, this example also illustrates the use of *approximately* which functions as a hedge (a discussion on hedges will be provided in Section 5.3.1).

In main sections, commas are also used (although less commonly) to signal the introduction of proper nouns (i.e. the second units) for the entities mentioned in the prior text (i.e. the preceding units). By providing the name of the entity, the writer supplies additional and more specific information for the argument and demonstrates the accuracy of the information. This use of commas is illustrated in Example 35.

Example 35

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> As the Residential Properties (First-hand Sales) Ordinance came into full effect in April 2013, a new department, Sales Practice Department, was set up with an independent checking function to ensure advertisements, sales brochures, show flat, property models and documents, to name but a few related to new property development projects in Hong Kong comply with the new legislation and minimise the risks to provide inaccurate information to our stakeholders. ... </MT3S1>

In this example, a comma is used to indicate the addition of *Sales Practice Department*, which is the name of the new department of the listed company. The second unit *Sales Practice Department* serves to identify the preceding unit *a new department*. The two units refer to the same entity in the real world in different ways. The second unit, i.e. the name, reduces the abstraction conveyed by the prior unit, i.e. *a new department*. The reader therefore receives more concrete, precise information about the new department.

According to Hyland (2007), there are two categories of the discourse functions of reformulations, i.e. expansion and reduction. There are two sub-functions of expansion, namely explanation and implication. There are also two sub-functions of reduction, namely paraphrase and

specification. In the present study, the sub-function explanation in the CMS is the most commonly signalled by the use of commas, as illustrated above. Explanation is also typically signalled by the use of the punctuations dashes, parentheses, colons and the linguistic form *namely*, which will be shown in Examples 36-39 respectively.

The excerpt in Example 36 is taken from part of a main section which presents information about a sustainable lifestyle and learning hub of the listed company called ‘The Green Atrium’. The writer describes that the listed company provided guided tours at ‘The Green Atrium’. In the example, the writer restates *Air Induction Unit (AIU)* by providing an explanation. The explanation increases the accessibility of the technical term and helps the reader arrive at the writer’s preferred understanding of its meaning (Hyland, 2007).

Example 36

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... “The Green Atrium” includes 32 sustainable building features under the categories of Energy, Air, Water, Food and Waste. One particularly innovative feature is the Air Induction Unit (AIU) – an energy-efficient bladeless fan designed for semi-outdoor environments. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00017-2016)

Similarly, in Examples 37-39, the writer clarifies or elaborates the meaning of a preceding unit to make the information more accessible for the reader.

Example 37

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> The Company organised a number of education and training sessions regarding “three stricts and three honests” (“Be strict in morals, power and disciplining oneself; be honest in decisions, business and behaviour”). Attracting more than 300 participants, the events covered topics including national policies analysis and anti-corruption education. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00688-2015)

Example 38

<MT23: Presenting corporate governance structure> Our board has five committees: Audit, Nomination, Remuneration, Human Resources and Compensation, and Finance and Investment. ... </MT23>

(CMS-00823-2013)

Example 39

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> ... COLI has expanded its business from Hong Kong to Mainland China, successfully seizing opportunities presented by the stages of economic development of China. Currently, it has expanded to provide balanced coverage in six regions, namely Hong Kong and Macau, the Pearl River Delta, the Yangtze River Delta, the Bohai Rim, Northeast China and Central and western China. ... </MT01>

(CMS-00688-2013)

In the following, I will discuss the other three sub-functions of reformulations and show that the discourse functions of reformulations are signalled by various reformulation markers.

The sub-function implication ‘serves to draw a conclusion or sum up the main import of the prior segment’ (Hyland, 2007, p. 275). In the CMS, implication is indicated by only four instance of reformulation markers, and they are linguistically realised by *which means* (RF: 3) and *this means* (RF: 1). Example 40 illustrate the use of *which means*.

Example 40

<MT13: Describing external circumstances> ... Hong Kong’s unemployment rate has remained low in FY2013/14 at around 3%, which means there is fierce competition for top talent. </MT13>

(CMS-00016-2013)

In this example, the writer describes the unemployment rate in Hong Kong, which is a social circumstance of the community in which the listed company operates. The reformulation marker *which means* is used to signal the writer’s interpretation of the situation as ‘fierce competition for top talent’. Based on the unemployment rate, the writer draws the conclusion that the competition is ‘fierce’. *Around* is used as a hedge in this example.

The sub-function paraphrase is concerned with providing the gist of what has been said ‘or restating an idea in different words to provide a summary’ (Hyland, 2007, p. 276). Typically, this sub-function is signalled in the CMS by the use of dashes and parentheses, as exemplified in Examples 41 and 42 respectively.

Example 41

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... The rate of turnover among all employees across our operations was 22.3% – slightly higher than in 2011. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-01972-2012)

Example 42

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Among our business units, shopping malls and Wharf Hotels contributed to the majority (50% and 30% respectively) of our total water consumption.

</MT3S1>

(CMS-00004-2015)

As shown in the above two examples, this sub-function of reformulation in the CMS is associated with the reporting of figures in relation to particular CSR issues.

The sub-function specification involves providing ‘detail features which are salient to the primary thesis in order to constrain how the reader might interpret it’ (Hyland, 2007, p. 276). In the CMS, specification is typically signalled by *particularly* and *especially*, as illustrated in Examples 43 and 44 respectively.

Example 43

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> New World Group has been organising sustainable community programmes to enhance social inclusion and improve social mobility of the under-resourced, particularly children and youths. </MT3S2>

(CMS-00017-2015)

Example 44

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We also promote the message of waste minimisation to our stakeholders and participate in recycling activities, especially during festive seasons when the amount of waste generated is likely to increase, such as lai see packets, Christmas trees, peach blossom trees and mooncake boxes. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-00083-2016)

By using the reformulation markers *particularly* and *especially*, the writer precisely specifies certain features in relation to what has been said and gives emphasis on the specification, highlighting that it forms an important part of the whole idea (Hyland, 2007). In Example 43, the writer highlights the listed company's efforts in helping children and youths among the under-resourced. In Example 44, the writer underscores the listed company's practices of protecting the environment during festive seasons. The use of the exemplificatory marker *such as* (discussed below) is also shown in Example 44.

In the CMS, exemplifications are commonly signalled by *such as*/(*such as X*) (RF: 540; 29.95%) and *for example*/(*for example X*) (RF: 115; 6.38%). The use of *such as* is illustrated in Example 45. The excerpt in the example is taken from part of a main section which reports on the listed company's restoration of a landmark building in Tianjin, China. The writer uses *such as* to indicate the examples of 'architectural features'. The examples cited by the writer are 'wooden engravings on the walls and window frames'. These examples enable the reader to understand more concretely about the architectural features of the landmark building and hence the restoration.

Example 45

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... The project restoration team found that many architectural features such as wooden engravings on the walls and window frames had been lost or damaged. They focused on repairing those features that could be saved and replicating those that were not salvageable. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00101-2012)

Examples 31-33 and 44 above also illustrate the use of exemplificatory markers in the CMS.

Code glosses across move types in the CMS

Table 5.20 shows the use of code glosses across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.20: Code glosses across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	1,014	56.24
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	268	14.86
Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations	133	7.38
Others	388	21.52
Total	1,803	100.00

The largest and the second largest proportions of code glosses in the corpus are formed by the code glosses used in the texts of steps 1 and 2 of the move type ‘reporting on CSR performance’. Added together, the instances of the code glosses make up over 70% of all code glosses identified in the corpus, which suggests the importance of exemplification and reformulation in the texts for ‘reporting on CSR performance’. It appears that code glosses are perceived by the writer as effective means to provide detailed, precise and comprehensive descriptions of the listed company’s CSR performance.

The use of code glosses in the texts of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ is about 3.8 times greater than that in the texts of step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3. The far greater use of code glosses in the texts of step 1 indicates that the writer seems to pay more attention to the texts of step 1 (when compared with step 2) of move type 3 to make them more coherent and reader-friendly through exemplification and reformulation. This rhetorical choice perhaps is due to the writer’s point of view that the texts of step 1 are more difficult for the reader to interpret, and therefore require greater specificity as well as more clarification, elaboration, explanation and examples. It could also be attributed to the writer’s perception that the reader’s interpretation of the texts in step 1 is of higher significance, and thus the texts need to be processed more easily by the reader.

Of all the 1,014 instances of code glosses used in the texts, 572 (56.41%) are reformulation markers, leaving 442 (43.59%) exemplificatory markers. Examples 31, 32, 34-37, 41, 42 and 45 above illustrates the use of code glosses in the texts.

As regards the code glosses which occur in the texts for ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’, 176 (65.67%) are exemplificatory markers and 92 (34.33%) are reformulation markers. Examples 43 and 44 above show the use of code glosses in the texts.

The third largest proportion (7.38%) of code glosses in the CMS is formed by a smaller number of instances (RF: 133) of code glosses which occur in the texts of the move type ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. There are 121 (90.98%) reformulation markers and 12 (9.02%) exemplificatory markers. In the texts belonging to the move type, the writer always have to introduce the individuals who were asked to say something for the listed company (see Section 4.1.3). In introducing the individuals, the writer provides their names and a brief description of who they are. A reformulation marker is used to signal the information which follows the person’s name. Most of the reformulation markers which occur in the texts of move type 24 are used to perform this function. Example 46 shows a quotation from William Yu. After providing the quotation, the writer provides the name *William Yu*, his position at the organisation he works in (*Head of Climate Program*) and the name of the organisation (*WWF*)³³. The second unit, i.e. *Head of Climate Program, WWF*, is an elaboration of the preceding unit, i.e. *William Yu*. The reformulation is signalled by the use of a comma. It helps the reader understand who William Yu is and interpret what he said about the listed company, i.e. Swire Properties Limited.

Example 46

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> “Green buildings will be important for our management of climate change. I am pleased to see the commitment of Swire Properties to environmentally responsible design and energy efficiency measures.”

William Yu, Head of Climate Program, WWF </MT24>

(CMS-01972-2009)

³³The full name is World Wide Fund For Nature (formerly World Wildlife Fund). The full name is not provided by the writer, probably because WWF is a leading conservation organisation, and therefore, from the writer’s perspective, the reader would be familiar with it.

A very small number of reformulation markers are used for other functions. Example 47 illustrates one of the cases, with the use of *known as*. The excerpt in the example is taken from part of a main section which reports on how the listed company strives to ensure that their buildings continue to operate with high efficiency with respect to energy and water consumption and waste management. A sub-section ‘Q & A with S.W. Lam – Senior Manager – Service Delivery, Leasing and Management’ is provided. The Q&A involves two pairs of questions and answers. In answering one of the questions, *known as* is used as a defining item to signal the reformulation which ‘provides a technical term for a concept already expressed in more accessible terms’ (Hyland, 2007, p. 274). In the example, the technical term ‘*defect liability period*’ is provided for *the first two years of a building’s operation*.

Example 47

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations>

Q) How does Hang Lung optimize operational efficiency in its buildings?

A) The first two years of a building’s operation, known as the ‘defect liability period’ is the best time to make adjustments to optimize efficiency. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00101-2015)

In Example 47, the question mark serves as an engagement marker showing the use of question (a discussion on the use of questions will be provided in Section 5.3.5).

5.2.4.2 Code glosses in the CCS

Table 5.21 shows top eight linguistic realisations of code glosses used in the CCS. Each of them occurs twice or more.

Table 5.21: Code glosses occurring twice or more in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
--	25	1.06	33.78
-,	16	0.68	21.62
- such as	14	0.59	18.92
- for example	4	0.17	5.41

- for instance	3	0.13	4.05
- in particular	3	0.13	4.05
- ()	2	0.08	2.70
- especially	2	0.08	2.70

From the above table, it can be observed that the code glosses in the CCS are most frequently realised by dashes, which function as reformulation markers. The 25 instances account for over one-third (33.78%) of all code glosses identified in the corpus. The second most common code gloss is comma (RF: 16; 21.62%), which also signals reformulations. The instances of *such as* (RF: 14) constitute the third highest percentage (18.92%) of the linguistic realisation of code glosses in the CCS. *Such as* is the most frequently occurring exemplificatory marker in the CCS. The examples illustrating the use of all these three linguistic realisations of code glosses have been provided in the previous sub-section (see Examples 31, 34-36, 41, 44 and 45). Therefore, the examples taken from the CCS are not provided here.

In the CCS, the sub-function explanation (Hyland, 2007) is typically signalled by the use of dashes and commas. This finding concerning the CCS is in line with that regarding the CMS in that the reformulation markers are frequently used to indicate explanations in main sections.

It is found that no code glosses in the CCS are used to signal the sub-function implication (Hyland, 2007).

Only a small number of instances of code glosses in the CCS signal the sub-functions paraphrase and specification (Hyland, 2007). The former is indicated by *that is* (RF: 1), while the latter by *in particular* (RF: 3) and *especially* (RF: 2).

In addition to *such as* (RF: 14), exemplifications in the CCS are signalled by *for example* (RF: 4) and *for instance* (RF: 3), as shown in Table 5.21. Interestingly, instances of the abbreviation *e.g.* are not identified in the CCS. It suggests that the writer of chairpersons' statements seems to prefer using more formal linguistic forms to signal exemplifications in chairpersons' statements. This is perhaps explained by the high formality of the 'direct' communication between the management of the listed company and the stakeholders (i.e. the target readers) in the chairperson's statement which is usually considered 'a letter'.

Code glosses across move types in the CCS

Table 5.22 shows the use of code glosses across move types in the CCS.

Table 5.22: Code glosses across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	28	37.84
Move type 5: Establishing credentials (Step 1: Referring to external evaluations)	10	13.51
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	6	8.11
Others	30	40.54
Total	74	100.00

Among the three largest proportions of code glosses shown in Table 5.22, two are concerned with the instances of code glosses identified in the texts of steps 1 and 2 of the move type ‘reporting on CSR performance’. They form the largest and the third largest proportions. Added together, the instances of code glosses account for 45.95% of the total number of code glosses in the CCS. Such a pervasive use of code glosses suggests that reformulation and exemplification are important discourse functions of the texts concerned. This reveals the writer’s perception that supplying additional information by explaining, elaborating, rephrasing what has been said and citing examples in chairpersons’ statements could facilitate the reader’s understanding of the listed company’s CSR performance. Similar to the case of code glosses in the CMS, a higher percentage (37.84%) of code glosses is involved in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’, and the instances of code glosses in the texts for ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ make up a smaller proportion (13.51%). Once again, the heavier use of code glosses in the texts of step 1 indicates that the texts of the step seem to demand greater clarification, explanation, elaboration and examples. It is evident that the writer attempts to express and shape the meanings of the actions and results more precisely to enhance the reader’s understanding of the CSR performance of the listed company.

As regards the code glosses used in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’, 16 (57.14%) are reformulation markers and 12 (42.86%) are exemplificatory markers. Concerning the code glosses which occur in the texts for ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’, there are five (83.33%) reformulation markers and only one (16.67%) exemplificatory marker. Therefore, it could be argued that in general, reformulation, compared with exemplification, plays a relatively more important role in chairpersons’ statements.

Examples illustrating the use of code glosses in the two steps of the move type ‘reporting on CSR performance’ in the CCS are not provided here for the efficiency of space. The reader of this thesis may refer to relevant examples taken from the CMS to understand how code glosses serve their functions in the texts (see Examples 31, 32, 34-37, 41-45 in Section 5.2.4.1).

The instances of code glosses which are used in the texts for ‘referring to external evaluations’ in ‘establishing credentials’ constitute the second largest proportion (13.51%) of code glosses across move types in the CCS. Seven (70.00%) of the ten instances of code glosses are reformulation markers. The other three are exemplificatory markers. Examples 48 and 49 respectively illustrate reformulation (signalled by the use of a comma) and exemplification (signalled by the use of *such as*) in the texts of the step ‘referring to external evaluations’.

Example 48

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> The Group is also a constituent member of the “Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index”, an index covering the top 30 leaders in corporate sustainability in Hong Kong. </MT5S1>
(CCS-00004-2016)

In Example 48, a comma is used to signal the second unit *an index covering the top 30 leaders in corporate sustainability in Hong Kong* which is an explanation for the preceding unit, i.e. *the “Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index”*. The second unit is provided to elaborate and clarify the meaning of Hang Seng Corporate Sustainability Index, which is a technical term. Here, the writer attempts to establish credentials for the listed company by highlighting that the listed company is ‘a constituent member’ of the index. By providing reformulation, the writer ensures that the reader understand the nature of the index and interpret the listed company as one of the ‘top 30 leaders in corporate sustainability in Hong Kong’.

Example 49

<MT5S1: Referring to external evaluations> ... Over the last year, we have received a number of awards in different themes, such as sustainability reporting, green building development, people management, customer service and corporate governance, which humble and motivate us.
</MT5S1>

(CCS-00101-2016)

In this example, the exemplificatory marker *such as* signals the examples of ‘themes’. The writer elaborates the statement about the awards received by the listed company in different themes by citing examples. The examples are provided to tell the reader what the ‘different themes’ are.

The use of code glosses in the texts for ‘referring to external evaluations’ reveals that the writer takes care to provide reformulations and exemplifications in presenting information about awards, accolades and recognitions. The reformulations and exemplifications allow the meanings of the external evaluations to be conveyed in a more explicit way. They support and highlight the writer’s view that the listed company achieved success in CSR, which consequently helps the listed company create a positive image.

Having discussed the use of interactive metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS, the next section will focus on the use of interactional metadiscourse in the corpora.

5.3 Interactional metadiscourse

This section discusses in detail the use of interactional metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS. It first focuses on hedges (5.3.1), then boosters (5.3.2), followed by attitude markers (5.3.3), self mentions (5.3.4), and finally engagement markers (5.3.5).

Similar to the previous section, the discussion on each subcategory of interactional metadiscourse begins with the findings in the CMS and then moves on to those in the CCS.

Appendices 4 and 5 provide all linguistic realisations of interactional metadiscourse items identified in the CCS and the CMS respectively, with their raw frequencies of occurrence.

5.3.1 Hedges

The present study identified 8 and 546 hedges in the CCS and the CMS respectively. In the CCS, hedges are used the least among the nine subcategories of metadiscourse (NF: 0.34; 1.68%). In contrast, hedges make up the second largest proportion (NF: 1.17; 14.84%) of all metadiscourse items in the CMS. Hedges are the most frequently occurring interactional metadiscourse items in the corpus. Based on normalised frequencies, the use of hedges in the CMS is about 3.5 times greater than that in the CCS.

Comparisons of findings from the present study and the studies of Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b) demonstrate that the use of hedges seem to be far more prevalent in CEOs' letters than in chairpersons' statements. Huang and Rose (2018) report 2.698 and 4.462 hedges per 1,000 words in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks respectively. Hyland (1998b) finds the frequency of 4.6/1,000 words. A much lower of occurrence of 0.34/1,000 words is found in this study. The more frequent use of hedges in CEOs' letters could be attributed to the fact that the CEOs' letters report on listed companies' financial performance. The use of hedges is an effective method to show indirectness and tentativeness in presenting disappointing financial results (Hyland, 1998b)³⁴, making claims about positive outcomes of projects and forecasting future performance. Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b) maintain that hedges can allow CEOs to be perceived as polite, modest and honest individuals and gain credibility. In the words of Hyland (1998b, p. 238), 'hedges help CEOs to demonstrate personal honesty and integrity through a willingness to address hard realities, albeit behind a shield of mitigation'. The infrequent use of hedges in chairpersons' statements suggests that the writer of this specific part of the ESG report may not have much need 'to address hard realities' (Hyland, 1998b, p. 238). As discussed in Section 4.1.2, bad news is presented in only two chairpersons' statements. An examination of the texts concerned reveals that no metadiscourse items are used in the texts. In fact, the announcement of bad news does not involve any justifications for the events. Only factual descriptions of the incidents and their impacts are provided. The rare occurrences of hedges in chairperson's statements also suggest that the writer of chairpersons' statements in comparison to the writer of

³⁴Hyland (1998b) also notes that in times of poor performance, CEOs' letters would contain more hedges than boosters to soften the announcement of poor results and account for setbacks. However, his analysis of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters is based on a sample of annual reports which was selected randomly, and he does not provide empirical evidence to substantiate his claim of the association between metadiscourse use and financial performance of listed companies.

CEOs' letters is less likely to show caution in making assertions and claims. Instead, they appear to be more willing to take direct responsibilities for what they say. A possible reason for these tendencies is that CSR performance of a listed company, unlike its financial performance, is less likely to be affected by its external economic environment. Listed companies are expected to practice CSR and improve their performance regardless of their business and financial developments.

5.3.1.1 Hedges in the CMS

The use of hedges in the CMS is characterised by a heavy use of lexical items. As shown in Table 5.23, all the ten most frequently occurring hedges in the corpus are lexical items. Each of them occurs 11 times or more.

Table 5.23: Ten most common hedges in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- approximately	145	0.31	26.56
- nearly	75	0.16	13.74
- around	72	0.15	13.19
- about	71	0.15	13.00
- mainly	42	0.09	7.69
- almost	20	0.04	3.66
- relatively	19	0.04	3.48
- generally	13	0.03	2.38
- in general	11	0.02	2.01
- largely	11	0.02	2.01

Approximately is found to be the most popular hedging device. The instances of *approximately* constitute more than a quarter (26.56%) of all hedges identified in the CMS. The number of instances of the next three linguistic realisations – *nearly*, *around* and *about* – are roughly the same. Altogether, the instances of the four linguistic realisations make up around two-thirds of the total. Qualitative analysis reveals that every single instance of these frequently used hedges is used to qualify numbers and figures (see Examples 50-52 below). This predominant function of hedges in

the corpus could be attributed to the informational nature of the main section. In giving informative descriptions, the writer makes use of approximation as a way to avoid giving the exact figures when necessary. It is found that this strategy is often used to report on the listed company's CSR efforts, as illustrated in Examples 50 and 51. In Example 50, the writer reports on waste management and recycling. Approximation is used (as signalled by *approximately*) in describing the amount of waste recycled by the listed company.

Example 50

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... During the reporting period, we recycled approximately 73,440kg of waste in total, and the recycled items included metals, plastics, glass, paper and waste oil. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00083-2016)

In Example 51, the writer uses *nearly* in describing the number of members of the reading club organised by the listed company. The reading club is referred to as 'the Club' in the example.

Example 51

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... For the second year the Club promoted multi-lingual reading through cultural exchanges. It connected nearly 200 underprivileged children, youth volunteers and exchange students from Hong Kong, Thailand, Germany, Norway, Belgium and Brazil. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00016-2015)

The hedges *approximately*, *nearly*, *around* and *about* are also used by the writer to provide numerical information on topics other than CSR matters. The excerpt in Example 52 presents information about the property portfolio of the listed company. In this example, *about* and *around* are used.

Example 52

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> ... As at 31 March 2011, our properties comprise 149 integrated retail and car park facilities, two standalone retail facilities and 29 standalone car park

facilities with an internal floor area of about 11 million square feet of retail space and around 80,000 car park spaces. ... </MT1>

(CMS-00823-2011)

It is found that approximation of numbers can be achieved with the use of two other hedges, i.e. *almost* and *some*. *Almost* is the sixth most frequently occurring hedge among the top ten items (Table 5.23). In Example 53, *almost* is used when the writer reports on the high occupancy rate at shopping malls, which forms part of the information about the listed company's financial performance.

Example 53

<MT2: Reporting on financial performance> Occupancy of our wholly-owned retail malls was almost 100% throughout 2009, although retail sales fell marginally overall. ... </MT2>

(CMS-01972-2009)

Some occurs only five times in the CMS, and therefore it is not shown in Table 5.23 above. In Example 54, *some* is used to describe the number of volunteer activities as the writer provides information about how the listed company created volunteer opportunities to serve the communities in Hong Kong and Mainland China.

Example 54

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results>... Our employees contributed more than 11,000 service hours to communities in Hong Kong and Mainland China in 2014, leading some 90 volunteer activities. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00101-2014)

The use of hedges to show approximation of numbers and figures suggests that there are many times when the writer finds it necessary or appropriate to withhold commitment when giving numbers and figures in main sections. This writer's need or preference could be explained by the lack of exact numerical information. Another possible explanation for the use is that hedges can signal the writer's rounding of numbers. The main section contains the information disclosed by

the listed company on various topics, including its CSR performance, financial performance and company profile, which invariably involve the reporting of numbers and figures. In providing the information, the writer may choose to round up the numbers in order to make them easier to remember. This in fact provides an opportunity to maximise the impact of the numbers to create a better impression. For instance, *some 90* in Example 54 could be used to refer to a number less than 90, for example, 87. That is, the exact number of volunteer activities could be smaller than the hedged one as reported by the writer. While it is also possible that the exact number could also be greater than the hedged one, instances like *almost 100%* in Example 53 would not be the case. The writer clearly attempts to emphasise the high occupancy rate, and the actual occupancy rate is less than 100%.

