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Authorial Stance in EFL Master Dissertations
Discussions: A Corpus-Based Study. Case of Master
Two Students at M'sila University

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Dedications

To my loving parents and sisters,

To my supportive partner,

To my friends,

I dedicate this work

~ Amina

To those who are interested,

To those who stood by,

To those who believed,

I dedicate this work

~ Yassamine

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In the name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful

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Abstract

The research into the rhetorical functions that allow for interpersonal communication in academic writing has shown a great deal of interest in EFL learners' academic production. In the light of that, this present study attempts to explore the use of metadiscourse in Algerian EFL novice writers' dissertations as a linguistic recourse to convey their attitude, judgment, and presence to project their authorial stance. The study aims to investigate the projection and conception of authorial stance by M'sila University Master 2 Linguistics students. It additionally seeks to shed light on students' awareness of this intersubjective positioning and teachers' thoughts about it as the main audience of students' writing. This comparative corpus-based study adopted Hyland's (2005) model of interaction as a framework for studying stance in a corpus of 80 research discussion sections, half of which are written by students and half by expert writers. The data from this study undertook qualitative and quantitative analysis assessed by a concordance toolkit. Two questionnaires were designed to gather the data needed from students and teachers. The findings revealed that students use stance markers differently than expert writers. The quantitative analysis showed that they employed fewer instances and forms of stance, especially in the expression of self-mention and hedges, while the qualitative analysis showed that students hold an overly assertive yet impersonal conception of stance. Furthermore, students were found to lack awareness of the concept of authorial stance and the use of stance markers, and teachers acknowledged the importance of and disclosed that they considered it while evaluating students' dissertations; however they did not expect students to show their presence. Hence, this study raises teachers and students' awareness to its subject matter, highlights the importance of authorial stance, and asks for the explicit teaching of stance taking to EFL novice students in their academic writing.

Keywords: authorial stance, stance markers, academic writing, EFL novice students, expert writers.

List of Abbreviations

DS: Discussion section

EAP: English for Academic Purposes

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

ESL: English as Second Language

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

MD: Master dissertation

MDDS: Master Dissertations Discussion Sections

PA: Published article

PADS: Published Articles Discussion Sections

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GENERAL
INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The traditional view that academic writing is impersonal and non-interactive has subduced in the last three decades, today academic writing is seen as a social act appropriated by the author's perspectives and interacting with the reader. As with any interaction, this writer-reader contact is predisposed to conflict and disagreement as each has his or her personal voice, and for the writers' claims to be accepted by the readers, writers must project a strong and appropriate authorial power.

To successfully advertise the correctness and importance of their texts, authors have to be audience-aware, by taking their readers' expectations, knowledge, and interests into consideration and anticipating their reactions. As corpus analysis studies have shown (e.g. Swales, 1990), every scientific community has its own genre, implying a unique usage of linguistic resources to persuade readers, project attitude towards text, and claim a position within the scientific community. So it is evident that writers "[...] must display familiarity with the persuasive practices of their disciplines, encoding ideas, employing warrants, and framing arguments in ways that their potential audience will find most convincing." (Hyland, 2008b, p. 3). This persuasion relies on the implementation of interpersonal resources that fall under metadiscourse especially the projection of authorial stance.

Stance, as defined by Hyland (2008b), is the conventional ways by which the writers present themselves, convey their judgment, opinions, and comments. For its central role in knowledge negotiation and author positioning, stance, as a means on interpersonal interaction, has been studied extensively in recent years under different terminologies including evaluation (Hunston 1994; Hunston & Thompson, 2000), intensity (Labov, 1984), affect (Ochs, 1989), evidentiality (Chafe & Nichols, 1986).

In recent years, stance in EFL students' writing has received considerable attention. Research suggests one of the problematic aspects of academic writing for EFL novice writers is authorial stance (Hyland, 1998c; Schleppegrell, 2004). In fact, it has been revealed that both L1 and L2 writers face difficulties in conveying an appropriate stance (Hood, 2006; Aull & Lancaster, 2014). Loiet al. (2016) indicated the lack of stance in student writing and, according to previous studies, attributed this lack to three factors: the lack of awareness of the value and functions of stance, linguistic and rhetorical differences between learners' first and second languages, and the inadequate instruction that is needed to prepare students to achieve a critical and persuasive stance.

For instance, Akbas (2014) has studied the authorial presence in academic writing of Turkish native speakers, Turkish speakers of English, and English native speakers and found that Turkish speakers of English adapt target language conventions to some extent; however, the impersonal style is still apparent and is likely a transferred academic structure from Turkish language. In an appraisal study of authorial stance in English, Arabic and EFL applied linguistics research, Alramadan (2020) has found that the Saudi EFL students' use of attitude (a stance category) diverges from the way this system is conventionally used in the target discourse community. Taj (2017) has tackled the issues of social and academic identity of Saudi students studying in UK universities. Through the use of diaries of interaction, semi-structured interviews, students' academic written drafts, and stimulated recalls she found that while students are encouraged to take texts' information as factual in Saudi Arabia their attempt to achieve criticality in the western educational context, posed a challenge for them. Chang and Tsai (2014) have studied ESL doctoral students' conceptions of authorial stance in academic knowledge claims and its relation to epistemic beliefs. The finding shows that EFL students were

aware of the linguistic angle to talk about authorial stance, but their description of it was superficial and imprecise although they had robust epistemic beliefs. The present study aims to add more insight to the deployment of stance by novice EFL students in their masters' dissertations and the expectations they face in the assessment of their writing.

Statement of the Problem

Research on academic writing has highlighted the influence of projecting effective stance on academic writing performance (Schleppegrell, 2004; Zhao & Llosa, 2008). The lack of proper stance in the academic writing of EFL students can negatively impact the quality of their writing resulting in poor statements even though the ideas presented by the students could be valuable. This is especially the case in the writing of master's dissertations, although at this level students are not expected to enter a disciplinary community, they are still assessed on how they use the specialized discourse of said community (Belcher & Braine, 1995), this makes investigating its use by EFL students highly important.

Although in recent years the topic has attracted the attention of some Algerian researchers, most of the studies that were conducted focused only on textual features of stance, (Merrouche & Messabhia, 2020, Belouettar & Mesbahi, 2019; Raissi & El-Khatib, 2019); the status of stance in the Algerian context is still not fully covered. To the best knowledge of the researchers, there has been no study in the Algerian EFL sphere that put under investigation all of the participants of this academic interaction, namely the author, the text, and the audience, while exploring stance in the written production of students. This study aims to fill this gap by the investigation of M'sila Master 2 linguistics students' awareness of this social aspect of academic writing, the examination of their use of stance markers as a means of interpersonal communication, as well as the exploration of teachers' standpoint toward that.

Research questions

Responding to the stated problem, this study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What differences are there between the stance markers employed by Linguistics Master 2 M'sila students in dissertations' discussions and expert writers in published research articles' discussions?
2. What might stance markers used by M'sila Master 2 Linguistics students reveal about their conception of authorial stance?
3. How familiar are M'sila Master 2 Linguistics students with the concept of authorial stance and the use of stance markers?
4. What are the examiners and supervisors' thoughts and expectations about stance taking in Master 2 Linguistics students' dissertations at M'sila University?

Objectives of the Study

The study intends to raise M'sila Master 2 Linguistics students' awareness of the importance of using stance markers as a means of taking authority of the text and framing persuasive claims in their masters' dissertations. The study also aims to provide the students with a guide on how to better discuss their research through shedding light on what examiners expect and anticipate while evaluating students' dissertations when it comes to stance taking.

Furthermore, it intends to draw teachers' attention to this challenging aspect of academic writing for the improvement of pedagogical practices in M'sila University.

Significance of the Study

This study's findings would contribute to the quality of research produced in the Algerian University by English Master 2 students as authorial stance is an important feature of academic writing that is; yet, to be sufficiently explored in the Algerian EFL context. By showing how

M'sila Master 2 Linguistics students are actually using stance markers in their writing and how this use aligns with or diverges from the conventions of their discipline, this study hopes to raise their awareness to the concept of authorial stance and the proper use of stance markers.

Additionally, this study is beneficial to teachers of academic and research writing as it brings the significance of authorial stance into light and provides them with a starting point on how and what to focus on in teaching this intricate subject. In this fashion, they would be able to provide the students with the adequate knowledge to write more efficiently and persuasively and create a strong researcher persona.

Finally, this research strives to motivate more research on this topic and inspire students to explore it from different perspectives as it is heavily underrated as of date in the Algerian EFL context despite its potential benefits to Algerian researchers.

Research Methodology

This research adopts a comparative corpus based study to investigate the use of stance markers by M'sila university students in their dissertations. It also makes use of two questionnaires, one is addressed to students and the other is addressed to supervisors and examiners to further understand both the students and teachers views on authorial stance. The corpus is analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. To answer the first two questions of this study, students and expert writers' application of stance markers are compared statistically, and semantic functions are drawn from them. The corpus consists of a total of 80 discussion sections extracted from 40 students' dissertations and 40 published articles.

Hyland's model of stance adopted from his interaction model (2005b) is used to study stance markers in this study alongside a list of stance markers he proposed in his book *Metadiscourse* (2005a). The frequencies are obtained through the concordance program AntCont

(2020), which also shows the linguistic environment of the targeted items making the semantic functions study easily accessible. The students' questionnaire is addressed to linguistics master 2 students of M'sila University to answer the third research question and has the total of 15 respondents. The teachers' questionnaire is conducted with 15 teachers from Algerian universities who have experience in evaluating Master Linguistics dissertations, this is in order to answer the last question of this research and obtain their experts comments on the results from the corpus study.

Structure of Dissertation

This study is divided into two chapters, each one contains different sections. The first chapter presents the theoretical framework of the study and reviews related research on the subject, it is divided into three sections. The first section provides insights into the nature of academic writing as a social negotiation of knowledge, and discusses the importance of persuasion and audience reader-awareness. The second section delves into stance; it covers its definitions and theoretical conceptions by different linguists, branches into its use in academic writing and its importance therein, and reveals how it can pose a challenge for novice EFL learners. The third section proposes metadiscourse as a framework for the study of stance. It provides definitions of metadiscourse, interpersonal metadiscourse and its interactional dimension. It also explains the Hyland's (2005b) model of stance that this study adopts. The second chapter contains four sections. The first section details the methodology the study follows. The second section presents the findings and their analysis. The third section provides the discussion of findings. The last section offers suggestions and recommendations to the teachers and the students at M'sila University for the betterment of the teaching and learning process in the hopes of advancing research quality in the Algerian universities.

Operational Definitions

Authorial Stance: The conventional ways writers present themselves, convey their judgment, opinions, and comments. Its main components being: Evidentiality (boosters and hedges), Affect (attitude markers), and Presence (self-mention).

Master 2 Linguistic students: Students who have completed their three years of undergraduate studies in English Language and Literature and are in the second, and last, cycle of Linguistics graduate major.

Expert Writers: This term is used interchangeably in this study with Published Writers; it refers to linguists with the academic disposition enabling them to be published in high ranking linguistics journals.

Master 2 Dissertations: Can be defined as a type of research paper that is required for the completion and attainment of a Master Degree at Algerian universities.

Published Articles: In this study, this term refers to articles published in high ranking linguistics journals.

Discussion Section: The section of a research paper where the results of the study are discussed in respect of the questions of the study, it could be considered as a writing genre.

CHAPTER ONE

ACADEMIC WRITING, AUTHORIAL STANCE, AND METADISCOURSE

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an indispensable theoretical background about the key concepts in this study, namely academic writing, metadiscourse, and stance. It presents the social aspect of academic writing drawing on the role of stance as an interpersonal communication function studied from the perspective of interpersonal metadiscourse. This chapter presents the framework of the study and tackles the previous studies on stance. Finally, it explains the model of interaction, focusing on stance, followed in this study.

Academic Writing

What is Academic Writing

Scholarly conversations are the backbone of academia. Scientific communities are maintained through the continuous communication between the members and the reporting of findings (Swales, 2004). Scholarly conversations can consist of publications, conferences, online discussions, and more events surrounding a particular topic. However, many of these conversations are carried through written research, published material such as books, essay collections, or journal articles; as Graff and Birkenstein (2010) claim academic writing is a way of entering a conversation with others. Writing is a reliable medium through which discussions can be organized and facilitated to reach. And since researchers write for the most part write for specific audiences, conventional norms of writing are followed to maximize understanding and avoid ambiguities, that is to say they all write academically (Hyland 2015a).

Academic writing is the formal writing used by academics. It is characterized by its logic, clarity, and precision Aceto (2003). In defining academic writing, Oshima and Hogue (2007) differentiate between personal, or creative writing, and academic writing. The former, such as stories and letters, is informal. The latter, used in high school and college classes, is cautious and formal. They also note that academic writing in English may differ from that in other languages in its structure, lexicon, and grammar (Oshima & Hogue, 2007). Hartley (2008) explains that through the examination of scientific texts it becomes apparent that there is a generally accepted way of writing them. He states that scientific text is precise, impersonal and objective.

Biber and Conrad (2009) consider academic writing as "a very general register, characterized as written language that has been carefully produced and edited, addressed to a large number of readers who are separated in time and space from the author, and with the

primary communicative purpose of presenting information about some topic" (p. 23). They define register with non-linguistic characteristics, as the cover term for a particular type of writing associated with a particular situational context and purpose. In their categorization of major situational differences, they characterize academic writing by the lack of interaction.

Academic Writing as a Social Act

When talking about the social aspect of academic writing what is usually brought up is research publication and academics livelihood. However, what is meant to be discussed under this heading is how academic writing is a form of social interaction.

Many definitions and characterizations of academic writing above emphasize on it being impersonal and non-interactional. As seen, these are supposed to be criteria for formality and objectiveness that the writer must follow for his or her work to be “scientific”. Conversely, after his already stated explanation, Hartley (2008) goes on to criticize this characteristic by illustrating how even renowned scientists write in a personal manner and their presence can be felt in the text.

In fact, the main role of academic writing is the communication of knowledge, and knowledge is not always an unequivocal fact, its truth in most cases depends on its soundness within a theory. As Hyland (2008b) aptly puts it “But scientific methods provide less reliable bases for proof than commonly supposed... the problem with scientific knowledge then, is that interpretation always depends on the assumptions scientists bring to the problem.” (p. 3). Interpretation of the fact by the reader can be in favor or against what the writer is arguing for, making it the task of the writer to prove the truth of her claim through the textual practices accepted by her scientific community (Hyland, 2008b). This entails that there must be some sort of interaction between the writer and the reader where the factuality of statements is negotiated.

Academic writing then is fundamental in the mediation of knowledge between the members of a given scientific community and is a focal point in the negotiation of facts. This constructivist view draws on Vygotsky's ideas that Knowledge is socially constructed (McKinley, 2015). Constructivists believe that learning and knowledge are socially created rather than innate or passively obtained (Fox, 2001). On its part, the social constructivist approach to academic writing focuses on the communicative and interpersonal nature of academic writing as ways knowledge is negotiated and persuasion is used to turn statements into facts (Latour & Woolgar, 1986; Latour 1987; Gilbert & Mulkay, 1984).

The social constructivist view focuses on how social norms arise to become stabilized, and how these norms then help individuals create and negotiate meaning. In other words, this perspective is concerned with how individuals shape form and meaning by using tools provided to them by the norms: socially available discursive repertoire, and how social conventions are appropriated by individual writers as they react to different rhetorical situations in the writing process (Matsuda, 2015). As a result, knowledge negotiation is within the perceived reality that results from the textual interaction between the writer and reader. For this, it is very important to be aware of the audience and their expectations.

Academic writing is persuasive by the nature of its purpose. This view is not new and is generally accepted today by all scholars. When writing, researchers are engaged in an argument with the reader as they propose their claim and support it in order to persuade them with the soundness of their logic and point of view (Abdesslem, 2020). Hunston (1989) argues that while research articles are seen as factual, objective and impersonal, their real goal is to persuade, which is an interpersonal act, as they seek to influence the reader to accept a point of view. Adding that while discourse is often taken as composed of field, tenor, and mode i.e. field is the

subject matter of the text, tenor is the relationship between the writer and reader, and mode is the text's construction be it written or spoken. She argues that these elements are not separable and so the field in academic writing has persuasive effects and is affected by the mode and tenor (i.e. channel, writer, and audience).

Disciplinary Variation and Audience Awareness

So what makes academic writing good or bad? Surely, following the norms and conventions of academic writing will result in a good piece of writing; however, as Rogers (2014) notes “The ultimate judgment of the quality of our scientific writing efforts lies with the readers themselves. If the learned reader follows our train of thought and understands our message, then the writing has fulfilled its primary purpose.” The success of academic writing lies within the ability to efficiently communicate thoughts and facts with the reader and have him or her persuaded by the claims the writer presents.

To make the text comprehensible to the reader, it is important to be familiar with the discursal practices of the target disciplinary community. Eggins and Martin (1997) indicate that linguists have defined genres as different ways of using language to achieve culturally established tasks. They argue that texts with different purposes will unfold in different ways. Since each scientific discipline has its own aims and ideology, the texts they produce are evidently different from one another.

This means that writers must know the rhetorical choices available in their field that would appeal to readers from their disciplines which includes evaluation of the audience and writers' relationship with them (Hyland, 2008b). It is then important to know the norms of carrying out a persuasive composition within a discourse community to properly interact with the reader and meet their expectation since persuasion, as it has been demonstrated, is the core of

academic writing. Indeed, Hyland (2000) calls the role of the researcher ‘persuasive: convincing peers’ and establishing credibility and states that writers should select words that draw, influence, and persuade the reader.

