

## Authorial Stance by Academic Writers in an EFL Context: A Case Study of Journal Article Contributors by UDSM Scholars

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### **Abstract**

*The current study assessed different ways academic writers make their stance towards the findings of and scholarly assertions by other scholars as well as their findings in their research report writing. The study was guided by Hyland's (2005) academic interaction model. It involved 60 research articles, chosen randomly from fields of humanities, business studies, natural sciences and engineering sciences. Documentary review was used as the sole data gathering tool. The findings show that the authors variously registered their authorial stance notably under three categories of stance nouns: relations, attributes and entity, the most dominant being the category of entity. It was concluded that the art and science of academic writing by authors in the studied research articles is generally similar across disciplines.*

**Key words:** *Academic disciplines, academic writing, authorial stance, journal article*

### **Introduction**

Academic writing, according to Hyland (2005), has undergone a great change over the years so much that it is no longer seen as an objective, faceless and impersonal form of writing. Instead, it is considered as an endeavor by authors and writers to initiate some interaction with their readers. In other words, producing good academic writing requires not only the authors' linguistic ability but also their awareness of rhetorical features accepted by readers. Tary (2005) adds emphatically that academic writing is seen as transformation of knowledge, a process through which the writer brings the readers to an understanding of his work's value and significance. Academic writing is thus not only a linguistic process but also a socio-political process in which authors, as the owners of power, try to be acknowledged and recognized by the social community they write for (Casanave, 2003). To accomplish this task, writers employ different strategies to express their identity in writing.

According to Hyland (2010), we should no longer think of academic writing as completely 'author evacuated' but as consisting of exact evaluations and interactions. He thus refers to research articles as

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‘sites’ where writers are not just offering their viewpoints, but also attempting to negotiate some relations with those who will possibly read these products. Looking at the issue from this perspective, Hyland (2010) leads us to the idea of interpersonality in academic writing, which is concerned with the ways through which writers make use of the explicit system of meanings to enter their ‘voice’ into the texts to be heard by their readers. To achieve this goal, these writers should actually be well aware of the norms of the community they are writing for.

One of the ways of reader engagements is either to increase the strength of their propositions by using boosters or decrease the force through the use of hedges. Researches indicate that hedges and boosters serve three main functions: 1) threat minimizing strategy to signal distance and to avoid absolute statements; 2) strategies to accurately reflect the certainty of knowledge; and 3) politeness strategies between writers and editors (Hinckel, 2009; Nivales, 2010; Salager-Meyer, 1997). Academic writers thus leave traces of themselves in their writing which may be linked to their national culture (Abdi, 2011).

## Literature Review

The current study was guided Hyland’s (2005) academic interaction model which expounds the interaction between writers and readers. According to Hyland (2005), the purpose of writing is not only producing some texts or explaining an external reality, but also constructing and negotiating social relations with the readers. According to this model, the interaction in academic writing mainly involves two major elements of stance and engagement, each with sub-components, as detailed in Figure 1 below.

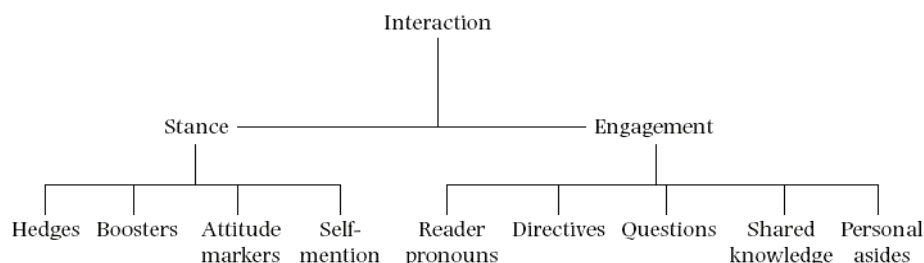


FIGURE 1. *Key resources of academic interaction*

**Source:** Hyland (2005)

As can be seen in - Figure 1 above, writers attempt to project their position in the texts through the following elements:

1. *Hedges*: These mitigating expressions and phrases resulting into what is popularly known as powerless language convey a cautious approach to the material or research results being presented, which in turn helps “academics gain acceptance for their work” (Hyland, 2000:179).

2. *Boosters*: These are expressions or linguistic resources that allow writers to express conviction and assert a proposition with confidence, representing a strong claim about a state of affairs. Affectively they also mark involvement and solidarity with an audience, stressing shared information, group membership, and direct engagement with readers (Hyland, 1998).

3. *Attitude Markers*: These refer to a set of expressions, which “serve as a means by which the user of the language makes obvious what his [or her] feelings, emotions or views are about the propositional content of the utterance being made” (De Bryun1998:127). This attitude includes the speaker’s belief in its reality or likelihood, and captures his/her estimation of the relevance of the situation to himself/herself.

4. *Self-mention*: self-mention is an important feature among interactional resources, whose function is generally signaling the authorial persona of the scholar(s) (Afsari and Kuhi, 2016). They can play a significant role in revealing the writers’ relationship with the reader and their discourse community (Kuo, 1999). Self-mention also helps the writers differentiate their voice from the viewpoints of others and communicate the uniqueness of their contribution to establish commitment and credibility and develop connection with audience (Hyland, 2008).