In the CMS, another use of hedges is to allow the writer to mitigate authorial commitment to assertions and claims. By doing so, the information is presented with an element of uncertainty. As Hyland (1998b, p. 237) notes, hedges function as ‘a prudent insurance against overstating an assertion which later proves to have been in error’. The excerpt in Example 55 is taken from part of a main section which describes water conservation of the listed company. By using *mainly*, the writer reduces the force of the explanation presented, expressing tentativeness and cautiousness in providing the reason for the increase in water consumption.

Example 55

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results>... Water consumption of our mainland China portfolio covered in the previous reporting period increased by 10.8%, mainly due to increases in demand for water for cleaning and the cooling load as a result of the higher occupancy rate and footfall at the properties. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00101-2016)

It is noteworthy that while modal auxiliaries (*may, might, could, should* and *would*) in their epistemic senses (i.e. epistemic modal verbs) play an important part as a group of hedging resource in academic writing (Hu & Cao, 2015; Hyland, 1994, 1998a, McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012), they are not among the top ten hedges in the CMS. In fact, only 17 instances of modal verbs were identified in the CMS, accounting for 3.11% of the total number of hedges. Example 56 illustrates how *may* is used to withhold the writer’s complete commitment to a proposition.

Example 56

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Climate change is recognised as a key business challenge, and we continue to improve our understanding and management of potential climate change risks. Over the longer term, changes in weather patterns and extreme weather events may place greater demands on the property sector to improve the resilience of buildings. However, our most immediate risks and opportunities relate to emerging policy and regulation designed to encourage businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. ... </MT3S2>
(CMS-01972-2010)

In this example, the use of *may* reflects the writer's recognition of alternative viewpoints. It softens the intensity of the claim that there would be a need *to improve the resilience of buildings* because of climate change. The 'greater demands on the property sector to improve the resilience of buildings' is conveyed in a tone of circumspection. It is 'presented as an opinion rather than accredited fact' (Hyland, 1998a, p. 351).

Hedges across move types in the CMS

Table 5.24 shows the use of hedges across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.24: Hedges across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	398	72.90
Move type 1: Presenting corporate profile	48	8.79
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 2: Describing strategies/methods/practices)	33	6.04
Others	67	12.27
Total	546	100.00

More than 70% of the hedges in the CMS are used in the texts of step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance'. It is found that the hedges which

occur in the texts are mainly used to express approximation of numbers and figures, as illustrated in Examples 50, 51, 54 and 55 above. Less commonly, hedges which occur in the step ‘describing actions and results’ are used to show that the writer is circumspect about presenting the information. This use of hedges reflects the writer’s attempt to make assertions and claims appear uncertain, tentative and less subjective. This could be considered a strategy to protect the writer from overstatement and exaggeration. For instance, Example 57 below illustrates the use of *in general* to hedge the writer’s interpretation of the feedback from office tenants.

Example 57

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results>... Periodic tenant visits and surveys are conducted to collect feedback on our service. Over 900 office tenants were engaged through surveys in the reporting year. In general, feedback on our services was positive. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00016-2013)

As shown in Table 5.24, the second largest proportion of hedges is much smaller (8.79%). This proportion is formed by the hedges which occur in the texts of the move type ‘presenting corporate profile’. This move type requires the writer to provide a brief and concise introduction of the listed company. In the texts, hedges serve as an important resource in providing information of the listed company in terms of its property portfolio (see Example 52 reproduced below), land bank (see Example 58 below), projects, operations, income, awards, recognitions and memberships, among others. Both Examples 52 and 58 show the use of two hedges.

Example 52 (reproduced)

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> ... As at 31 March 2011, our properties comprise 149 integrated retail and car park facilities, two standalone retail facilities and 29 standalone car park facilities with an internal floor area of about 11 million square feet of retail space and around 80,000 car park spaces. ... </MT1>

(CMS-00823-2011)

Example 58

<MT1: Presenting corporate profile> ... As at June 2015, our land bank in Hong Kong amounted to a gross floor area of 50.8 million square feet, comprising 22.1 million square feet, or 44%, of properties under development, and 28.7 million square feet, or 56%, of completed investment properties. Six sites were added to our land bank with an aggregate gross floor area of 4.9 million square feet, whereas the new sites are mainly designated for residential developments comprised of mostly small-to-medium sized units. ... </MT1>

(CMS-00016-2014)

The third highest percentage (6.04%) of hedges across move types in the CMS is concerned with the hedges which occur in the texts of step 2 ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’, as illustrated in Example 59 below. In the example, the writer details a working group of the listed company (i.e. Swire Properties Limited) which aims to develop long-term, mutually beneficial relationships with its business partners and other key parties. The working group is one of the strategies of the listed company to improve its CSR performance. The hedge *relatively* is used to soften the claim that the working group has a ‘large and diverse composition’.

Example 59

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> ... Our Partners Working Group is chaired by our General Manager for Projects. It comprises 25 representatives from different functions within Swire Properties, ranging from Mainland China business development, hotels, portfolio management, public affairs, marketing and projects, to technical services & sustainability. The relatively large and diverse composition of this working group reflects our belief that we need to work with a wide range of Partners. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-01972-2016)

Example 56 above (reproduced below) also illustrates the use of hedges in the texts for ‘describing strategies/methods/practices’. After using the hedge *may* in presenting the claim that there would be a need ‘to improve the resilience of buildings’ because of climate change, the writer points out that businesses should ‘reduce their greenhouse gas emissions’, which is a strategy to protect the environment and manage climate change.

Example 56 (reproduced)

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> Climate change is recognised as a key business challenge, and we continue to improve our understanding and management of potential climate change risks. Over the longer term, changes in weather patterns and extreme weather events may place greater demands on the property sector to improve the resilience of buildings. However, our most immediate risks and opportunities relate to emerging policy and regulation designed to encourage businesses to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-01972-2010)

5.3.1.2 Hedges in the CCS

In the CCS, there are eight instances of hedges. All the four linguistic realisations of hedges are shown in Table 5.25.

Table 5.25: All hedges in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- may	3	0.13	37.50
- approximately	2	0.09	25.00
- nearly	2	0.09	25.00
- around	1	0.04	12.50

Among the linguistic realisations, the modal auxiliary *may* is used the most frequently, with three times. This hedging device signals possibility and is used to express the likelihood of assertions. In Example 60, the writer uses *may* to indicate that there is the possibility that ‘economic conditions’ could give rise to ‘uncertainty’. Then, the writer uses the comparative transition *but* (see Section 5.2.1 for a discussion on transitions) to argue that the determination and commitment of the listed company would not be affected by the potential uncertainty caused by economic conditions.

Example 60

<MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> ... Economic conditions may offer uncertainty, but we are committed to our environmental and community initiatives and strengthening our sustainable development. We will continue to expand the Group's property business by offering premium products and services, and advance our sustainability agenda across all sectors of operation as we remain committed to Building Homes with Heart. </MT14>
(CCS-00016-2011)

The other linguistic realisations of hedges, i.e. *approximately*, *nearly* and *around*, are used either once or twice in the CCS. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.1, these hedges function to signal approximation of numbers and figures. In the CCS, all five instances of *approximately*, *nearly* and *around* are found to perform this function. They are used in the reporting of either CSR or financial performance of listed companies, as shown in the following two examples respectively. It is not surprising that hedges perform this function, as the writer often has to provide numerical information on different aspects of CSR or financial performance.

Example 61

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> In giving back to our communities, our Hang Lung As One volunteer team continued their efforts in organizing over 100 volunteer activities in 2016, with nearly 14,000 service hours contributed by our colleagues. </MT3S1>
(CCS-00101-2016)

In Example 61, *nearly* is used when the writer describes the total number of service hours of the employees of the listed company (i.e. Hang Lung Properties Limited) who are members of the listed company's volunteer team.

Example 62

<MT2: Reporting on financial performance> In the past decade, our sales have grown around 28 times and annual net profit has increased at a compound annual growth rate of over 40%. </MT2>
(CCS-00688-2012)

In Example 62, the writer uses *around* in reporting on the increase in sale of the listed company.

Hedges across move types in the CCS

The eight instances of hedges are used in the texts of five different move types in the CCS. Given the small number of hedges, all the move types are shown in Table 5.26.

Table 5.26: Hedges across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	4	50.00
Move type 2: Reporting on financial performance	1	12.50
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	1	12.50
Move type 14: Projecting future performance and making promises	1	12.50
Move type 20: Soliciting feedback	1	12.50
Total	8	100.00

Half of the instances of hedges occur in the texts of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’. Like the case of hedges in the CMS, this group of hedges forms the largest proportion of hedges across move types in the CCS. The four instances are linguistically realised by *approximately* (RF: 2) and *nearly* (RF: 2). The use of *nearly* in the step is illustrated in Example 61 above.

The other four instances of hedges are used in the texts of four different move types. Examples 60 and 62 above respectively illustrate the use of hedges in the texts for the communicative purposes of ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ (*may*) (move type 14) and ‘reporting on financial performance’ (*around*) (move type 2). Both hedges which occur in the texts for ‘stating values and beliefs’ and ‘soliciting feedback’ are linguistically realised by *may*.

Given the limited use of hedges in the CCS, the findings do not seem to reveal meaningful patterns. While it is noticeable that hedges appear to be used quite commonly for signalling approximation of numbers and figures in ‘describing actions and results’, it is difficult, if not impossible, to interpret or generalise the findings of the use of hedges in the texts of other move types. Further research is needed to enhance our understanding of the role of hedges in chairpersons’ statements.

5.3.2 Boosters

There are 60 and 401 instances of boosters in the CCS and the CMS respectively. Boosters are used occasionally in both corpora. They account for 12.58% and 10.90% of all metadiscourse items identified in the CCS and the CMS respectively. They also constitute the second largest proportions of interactional metadiscourse items in both corpora. In comparison, the use of boosters in the CCS (NF: 2.54) is about 3 times greater than that in the CMS (NF: 0.86). Therefore, the writer of chairpersons' statements is more likely 'to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 52) than the writers of main sections.

The comparison of the findings from Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (1998b)³⁵ indicates that the frequency of use of boosters in CEOs' letters can vary greatly. Hyland (1998b) finds the frequency of 1.3/1,000 words. In their cross-cultural analysis of CEOs' letters, Huang and Rose (2018) report higher frequencies of boosters, i.e. 2.568 and 5.262 boosters per 1,000 words in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks respectively. The normalised frequency of 2.54 found in the analysis of chairpersons' statements in the present study is higher than that reported by Hyland (1998b) but lower than those by Huang and Rose (2018). Therefore, the issue of whether boosters occur more frequently or less frequently in chairpersons' statements when compared with CEOs' letters remains indeterminate and thus requires further investigation.

5.3.2.1 Boosters in the CMS

Table 5.27 shows the ten most frequently used linguistic realisations of boosters in the CMS. Each of them occurs four times or more.

Table 5.27: Ten most common boosters in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- believe/believed/believes	145	0.31	36.16
- very	71	0.15	17.71
- always	63	0.13	15.71

³⁵In Hyland (1998b), 'boosters' are referred to as 'emphatics'.

- will	59	0.13	14.71
- truly	10	0.02	2.49
- in fact	9	0.02	2.24
- really	9	0.02	2.24
- show/showed/shows	8	0.02	2.00
- revealed	5	0.01	1.25
- firmly	4	0.01	1.00

Believe (and its inflectional forms) is found to be the most frequently used booster. The instances of *believe/believed/believes* constitute more than one-third (36.16%) of all boosters identified in the corpus. Before looking at how *believe* and other boosters are used in the CMS, it is important to be aware of the dual nature of *I think* and *I believe* as markers of epistemic modality: tentative and deliberative.

In her study of hedges and boosters in women's and men's speech, Holmes (1990, p. 199) identifies 'two distinct and contrasting functions' of *I think*, i.e. tentative *I think* and deliberative *I think*. Tentative *I think* expresses uncertainty, while deliberative *I think* expresses certainty. In the tentative function, *I think* is used to mitigate the illocutionary force of the assertion. *I think*, when serving the deliberative function, adds weights to the assertion. In discussing the use of deliberative *I think*, Holmes (1990, p. 187) notes that it expresses 'emphasis and confidence'. Her criteria for classifying tentative and deliberative *I think* are prosodic and syntactic features and the context of utterance, including the relationship between the participants, the topic and the formality of the interaction. Based on Holmes (1990), Aijmer (1997) distinguishes the tentative and deliberative functions of *I think* in the London-Lund Corpus of Spoken English (LLC). The distinction depends on prosodic, grammatical and positional features. For an instance of *I think* to be classified as performing the deliberative function, it has the nuclear tone or the prosodic prominence, it is followed by the complementiser *that*, and it takes the initial position in an utterance. Based on Aijmer's work, van Bogaert (2006) proposes that there are two types of *I believe* in a study of *I guess*, *I suppose* and *I believe* as pragmatic markers in spoken and written language. Drawing on data from the International Corpus of English – Great Britain (ICE-GB), van Bogaert (2006, p. 139) points out that tentative *I believe* 'soften illocutionary force and reduces commitment', while deliberative *I believe* 'reinforces illocutionary force and present the speakers as highly committed'.

I believe which serves the deliberative function ‘can signal certainty and an authoritative attitude on the part of the speaker’ (p. 138). In van Bogaert’s (2006) study, the criteria for distinguishing between the deliberative and tentative functions of *I believe* are different from those regarding *I think* in Aijmer (1997). For van Bogaert (2006, p. 140; quotes in original), there is an important criterion for identifying *I believe* in the deliberative function – ‘The fundamental criterion for classifying an instance of *I believe* as deliberative is paraphrasability as “it is my conviction (that)”’. Example 63 provided by van Bogaert (2006) illustrates an instance of *I believe* which can be paraphrased in this way.

Example 63

In this spirit **I believe** we should seriously question the tradition of the monarchy.
(van Bogaert, 2006, p. 139; bold in original)

van Bogaert (2006) also suggests that contextual cues are useful indications, for instance, the use of *effectively* in Example 64.

Example 64

But we have lost a tremendous amount of time time in which the western powers simply failed to respond time that went on through the whole of nineteen ninety and nineteen ninety-one and where we are still effectively **I believe** underestimating the scale of what is required for us.
(van Bogaert, 2006, p. 140; bold in original)

The use of the complementiser *that* and initial position are not considered necessary features for *I believe* to be classified in its deliberative function, because the ICE-GB ‘contained numerous examples which, in spite of their failure to meet Aijmer’s syntactic criteria, display contextual and pragmatic characteristics point towards deliberative use’ (van Bogaert, 2006, p. 140).

For van Bogaert (2006), tentative *I believe* marks the external source of evidence on which the speaker depends when he or she makes a claim. Thus, tentative *I believe* can be paraphrased as *I am told/I have read/people say*.

The use of deliberative function of *I think* and *I believe* is observed in political spoken discourse. In her study on cognitive verbs in political speeches and interviews, Fetzer (2008)

investigates *think*, *believe* and other cognitive verbs with both first-person singular and first-person plural self-reference. As she explains, it is necessary to examine first-person plural self-reference because ‘political agents do not only speak on behalf of themselves as individual agents but also on behalf of a political party as collective identities’ (Fetzer, 2008, p. 389). Fetzer does not use the terminology ‘deliberative *I think/I believe*’. However, her findings show that *we think* and *I/we believe* are always used by politicians to ‘boost the force of commitment’ (Fetzer, 2008, p. 393). The following two examples are provided by Fetzer (2008). Both excerpts were taken from political interviews.

Example 65

Interviewee: well, if the economic conditions are right, **I believe** we should join the single currency (Fetzer, 2008, p. 390; bold in original)

Example 66

Interviewee: **we believe** British people deserve the opportunity to have their say in a referendum... (Fetzer, 2008, p. 390; bold in original)

According to Fetzer (2008), the politician in Example 65 as the interviewee uses *I believe* to invite the addressees to adopt her or his perspective and share her or his belief that joining the single currency is beneficial. In Example 66, *we believe* is used in a similar way that the addressees are invited to adopt the politician’s perspective and share her or his party’s belief regarding the decision-making process of the referendum. I would argue that Fetzer (2008), like van Bogaert (2006), provides evidence that *believe* can be used to perform a deliberative function. Fetzer’s study also reveals how *believe* can be used by the politician to express ‘collective epistemic commitment’ (Fetzer, 2008, p. 390) on behalf of his or her party. The idea of ‘collective epistemic commitment’ is of high relevance to the present investigation as *we believe* occur frequently in the CMS (discussed below).

In the present study, I adopted van Bogaert’s (2006) criteria for determining the deliberative and tentative functions of *I/we think* and *I/we believe* in the data. I argue that the fundamental criterion proposed by van Bogaert (2006) for classifying an instance of *I believe* as deliberative – that I believe can be paraphrased as *it is my conviction (that)* – is in line with the discourse functions

performed by boosters in Hyland's perspective, i.e. that boosters 'allow writers to express *conviction* and assert a proposition with confidence, representing a strong claim about a state of affairs' (Hyland, 1998a, p. 350; emphasis added). Although van Bogaert (2006) does not examine *I/we think* and *we believe*, it is the only study which analyses written discourse among the aforementioned previous studies. Because of the focus on metadiscourse in the current study, in my analysis, I considered *I/we think* and *I/we believe* which performs the tentative function as a combination of self mention (*I/we*) and hedge (*think* and *believe*), and *I/we think* and *I/we believe* which perform the deliberative function as a combination of self mention and booster. Given the scope of self mentions in the present study (see Section 3.2.3.2 for details), I examined *I/we* and other self-references – what I refer to as 'general company references' (for instance, *the Group*) and 'company name references' (for instance, *New World Group*) – which are used in conjunction with *think* and *believe*.

Data analysis showed that all instances of *think* and *believe* identified in the CMS perform a deliberative function, and thus all of them are classified as boosters. The identification criteria proposed and implemented by van Bogaert (2006) have proven useful in my data. However, I have to note that since I was the only analyst of this study (see Section 3.2.3.2 for details of this methodological issue), the distinction between tentative and deliberative *I/we think* and *I/we believe* inevitably involved a certain level of subjective judgement. In this regard, I would like to discuss the following example given by Hong and Cao (2014), which is taken from an essay written by a young English as a foreign language (EFL) learner.

Example 67

I like to eat many foods, such as fish, egg, apple and so on. But my favorite food is fish. When I was ten years old, I like to eat fish very much, so my mother always cook fish for me. *I think* fish is a very good kind of food, and that is because the fish is very delicious, and it very cheap. All in all, My favorite food is fish.

(Hong & Cao, 2014, p. 214; underlined and italicised in original)

The authors state that: 'Except for one instance of hedge, namely, *I think*, the writer employed several boosters such as *very* and *always*, in order to intensify the degree of his/her fondness for fish' (Hong & Cao, 2014, pp. 214-215). They also report that two trained raters coded all their data

independently, and that a third rater was invited to resolve disagreements through discussions with the two raters. Thus, there should be a justifiable reason for classifying *I think* as a hedge. However, in my interpretation, I would consider *I think* performing the deliberative function, and I would classify *think* as a booster. My understanding is that the speaker uses *I think*, *very* and *always* to passionately formulate a strong opinion. *I think* here is used by the writer to express ‘emphasis and confidence’ (Holmes, 1990, p. 187) instead of conveying doubt or tentativeness. Given the difference between my interpretation of *I think* and Hong and Cao’s, I would like to acknowledge that what I consider as ‘tentative’ or ‘deliberative’ *think* and *believe* in my analysis might not be the case from the perspective of other analysts.

Returning to the use of *believe* in the CMS, it is found that *believe* is always used in conjunction with *we* and other self-references to signal the listed company’s conviction towards a wide range of issues. Only four instances of *believe* identified in the corpus are used with the first-person singular pronoun *I*. By using *believe*, the writer who represents the listed company explicitly shows the listed company’s awareness of the issues and its willingness and commitment to address them. Examples 68 and 69 give some flavour of this usage, with the use of *we* and the general company reference *the Group* respectively. *We* and *the Group* function as self mentions (Section 5.3.4 will provide a discussion on self mentions).

Example 68

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that one of the most effective ways to invest in our communities is through the sharing of our business expertise. </MT11>
(CMS-01972-2010)

Example 69

<MT 11: Stating values and beliefs> The Group believes that employees’ mental health is as important as their physical well-being </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> and has therefore established a 24-hour counselling and emotional support Hearty Hotline where employees and family members can seek professional help from social workers, psychologists and counsellors. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00016-2015)

It is observed that some instances of *believe* are used to introduce the listed company's belief that a particular issue is of importance, for example, supporting the integration of disadvantaged and marginalised groups (see Example 70) and innovative design (see Example 71).

Example 70

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that it is important to support the integration of disadvantaged and marginalised groups, such as the elderly, new immigrants, low-income families and people with disabilities, to create a more inclusive society for all. </MT11>

(CMS-00016-2012)

Example 71

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that innovative design is the key to sustainable development </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> and have incorporated eco-friendly elements in our facilities and processes over the years. </MT3S2>

(CMS-00083-2014)

In the CMS, nine instances of *believe*, *believes* and *believed* are found to co-occur with other boosters – *deeply*, *firmly* and *strongly* – to convey a very high level of conviction. Examples 72 and 73 illustrate this, with the use of two and three boosters respectively.

Example 72

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The Group firmly believes that business and community are inextricably intertwined. </MT11>

(CMS-00004-2015)

Example 73

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> At New World Group, we strongly believe that there is always room for improvement and this also applies to our sustainability report. </MT11>

(CMS-00017-2013)

In Example 72, the writer expresses certainty and confidence towards the close relationship between business and community. Regarding Example 73, the opinion is concerned with the continual improvement of producing ESG report (referred to as ‘sustainability report’ in the example). The writer in Example 72 highlights the listed company’s determination to contribute to the community in which it operates, and the writer in Example 73 underscores the listed company’s intention to continuously improve its ESG report. By conveying a strong conviction, the writer of the examples attempts to deliver a message to the reader that the listed companies place great emphasis on the two aforementioned issues.

The second and third most frequently used boosters in the CMS are the adverbs *very* and *always*. The use of these linguistic realisations of boosters are illustrated in Examples 74 and 75 respectively.

In Example 74, *very* is used to emphasise how the listed company handles customer privacy issues.

Example 74

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> The Group takes customer privacy issues very seriously. ... </MT3S2>

(CMS-00016-2016)

The excerpt in Example 75 is taken from part of a main section which reports on various initiatives implemented by the listed company (i.e. China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd.; referred to as ‘COLI’ in the example) to prevent climate change. *Always* is used by the writer to intensify certainty regarding the listed company’s practice of replacing business travels with video conferencing.

Example 75

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> As always, COLI encourages its subsidiaries to use the video conferencing system to replace unnecessary business travels. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00688-2016)

The epistemic modal verb *will* ranks fourth on the top-ten list in Table 5.27. It indicates certainty, assurance and conviction towards positive outcomes, as illustrated in the Example 76.

Example 76

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> ... We have rebranded our retail facilities into four categories, which will help us develop better asset management strategies and cater our assets with more suitable tenant mix and trade varieties, which in turn will maximise their potential and value for our tenants and investors. </MT3S2>

(CMS-00823-2011)

The two instances of *will* help the writer express certainty towards the view of the listed company that the rebranding of its retail facilities would benefit tenants and investors. The use of *will* indicates the writer's attempt to instil confidence in the reader with regard to the rebranding and makes the listed company's action appear reasonable and logical.

The use of *will* as a booster in corporate discourse is also observed by McLaren-Hankin (2008). In her study of hedging in corporate press releases, McLaren-Hankin (2008) reports that *will* is used quite frequently in unhedged, plain predictions. While the majority of such predictions with the use of *will* are information-oriented (see Example 77), 'there are some, more evaluative, predictions which are unhedged' (McLaren-Hankin, 2008, p. 644) (see Example 78). According to McLaren-Hankin (2008), *will* in the latter example functions as a booster, based on Hyland (1998a).

Example 77

Application **will** be made today for the new shares to be admitted to the Official List and to trading on the London Stock Exchange.

(McLaren-Hankin, 2008, p. 644; bold in original)

Example 78

The current financial year **will** see the start of a significant growth period for OPTI [blood gas analysers] . . .