Stance

Theoretical Conception of Stance

The interpersonal linguistic resources that authors use to comment on a text and show their attitudes towards it and the reader have been the focus of many linguistic studies. They have taken many labels but are essentially related to the same scope e.g. Evidentiality (Chafe & Nichols, 1986), Affect (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989), Evaluation (Hunston, 1994; Hunston & Thompson, 2000), Intensity (Labov, 1984), Appraisal (Martin, 2000), and Stance (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Conrad & Biber, 2000).

Gray and Biber (2012) confer that taken together, these previous studies show that the expression of stance can vary across two parameters: Functional (Attitude/status of knowledge) and Linguistic (Lexical/grammatical). The first referring to the meaning of the statement, and the latter referring to the linguistic level on which it is expressed.

Studies tackling the issues of authorial stance abound; however, it can be argued that there has been two major influences in the field (Gray & Biber, 2012), Evidentiality (Chafe & Nichols, 1986), and Affect (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1989). The term Evidentiality is used generally to refer to both the source and the reliability of the speaker's knowledge. In a broad sense it can be defined, according to Mithun (1986, pp. 89-90), as:

- Specification of the source of knowledge.
- Specification of the degree of precision or truth or appropriateness of a category label.
- Specification of the probability of the truth or mode of knowing.

- Specification of the expectations concerning the probability of a statement.

Whereas, affect refers to emotions, feelings, moods, dispositions, and attitudes associated with persons and/or situations. The idea proposes that languages do not only communicate referential information but also affective information as languages are responsive to peoples' need to share their emotions, moods, and attitudes towards uncertain information (Ochs, & Schieffelin, 1989). In discussing the pragmatic properties of affective markers, Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) differentiate between two affective functions features: intensity of utterances and affective specifics, i.e. the particular attitude or emotion of utterances.

Unlike evidentiality, affect deals with the emotional dimension of utterances not the epistemic dimension. However, Biber and Finegan (1989) have noted that English uses the same grammatical devices in the realization of evidentiality and affect, and they synthesized the two models into one broader model of stance. In this modal, evidentiality indicates the level of certainty (e.g. surely, exactly) or doubt (e.g. may, possibly), and affect could be positive (e.g. gladly, like) or negative (e.g. unfortunate, shame).

Through a cluster study of stance markers across 500 spoken and written texts, Biber and Finegan (1989) indicate six different styles of stance present in English: 'Emphatic Expression of Affect', 'Taceless Stance', 'Interactional Evidentiality', 'Expository Expression of Doubt', 'Predictive Persuasion', 'Oral Controversial Persuasion'. In later work, Biber et al.(1999) extend this framework, adding along evidentiality and affect or what they labeled epistemic and attitudinal stance respectively, a third category indicating 'style of speaking' (Biber & Conrad, 2009). Epistemic stance markers are used to present speaker comments on the status of knowledge in a proposition. They can mark certainty, doubt, actuality, precision, or limitation. They can also indicate the source of knowledge or the perspective from which the information is

given. Attitudinal stance makers are less common than epistemic stance markers and are more grammatically limited, they can be clearly attitudinal (e.g. oddly, luckily) while others mark personal feelings (e.g. love, hate). The third category of stance devices is style of speaking, presenting speaker/writer comments on the communication itself (e.g. honestly, in truth) (Biber et al., 1999).

Numerous works have been completed under the frame of metadiscourse. Hyland (2005b) has proposed a model of stance oriented towards academic writing where stance refers to the writer's textual 'voice' or community recognized personality. He has suggested that authorial stance can be realized through hedges and boosters (evidentiality), attitude markers (affect), and self-mention (presence). A detailed account of this model shall be presented in the sections below.

Evaluation is another term that comes up when discussing stance, as evaluative resources offer the author/speaker's evaluation of a proposition. Thompson and Hunston (2000) define evaluation as "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about." They (as cited in Gray & Biber, 2012, p. 18) outline four parameters that evaluative language can convey:

1. Evaluations of positive and negative values or characteristics (value in Hunston, 1994);
2. The degree of certainty the speaker/writer has with regard to information (status in Hunston, 1994);
3. How obvious or expected the information is to the hearer/reader;
4. Importance or relevance (relevance in Hunston, 1994).

There are four factors of evaluation: certainty/ likelihood, desirability/ goodness, obviousness/ expectedness, and importance/ relevance, where certainty and desirability are the

central parameters of evaluation. Certainty shows how certain the writer is about the information. Desirability expresses how desirable the writer thinks the information is (Thompson & Hunston, 2000).

Closely related to the evaluation approach is the appraisal approach proposed by Martin and White (2005). This approach was developed within the systemic functional linguistics paradigm of Halliday and Matthiessen(2004). It attends to the traditional views of affect, epistemic modality and evidentiality. In addition to that, not only does it account for the speaker/writer's certainty, commitment, and knowledge, but also “how textual voice position itself with respect to other voices and positions” (Martin & White, 2005).

Appraisal itself encompasses three interacting domains – ‘attitude’, ‘engagement’ and ‘graduation’. Attitude is divided into ‘affect’, ‘judgment’ and ‘appreciation’ dealing with feelings, and emotional reactions, judgments of behavior and evaluation of things; engagement dealing with “the ways in which resources such as projection, modality, polarity, concession and various comment adverbials position the speaker/writer with respect to the value position being advanced and with respect to potential responses to that value position”; and graduation attends to grading the force of evaluation of a phenomena (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 35-36-37).

Stance in Academic Writing

As a reaction to the traditional belief that academic writing is objective and focuses on the reporting of factual information, discourse analysts over the past three decades have given the study of evaluative language considerable attention. Hunston (1993, 1994) argues that the aim of academic discourse is to persuade, and thus, academic writing fundamentally cannot be objective and impersonal (Hyland, 2005a). Many studies followed these perspectives in the

investigation of stance in academic discourse (e.g. Baratta, 2009; Hunston, 1993, 1994; 2000; Hyland and Tse, 2005).

However, as Gray & Biber (2012) note, these studies argue for the importance of stance in academic writing by limiting the scope of investigation to this single register, while conversely, comparative register studies show that academic writing is in fact objective and impersonal. Indeed, Hyland and Jiang (2016) states that “we need to acknowledge that overt stance expressions are far less common in academic prose than in other registers” (p. 3). For example, 75 percent of the written academic texts analyzed in Biber and Finegan (1989) were statistically categorized as ‘faceless’ i.e. “characterized by the relative absence of all stance features and the unmarked assumption that the discourse assertions are factual”. They propose that one reason for the large number of ‘faceless’ texts in English could be that stance is, in fact, not overtly marked in many types of English texts. While most personal letters were grouped in the ‘emphatic expression of affect’ cluster, and most public speeches were grouped in the ‘oral controversial persuasion’ stance category.

Another distinction drawn from the comparative studies is the difference between stance in spoken and written forms. Stance is found to be prevalent in personal registers and explicitly persuasive written registers (e.g. newspaper articles) (Gray & Biber, 2012). Even in academic context, university spoken register is found to be more stance-laden than the written register (Biber, 2006). Furthermore, Hyland and Jiang (2016) argue that it should be acknowledged that features of stance in academic writing are not static and unchanging.

However, studies have shown that there are some unique stance patterns present in academic written register. Written academic registers use complement clauses headed by stance nouns as explicit markers of stance, while these structures are largely absent from all spoken

academic registers (Gray & Biber, 2012). And from the studies of evaluative lexis it should be clear that it is important to study implicit markers of stance. As Hunston (1994) states “the description of the implicitness and metaphorisation of personal assessment in research articles helps to account for the 'inversion' (Latour & Woolgar, 1979,p. 240) by which scientists, when writing experimental research articles, attempt to persuade by appearing not to persuade at all.” Meaning that although persuasion, and thus subjectivity, is an integral aspect of academic writing, writers tend to accomplish this persuasion implicitly so as their claims seem more factual to the reader than mere opinions. Stance then is still of importance in the understanding of persuasion in academic writing and how authors position themselves to the readers.

Importance of Stance in Academic Writing

The presentation of self is important in academic writing (Ivanic, 1998). Ivanic suggests four aspects of writer identity: ‘autobiographical self,’ ‘discoursal self,’ ‘self as author’ and ‘possibilities for self-hood’. In which ‘discoursal self,’ can be roughly acquitted to authorial stance. Researchers cannot write without projecting ourselves and impressions in discourse, it is impossible not to take a stance (Hyland & Jiang, 2016).

Though there may be considerable differences between disciplines’ scientific observations, findings cannot speak by themselves without any help or trace of the author behind them (Fløttum, 2012). And so the different conventions of projecting authorial presence existing across disciplines are key features to academic writing (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Swales, 2004).

The importance of stance lies in the role it plays in the negotiation of meaning and agreement with the reader, for whom they are used, and the impression of the writer leaves the reader with. Stance in text embodies the author’s choices to represent his individuality within the

sea of disciplinary practices while still conforming to them (Hyland & Guinda, 2012). Hyland (2012) further elaborates on the importance of stance stating:

Their importance lies in the fact that we do not just say what we think and get it over with, but take care to design a text for particular recipients so that, as far as possible, it meets the rhetorical expectations, processing abilities and information needs of readers in our social groups. The arguments we make, the positions we take and the ways we try to connect and fit in with others, all contribute to the presentation of ourselves and so influence how others respond to us. Every text therefore provides writers with an opportunity to construct a disciplinary-aligned presence and shape a credible self. (p. 135).

Academic writing then is embedded in wider social and discursive practices which carry expectations on how participants' relationships are formed and how these practices should be organized and negotiated. In addition to that, from a social constructivist view, social conventions are adopted by individual writers as they react to the particular rhetorical situation while writing, and at the same time writers influence the evolving conventions (Matsuda, 2015). So authors are not only projecting their authorial selves, but are continuously asserting the way they use textual resources to do so, to legitimize their authority.

From what has been stated above, it can be concluded that stance plays a major role in the negotiation of knowledge, the creation of a community accepted self, and the credibility of the author. This makes the appropriate use of stance important for writers to be recognized in their community, and their claims to have a force. It also helps them get their research published and their voice heard (Casanave, 1998 as cited in Kobayashi & Rinnert, 2013).

Stance in Novice ESL Students' Academic Writing

Research carried out on stance and stance related markers in the academic writing of ESL students clearly show that they are problematic aspects of academic writing (Hood, 2004, 2006; Pho, 2008). The studies are usually a comparison between native/experienced with non-native/novice, since, generally, the difficulties are attributed to two factors: the level of English academic writing literacy of students (i.e. being novice writers), and their different sociocultural background.

Academic Stance Literacy Challenges. To understand stance taking in novice writing it is useful to examine studies that compared stance markers at different levels of writing development. In a study on the development of students' academic writing in historical essay and reader negotiation, Coffin (2002) as cited in Akinici (2016) found that as students progress into upper level writing, they adapt different authorial voices, starting from being mere 'interpreters' i.e. discoursal features with the absence of evaluation or judgment to 'adjudicators' i.e. use of engagement resources and communication with the reader. In a similar comparative study, Hewings (2004) investigated stance-taking among undergraduate students at different stages of development within the discipline of Geography. The results of the study revealed that first-year students used fewer instances of stance when compared to third-year students. These findings illustrate how, as students get more familiar with the writing conventions of their discipline, they become more capable to adopt the appropriate stance, meaning that novice writers will evidently find it difficult to adapt to these conventions.

Other studies that demonstrate the differences between novice and expert writers are comparative studies between students writing and published writers. Hewings and Hewings (2002) comparing between students writing and published articles in the use of anticipatory "it" as a stance construct, found that of the main impression dissertations leave is that the student

writers make a much greater and more overt effort to persuade readers of the correctness of their claims than do the published writers. The use of these emphatics means that the students tend to state propositions more forcefully than is acceptable in their disciplinary community. In another study, Aull and Lancaster (2014), through comparative corpus methods, examined the expression of stance in over 4000 argumentative essays written by first year university students, upper level undergraduates, and published academics. They found a great distinction between stance markers used by first year students and the more advanced writers, showing that first year students used stance markers less frequently than appropriate.

In addition, studies show that novice L2 writers tend to use subjective authorial-self, or stance-lacking authorial-self that is closer to being a narration (Chang, 2010). For instance, Hood (2004) found that students show attitude through the use of ‘affection’ and ‘judgment’ making their stance more emotional and personalized as opposed to published writers who use more ‘appreciation’ resources making evaluations about propositions. In parallel with Hood’s findings, Barton (1993) found that student writers presented more personal experiences in their writing exemplifying from real life through the use of ‘affect’ and ‘judgment’.

Similarly, Hewings (2004) found that novice writers do not really understand what arguments and criticism mean within academic writing. Her results showed that students conflict between the use of subject and theme at the start of clauses. She states that “theme has the potential to influence the reader’s interpretation of the rest of the clause and ultimately of the text and can take on a significant role in the domains of evaluation and persuasion.” However, she found that novice students tend to employ more interpersonal and emotion evoking themes than advanced writers. This improper use contributes to texts sounding more descriptive or expository than evaluative.

In exploring negotiation with the readers Hyland (2005b) examined 64 projects written by senior undergraduate students and 240 published research articles from eight disciplines. Through the examination and comparison of engagement devices the corpora showed that although both students and experts used the engagement markers in the same frequency, the diversity of the devices used by expert writers was much higher than the diversity of devices used by students. Hyland attributes this to the students' lack of English vocabulary.

It can be concluded that novice writers face a great deal of trouble trying to deliver on the expectations of their disciples when it comes to stance taking and projecting a credible and strong authorial-self. As presented above, it is the lack of knowledge of the right linguistic features to deploy when arguing and presenting claims and the unfamiliarity with the literary practices of researchers in their domains. Hyland (2012) argues that students are in fact unaware of the interpersonal features of academic language because they were not explicitly taught to them and so they see academic writing as detached and voiceless. EAP courses focus on teaching students the ideational mode of language and how to organize and reason systematically but no systematic attention is given to how these ideational features should be presented in an interactive way with the reader. As a consequence, students are often lost when the teachers vaguely ask them to keep the audience in mind while writing or anticipate the readers' expectations (Hyland, 2012). In addition to that, students are not exactly participants in the community of the disciplines they study; their only actual discourse community they are involved in is the classroom. This results in viewing academic writing as nothing more than a way to fulfill course requirements and not as an engagement with the ongoing dialogue in their disciplines (Beaufort & Williams 2005).

Cultural challenges. Another challenge ESL learners face is the fact that stance and the way it is expressed are very much socially dependent. Students from a non-Anglo cultural background hold different beliefs on what stance to take socially, and different conventions on how stance is projected linguistically. So effective stance taking is relative and dependent on the language and the culture it represents i.e. what it means to project an impactful stance and sources needed to do so. It is then difficult for writers who are not used to seeing writing as interactive to write according to English academic writing norms (Hyland, 2012).

English, unlike many other languages, is considered to be writer responsible language, a term coined by Hinds (1987), to mean that it is the responsibility of the writer to make the message comprehensible to the readers and make sure they understand it (Qi & Liu, 2007). English writers have to always consider their readers and anticipate any difficulties from their part in understanding the text by writing in a style and taking a stance that best suits the writers' aims which can be a daunting task from L2 writers from a different culture whose language is reader-oriented.

Consequently, academic writing may feel unfamiliar and alien to L2 writers. As Hyland (2012) puts it 'The 'self' that is inscribed in academic discourse is strange to newcomers and novices who often feel a conflict in the identity they are portraying using disciplinary-prescribed conventions.' This is true even with L1 novice writers who are expected to weaken their connections with their home culture in favor of the values and language of their disciplinary one (Hyland, 2002). It can be inferred then; L2 writers in the same situation experience a stronger alienation from their home cultures and might even reject the norms of English academic writing as they find their personal experiences diminished and undervalued in the literacy practices of their discourse communities.

Furthermore, the notion of individual voice, sometimes equated with authorial stance, is said to be associated with the ideology of Western individualism. Ramanathan and Kaplan (1996) argue that individual voice fostered in the U.S. classroom writing is difficult for ordinary students and even more so for students from different cultural backgrounds. They assert that voice is culturally restricted and relatively inaccessible to students who are not fully integrated in the culture within which they are writing to. This can be illustrated in the findings of Hyland (2002) on the use of self-mention by Hong Kong undergraduate students in their dissertation where students preferred the use of passive voice and the avoidance of personal pronouns. When interviewed students gave two reasons for their choices: that they were taught not to advertise their own opinions in texts, and that they felt uncomfortable with the personal authority that is implied by the use of personal pronouns (Hyland, 2016).

The importance of the role cultural and educational history of EFL students play on the authorial identity they produce in academic texts is clearly demonstrated by Taj (2017). In investigating the effects of cultural and pedagogical background on the impact of the construction of a writer's identity, Taj (2017) examined the academic writing of Saudi students studying in the UK. She found that the discursual choices made did not always reflect conscious choices, which suggested that they were unaware of the concept of writer identity. For them, achieving an adequate writer identity was secondary; their priority instead was achieving clarity, correct referencing, and displaying knowledge and comprehension of content. She attributed this to the different epistemology they were first taught in and have their identity rooted within. The values of Saudi society emphasized the role of the teachers in the learning process and the students' reliance on them which resulted in negative consequences for the development of an individual authorial identity.

In a sum, these studies show that stance resides within the cultural dimension and its linguistic realization and projection is heavily influenced by its conception within this cultural dimension. It is then not surprising that ESL learners would find it challenging to conform to the norms of English academic writing and to adapt a proper authorial stance that is aptly evaluative and persuasive. This aspect should be considered in the investigation of ESL writers' stance in academic writing and the pedagogical implications of teaching stance in ESL classrooms.