In addition to expressing their positions in what they write, writers are also required to bring the potential readers into their text. As Hyland (2005) explains, writers can involve the readers in their writing by making use of one or more of these five elements:

1. *Reader pronouns*: These are use of second person pronouns and first person plural so as to engage more the readers.
2. *Personal asides*: These, according to Hyland (2008), allow writers to address readers directly by briefly interrupting the argument to offer a comment on what has been said. By turning to the reader in mid-flow, the writer acknowledges and responds to an active audience, often to initiate a brief dialogue that is largely interpersonal, adding more to the writer-reader relationship than to propositional development.
3. *Appeals to shared knowledge*: These are marked by explicit signals asking readers to recognize something as familiar or accepted. These constructions of solidarity ask readers to identify with particular views and in so doing construct readers by assigning to them a role in creating the argument, acknowledging their contribution while moving the focus of the discourse away from the writer to shape the role of the reader (Hyland, 2008).
4. *Directives*: Hyland (2008) posits that these are mainly expressed through imperatives and obligation modals and they direct readers to engage in three main kinds of activity: *textual acts* which direct readers to another part of the text or to another text, *physical acts*, which direct readers how to carry out some action in the real-world (e.g. open the valve, heat the mixture), and *cognitive acts*, which instruct readers how to interpret an argument, explicitly positioning readers by encouraging them to note, concede or consider some argument or claim in the text.
5. *Questions*: Questions are the main strategy of dialogic involvement, inviting engagement, encouraging curiosity and bringing interlocutors into an arena where they can be led to the writer's viewpoint (Hyland, 2002b).

A number of empirical studies have been conducted in this aspect of academic writing. Mojica's (2005) study focused on hedges in research articles of Filipino engineers and linguists, seeking to examine how these authors use this academic discourse feature. She

noted that there was significant difference in the two groups of authors' ways of showing commitment and detachment to their proposed ideas whereby the engineers boosted more while linguists hedged more. She attributed this difference to the highly technical discussions in engineering as well as to its writing conventions which may not be as rigid as those of the linguists'.

Taki and Jafrpour (2012) investigated the ways in which English and Persian academics express their position to discover the strategies used to bring readers to their writing. Their study was guided by Hyland's (2005) model of interaction in which stance and engagement are introduced as two discursual features having an effective role in constructing writer-reader interactions. The study involved comparative analysis of 120 English and Persian research articles in two disciplines of Chemistry and Sociology. They found that the writers of both disciplines, especially the sociologists, considered the expression of stance and engagement markers in their writing important. However, in sociology articles, there was a greater effort to interact with readers.

As for Hyland (2005), he used a total corpus of 64 project reports written by a group of final-year Hong Kong undergraduates to explore the ways in which these participants 'tried to show the readers' presence in their writings so as to establish relationship with them. The findings suggested that contrary to what is often depicted, academic writing is not an impersonal monologue, but it contains many dialogic interactions. In addition, distinguishing such engagement devices as reader pronouns, asides, and references to shared knowledge from directives and questions, he concluded that the former devices are used to draw on the shared goals between the writers and readers and thereby to bring the reader into the discourse as a fellow disciplinary member.

Biber (2006), in a study of stance as a discursual element, examined university registers within both speech and writing. His study was delimited to grammatical features specifically adverbials and complement clauses aiming to come up with different ways of expression of stance by means of various grammatical features. It was found that adverbials express the attitude or assessment of the writer with respect to the proposition in the matrix clause while in the complement clauses; the matrix clause verbs express a stance with respect to the proposition in the complement clause. The

findings confirmed the view held by previous studies that stance should be necessarily expressed in all university registers.

Heng and Tan (2010), on their part, made a comparative analysis of the persuasive texts, written in English, by Malaysian undergraduates and the British Academic Written Essays (BAWE), which is a corpus of metadiscourse-proficient essays. They found that the most frequent interactional features in the BAWE were hedges (115/10,000 words) followed by boosters (49/10,000 words). Malaysian undergraduates tended to use inclusive first person pronouns and boosters such as *must* (used 741 times), *indeed* (used 266 times), *actually* (109 times), and *never* (253 times). Malaysian students' writing contained more engagement features than the BAWE, and overall, more interactional features than the BAWE, suggesting Malaysian undergraduates were more concerned with building writer-reader relationships than British undergraduates.

Press (2012) evaluated students' in-text interaction in the context of overall student engagement. The study combined text analysis and interviews with seven College Composition I students at a public university to investigate students' out-of-text engagement, in-text engagement, and the relationship between the two. The findings suggested that participants consider themselves engaged student participants, but not writers participating in the academic community. Students' in-text interactions included self-mentions, attitude markers, and reader references, which often reflected participants' reported comfort and confidence within the community.