(McLaren-Hankin, 2008, p. 644; bold in original)

I would argue that *will* enables corporate writers, at least those who produce ESG reports and corporate press releases, to make predictions and projections in a positive manner. Obviously, predictions can be expressed with the use of other linguistic resources such as *may* and *is/are likely to*. However, the boosting function of *will* enables the communication of a stronger, more positive message about the listed company's future performance. This probably explains the high frequency of *will* as a booster in the CMS (RF: 59; 14.71%). In fact, the number of instances of *will* (i.e. an epistemic modal verb) functioning as a booster is greater than the total number of all epistemic modal verbs functioning as hedges in the CMS. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.1, the corpus contains only 17 instances of hedges, linguistically realised by epistemic modal verbs, namely *may*, *might*, *could*, *should* and *would*, with raw frequencies of occurrence ranging from one to six.

Boosters across move types in the CMS

Table 5.28 shows the use of boosters across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.28: Boosters across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	152	37.91
Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations	98	24.44
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	56	13.97
Others	95	23.69
Total	401	100.00

The boosters which occur in the texts for the communicative purpose of 'stating values and beliefs' constitute the largest proportion of boosters across move types in the CMS, accounting for 37.91% of all instances of boosters. The three most frequently used boosters in this move type are linguistically realised by *believe* (RF: 91), *will* (RF: 20) and *believes* (RF: 19). The use of these boosters are illustrated in some examples above:

- *Believe*: See Examples 68, 70, 71 and 73
- *Will*: See Example 76
- *Believes*: See Examples 69 and 72

In addition, it is also observed that in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’, 13 of the 20 instances of *will* co-occur with *believe* (and the self mention *we*). This combination of boosters indicates the writer’s attempt to explicitly express strong beliefs in relation to predictions about the future in order to present the listed company in a positive light and impress the reader, as exemplified below.

Example 79

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that conducting our business in an open and responsible manner and following good corporate governance practices will serve the long-term interests of the Group and our stakeholders. </MT11>
(CMS-00016-2011)

The second largest proportion of boosters in the corpus is concerned with the boosters used in the texts of the move type ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. The instances make up nearly one quarter of all boosters identified in the corpus. More than half of the 98 boosters which occur in the texts of this move type are linguistically realised by *very* (RF: 38) and *always* (RF: 20). While *believe* (and its inflectional forms) is the most frequently used booster in the CMS, there are only nine instances of *believe* in the texts of this move type. Since the move type involves direct and indirect quotations, the texts concerned contain some spoken material, and therefore could be considered comparatively more informal than the texts for other communicative purposes. The low frequency of *believe* in this particular move type provides further support for van Bogaert (2006)’s finding that *I believe* tends to occur more frequently in written language and formal text types than in spoken language and informal text types.

Examples 80 and 81 respectively illustrate the use of two instances of *very* and an instance of *always* which serve as boosters in the texts of move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. The former example shows a direct quotation from a participant of a focus group organised by the listed company. The quotation is incorporated into the section ‘Commitment to

Our Community’ of the ESG report. The excerpt in Example 81 is taken from part of a main section which is a management trainee journal written by a management trainee, Cherry Lau. The management trainee journal is placed in the section ‘Our People’ of the ESG report.

Example 80

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> “Sun Hung Kai Properties is very proactive in participating in a wide range of community activities and is very supportive of a large number of NGOs and charities.”

NGO focus group participant </MT24>

(CMS-00016-2010)

Example 81

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Maintaining good relationship and communication with working partners, especially teamwork among colleagues or stakeholders is always the key for success. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00017-2014)

Three of the four instances of *think* in the CMS are used in the texts of move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. The remaining instance occurs in the texts of move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’. Example 82 shows a direct quotation from Andrew Man, a management trainee of the listed company, illustrates the use of three boosters, including *think*, in the texts of move type 24.

Example 82

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> I think Hang Lung Group is a very sincere Company. It cares for applicants during the recruitment process, when staff explained the program and took our needs into consideration. It’s exactly such a passion that really moved me. ... </MT24>

Andrew Man

(CMS-00101-2014)

In fact, the use of multiple boosters is common in move type 24. The largest number of boosters in a move is 11. The move involves the use of *always* (RF: 5), *believe* (RF: 2), *very* (RF: 2) and *will* (RF: 2) in a management trainee journal written by a management trainee, Jimmy Lai (the main section which contains the move is CMS-00017-2015).

The use of boosters in move type 24 suggests that different individuals seem to express certainty when asked to give comments, opinions, explanations and feedback in spoken language or when asked to create written texts (in the cases of management trainee journals). Unfortunately, the processes of how the texts of move type 24 are produced, selected and integrated into other parts of the ESG report are beyond the scope of the present study. However, it is evident that the boosters used in the texts give emphasis on various aspects of the listed company in terms of CSR and present them in a positive way.

The third largest proportion (13.97%) of boosters in the CMS is formed by the boosters which occur in the texts of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’. Nearly half of the 56 boosters are linguistically realised by *very* (RF: 14) and *always* (RF: 12). The use of *very* is illustrated in Example 83. The use of *always* is shown in Example 75 above and is reproduced below.

Example 83

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... The Group’s dedicated Sports and Recreation Committee is very active in organising engaging employee activities. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00012-2015)

Example 75 (reproduced)

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> As always, COLI encourages its subsidiaries to use the video conferencing system to replace unnecessary business travels. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00688-2016)

5.3.2.2 Boosters in the CCS

In the CCS, there are eight linguistic realisations of boosters. Five of them are used twice or more, as shown in Table 5.29.

Table 5.29: Boosters occurring twice or more in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- believe/believes	35	1.48	58.33
- will	12	0.51	20.00
- always	6	0.25	10.00
- belief	2	0.08	3.33
- very	2	0.08	3.33

As with the CMS, the use of *believe* (RF: 32) and *believes* (RF: 3) is pervasive in the CCS. The 35 instances of *believe* and *believes* make up about 60% of the total number of boosters identified in the CCS. All, except one, instances of *believe* co-occur with the self mention *we*, as illustrated in Example 84.

Example 84

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that by cultivating a culture of honesty and integrity and keeping our systems sound, we enable our employees to work more productively and help us win the trust of our stakeholders. </MT11>
(CCS-00101-2013)

The second most frequently used booster is *will*. The number of instances of *will* (RF: 12; 20.00%) is about one-third of that of *believe* (*believes*). *Always*, the third most common booster, is used six times (10.00%) in the CCS. The other two linguistic realisations shown in Table 5.29 are *belief* and *very*, each of which occurring twice. The boosters which are used once in the CCS are *confidently*, *firmly* and *strong*, and they co-occur with other boosters, forming the phrases *confidently believe*, *firmly believe* and *strong belief*.

The use of *believe* (*believes*), *will*, *always* and *very* as boosters as well as the combination of boosters are discussed in the previous sub-section on boosters in the CMS (Section 5.3.2.1). In the following, I will discuss the use of *belief*. Example 85 illustrates the use of the boosters *belief* and *will* as well as the self mention *our*.

Example 85

<MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> Looking ahead to the rest of 2016, we expect more progress to be made in Hong Kong, Mainland China and the US. </MT14> <MT15: Illustrating outlook for the future> It is our belief that the sustainable development investments we made during 2015 will result in greater innovations across our portfolio in the years to come. </MT15>
(CCS-01972-2015)

The use of *will* expresses the writer's conviction that the listed company's sustainable development investments are very likely to create a positive impact on the development of the listed company in the future. The clause *it is our belief* has a similar meaning of *we believe*. It helps the writer express the forecast or prediction with certainty.

Another instance of *belief* in the CCS is used in a similar construction, i.e. *it is our strong belief that*, in which *strong* functions as a booster and *our* as a self mention, as illustrated in Example 86.

Example 86

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> It is our strong belief that there is always room for improvement </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> and we are actively benchmarking with international best practices. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Policies, guidelines and code of conducts are being developed to further strengthen our internal systems. </MT3S1>
(CCS-00017-2014)

In this example, *always* also serves as a booster. The combination of three boosters is used to convey a high level of conviction, like the use of *we strongly believe* and *always* in Example 73 in Section 5.3.2.1 above (reproduced below)³⁶.

Example 73 (reproduced)

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> At New World Group, we strongly believe that there is always room for improvement and this also applies to our sustainability report. </MT11>

³⁶It is observed that both Examples 73 and 86 are taken from the ESG reports issued by the same listed company.

(CMS-00017-2013)

The combination of booster and self mention (such as *I*, *we* and *our*) will be discussed in Section 5.3.4, the sub-section on self mentions.

Boosters across move types in the CCS

Table 5.30 shows the use of boosters across move types in the CCS.

Table 5.30: Boosters across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	40	66.67
Move type 15: Illustrating outlook for the future	7	11.67
Move type 14: Projecting future performance and making promises	5	8.33
Others	8	13.33
Total	60	100.00

Two-thirds of the boosters identified in the CCS are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’. This proportion is larger than that in the CMS (in the CMS, 37.91% of the boosters occur in the texts of this move type). Concerning the linguistic realisations of the boosters, most (70.00%) of the 40 instances of boosters are linguistically realised by *believe* (RF: 28; see Example 84 above). There is a small number of instances of *believes* (RF: 3), *will* (RF: 3) and *always* (RF: 2). *Belief*, *confidently*, *firmly* and *strong* are also involved in the texts, and each of them occurs once. Furthermore, it is observed that there are six cases of co-occurrence of two or more boosters in the texts for ‘stating values and beliefs’. One of the cases is shown in Example 86 above. As already discussed, the combination of boosters enables the writer to convey a strong belief or opinion.

The second largest proportion of boosters across move types in the CCS is formed by the instances which occur in the texts of the move type ‘illustrating outlook for the future’. The seven instances account for 11.67% of all boosters used in the corpus. The boosters are linguistically realised by *believe* (RF: 3), *will* (RF: 3) and *belief* (RF: 1). The three instances of *will* are found to co-occur with either *believe* (2 cases) or *belief* (1 case). Example 85 above illustrates the co-

occurrence of *belief* and *will* in the texts of the move type. The use of boosters in the texts for ‘illustrating outlook for the future’ shows the writer’s certainty in presenting what is likely to happen in the future. It demonstrates that the writer exudes confidence in the development of the listed company in terms of CSR.

The five instances of boosters which are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘projecting future performance and making promises’ constitute the third largest proportion (8.33%). All the instances are linguistically realised by *will*. The use of *will* for making predictions and projections is discussed in Section 5.3.2.1 (boosters in the CMS). Example 87 below illustrates how *will* perform this function in the CCS.

Example 87

<MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> The commencement of the 4-storey extension at Ocean Terminal of Harbour City and The Murray in 2017 will further strengthen our leading positions of retail and hospitality markets. </MT14>
(CCS-00004-2016)

The ESG report in which the above excerpt occurs discloses information about the new extension of Ocean Terminal of Harbour City, one of the shopping malls of the listed company in Hong Kong, and the conversion from the former landmark Murray Building in Hong Kong into The Murray, a hotel. In Example 87, the writer makes claims about potential positive impact of the commencement of the extension of the shopping mall and the hotel in 2017. *Will* is used to convey certainty and commitment to the assertion. It creates the impression that the result, i.e. further strengthening the listed company’s leading position of retail and hospitality markets, is certain and indisputable.

5.3.3 Attitude markers

There is only a small number of instances of attitude markers in both chairpersons’ statements (RF: 37) and main sections (RF: 47). In the CCS, attitude markers account for 7.76% of the total number of metadiscourse items. The proportion of attitude markers is even smaller in the CMS, with only 1.28%. In this corpus, attitude markers are the resources which are used the least among the nine subcategories of metadiscourse. The rarity of attitude markers in the corpora suggests that the

writers of both chairpersons' statements and main sections seldom express their affective attitude to propositions, and that they seem to prefer using other subcategories of metadiscourse to engage with their readers.

Comparatively, attitude markers are more common in the CCS (NF: 1.56) than the CMS (NF: 0.10). As will be discussed, most instances of the attitude markers identified in the chairpersons' statements are used to convey the writer's feelings, for example, *pleased* and *delighted* are used to signal the writer's pleasure to present the unfolding text, i.e. the ESG report. These attitude markers serve to welcome the reader of the chairperson's statement and hence the ESG report. Attitude markers serving the welcoming function are not needed in main sections, and therefore they cannot be identified in main sections, which could explain the lower frequency of occurrence of attitude markers in the CMS.

Regarding the use of attitude markers in the chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters, the frequency of use in the chairpersons' statements found in the present study is higher than that in the CEOs' letters in Hyland's (1998b) study, i.e. 1.0/1,000 words. However, attitude markers occur more frequently in both sets of data in the study of Huang and Rose (2018). The authors report the frequencies of 1.986 and 2.66 per 1,000 words in CEOs' letters from Chinese and western banks respectively. These figures are higher than the figure for chairpersons' statements in this study. Therefore, it is unclear as to whether attitude markers are used more commonly or less commonly in chairpersons' statements in comparison to CEOs' letters. This issue of attitude markers awaits further investigation.

5.3.3.1 Attitude markers in the CMS

Table 5.31 shows the top nine linguistic realisations of attitude markers in the CMS. Each of them occurs twice or more.

Table 5.31: Attitude markers occurring twice or more in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- important	9	0.02	19.15
- !	8	0.02	17.02
- pleased	4	0.01	8.51
- essential	3	0.01	6.38

- unfortunately	3	0.01	6.38
- utmost importance	3	0.01	6.38
- more importantly	2	0.00	4.26
- most importantly	2	0.00	4.26
- notably	2	0.00	4.26

The most frequently used attitude markers in the CMS is *important* (RF: 9). The instances of *important* make up almost one-fifth (19.15%) of all attitude markers used in the corpus. In Example 88, *important* is used to indicate the writer's (hence the listed company's) evaluation of the importance of the proposition of promoting the mental and physical health of the employees.

Example 88

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The industries in which we operate are highly demanding and fast-paced, and it is important that we promote the mental and physical health of our employees.

</MT11>

(CMS-00016-2013)

In the CMS, most instances of attitude markers are used to show the writer's judgement of the importance of propositions. Apart from *important*, the attitude markers serving this function are *essential* (RF: 3), *utmost importance* (RF: 3), *more importantly* (RF: 2), *most importantly* (RF: 2), *notably* (RF: 2), *imperative* (RF: 1), *importantly* (RF: 1) and *most significantly* (RF: 1), and they occur with a lower frequency of occurrence. Added together, more than half (RF: 24; 51.06%) instances of attitude markers in the CMS are concerned with this particular use. The linguistic realisations involve adjectives (RF: 13), adverbs (RF: 8) and nouns (RF: 3). Example 89 illustrates the use of the adverb *more importantly*.

Example 89

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> ... Providing an honest account of our achievements and challenges enables our stakeholders to assess fairly our business performance. More importantly, the process of reporting our sustainability performance has enabled us to better

understand our strengths and weaknesses as we further develop our sustainability agenda. ...

</MT9>

(CMS-00101-2013)

In the above example, the use of *more importantly* allows the writer to display the affective attitudes of the importance of the idea that ‘the process of reporting our sustainability performance has enabled us to better understand our strengths and weaknesses as we further develop our sustainability agenda’. In doing so, the writer strengthens the arguments regarding the practice of CSR reporting of the listed company.

In addition to evaluations of importance, attitude markers in the CMS also convey other affective feelings or judgements. Such attitudes are typically signalled by the use of exclamation mark (RF: 8; 17.02%) and the linguistic forms *pleased* (RF: 4; 8.51%) and *unfortunately* (RF: 3, 6.38%). The attitudes expressed are those held by the writer of main sections (see Examples 90 and 91) as well as those by other people. The writer’s use of attitude markers to express attitudes of other people will be discussed later.

The excerpt in Example 90 is taken from part of a main section which reports on the stakeholder engagement of the listed company Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (referred to as ‘SHKP’ in the ESG report). After describing that the listed company conducted an online survey and focus group discussion with about 400 stakeholders, the writer reports the feedback of the stakeholders, as shown in the example. The attitude marker *pleased* is used to signal the happiness or satisfaction of the writer (hence the listed company) in summarising the responses of the stakeholders. The use of *pleased* enhances the accessibility of the information by indicating that the stakeholders’ feedback is positive. This example also illustrates the use of the self mention *we* and the frame marker *report*.

Example 90

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... We are pleased to report that our stakeholders continue to regard SHKP as having a superior brand and service quality, and our efforts to promote sports events have also been widely recognized. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2015)

The attitude marker *unfortunately* is used in Example 91. In presenting information about the health and safety of the employees of the listed company, the writer reports a fatal accident which occur during the reporting period. The affective adverb *unfortunately* is used to help impart the bad news. By using this attitude marker, the writer expresses the sadness of the fatal accident, and at the same time, suggests how the reader might respond to this piece of information while understanding the listed company's performance on the topic of health and safety.

Example 91

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We regularly review and improve contractor safety regulations and procedures, and we adhere to the same high safety standards for every person who contributes to our company, whether they are an employee, a contractor, a supplier or a customer. In 2011, unfortunately, there was a fatal accident involving a contractor working on the construction site of our development at 28 Hennessy Road. </MT3S1>
(CMS-01972-2011)

It has to be noted that according to Hyland (2005a, p.49), attitude markers 'express writer's attitude to proposition'. Attitude markers, therefore, should not be associated with the attitudes conveyed by other people. However, as will be presented below, several instances of attitude markers identified in the present study signal the attitudes expressed by other people (not the writer). The attitude markers are used in the texts of move type 24 'presenting individual cases and quotations'. The use of attitude markers in the texts reveals the individuals' attempts to highlight aspects of the text and make explicit their attitudes to the material. Since the individual cases and quotations are provided in main sections to serve as testaments to specific aspects of the listed company's CSR performance (see Section 4.1.3), the use of attitude markers in the texts could function to support and emphasise the listed company's performance. By integrating individual cases and quotations into main sections of ESG reports, the writer (who represents the listed company) highlights the arguments in relation to different aspects of CSR and expresses attitudes to the arguments. As will be seen, the individual cases and quotations serve as vehicles for the writer to establish a clear attitude to arguments.

The excerpt in Example 92 below is taken from part of a main section called 'Dialogue with the Sustainability Steering Committee Chairman'. In this part of the text, there are six pairs of

questions and answers. They provide an opportunity for the Chairman of the Sustainability Steering Committee of the listed company (or other management staff members who produced the text) to provide the reader with CSR-related information as he ‘answers’ the questions, which are in fact also prepared by the listed company. Obviously, the questions are deliberately used to orient readers to particular topics, allowing the listed company to address potential concerns or issues of the reader. Example 92 illustrates that an exclamation mark is used in the Chairman’s answer to the fourth question.

Example 92

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations>

Q4. As the Chairman of the Sustainability Steering Committee, what do you see as the greatest opportunities and challenges relating to sustainability?

The opportunities are endless! We employ almost 5,000 employees, who touch hundreds of thousands of customers every day across Hong Kong and mainland China. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00101-2016)

In this example, the Chairman makes a strong opinion that there are ‘endless’ possibilities for the listed company to achieve different CSR goals. The exclamation mark signals his exclamation of excitement, indicating his positive attitudes towards the argument. By including such a ‘response’ of the Chairman in the main section, the writer emphasises the listed company’s dedication and enthusiasm for CSR.

Attitude markers across move types in the CMS

Table 5.32 shows the use of attitude markers across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.32: Attitude markers across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	16	34.04
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	14	29.79
Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations	8	17.02

Others	9	19.15
Total	47	100.00

The attitude markers used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’ constitute the largest proportion (34.04%) of attitude markers across move types in the CMS. All the 16 instances of attitude markers are concerned with the writer’s judgement of the importance of propositions, as illustrated in Example 88 above. Given the meaning of ‘importance’, the use of such attitude markers enables the writer to argue that particular principles, ideas and viewpoints are necessary for the listed company in practising CSR. The attitude markers function to ‘suck readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute such judgements’ (Hyland, 2005, p. 150), and therefore convey strong positions, values and beliefs of the listed company. In this way, the reader is forced to accept the listed company’s judgements, and perhaps perceive the listed company’s actions more desirable, reasonable and justifiable. Example 88A below illustrates this point. The example is an extended version of Example 88, showing the additional text for the communicative purpose of ‘describing actions and results’ in ‘reporting on CSR performance’.

Example 88A

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The industries in which we operate are highly demanding and fast-paced, and it is important that we promote the mental and physical health of our employees. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We offer a 24-hour counselling hotline for employees, and organize regular social activities to encourage work-life balance. </MT3S1> (CMS-00016-2013)

In this example, which shows an MT11-MT3 sequence (see Sections 4.3 and 4.4), the writer seems to suggest that the actions undertaken by the listed company, i.e. offering a 24-hour counselling hotline for employees and organising regular social activities to encourage work-life balance, were motivated by the listed company’s value and belief that promoting ‘the mental and physical health of our employees’ is of significance. The reader is asked to share the listed company’s way of thinking and perceive its actions as logical and practical.

The second highest percentage (29.79%) of attitude markers in the CMS is formed by the attitude markers used in the texts of step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’. This pattern of use indicates that the writer conveys judgements and attitudes towards the actions undertaken by the listed company and results of the actions, pointing out the important material (see Example 93 below with the use of *most significantly*) and engaging the reader to share the feelings such as satisfaction (see Example 94 below with the use of *proud*) and sadness (see Example 91 above with *unfortunately*). Both examples also illustrate the use of other metadiscourse items.

Example 93

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> We involve our tenants in our community activities, which cover issues such as the environment, health, education, disadvantaged community groups and the arts. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Most significantly, we joined hands with over 30 business partners, including tenants, in supporting the Love’s Team Charity Bazaar (see Our Community Ambassador Programme: A Decade of Service), our largest ever Community Ambassador Programme event. </MT3S1>
(CMS-01972-2011)

Example 94

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We are proud to report that the Group achieved our tenant care targets for 2015. </MT3S1>
(CMS-00012-2015)

The third largest proportion (17.02%) of attitude markers in the CMS is concerned with those used in the move type ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. Six (75%) of the eight instances of attitude markers which occur in the texts for this communicative purpose are exclamation marks, as exemplified in Example 92 above. It is found that all eight, except one, instances of attitude markers which are identified in move type 24 ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’ are used in the texts produced (spoken or written) by individuals who work in the listed companies as management staff members (which is the case of Example 92) and a management trainee. Therefore, the attitudes expressed by the individuals appear to represent those held by the

respective listed companies. It could be argued that the use of attitude markers in the texts of this move type is a more indirect way for the writer to express attitudes towards arguments regarding CSR.

5.3.3.2 Attitude markers in the CCS

Table 5.33 shows the top four linguistic realisations of attitude markers in the CCS. Each of them occurs more than twice. In the corpus, there are eight other linguistic realisations of attitude markers which occur only once.

Table 5.33: Attitude markers occurring three times or above in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- pleased	11	0.46	29.73
- delighted	8	0.34	21.62
- hope	7	0.30	18.92
- thank	3	0.13	8.11

The attitude markers in Table 5.33 convey the following attitudes:

1. Pleasure, happiness and satisfaction (*pleased* and *delighted*),
2. Hope or wish (*hope*), and
3. Appreciation (*thank*).

It is interesting to note that importance, i.e. the attitude expressed by more than half of the instances of attitude markers identified in the CMS, is conveyed by only five instances of attitude markers in the CCS, making up 13.51% of all attitude markers in the CCS. The attitude markers are linguistically realised by *crucial* (RF: 1), *essential* (RF: 1), *more importantly* (RF: 1), *notably* (RF: 1) and *vital* (RF: 1).

The attitude markers *pleased* (eight of the 11 instances) and *delighted* (seven of the eight instances) are usually used in the first sentence of chairpersons' statements where the writer welcomes the reader of the current ESG report. These two attitude markers signal the writer's pleasure, happiness and satisfaction towards the publication of the ESG report as a form of

communication between the listed company and its stakeholders. The use of *pleased* and *delighted* is illustrated below. The first example, Example 15, has already been presented in the sub-sections on frame markers (Section 5.2.2.2) and endophoric markers (Section 5.2.3.2) in the CCS.

Example 15 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report.

</MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

Example 95

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am delighted to introduce the first standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land. </MT8>

(CCS-00012-2014)

As can be seen, the two examples above are constructed by four subcategories of metadiscourse, as follows:

1. Self mentions: *I* and *our*,
2. Attitude markers: *pleased* and *delighted*,
3. Frame markers (announcers): *present* and *introduce*, and
4. Endophoric markers (linear text references): *2014/15 Sustainability Report* and *the first standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land*

Here, I would like to focus on the co-occurrence of attitude markers and announcers, i.e. *pleased to present* and *delighted to introduce*. In both examples, this combination of interactive and interactional metadiscourse signals the writer's attempt to create a sense of friendliness in introducing the unfolding ESG report to the reader. We shall return to Examples 15 and 95 in the discussion on self mentions in the CCS (Section 5.3.4.2).