Metadiscourse as an Empirical Approach to Stance

What is Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse is based on the idea that language communication is more than just the exchange of information and knowledge; rather, it is the inclusion of the points of view, attitudes, and judgments in discourse (Hyland, 2005a). According to Hyland (1998c), metadiscourse does not deal with the propositional content of a text; however, it directs the readers to the way they ought to process, comprehend, and evaluate that content.

Crismore (as cited in Nasiri, 2013, p. 69) states that the purpose of metadiscourse is to “direct rather than inform the readers” (1984, p. 280). In other words, metadiscourse involves the aspects of schematic structure of the text which go beyond the subject matter and which portray the presence of the writer; thus, it refers to the materials that authors utilize to organize the texts, to signal their attitude and stance, and to engage with the readers as members of a discourse community (Nasiri, 2013, p. 69). As mentioned in the work of Maria-Graf et al. (2016) metadiscourse is considered as an important specification of interactions between speakers and listeners.

The features of metadiscourse are widely used by multiple authors because they make the discourses more coherent, cohesive and comprehensible (Farahani, 2018), they also shape the

structure of the written discourses, and they help the audience in organizing, interpreting, and evaluating the text information. According to Hyland (2000), metadiscourse contributes in understanding communication as social engagement, as authors can highlight their stance towards both the audience and the content of the text. Writers can also relate the text to a given context and express their personality, credibility, audience-sensitivity and relationship to the message (Hyland, 2005a).

Chambliss and Garner (1996), and Hyland (1996, 1998c) affirm that metadiscourse is considered as one of the key rhetorical features in the production of any piece of discourse. It aids in relating a text to its context by employing language to consider the audience's needs, understandings, knowledge and experiences with texts and a stretch of discourse perhaps could realize both functions (Hyland, 2005a). The significance of metadiscourse and its relation to the readers lies in the fact that a written discourse communicates effectively only when the readers' resources for interpreting have correctly been assessed (Hyland, 1999). Thus, metadiscourse research tends to investigate 'rhetorical functions' that are utilized by authors and speakers 'to talk about their own talk' (Sanderson, 2008) 'or to shape propositional information' along with the authors or speakers' evaluations of that information (Hyland, 2005 as cited in Adel, 2006).

Hyland (2005a, p.5) regards metadiscourse as an increasingly essential concept in research in the 'composition, reading, rhetoric', and the schematic structure of texts. Studies suggest the significance of metadiscourse "in casual conversation, school textbooks, oral narratives, science popularizations, undergraduate textbooks, postgraduate dissertations, and company annual reports" (as summarized by Hyland, 2005a, p. 5). Hyland (2005a) further suggests that metadiscourse seems to be a feature of a variety of languages and genres which has been employed to reveal the 'rhetorical differences' in the written discourses produced by

authors who share diverse cultures. Moreover, He mentions that metadiscourse is considered to ‘contribute to effective comprehension’ and is regarded as a characteristic of good written production of both native and non-native speakers English learners, he also mentions that metadiscourse is thought to comprise an important element of persuasive discourse in the works of Crismore and Farnsworth (1990) and Hyland (1998).

Hyland (2005a, p.5) claims that metadiscourse is an essential “means of facilitating communication, supporting a position, increasing readability, and building a relationship with an audience”. Thus, it has been crucial in writing instruction for academic purposes, as a means to help native and non-native speakers of English in order to express their ideas and to effectively engage with their readers.

Interpersonal Metadiscourse

Metadiscourse was derived from Halliday's macro-functions of language; Halliday (1978, 1994) claims that it is the function that explains the way the writers address the tenor by means of diverse linguistic elements such as personal pronouns, imperatives, adjectives or epistemic verbs (Suau-Jiménez & Dolón, 2014). In addition, Halliday (1973) asserts that when people use language, they usually seek to fulfill these macro-functions of language: ideational, textual, and interpersonal. The former function refers to the use of language to represent ideas and experience; it deals with the propositional content. While, the textual function refers to the use of language to organize the text itself, coherently relating what is said to the audience. The interpersonal function refers to the use of language to interact with readers and to express and understand feelings and evaluations (Nasiri, 2013).

Hyland and Tse (2004) claim that all metadiscourse is interpersonal; “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 armory of rhetorical appeals to achieve this". However, Hyland (2005a) mentions that some researchers categorized metadiscourse as textual and interpersonal; the textual category has the sub-classifications of text connectives, code glasses, validity markers and narrators. The interpersonal category contains illocution markers, attitude markers and commentaries.

Interpersonal metadiscourse, according to Cheng and Steffensen (1996) as mentioned in Abdi (2002), is utilized to develop the relationship between the audience and the author and to include the authors' own beliefs and judgments. Hyland (2005a), states that there are two dimensions of interaction in metadiscourse; he classifies its features into two main categories as interactive and interactional. Interactive metadiscourse features are utilized to help and guide the reader throughout the text; whereas the latter is used in order to involve the reader through the text. This study focuses on the interactional aspect of metadiscourse.

The Interactional Dimension

Hyland (2005a) argues that this dimension deals with how authors conduct interaction through the intrusions and comments in their writing. . Hyland (2015b) ascertain that interactional metadiscourse also deals with the writers' efforts to control the personality level in a discourse and establish a relationship that suits their data, arguments, and audience, "marking the degree of intimacy, the expression of attitude, the communication of commitments and the extent of reader involvement" (Hyland, 2015b, p.3). Here, the author aims "to involve the readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text" (Hyland, 2005a, p.49). Authors include their expression of 'textual voice', or 'community-recognized personality', and the ways they express judgments as well as the linguistic expressions that highlight their stance, judgment, and attitude towards the targeted audience. Hyland (2005a) states that interactional

metadiscourse is evaluative and engaging in a way in which it conveys solidarity. The interactional dimension, according to Hyland (2005a, pp. 52-54) contains five sub-categories:

1. **Hedges** are devices, (*possible, might and perhaps*), that mark the reluctance of the author in order to “present propositional information categorically”.
2. **Boosters** are words, (*clearly and obviously*), that convey certainty and that emphasize the propositions’ force.
3. **Attitude markers** (*interesting and surprising*) display the author’s attitude of propositional information, expressing affective values such as obligation, agreement, surprise, importance.
4. **Engagement markers** refer to building a relationship with the audience, they explicitly address the audience either by focusing their attention or by including them as discourse participants through directives such as imperatives (*see, note, consider*) and modal verbs (*have to, should, must*), and through second person pronouns (*you, your, inclusive we*).
5. **Self-mentions** are features of explicit self-references and self-citations that signal the authorial persona of the authors. Words such as (*I, my, me, mine, we, our, ours*) belong to this category.

These linguistic expressions are an important rhetorical tool authors use to position themselves within the text and guide the reader throughout it.

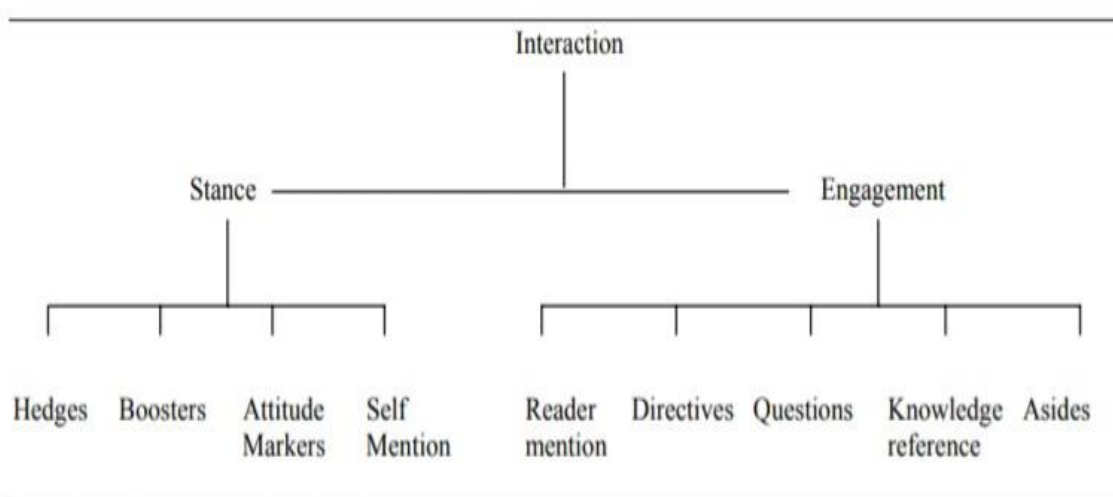
Hyland’s Model of Interaction

Building on his previous notion of metadiscourse, Hyland (2005b) introduced a working model for the interaction between authors and readers. According to this model, writers express their judgment and manage their interaction through the concepts of “stance” and “engagement”.

Stance conveys the judgments, opinions, and commitments of the authors through utilizing stance resources that express a textual voice or community recognized personality or attitude; whereas, engagement refers to recognizing the presence of the readers and including them as discourse participants. Figure 1 illustrates the composition of interaction in Hyland's (2005b) model.

Figure 1

Interactional Macro-functions and their Realizations



Note. This model represents the components of interaction in a text and the linguistic resources to carry them out. From “Stance and engagement: A model of interaction in academic discourse. *Discourse Studies*,” by K. Hyland, 2005, *Discourse Studies*, 7(2), p. 177. Copyright 2005 by SAGE Publications.

According to Hyland (2005a, p. 176), stance “can be seen as an attitudinal dimension and includes features which refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments. It is the ways that writers intrude to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement”. Pho (2013, p.22) viewed Hyland’s definition of stance as more comprehensive than some other definitions because they all entail that stance refers to writers’ attitudes or judgments only. According to her, Hyland’s definition covers the way authors reveal or conceal their identity; for example, through the

employment of first person pronouns or the passive voice. Furthermore, Pho (2013) highlights that Hyland's definition covers what Biber et al. (1999) and some other researchers of stance refer to as 'authorial stance' and it also covers what some authors call 'writer identity', 'authorial voice' or 'authorial 'Stance' (p.22).

According to (Hyland, 2008b, p.7), stance deals with 'writer-oriented features of interaction', it expresses personal feelings, assessments, and professional attitudes towards particular information, the extent of the author's certainty about its veracity, how s/he obtained access to it, and what perspective s/he is taking to it and to the reader. He identified three main components of stance: evidentiality, affect, and presence, which is materialized with features such as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention. Evidentiality refers to the authors' expressed commitments to the reliability of the propositions they present and their potential impact on the reader; affect involves a broad range of personal and professional attitudes towards what is said; and presence simply concerns the extent to which the authors choose to project themselves into the text (Hyland, 2008b).

As Chang (2010) notes, Hyland's framework is more pedagogically oriented exploring the probability of lexical or lexico-grammatical resources for academic purposes. Thus, this framework appears to be the most suitable and practical approach for discourse studies in EFL context since it concerns academic writing (Bahrami et al., 2018), and is thus the framework this study adopts.

Stance Markers in Hyland's Model

Hyland (2005b) proposed a stance model, referring to the employment of rhetorical devices to maintain social interaction between researchers and their audience and for researchers to present persuading viewpoints and judgments. Stance devices "are the ways which writers

project themselves into their texts to communicate their integrity, credibility, involvement, and a relationship to their subject matter and their readers” (Hyland, 1999a, p.101). Stance devices are utilized for four main purposes: evaluating other studies, introducing one’s own study, commenting on one’s own study, and presenting facts. Hyland (2005b) claims that presenting stance can rely on the use of its four components: hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions.

Hedges. Are devices (*modal verbs: may, could; adverbs: apparently possibly; lexical verbs: suggest, believe*) which indicate the writer’s withhold complete commitment to a proposition, implying that a certain claim is based on the author’s reasoning rather than credited fact (Hyland, 2005b). Hedging has been considered by Salager-Meyer (1994) as “understatements used to convey (purposive) vagueness and tentativeness, and to make sentences more acceptable to the hearer/reader, thus increasing their chance of ratification and reducing the risk of negation” (p.150). Meyer (1997) maintains that hedging is a strategy used by language users to accomplish producing weaker claims in order not to be falsified. According to Hyland (2008b), hedging devices “indicate the degree of confidence the authors think it might be wise to attribute to a claim. Claims can challenge readers beliefs and research and so it’s often a good idea for authors to tone down their opinions and avoid being too categorical in their assertions” (p. 7). In research articles, Hyland (1998) ascertains (as cited in Kuhi et al., 2012, p.81) that “all statements are evaluated and interpreted through a prism of disciplinary assumptions; accordingly, writers must calculate what weight to give to an assertion, attesting to the degree of precision or reliability that they want it to carry”. The following examples are taken from the corpus of this study, the words in bold function as hedges.

- 1) *Of course, it **may** also **suggest** that need + prepositional adverb was simply too rare to have been recorded or simply escaped notice (see Murray & Simon 2002:49), though I **somewhat doubt** that because the even rarer like + prepositional adverb was recorded. (PA)*
- 2) *This latter -being fostered and enhanced by student's exhibition of an attitude of disproportion towards appropriateness and correctness- **might probably** hint to a privileged language mastery. That in its turn **may** be molded under the impact of a false misconception of fluency' sense. (MD)*

Boosters. They are devices (*e.g. definitely, of course, sure, prove, etc.*), that enable authors to convey certainty and conviction, they are used to present a claim with confidence in order to stress its strength and to mark involvement, solidarity and engagement with the audience (Hyland, 1998a, 2008a). Hyland (1998a) adapts Myers (1989) view on boosters and asserts that they allow writers to intensify the force of a statement and that they play the role of positive-politeness devices; moreover, they help in establishing the perceived truth of an information “by strategically presenting it as consensually given” (p.353). Hyland (1998a) argues that boosters are utilized to balance objective information, subjective evaluation and interpersonal negotiation, which can help gain acceptance for claims. Through the employment of these linguistic items, he believes that authors can weigh the level of commitment of a certain claim depending on its epistemic status as accredited facts or interpretations. He also maintains that boosters are utilized to carry the writers' authority and that devices such as *of course* and *obviously* are often employed to highlight the author's assumption “that a proposition carries the status of mutual pre-existing knowledge, and the effect of this is to strategically align one's claim with the

knowledge of the field” (Hyland 1998a, p. 368-370). The following examples are taken from the corpus of this study, the words in bold function as boosters.

3) *The family-based vocabulary test scores in that study did not show how much morphological knowledge learners had; **indeed**, it is reasonable to think that they had less than full knowledge of many derived forms.* (PA)

4) *It was **clear** from the analysis of the results that both teachers and students agreed on facing problems and difficulties in teaching and learning the writing skill.* (MD)

Attitude Markers. Hyland (2005a) states that attitude markers indicate the author’s affective, rather than epistemic beliefs, attitude to propositions, expressing surprise, agreement, importance, frustration. (Kuhi et al., 2012, p.81) argue that attitude is portrayed throughout discourse by the employment of subordination, comparatives, progressive particles, punctuation, text location and that it is most explicitly highlighted by attitude verbs (*e.g. believe, agree, prefer*), sentence adverbs (*e.g. unfortunately, hopefully*), and adjectives (*e.g. appropriate, logical, remarkable, extraordinary, interesting*); they also maintain that the marking of supposition of shared attitudes, values and reactions to material in academic writing, allows authors to take a stand in order to express a position and to align themselves with disciplinary-oriented value positions by pulling readers into a conspiracy of agreement. The following examples are taken from the corpus of this study, the words in bold function as attitude markers.

5) *While the fact that LoR is statistically significant is not **surprising**, it is nonetheless **interesting**, particularly when the degree of acquisition of the local variant over time is explored in more detail.* (PA)

- 6) *On the other hand, **unfortunately**, “identifying the text’s objectives and target reader’s profile” before translating was the least conducted planning strategies.*

(MD)

Self-mention. Hyland (2001) maintains that self-mentions are devices (*e.g. I, we, our*), which refer to the employment of first person pronouns and possessive adjectives to present information. According to Ivanic (1998), presenting a discoursal self is central to the writing process, Hyland (2008a) adds that one cannot avoid projecting an impression of his/herself and the way he/she stands in relation to his/her arguments, discipline, and audience; and that “the presence or absence of explicit author reference is a conscious choice by writers to adopt a particular stance and disciplinary-situated authorial identity”. He suggests that the employment of self-mentions not only helps authors to construct the text but also their rhetorical self. Ivanic (1998) suggests that utilizing the first person plays a role in writers’ presentations of ‘discoursal selves.’ The following examples are taken from the corpus of this study, the words in bold function as self-mention.

- 7) ***We** address this critique in **our** work by integrating a cognitively more complex model of evaluation (Preston 2010) and by treating social salience as a dynamic construct that is sensitive (among other things) to listeners’ prior evaluative experiences with a variable (*e.g., Fazio 2007; see also Fridland, Bartlett & Kreuz 2004*). (PA)*
- 8) *First **we** looked at the data **we** had collected from the English Learners, **our** notes and observations indicated that this time was useful in checking for understanding about their use of self-regulation strategies. (MD)*

Conclusion

This chapter positions academic writing into its social context through stressing the importance of interpersonal communication within the text in the construction of knowledge. Therefore, it argues that academic writers should be audience sensitive and aware to be able to formulate credible results and claims that are accepted within their disciplines and scientific communities. Subsequently, the chapter explains the concept of authorial stance as an interpersonal communication aspect and examines the different theoretical conceptions of stance in academic writing all of which emphasize on how the effective and proper projection of a strong authorial stance is crucial in writing persuasive and convincing claims. Notwithstanding its importance, authorial stance is shown to be a challenging notion for EFL novice writers, a problem that this study aims to investigate within the Algerian EFL context. The next chapter presents the research design, findings, and discussion.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

FINDINGS

AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

This research is conducted to investigate Algerian EFL learners' awareness of the use of stance markers in academic writing, how these markers are used by students in their masters' dissertations, and the implications of such use. This chapter provides the practical part of this study and consists of four sections. The first section explains the methods used to conduct this research, it provides information about the corpus, its treatment, and procedures followed to analyze the data, as well as the steps to design and conduct the two questionnaires. The second section presents the statistical and functional analysis of the corpus data, the analysis of the interviews. The third section contains the discussion of results. The fourth section indicates some pedagogical implications and suggestions based on the findings, and points out some of the limitations of the study and recommendation for further research.