Aull and Lancaster (2014) made a comparative examination of linguistic expressions of stance in over 4,000 argumentative essays by incoming first-year university students in comparison with those by upper-level undergraduate students and published academics. The findings revealed that linguistic stance markers shared across the first-year essays despite differences in students' educational context, with greatest distinctions emerging between first-year writers and all of the more advanced writers. The specific features of stance that point to a developmental trajectory are approximate hedges/boosters, code glosses, and adversative or contrast connectors.

Çakır (2016) explored how academic writers from different scientific communities constructed author's stance in research article abstracts. More specifically, the author sought to analyze lexicogrammatical features in research article abstracts focusing

specifically on stance adverbs, using a corpus of 240 abstracts from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, linguistics, physics, chemistry and biology. The results revealed significant differences in the total number of stance adverbs. Native writers of English employed more stance adverbs in their abstracts than Turkish writers. Differences were also found in use of stance adverbs in what he referred to as 'soft and hard sciences' whereby academic writers in the soft sciences used more stance adverbs in their abstracts.

Similarly, Uysal and Akpinar (2008) compared English abstracts written by different academic writers. The study examined indirectness markers (disclaimers, hedges and hedging devices, discourse particles, demonstratives and passive voice) in conference abstracts produced by Turkish and Indian academic writers. Also in Turkey, a study by Kafes (2009) examined modal verbs in research articles as well as in abstracts written by Turkish, Spanish and American academic writers to determine how academic writers construct authorial stance in their research articles published in international journals. The author found similarities as well as some differences in the distribution of the modal verbs across the different parts in the research articles he examined.

Getkham's (2016) study investigated how linguistic devices were used to convey authorial stance in 36 Introduction sections and 36 Discussion sections of doctoral dissertations written in English by Thai students that graduated in language education from different universities in the United States during the period 2008 to 2013. It also compared the use of authorial stance in the two sections. A concordance program called 'AntConc' was used to detect authorial stance based on Hyland (2005)'s framework. The results of an independent sample t-test revealed that there were some sectional differences in the amounts, types, and functions of authorial stance.

Henderson and Barr (2010) examined the use of first - person pronouns, certain adjectives and grading adverbs in a corpus of 51 French psychology student papers written in English as a second language. These results were compared to a corpus of published psychology articles and to a sub-corpus of psychology student texts from the British Academic Written English corpus (BAWE). Strategic use of pairs of evaluative words was found in the students' texts but not in the published texts. However, the variables of native language and level of field expertise could not explain all of the variance observed.



Heather and Quintina-Toledo (2013) explored authorial stance as expressed by adverbial markers in the introduction and conclusion sections of legal research papers. Following Biber et al. (1999) and Biber and Conrad (1999), they aimed to identify the most frequent adverbial markers of stance present in each section as indicators of (i) epistemicity, (ii) attitude, and (iii) style. Specifically, they sought to establish whether or not there are functional differences in the use of adverbial stance markers, and whether or not these are derived from the different communicative purposes of these sections. It was found that the adverbial marking of stance was realised by selections from different semantic categories, be they epistemic, attitudinal or stylistic. Epistemic stance adverbials were remarkably predominant in both sections, with significantly higher occurrences in conclusions. The expression of doubt and uncertainty rather than certainty was favored since conclusions contained possible explanations for the outcome of the research and recommendations for future lines of action.

In Africa we have studies from Uba (2017) in Nigeria, Saleem (2013) in Egypt, Maroko (2013) and Kondowe (2014) in Kenya. Uba's (2017) study investigated what ensure that the following words are decongested. Linguistic markers of stance accounting PhD authors are more frequently used in Bayero University Kano, Nigeria and what factors might constrain or influence their use. He used a corpus-based textual analysis but complemented it with a consideration of institutional and disciplinary factors which might explain why the writers investigated writeas they do. He employed nine participants: six accounting PhD authors and three accounting PhD supervisors. The result of comparative corpus-based textual analysis showed that there were certain similarities and differences in the use of stance markers. For example, in terms of similarities all the six authors used higher frequencies of boosters than the other categories of stance markers in their result sections whereas in their conclusion section they all used higher frequencies of hedges than the other categories of stance markers. They also used few restricted typologies of each category of stance markers. On the other hand, there are certain differences in using stance markers, for example, only two out of the six authors use explicit self-mention features.

As for Saleem (2013), he assessed the differences between stance markers in Egyptian research Articles (RAs) compared to internationally published RAs in the field of medicine. Differences were diagnosed and patterns of what was deemed as acceptable use



of stance markers are listed in order to help Egyptian doctors write more professionally and gain acceptance in international publishing. In this corpus-based study, 47 RAs published in local Egyptian medical journals representing different medical schools and institutions across the country were examined and compared to the Corpus of Contemporary American English (COCA). The use of direct self-reference using first person pronouns *I, me, my, we us* and *our* compared to the more impersonal “*it...that*” structure was examined in both corpora. The study revealed that there was a tendency in the Egyptian RAs to sound more distant and cautious. The use of first person pronouns in Egyptian RAs was generally less frequent. Egyptian medical researchers avoided using the singular first person pronoun in their RAs but they sometimes directly referred to themselves when they wrote in a group. Egyptian researchers also showed higher frequency of the more mitigated and impersonal structures such as “*it...that*” structures, the passive structure and doubt adverbs.