Less frequently, *pleased* (three of the 11 instances) and *delighted* (one of the eight instances) are used in other parts of chairpersons' statements, as illustrated in Examples 96 and 97 respectively.

Example 96

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... We are also pleased to report that the Sino Children Mentorship Programme has extended its service to Kwun Tong to benefit the young children in the district. </MT3S1>

(CCS-00083-2016)

Example 97

<MT9: Describing the practice of CSR reporting> Our report is now progressing to a new level, with the creation of this “living report”, which features regular updates as new information becomes available. Timely, accurate disclosure has long been the foundation of corporate financial reporting, and I am delighted to be encouraging the adoption of this practice in corporate sustainability reporting. </MT9>

(CCS-01972-2010)

In Example 96, *pleased* is used to indicate the writer’s pleasure, happiness and satisfaction in providing information about ‘the Sino Children Mentorship Programme’ organised by the listed company, i.e. Sino Land Company Limited. In Example 97, the writer presents information about the practice of CSR reporting of the listed company, suggesting that a new approach had been adopted by the listed company. The writer signals the attitudes of pleasure, happiness and satisfaction towards the new practice of ‘corporate sustainability reporting’ which involves ‘timely, accurate disclosure’. Once again, the two examples above involve the combination of attitude marker (realised by *pleased* and *delighted*) and announcer (realised by *report* and *encouraging*). The co-occurrence of attitude marker and announcer has the effect of expressing the writer’s feelings and evaluations of what the writer is going to do, i.e. to report on the performance of community involvement and to be encouraging the adoption of a new practice of CSR reporting. The reader is invited to share the positive viewpoints or reactions of the writer. That is, the reader is encouraged to see that the listed companies makes improvement or even achieves success in CSR.

Five of the seven instances of *hope* are used in the final paragraph of chairpersons’ statements to express the writer’s hope or wish that the reader of the ESG report would enjoy reading the

report or witnessing the growth of the listed company in terms of CSR. This pattern of use is illustrated in Example 98.

Example 98

<MT21: Ending the statement politely> I hope you enjoy reading our Sustainability Report.
</MT21>

(CCS-00017-2016)

Apart from the attitude marker *hope*, this example also shows the use of the self mention *I* and *our*, the engagement maker *you* and the endophoric marker (linear text reference) *Sustainability Report*. In fact, six of the seven instances of *hope* which are used in the CCS co-occur with *you*. Five of them occur in the last paragraph of the chairperson's statements, as can be seen in Example 98 above. The remaining instance is used at the end of the first paragraph of a chairperson's statement, as illustrated in Example 99 below.

Example 99

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... From reading this Report, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of our commitment towards building a better and a more sustainable future for all. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2013)

As with Example 98, Example 99 also involves the use of a linear text reference (*this Report*) and a self mention (*we*). The attitude marker *hope* is used by the writer to introduce the current ESG report to the reader and express the hope or wish that the reader will understand more about the listed company's 'commitment towards building a better and a more sustainable future for all'.

Clearly, the use of *hope* in chairpersons' statement is mainly driven by the purpose of establishing a friendly relationship with the reader of the unfolding chairperson's statement (hence the ESG report), regardless of its use at the beginning or at the end of the chairperson's statement.

Attitude markers across move types in the CCS

Table 5.34 shows the use of attitude markers across move types in the CCS.

Table 5.34: Attitude markers across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	17	45.95
Move type 21: Ending the statement politely	5	13.51
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	4	10.81
Others	11	29.73
Total	37	100.00

In the CCS, the 17 instances of attitude markers used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘introducing the current report’ constitute the largest proportion of attitude markers across move type in the corpus, accounting for 45.95% of the total number of attitude markers. The attitude markers are linguistically realised by *pleased* (RF: 8; see Example 15 (reproduced) above), *delighted* (RF: 7; see Example 95 above), *hope* (RF: 1; see Example 99 above) and *pleasure* (RF: 1). Example 100 below illustrates the use of the latter, as well as other metadiscourse items, namely the self mentions *me* and *Swire Properties*’, the announcers *present* and *describes* and the linear text reference *first Sustainable Development Report*.

Example 100

<MT8: Introducing the current report> It gives me great pleasure to present Swire Properties’ first Sustainable Development Report, which describes what the Company has achieved in 2008 towards its goal of sustainable development. </MT8>

(CCS-01972-2008)

The sentence in the above example is the first sentence of the chairperson’s statement. Using *pleasure*, the writer indicates the happiness and satisfaction in welcoming the reader of the current chairperson’s statement (hence the ESG report). It has to be noted that while the sentence containing *pleasure* serves a similar function like the sentences in Examples 15 (reproduced) and 95 above, *pleasure* is used only once in the CCS. Chairpersons’ statements often begin with sentences like those in Examples 15 (reproduced) and 95. The sentence in Example 100 appears to be quite similar to the start of a speech. The writer’s use of the sentence with *pleasure* for

introducing the unfolding report perhaps could be explained by the fact that the report is the first ESG report published by the listed company (Swire Properties Limited), and that the report was published at a rather early stage of the development of CSR reporting in the context Hong Kong.

The second largest proportion (13.51%) of attitude markers is concerned with the attitude markers used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘ending the statement politely’. All five instances of attitude markers are linguistically realised by *hope*, as already discussed previously. This particular use of attitude markers is exemplified in Example 98 above.

Four instances of attitude markers in the CCS are used in the texts of the move type ‘stating values and beliefs’, making up 10.81% of all attitude markers identified in the corpus. The attitude markers are linguistically realised by the adjectives *convinced*, *crucial*, *essential* and *vital*. Except *convinced*, all of them are used to express the judgement of importance. Example 101 illustrates the use of *convinced* (and the self mention *we*).

Example 101

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> ... We are convinced that over the long term, a successful business is one that embraces the core principles of sustainability, pursuing a business model that enables responsible, equitable growth that has minimal negative environmental impact and adds value to the community. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We have spent the past three years evaluating and integrating sustainability into our operations in an effort to create lasting economic, social and environmental impacts for our diverse group of stakeholders. </MT3S1>

(CCS-00823-2013)

In this example, the writer uses the attitude marker *convinced* to indicate that the listed company has no doubt about what makes ‘a successful business’ over a long period. The certainty expressed helps the writer construct the argument that the listed company has a clear vision of how to manage its business sustainably. The reader is given the impression that the listed company did (and will continue to do) what it believes to be true – perusing a sound business model, reducing negative impacts and creating positive and ‘lasting economic, social and environmental impacts’.

5.3.4 Self mentions

The present study identified 125 and 157 self mentions in the CCS and the CMS respectively. Self mentions constitute the most popular subcategory of metadiscourse in the CCS, accounting for over a quarter (26.21%) of all metadiscourse items identified in the corpus. In comparison, the use of self mentions in the CMS is scarce. The instances make up only 4.27% of the total number of metadiscourse items. The normalised frequency of self mentions in the CCS (5.28/1,000 words) is over 15.5 times greater than that in the CMS (0.34/1,000 words). Hyland (2005a, p. 53) notes that ‘[t]he presence or absence of explicit author reference is generally a conscious choice by writers to adopt a particular stance and a contextually situated authorial identity’. Therefore, the writer of chairpersons’ statements is much more likely to intrude into the unfolding text to show their presence, express their stance and establish authorial identity. The writer interacts with the reader in a more personal manner in chairpersons’ statements. However, the interaction between the writer and the reader is more impersonal in main sections.

As explained in Section 3.2.3.2, the present study distinguishes the following three types of self mentions:

1. First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives (e.g. *I, my, our, we*),
2. General company references (e.g. *the Board, the Group, the Group’s*), and
3. Company name references (e.g. *Hang Lung’s, New World Group, Swire Properties*).

Table 5.35 compares the distribution of the different types of self mentions in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.35: The distribution of self mentions in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives	114	4.82	91.20	132	0.28	84.08
General company references	1	0.04	0.80	14	0.03	8.92
Company name references	10	0.42	8.00	11	0.02	7.01
Total	125	5.28	100.00	157	0.34	100.00

In both corpora, the majority of self mentions are first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives. The instances of this type of self mentions account for 91.20% of the total in the CCS (NF: 4.82) and 84.08% in the CMS (NF: 0.28). The second largest proportions of the corpora are not the same. In the CCS, the proportion is constituted by company name references (NF: 0.42; 8.00%). In the CMS, it is concerned with general company references (NF: 0.03; 8.92%).

The comparison of the use of self mentions between chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters does not involve the findings from Hyland (1998b). This is due to the fact that while self mentions is a subcategory of metadiscourse in Hyland (2005a), this subcategory is not included in Hyland's (1998b) taxonomy. In Hyland (1998b), first-person pronouns are considered potential items of the subcategory 'relation markers'. However, the subcategory 'relation markers' includes other resources, namely second-person pronouns, imperatives, questions and asides that interrupt the ongoing discourse, which largely correspond to engagement markers in Hyland (2005a). Thus, no subcategory in Hyland (1998b) is equivalent to the subcategory 'self mentions' in Hyland (2005a) and in the present study.

Huang and Rose (2018) find that the occurrences of self mentions in CEOs' letters from Chinese banks and those in letters from western banks are 1.645 and 3.835 per 1,000 words respectively. The figure for chairpersons' statements in the present study – 5.28/1,000 words – is higher than those reported by Huang and Rose (2018). This finding indicates that in contrast with the writer of CEOs' letters, the writer of chairpersons' statements seems to make a greater effort in presenting their authorial identity and reveal themselves explicitly to the reader. I would like to remind the reader that as discussed in Section 3.2.3.2, the definition of self mentions in the present study is more restrictive than those of Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (2005a). Thus, the occurrence of self mentions in chairpersons' statements would have been even higher if the present study had adopted the broader definitions of self mentions of Huang and Rose (2018) and Hyland (2005a). Self mentions are explicit author references which show the writer commits to the assertions in the text. The higher frequency of use of self mentions in chairpersons' statements could perhaps be explained by the writer's attempts to provide explicit signals of author presence in constructing arguments of CSR performance of the listed company, which aim to present the actions, strategies, values and plans as socially responsible (discussed below in Section 5.3.4.2).

Huang and Rose (2018) do not classify the instances of self mentions identified in their data sets into different types. Therefore, it is unclear as to how the use of self mentions in chairpersons' statements could be compared with that in CEOs' letters in terms of specific types of self mentions.

5.3.4.1 Self mentions in the CMS

Table 5.36 shows the top seven linguistic realisations of self mentions in the CMS. Each of them occurs twice or more.

Table 5.36: Self mentions occurring twice or more in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- we	131	0.28	83.44
- the Group	8	0.02	5.10
- New World Group	3	0.01	1.91
- the Board of Directors of COLI	3	0.01	1.91
- COLI	2	0.00	1.27
- Swire Properties	2	0.00	1.27
- the Board	2	0.00	1.27

More than 80% of the instances of self mentions identified in the CMS are linguistically realised by the first-person plural pronoun *we*, contributing to the large share (84.08%) of 'first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives' among the three types of self mentions in the corpus (see Table 5.35). The other linguistic realisations of self mentions shown in Table 5.36 occur much less frequently, with raw frequencies ranging from 2 to 8, accounting for only 1.27% to 5.10% of the total number of self mentions used in the corpus. As far as general company references are concerned, it is found that *the Group* (RF: 8; 5.10%) is the most common. Among the company name references, *New World Group* (RF: 3; 1.91%), which refers to the listed company New World Development Company Limited, is used the most frequently. The following illustrates the use of *we*, *the Group* and *New World Group*.

Examples illustrating the use of *we* in the CMS have been provided in discussions of other subcategories of metadiscourse in earlier parts of this chapter. The examples are reproduced below.

Example 11 (reproduced)³⁷

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... On the environmental front, we showcase our substantial energy savings through upgrades and efficiency enhancements. On health and safety, we note our latest safety initiatives, as well as our assistance towards industrial accidents victims' families.

</MT8>
(CMS-00014-2007)

Example 79 (reproduced)³⁸

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that conducting our business in an open and responsible manner and following good corporate governance practices will serve the long-term interests of the Group and our stakeholders. </MT11>

(CMS-00016-2011)

Example 90 (reproduced)³⁹

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... We are pleased to report that our stakeholders continue to regard SHKP as having a superior brand and service quality, and our efforts to promote sports events have also been widely recognized. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2015)

Example 94 (reproduced)⁴⁰

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We are proud to report that the Group achieved our tenant care targets for 2015. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00012-2015)

The above examples show the uses of *we* and other metadiscourse items (both interactive and interactional) in the CMS. However, it has to be pointed out that a large number of instances of *we* in the corpus are used together with the booster *believe*, as shown in Example 79 above (see Section 5.3.2.1 above for a discussion on boosters in the CMS). More specifically, there are 102 cases of

37Reproduced from Section 5.2.2.1 (frame markers in the CMS).

38Reproduced from Section 5.3.2.1 (boosters in the CMS).

39Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.1 (attitude markers in the CMS).

40Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.1 (attitude markers in the CMS).

we believe, three cases of *we also believe* and three cases of *we strongly believe*. Added together, the 108 instances of *we* which combine with *believe* make up 82.44% of the total number of *we* in the corpus, and 68.79% of the total number of self mentions in the corpus. While *believe* also co-occurs with other linguistic forms of self mentions, such cases of combinations are scarce. There are 14 cases of the combination of general company reference and *believes* (and *firmly believes*) (for instance, *The Board believes*), and another nine cases of the combination of company name reference and *believes* (and *believed*) (for instance, *Swire Properties believes*). Obviously, there is a preference for using *we* together with *believe*. This preference suggests that the writer, when expressing assertions with certainty, strives to present authorial identity to engage with the reader in a more personal manner. A possible explanation for the choice of using *we* is that the main section could be considered a discourse constructed by different individuals on behalf of the listed company. Consequently, there is a need to indicate that the conviction is the position held by a group of people as a whole. The heavy use of *we* could also be attributed to the writer's attempt to humanise the listed company. The listed company is represented by a group of people who make assertions with conviction. Therefore, the listed company can have ideas, opinions, values and beliefs, which are associated with the meaning of *believe*.

There are 14 instances of general company references in the CMS. The example below illustrates the use of *the Group*, the most frequently used general company reference and its co-occurrence with *believes*.

Example 69 (reproduced)⁴¹

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The Group believes that employees' mental health is as important as their physical well-being </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> and has therefore established a 24-hour counselling and emotional support Hearty Hotline where employees and family members can seek professional help from social workers, psychologists and counsellors. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00016-2015)

In fact, all eight instances of *the Group* in the CMS co-occur with either *believes* (six cases) or *firmly believes* (two cases). It is also observed that *the Group* is used by only three of the ten

⁴¹Reproduced from Section 5.3.2.1 (boosters in the CMS).

listed companies – Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (five instances), Henderson Land Development Company Limited (two instances) and The Wharf (Holdings) Limited (one instance). In addition, four of the six cases of *the Group believes* are found in the same main section of the ESG report issued by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (CMS-00016-2015).

The other three general company references identified in the CMS are *the Board of Directors of COLI* (RF: 3), *the Board* (RF: 2) and *the Company* (RF: 1). All five instances are used in the main sections of the ESG reports issued by one listed company, i.e. China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd., and again, they co-occur with *believes*. The above findings reveal that the use of the combination of general company references and *believes* is a choice made by particular listed companies only. It should be pointed out that *we believe* is used by all ten listed companies under investigation.

In the CMS, there are 11 instances of company name references. All the instances, except one, co-occur with *believes* (eight cases), *deeply believed* (one case) and *strongly believes* (one case). The remaining instance co-occur with the attitude marker *convinced*. The company name references are used in the main sections of the ESG reports issued by six listed companies. The most frequently occurring company name reference is *New World Group* (RF: 3). Its use is illustrated in Example 102. *New World Group* is a short form of the name New World Development Company Limited.

Example 102

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> New World Group strongly believes that in order to achieve sustainable growth, a balance must be maintained among profit and its responsibilities towards the environment and the community. </MT11>
(CMS-00017-2015)

It has to be mentioned that all company name references are (short forms of) the names of listed companies except *the Club* (RF: 1), which refers to ‘the SHKP Reading Club’, a platform which promotes reading offered by Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited. The identification and classification of *the Club* as a company name reference were motivated by the fact that the writer

uses *the Club* to represent the listed company to express the belief about reading, as can be seen in Example 103.

Example 103

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> The Club believes that every child should experience the joy of reading, </MT11> <MT3S1: describing actions and results>so its signature Read to Dream was held for the eighth year with the St. James' Settlement and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council to create a relaxed and happy reading experience for everyone. ... </MT3S1>
(CMS-00016-2015)

Self mentions across move types in the CMS

Before moving on to the findings regarding the use of self mentions across move types in the CMS, I would like to remind the reader that move type 24 'presenting individual cases and quotations' involves the texts which are produced by the writer of the main section as well as the texts which are produced by other individuals (see Section 4.1.3). The former are the texts which provide background information about the individual cases and quotations (such as introducing the individuals). The latter is concerned with texts including records of interviews, management trainee journals, direct and indirect quotations. Self mentions are 'explicit reference to author(s)' (Hyland, 2005a, p. 49), and 'author(s)' refer to the writer of the current text, i.e. the unfolding main section. Therefore, self mentions cannot be identified in the texts produced by the individuals involved in the cases and quotations. The use of *I*, *we*, etc. by the individuals functions to refer to the individuals themselves as they produce their writing (for instance, writing a management trainee journal) or speech (for instance, answering questions in an interview), and does not refer to the writer of the current main section which contains the individual cases and quotations.

Table 5.37 shows the use of self mentions across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.37: Self mentions across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	115	73.25
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	9	5.73

Move type 10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement	7	4.46
Others	26	16.56
Total	157	100.00

The popularity of the combinations of self mention and *believe* (*believes* and *believed*) in the CMS is discussed above. It therefore comes as no surprise that the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘stating values and beliefs’ contain a large number of instances of self mentions (RF: 115). Such instances constitute the largest proportion (73.25%) of self mentions in the corpus by move type. The use of all three types of self mentions in this move type is illustrated above in Examples 69 (reproduced), 79 (reproduced), 102 and 103. As discussed in Section 5.3.2.1 (boosters in the CMS), the largest proportion of boosters across move types in the CMS is constituted by the boosters which occur in the texts of the move type ‘stating values and beliefs’, and most of the boosters are linguistically realised by *believe* and *believes*. It is clear that the combination of self mention (especially *we*) and *believe* (and *believes*) is a characteristic of the texts of move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ in the CMS.

Compared with the largest proportion of self mentions, the other proportions are much smaller. The second and third largest proportions are respectively formed by the instances of self mentions used in the texts for step 1 ‘describing actions and results’ of move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’ and the texts of move type 10 ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’. Example 104 below illustrate the use of *we* in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’. The excerpt in the example is taken from part of a main section which reports on the culture of volunteering of the listed company. The writer describes that a volunteer team was established by the listed company to help members of the community through a wide range of initiatives such as promoting arts and culture, and environmental education. In the example, the writer explains the reason for inviting families of the volunteers ‘to jointly participate in the volunteer activities’. The use of *we* presents an authoritative authorial stance. The explanation for inviting families of the volunteers is offered with the writer’s conviction which is conveyed by the booster *believe*.

Example 104

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... Families of volunteers are invited to jointly participate in the volunteer activities because we believe it raises the morale and spirits of our employees. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00012-2014)

Example 94 (reproduced) above is another example of the use of *we* by the writer in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’, as shown below.

Example 94 (reproduced)

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We are proud to report that the Group achieved our tenant care targets for 2015. </MT3S1>

(CMS-00012-2015)

As for the instances of self mentions in the move type ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’, two patterns of the use of *we* can be observed. The first pattern involves four of the seven instances, while the second pattern is concerned with the remaining three instances. In the first pattern, *we* co-occurs with an announcer (*report* or *note*), and in three of such cases, the attitude marker *pleased* is also used. Two examples are given below for illustration.

Example 105 shows the use of *we* and *report*. The excerpt in the example is taken from part of a main section which describes how the listed company identified material aspects for CSR reporting. Various CSR issues were considered by stakeholders in the process of stakeholder engagement during the reporting period. In the example, the writer defines what ‘material issues’ are from the perspective of the listed company, and then informs the reader that the unfolding ESG report provides information about particular ‘high priority issues’ which are shown in a table.

Example 105

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> Material issues are those of high importance to stakeholders and high significance to our business, and we will report in detail on the following high priority issues. </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2012)

Example 90 has been provided in Section 5.3.3.1 (attitude markers in the CMS). It illustrates the use of *we*, *pleased* and *report*. As already discussed in the sub-section, the metadiscourse items are used to indicate the writer's pleasure and satisfaction in presenting findings from the stakeholder engagement exercises of the listed company.

Example 90 (reproduced)

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... We are pleased to report that our stakeholders continue to regard SHKP as having a superior brand and service quality, and our efforts to promote sports events have also been widely recognized. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2015)

The second pattern of the use of *we* in the move type 'reporting on stakeholder engagement' involves the three cases of the combination of *we* and the booster *believe*. In some main sections, the writer lists several key issues which are found to be stakeholders' concerns during the process of stakeholder engagement. The writer also provides the listed companies' responses to each of the issues. *We believe* is used in the responses in three different main sections. Example 106 shows the reporting of the issue of affordable housing and the listed company's response which begins with *despite*.

Example 106

<MT10: Reporting on stakeholder engagement> ... Affordable Housing: The shortage of affordable housing is one of Hong Kong's most important social issues. Many stakeholders raised the issue, including social NGOs, employees and suppliers, with some believing it is the responsibility of local developers to help solve this problem. Others, such as industry associations, felt that the Group should collaborate with government and peers to find a solution.

Despite government measures to cool the property market, we believe that the demand for small to medium sized apartments will remain robust. ... </MT10>

(CMS-00016-2012)

The use of *we* (and other metadiscourse items) in the above examples guide the reader's understanding of the findings from the stakeholder engagement exercises of the listed company.

In this study, it is also observed that all seven instances of *we* which occur in the move type ‘reporting on stakeholder engagement’ are used in the ESG reports issued by only two listed companies, namely Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (five instances) and Hang Lung Properties Limited (two instances). This indicates that the two companies seem to prefer including explicit authorial presence in reporting on stakeholder engagement to help the reader understand the information.

5.3.4.2 Self mentions in the CCS

Table 5.38 shows the top eight linguistic realisations of self mentions in the CCS. Each of them occurs twice or more.

Table 5.38: Self mentions occurring twice or more in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- we	63	2.66	50.40
- I	27	1.14	21.60
- our	18	0.76	14.40
- Hang Lung’s	2	0.08	1.60
- me	2	0.08	1.60
- my	2	0.08	1.60
- Sun Hung Kai Properties’	2	0.08	1.60
- us	2	0.08	1.60

Only three linguistic realisations of self mentions are used more than twice in the CCS, and they are first-person pronouns *we* (RF: 63) and *I* (RF: 27) and the possessive adjective *our* (RF: 18). Added together, the instances of these linguistic realisations account for more than 85% of all instances of self mentions identified in the corpus. The popularity of *we* and *I* contributes greatly to the high percentage (91.20%) of ‘first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives’ among the three types of self mentions in the CCS (see Table 5.35).

In the CCS, there are eight linguistic realisations of company name references, while there is only one linguistic realisation of general company reference, i.e. *the Group’s*. All these linguistic

realisations occur only one or twice in the corpus. Table 5.38 shows two of the company name references, i.e. *Hang Lung's* and *Sun Hung Kai Properties'*.

Examples illustrating the use of *we* in the CCS have been provided in discussions of other subcategories of metadiscourse in earlier parts of this chapter. The examples are reproduced below. They show the uses of *we* and other metadiscourse items (both interactive and interactional) in the CCS.

Example 26 (reproduced)⁴²

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are very pleased to present our third Sustainability Report, which offers detailed information about our approach to corporate sustainability, key initiatives and achievements during the past year. </MT8>
(CCS-00017-2015)

Example 27 (reproduced)⁴³

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are pleased to present the Group's 2015/16 Sustainability Report. This report details the Group's efforts and achievements in advancing sustainability in society and cementing business continuity to create long-term value for customers, employees, business partners, shareholders, investors and the wider community. </MT8>
(CCS-00016-2015)

Example 84 (reproduced)⁴⁴

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that by cultivating a culture of honesty and integrity and keeping our systems sound, we enable our employees to work more productively and help us win the trust of our stakeholders. </MT11>
(CCS-00101-2013)

Example 99 (reproduced)⁴⁵

42Reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

43Reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

44Reproduced from Section 5.3.2.2 (boosters in the CCS).

45Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.2 (attitude markers in the CCS).

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... From reading this Report, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of our commitment towards building a better and a more sustainable future for all. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2013)

Example 101 (reproduced) ⁴⁶

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> ... We are convinced that over the long term, a successful business is one that embraces the core principles of sustainability, pursuing a business model that enables responsible, equitable growth that has minimal negative environmental impact and adds value to the community. </MT11> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> We have spent the past three years evaluating and integrating sustainability into our operations in an effort to create lasting economic, social and environmental impacts for our diverse group of stakeholders. </MT3S1>

(CCS-00823-2013)

In the CCS, three patterns of the use of *we* emerge. The patterns are as follows:

1. The co-occurrence of *we* and the booster *believe* (and boosters *confidently believe*): 31 cases (see Example 84 reproduced above),
2. The co-occurrence of *we* and an attitude marker such as *pleased*, *hope* and *convinced*: 21 cases (see Examples 26, 27, 99 and 101 reproduced above), and
3. The co-occurrence of *we* and a frame marker (and more specifically, announcer) such as *aim* and *present*: 3 cases (see Examples 26 and 27 reproduced above).

A total of 55 instances of *we* are used in the above three patterns, making up 87.30% of all instances of *we* identified in the CCS.

The functions of *we* are similar to those of *I* in the present study. Of all the 27 instances of *I* identified in the corpus, 13 co-occur with a frame marker (announcer) such as *would like to* and *encourage* (see Example 16 reproduced below) and another 11 co-occur with an attitude marker such as *pleased* and *delighted* (see Example 15 reproduced below). In addition, one instance of *I*

⁴⁶Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.2 (attitude markers in the CCS).

co-occur with the boosters *firmly* and *believe* (see example 107 below). Added together, these 25 instances of *I* account for 92.59% of the total number of *I* in the CCS.

Example 16 (reproduced)⁴⁷

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> I would like to thank all our people as well as our stakeholders who have helped us in the development of this report for the contribution they have made towards strengthening our strategies and practices. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2008)

Example 15 (reproduced)⁴⁸

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report. </MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

Example 107

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> I firmly believe that interaction with our stakeholders is essential for gauging the Group's progress towards our ongoing sustainability and CSR objectives and for ensuring we pursue appropriate future strategies. </MT11>

(CCS-00012-2014)

The combination of *we/I* and the booster *believe* helps highlight the writer's presence in the expression of ideas, opinions and beliefs with conviction (see Section 5.3.2.2). The combination of *we/I* and an attitude marker indicates the writer's attitudes to propositions, and in chairpersons' statements the attitudes commonly involve pleasure, happiness and satisfaction (conveyed by *pleased* and *delighted*) (see Section 5.3.3.2). Finally, the combination of *we/I* and an announcer signals the writer's goal in the unfolding text, informing the reader what the writer is going to do later in the chairperson's statement (or in the main section) (see Section 5.2.2.2).

Compared with *I*, *we* is used more frequently (see Table 5.38 above). The higher density of *we* in the CCS suggests that the writer of chairpersons' statements is more likely to express the

⁴⁷Reproduced from Section 5.2.2.2 (frame markers in the CCS).

⁴⁸Reproduced from Section 5.2.2.2 (frame markers in the CCS).

authorial identity as a group, rather than an individual. This preference could be attributed to the fact that it is common for listed companies to develop a dedicated corporate governance structure for CSR (see the discussion of move type 7 ‘presenting corporate governance structure for CSR’ in Section 4.1.1). The CSR development of a listed company is therefore always considered a team effort. ESG reports often provide information about a committee which is responsible for various aspects of CSR of the listed company. Furthermore, as described in Section 3.1.3, some chairpersons’ statements are placed under headings containing *committee*, indicating that the statement is a message from the committee. Occasionally, a typed signature of the committee is provided at the end of chairpersons’ statements.

The third most frequently occurring self mention in the CCS is the possessive pronoun *our*. It is found that *our* always co-occur with endophoric markers (more specifically, linear text references) which refer to the unfolding ESG report. Of all the 18 instances of *our*, 14 (77.78%) perform this function, as illustrated in the following two examples. The attitude marker *pleased* and the frame marker (announcer) *present* are also used in the examples.

Example 15 (reproduced)⁴⁹

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report.

</MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

Example 26 (reproduced)⁵⁰

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are very pleased to present our third Sustainability Report, which offers detailed information about our approach to corporate sustainability, key initiatives and achievements during the past year. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2015)

As discussed in the sub-sections on frame markers (Section 5.2.2), endophoric markers (Section 5.2.3) and attitude markers (Section 5.3.3), sentences similar to those in the above examples are frequently provided at the very beginning of chairpersons’ statements to welcome

⁴⁹Reproduced from Section 5.2.2.2 (frame markers in the CCS).

⁵⁰Reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

the reader and introduce the unfolding ESG reports. Here, I would like to focus on the co-occurrence of *our* with linear text references. This combination of metadiscourse items could be considered as a means of introducing the unfolding ESG report in a more explicit manner. It highlights that the unfolding ESG report contains the information about the listed company (which is represented by a group of people as signalled by the use of *we*). The writer of chairpersons' statements also uses other possessive forms to perform the function, namely *Hang Lung's* (RF: 2), *Sun Hung Kai Properties'* (RF: 2), *Hysan's* (RF: 1), *New World Group's* (RF: 1), *Swire Properties'* (RF: 1), which are company name references, and *the Group's* (RF: 1), which is a general company reference. All these instances of self mentions are used to pre-modify the nouns phrases (i.e. linear text references) which refer to the current ESG reports.

It has to be noted that while Examples 15 and 26 reproduced above respectively show the use of five and six metadiscourse items in the first sentences of chairpersons' statements, there are cases in the CCS which involve only two or four items, as shown in the two examples below.

In Example 108, two metadiscourse items, a company name reference (*Hang Lung's*) and a linear text reference (*third stand-alone sustainability report*), are used.

Example 108

<MT8: Introducing the current report> This is Hang Lung's third stand-alone sustainability report. ... </MT8>

(CCS-00101-2014)

Example 95 has been provided in Section 5.3.3.2 (attitude markers in the CCS). It illustrates the use of four metadiscourse items, i.e. the self mentation *I*, the attitude marker *delighted*, the announcer *introduce* and the linear text reference *the first standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land*.

Example 95 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am delighted to introduce the first standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land. </MT8>

(CCS-00012-2014)

It is found that the combinations of metadiscourse illustrated in Examples 15, 26, 95 and 108 above are used in the first sentences of 18 (43.90%) chairpersons' statements examined in the present study. The sentences containing both interactive and interactional metadiscourse serve as a tool for the writer to emphasise authorial identity and interact with the reader by introducing the unfolding ESG report with a pleasant attitude. They are provided in the chairpersons' statements of the ESG reports issued by six listed companies.

Self mentions across move types in the CCS

Table 5.39 shows the use of self mentions across move types in the CCS.

Table 5.39: Self mentions across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	44	35.20
Move type 11: Stating values and beliefs	33	26.40
Move type 19: Expressing appreciation	15	12.00
Others	33	26.40
Total	125	100.00

The texts for the communicative purpose of 'introducing the current report' contain the largest proportion (35.20%) of self mentions across move types in the CCS. A large number (RF: 32) of the instances of self mentions concerned are those used in the first sentences of chairpersons' statements, as already discussed. The other instances of self mentions (RF: 12) are linguistically realised by *we* (RF: 8), *our* (RF: 3) and *I* (RF: 1). Example 109 illustrates the use of *we*, *our* and other metadiscourse items, i.e. the linear text reference *second sustainability report* and the announcer *outline*⁵¹.

Example 109

⁵¹The other instance of *our* in the example is not identified as a self mention because it is concerned with entities (commitments and activities contributing to sustainable development) in the real world, which are outside the current text.

<MT8: Introducing the current report> In our second sustainability report, we outline our commitments and activities contributing to sustainable development. </MT8>

(CCS-00823-2012)

The instances of self mentions which occur in the texts of move type ‘stating values and beliefs’ constitute the second largest proportion (26.40%). Most (RF: 28) instances of self mentions are linguistically realised by *we*. In addition, all 33, except two, instances co-occur with the booster *believe* (and *believes*), as exemplified above in Examples 84 (reproduced) and 107. One of the two exceptional cases is illustrated earlier in this sub-section in Example 101 (reproduced) involving the use of *we are convinced*. The example below shows the other exceptional case. In this example, the self mention *our* co-occurs with the boosters *strong*, *belief* and *always*.

Example 86 (reproduced)⁵²

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> It is our strong belief that there is always room for improvement </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> and we are actively benchmarking with international best practices. </MT3S2> <MT3S1: Describing actions and results> Policies, guidelines and code of conducts are being developed to further strengthen our internal systems. </MT3S1>

(CCS-00017-2014)

The third largest proportion (12.00%) of self mentions is formed by the instances of self mentions which occur in the texts of the move type ‘expressing appreciation. All 15, except one, instances are used in the last or second last paragraphs of chairpersons’ statements. Most (RF: 12) instances of self mentions are used to indicate the writer’s presence in expressing gratitude to the employees, clients, partners and other stakeholders for their contribution to and support of the listed companies, as illustrated in Example 16 (reproduced) above. A small number of (RF: 3) instances of self mentions, all realised by *our*, are used by the writer to thank the reader who is reading the current ESG report, as shown in the example below.

⁵²Reproduced from Section 5.3.2.2 (boosters in the CCS).

Example 30 (reproduced)⁵³

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> Thank you for reading our Sustainable Development Report 2014. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2014)

The next sub-section will discuss the final subcategory of interactional metadiscourse, engagement markers.

5.3.5 Engagement markers

There are 29 and 197 instances of engagement markers in the CCS and the CMS respectively. In both corpora, engagement markers contribute to a rather small percentage of all metadiscourse items, with 6.08% in the CCS and 5.35% in the CMS. In comparison, engagement markers are more common in chairpersons' statements (NF: 1.23) than in main sections (NF: 0.42). Therefore, the reader of ESG reports is more frequently addressed by the writer in the former than in the latter. This finding reflects that chairpersons' statements seem to focus more on the reader as participant of the text. This characteristic of chairpersons' statements perhaps is not surprising, as this part of the ESG report is written in the form of a message or a letter, which could be seen as a more 'direct' way of communication between the listed company and its stakeholders.

As explained in Section 3.2.3.2, engagement markers identified in the present study were classified into five types, namely reader pronouns, directives, questions, appeals to shared knowledge and personal asides. The latter is not found in both corpora. Table 5.40 compares the distribution of the other four types of engagement markers in the CCS and the CMS.

Table 5.40: The distribution of engagement markers in the CCS and the CMS by type

Type	CCS			CMS		
	RF	NF	%	RF	NF	%
Reader pronouns	21	0.89	72.41	4	0.01	2.03
Directives	5	0.21	17.24	136	0.29	69.04
Questions	0	0.00	0.00	56	0.12	28.43

⁵³Reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

Appeals to shared knowledge	3	0.13	10.34	1	0.00	0.51
Total	29	1.23	100.00	197	0.42	100.00

From Table 5.40, a number of differences between the two corpora can be observed in terms of the frequency distribution across the four types of engagement markers. The most explicit strategy of engaging the reader in the CCS is the use of reader pronouns. The CCS has a much higher proportion (72.41%) of reader pronouns than the CMS (2.03%). In terms of normalised frequency, reader pronouns in the CCS occur 89 times more often than those in the CMS, indicating the greater significance of reader pronouns in chairpersons' statements. The writer of main sections tends to use directives more than the other types of engagement markers. This type of engagement markers is slightly more frequently used in main sections (NF: 0.29) when compared with chairpersons' statements (NF: 0.21). Questions are used in the CMS (RF: 56; 28.43%) but not in the CCS, and they are the second most frequently used engagement markers in the CMS.

As stated earlier in Section 5.3.4, Hyland (1998b) classes what he calls 'engagement markers' (Hyland, 2005a) as 'relation markers', and this subcategory of metadiscourse includes first-person pronouns. Therefore, the number of instances of engagement markers in Hyland's (1998b) data of CEOs' letters cannot be determined.

The frequency of occurrence of engagement markers in chairpersons' statements, i.e. 1.23/1,000 words, is higher than that in CEOs' letters from Chinese banks (0.702/1,000 words) reported by Huang and Rose (2018) but lower than that in CEOs' letters from western banks (2.448/1,000 words). Therefore, the use of engagement makers in chairpersons' statements in contrast with CEOs' letters remains uncertain, and this issue deserves further investigation. In addition, it is also unknown as to the similarities and differences in the use of engagement markers between chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters in terms of the different types of engagement markers. While Huang and Rose (2018) provide examples of the use of all five types of engagement markers in their data sets, they do not offer the frequency distribution of the engagement markers they identify by type.

5.3.5.1 Engagement markers in the CMS

There are eight linguistic realisations of engagement markers in the CMS. Table 5.41 shows five of them which occur twice or more.

Table 5.41: Engagement markers occurring twice or more in the CMS

Item	RF	NF	%
- see	87	0.19	44.16
- ?	56	0.12	28.43
- refer	46	0.10	23.35
- you	4	0.01	2.03
- check	2	0.00	1.02

As noted above, directives are the most preferred type of devices used in the CMS to explicitly engage with the reader in a virtual dialogue. It can be observed from Table 5.41 that the directives *see* and *refer* are among the most frequently occurring engagement markers in the corpus. They make up 44.16% and 23.35% of the total number of engagement markers respectively. Other directives identified in the corpus are *check* (RF: 2) and *must* (RF: 1). The use of questions is quite common in main sections. The 56 instances of question marks account for more than a quarter (28.43%) of all engagement markers used in the CMS. All four instances of reader pronouns in the CMS are linguistically realised by the second-personal pronoun *you*. There is only one instance of the use of appeal to shared knowledge, and it is signalled by the clause *it is well known*. No personal asides are used in the CMS.

(1) Directives

With the exception of *must*, all instances of directives are imperatives and are linguistically realised by *see*, *refer* and *check*. All 135 instances of imperatives co-occur with endophoric markers (both linear and non-linear text references) in the CMS. This combination of metadiscourse items function to direct the reader to refer to another part of the current text. In the following, I will discuss the use of *see*, *refer*, *check* and *must* in the CMS.

The excerpt in Example 110 is taken from a sub-section ‘Public Health’ in the main section of an ESG report. The sub-section presents information about how the listed company safeguards

public health at its premises. One of the strategies of the listed company is to maintain high standards of indoor air quality in its buildings. Example 110 shows the last sentence of the sub-section. The writer describes that the listed company monitors indoor air quality in tenanted areas. The directive *see* and the linear text reference *Indoor Air Quality* are used to direct the reader to read ‘Indoor Air Quality’, a later part of the main section, for further information.

Example 110

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> In addition, we monitor the quality of indoor air and the quantity of fresh air delivered to our tenanted areas as part of our commitment to maintaining high standards of indoor air quality </MT3S2> <MT16: Indicating further information> (see [Indoor Air Quality](#)). </MT16>
(CMS-01972-2013)

It is observed that all, except one, cases of the combination of *see* and endophoric marker are provided in parentheses, as illustrated in the above example. The exceptional case involves the use of *please* (discussed below).

Example 23, which is reproduced from Section 5.2.3.1 (endophoric markers in the CMS), shows the use of the directive *refer* and the non-linear text reference *the Data Tables*.

Example 23 (reproduced)

<MT16: Indicating further information> For more details on our health and safety performance, please *refer to the Data Tables*. </MT16>
(CMS-00016-2014)

The excerpt in Example 23 is taken from a text box at the end of the sub-section ‘Safety and Well-being at Work’ in a main section. The sub-section provides information about work-related health and safety performance of the listed company. By using *refer to the Data Tables*, the writer invites the reader to obtain ‘more details’ on the specific CSR topic by reading the related information in the Data Tables. Data Tables is a separate section towards the end of the ESG report (one of the structural elements of the ESG reports in the present study). In this example, *please*

serves as a mitigating device (Trosborg, 1995). The use of *please* represents the writer's conscious effort to reduce the degree of imposition as directing the reader to take actions could be face-threatening. It is found that 44 (32.59%) of 135 directives identified in the CMS are preceded by *please*. The directives are *refer* (RF: 43) and *see* (RF: 1).

Example 111 illustrates the use of the imperative *check* and the linear text reference “*Our Value Chain*” section.

Example 111

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> ... We support sustainable fishing practices when sourcing seafood, and ensure that we do not offer threatened species to our guests. </MT3S2>
<MT16: Indicating further information> Check “Our Value Chain” section for information on Sustainable Procurement in Hotels. </MT16>
(CMS-01972-2010)

In this example, the reader is asked to refer to (signalled by *check*) the section ‘Our Value Chain’, which is an earlier part of the current main section, to understand more about the initiatives of the hotels of the listed company regarding procurement of food.

The sentences containing the combination of imperative (i.e. *refer*, *see* and *check*) and endophoric marker serve as explicit signals of further information on particular topics. They encourage the reader to obtain related, perhaps more detailed, information from another part of the main section. As shown in the above examples, such signals can direct the reader to refer to both textual (signalled by a linear text reference) and visual (signalled by a non-linear text reference) materials in an earlier and later part of the current main section (the use of endophoric markers is discussed in Section 5.2.3 above).

The use of *must* as a directive is illustrated in Example 112. As described above, there is only one instance of *must* in the CMS. The excerpt in Example 112 is taken from the section ‘Corporate Governance’ in the main section of an ESG report issued by Hysan Development Company Limited. This section presents ‘An Interview with Sir David Akers-Jones on Corporate Governance’ which contains 6 pairs of questions and answers. Sir David Akers Jones is the Independent non executive Deputy Chairman of the listed company. The questions seek his views

on the roles of independent non executive members of the Board of Directors and how they work within the listed company's corporate structure. Example 112 shows one pair of question and answer of the interview. The answer shows the use of the comparative transition *although* apart from the directive *must*.

Example 112

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Hysan is often cited as a classic example of a family controlled company, and family controlled enterprises must be considered quite common in Hong Kong. How does the Independent non executive Deputy Chairman operate within this setup?

Sir David: Although Hysan is considered by some to be a family controlled company, it must be remembered that the family is actually working for and developing the Company on behalf of the shareholders, not on behalf of the family. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00014-2006)

In answering the question, Sir David uses *it must be remembered*, in which the directive *must* is an obligation modal. As discussed in Section 4.1.3, the sections of questions and answers in main sections are presented with the aim to disclose CSR information in a more interactive way in which the reader appears to be assigned with the role of the interviewer. The reader is forced to 'ask' the questions which are prepared by the writer (i.e. the listed company). While reading the 'answers' of the interviewee, the reader is forced to take positions of the interviewee. The use of *must* signals Sir David's belief that it is necessary to remember 'that the family is actually working for and developing the Company on behalf of the shareholders, not on behalf of the family', and obliges the reader to take the action (i.e. to remember) as suggested by Sir David. By reporting on the interview, the writer (represented by the interviewee Sir David) directs the reader to perform the action, i.e. to remember 'that the family is actually working for and developing the Company on behalf of the shareholders, not on behalf of the family'. Such an action enables the writer to demonstrate the family's commitment in performing actions in relation to corporate governance in the interest of stakeholders (not the family).

(2) Questions

The use of questions, which are signalled by the use of question marks, is the second most common strategy to engage with the reader in the CMS. Questions function to elicit the reader's interest in various aspects of CSR. Most questions in the CMS are provided in sections of questions and answers in particular ESG reports (see Section 4.1.3 for a discussion of the sections of questions and answers in move type 24 'presenting individual cases and quotations'). More specifically, a total of 37 questions are used in eight sections of questions and answers in six ESG reports issued by two listed companies, namely Hysan Development Company Limited (20 questions in four sections in three reports) and Hang Lung Properties Limited (17 questions in four sections in three reports), as illustrated in Example 112 above⁵⁴. Such questions account for about two-thirds (66.07%) of all questions in the CMS. The other 19 (33.93%) questions are used in six ESG reports issued by six different listed companies, and one of the reports contains a section of questions and answers. One of the 19 questions is provided in Example 113.

Example 113

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> What kind of tenants lease spaces in The Link's shopping centres?

Many of our individual tenants occupy shops that are less than 1,000 sq ft and operate small businesses rather than chains or listed companies. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00823-2013)

Of all 56 questions identified in the CMS, 48 (85.71%) are immediately followed by a response. The other eight (14.29%) questions are given in a direct quotation from a staff member of China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd., in which the individual argues that property owners of the listed company have high expectations of the company. The staff member provides eight questions with the aim to illustrate how staff member pay attention to the quality of their property management services, as can be seen in Example 114 below.

Example 114

⁵⁴See Example 47 in Section 5.2.4.1 (code glosses in the CMS) and Example 92 in Section 5.3.3.1 (attitude markers in the CMS) for other examples of the use of questions in sections of questions and answers.

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... In addition to efficient property management services and a positive attitude, they pay more attention to real life operations. Is the equipment functioning? Do we follow procedures? Is the water healthy for use? Are the lifts safe for use? Are the cars safe in the car park? Do they feel safe living in the community? Are obsolete and damaged equipment and facilities being replaced and repaired in due course? Are more and bigger recreational activities being planned? To satisfy their demands, we have to perform our responsibilities efficiently and in a fashion where property owners see tangible progress and understand that we have the same requirement as they do. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00688-2012)

The questions are concerned with different areas of property management services which the staff members care about. They help the writer engage the reader because the reader is asked to consider the areas of property management services presented in the questions when reading them, and then the reader is assured that the listed company strives to provide excellent services.

(3) Reader pronouns

Reader pronouns are rarely used in the CMS. There is only one linguistic realisation of reader pronouns, i.e. *you*, and there are only four instances of *you* in the corpus. The use of *you* illustrates the writer's attempt to engage the reader and establish the reader's involvement in the text by directly addressing them. Example 115 illustrates the use of *you*. It also shows the use of the exemplificatory marker *such as* and the linear text reference *below*.

Example 115

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... We continue to promote waste recycling and collect various types of recyclables at our properties, which include paper, metal, plastic and festival waste such as mooncake boxes. </MT3S1> <MT25: Indicating upcoming information> You can find the amount of recyclables we collected in 2010 below. </MT25>

(CMS-00083-2011)

In the example, the writer addresses the reader and informs the reader that the upcoming information is about ‘the amount of recyclables’ collected by the listed company during the reporting period.

While *you* is used by the writer in the above example, the other 3 instances of *you* are used by individuals who are involved in two individual cases. One of the instances is used in a section of questions and answers. It is used by Lawrence Lau (Assistant General Manager, Technical Services, Hysan Development Company Limited) in one of his answers, as shown in Example 116.

Example 116

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... Has Hysan always been a supporter of sustainability?

Lawrence: Hysan’s approach to sustainability has, in fact, been developed over many years. We have a long history of owning high quality buildings that incorporate green provisions such as landscaped gardens and building set-backs. Sunning Plaza’s front area, Hysan Avenue’s greenery and Lee Gardens Two’s upper-level garden are good examples. As you can see, our mindset to push for a sustainable community has not changed over the years. ... </MT24>

(CMS-00014-2010)

By using the clause *as you can see*, Lawrence Lau addresses his interviewer and suggests that it is easy for his interviewer to grasp the meaning of his utterance. As already discussed, the reader is ‘given’ the role of the interviewer in the sections of questions and answers in main sections. Therefore, the use of *you* by the Lawrence Lau could be considered having the effect of addressing the reader. Example 116 also shows the use of question, the booster *in fact* and the exemplificatory marker *such as*.

(4) Appeals to shared knowledge

In the CMS, there is only one instance of writer’s appeal to shared knowledge, and it is signalled by the clause *it is well known* (see Example 117). It is used by Lawrence Lau, Assistant General Manager, Technical Services, Hysan Development Company Limited, while he answers another question in the same section of questions and answers from which Example 116 is taken. Apart

from *it is well known*, Example 117 also illustrates the use of the boosters *will, no doubt* and *clear*, the comparative transition *though* and question (question mark).

Example 117

<MT24: Presenting individual cases and quotations> ... By aiming for top environmental standards, Hysan Place will no doubt show a significant reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and energy use. It is clear, though, that Hysan still has an existing portfolio that is sizeable. What has been done in these buildings to make them more energy efficient?