Research Design and Methodology

Descriptive Approach Research Design

The exploratory nature of this study necessitates the adoption of a descriptive method to pertinently answer the research questions. Descriptive studies inspect the status quo of a phenomenon. They can be either qualitative or quantitative, in the former the data is analyzed in an interpretive way, while in the latter data is analyzed through descriptive statistics (Anderson, 2005). This makes a descriptive study a suitable way to approach our exploration of stance use and conception by students and its reception by teachers. This descriptive study uses both quantitative and qualitative descriptions of data. It makes use of a content analysis based method in the form of a computer corpus based analysis assisted by the concordance toolkit AntConc. Additionally, it deploys two questionnaires to collect the data needed to answer the last two research questions.

Corpus based Analysis

To answer the first two questions posed by this study, we have opted for a corpus based approach to study students' academic writing. The corpus based method aim is to describe and explain the systematic variations and use of linguistic patterns "that govern the linguistic features recognized by standard linguistic theory" (Biber, 2010, p. 163). To efficiently evaluate students' awareness and use of stance markers, a reference corpus written by expert authors, in addition to the students' corpus, was used for a comparative corpus analysis. This study focuses particularly on the use of stance markers within the discussion section, this section was deliberately chosen as it one of the sections where authorial comments are most frequent (Swales, 2004). For a comprehensive study, both qualitative and quantitative analyses were used to study the corpus.

The Study's Corpus

The corpus used for this study consists of two sub-corpora, the first is represents the students' dissertation writing, while the second represent experts' PAs writing following the example of many other similar studies (Hyland, 2002, 2012; Hewings & Hewings, 2002; Wang & Chen, 2012). The first sub-corpora is locally compiled from the University of M'sila, it consists of DSs of linguistics students MDs. The second sub-corpora consists of DSs of PAs in the field of linguistics. Research articles and master dissertations are two different genres of writing with different audiences and purposes, thus this study does not aim to make direct one-to-one comparison, which would not be of much use (Hyland, 2012). Rather, the study aims to make parallel observations to investigate students' conception of stance and what they actually do with their words choice in reference with expert writers. Thus, this corpus is meant to represent two levels of writing that: of master students and of expert writers, in order to conduct a comparative corpus study on the use of stance markers. For this purpose, all the students' papers and the articles included in this study were both empirical research. In addition to that, since each MD is written by two students, the articles in this study are written by no more than three writers. Table 1 summarizes the composition of the corpus.

Table 1

General Composition of the Corpus

Level of writing	Number of discussion sections	Total words count
Master 2 Students	40	28489
Expert Writers	40	57022
Total	80	85511

Students' Discussion Section Corpus. The corpus of students' DSs was collected from forty linguistics MDs by University of M'sila students. These dissertations were submitted for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master in Linguistics.

The dissertations were collected from over seventy linguistics MD present in DSpace-UMBM, the database of M'sila University (website:<http://dspace.univ-msila.dz:8080/xmlui/>). The year of submission of the dissertations ranged from 2018 to 2020, Table 2 shows the composition of the students' corpus. Since this study investigates the use of stance markers in the DS, only dissertations following IMRD structure were chosen, specifically the ones with a separate DS. All the papers were written by two students as it is required by the regulations of The Department of English Language and Letters in M'sila University.

Table 2

Composition of Students' Sub-corpora

Year of submission	2018	2019	2020
Number of discussion sections	11	12	17
Total		40	

Published Articles Discussion Section Corpus. The corpus meant to represent expert writers consists of DSs collected from forty articles published in four high ranking linguistics journals. The four journals were: *Linguistics*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *TESOL Quarterly*. For the comparative study to be compatible, the selected articles also followed IMRD structure and contained a separate DS part. Furthermore, to maintain the similarity of themes, the journals from which articles were collected discuss, to the greatest possibility, topics similar to M'sila University students' dissertations, mainly applied linguistics,

second language acquisition, and English learning and teaching. The articles present in the study are all open or free access articles published from 2012 to 2021, table 3 summarizes this corpus.

Table 3

Composition of Published Writers' Sub-corpus

Name of journals	Number of discussion sections	Total number of discussion sections
<i>Journal of English Linguistics</i>	12	40
<i>Linguistics</i>	8	
<i>Studies in Second Language Acquisition</i>	10	
<i>Applied Linguistics</i>	10	

Procedure for Preparing the Texts

As mentioned above, the DSs of master students' dissertations were collected from DSpace-UMBM, and the PAs were downloaded digitally from the official websites of the journals mentioned above. The obtained 40 DSs for each writing level were converted from PDF format to text files in preparation for the concordance analysis. Afterwards, any references, quotations, examples, footnotes, diagrams, tables or figures were deleted from the discussions as stance taking is not present in these parts. It is worth to note that no edits in the original writing were made, except for typing mistakes that could affect the software identification of words. An example of a final version the treated texts can be seen in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the corpus were carried out in order to answer the first two questions of this study.

First, to address what stance markers are used by students as compared to expert writers, stance markers were located in the corpus. This was done using the concordance program AntConc (Anthony, 2020). AntConc was the program of choice for this study as it enables the user to look for a list of target items across the uploaded corpus. In addition to that, it shows the frequency of each individual item, its distribution, and its location, allowing for quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus. It also shows the linguistic environment of each key term as the user can see the words surrounding it arranged alphabetically. For this, AntConc was deemed appropriate for the analysis of stance markers through calculating their frequencies and inspecting them in context across the two levels of writing. A screenshot showing how the results are displayed in the program can be found in Appendix B.

Analysis of frequencies of Stance Markers. To carry out the analysis of frequencies of stance markers a concordance search was used. For this, the list of stance markers provided by Hyland (2005a) was adopted. Hyland's list was chosen based on two considerations: First, the list is most compatible with Hyland's (2005b) stance model. Second, the list encompasses a wide range of parts of speech for each stance type. The list includes the four categories of stance markers each containing the target items. The first category on the list is boosters (containing verbs, adverbs, modal verbs, and adjectives). The second category is hedges (containing verbs, adjectives, and adverbs of certainty). The next category is that of attitude markers (containing attitude verbs, adjectives, and sentence adverbs). Finally, the last category of stance markers is self-mention (containing personal pronouns and possessive adjectives).

To begin with, the frequencies of the four stance categories in students and expert writers were quantitatively examined as well as the frequency of each individual item falling within each category. Since this approach identifies all the appearances of the target items it also identifies

words that do not function as stance markers. Therefore, each target item detected in the texts was reviewed to make sure it functions as stance marker and to exclude the items that did not function as stance markers. This was made possible as AntConc allows for the examination of the linguistic environment of each item. The excluded items were omitted from the analysis. The following is an example that showed in the concordance results but did not function as stance markers.

- 1) *Thus, while the study confirmed the prevalence of markers such as ‘I **think**’ and ‘I don’t **know**’ in the L2 speech, it also found that the speakers used considerably fewer of these markers typical of speech in the most formal and monologic task, the PRES.(PA)*
- 2) *This contradicts with major research in the field such as the case for Moroccan students “I noticed that **my** students are not engaged enough in **my** class. Their facial expressions signify boredom and a lack of interest in the subject matter.” (Zouar,2015). (MD)*

The words ‘think’ and ‘know’ are both stance markers under the category of boosters. However, in the first example (1), ‘think’ and ‘know’ do not function as stance markers but rather refer to the words in themselves, i.e. instances of metalanguage. Similarly, the words ‘I’ and ‘my’ are also stance markers under the category of self-mention. In the second example (2) however, they are part of a quotation and do not refer to the students who wrote the dissertation, thus, they do not function as self-mention. For this, it was necessary to review the function of all the words that appeared in the concordance search.

To facilitate the analysis, the results of the frequencies of stance markers used by students and experts were recorded on Excel documents. After the examination of the frequencies and

functions of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention in the corpus, the results from the MDDS were compared with the results from the PADS. Since the number of words varied between the students and expert writers' corpora, the data was normalized to the total number of words in each sub-corpus per 1,000 words to make comparison of data possible. The formula from Biber et al. (1998) was adopted and modified to fit the current study:

$$\text{Distribution of Use} = \frac{\text{Number of instances in the sub corpus}}{\text{Total number of words in the sub corpus}} \times 1000$$

Analysis of Functions of Stance Markers. The functional properties of the stance markers were qualitatively analyzed. This focused on what students were doing with stance markers through analyzing reoccurring stance markers patterns in each category (collocative pattern) and their semantic associations. This functional analysis only included the most common stance devices within each category in the writing of students and experts. This was carried out by using the concordance tool that shows results alphabetically based on their frequencies and the context within which they occur. Each concordance line for the most frequent collocates was studied to comprehend the function of the constructions.

Representativeness and Reliability

The representativeness refers to the extent to which a sample includes the full range of variability in a population. The variability in corpus design includes situational and linguistic perspectives, that is to say, the range of text types in a language and the range of linguistic distribution in a language respectively (Biber, 1993). The corpus in this study adheres to both criteria. First, we chose MD specifically as the text type to represent students' academic writing generally and PAs as a reference to expert academic writing. Second, we deliberately selected the discussion section as the focus of the study since the distribution of the linguistic item (stance markers) we aim to study is most prominent in this section of research papers. As Swales (2004)

notes, authorial comments can be found more in the Introduction and Discussion sections than other research paper sections. In a similar study Behnam, Naeimiand, and Darvishzade (2012) state that the discussion section is “where appropriate expression of scientific claims is highly welcome”. On account of this, the DS was judged to be most representative of students’ projection of authorial stance and use of stance markers.

To ensure the reliability of the corpus analysis, the counting of stance markers in the corpus was carried out twice by each of the present researchers with a gap of a week between the first and second count. The results of each count was then rounded to see the margined of differences which were negotiated between the two researchers before a third count of the whole corpus was carried out.

Teachers and Students questionnaires

The third and fourth questions in this paper are answered through the use of questionnaires. According to Singh (2006), questionnaire is viewed as “a form which is prepared and distributed for the purpose of securing responses. Generally these questions are factual and designed for securing information about certain conditions or practices, of which recipient is presume audience is d to have knowledge”. The present study opted for a questionnaire because an anonymous survey is an appropriate tool which enables respondents to freely express themselves and their views about a certain topic. These questionnaires can be considered as a follow up to the corpus based study, as the questions were designed to address the results of the corpus analysis and the trends it showed.

Students’ Questionnaire

While the corpus study provides us with how students actualize their stance through stance markers, it remains insufficient to assess students’ awareness of the concept of authorial

stance. A questionnaire thus is designed as a follow up to the corpus study to attain better understanding of students' familiarity with authorial stance and their perspectives on the use of stance markers. The findings of this questionnaire also help to anchor the validity of the results obtained in the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus as well as provide possible explanations for the findings.

Participants. This questionnaire is addressed to master 2 linguistic students of M'sila University. The students were reached through the study groups in different social media platforms that are dedicated to Master 2 linguistics students of M'sila University. The response rate was slow, but eventually 15 responses were submitted, which makes up 20% of the total students, to allow for the start of the analysis.

Research Tools. For the sake of this study, an online questionnaire was administered through the use of Google Forms. The questionnaire contains 21 questions divided into two sections. The first section "Overview on Academic Writing" aims to form a concise background of the students' experience with academic writing, specifically the writing of their MDs. The questions in this section implicitly target authorial stance. The second section "Stance in Academic Writing" aims to gather information about students' exposure to the concept of stance throughout their academic study, their attitude towards stance markers, and their perception of its importance. The questions in this section explicitly address authorial stance and stance markers. Both sections contained close ended and open ended questions allowing for quantitative and qualitative data to be gathered.

Data Collection and Analysis. The questionnaire was created through the use of Google Forms which allow for responses to be submitted directly to a Google Forms document. It also automatically converts the responses into graphs and pie charts together with frequencies and

percentages which are the statistical tools this study used to carry out the analysis of the close ended questions. The open ended questions were examined by the researchers and categorized for the sake of the analysis.

Teachers' Questionnaire

As has been established before, authorial stance does not exist in a vacuum, but within a context in which both the text and audience are taken into consideration. This being the case, we posit that it is important to extend the study to include the main audience the students address when writing their MDs: the jury and supervisors (Silva, 2012). This questionnaire aims to elucidate dissertation committee members and supervisors' expectations about the authorial stance students ought to take while discussing their master research results. It also aims to provide teachers' evaluation of the overall performance of students in using stance markers and writing persuasively. Additionally, it seeks to investigate teachers' attitude towards stance both while evaluating dissertations and while teaching academic writing.

Participants. The questionnaire is addressed to teachers from Algerian Universities with experience in evaluating and supervising linguistics master students' dissertations. The teachers were selected from four universities including M'sila University. Out of more than 50 teachers contacted, a total of 15 teachers submitted their answers.

Design and Research Tools. Similar to the students' questionnaire, the teachers' questionnaire also took the form of an online survey through the use of Google Forms. It contains 19 questions 3 of which are open-ended while the rest are close-ended. The close-ended questions aimed to shed light on teachers' perspectives on writing MDs and their evaluation of students' academic writing quality, persuasion, and authorial presence. They also seek to

investigate teachers' attitude towards stance, as jury members and supervisors. The open-ended questions aim to provide elaboration on some of the findings of the corpus study.

Data Collection and Analysis. The teachers' questionnaire results were analyzed in the same way as the students', through the use of Google Forms making use of its inbuilt feature to convert answers to graphs and charts accompanied with frequencies and percentages.

Data Analysis

Corpus-based Analysis

Qualitative Comparison of the use of Stance Makers between Students and Published Writers

The first research question investigates the differences of use of stance markers between students and published writers, for this end the frequencies of stances markers were identified in the corpus. Table 4 summarizes the distribution of stance markers per 1000 words in each sub-corpora and the number of stance tokens used by students and expert writers throughout the DSs.

As can be noted, the qualitative analysis shows that the expression of stance is more frequent in published writing than in students' writing. Stance markers appeared in master students' dissertations DS 20 times per 1000 words whereas in PADS they appeared 35.3 times per 1000 words. The relative difference between the two is 55.3%, meaning that students are 55.3% less likely to use stance markers than expert writers. This concludes that stance markers are used almost twice as much by expert writers than by students. In all categories of stance, expert writers employed more instances of stance than students, except in the expression of boosting, where students used more boosters than expert writers although the difference was marginal.

Table 4

The Distribution of Stance Markers per 1000 Words in Students Discussion Sections and Published Writers Discussion Sections

Category		MDDS (28489 words)	PADS (57022 words)	Total (85511 words)
Stance Markers	Distribution	20	35.30	2.41
	Tokens	96	137	149
Hedges	Distribution	10	17.68	1.24
	Tokens	42	64	67
Boosters	Distribution	6	5.55	0.80
	Tokens	32	38	44
Attitude Markers	Distribution	2.40	3.52	0.60
	Tokens	19	30	33
Self-mention	Distribution	1.61	8.54	0.09
	Tokens	3	5	5

On the whole, hedges were the most used stance marker with 10 hedges per 1000 words in students' writing and 17.68 hedges per 1000 words in experts' writing. Following hedges in students' writing was boosting with 6 words per 1000 and in experts' writing self-mention was the second most frequent stance marker with 8.45 words per 1000. While the third most used stance marker by students was attitude markers with 2.35 markers per 1000 words, boosters were the third most used stance by experts with 5.55 markers per 1000 words. Finally, the least used stance marker by students was self-mention at the rate of 1.61 instances per 1000 words, and by expert writers it was attitude markers with 3.25 instances per 1000 words.

According to the results, the biggest discrepancies between the two levels of writing are most prominent in the use of hedges and self-mention. Although hedging was the most preferred

marker for conveying stance in both sub-corpora, academics used it significantly more than students. Boosters were used almost evenly by students and experts, and attitude markers were the least favored stance marker from the experts' part, but they were more frequently used by them than by students.

The numbers of tokens, as demonstrated in Table 4, show that expert writers employed a larger variety of stance items than students, that is to say, experts used around 35% more of the total items in the stance markers list proposed by Hyland (2005a) than students used. In fact, in all categories of stance expert writers employed a wider range of markers than students. Interestingly, even in the use of boosters where students exceeded academics in their use, the latter still used more different items to express certainty. Among all categories hedges have the least diversity of forms in students writing as compared to published writers. Expert writers used 22 forms (out of a total of 102) more than students.