In Kenya, Maroko (2013) studied the frequency and usage of markers of writer stance in selected dissertations in Kenyan Public Universities. It was found that humanities dissertations preferred personal pronouns and the third person while science dissertations mainly chose the ‘faceless’ agentless passive voice. Suggesting that choices for such features in dissertations are a function of the epistemology and ideology of the disciplines, the author proposed a genre-based approach to teaching those preparing to write their dissertations.

Another study in Africa was by Kondowe (2014) who investigated the culture of writing in literature, analysed dissertation abstracts of PhD candidates in the field using Hyland’s (2005) meta-discourse taxonomy. 60 abstracts, from 2007 to 2012, were selected and analyzed using *AntConc* concordance tool which was supplemented by manual analysis. The researcher noted that PhD candidates in literary studies tended to hedge three times more than they used boosters favoring the use of low committal modal auxiliary *can* as well as solidarity phrases. They boosted only when they were convinced that their claims shared some universal understanding.

In Tanzania, Msuya (2016) analyzed mode and extent of author visibility in academic writing in the EFL context. he study was guided by Hyland’s (2005) meta-discourse model and it was conducted in the University of Dar es Salaam. -It involved 27

postgraduate theses and dissertations from the University main library. The areas in focus were: abstract, acknowledgement, declaration, statement of the problem, aim and objectives, significance of the study, literature review, theoretical framework, methodology, data presentation and analysis, conclusions and recommendations. The findings revealed that University of Dar es Salaam EFL academic writers, in their adherence to norms and conventions of academic writing, tended to be extremely formal, favoring invisibility over visibility by their limited use of the first person (singular or plural) and a more pronounced use of the third person.

Elisifa and Kyara (2017) assessed the presentation of authorial stance using the engagement framework by Tanzanian EFL academic writers so as to reveal the linguistic resources that enable authors to present a stance towards the research they are reviewing and presenting. Specifically, the study sought to i) explore the pattern of expanding and contracting in presenting authorial stance in the selected dissertations and theses, ii) assess the authors' linguistic resources for expanding moves, and iii) assess the linguistic resources for contracting moves by - authors. The study adapted Martin and White's (2005) engagement system framework focusing on heterogloss. 20 EFL post-graduate theses and 20 Dissertations at Master's and Doctoral levels by the EFL candidates/authors of the Open University of Tanzania were analysed. The researchers found that dissertation/thesis writers varied in their mode of registering their stances towards the subject matter and hence to be heteroglossic rather than monoglossic. In that way, they were able to establish their authorial territory and claim their visibility or presence instead of being compilers or reporters of findings by others.

### **Research Gap**

The surveyed literature shows that the area of authorial stance is multi-faced and that it has been extensively studied elsewhere except in Tanzania where only two studies have been conducted. The two studies conducted in Tanzania focused on dissertations and theses written by postgraduate students. They did not involve research publications by academic staff nor were they comprehensive enough as to draw academic submissions from different disciplines. The current study sought to contribute towards bridging this existing knowledge gap.

## **Materials and Methods**

This study involved a total 60 research articles. These were accessed and downloaded from the University of Dar es salaam online research repository. The articles were from Departments of Foreign Languages and Linguistics (10), Literature (4), Institute of Development Studies (7), Botany (10), Chemistry (6), Finance (5), Marketing (5), Mechanical Engineering (6), Civil and Structural Engineering (4) and Institute of Kiswahili Studies (3). This wide spectrum of articles was drawn for wide representativeness of units but not for any purpose of comparability. The choice was also made regardless of the academic rank of the author.

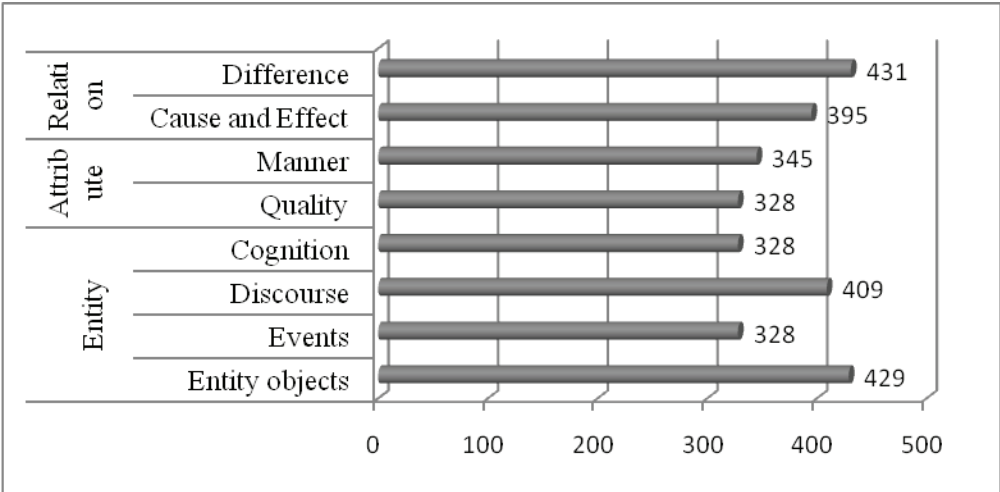
We first read through the research articles. Thereafter, guided by Hyland's (2005) framework for authorial stance, we isolated different categories and posted them into excel work book. Then we assigned each into their respective macro categories; namely; stance nouns, hedging, evidence based argumentation, and stance adverbs. Thereafter, we sorted them into such categories and assigned them specific micro-groups within each macro-group. Frequencies were sought of occurrence of each item, summations of the frequencies calculated and means computed for each macro- and micro group. The results were summarized in figures and other descriptive statistics were presented in – text to serve illustrative and analytical functions of diversity in authors registering their stances.