Lawrence: It is well known that electricity generation is the largest source of Hong Kong's GHG emissions, and our electricity consumption is overwhelmingly related to our buildings. ... </MT24> (CMS-00014-2010)

In this example, the writer (represented by Lawrence Lau) draws on the shared knowledge of electricity generation being the largest source of Hong Kong's GHG emissions. The use of *it is well known* demonstrates the writer's attempt to create and emphasise the shared understanding about greenhouse gas emissions and energy use in the context of Hong Kong, implying that the writer and the reader are members of a shared community. By making such an explicit appeal to shared knowledge, the writer suggests that reducing electricity consumption is an important issue for the listed company. This argument facilitates the disclosure of information about the initiatives for energy saving and improving energy efficiency in the later part of the response of Lawrence Lau.

Engagement markers across move types in the CMS

Table 5.42 shows the use of engagement markers across move types in the CMS.

Table 5.42: Engagement markers across move types in the CMS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 16: Indicating further information	125	63.45
Move type 24: Presenting individual cases and quotations	50	25.38
Move type 3: Reporting on CSR performance (Step 1: Describing actions and results)	11	5.58

Others	11	5.58
Total	197	100.00

The prevalence of the combination of directive (imperative) and endophoric marker in the CMS is discussed. Therefore, it is unsurprising that a large amount (63.45%) of engagement markers identified in the corpus is used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘indicating further information’. In fact, the 125 instances of engagement markers used in the move type include 77 (88.51%) instances of *see*, all 46 instances of *refer* and both instances of *check* identified in the CMS. The use of these three directives is exemplified in Examples 110, 22 (reproduced) and 111 above.

More than a quarter (RF: 50; 25.38%) of the instances of engagement markers identified in the CMS are used in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’. They constitute the second largest proportion. This use of engagement markers is mainly concerned with the use of questions (RF: 45). The questions are the ones used in the sections of questions and answers (i.e. quotations), as illustrated in Examples 112, 116 and 117 above, as well as the ones used in the direct quotation from a staff member, as shown in Example 114 above. The other five instances of engagement markers which occur in the texts of the move type ‘presenting individual cases and quotations’ are the three instances of the reader pronoun *you* (see Examples 115 and 116 above), the instance of the directive (obligation modal) *must* (see Example 112 above) and the single instance of writer’s appeal to shared knowledge *it is well known* (see Example 117 above).

The third largest proportion (5.58%) of engagement markers is formed by a small number of instances of engagement markers which occur in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’ in ‘reporting on CSR performance’. The 11 instances of engagement markers are linguistically realised in two ways, namely the directive *see* (RF: 7) and the question mark (RF: 4). All seven instances of *see* co-occur with the non-linear text reference *picture 1/2/3/4*, and they are used in one single ESG report. The reader is directed by the writer to refer to three or four photographs in two different parts of the main section which describe the initiatives implemented and the events organised by the listed company. The use of questions in the texts for ‘describing actions and results’ is illustrated in Example 113 above.

5.3.5.2 Engagement markers in the CCS

In the CCS, there are six linguistic realisations of engagement markers. Three of them function as reader pronouns (*you*, *readers* and *our stakeholders*). Two are the directives *learn* and *see*. The remaining engagement marker is *of course* which indicates writer's appeals to shared knowledge. The CCS does not contain any questions and personal asides. Given the small number of linguistic realisations of engagement markers, all of them are shown in Table 5.43.

Table 5.43: Engagement markers occurring twice or more in the CCS

Item	RF	NF	%
- you	19	0.80	65.52
- learn	3	0.13	10.34
- of course	3	0.13	10.34
- see	2	0.08	6.90
- of course	1	0.04	3.45
- our stakeholders	1	0.04	3.45

(1) Reader pronouns

The 19 instances of *you* make up slightly over 65% of all engagement markers identified in the corpus. The other two reader pronouns, i.e. *readers* and *our stakeholders*, are used only once. *You* can be considered the most explicit or obvious signal of the writer's engagement with the reader in the CCS. The occurrences of *you* mostly explain the large share (72.41%) of reader pronouns among the four types of engagement markers (see Table 5.40).

Most instances of reader pronouns are used either at the beginning or at the end of the chairperson's statement. By addressing the reader directly in these parts of the chairperson's statement, the writer seeks to achieve the following:

1. To introduce the unfolding ESG report and encourage the reader to continue reading it (see Example 99 (reproduced) below with the use of *you*),
2. To thank the reader for reading the ESG report and for supporting the listed company (see Example 30 (reproduced) below with the use of *you*),

3. To solicit the reader's feedback on the listed company's CSR reporting and its CSR performance (see Example 118 below with the use of *readers*), and
4. To end the chairperson's statement politely (see Example 98 (reproduced) below with the use of *you*).

Example 99 (reproduced)⁵⁵

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... From reading this Report, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of our commitment towards building a better and a more sustainable future for all. </MT8>

(CCS-00017-2013)

Example 30 (reproduced)⁵⁶

<MT19: Expressing appreciation> Thank you for reading our Sustainable Development Report 2014. </MT19>

(CCS-01972-2014)

Example 118

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I value any feedback that readers may wish to provide us in order to improve our performance yet further. </MT20>

(CCS-00823-2012)

Example 98 (reproduced)⁵⁷

<MT21: Ending the statement politely> I hope you enjoy reading our Sustainability Report. </MT21>

(CCS-00017-2016)

The use of *our stakeholders* is illustrated in Example 119 below. This reader pronoun which occurs once in the CMS is used in the first sentence of the chairperson's statement where the writer

⁵⁵Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.2 (attitude markers in the CCS).

⁵⁶Reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

⁵⁷Reproduced from Section 5.3.3.2 (attitude markers in the CCS).

expresses pleasure and satisfaction when presenting the ESG report. Since the target audience of the ESG report is the stakeholders of the listed company, *our stakeholders* is considered having the meaning of *our readers*.

Example 119

<MT8: Introducing the current report> We are pleased to present Sun Hung Kai Properties' first Sustainability Report to our stakeholders. </MT8>

(CCS-00016-2010)

It has to be noted that inclusive *we* is not used in the CMS and the CCS. The absence of inclusive *we* perhaps is a consequence of the writer's preference for *you*, because *you* can highlight the separation of the role of the writer – as a discourse participant who guides and engages the reader – and the role of the reader – as a discourse participant who processes and interprets the meaning of the unfolding text. Such a separation is necessary or preferred perhaps because it helps the writer create a sense of inequality with the reader, emphasising that the ESG report is produced to be read by the reader, and that the reader is being assisted by the writer during the reading process. As inclusive *we* can bring the writer and the reader together and show the connectedness between them, it expresses a more equal relationship. Therefore, it is considered relatively less appropriate in ESG reports (both chairpersons' statements and main sections). Further research is needed to assess the generalisability of this claim.

Another important point I would like to make regarding reader pronouns is the use of *you* (and its co-occurrence with other metadiscourse items) in sentences like the one in Example 98 (reproduced) above. In Section 4.1.3, I have discussed that the sentences like the one in Example 98 (reproduced) are used in chairpersons' statements for the communicative purpose of 'ending the statement politely' (move type 21). I have also argued that part of the chairperson's statement examined and discussed by Catenaccio (2010a) serves the function of 'ending the statement politely'. The excerpt illustrates the use of *you* as a reader pronoun and other metadiscourse items, as can be seen in Example 120.

Example 120

I hope that you will enjoy reading our second Sustainability Report, which has been prepared using the 2002 Global Reporting Initiative Guidelines.

(Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 190; emphasis added)

Based on Hyland's (1998b) study of metadiscourse in CEOs' letters, Catenaccio (2010a) discusses the use of *I hope* in Example 120. She suggests that the use of *I* as a first-person reference signals 'the personal involvement of the writer in the text' (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 200). In addition, the verb *hope* is 'a politeness marker and form of mitigation which attempts to bring the reader into text without appearing overbearing' (Catenaccio, 2010a, p. 200). Interestingly, Catenaccio (2010a) does not employ the terminology of metadiscourse (such as self mentions and attitude markers) proposed by Hyland (1998b) in her discussion.

It is observed that both Examples 98 (reproduced) and 120 illustrate the use of the following four subcategories of interactive and interactional metadiscourse.

1. Endophoric markers (*Sustainability Report* and *second Sustainability Report*),
2. Attitude markers (*hope* in both examples),
3. Self mentions (*I* and *our* in both examples), and
4. Engagement markers (*you* in both examples).

In the following, Example 121-123 show the use of (some of) the above four subcategories of metadiscourse in the texts of move type 21 'ending the statement politely' in the CCS. Texts of other move types are provided for reference.

Example 121

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I would welcome any feedback, </MT20> <MT21: Ending the statement politely> and hope that you will enjoy reading this report. </MT21>
(CCS-00101-2012)

Example 122

<MT8: Introducing the current report> In the following pages, you will find highlights of our 2014 achievements, as well as our targets and expectations for the coming years. </MT8> <MT21:

Ending the statement politely> We hope that you will enjoy reading it as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. </MT21>

(CCS-00101-2014)

Example 123⁵⁸

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... Our goal is to Do It Right and make our story unique, informative and inclusive. </MT8> <MT21: Ending the statement politely> We hope that you will enjoy this journey with us. </MT21>

(CCS-00101-2015)

It can be observed from the above examples that the reader pronoun *you* is used. In fact, the move type ‘ending the statement politely’ occurs in nine chairpersons’ statements. *You* is used in five of the nine cases, as illustrated in Examples 98 (reproduced), 121-123 above and Example 127 below (in the discussion of engagement markers across move types in the CCS). However, it should be noted that all five examples are taken from the chairpersons’ statements of the ESG reports issued by three listed companies. Further research is needed to better understand the extent to which texts like those in the examples with the use of the reader pronoun *you* and other metadiscourse items are produced in chairpersons’ statements.

(2) Directives

Both directives *learn* (RF: 3) and *see* (RF: 2) in the CCS are imperatives. The use of imperatives perhaps is motivated by the writer’s decision to draw special attention to particular aspects of the listed company’s CSR performance. The issues highlighted perhaps are the ones which are considered more important or meaningful by the writer, and thus from the writer’s perspective, they deserve the reader’s further attention. Example 29 illustrates the use of *learn*. It is reproduced from Section 5.2.3.2 (endophoric markers in the CCS).

Example 29 (reproduced)

⁵⁸The use of *Do It Right* in the example can be attributed to the business philosophy of the listed company – We Do It Right.

<MT16: Indicating further information> Learn more about our social care programmes in ‘Caring Our Community’. </MT16>

(CCS-00083-2016)

It is observed that all three instances of *learn* occur in the same ESG report, and that the two instances of *see* are used in another ESG report. Therefore, the use of imperatives in chairpersons’ statements is quite rare among the listed companies under investigation.

(3) Appeals to shared knowledge

All three cases of writer’s appeals to shared knowledge in the CCS are signalled by the use of *of course*. They are found in three different chairpersons’ statements from three listed companies. By using *of course*, the writer implies that certain issues are obvious and already known between the writer and the reader, which helps the writer express solidarity.

Example 124 below illustrates that *of course* is used by the writer to point out and highlight the shared understanding of the close relationship between ‘the Group’s prospects and success’ and ‘the prosperity of the local community’. The shared knowledge enables the writer to argue that the listed company is aware of the public’s (and the reader’s) expectation that it needs to contribute to the betterment of society. After acknowledging such an understanding, the writer presents information about the listed company’s community involvement, informing the reader that there was further development of the community investment initiatives of the listed company during the reporting year. The further development of the community investment initiatives is considered a contribution towards the prosperity of Hong Kong. In other words, the writer argues that the listed company creates positive impacts to the society, and what has been done is in line with the shared understanding.

Example 124

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> Of course, the Group’s prospects and success are closely linked to the prosperity of the local community, </MT11> <MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> and this year saw the further evolution of our community investment initiatives which are targeted at issues including poverty alleviation and youth development. </MT3S2>

(CCS-00012-2016)

Engagement markers across move types in the CCS

Engagement markers in the CCS are mainly used in the texts for four communicative purposes, i.e. ‘indicating further information’, ‘introducing the current report’, ‘soliciting feedback’ and ‘ending the statement politely’, as shown in Table 5.44.

Table 5.44: Engagement markers across move types in the CCS

Move type	RF	%
Move type 16: Indicating further information	6	20.69
Move type 8: Introducing the current report	5	17.24
Move type 20: Soliciting feedback	5	17.24
Move type 21: Ending the statement politely	5	17.24
Others	8	27.59
Total	29	100.00

The largest proportion of engagement markers in the corpus is constituted by the six instances of engagement markers which occur in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘indicating further information’. The six instances of engagement markers include all five instances of directives (i.e. three instances of *learn* and two instances of *see*) and one instance of *you*. The use of *you* is illustrated in Example 125. This example also shows the use of code gloss (comma), self mention (*I*), frame markers (*encourage* and *focuses*) and endophoric marker (*the Sustainability in Action section of this report*).

Example 125

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> As with all our projects, we have planned and designed Brickell City Centre to meet the needs of a broad community of residents, tenants and customers in environmentally, socially and economically responsible ways. </MT3S1> <MT16: Indicating further information> To learn more about this new project, including our cutting-edge architectural feature, the CLIMATE RIBBON™, I encourage you to read the Sustainability in Action section

of this report, which focuses on Brickell City Centre’s innovative and wide-reaching sustainability features. </MT16>

(CCS-01972-2013)

In the example, the writer invites the reader to ‘learn more about’ the construction project of Brickell City Centre by reading a later part of the ESG report, i.e. the Sustainability in Action section. Instead of using a directive, the writer explicitly addresses the reader with *you* when asking the reader to read the related information in order to learn more about the project. The use of the announcer *encourage* helps reduce the degree of imposition or face threat, indicating that the reader is encouraged or suggested, not directed, to read the related information in another part of the ESG report.

All five instances of engagement markers which occur in the move type ‘introducing the current report’ are reader pronouns, including four instances of *you* and the single instance of *our stakeholders*. The use of *you* and *our stakeholders* is illustrated above in Examples 99 (reproduced) and 119 respectively. The use of reader pronouns serves to engage the reader as a discourse participant who has just started reading the current ESG report. It demonstrates the writer’s explicit recognition of the presence of the reader when the writer introduces the unfolding report at a relatively early stage of the interaction between the writer and the reader, as the chairperson’s statement is an introductory section of the ESG report. Three instances of the reader pronouns are used at the beginning of chairpersons’ statements, while the others occur at the end.

All five instances of engagement markers which are used in the move type ‘soliciting feedback’ are reader pronouns. They are linguistically realised by *you* (RF: 4) and *readers* (RF: 1). The writer uses reader pronouns to directly ask the reader to provide feedback on the listed company’s CSR reporting and its CSR performance after reading the ESG report. All the instances of reader pronouns are used at the end of chairpersons’ statements. Example 126 illustrates the use of *you*. It also shows the use of the self mention *I* and the frame marker *encourage*.

Example 126

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I encourage you to provide us with your feedback. </MT20>

(CCS-01972-2014)

As with Example 125, the writer in Example 126 uses *I encourage you* to explicitly ask (or suggest) the reader to do something. However, it should be noted that there is a difference in the nature of the actions to be performed between the examples. The action of reading a later part of the ESG report in Example 125 is within the realm of the current ESG report. However, the action of giving feedback to the listed company in Example 126 (for example, create a written text or complete a questionnaire) is an action which involves another text, and not the current report. It is impossible for the reader to provide any feedback when the reader is reading the unfolding ESG report. Therefore, *us* and *your* used in Example 126 are not considered metadiscourse items in the present study.

The use of *readers* in the texts of the move type ‘soliciting feedback’ can be seen in Example 118 as presented earlier in this sub-section, and the example is reproduced below.

Example 118 (reproduced)

<MT20: Soliciting feedback> I value any feedback that readers may wish to provide us in order to improve our performance yet further. </MT20>

(CCS-00823-2012)

I would like to acknowledge that *readers* (engagement marker), *may* (hedge) and *us* (self mention) in Example 118 are borderline cases of metadiscourse in the present study. In this example, *that readers may wish to provide us* functions as a post-modifier of *feedback*. The writer does not solicit the reader’s feedback by directly addressing the reader like Example 126 above. On the contrary, the writer uses an indirect strategy to ask for the reader’s feedback by indicating that ‘there is a possibility that the reader wants to provide feedback’. I would argue that the writer’s mentioning of such a possibility could be considered a request made by the writer, although the request is expressed in an implicit, subtle way. Therefore, the reader in Example 118 is requested by the writer to provide feedback, like Example 126. In this view, *readers*, *may* and *us* function as metadiscourse items, allowing the writer to interact with the reader by describing that the writer considers the reader’s feedback important with the aim to motivate the reader to provide feedback.

Finally, there are also five instances of engagement markers in the texts for the communicative purpose of ‘ending the statement politely’ in the CCS. All the instances are linguistically realised by *you*. They occur at the end of chairpersons’ statements. The use of four of the instances of *you*

is illustrated in Examples 98 (reproduced), 121-123 above. The following discusses how the remaining instance of *you* is used, which is another borderline case of metadiscourse in this study.

Example 127

<MT21: Ending the statement politely> We look forward to reporting back to you on our further progress in next year's Sustainable Development Report. </MT21>

(CCS-01972-2008)

In this example, *you* is used by the writer to address the reader of the current chairperson's statement (hence the current ESG report). At the same time, *you* allows the writer to express the idea that the communication between the writer and the reader is not restricted to the current ESG report, that is, the interaction continues as the writer 'reports back' to the reader in another ESG report. I consider *you* performing a dual function: (i) it refers to the role of the reader as a participant of the unfolding text, and (ii) it refers the role of the reader of the unfolding text being the reader of another text, i.e. the ESG report issued by the listed company in the following year, which is not the current text. Such a view therefore argues that *you* could be seen as a metadiscourse item (reader pronoun) for its function to refer to the reader of the unfolding ESG report, and simultaneously, *you* is not a metadiscourse item because it refers to the reader of another ESG report, which is in fact beyond the realm of the current text. In this study, *you* is considered a reader pronoun for its potential to address the reader of the current text.

The next section discusses how metadiscourse allows the writer of chairpersons' statements and main sections to make persuasive attempts.

5.4 Use of metadiscourse in making persuasive attempts

This section discusses how metadiscourse is used in an attempt to achieve persuasion in chairpersons' statements and main sections. As noted in Section 2.4.5, Hyland (1998b, 2005a) argues that the writer can make rhetorical appeals to the reader with metadiscourse. According to Hyland (1998b, 2005a), metadiscourse can enhance persuasiveness of a text by realising three means of persuasion as suggested by Aristotle – logos, ethos and pathos. Logos refers to rational appeals, i.e. appeals to reason, and concerns the 'arrangement, length, complexity, types of evidence and arguments' of the text; ethos refers to personal appeal of an individual's character

and concerns the character and the credibility of the speaker or writer; and pathos refers to affective appeals, i.e. appeals to emotions, and ‘focuses on the characteristics of the audience rather than the speaker’ or writer (Hyland, 2005a, pp. 64-65). The following discussion illustrates how metadiscourse is used in an attempt to persuade the reader through making appeals to rationality (logos), character and credibility (ethos) and emotion (pathos). The use of metadiscourse in making persuasive attempts in chairpersons’ statements is discussed in Section 5.4.1, while that in main sections is discussed in Section 5.4.2.

5.4.1 Use of metadiscourse in making persuasive attempts in chairpersons’ statements

Table 5.45 shows the normalised frequencies of use of metadiscourse in the CCS (per 1,000 words).

Table 5.45: Normalised frequencies of use of metadiscourse in the CCS

Interactive		Interactional	
Transitions	0.38	Hedges	0.34
Frame markers	3.38	Boosters	2.54
Endophoric markers	2.32	Attitude markers	1.56
Code glosses	3.13	Self mentions	5.28
		Engagement markers	1.23
Total	9.21	Total	10.94

The higher frequency of use of interactional than interactive metadiscourse (10.94 vs. 9.21) suggests that the writer of chairpersons’ statements tends to persuade the reader with credibility and emotion than rationality. In the following, I will discuss how metadiscourse allows the writer to make persuasive attempts through ethos, pathos and logos.

5.4.1.1 Persuading through creating credibility appeals (ethos)

The credibility of the writer of chairpersons’ statements is created and enhanced mainly through the (combined) use of self mentions and boosters. Table 5.45 shows that self mentions (5.28) and boosters (2.54) are the most and the second most frequently used interactional metadiscourse items in the CCS. Compared with the other eight subcategories of metadiscourse, the higher frequency of use of self mentions suggests the writer’s desire to highlight their own

character. As discussed in Section 5.3.4.2, self mentions are the most commonly used in the texts of move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’⁵⁹ (see the use of *I* and *our* in Examples 15).

Example 15 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> I am pleased to present our 2014/15 Sustainability Report.

</MT8>

(CCS-00016-2014)

The use of self mentions in the texts of move type 8 indicates the writer’s intention to explicitly show that they take the initiative to introduce the ESG report to the reader and express gratitude to the reader and/or the stakeholders of the listed company. The explicit presence of the writer in the texts could therefore be seen as an attempt to highlight the writer’s character of being sincere, kind and polite. Here, I would like to emphasise that self mentions are usually used together with frame markers (announcers), endophoric markers (linear text references) and attitude markers in the texts of move type 8, as illustrated in the above example (for details of the combined use of these matediscourse items, see Sections 5.2.2.2, 5.2.3.2, 5.3.3.2 and 5.3.4.2).

The frequent use of boosters could be an indication of the writer’s attempt to emphasise the character of being confident, assertive and authoritative by expressing certainty and conviction for the propositional material. Such characters of the writer help demonstrate the attitudes, beliefs, perceptions and aspirations of the writer, and hence the listed company the writer represents. Boosters are frequently used in the texts of move types 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’⁶⁰ and 15 ‘illustrating outlook for the future’⁶¹ (see Section 5.3.2.2 for details). The characters of the writer are further emphasised when more than one boosters are used in the same clause or in adjacent clauses (Ho, 2018a; see Section 5.3.2.2 for details), as illustrated in Example 85 and when boosters are used in combination with self mentions (Ho, 2018a; Hyland, 1998b; see Sections 5.3.2.2 and 5.3.4.2 for details), as shown in Examples 84 and 85.

Example 84 (reproduced)

5935.20% of the instances of self mentions in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 8.

6066.67% of the instances of boosters in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 11.

6111.67% of the instances of boosters in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 15.

<MT11: Stating values and beliefs> We believe that by cultivating a culture of honesty and integrity and keeping our systems sound, we enable our employees to work more productively and help us win the trust of our stakeholders. </MT11>

(CCS-00101-2013)

Example 85 (reproduced)

<MT14: Projecting future performance and making promises> Looking ahead to the rest of 2016, we expect more progress to be made in Hong Kong, Mainland China and the US. </MT14> <MT15: Illustrating outlook for the future> It is our belief that the sustainable development investments we made during 2015 will result in greater innovations across our portfolio in the years to come. </MT15>

(CCS-01972-2015)

5.4.1.2 Persuading through creating affective appeals (*pathos*)

The use of attitude markers (1.56) and engagement markers (1.23) contributes to appealing to the emotions of the reader of chairpersons' statements. The use of attitude markers indicates the writer's effort in making explicit the writer's attitudes and feelings to views and events. As discussed in Section 5.3.3.2, attitude markers are the most frequently used in the texts of move types 8 'introducing the current report'⁶², conveying the writer's attitude of pleasure, happiness and satisfaction (see the use of *pleased* in Examples 15 above). The expression of the attitudes clearly signals that the writer looks at the text from the reader's perspective and interacts with the reader by making the reader feel welcome and motivating the reader to continue reading the unfolding ESG report. The use of attitude markers is thus rhetorically appealing to the reader's emotions.

Engagement markers in the CCS are often used in the texts of move type 16 'indicating further information'⁶³, move type 8 'introducing the current report'⁶⁴, move type 20 'soliciting feedback'⁶⁵ and move type 21 'ending the statement politely'⁶⁶. All, except one, instances of the engagement

6245.95% of the instances of attitude markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 8.

6320.69% of the instances of engagement markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 16.

6417.24% of the instances of engagement markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 8.

6517.24% of the instances of engagement markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 20.

6617.24% of the instances of engagement markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 21.

markers used in the texts of move type 16 are directives, and all instances of the engagement markers used in the texts of move types 8, 20 and 21 are reader pronouns (see Section 5.3.5.2 for details). With the use of directives and reader pronouns, the writer highlights the presence of the reader in the text and engages with them by inviting them to perform an act which is internal to the text (see the use of *learn* in Example 29) or directly addressing them (see the use of *you* in Example 99).