Differences in the use of Stance Categories

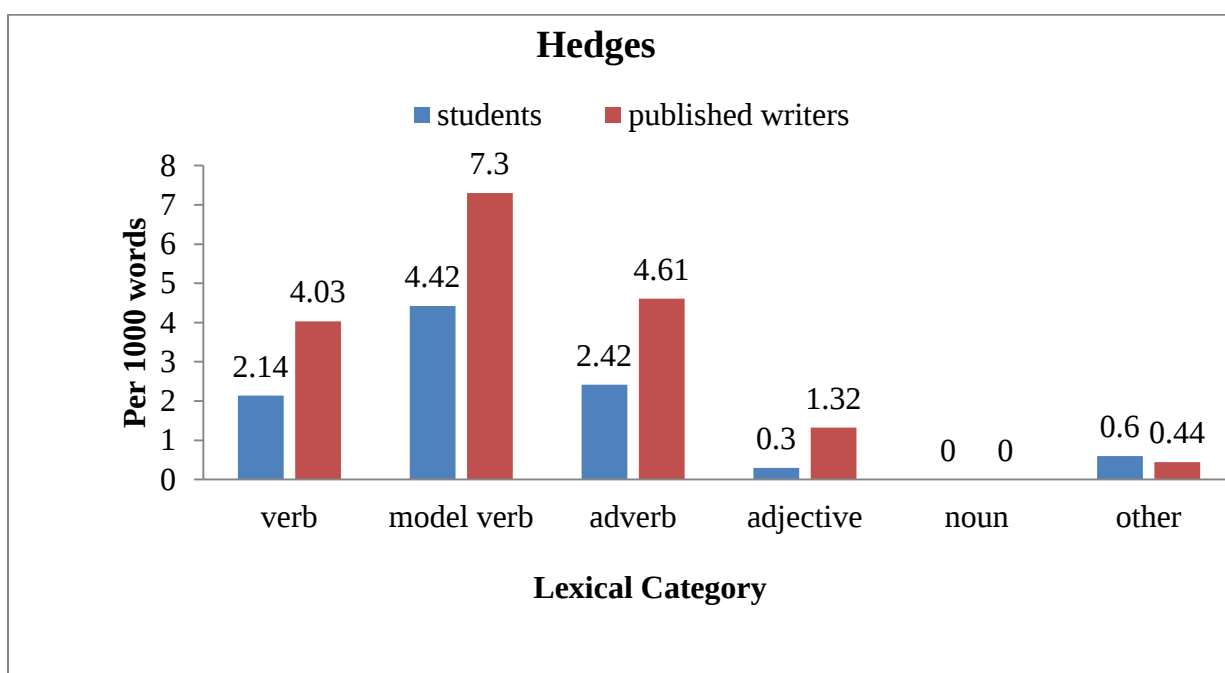
Hedges. As mentioned above, the analysis revealed that at both levels of writing, hedging was the favored way to express epistemic beliefs and judge the status of knowledge in propositions. This means that writers chose to proceed carefully; concealing full commitment to the stated information and leaving room for the reader to negotiate the weight of the proposition. Although students used hedges the most among the other stance categories, the frequency of their use was far less than that of experts.

Graph 1 shows the frequency of different lexical categories of hedges used by students and expert writers. The order of use of lexical categories was parallel at both writing levels with published writers using more hedges than students; however, students slightly exceeded experts in the application of 'other' items that indicate phrases (e.g. *to my knowledge, tends to*). Modal

verbs were the most used category counting for about half of the overall hedges in both students' and experts' writing. Adverbs and verbs were the next most used categories respectively with almost the same frequency. Adjectives were used less for hedging by expert writers and a very small number of them were used by students. Hedging nouns on the other hand were not used by any writer in the corpus, and other items that did not fall under lexical categories were used little at both writing levels.

Graph 1

Lexical Categories of Hedges in Students and Published Writers' Discussion Sections



The analysis of individual hedges revealed that they were used in PAs and students' dissertations with different frequencies. Table 5 demonstrates the frequently used hedges in general and their frequency in each writing level.

Table 5*The Frequency of Individual Hedges Used in Students and Published Writers' Discussion**Sections per 1000 words*

Hedges	PADS	MDDS	Total
May	2.718	2.071	2.503
Would	1.806	0.632	1.415
Might	1.350	0.421	1.041
Could	0.807	0.702	0.772
Possible	0.824	0.176	0.608
Suggests	0.824	0.140	0.596
Should	0.561	0.597	0.573
Suggest	0.631	0.246	0.503
Likely	0.579	0.211	0.456
Indicate	0.368	0.562	0.433
Relatively	0.456	0.211	0.374
Seems	0.316	0.316	0.316
Often	0.438	0.070	0.316
Almost	0.228	0.351	0.269
Indicated	0.175	0.351	0.234
tend to	0.175	0.351	0.234
Sometimes	0.281	0.140	0.234
Probably	0.298	0.105	0.234
Indicates	0.140	0.246	0.175
Argue	0.263	0.000	0.175
Mainly	0.140	0.211	0.164
Assumed	0.210	0.070	0.164
Assume	0.246	0.000	0.164

Hedges	PADS	MDDS	Total
Perhaps	0.175	0.105	0.152
Frequently	0.228	0.000	0.152

Note. Frequencies under 0.15 are not shown in this table, for the full list check Appendix D

Modal verbs are at the top of the list with *may* being the most used hedging marker by students and experts (2.72 per 1000 words in PAs and 2.07 per 1000 words in MDs). The modal verbs *would*, *might*, then *could* came right after in experts writing (1.81, 1.35, and 0.81 per 1000 words respectively); while *could*, *would* then *should* are the next choice for students (0.70 and 0.60 per 1000 words respectively). The modal least used by students was *might* (0.42 per 1000 words) and by academics it was *should* (0.56 per 1000 word).

Besides modal verbs, *likely* was the most used adverb in PAs (0.60 per 1000 words) while students preferred the adverb *almost* (0.35 per 1000 words). *Possible* was the most used adjective by expert writers (0.82 per 1000 words); however, it did not appear much in students' writing (0.18 per 1000 words). The same can be said about the most used verb used by academics which is *suggests* (0.82 words per 1000 words) that was used little by students (0.14 per 1000 words) who preferred the use of the verb *indicate* (0.60 per 1000 words). The following are examples showing the use of hedges in the corpus:

- 1) *In other words, EFL teachers **may** not make use of instructions that fit their need and interest. Additionally, the findings **may suggest** that the time allotted for Oral Expression is not enough.* (Student's Dissertation)
- 2) *Thus, it is **possible** that the results **would** be different if we were to present the same structures with AGRM-BC without a reduced path movement.* (PA)

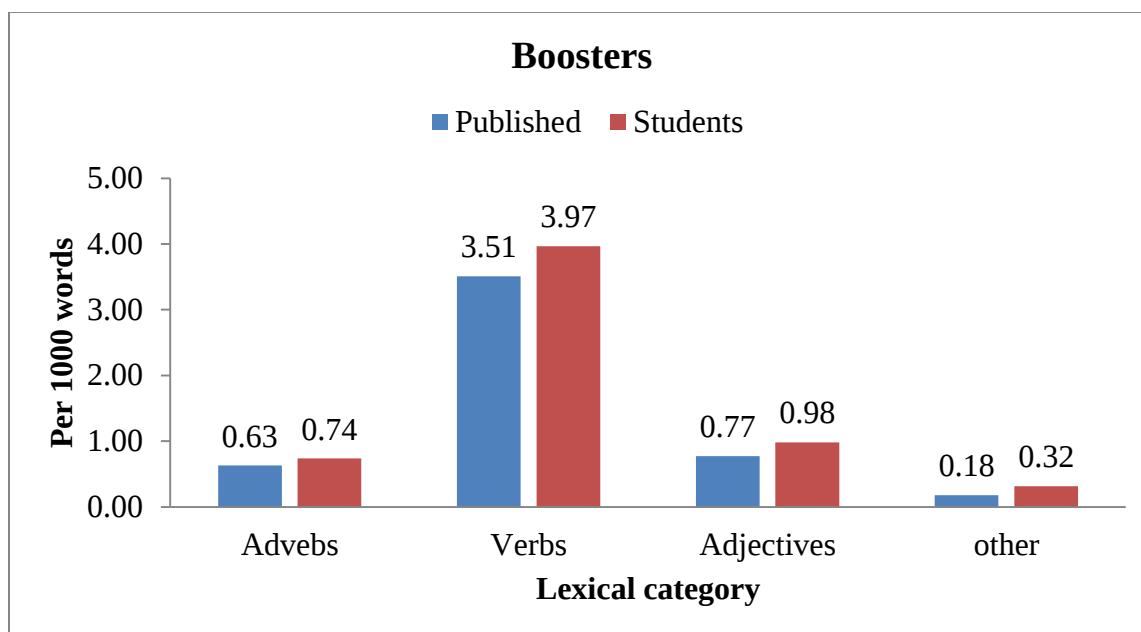
Boosters. Unlike hedges, boosters work on amplifying the certainty of claims and stance taken by the author, they give force and legitimacy to the information proposed, and they shut

the door for alternative perceptions. In the students' sub-corpora boosters are the second most used stance markers, they account for 30% of the markers used by students and only 15% of the markers used by experts.

The Graph 2 illustrates the lexical categories of boosters used in the corpus. We note that the order of the frequently used categories is the same at both writing levels with students using more boosting markers than published writers although the differences are small. Verbs were dominantly the most used category to boost, counting for two thirds of all hedges in students writing, followed by adjectives, adverbs and other unclassified items (e.g. *in fact*, *of course*).

Graph 2

Lexical Categories of Boosters in Students and Published Writers' Discussion Sections



Analysis of individual boosters provides us with more information on how they are applied in the corpus; Table 6 shows the frequently used boosters and their frequency at each writing level. According to the results, the three most used boosters are unsurprisingly verbs,

found, *show* and *showed* (1, 0.50, and 0.45 per 1000 words by experts and 0.70, 0.80, and 0.60 by students respectively).

The verb *proved* was the next most used booster in students writing (0.50 per 1000 words) but it was used much less frequently by expert writers (0.11 per 1000 words). Conversely, *find* was the next most used boosting verb by expert writers (0.35 per 1000 words); yet, students did not use it as much (0.14 per 1000 words). While *clear* was the most used boosting adjective in both sub-corpora (0.40 per 1000 words by experts and 0.50 per 1000 words by students).

- 3) *The data obtained from the questionnaire clearly show that 2nd year students use all MLSs, namely evaluation, monitoring, and planning, differently when they write a paragraph.* (Student's Dissertation)
- 4) *In addition, comparing task performance at the pretest and the posttest, we found the grammatical processing task to show the least difference between the participant groups.* (PA)

Table 6

The Frequency of Individual Boosters Used in Students and Published Writers' Discussion Sections per 1000 words

Boosters	PADS	MDDS	Total
Found	1.000	0.667	0.889
Show	0.473	0.807	0.585
Showed	0.456	0.562	0.491
Clear	0.386	0.456	0.409
Find	0.351	0.140	0.281
Indeed	0.351	0.070	0.257

Boosters	PADS	MDDS	Total
Demonstrated	0.228	0.281	0.246
Shown	0.246	0.140	0.210
Shows	0.193	0.211	0.199
Clearly	0.158	0.246	0.187
Proved	0.111	0.491	0.175
in fact	0.123	0.281	0.175

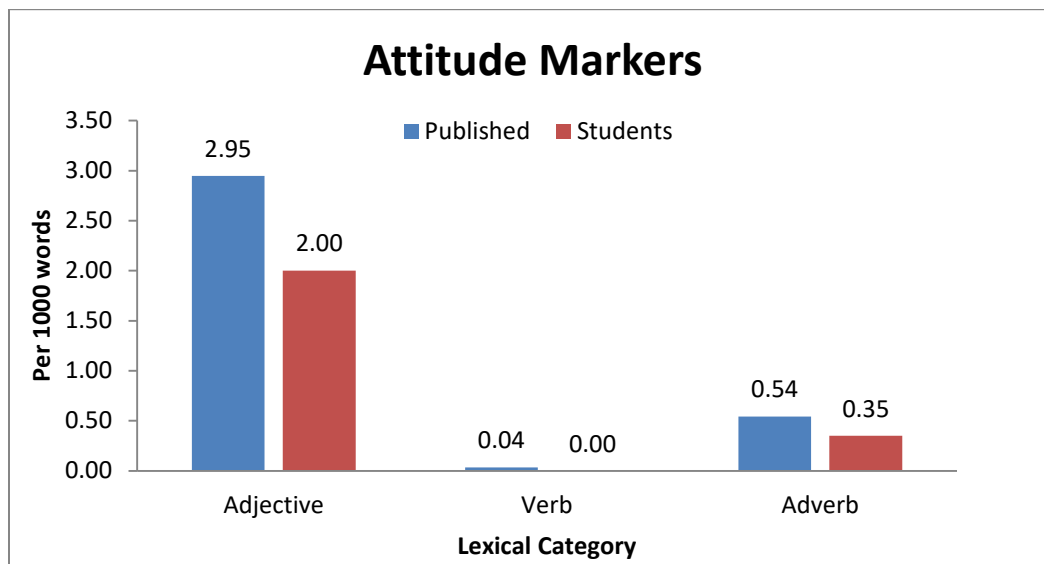
Note. frequencies under 0.15 are not shown in this table, for the full list check Appendix D

Attitude Markers. In Hyland's (2005b) model, attitude markers count for the expression of affective meaning and personal emotions towards what is being said, and is one of the most direct ways authors can project themselves through. The results from the qualitative study show that attitude markers were not used by writers in this corpus considerably, and that they count for about a 10% of the total stance markers used in both sub-corpora. Writers instead choose to avoid direct emotional judgment while discussing their research and opted for a rational epistemic stance.

Graph 3 shows the lexical categories of attitude markers used in the corpus. Adjectives amounted for the majority of attitude markers used followed by a small number of adverbs. The number of attitude verbs use is about null, non-existent in students' writing and 0.04 per 1000 words in experts' writing.

Graph 3

Lexical Categories of Attitude Markers in Students and Published Writers' Discussion Sections



From the above graph, the individual examination of attitude markers shows that they too were used in different frequencies at the two writing levels. Table 7 shows the frequently used attitude markers in general and their frequency in each writing level. Although they were used in different frequencies, all the items in Table8 had the same order of use.

The adjectives *even*, *important*, and *interesting* were the most used attitude adjectives (1.28, 0.43 and 0.26 per 1000 words by expert writers and 0.56, 0.40, and 0.10 per 1000 words by students respectively). The verb *expected* appears third on the list (0.35 per 1000 words by expert writers and 0.30 per 1000 words by students respectively), while the *importantly* was the most used attitude adverb although it was used very little by students (1.14 per 1000 words by expert writers and 0.07 per 1000 words by students respectively).

These markers convey a strong stance, and more importantly, allow writers to reach to other members in their communities through presenting information expected to be of importance to them as they have a shared background. In this sense writers express camaraderie

and alignment of interest with the audience while being in control of the information presented. For instance, writers are able to use *even* to emphasize on the unusual matter discussed because they assume the reader knows what ought to be usual, this helps connect the writer with their audience. The following are examples on that:

- 5) *Accordingly, participants, **even** unaware of their CQ abilities, have built and developed them by time.* (Student's Dissertation)
- 6) *Thus, the most **important** contribution of the present study is that the motivation of learners in relation to learning English as a foreign language might be influenced by the various types and characteristics of their teacher's personality.* (Student's Dissertation)
- 7) *In contrast, we found distinct development on the same measures in Swedish after only one year, which may be **expected** considering the great difference in teaching time allocated for Somali and Swedish in school.* (PA)

Table 7

The Frequency of Individual Attitude Markers Used in Students and Published Writers' Discussion Sections per 1000 words

Attitude	PADS	MDDS	Total
even	1.284	0.562	1.052
Important	0.434	0.281	0.386
Expected	0.347	0.140	0.281
Interesting	0.260	0.105	0.210
Importantly	0.139	0.070	0.117

Note. Frequencies under 0.15 are not shown in this table, for the full list check Appendix D

Self-mention. The final component of stance is presence represented in this model by self-mention. As stated before, self-mention has the biggest difference of use between students

and academics. While it is the second most used category by experts, it is the least and barely used category by students.

Table 8 summarizes the frequency of the used self-mention markers in the corpus and both sub-corpora. The first plural person pronoun *we* was the preferred way of self-mention at both writing levels (5.60 per 1000 words by experts and 1.02 per 1000 words by students) this is not surprising since most the texts in the corpus are written by two to three writers, which is why *I* was used the least (0.16 per 1000 words by experts and none by students). On that same note, *I* was not used in students writing, since MD sat M'sila University are required to be a pair work project. The possessive pronoun *our* was the second most used followed by the pronoun *us* which was used little by students (3.40 and 0.35 per 1000 words by experts and 0.53 and 0.07 per 1000 words by students respectively).

8) *Unlike respondents' replies to the mostly applied type of activities; our notes from the punctual supervision, we realize, indicate a serious shortness of variety in tasks.*

Nevertheless the aftermaths of our analyses were able to greatly reflect the agreeability of our research' format of conduction with its formerly held resembling works.(MD)

9) *Throughout this article, I have switched between two distinct structural conceptions of need + prepositional adverb.(PA)*

10) *As we make a case for variation to be seen as a source of information, it remains for us to answer the question: in which cases is variation really spurious? We suggest that in untimed metalinguistic judgments variation is hardly ever noise.*

Table 8

The Frequency of Individual Self-mention Used in Students and Published Writers' Discussion

Sections per 1000 words

Self-mention	PADS	MDDS	Total
We	4.59	1.02	5.70
Our	3.37	0.53	3.40
Us	0.35	0.07	2.42
I	0.16	0.00	0.26

Note. Frequencies under 0.15 are not shown in this table, for the full list check Appendix D

Functional Analysis of Stance Markers in Students and Experts Discussion Sections

This section deals with the qualitative analysis of the corpus. Its aim is to investigate the use of stance markers within their linguistic environment in students' writing. For this, the most prominent form in students' DSs from the qualitative analysis are explored through examining the recurring pattern they appear in, which is then compared to how the same form appears in the DSs of PAs. The aim is to find qualitative differences and similarities in how these stance markers are used at the two levels of writing within each category of stance. The end goal of this qualitative analysis is to better understand how students actually use these markers and how aware are they of their applications.