## **Findings**

The findings are organized in four subsections, namely: stance nouns, hedging, evidence – based argumentation, and stance adverbs. In each subsection -that represents macro-categories of author stance, descriptive statistics are presented showing varying types and frequencies of micro-group and subgroups. Linguistic items standing for the stance are presented with their frequencies of occurrence and analytical accounts are -made.

### **Stance Nouns**

A Stance noun is a noun complement structure, where a stance head noun takes a nominal complement clause, a pattern that allows a writer to front-load attitude meanings and offers an explicit statement of evaluation of the proposition which follows (Jiang and Hyland, 2016). Stance nouns in the current study were variously employed as -shown in Figure 2 below.



**Figure 2: Micro-types and Frequencies of Occurrence of Stance Nouns**

Figure 2 shows that the authors registered their authorial stance using three categories of stance nouns which consist of relations, attributes and entity. The most dominant was relations, notably in stance nouns representing utterance followed by the nouns denoting entity objects which belong to the entity category. The subcategories within attributes were comparably not as popular. The total number of frequencies was 2,895.

Below are detailed accounts of each micro-group of author stance under stance nouns.

**Entity Object**

In entity object, there were a total of 429 (15%) frequencies out of the overall total 2,895 functioning as entity objects. There were three subsumed specific linguistic items, the most popular of which was *the paper* which occurred 211 times, similar to 49% followed by *report*, which occurred 127 times, similar to 30%. The last was *extract* equal to 21%.

The events sub-category had 328 frequencies, similar to 11% of all stance nouns. This sub-category was realized by three linguistic items which, according to their magnitudes of occurrences consisted of *process* (132, 40%), *evidence* (114, 35%) and *change* (82, 25%).

The discourse subcategory was noted 409 times which represented 14% of all stance nouns. It consisted of two linguistic items - (*claim* and *conclusion*) the frequencies and percentages of which were 218 (53%), 119 (29%) and 72 (18%), respectively.

The last sub-category in the entity category consisted of cognition nouns which occurred 328 times, representing 11% of stance nouns. This was realized by 4 linguistic items, the most prevalent of which was *belief* which was used 136 times representing 41%. The remaining three were *idea*, *doubt* and *decision* which had a total of 74 frequencies (23%).

### **Attribute Nouns**

According to Jiang (2017), attribute nouns are in the format of “noun + that” structure, where a stance head noun takes a nominal complement clause which allows a writer to express authorial stance towards complement content and attribute a voice to that stance through pre-modification.

The attribute nouns occurred 578 times, similar to 20% of all stance nouns. It subsumed two subcategories of author stance nouns; manner nouns and quality nouns. The former occurred 345 times (equal to 60% of all attribute nouns) and the latter occurred 230 times (equal to 40%). The manner nouns were realized by the following linguistic items: *Method* (109, 32%), *Extent* (101, 29%), *way* (88, 26%) and *times* (47, 13%). The quality nouns were linguistically realized by *difficulties* (103, 44%), *advantage* (92, 40%), and *value* (35, 16%). In short, the data showed manner nouns dominated over quality nouns both in terms of number of linguistic items and overall frequencies in the category of attribute nouns. As per magnitude of use of individual linguistic items *difficulties* and *advantage* were the most prevalent and were both in the quality nouns sub-group.

A similar study by Jiang (2017) examined employment of stance nouns in a corpus of 60 journal articles across six disciplines extracted from the BNC corpus. Developing an expressive classification of stance nouns and the possible voice categorization, the study showed that the structure was not only widely used to project stance and voice, but that it displayed considerable variation in the way that it is used to build knowledge across different disciplines.

### Relation Nouns

Starosta (1985) sees relational nouns as constructions that are characterized as functioning syntactically as nouns, although they convey the meaning for which other languages use adpositions (i.e. prepositions and postpositions). He adds that a relational noun is grammatically speaking a simple noun, but because its meaning describes a spatial or temporal relation rather than a ‘thing’, it describes location, movement, and other relations just as prepositions do in the languages that have them. When used the noun is owned by another noun and describes a relation between its ‘owner’ and a third noun.