Example 29 (reproduced)

<MT16: Indicating further information> Learn more about our social care programmes in ‘Caring Our Community’. </MT16>
(CCS-00083-2016)

Example 99 (reproduced)

<MT8: Introducing the current report> ... From reading this Report, we hope that you will gain a better understanding of our commitment towards building a better and a more sustainable future for all. </MT8>
(CCS-00017-2013)

The use of engagement markers indicates the writer’s willingness to take the reader’s textual experience into account. It allows the writer to interact with the reader as an active participant of the discourse, encouraging the reader to continue participating in the interaction with the writer through the text. It therefore creates affective appeals.

5.4.1.3 Persuading through creating rational appeals (logos)

In chairpersons’ statements, rational appeals are mainly made with the use of three subcategories of interactive metadiscourse, namely frame markers (3.38), code glosses (3.13) and endophoric markers (2.32). Analysis shows the writer’s preference to contribute to the rationality of chairpersons’ statements by explicitly signalling discourse goals with frame markers, and more specifically, announcers (see Section 5.2.2.2 for details). Most of the instances of frame markers (all of which are announcers) are used in the texts of move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’

⁶⁷ (see the use of *present* in Example 15 above). Announcers help create the rationality of chairpersons' statements by showing clearly the purpose of the discourse, allowing the reader to better understand what the writer intends to achieve in the discourse.

The use of code glosses reflects that the writer's desire to rephrase, explain, elaborate and exemplify what has been already said to facilitate the reader's processing of information. As discussed in Section 5.2.4.2, code glosses in chairpersons' statements are the most frequently found in the texts of step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' ⁶⁸, as in the use of *such as* in Example 128.

Example 128

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... we inspire the bright minds of the future through leadership development such as our Group Management Trainee and Internship Programme. ...
</MT3S1>
(CCS-00017-2016)

The use of code glosses, which signal reformulation and exemplification, enables the reader to have a clear understanding of the CSR performance of the listed company through the actions taken by the listed company and the results of the actions. It is a rhetorical strategy which helps the reader process the discourse more easily. In the above example, *such as* is used to signal exemplification. It allows the reader to better understand how the listed company 'inspire[s] the bright minds of the future through leadership development' by taking actions – organising 'Group Management Trainee and Internship Programme'. The use of *such as* indicates the writer's assessment of the processing needs of the reader, i.e. the writer's assumption that the reader would like to have some key terms rephrased, explained, elaborated or exemplified.

As discussed in Section 5.2.3.2, all endophoric markers identified in the CCS are linear text references. They are typically used in the texts of move type 8 'introducing the current report' ⁶⁹ (see the use of *2014/15 Sustainability Report* in Example 15 above) and are usually realised by

6755.00 % of the instances of frame markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 8.

6837.84% of the instances of code glosses in the CCS are used in the texts of step 1.

6965.45% of the instances of endophoric markers in the CCS are used in the texts of move type 8.

(the) X report, as illustrated in the example. The use of linear text references indicates that the writer tends to refer to the unfolding ESG report itself while making an introduction of the report.

The above discussion seems to point to the importance of the use of metadiscourse in the texts of move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’. It seems clear that the writer of chairpersons’ statements tends to use various subcategories of metadiscourse in the texts of the move type to make credibility, affective and rational appeals. This pattern of use of metadiscourse involving move type 8 suggests the writer’s tendency to use metadiscursive resources (i.e. frame markers, endophoric markers, attitude markers and self mentions) to introduce the ESG report to the reader and persuade the reader to continue reading the ESG report, highlighting the primary communicative purpose of the chairperson’s statement as the introductory section of ESG report (see related discussion in Sections 5.2.2.2, 5.2.3.2, 5.3.3.2 and 5.3.4.2). The use of metadiscursive resources for creating credibility, affective and rational appeals has the rhetorical effect of persuading the reader to read more and to believe the writer and the writer’s portrayal of the listed company in terms of the company’s CSR performance, achievements, values and beliefs and so on. This could eventually increase the chance of the reader to perceive the listed company as socially responsible.

5.4.2 Use of metadiscourse in making persuasive attempts in main sections

Table 5.46 shows the normalised frequencies of use of metadiscourse in the CMS (per 1,000 words).

Table 5.46: Normalised frequencies of use of metadiscourse in the CMS

Interactive		Interactional	
Transitions	0.11	Hedges	1.17
Frame markers	0.40	Boosters	0.86
Endophoric markers	0.62	Attitude markers	0.10
Code glosses	3.85	Self mentions	0.34
		Engagement markers	0.42
Total	4.98	Total	2.88

In the CMS, interactive metadiscourse is used more frequently than interactional metadiscourse (4.98 vs. 2.88). This result suggests that the writer of main sections appears to prefer making rational appeals than credibility and affective appeals.

It is observed that both normalised frequencies of use of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in the CMS are lower than those in the CCS (interactive: 9.21; interactional: 10.94). Therefore, in comparison, the chairperson's statement seems to have a more rhetorical role to play than the main section within the ESG report. One may argue that the use of all the nine subcategories of metadiscourse is rather infrequent in the CMS. However, it can be seen from Table 5.46 that code glosses (3.85) and hedges (1.17) are used relatively more frequently than the other subcategories, which occur less than once per 1,000 words. Below, I will discuss how code glosses and hedges are used to make persuasive appeals before accounting for the infrequent use of attitude markers, i.e. the least frequently used subcategory.

5.4.2.1 Persuading through creating rational appeals (logos) with code glosses

As main sections usually contain factual descriptions of listed companies, reformulation and exemplification serve as effective strategies employed by the writer to present information. As discussed in Section 5.2.4.1, code glosses in the CMS are mainly used in the texts of step 1 'describing actions and results'⁷⁰ and step 2 'describing strategies/methods/practices'⁷¹ of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' (see the use of a dash in Example 36 and the use of *particularly* in Example 43). Through rephrasing, explaining or expanding what has been said, the writer attempts to reduce any potential uncertainties about the information, making rational appeals.

Example 36 (reproduced)

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... "The Green Atrium" includes 32 sustainable building features under the categories of Energy, Air, Water, Food and Waste. One particularly innovative feature is the Air Induction Unit (AIU) – an energy-efficient bladeless fan designed for semi-outdoor environments. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00017-2016)

7056.24% of the instances of code glosses in the CMS are used in the texts of step 1.

7114.86% of the instances of code glosses in the CMS are used in the texts of step 2.

Example 43 (reproduced)

<MT3S2: Describing strategies/methods/practices> New World Group has been organising sustainable community programmes to enhance social inclusion and improve social mobility of the under-resourced, particularly children and youths. </MT3S2>

(CMS-00017-2015)

The use of code glosses reflects the writer's assessment of the reader's processing needs. Additional information is provided through reformulation and exemplification to help the reader interpret the information presented by the writer. This assistance offered by the writer is probably motivated by the fact that ESG reports are produced for a diverse readership. By making the information more specific, concrete and accessible to the reader with code glosses, the writer helps the reader process the information with less burden. This strategy is perhaps more useful to readers who may not be familiar with the listed company and its CSR efforts. As discussed in Section 4.4.2, the fundamental purpose of the main section is to report on what listed company did in various areas of CSR during the reporting year. Code glosses are therefore crucial in main sections as they could assist the reader's interpretation by taking their needs, understandings and existing knowledge into account (Hyland, 2007).

5.4.2.2 Persuading through creating credibility appeals (ethos) with hedges

Most of the hedges identified in the CMS are used in the texts of step 1 'describing actions and results'⁷² of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance', as discussed in Section 5.3.1.1. These hedges are typically used to indicate approximation of numbers and figures (see the use of *approximately* in Example 50).

Example 50 (reproduced)

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results> ... During the reporting period, we recycled approximately 73,440kg of waste in total, and the recycled items included metals, plastics, glass, paper and waste oil. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00083-2016)

⁷²72.90% of the instances of hedges in the CMS are used in the texts of step 1.

The information about CSR performance with numbers and figures demonstrates the writer's attempt to offer evidence to show that the listed company took desirable actions and achieve satisfactory results. As discussed in Section 5.3.1.1, the use of hedges signalling approximation offers an opportunity for the writer to provide numerical information with some degree of uncertainty when there is a lack of accurate information, showing cautiousness and tentativeness of the writer. This is because the hedged numbers and figures presented could be larger or smaller than the actual ones. In addition, the use of hedges also enables the writer to maximise the CSR contribution made by the listed company. The hedged number presented in Example 50, for instance, could be greater than the exact number which is not reported by the writer. The use of hedges therefore highlights the writer's character of being confident about the CSR performance of the listed company.

A small number of hedges which occur in the texts of step 1 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' are used to indicate the writer's reservation about the assertions made (see the use of *in general* in Example 57).

Example 57 (reproduced)

<MT3S1: Describing actions and results>... Periodic tenant visits and surveys are conducted to collect feedback on our service. Over 900 office tenants were engaged through surveys in the reporting year. In general, feedback on our services was positive. ... </MT3S1>

(CMS-00016-2013)

The use of hedges indicates the writer's attempt to withhold commitment to assertions and acknowledge alternative viewpoints. It could establish a credible identity for the writer, and hence the listed company the writer represents.

5.4.2.3 The infrequent use of attitude markers

Among the nine subcategories of metadiscourse, attitude markers are the least frequently used – the normalised frequency is only 0.10. The infrequent use of attitude markers could be attributed to the writer's attempt to reduce the expression of personal attitudes, values, evaluations towards propositions. The reader is thus less likely to be asked to share the writer's opinions and

judgements. This could be regarded as a strategy to make the information provided in main sections be conveyed in a more objective light. The infrequent use of attitude markers therefore helps establish and enhance the writer's character of being objective, which could make main sections more persuasive.

In sum, it appears to be obvious that code glosses and hedges serve important rhetorical functions in the step 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance', which is the most predominant move type in main sections (see Section 4.3.1 for details). The higher frequency of use of these two subcategories of metadiscourse contribute to the making of appeals to rationality as well as credibility and character, which subsequently could enhance the persuasiveness of main sections. The rarity of attitude markers in main sections could be considered as a means to highlight the objectivity of the writer, a way to make credibility appeals.

Summary

Using the model of metadiscourse developed and implemented in the present study, instances of metadiscourse items in the CCS and the CMS were identified and classified. This chapter has provided a detailed discussion on the use of metadiscourse in the two corpora. Additionally, it has compared the use of metadiscourse between chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters, indicating how metadiscourse is used in both similar and different ways in the two parts of corporate reports. Linguistic forms and functions of interactive and interactional metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections are illustrated and discussed. The investigation of the use of metadiscourse across move types in the CCS and the CMS reveals the writer's preferred patterns of metadiscourse use for different communicative purposes in the two (part) genres. It also shows how selected subcategories of metadiscourse are used by the writer of chairpersons' statements and main sections in an attempt to achieve persuasion through creating rational, credibility and affective appeals.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This chapter concludes the thesis. It first revisits the research questions of the present study (6.1). It then moves on to highlight the theoretical, empirical and the practical contribution of the study (6.2-6.4). This is followed by a discussion of the limitations of the present study (6.5). Finally, areas for further research are suggested (6.6).

6.1 Research questions revisited

This section revisits the five research questions of the present study.

6.1.1 What are the rhetorical moves in chairpersons' statements?

By conducting a move analysis of the 41 chairpersons' statements in the CCS, the present study found that the (part) genre of chairpersons' statements comprises a total of 21 move types, as presented in Table 6.1. From the analysis, it is shown that the 21 move types occur recursively in chairpersons' statements. Move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' is the most common move type.

Table 6.1: Move types in chairpersons' statements

Move type		
1	Move type 1:	Presenting corporate profile
2	Move type 2:	Reporting on financial performance
3	Move type 3:	Reporting on CSR performance
	Step 1:	Describing actions and results
	Step 2:	Describing strategies/methods/practices
4	Move type 4:	Stating mission
5	Move type 5:	Establishing credentials

	Step 1:	Referring to external evaluations
	Step 2:	Self-praising
6	Move type 6:	Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks
7	Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR
8	Move type 8:	Introducing the current report
9	Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting
10	Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement
11	Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs
12	Move type 12:	Showing commitment
13	Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances
14	Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises
15	Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future
16	Move type 16:	Indicating further information
17	Move type 17:	Presenting business highlights
18	Move type 18:	Presenting bad news
19	Move type 19:	Expressing appreciation
20	Move type 20:	Soliciting feedback
21	Move type 21:	Ending the statement politely

Six of the 21 move types are obligatory, as shown below:

1. Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’,
2. Move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’,
3. Move type 8 ‘introducing the current report’,

4. Move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’,
5. Move type 12 ‘showing commitment’, and
6. Move type 14 ‘projecting future performance and making promises’.

This study identified three structural elements in chairpersons’ statements, namely salutation, penned and/or typed signature(s) and date line. Signature is obligatory.

Move type 3 ‘reporting on CSR performance’, move type 5 ‘establishing credentials’, move type 11 ‘stating values and beliefs’ and move type 12 ‘showing commitment’ are the most prevalent in chairpersons’ statements. They work in combination in various ways to form what I call ‘sequences’. The sequences of move types 3, 5, 11 and/or 12 reveal the interrelationship among the move types as well as their importance in chairpersons’ statements. The combined use of move types 3, 11 and/or 12 enables the writer to explain and justify the behaviour of the listed company. The listed company’s attitudes, values and beliefs as well as its commitment to achieve CSR objectives represent the rationale behind the different new and usual actions and strategies of the listed company. The sequences of move types 3 and 5 allows the writer to highlight the listed company’s strengths and achievements while reporting on its CSR performance in particular areas.

6.1.2 What are the rhetorical moves in main sections?

The move analysis of the 54 main sections in the CMS identified 20 move types, as displayed in Table 6.2. The present study found that the two (part) genres of chairpersons’ statements and main sections share 16 move types. The similarities and differences in the move types between chairpersons’ statements and main sections are presented in Table 3.4 in Chapter 3.

Table 6.2: Move types in main sections

Move type		
1	Move type 1:	Presenting corporate profile
2	Move type 2:	Reporting on financial performance
3	Move type 3:	Reporting on CSR performance
	Step 1:	Describing actions and results

	Step 2:	Describing strategies/methods/practices
	Step 3:	Assessing CSR performance
4	Move type 4:	Stating mission
5	Move type 5:	Establishing credentials
	Step 1:	Referring to external evaluations
	Step 2:	Self-praising
6	Move type 6:	Presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks
7	Move type 7:	Presenting corporate governance structure for CSR
8	Move type 8:	Introducing the current report
9	Move type 9:	Describing the practice of CSR reporting
10	Move type 10:	Reporting on stakeholder engagement
11	Move type 11:	Stating values and beliefs
12	Move type 12:	Showing commitment
13	Move type 13:	Describing external circumstances
14	Move type 14:	Projecting future performance and making promises
15	Move type 15:	Illustrating outlook for the future
16	Move type 16:	Indicating further information
17	Move type 22:	Presenting operational overview
18	Move type 23:	Presenting corporate governance structure
19	Move type 24:	Presenting individual cases and quotations
20	Move type 25:	Indicating upcoming information

As with the move structure of chairpersons' statements, main sections exhibit recursive patterns of the occurrence of move types. Once again, move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance' is the most common move type.

Thirteen of the 20 move types are obligatory, as follows:

1. Move type 1 'presenting corporate profile',
2. Move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance',
3. Move type 5 'establishing credentials',
4. Move type 6 'presenting CSR policies, approaches and frameworks',
5. Move type 7 'presenting corporate governance structure for CSR',
6. Move type 10 'reporting on stakeholder engagement',
7. Move type 11 'stating values and beliefs',
8. Move type 12 'showing commitment',
9. Move type 13 'describing external circumstances',
10. Move type 14 'projecting future performance and making promises',
11. Move type 16 'indicating further information',
12. Move type 23 'presenting corporate governance structure', and
13. Move type 24 'presenting individual cases and quotations'.

A close examination of the use of move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 reveal a range of sequences of the move types. The variety in the combined use of the move types demonstrates the importance of the move types and the complex nature of main sections in terms of its discourse structure.

It is clear that move types 3, 5, 11 and 12 are crucial in both chairpersons' statements and main sections. Their reappearance and use in combination allow the writer of the two key parts of ESG report to portray the listed company as a socially responsible organisation by emphasising its CSR performance (move type 3), abilities, strengths and achievements (move type 5), values and beliefs (move type 11) and commitment to CSR (move type 12). The sequences of the four move types demonstrate the informative and promotional purposes of CSR reports. Therefore, it could be argued that from the perspective of listed companies, the four move types contribute greatly to the success of the communication of CSR information in the chairperson's statement as well as the main section, or the ESG report as a whole.

6.1.3 What are the frequency and types of metadiscourse used in chairpersons' statements?

The frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements is presented in Section 5.1.1. It is found that there is a heavier use of interactional than interactive metadiscourse in the CCS. Frame markers and self mentions are the most frequently occurring interactive and interactional metadiscourse items respectively. Given the similarity in communicative purposes between chairpersons' statements and CEOs' letters, the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements is compared with that in CEOs' letters reported in related previous studies. The metadiscourse items identified in the CCS are found to belong to all nine subcategories of metadiscourse in the model of metadiscourse for the current study. They were further classified into different types whenever appropriate. In the CCS, there is an absence of additive transitions (transitions), topicalisers (frame markers), non-linear text references (endophoric markers) and personal asides (engagement markers).

6.1.4 What are the frequency and types of metadiscourse used in main sections?

The frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse in main sections is presented in Section 5.1.2. In contrast with the case of the CCS, more interactive than interactional metadiscourse items were identified in the CMS. In terms of interactive metadiscourse, code glosses are the most commonly used. Concerning interactional metadiscourse, hedges are the most frequently occurring. All nine subcategories of metadiscourse were identified in the corpus. Similar to the CCS, no personal asides (engagement markers) were identified in the CMS.

6.1.5 How does the interplay between move structure and metadiscourse use in chairpersons' statements and main sections contribute to the persuasiveness of the ESG report?

The use of each of the nine subcategories of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS is discussed in Sections 5.2.1-5.2.4 (interactive) and Sections 5.3.1-5.3.5 (interactional). The in-depth discussion provides us with a better understanding of some typical uses of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections. In this study, patterns of metadiscourse use across move types in the CCS and CMS were identified to explore how metadiscourse is used in chairpersons' statements and main sections for different communicative purposes. The patterns observed are discussed in the aforementioned sub-sections. For each subcategory of metadiscourse,

the move types which contain the three largest proportions of instances of metadiscourse items were identified and discussed. The results indicate that the writer of chairpersons' statements and main sections may prefer using particular subcategories of metadiscourse in different moves (or steps) of the two (part) genres, illustrating the role of metadiscourse in relation to the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections.

Conceptualising metadiscourse as linguistic resources which perform rhetorical functions to achieve persuasion, this study reveals the choices made by the writer of chairpersons' statements and main sections while making persuasive attempts (see Sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 for details). An exploration of the (frequent) use of selected subcategories of metadiscourse suggests that the writer of chairpersons' statements attempts to persuade the reader by creating rationality, credibility and affective appeals. The use of metadiscourse in the texts of move type 8 'introducing the current report' is shown to reflect the writer's intention to persuade the reader to continue reading the unfolding ESG report. All 3 means of persuasion are relevant in the move type. As regards main sections, code glosses and hedges are found to be of great importance in the texts of the step 'describing actions and results' of move type 3 'reporting on CSR performance'. They are used to create rationality and credibility appeals. The rare use of attitude markers could be understood as a rhetorical strategy to enhance the persuasiveness of main sections by creating credibility appeals.

The present study is a timely response to the growing importance of ESG reports as a form of external corporate communication in the business domain. I will now move on to discuss the significance of the study by highlighting its theoretical, empirical and the practical contribution.

6.2 Theoretical contribution of the study

The present study modifies Hyland's (2005a) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. The subcategory of evidentials (which belongs to the interactive metadiscourse category) in Hyland's model is excluded from the present model due to its discourse function to signal intertextual phenomena. In this study, it is argued that the concept of intertextuality should be separated from the concept of metadiscourse. In addition, it is argued that there seems to be inconsistencies in Hyland's (2005a) identification of self mentions and attitude markers. This study therefore adopted a more restrictive approach to identifying these two subcategories of interactional metadiscourse.

6.3 Empirical contribution of the study

The present study represents a modest attempt to further our knowledge of the ESG reports as a discourse genre. The empirical contribution of this study lies in three aspects. Firstly, this study has investigated the move structure of chairpersons' statements and main sections. The findings can enhance our understanding of the production of the discourse of the two (part) genres and contribute to the research of the genre of ESG reports. Secondly, this study has demonstrated the application of the proposed model of metadiscourse to the data. The use of metadiscourse in the CCS and the CMS has been explored in terms of frequency of occurrence, linguistic realisations and discourse functions, demonstrating the interaction between the writer and the reader in the discourse of chairpersons' statements and main sections. This study has revealed patterns of metadiscourse use across move types in the CCS and the CMS. Furthermore, it has shown the use of metadiscourse as persuasive strategies in particular move types in chairpersons' statements and main sections. Finally, this study contributes to the study of metadiscourse by examining the role of metadiscourse in ESG reports. It extends metadiscourse research which has predominantly focused on academic genres.

6.4 Practical contribution of the study

The present study has practical implications. It is believed that the insights gained from the study can benefit different groups of individuals. Firstly, the findings would be of interest to educators and professionals in business settings. They could be of practical use in the design of material for courses of English for specific purposes (ESP) at tertiary institutions and language training programmes for ESG report writers and other practitioners such as those who work in corporate communications, public relations and marketing. Secondly, the findings would be of value to individuals who produce ESG reports and other corporate texts for listed companies, such as staff members of corporate communications departments of listed companies. This study could help them develop a better understanding of how to achieve different communicative goals and create effects on their readers through linguistic means. Finally, this study could help users of ESG reports, including (potential) investors, financial journalists and the media to better understand and be aware of how linguistic resources could be exploited in writing ESG reports. This would enable them to better judge the information provided in ESG reports and determine the success of the

listed companies in terms of their CSR performance. (Potential) investors could therefore make more informed investment decisions.

In the following section, I will discuss the limitations of the study.

6.5 Limitations of the study

The present study has analysed ESG reports issued by listed companies based in Hong Kong. All the listed companies under investigation belonged to the industry category of properties and construction. The construction of the discourse of ESG reports could be shaped by the listed companies, the industry and/or the social context in which the ESG reports were produced. Therefore, the results of move structure and the use of metadiscourse could be specific to the data analysed. The investigation of ESG reports issued by listed companies in other industries and social contexts were unfortunately beyond the scope of the present study. Admittedly, exploration in those research areas would provide us with a more comprehensive account of the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections. Another limitation regarding the data for this study is that there is an uneven distribution of the texts across listed companies in the CCS and the CMS. In this study, the findings have been discussed and conclusions have been drawn based on the data analysed. It is not my intention to claim to offer a detailed account of the move structure and the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections of ESG reports published in the context of Hong Kong. The size of the data is limited – only 54 ESG reports were analysed in the study. While the analyses of the data made it possible to obtain meaningful results, using a larger set of data involving a wider range of listed companies (and industries) could enhance the generalisability of the findings.

This study is limited in terms of the possible subjectivity of data analysis. The findings were generated through discourse analysis. Access to the producers (i.e. writers) and users (i.e. readers) of ESG reports could enrich the investigation. Understanding how the writers consciously made linguistic choices and how the readers perceive the effectiveness of such choices could allow the researcher to validate the results of discourse analysis, and thus provide a more thorough understanding of ESG reports.

Lastly, one might argue that the coding schemes for move analysis and metadiscourse analysis have only focused on mapping a text segment onto a specific category of analysis in terms of move types and discourse functions. That is, the potential multifunctionality of linguistic units may have

been overlooked. The present study acknowledges that the nature of language is inherently dynamic, and therefore it is not possible to offer an accurate description of all the communicative purposes of the two (part) genres and all the discourse functions a potential metadiscourse item performs. It seems inevitable to make categorisations of move types and discourse functions as the basis for data analysis in order to conduct the investigation.

In the next section, I will make recommendations for future research.

6.6 Areas for further research

Recently, the study of linguistic features of ESG reports has been expanding. However, our understanding of ESG reports is still rather limited. It is believed that the present study could lead to further research of ESG reports and related corporate texts. Studies could be conducted in the following areas.

In terms of data, future studies could analyse ESG reports in other industries in the context of Hong Kong, and ESG reports in other cultures to help us develop a greater understanding of the move structure, metadiscourse use and their interplay in ESG reports. In addition, the scope of the study does not allow an investigation of disclosure of CSR information in annual reports and on corporate websites. Studies analysing the CSR information disclosed in different medium could lead us to a more comprehensive understanding of the discourse of CSR.