Functional Analysis of Hedges. The quantitative analysis has indicated that modal verbs were the most used stance markers. Through the qualitative analysis it was revealed that a passive verb frequently occurred after these forms: *may, could, would, should and might + be*. This was also observed in expert writers' discussions but in much more abundance. This pattern was mainly used to establish a basis of an argument as can be seen in the examples below:

- 1) *Furthermore, according to those types or characteristics of the teacher's personality, learners' motivation **may be** affected either positively or negatively. (MD)*
- 2) *It **would be** fair to hypothesize that the presentation of conditionals to the cognitive group was more cohesive and meaningful because it had a consistent foundation in the shape of CL presentation of language. (PA)*
- 3) *In this regard, it **could be** inferred when the learners are exposed to limited language samples and inauthentic materials, their grammatical competence **would be** developed without the pragmatic one. (MD)*

The other pattern found at both writing levels was and *hedge(adverb) + to-infinitive*, this construction expresses dynamic modality which demotes the generality of the content presented in the clause (Biber et al., 1999 & Collins, 1994; as cited in Yoon, 2019) which is toned down by the use of the preceding hedge.

- 4) *Moreover, they indicated that confident learners are more **likely to develop** their ability of evaluating their own learning. (MD)*
- 5) *This research was carried out **essentially to investigate** the difficulties that face the EFL learners in writing a composition at high schools in M'Sila. (MD)*
- 6) *If they first understand an Inland North/Midland distinction as a result of direct linguistic experience, hearing and noticing some aspect of another's speech, a speaker may be more **likely to assume** their own variety is normative. (PA)*

Finally, the last frequent structure was *hedge (verb) + that clause* which also appeared in both students and experts' writing as can be seen here:

- 7) *These findings **indicate that** majority of the students know that they have to consider the difficult word and do not skip them. (MD)*

8) The findings above **suggest that** there a relationship between the metacognitive learning strategies used by the students and their writing achievement. (MD)

9) We **suspect that** we might have seen a larger and wider effect of MTI had we been able to include more participants in our sample who had not attended any MTI. (PA)

This use of evaluative ‘*that clause*’ has been noted by many researchers studying authorial stance. Evaluative *-that clause* functions as a complement and describes specific stances of the authors. Hyland and Tse (2005) state that one common way authors protect themselves from the possible danger of categorical assertion (i.e. A statement presented with no modality) is through the application of ‘*non-agentive evaluative -that structure*’ with a hedge (Hyland & Tse, 2005; as cited in Hyland, 2008a).

Functional Analysis of Boosters. The environmental analysis of boosters showed that, like hedges, in both sub-corpora boosters also appeared before *-that clauses* especially with the verbs *show* and *find* in their present and past forms. The reason behind this could very well be similar to that previously stated with hedges. In students’ discussions the verb *proved* also appeared before a *-that clause*, but also in the structure *proved + to be* to demonstrate strong evidence.

10) It was **found that** there is no statistically significant difference between the two groups with regard to “Which of correction”. (MD)

11) Based on results the tables above strengthen our hypothesis about if learners face problems in writing and speaking, and the results **show that** learners face many problems speaking and writing. (MD)

12) In teaching practice, we **find that** the instrumental aim leads to the application of prescriptive rules of thumb for specific situations. (PA)

Another pattern in experts writing that was particular to the two boosters *shown* and *found* appeared little in students' writing. *Shown/found* + *in* was used by published writers to direct the readers' attention towards the source of information and to its certainty.

13) *Similar interactions between condition and gender have been **found in** other research (Hay, Nolan & Drager 2006; Hay & Drager 2010; Drager 2011). (PA)*

14) *However, as was **shown in** one of the previous studies on German preschoolers and their daycare center teachers, this is not the case even with the sample sizes of $N > 1,000$ (Zaretsky et al. 2015b). (PA)*

The prepositional phrase *in fact* was used by both students and expert writers to contrast what was stated before and present what is actually the truth in the situation. This structure could function as a means for the author to point out new and interesting ideas to the reader.

15) ***In fact**, this high percentage may reflect the awareness of Master students concerning the sensitivity of such type of translation. (MD)*

16) ***In fact** the pattern {because, initial} is even an antitype in academic writing. (PA)*

It should be noted that both sub-corpora contained what Hyland and Milton (1997) referred to as “epistemic clusters”, or the use of more than one epistemic device (hedges/boosters) of about the same degree of modality in the same proposition. This, they argue, is mostly found in native speakers' writing. Accordingly, though it was a pattern present in students' DSs, it was indeed found more in published writers' discussions.

17) *The data obtained from the questionnaire **clearly show** that 2nd year students use all MLSSs, namely evaluation, monitoring, and planning, differently when they write a paragraph. (MD)*

18) *Third, because the zero definite article is a nonstandard form, it **seems likely** that it **would** be sensitive to stigmatization and external pressure leading to infrequent usage among individuals in the work force [...]. (PA)*

Functional Analysis of Attitude Markers. Attitude markers in this corpus were mostly adjectives and adverbs. The use of the form *even* differed between experts and master students. The pattern *predicate + even + verb* was common in students writing, in this position, *even* refers to the whole sentence or clause and it mainly shows surprising outcomes.

19) ***They even agree** that what frustrates them most within the classroom is the same which annoys fresh teachers (students and their doings, the lack of confidence). (MD)*

The pattern found in expert writers' discussions was *even + though/if*. This construction is used to refer to something that happened/ did not happen in spite of the fact that it should/should not have happened. Expert writers emphasize on the unexpectedness of the results drawing on the shared knowledge they expect the reader to be familiar with. Thus, it can be said that expert writers tend to use *even* as an intensifier and a way to interact with the reader in a more robust manner than students.

20) ***Even if** a correct answer on a base word item does not imply knowledge of the entire word family, knowledge of the most frequent affixes that appear in our corpus probably suffices for comprehending most texts. (PA)*

21) *By contrast, in prevalently monologic speech, **even though** the intended listener may be acknowledged, the intersubjective relationship does not need to be negotiated with a similar intensity. (PA)*

Another pattern found in students' writing but less so in experts' writing is *intensifier + important/importantly* as shown below.

22) *Besides, “checking the terminology consistence” which is **highly important** in pragmatic translation, as mentioned previously, was highly applied by the participants. (MD)*

23) ***Most importantly**; sophomores themselves confessed that they have been prompted by their teachers to communicate. (MD)*

Through the use of this construction, students might have tried to highlight the importance of the proposition and direct the reader’s attention to what they believe is significant to the discussion. This reliance on intensifiers to develop an effective rhetorical persuasion can be a strategy students use to compensate for their limited range of lexicon (Hinkle, 2005).

Functional Analysis of Self-mention. Generally, students did not refer to themselves in the study much, but there are still some patterns that can be found in their writing. The structure *we + can + verb* was present at both writing levels. There was one interesting difference however; students usually followed *can* with strong assertive verbs such as *declare* and *confirm*, conversely, published writers tend to be more restrained following *can* with cautious verbs like *expect* and *think*.

24) *The two have provided the research with a qualitative and quantitative data through which **we can declare** that the use of teachers’ written feedback can be very beneficial in developing students’ writing skills. (MD)*

25) *As regards the finding that two out of three highly significant patterns in academic writing are characterized by initial ACs, we would like to offer some ideas toward an explanation of why **we can expect** to find the patterns we have found. (PA)*

Some even more modest stance was found in experts’ writing though the insertion of *only* between *can* and the *verb*, or through the use of *we + cannot + verb*.

26) However, we can only speculate whether and if so, how much non-reduced movement would influence the acceptability ratings. (PA)

27) While we cannot be absolutely certain of this interpretation without real time evidence, we suggest that not only does this explanation fit the facts, it also demonstrates how grammatical options may become intertwined with locally situated indexical meanings (e.g., Eckert 2000) under conditions of longitudinal stability. (PA)

The possessive pronoun *our* was mainly used to refer to the students' study, it was followed by nouns like *results*, *participants*, and *research*, and it is used to show the contribution of the study and its product.

28) Unlike respondents' replies to the mostly applied type of activities; our notes from the punctual supervision, we realize, indicate a serious shortness of variety in tasks. (MD)

29) In general, our results showed that adjective + noun are the easiest collocation type to use. (MD)

30) Our data show a large amount of hypercorrection in both experiment. (PA)

The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire comprises 21 items designed to investigate master two linguistics students' awareness about the notion of authorial stance and the use of stance markers in the discussions of their MDs. The analysis is based on 15 responses of master two linguistics students from M'sila University, of which two thirds are female and one third are males.

Overview on Academic Writing

This section aims at providing a general idea on students' experience and attitude towards academic writing as researchers, and how these could be affected by their awareness authorial stance.

The questionnaire offered the students the opportunity to express their opinions on whether the Academic Writing classes, which they have been studying as part of their Master studies for two years, prepared them for writing their dissertations. Table 9 shows their answers.

Table 9

Students' Opinion on Their Preparedness to Write Their Master Dissertation

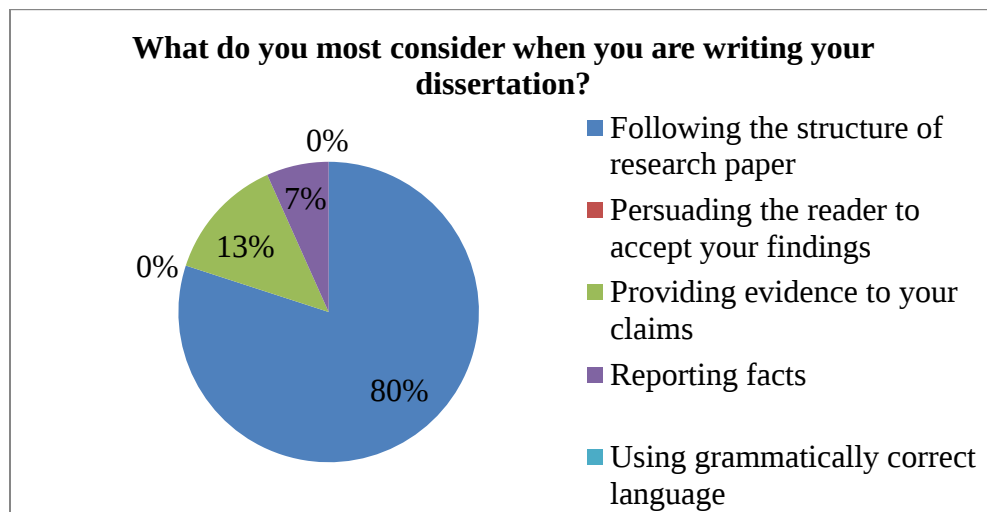
Prepared	Frequencies	Percentages
Somewhat	8	53.3%
No	5	33.3%
Yes	2	13.3%
Total	15	100%

About half of the students answered that they felt adequately prepared (53.3%), a third of them answered that they did not feel prepared (33.3%), while the students who answered that they felt prepared compromised only 13.3%.

Additionally, students were asked what they prioritize when writing their dissertation, Graph4 summarizes their answers. The results indicate that the majority of students (80%) found that following the structure of a research paper as the most important thing to consider when writing their dissertations, while the rest were divided between providing evidence to support their claims (13%) and reporting facts (7%). The use of grammatically correct language was not favored by any of the students.

Graph 4

Students' Priorities While Writing Their Dissertations



The results also revealed that most of the students believed that their academic writing only averagely represent the linguistics genre it belongs to (46.7%), while a third of them were positive that their writing represented the genre (33%), leaving only three students who did not believe that their academic writing was representative; as can be seen in Table 10.

Table 10

Students' Opinion on Their Academic Writing Genre Representativeness

Genre Representativeness	Frequencies	Percentages
Representative	5	33.3%
Averagely representative	7	46.7%
None- representative	3	20%
Total	15	100%

To inspect students' audience awareness and interaction in text while trying to convey their claims and results, students were asked if they imagine that they are arguing with an

audience that they have to persuade. The results as shown in Table 11 reveal that most students positively answered that they imagine an audience to persuade when writing (60%), while a small fraction answered that they do not (7%), the rest of the students answered that they only sometimes do (33%).

Table 11

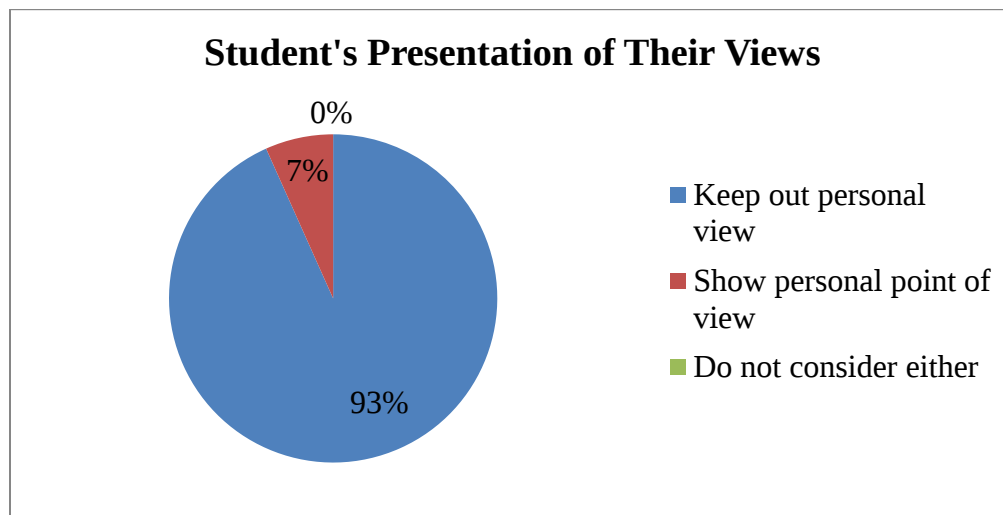
Students' Consideration of Writing to Persuade Their Audience

Persuade Audience	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	9	60%
No	1	7%
Sometimes	5	33%
Total	15	100%

An important element of this study is how students choose to present their authorial self in their writing, or if they try to do that at all. For this students were asked if they try to show their personal point of view while discussing the results of their research in their dissertations. The results illustrated in Graph5 show that the total majority of students (93%) preferred to keep out their personal point of view while only one student chose the second option, students who chose to show their point of view were asked to elaborate on their answer and on how they achieved that. Unfortunately, the only student who picked that answer did not provide any follow up comments.

Graph 5

Students' Presentation of Their Views in Their Dissertations Discussion Sections



Stance in Academic Writing

This section of the questionnaire aims to explore students' academic writing exposure to the concept of authorial stance within their academic institution and to examine their attitude towards the application of stance in their dissertations' DSs.

The ninth question in this asked students about their awareness with the concept of authorial stance. According to the results (Table 12), most students (80%) are not acquainted with the concept of authorial stance.

Table 12

Students' Familiarity with the Concept of Authorial Stance

Familiar	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	3	20%
No	12	80%
Total	15	100%

Although when provided with a concise definition of stance (i.e. the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the content of a message), most of the students (80%) positively agreed on its importance as seen in Table 13.

Table 13

The Importance of Authorial Stance According to Students

Important	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	12	80%
No	3	20%
Total	15	100%

When asked where they believe the importance of authorial stance lies, the students provided different answers. Notably, some students commented that it is important for giving strong arguments, providing a chance to show personal point of view, showing commitment to the topic, and writing critically. Other answers were vague or missed the point of the question, as some students commented about research feasibility, clearness, and avoidance of subjectivity.

When asked about their encounter with stance in their studies (Table 14), the majority of students (87%) reported that their academic writing classes did not tackle the topic of stance.

Table 14

Previous Study of Stance in Academic Writing Class According to Students

Studying Stance	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	2	13.3%
No	13	86.7%
Total	15	100%

When asked if they try to project their stance in their dissertations two thirds of the students answered that they somewhat do while the rest answered with yes as presented in Table 15.

Table 15

Projection of Stance in Master Dissertations According to Students

Projection of Stance	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	5	33.3%
No	0	0%
Somewhat	10	66.7%
Total	15	100%

The next question was about teachers' feedback. Most of the students (11) indicated that they did not receive feedback concerning stance application in their dissertation from their supervisors, while only 4 reported that they did as shown in Table 16.

Table 16

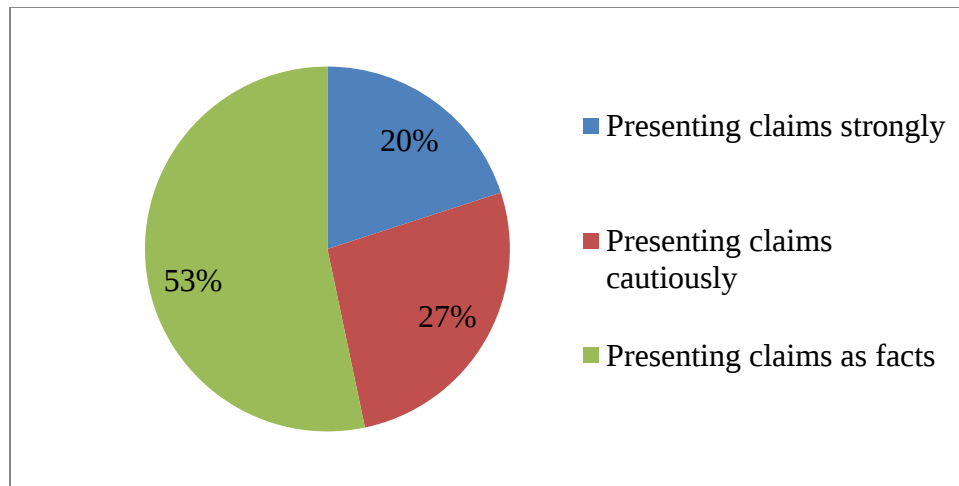
Receiving Supervisors' Feedback over the Use of Stance in Master Dissertations According to Students

Receiving Supervisors' Feedback	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	4	26.7%
No	11	73.3%
Total	15	100%

To probe students' understanding of hedges and boosters and the degree of commitment they usually show in their writing, students were asked to choose from statements with varying levels of commitment, Graph6 sums up the results.