This was the third and last category of stance nouns and it registered 431 frequencies of occurrence (similar to 15%). It subsumed two subcategories, which are cause and effect nouns which predominated with 395 frequencies, (equal to 91%), and difference nouns, with minimal extent of use as it occurred only 36 (similar to 9%). Cause – and-effect subcategory was realized by three items the most recurring being *result* followed by *cause* with 204 (52%) and 121 (31%) frequencies, respectively. The least used was *amount*, which was used 70 times (equal to 17). As for the difference nouns, there were four linguistic items realizing them, the most used of which was *difference* followed by *contract* with 18 (50%) and 10 (28%) occurrences, respectively. The least used was *reasons*, which was used 8 times (similar to 2) only.

Generally, looking at stance nouns, one can conclude that they make a highly comprehensive category of authorial stance which is also very rich in diversity in terms of both the subcategories subsumed under each category and the number-and- extent of recurrence of linguistic items realizing each sub-category.

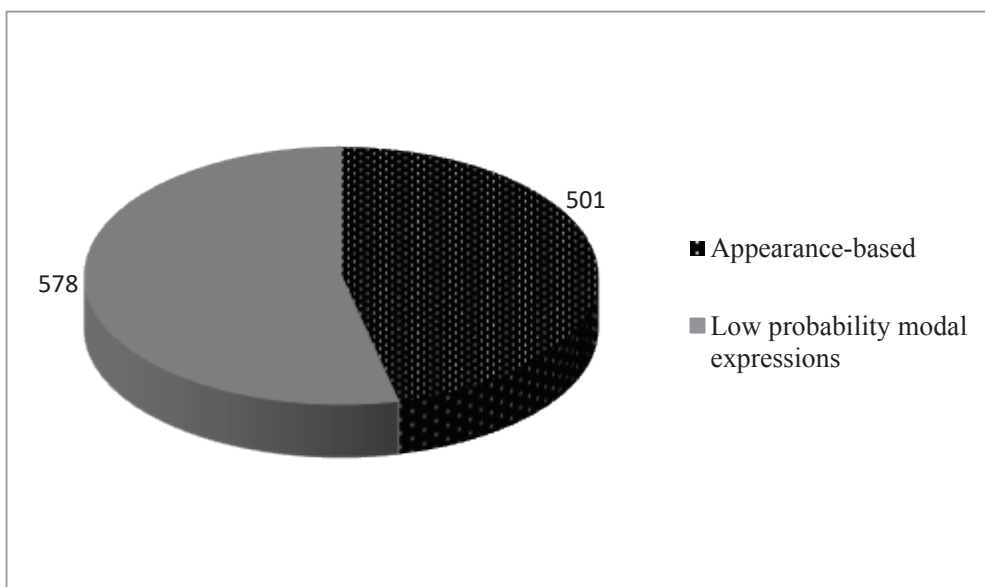
Elsewhere, a more or less similar finding was in a study by Jiang and Hyland (2016) who explored the frequencies, forms and functions of this structure in a corpus of 160 research articles across eight disciplines totaling 1.7 million words. Developing a new rhetorically based classification of stance nouns, their findings showed that the structure was not only widely used to express author comment and evaluation, but that it exhibited considerable variation in the way that it was used to build knowledge across different disciplines. Also, earlier on, Asmuth and Gentner (2005) explored context sensitivity of relational nouns. They noted that the relational nouns were more context- sensitive than entity nouns in

two conceptual combination recognition tasks. Across two experiments, they investigated people's ability to recognize entity nouns and relational nouns either in the same context as at encoding or in a different context. The findings revealed that (1) participants showed greater recognition sensitivity for entity nouns than for relational nouns and (2) relational nouns showed a greater disadvantage in recognition in new contexts relative to old contexts. Thus, the encoding of relational nouns appears to be more influenced by context than the encoding of entity nouns.

### **Hedging**

Hedges are linguistic items used the writer to represent a weakening of a claim through an explicit qualification of the writer's commitment. This may be to show doubt and indicate that information is presented as opinion rather than accredited fact, or it may be to convey deference, humility, and respect for colleagues' views (Myers, 1989; Hyland, 1996b).

This kind of author stance was used variously with two categories, each with differing magnitudes of use as illustrated in figure 3 below.



**Figure 2: Extent of Use of Forms of Hedging as Author Stance**

Data in figure 3 above indicate presence of stance indicators. These were used almost equally. The first, low probability modal expressions, registered 578 frequencies, similar to 54% of all 1,079



frequencies of hedging items. The second, known as appearance based hedging items, was used 501, similar to 46% of all frequencies under hedging.

The appearance – based evidential verbs subgroup was realized by 4 linguistic items, the most prevalent of which was *suggests* with 192 frequencies, equal to 38%. This was closely followed by *implies* the frequencies of which were 171 (equal to 34%). The other two which were not so popular, were *appear* and *seem*, with 81 (16%) and 63 (12%) frequencies, respectively.