In terms of research methodology, the investigation of move structure and use of metadiscourse could adopt an ethnographic approach. It would be worthwhile to find out from professionals working in the field of corporate communications why particular linguistic and rhetorical choices were made while writing ESG reports, and similarly, to explore the perspectives of the readers of ESG reports regarding the effects of particular linguistic and rhetorical elements identified in ESG reports. Inputs of the two parties would be useful for data triangulation, allowing analysts to verify their interpretation of move structure and/or metadiscourse use, which could enhance the reliability of the findings.

Another possible line of research concerns the investigation of diachronic variations of CSR reports, CSR information in annual reports and/or CSR information on corporate websites. Yu and Bondi (2017, p. 288) call for research in this area, noting that ‘a diachronic approach can shed light on how the generic features of CSR reports have changed with the rapid development of CSR reporting activities in the last decades’. Future studies could investigate possible changes in the

move structure and the use of metadiscourse in chairpersons' statements and main sections over time to show how the genre of CSR reports evolves.

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Appendix 1

Company profiles of the 10 listed companies

The following provides the company profiles of the 10 listed companies under investigation. The information was reproduced from the website of Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (2018). The profiles are presented in ascending order of stock codes.

The Wharf (Holdings) Limited (stock code: 00004)

The Wharf (Holdings) Limited is an investment holding company mainly engaged in the property development. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through five segments. The Development Property segment is involved in the activities relating to the acquisition, development, design, construction, sales and marketing of the Company's trading properties primarily in Hong Kong and Mainland China. The Investment Property segment is involved in property leasing. The Company's properties portfolio, which mainly consists of retail, office and serviced apartments is primarily located in Hong Kong and Mainland China. Communications, Media and Entertainment (CME) segment comprises pay television, internet and multimedia and the telecommunication businesses. Logistics segment is engaged in the container terminal operations and other public transport operations. The Hotels segment is involved of operation of hotels in the Asia Pacific region.

Henderson Land Development Company Limited (stock code: 00012)

Henderson Land Development Company Limited is an investment holding company principally engaged in property development. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through six segments. The Property Development segment is engaged in the development and sales of properties. The Property Leasing segment is engaged in the leasing of properties. The Department Store Operation segment is engaged in the operation and management of Citistore (Hong Kong) Limited. The Hotel Operation segment is engaged in the operation and management of hotels such as Newton Inn, North Point. The Others segment is engaged in construction, provision of finance, investment holding, project management, property management, agency services, cleaning and security guard services, as well as the trading of building materials and

disposal of leasehold land. The Utility and Energy segment is engaged in the production, distribution and marketing of gas, water supply and new energy businesses.

Hysan Development Company Limited (stock code: 00014)

Hysan Development Company Limited is engaged in investment, management and development of properties. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through three segments. The Retail segment is involved in the leasing of space and related facilities to a range of retail and leisure operators. The Office segment is involved in leasing of office space and related facilities. The Residential segment is involved in leasing of luxury residential properties and related facilities. The Company's property portfolio includes Hysan Place, Lee Garden One, Lee Garden Two, Lee Garden Three, Lee Garden Five, Lee Garden Six, Leighton Centre, One Hysan Avenue, Lee Theatre Plaza and Bamboo Grove, among others.

Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited (stock code: 00016)

Sun Hung Kai Properties Limited is an investment holding company mainly engaged in the sale of property. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through six segments: the Property Sales segment, the Property Rental segment, the Telecommunications segment, the Hotel Operation segment, the Transport Infrastructure and Logistics segment, and the Other Businesses segment. The Property sales and Property rental segments operate in Hong Kong, Mainland China and Singapore. The Telecommunications segment is involved in the provision of mobile telephone services, and data centers and information technology (IT) infrastructure business. The Transport Infrastructure and Logistics segment is involved in transport infrastructure operation and management, port business, air transport and logistics business, and the operation of department stores and supermarkets through YATA Limited.

New World Development Company Limited (stock code: 00017)

New World Development Company Limited is an investment holding company mainly engaged in the property development. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through seven segments: the Property development segment, the Service segment, the Department stores segment, the Property Investment segment, the Infrastructure, the Hotel Operations segment, and the Others segment. The Property development segment is involved in the construction of the

residential units. These include SKYPARK, BOHEMIAN HOUSE, Shenzhen New World Yi Shan Garden, Shenzhen New World Signature Hill, among others. The Service segment provides property and facility management, transport and other services. The Infrastructure Operations segment is involved in the operation of roads, environment projects, commercial aircraft leasing, container handling, logistics and warehousing services. The Others segment is engaged in telecommunications, media, technology and other strategic businesses.

Sino Land Company Limited (stock code: 00083)

Sino Land Company Limited is an investment holding company mainly engaged in the sale of property. Along with subsidiaries, the Company operates its business through six segments: the Property Sales segment, the Property Rental segment, the Hotel Operations segment, the Property Management and Other Services segment, the Investments in Securities and Financing segment. The Property Sales segment is involved in the sale of residential units. These include residential units in Corinthia By The Sea in Tseung Kwan O, Dragons Range in Kau To, the Palazzo in Chengdu, among others. The Property Rental segment is engaged in the rental of retail portfolio, office portfolio, and industrial portfolio. The Hotel Operations segment is involved the operation of hotels. The hotels are The Fullerton Hotel Singapore, The Fullerton Bay Hotel Singapore, Conrad Hong Kong, The Westin Sydney and The Olympian Hong Kong.

Hang Lung Properties Limited (stock code: 00101)

Hang Lung Properties Limited is an investment holding company principally engaged in property businesses. The Company operates through three segments. Hong Kong Property Leasing segment is engaged in the leasing of properties in Hong Kong, including units at The Long Beach, semi-detached houses at 23-39 Blue Pool Road, units at Carmel-on-the-Hill, and unit at The HarbourSide. In addition, it also sells some remaining parking spaces at The Aquamarine, and selected car parking spaces at Carmel-on-the-Hill. Mainland China Property Leasing segment is engaged in the leasing of properties in Mainland China. These include Dalian Olympia 66 mall and Shenyang Forum 66 office tower, among others. Hong Kong Property Sales segment is engaged in the development and sales of properties in Hong Kong. The property portfolio includes commercial properties, offices and residential and serviced apartments, among others.

China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd. (stock code: 00688)

China Overseas Land & Investment Ltd. is a Hong Kong-based investment holding company principally engaged in property businesses. The Company operates its businesses through three segments. The Property Development segment is engaged in the development of residential and commercial properties. The Property Investment segment is engaged in the investment in properties for rental. Other Operations segment is engaged in the provision of real estate management services, as well as construction and building design consultancy services.

Link Real Estate Investment Trust (stock code: 00823)

Link Real Estate Investment Trust is a Hong Kong-based real estate investment trust (REIT). It is also a constituent of the Hang Seng Index. The investment objectives of the Fund are to deliver sustainable growth and to create long-term value for its unitholders. It invests in a portfolio of properties, including retail facilities, markets, car parks and offices in Hong Kong, Beijing and Shanghai. Its investment properties include Destination Shopping Centers in Hong Kong, Community Shopping Centers in Hong Kong, EC Mall in Beijing and Corporate Avenue in Shanghai, among others. The Fund is managed by Link Asset Management Limited.

Swire Properties Limited (stock code: 01972)

Swire Properties Limited is principally engaged in property investment. The Company operates its business through three segments. The Property Investment segment is engaged in the development, leasing and management of commercial, retail and some residential properties. The Property Trading and Development segment is engaged in the development and construction of properties. The Hotels segment is engaged in the operation of hotels. The Company's subsidiaries include Cathay Limited, Cityplaza Holdings Limited and One Queen's Road East Limited. Through its subsidiaries, the Company is also engaged in project management.

Appendix 2

Interactive metadiscourse items in the CCS

Below shows all interactive metadiscourse items identified in the CCS. Items are listed in alphabetical order.

Transitions (9 instances)

<i>Comparative transitions</i>	3
- although	1
- but	2
<hr/>	
<i>Consequential transitions</i>	6
- as	1
- therefore	5

(No additive transitions were identified in the CCS.)

Frame markers (80 instances)

<i>Sequencers</i>	6
- finally	1
- firstly	1
- last but not least	2
- secondly	1
- thirdly	1
<hr/>	
<i>Discourse-labels</i>	1
- in short	1
<hr/>	
<i>Announcers</i>	73

- aim	1
- announce	1
- capturing	1
- celebrates	1
- chronicles	1
- contains	1
- describes	2
- detailed	2
- details	1
- encourage	4
- encouraging	1
- explained	1
- explains	1
- focuses	2
- gives	1
- highlight/highlights	4
- include	1
- included	1
- introduce	3
- invite	1
- maps out	1
- note	1
- offer	1
- offers	2
- outline	2
- outlined	1
- outlines	2
- present	12
- provides	2

- providing	1
- records	1
- report	1
- reporting	2
- reports	1
- share	1
- takes into account	1
- wish to	3
- would like to	7

(No topicalisers were identified in the CCS.)

Endophoric markers (55 instances)

<i>Liner text references</i>	55
- (in) the report	4
• <i>in the report</i>	2
• <i>the Report</i>	1
• <i>the report</i>	1
- (in) this report	12
• <i>in this report</i>	3
• <i>this Report</i>	2
• <i>this report</i>	7
- (in) X (a particular section)	7
• <i>in 'Building a Beautiful Community'</i>	1
• <i>in 'Caring Our Community'</i>	1
• <i>in 'Creating Green Environment'</i>	1
• <i>in 'Promoting Heritage Conservation'</i>	1
• <i>Sustainability in Action</i>	1
• <i>Sustainable Development Strategy Workshop in Chengdu</i>	1

• <i>the Sustainability in Action section of this report</i>	1
- (the) X report	25
• <i>2011/12 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2012/13 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2013/14 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2014/15 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2015 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2015/16 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>2016/17 Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>Corporate Responsibility Report 2006</i>	1
• <i>first Sustainability Report</i>	2
• <i>first Sustainable Development Report</i>	1
• <i>fourth Group Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>second Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>second sustainability report</i>	1
• <i>Sustainability Report</i>	1
• <i>Sustainable Development Report 2014</i>	1
• <i>Sustainable Development Report 2015</i>	2
• <i>the first standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land</i>	1
• <i>the second standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land</i>	1
• <i>the sustainability report</i>	2
• <i>the third standalone Sustainability and CSR Report of Henderson Land</i>	1
• <i>third stand-alone sustainability report</i>	1
• <i>third Sustainability Report</i>	1
- in later chapters of this report	2
- in the following pages	2
- major sections	1
- Report	1

- this third report	1
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(No non-linear text references were identified in the CCS.)

Code glosses (74 instances)

Reformulation markers **53**

- –	25
- ()	2
- ,	16
- especially	2
- i.e.	1
- in particular	3
- namely	1
- particularly	1
- specifically	1
- that is	1

Exemplificatory markers **21**

- for example	4
- for instance	3
- such as	14

Appendix 3

Interactive metadiscourse items in the CMS

Below shows all interactive metadiscourse items identified in the CMS. Items are listed in alphabetical order.

Transitions (52 instances)

<i>Additive transitions</i>	6
- at the same time	1
- in addition	3
- moreover	2
<i>Comparative transitions</i>	26
- although	5
- but	2
- however	11
- nevertheless	2
- nonetheless	1
- still	1
- though	1
- while	2
- yet	1
<i>Consequential transitions</i>	20
- accordingly	1
- as	3
- because	2
- since	1
- so	2

- therefore	9
- thus	2

Frame markers (186 instances)

Sequencers 25

- finally	7
- first	1
- firstly	6
- last, but not least,	1
- second	1
- secondly	6
- thirdly	3

Discourse-labels 3

- in short	1
- in summary	2

Announcers 138

- addressed	2
- advise	1
- brings to light	1
- cover	1
- deal with	1
- describe	1
- described	1
- describes	2
- detailed	1
- details	2
- disclosed	1

- discloses	1
- displayed	1
- documented	1
- excludes	1
- explain	2
- focus	3
- focuses	5
- gives	2
- highlight	4
- highlighted	4
- highlights	2
- illustrate	1
- illustrated	5
- illustrates	6
- included	2
- indicates	2
- interviews	1
- introduced	1
- listed	7
- lists	1
- mentioned	5
- note	2
- noted	2
- offers	1
- outline	2
- outlined	10
- outlines	5
- presented	3
- presents	1

- prioritises	1
- provide	2
- provides	4
- report	5
- reported	1
- reports	1
- set out	4
- shares	1
- show	1
- showcase	2
- shows	7
- summarised (summarized)	5
- would like to ('d like to)	7

Topicalisers **20**

- as for	10
- concerning	1
- on X	7
• on a slightly different note	1
• on health and safety	1
• on our stakeholders' front	1
• on the environmental front	2
• on the procurement side	1
• on the property development front	1
- with regard to	2

Endophoric markers (290 instances)

Liner text references **218**

- (in) this report	13
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• <i>in this report</i>	3
• <i>this Report</i>	1
• <i>this report</i>	8
• <i>this sustainability report</i>	1
- (in) (the) X report	5
• <i>in Hysan's first Corporate Responsibility Report</i>	1
• <i>in the Corporate Responsibility Report</i>	1
• <i>in this edition of Hysan's Corporate Responsibility Report</i>	1
• <i>our first sustainability report</i>	1
• <i>this edition of Hysan's Corporate Responsibility Report</i>	1
- (in) X (a particular section or particular sections)	149
• <i>"Innovations in Public Space: Tong Chong Street"</i>	1
• <i>"Our Value Chain" section</i>	1
• <i>2020 Energy Reduction Pledge</i>	1
• <i>Arts and Culture</i>	1
• <i>Arts and Culture</i>	1
• <i>Biodiversity</i>	1
• <i>Building Rating Schemes</i>	2
• <i>Business-in-Community section on page 19</i>	1
• <i>case study on p.27</i>	1
• <i>case study on page 27</i>	1
• <i>Code of Conduct</i>	2
• <i>Corporate Governance on page 7</i>	1
• <i>Educational Programmes</i>	1
• <i>Employee Engagement</i>	1
• <i>Energy & Climate Change</i>	2
• <i>Energy Efficiency across Our Portfolios</i>	2
• <i>Energy Efficiency in Operating Buildings</i>	3

• <i>Energy Efficiency Research</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Environment section from P.27 to P.32</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Environment section on page 31</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Free Energy Audits for Tenants and Non-Profit Making Organisations</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in “Message from Management”</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in later sections</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in subsequent sections of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the ‘About Hang Lung’ section found on page 7</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the “Achievement and Awards” section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the “Sustainability at Hang Lung Properties” section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Commitment to Our People on page 13 in this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Commitment to Our Stakeholders of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the corresponding sections of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Environmental Quality sub-sections</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the following section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the following sections of the Report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the sidebar story in the Environment section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the sub-sections on “Energy Conservation” and “Waste Management”</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the UNGC index on page 50</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Value Created for Community section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Value Created for People section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Value Created for People, and Value Created for Customers sections</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in the Value Created for the Environment section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in this section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>in Value Created for Supply Chain</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Indoor Air Quality</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Island East Markets: A Sustainable Market in the Heart of the City</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>Leveraging Our Resources</i>	<i>2</i>

• <i>Membership and Awards</i>	3
• <i>Memberships and Awards</i>	1
• <i>New Projects and Sustainable Design</i>	1
• <i>other relevant sections of this report</i>	1
• <i>Our Commitment</i>	1
• <i>Our Community Ambassador Programme: A Decade of Service</i>	2
• <i>Our community section of the Report</i>	1
• <i>Our Continued Partnership with Tsinghua University</i>	1
• <i>Our Environment</i>	1
• <i>Our Value Chain</i>	3
• <i>P. 21 - 23 of Business-in-Community section</i>	1
• <i>P. 38 - 45 of the People section</i>	1
• <i>P. 46 - 51 of Products and Services section</i>	1
• <i>P.32 - 37 of the Environmental section</i>	1
• <i>Partnering for Change</i>	3
• <i>Partnering with Customers and Tenants</i>	1
• <i>Partnering with Tenants and Customers</i>	1
• <i>People section from P.33 to P.40</i>	1
• <i>Products and Services section</i>	1
• <i>Recruiting and Retaining Employees</i>	3
• <i>relevant sections of this year's report</i>	1
• <i>Stakeholder Engagement and Materiality</i>	1
• <i>Supporting Innovation and Entrepreneurship</i>	1
• <i>Sustainability in Action</i>	9
• <i>Sustainable Design</i>	2
• <i>Sustainable Development Strategy Workshop in Chengdu</i>	2
• <i>Tenant Engagement</i>	1
• <i>the 'Urban Farm' sidebar story</i>	1

• <i>the “Community” section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the “Environmental Roadmap” section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the “Our buildings” section</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>the “Our Buildings” section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the “Practice of Green Properties” section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the “Water” section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the case study on page 15</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the case study on Riverside 66</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Commitment to our Community section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Commitment to Our Environment on page 27 in this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Commitment to Our Environment section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Commitment to Our People of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Company Profile section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Energy section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the following sections</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>the Life Cycle Approach to Sustainable Property Development section</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Park Island case study</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Partners section</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>the Partners section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Performance (Environment) section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Places section of this report</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the previous chapter, Environmental Performance</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the relevant sections of the Report</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>the section “Major Sustainability Awards”</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the sections to follow</i>	<i>1</i>
• <i>the Sustainable Development in Action: Taikoo Place Redevelopment section of this report</i>	<i>2</i>
• <i>the Value Created for Customer</i>	<i>1</i>

• <i>the Value Created for Customers</i>	1
• <i>the Value Created for Customers section of this report</i>	1
• <i>the Value Created for Environment</i>	1
• <i>the Value Created for People</i>	2
• <i>the Value Created for Supply Chain section</i>	1
• <i>Turnover</i>	1
• <i>Value Created for People in this report</i>	1
• <i>Value Created for Supply Chain section</i>	2
• <i>Volunteer Opportunities</i>	3
• <i>Waste Management</i>	3
• <i>Working Together to Make a Difference</i>	2
- above	2
- as follows	2
- below	30
- earlier	1
- in this article	1
- page(s)	10
• <i>in this report on page 9</i>	1
• <i>P.14 of this section</i>	1
• <i>page 12</i>	1
• <i>page 16 of this report</i>	1
• <i>page 26</i>	1
• <i>page 53 in Data Performance section</i>	1
• <i>pages 22 to 25 of this Report</i>	1
• <i>pages 56 to 59 of the Report</i>	1
• <i>pages 59 to 60 of our report</i>	1
• <i>the next page</i>	1
- the following	2

- the Report	1
- this booklet	1
- this Review	1
<hr/>	
<i>Non-linear text references</i>	72
- appendix	2
• <i>Appendix I on p.75-76</i>	1
• <i>Appendix II on p.77</i>	1
- below	1
- chart(s)	7
• <i>the below chart</i>	1
• <i>the chart below</i>	4
• <i>the charts</i>	1
• <i>the following chart</i>	1
- diagram	5
• <i>the below diagram</i>	1
• <i>the diagram below</i>	2
• <i>the diagram on the next page</i>	1
• <i>the diagram on the right</i>	1
- figure	2
• <i>Figure 1</i>	1
• <i>Figure 2</i>	1
- figures in Performance Data Summary	1
- infographic	2
• <i>the following infographic</i>	1
• <i>the infographic below</i>	1
- matrix	6
• <i>matrix diagram below</i>	1

• <i>the materiality Matrix</i>	2
• <i>the Materiality Matrix below</i>	1
• <i>the Matrix</i>	1
• <i>the Matrix presented below</i>	1
- on the right	1
- picture	7
• <i>picture 1</i>	2
• <i>picture 2</i>	2
• <i>picture 3</i>	2
• <i>picture 4</i>	1
- pictured below right	1
- table(s)	33
• <i>the Data Tables</i>	1
• <i>the data tables on page 33 to 34</i>	1
• <i>the following table</i>	10
• <i>the following tables</i>	1
• <i>the table below</i>	17
• <i>the table of Projects Completed in 2016/17</i>	1
• <i>the table on the right</i>	1
• <i>this table</i>	1
- the boundary map	1
- the following framework shown to the left	1
- the following graphic	1
- the graphs on the next page	1

Code glosses (1,803 instances)

<i>Reformulation markers</i>	1,055
- -	93

- ()	89
- ,	600
- :	77
- especially	28
- i.e.	11
- in particular	25
- known as	11
- namely	59
- or	22
- particularly	34
- specifically	2
- this means	1
- which means	3
<i>Exemplificatory markers</i>	748
- e.g./ (e.g. X)	31
- for example/ (for example X)	115
- for instance	19
- like	27
- such as/ (such as X)	540
- such X as	13
• such areas as	1
• such aspects as	1
• such cities as	1
• such contents as	2
• such crises as	1
• such functions as	2
• such modules as	2
• such schemes as	1

• such system documents as	1
• such systems as	1
- take the residential side, for example	1
- taking Hong Yip as an example	1
- to use just one example	1

Appendix 4

Interactional metadiscourse items in the CCS

Below shows all interactional metadiscourse items identified in the CCS. Items are listed in alphabetical order.

Hedges (8 instances)

- approximately	2
- around	1
- may	3
- nearly	2

Boosters (60 instances)

- always	6
- belief	2
- believe	32
- believes	3
- confidently	1
- firmly	1
- strong	1
- very	2
- will	12

Attitude markers (37 instances)

- !	1
- convinced	1
- crucial	1
- delighted	8
- essential	1

- hope	7
- more importantly	1
- notably	1
- pleased	11
- pleasure	1
- thank	3
- vital	1

Self-mentions (125 instances)

<i>First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives</i>	114
- I	27
- me	2
- my	2
- our	18
- us	2
- we	63

<i>General company references</i>	1
- the Group's	1

<i>Company name references</i>	10
- Hang Lung's	2
- Hysan's	1
- New World Group's	1
- Sun Hung Kai Properties	1
- Sun Hung Kai Properties'	2
- Swire Properties'	1
- The Link	1
- Wharf	1

Engagement markers (29 instances)

<i>Reader pronouns</i>	21
- our stakeholders	1
- readers	1
- you	19
<i>Directives</i>	5
- learn	3
- see	2
<i>Appeals to shared knowledge</i>	3
- of course	3
(No personal asides were identified in the CCS.)	

Appendix 5

Interactional metadiscourse items in the CMS

Below shows all interactional metadiscourse items identified in the CMS. Items are listed in alphabetical order.

Hedges (546 instances)

- about	71
- almost	20
- approximately	145
- around	72
- broadly	1
- comparatively	2
- could	6
- fairly	2
- from the perspective of COLI	1
- generally	13
- in general	11
- indicate	1
- indicated	7
- indicates	2
- largely	11
- likely	3
- mainly	42
- may	3
- might	2
- mostly	5
- nearly	75
- overall	4

- perhaps	1
- possibly	1
- primarily	1
- quite	1
- relative	1
- relatively	19
- should	1
- some	5
- somewhat	1
- tend to	1
- to a large extent	1
- typically	8
- usually	1
- would	5

Boosters (401 instances)

- always	63
- belief	1
- believe	118
- believed	2
- believes	25
- certainly	1
- clear	1
- clearly	1
- deeply	1
- evident	1
- feel	1
- firmly	4
- in fact	9

- indeed	1
- no doubt	1
- really	9
- revealed	5
- show	1
- showed	5
- shows	2
- strongly	4
- the fact that	1
- think	4
- truly	10
- very	71
- will	59

Attitude markers (47 instances)

- !	8
- convinced	1
- essential	3
- glad	1
- imperative	1
- important	9
- importantly	1
- more importantly	2
- most importantly	2
- most notably	1
- most significantly	1
- not surprisingly	1
- notably	2
- pleased	4

- proud	1
- sadly	1
- unfortunate	1
- unfortunately	3
- utmost importance	3
- with extreme regret	1

Self-mentions (157 instances)

<i>First-person pronouns and possessive adjectives</i>	132
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- our	1
- we	131

<i>General company references</i>	14
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- the Board	2
- the Board of Directors of COLI	3
- the Company	1
- the Group	8

<i>Company name references</i>	11
---------------------------------------	-----------

- China Overseas Land and Investment Ltd. (COLI)	1
- COLI	2
- New World Group	3
- Sino Land	1
- Swire Properties	2
- the Club	1
- The Link	1

Engagement markers (197 instances)

<i>Reader pronouns</i>	4
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- you	4
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<i>Directives</i>	<i>136</i>
- check	2
- must	1
- refer	46
- see	87
<i>Questions</i>	<i>56</i>
- ?	56
<i>Appeals to shared knowledge</i>	<i>1</i>
- it is well known	1

(No personal asides were identified in the CMS.)