Graph 6

Students' Commitment to Their Claims



As Graph 6 shows, about half of the students (53%) answered that they write their claims as facts, while the rest chose to present claims cautiously (27%), or chose to write in a strong assertive way (20%). Thus, half of the students preferred to frame their claims without any epistemic modality involved in their propositions. These results could explain the findings from the qualitative analysis of the corpus, specifically the lack of hedges in students' writing as compared to expert writers.

Moreover, to get to know their opinion on the projection of affect and the use of attitude markers, the students were asked if they think showing a certain degree of emotion in their writing (e.g. surprise, interest, appreciation) did not correspond with the norms of academic writing, Table 17 shows the results. Students' opinions were divided almost equally regarding

this question; half (53%) responding that it is appropriate while the rest (47%) seem to disapprove their use.

Table 17

The Appropriateness of Projecting Affect in Academic Writing According to Students

Appropriateness of Projecting Affect	Frequencies	Percentages
Appropriate	8	53%
Inappropriate	7	47%
Total	15	100%

As of the use of personal pronouns, which are the main self-mention linguistic forms to show presence in writing, the majority of students (93%) responded that they find it inappropriate to use them in their academic writing as seen in the Table 18 below.

Table 18

The Appropriateness of Using Personal Pronouns in Academic Writing According to Students

Appropriateness of Using Personal Pronouns	Frequencies	Percentages
Appropriate	1	7%
Inappropriate	14	93%
Total	15	100%

This finding corresponds with the findings from the quantitative study where the analysis revealed that the highest frequency discrepancy between students and expert writers' use of stance markers fell under self-mention. The questionnaire sought to investigate this further. Thus, students were prompted to elaborate on their answer concerning the use of personal and possessive pronouns. Their answers revealed that their avoidance of personal pronouns comes from their belief that academic writing has to be objective and that the use of self-mention decreases the reliability of their research. Interestingly, one student provided a distinctive answer

as to why he does not employ personal pronouns writing “as young researchers we lack experience to give that kind of claims and judgment”. This shows that some students may feel ill at ease with the authority that personal pronouns denoted as they regard themselves incompetent to write with such power. As for the one student who responded positively to the use of personal pronouns, he commented saying “Of course everyone has such point of view about anything, or about any topic, so why to hide it when you are writing about that topic.” Though this opinion is not popular among the students, it is fair to assume that a number of students also adopt it.

Additionally, the results revealed that students seem to acknowledge the importance of using epistemic markers, as two thirds of the students responded positively to the importance of using hedges and boosters in the DSs of their dissertations, Table 19 shows the results for the two questions about hedges and boosters.

Table 19

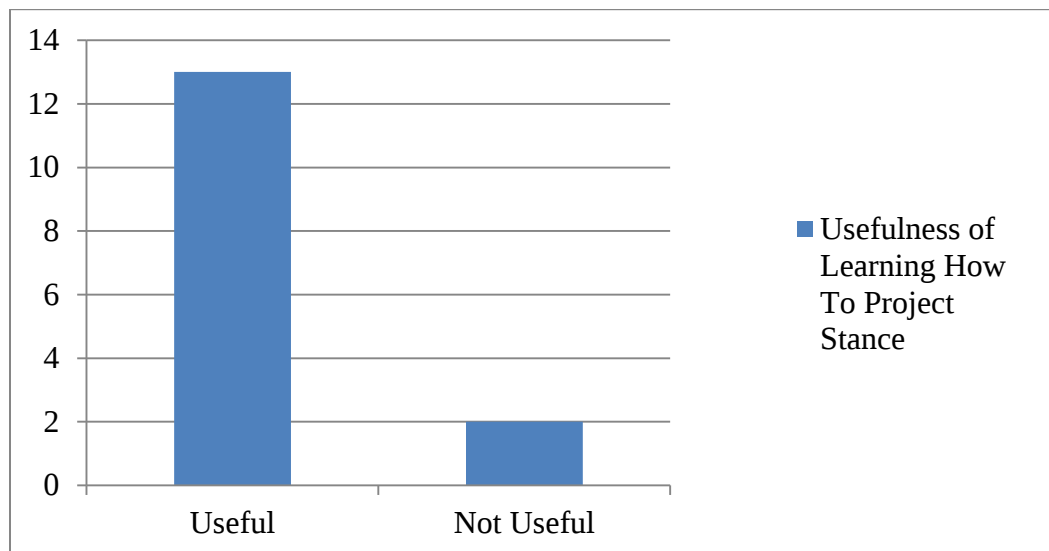
The Importance of Using Hedges and Boosters in Dissertations Discussion Sections According to Students

Importance of Using Hedges and Boosters	Frequencies	Percentages
Important	10	66.7%
Not Important	5	33.3%
Total	15	100%

The last question asked for students’ options on the usefulness of learning how to project their authorial stance appropriately. As the results show in Graph 7 the majority of students (13) agreed that knowing how to articulate their stance will be indeed helpful to them in the writing of their dissertations, while two students did not believe so.

Graph 7

The Usefulness of Learning How To Project Stance in Master Dissertation According to Students



The Analysis of Teachers' Questionnaire

This questionnaire includes 19 items aimed at exploring linguistics teachers' attitude and thoughts on authorial stance when assessing linguistics MDs and their evaluation of students' presence, persuasion, and use of stance markers while discussing research results. The analysis is based on the responses of 15 linguistics teachers whose experience in evaluating and supervising master linguistics dissertations varied from 2 to 9 years with the mean being 5 years.

To explore the opinions of teachers about the status of the academic production of students, teachers were asked to evaluate the overall quality of students' academic writing. The results (Table 20) show that students' academic writing quality is mediocre with most teachers evaluating it as average (80%), and the rest finding it to be poor (20%).

Table 20*The Quality of Students' Writing According to Teachers*

Quality of Students' Writing	Frequencies	Percentages
Average	12	80%
Poor	3	20%
Total	15	100%

To know what characteristic of MDs teachers think is the most important; teachers were asked to choose from a list of characteristics, Table 21 summarizes their answers.

Table 21*Most Important characteristic of Master Dissertations According to Teachers*

Characteristic	Frequencies	Percentages
The novelty of the topic	0	0%
The appropriate use of research tools and methods	6	40%
The quality of persuasive sound academic writing	5	33.3%
The applicable and valuable results	0	0%
All of them	4	26.7%
Total	15	100%

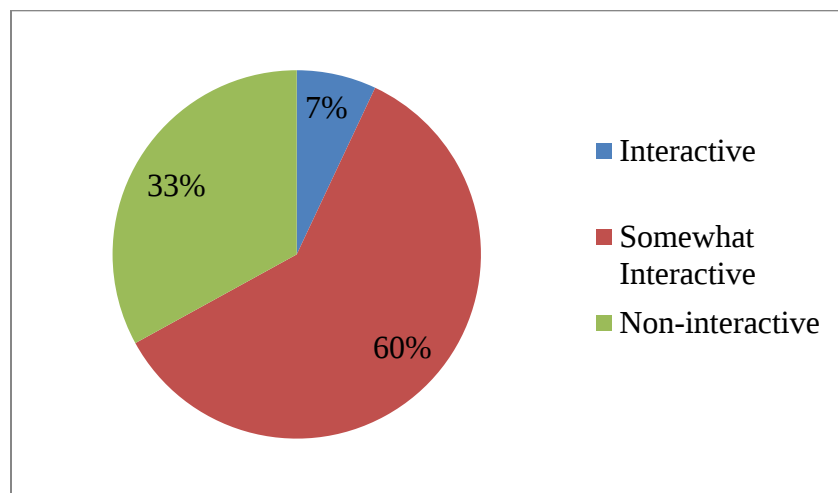
The analysis reveals that the most important characteristic in dissertation for teachers is the correct application of research tools and methods (40%), followed by proper academic writing and the quality of persuasion (33%); while the remaining teachers emphasized on the importance of all mentioned characteristics: The novelty of the topic, the appropriate use of

research tools and methods, the quality of persuasive sound academic writing, and the applicable and valuable results (27%).

Moreover, the analysis also revealed that students' dissertations, according to teachers, do not possess a great rhetorical interaction with the reader (i.e. anticipate the writer-reader dialogue). As can be seen in Graph 8 most teachers found students' writing to be somewhat interactive (60%) while a third of them did not (33%), and only one respondent believed that the students' writing is rhetorically interactive (7%).

Graph 8

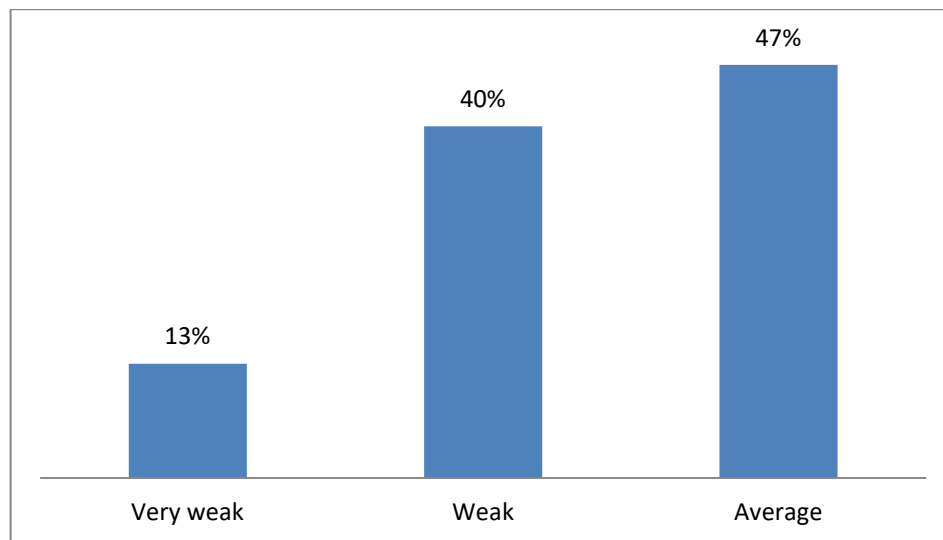
Rhetorical Interactions in Master Dissertations According to Teachers



In exploring the authorial presence in the writing of master students, teachers were asked to provide their evaluation of it. The findings (Graph 9) reveal that teachers found the students' authorial presence in MDs to be average (47%), weak (40%), or very weak (13%).

Graph 9

Strength of Authorial Presence in Master Dissertations According to Teachers



In order to see if this extends to the strength of their arguments, teachers were asked about the effectiveness of persuasion in students' DSs. The results, as displayed in Table 22, show that most assessors thought that the persuasion in students' DSs was somewhat ineffective (67%), while the rest (33%) found students' persuasion to be somewhat effective. This could designate that authorial presence corresponds with the efficacy of persuasion, and the students' poor persuasion could be attributed to the weak authorial presence they display in their discussions.

Table 22

The Effectiveness of Persuasion in Master Dissertations Discussions According to Teachers

Effectiveness of Persuasion	Frequencies	Percentages
Effective	0	0%
Somewhat effective	5	33.3%
Not effective	10	66.7%
Total	15	100%

Additionally, the results (Table 23) show that most all assessors agreed upon the significance of stance, with most of them viewing it as important (40%), a third viewing it as very important (33.3%), and the rest considering it as somewhat important (20%).

Table 23

The Importance of Stance in Academic Writing According to Teachers

Importance of Stance	Frequencies	Percentages
Important	6	40%
Very important	5	33.3
Somewhat important	4	26.7%
Total	15	100%

Following the previous question, examiners were asked whether they give any consideration to authorial stance while evaluating the student's writings. The results (Table 24) show that the majority of them (12) answered positively, while 3 teachers answered with no.

Table 24

Stance Consideration in Evaluating Students' Writing According to Teachers

Stance Consideration	Frequencies	Percentages
Yes	12	80%
No	3	20%
Total	15	100%

To further consolidate our findings concerning the use of stance markers by students in the DS of their MDs, teachers were asked for their opinion on the matter. Special care was given to self-mention, as the corpus study has revealed that these markers are remarkably scarce in students writing compared to expert writers. Instead of asking about students' use, teachers were asked about the appropriateness of employing self-mention.

The results show (Table 25, questions 9, 10, 11) the majority of assessors (80%) believe that students use stance markers improperly; whereas, the rest of them (20%) found that students properly use stance markers. It seems that students are unaware of the adequate way in which their stance can be conveyed when discussing the results of their research through the employment of stance markers; these results correspond to the findings from the corpus based study.

Table 25

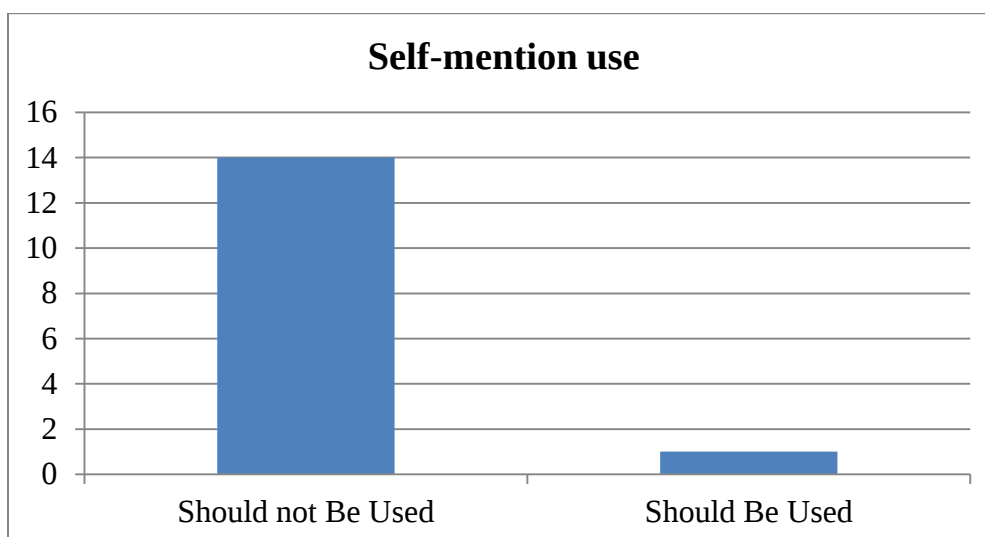
Teachers Opinion about the Proper Use of Hedges, Boosters, and Attitude Markers by Students

Questions	Yes	No
9. From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use hedges in the discussion section?	20%	80%
10. From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use boosters in the discussion section?	20%	80%
11. From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use attitude markers in the discussion section?	20%	80%

Explicit author reference can be manifested through utilizing personal pronouns and possessive adjectives; the use of such markers can demonstrate the authorial identity of the writer; thus, writers deliberately decide whether to project their authorial- reference or not (Hyland, 2005a). Therefore, two items in this survey investigated the assessors' opinions on whether students should use self-mention in their MDs. As displayed in Graph10 the majority of teachers (14) believed that students should not use self-mention, while one respondent believed that students should use self-mention.

Graph 10

Teachers' Opinion on the use of Self-mention by Students in Master Dissertations



When asked to elaborate on their answers concerning self-mention, three different cases were made. Some teachers strongly advocated the importance of objectivity in research where the use of personal pronouns adds subjectivity; *“objectivity is a must”* answered one teacher. While others acknowledged this same point, they also further explained that students should avoid the use of personal pronouns because they are not expected to be subjective especially at the level of master degree where they are only beginners, as can be seen in this answer *“they are just beginners in research ...avoid I and we ..”*. Lastly, some teachers argued that the use of personal pronouns is appropriate within certain limits, depending on the academic requirement and the novelty of the discussion, or that their use is not an obligation and can be accepted sometimes as this answer shows *“As long as they have their own touch in their dissertations, they have the right to use I and we.”*

To address the attitude of respondents towards authorial stance as supervisors and examiners, and in the hope of explaining previous findings, to examine their practices as teachers, the following questions summarized in Table 26 were asked.

Table 26*Teachers' Attitude towards Authorial Stance as Supervisors and Examiners*

Questions	Yes	No	Sometimes
14. As a supervisor, have you ever highlighted the importance of stance to your supervisees or trained them to project an appropriate authorial stance?	33.3%	6.7%	60%
15. As a jury member during your evaluation, have you highlighted the absence of authorial stance, and the corresponding impact, to the concerned students?	33.3%	20%	46.7%
16. As a teacher, do you encourage your students to reflect on the differences of academic and rhetorical practices in English and their first language?	60%	20%	20%
17. As a teacher, do you task your students to analyze the academic genres they are expected to write?	73.3%	6.7%	20%

The analysis of question 14 shows that for the most part supervisors sometimes stressed the importance of stance to their supervisees (60%) while others positively affirmed that they did (33%); leaving only one respondent who did not (6.7%). Additionally, from the analysis of question 15 we can see that about half of the teachers acting as jury members said that they sometimes indicate the absence of authorial stance to the candidates (47%), while a third of them do indeed highlight the absence of authorial stance (33.3%), and the rest said that they do not highlight the absence of authorial stance (20%).