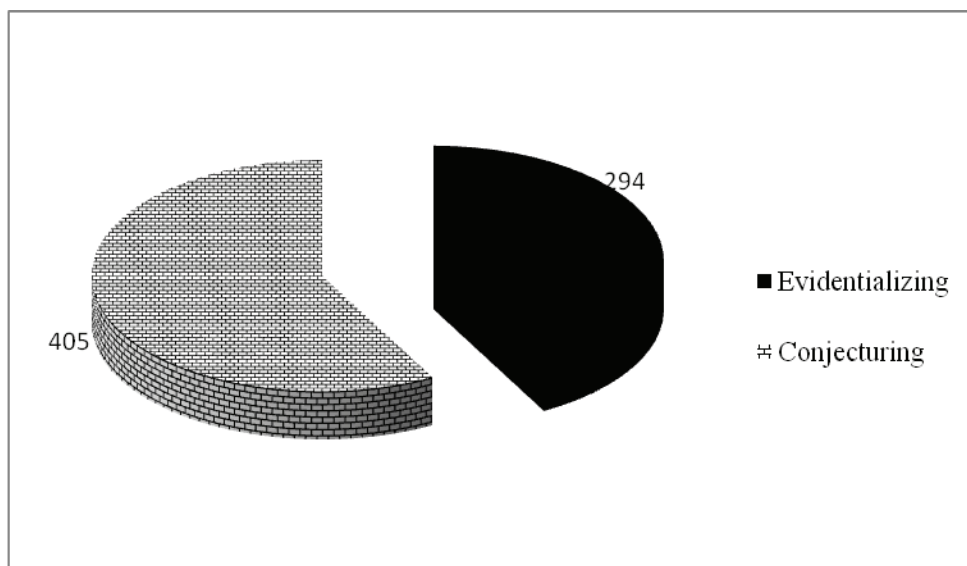
On the other hand, the low probability model verbs were realized by 7 linguistic items. The most recurring one was *perhaps* with 193 frequencies, equaling 33%, followed by *may* which occurred 117 times, similar to 20%. Others, with their frequencies and percentages of occurrence in descending order, are *possibly* (73, 13%), *could* (69, 11%), *might* (58, 10%), “*seem reasonable* (39, 6%) and last least of all *I/we think* (29, 5%). In general, low probability expressions predominated as hedging strategy of authorial stance both in terms of overall frequencies and in the number of items.

The findings are concurrent with Hinkel (2005) who analyzed the types and frequencies of hedges and intensifiers employed in NS and NNS academic essays included in a corpus of L1 and L2 student academic texts (745 essays/220,747 words). The study compared the NS and NNS frequencies of uses of various types of hedging devices and intensifiers in written academic prose. The findings show that L2 writers employed a severely limited range of hedging devices, largely associated with conversational discourse and casual spoken interactions. Similarly, a study by Alg (2012) investigated the types, frequencies and functions of hedges and boosters employed in L1 and L2 argumentative paragraphs written by Turkish learners of English with pre-intermediate level of proficiency. The results show that the types, frequencies, and meanings of hedges and boosters are culture and language-specific and they are topic and genre dependent. He also found that the study participants often expressed appropriate degree of certainty and pragmatic vagueness while writing in L1 and L2. However, there were some cases in which the evidence of rhetorical transfer are observed with respect to functions of certain hedges.

### **Evidence – based Argumentation**

This refers to closely investigating a wide variety of primary and secondary sources, writers begin to develop their own arguments

(Monte-Sano, 2011). This third category of author stance was found in two subcategories the differing frequencies of which are illustrated in figure 4 below.



**Figure 4: Extent of Evidence –based Argumentation**

Data in figure 4 above inform that the two sub-groups of evidence –based argumentation are two. The first are those serving conjecturing role which had higher extent of use by having 405 frequencies, similar to 58% of all 699 items of evidence – based argumentation. The second, serving the evidentialising role had 294 frequencies, similar to 32%.

The conjecturing argumentation sub-category was realized by 4 linguistic items in which *possible that* the most frequently used with 151 frequencies, similar to 37%, followed by *perhaps* with 117 frequencies, equal to 295. The other two, not as popular, are *likely* and *in my/our view* with 75 (19%) and 62 (15%) frequencies, respectively.

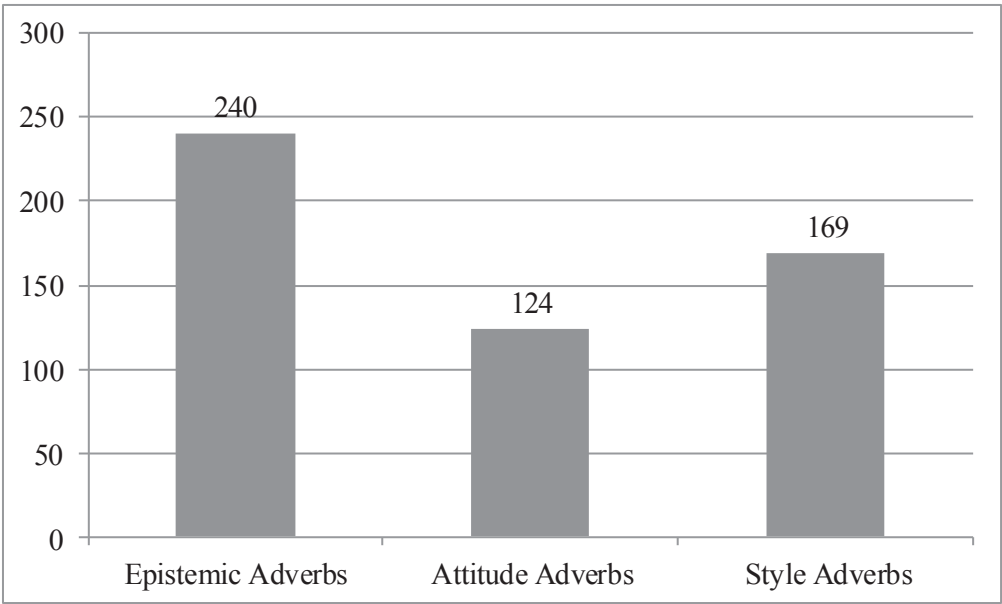
Conversely, evidentialising linguistic items, with *suggest* being the most dominant with 142 (48%) frequencies while *seem* ranked second by occurring 132 (45%) times. The last item was *appear* which was used 21 times (equal to 7%). In short, evidentializing argumentation subcategory was dominant over conjecturing forms of argumentation both by overall frequencies and by number of linguistic items.

A similar study was done by Kibler and Hardigree (2017) in their 8-year longitudinal case study of Fabiola, a Spanish-English bilingual, seeking to assess her argumentative writing development, with a focus on her use of evidence to support and develop arguments over time from high school through university. Data sources included 36 writing samples. Texts across grade levels and course types were analyzed to determine changes in evidential types (quotations and paraphrases), evidential functions, and reporting verbs used to introduce evidence. Evidentials were found to vary according to course type, but more dramatic changes (in type, function, and range of reporting verbs used) were found over time as language proficiency and writing expertise developed,

**Stance Adverbs**

Stance adverbials are items which express stance. Silver (2003: 372) notes that they function to construct knowledge claims and a “writer’s professional persona”. Biber (2006: 99) is more specific in referring to stance adverbs as items which express attitude or assessment towards a proposition.

This last category of author stance was manifested in three subcategories the differing frequencies of which are summarized in figure 5 below.



**Figure 5: Extent of use of Stance Adverbs**

The data in figure 5 above show that stance adverbs were 533 in total. These stance adverbs subsumed three subcategories, the most dominant of which was epistemic adverbs the frequencies of which are 240 (similar to 45%), followed by style adverbs with 169 (31%). Attitude Adverbs were least used with 124 (24%) frequencies.

The epistemic adverbs were realized by 4 linguistic items; the most frequently used of which was *certainly* with 75 (31%) frequencies. Closely following it was *probably* which had 72 (30%) frequencies. The other two were *perhaps* and *in fact* used 48 (20%) and 45 (19%) times, respectively. As for style adverbs, there were two linguistic realizers: *generally* and *typically* with 97 (57%) and 72 (43%) frequencies. Attitude adverbs made the third and last category in popularity. These were realized by two items: *importantly* with 63 frequencies, similar to 51%, and *interestingly*, with 61 frequencies, which is equal to 49%.

Generally, epistemic adverbs predominated this category of author stance in terms of overall frequencies as well the number of linguistic items.

Elsewhere, similar studies have been conducted. One of such studies is Cakir (2016) who, by comparing abstracts written by Turkish and native writers of English, sought to explore how academic writers from different scientific communities construct author's stance in research article abstracts, focusing specifically on stance adverbs. The corpus consists of 240 abstracts from the disciplines of sociology, psychology, linguistics, physics, chemistry and biology. The results revealed significant differences in the total number of stance adverbs. Native writers of English employed more stance adverbs in their abstracts than Turkish writers. Differences were also found of stance adverbs in soft and hard sciences. Academic writers in the soft sciences used more stance adverbs in their abstracts. Earlier on, Ahmad and Mehrjooseresht (2012) assessed how L2 writers make their stance in 30 doctoral theses in the field of Engineering, in one of the major research universities in Malaysia. The results showed that writers expressed their evaluations using different adverbial stance types and at varying frequency according to the rhetorical moves commonly found in abstracts. The epistemic stance adverbs had the highest frequency of use.

## Conclusion

As revealed both in the surveyed literature and in the current study, the observance of and adherence to conventions, academic writing is determined by the major international Englishes' native speakers' choice and establishment of writing canons and norms. This explains why the studied authors' styles did not differ significantly within and between their academic specializations, on the one hand, and between them and the other authors surveyed in the literature who adhered to British conventions of academic writing, on the other hand.

The dominance of relational macro-category of authorial stance is highly telling in terms of the authors' registering their stance in relation to others scholars. In other words, these authors have empirically subscribed to the claim by Hyland (2010) that academic writing is by no means completely author-evacuated, rigid and impersonal. Rather, they are sites where authors attempt to negotiate some relations with those that share similar or dissimilar views and the potential readers of their works.

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