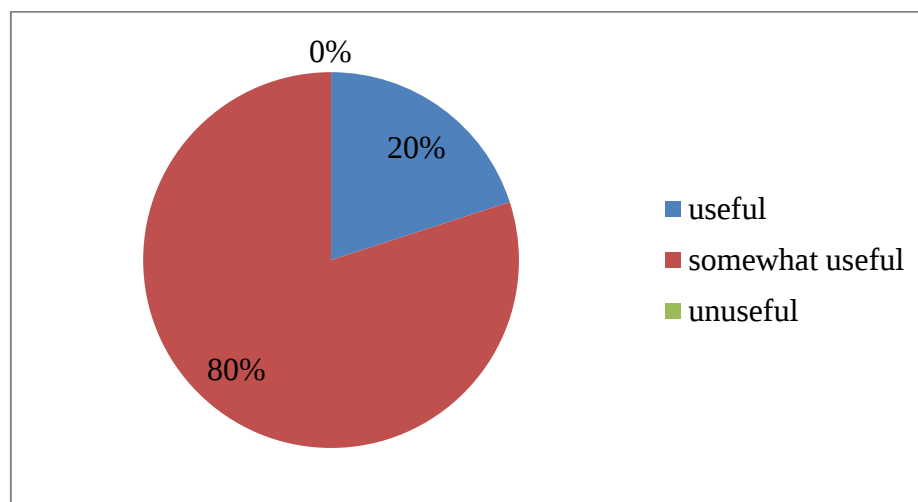
Since academic writing standards differ from one language to the other, and from one writing genre to the next, teachers were asked whether they encourage their students to reflect on the differences of academic and rhetorical practices in English and their first language and on the genres that are expected to write (question 16). Most of the teachers' responses about raising

students' attention to language differences were affirmative (60%), while 20% said that only sometimes do, and 20% said that they do not. Lastly from question 17 it is revealed that most teachers answered that they task students to analyze the genres they should produce (73.3%), while the rest said they only sometimes do (20%).

Despite its accepted importance, authorial stance importance in the context of college level writing has been debated (Park & Stapleton, 2003 as cited in Matsuda, 2015). It was then deemed important to explore teachers' opinion of this subject to investigate the possible inclusion of stance in Academic Writing classes. Teachers were asked whether they believe the explicit teaching of authorial stance can be useful. The majority of them agreed on its usefulness (80%), while the rest answered that it can somewhat be useful (20%). Graph11 illustrates their answers.

Graph 11

The Usefulness of the Explicit Teaching of Authorial Stance According to Teachers



Additionally, teachers' opinion about the place of authorial stance within academic writing teaching was sought. For this, they were asked to comment on the following statement: "some might argue that academic writing is complex enough as it is without adding more things,

like stance, to teach". Some of their responses were *"True to a great extent"; "Academic writing is not complex but crucial to write in English though some might consider it to be hard to master in a short time"; "Academic writing should have its largest share in teaching future researcher (university students) accordingly, I think that academic writing must be integrated in License and master, hence, students will learn all aspects of academic writing including stance"; "it is the writing context and objective that dictate the use or non-use of this authorial position. It might be helpful to train learners to know about and use them whenever needed"; "I can't agree more with this argument", "It's complex but stance is of value as well"; "I do agree."; "It's essential to add the element of Stance un academic writing if the goal is to fully produce proficient writers"*.

The answers provided by the teachers varied but most of them disagreed with the statement and promoted the inclusion of stance in teaching academic writing. They argued that the teaching of academic writing should be holistic for it to produce proficient writers, and this should include the teaching of authorial stance. And while some teachers acknowledged the complexity of academic writing, they also approved on teaching stance as it is an important skill to master. This positive position towards teaching stance is captured in this answer *"Taking positions and assuming explicit responsibility for one's ideas push writers to be more careful in their claims and work harder to be more persuasive leading to better writing skills overall."* However, there were teachers who fully agreed with the statement and the inadequacy of adding stance to academic writing classes. This view might be explained by the following answer provided by one teacher: *"Of course it is quite important to teach authorial stance even if it is a complex skill. However, taking into consideration students' learning needs, we sometimes find that students struggle with simple writing techniques and encounter a lot of difficulties in writing*

correctly. Thus, we find ourselves obliged to prioritize teaching the simple writing skills that students still need to acquire and give less emphasis to academic stance despite its recognized importance.”

Discussion of Findings

The present study is based on four research questions. The first and second research questions were answered through the use of a comparative corpus-based study. They explored the quantitative use of stance markers in students' master dissertations discussion sections and expert writers' articles discussion sections as well as students' conception on authorial stance. It was found that the composition of stance varied between the two writing levels. Each favored a different approach to convey their positions towards the text and the readers and different ways of taking authority over their writing. Expressing evidentiality was the main purpose of stance markers in both sub-corpora. Students preferred to keep their involvement simply as judges of the epistemic value, certainty, or doubt of the information reported. They might not have found it necessary or appropriate to directly show their presence in the text, nor to express their emotions to avoid making their judgment personalized. Expert writers on the other hand prioritized the expression of evidentiality as well; however, they also projected a substantial degree of presence in their writing claiming direct authority of the text and promoting themselves. While like students, they also chose to keep their affective stance restrained.

One of the significant differences between expert writers and student's writing that the study revealed is in the frequencies of stance markers used. Published articles discussion sections contained about twice as many stance markers as master dissertations discussion sections included (35.3% to 20%). Additionally, expert writers used a richer array of stance items in all categories of stance. This was seen in the number of stance tokens used which shows experts

using 35% more forms than students. This agrees with the results of Hyland and Milton (1997) who concluded that non-native English students found the management of certainty and affect (i.e. hedges, boosters, and attitude markers) particularly problematic, and that they relied on a limited range of devices.

Hedging markers were the least diverse stance markers in students' composition compared to experts' writing which used 22 forms (out of a total of 102) more than students. This could be explained by the fact that hedges in texts are found to be hard to identify by non-native English students, who seem to ignore hedges, misinterpret them, or genuinely not know their meanings (Hyland, 2010). This corresponds with the findings of Hinkle (2002) who commented "it stands to reason that NNSs' [non-native students'] accessible repertoire of hedges was restricted to those found in conversational discourse".

The stance categories with the most significant discrepancies between students and experts' writing are self-mention and hedges respectively. It appears that presence is a rather problematic aspect for students. The meager application of self-mention markers could only mean an active avoidance of personal and possessive pronouns. We estimate that students found it unnecessary or even unwise to put themselves into the spotlight of the discussion and opted for a passive reporting of propositions. This of course weakens the strength of their authorial self and as such the power of their persuasion. This result is in line with the findings of Hinkle (2002) and Hyland (2012) who found that EFL students' essays have far less use of personal pronouns than published research articles.

Self-mention is arguably the strongest and most direct way writers can claim authority of a text, thus, underusing it or overusing it can significantly influence the persuasive goals of research, mistakes that EFL students tend to commit (Hinkle, 2002; Hyland 2016, Taki &

Jafarpour, 2012). This struggle to present an appropriate authorial self is explained by Scollon (1994) by part as an ideological challenge and a cultural conflict in the construction of selves between non-native English students and their native counterpart. He further explains that the Utilitarian individualistic ideology found in English speaking countries is hard to grasp for students from Collectivistic communities. Taki and Jafarpour (2012) on the other hand, explain that EFL students aim to make arguments stronger through emphasizing on the discussion rather than themselves.

For M'sila University students', the reason why self-mention was avoided is most likely due to the teaching students received in their English higher education. The analysis of students' questionnaire revealed that learners believed it is unacademic to use personal pronouns and possessive adjectives in their writing as they have been taught that they invite subjectivity and bias into their writing. This finding is further accentuated by the analysis of teachers' questions that showed teachers to mostly object on the use of self-mention in master dissertations. Teachers argued that novice students are not ready to take on such a level of authority, and emphasized on the importance of objectivity in academic writing. Comments similar to our respondents' were documented by Hyland (2016) who found that second language students were taught not to bring their options into their academic writing and felt uncomfortable using the personal authority *I* implied. He further argues that despite being exposed to academic texts in their courses and studies, second language students still find it difficult to manage reader-written interaction.

As has been mentioned before, this traditional idea, that Algerian University teachers seem to hold, about academic writing being objective and faceless has shifted towards an acceptance of the interpersonal communicative nature of persuasion in academic writing. The

use of personal pronouns and self-mention by writers, including students, is important in the creation of an appropriate researcher persona. The subjectivity that self-mention suggests is not equivalent with unreliableness or bias, which is illustrated by the findings of this study. The functional analysis of self-mention in the corpus revealed that while the structures that the students used with personal pronouns were assertive and too bold like (*we + can + [assertive] verb*), experts employed more reserved forms, or used structures that display a more modest stance (*we + can + only + verb; we + cannot + verb*). This shows that when self-mention is used properly, it can emphasize the authority of the writer without imposing on the reader. We argue that it would be more effective if instead of being discouraged from using personal pronouns, students are taught the right way of using them.

Additionally, it is worth mentioning that the great presence of self-mention in research articles can be for promotional reasons within the competitive environment of academic research. The need to be recognized by the community, to get published, or to receive funding and promotion motivates writers to take a strong authority of the texts (Harwood, 2005; Hyland 2004; as cited in Sayah & Hashemi, 2014). This need does not correspond with Master students' objectives from writing dissertations, which for the most part are not published, and could be a reason why there is a big difference in self-mention frequencies between the two sub-corpora.

The second stance category with the largest gap in frequency between students and experts' writing was hedges. Hedges were the most preferred stance marker for conveying epistemic beliefs and evaluating propositions for both novice and expert writers. They could be so common because academic writing demands for the writer to weigh the evidence before reporting how much the reader can rely on it (Hyland, 2008a). Nevertheless, students hedged their statements significantly less than expert writers; this might be comparable to previous

studies that demonstrated that EFL students tend to under-hedge their statements (Allison, 1995; Hyland, 2005b). It shows that students may not fully understand the suitable use of these markers. Consequently, students' writing might come out as imprudent and imposing to their readers and might elicit a negative reaction from the latter's part concerning the credibility of the presented claims. This is what the analysis of teachers' questionnaire also suggests, as teachers believed students to display an inappropriate use of hedges in their discussion sections.

However, the corpus analysis of hedges in students' writing shows that when used, they were used correctly. The quantitative analysis shows that the lexical categories of hedging items are parallel in both sub-corpora. Additionally, modal verbs were the most used forms for hedging at both writing levels, which corresponded to Holmes' finding modal verbs dominant in the grammatical classes used to express epistemic modality in writing (Holmes, 1988 as cited in Serholt, 2012). More specifically, the modal verb *may* was favored by both students and experts. In a longitudinal study by Hyland and Jiang (2016) it was found that *may* remained the most frequently used hedges in applied linguistics articles. The reason for this could be the function of *may* as a marker of logical possibility, which is an important characteristic of academic writing (Moini & Salami, 2015). The qualitative analysis on the other hand shows that the most prominent hedges appeared in similar structures at both writing levels. So while students seem to misjudge the frequency by which hedges should be used, they know how to use hedges in semantically correct structures

The remaining stance categories were used in similar frequencies in master dissertations and published articles discussions. Boosters were used almost evenly by students and experts, which contradicts previous similar studies which found that EFL students project gratuitous levels of certainty in their academic writing (Allison, 1995; Hyland, 2000; Hyland & Milton,

1997). Compared to the overall stance markers used, boosters account for 30% in students' writing while only 15% in experts' writing. This preference to boost from the students part can be linked to their cultural background concept of politeness. Arab cultures are known for keeping a positive face politeness where having an assertive tone is considered more respectful and polite, whereas English culture keeps a negative face politeness where respect lies in acknowledging the personal space of others and giving them room for rejection (Al-Rickaby, 2020). Although another plausible reason for this percentage difference could be simply linked to the overall shortage of hedges, which can be related to the aforementioned cultural differences, and self-mention in students' writing. The functional analysis of boosters showed that the semantic constructions used by students were similar to the ones used by expert writers. While these findings suggest that students' use and conception of boosters are accurate, the analysis of the teachers' questionnaire shows that teachers found students to improperly use boosters, a claim that cannot be backed up by the corpus analysis findings.

Attitude markers on the other hand were the least favored stance marker from the experts' part, but they were more frequently used by them than by students. This minimal use of attitude markers could be due to the expected conventional emotionlessness of academic writing and the restrictions it puts on the range of possible attitudes that can be expressed appropriately (Hyland, 2016). This can be seen in the most preferred attitude markers employed (e.g. interesting, even) which do not express emphatic emotions but rather express what is labeled as 'appreciation' through invoking positive and negative meanings (Hyland & Jiang, 2016).

The qualitative analysis of attitude markers on the other hand revealed that there are some differences in their use. The patterns used by expert writers were more refined and academically appropriate than the pattern used by students; this finding is in line with the teacher's

questionnaire results which showed that teachers found students to misuse attitude markers in their dissertations. For instance, students tended to rely on intensifiers to give more value to their attitudes (*intensifier + attitude marker*). Through the use of such constructions, students might have tried to highlight the importance of the propositions and direct the reader's attention to what they believe is significant to the discussion. This reliance on intensifiers to develop an effective rhetorical persuasion can be a strategy students use to compensate for their limited range of lexicon (Hinkle, 2005).

The third research question this study puts forward deals with M'sila master students' awareness of the concept of stance and stance markers. We attempted to answer this question through the use of a questionnaire addressed to M'sila master 2 linguistics students. It was found that students are not familiar with the concept of authorial stance as they did not encounter it in their Academic Writing classes and were not taught how to properly project it. Students preferred to write without including personal views in their discussions and did not consider the persuasive nature of this section. Moreover, they chose to not evaluate their statements and mostly refrained from showing epistemic modality. These choices from students' part could lead for their authorial grasp on the text to be lost and for their persuasion to be unconvincing; which can be seen in the results of the teachers' questionnaire that shows teachers finding students' authorial presence to be very weak, and their persuasion to be ineffective.

Additionally, most students reported that they did not receive any feedback from their supervisors on the use of stance in their master dissertations. This contradicts the finding from the teachers' questionnaire which showed that, for the most part, supervisors highlighted the importance of stance to the students under their supervision and trained them how to project a proper stance. The reason behind this contradiction is not clear, but drawing from our results it

might indicate that although some elements of stance are explained to students upon undertaking their master research, the fact that they did not previously learn about authorial stance or its manifestation in texts means that they do not really understand it even when brought out to their attention. Students cannot be expected to fully grasp the importance and the application of stance markers in the relatively short time they have while preparing their master dissertations, and supervisors' attempts to fill this knowledge gap seems to be insufficient.

Furthermore, the analysis of students' questionnaire also revealed that students are not aware of the use of different stance markers. For instance, the questionnaire shows that half of the students disapprove of showing emotions such as interest, surprise, or appreciation when discussing their research results, while the qualitative corpus study shows that students used attitude markers about as much as expert writers did. This could mean that students' application of attitude markers is spontaneous and arbitrary rather than a thoroughly thought through choice. In the lack of any explicit teaching of stance learners are left to import their cultural conception of stance and make their own judgment on what is appropriate or not in academic writing without adhering to the specificities of the genre they are writing for.

The last research question in this study is aimed towards exploring Algerian teachers' expectations and considerations over stance in students writing as master dissertations jury members and supervisors. A questionnaire was used to answer this question. Our results showed that teachers acknowledge the importance of stance in master dissertations with most of them stating that they take it into account when assessing students' work. From the analysis it was revealed that, as supervisors, teachers said that they indicated the importance of stance to their supervisees and, as jury members, they pointed out the authorial aspect to the students they evaluated. However, it was found that teachers did not encourage the projection of "presence" in

students' master dissertations. They believed that academic writing should remain objective and the use of personal pronouns threatens to give it a subjective tint, especially when used by novice writers like master 2 students. Additionally, most teachers held that the explicit integration of authorial stance in students' Academic Writing classes can be beneficial. They argued that academic writing teaching should be holistic, and that learning about authorial stance will lead to better writing skills overall as it would push students to take responsibility over their work and formulate more persuasive claims.

Limitations, Future Research Recommendations, and Pedagogical implications

Limitations

Although the study has answered all its questions, it inevitably has some limitations. In conducting the comparative corpus study, the researchers have tried their best to ensure the representativeness of the corpus; however, the small size of the gathered texts may not result in a holistic depiction of the rhetorical practices of all M'sila University master 2 linguistics students. Additionally, identifying the frequencies of stance markers in the corpus is done by the present researchers who do not claim to be experts in the subject and are disposed to commit some mistakes in assigning items to their corresponding stance categories. The number of respondents for the students' questionnaire was relatively small, accounting for about 20% of the targeted population of students. This could be due to it being an online questionnaire because reaching students was not practical in the current Covid-19 pandemic, which would make the results limited to the present study. The teachers' questionnaire was initially addressed to M'sila University linguistics teachers only, but due to the slow and small rates of responses, it was administered to linguistics teachers from other Algerian universities as well.

Future Research Recommendations

Drawing from the findings of the study, the researchers put forward the following recommendations for future research:

- 1) The replication of the comparative corpus study on a larger and more inclusive corpus.
- 2) The exploration of stance in other sections of master dissertations
- 3) The investigation of stance in different writing genres such as students' essays, academic emails, articles, or PhD theses.
- 4) Adopting different methodologies for the study of stance besides the lexical ones, such as the study of particular grammatical structures.
- 5) Conducting correlational studies on the relationship between stance and different academic writing characteristics.
- 6) Conducting experimental studies of students' awareness of the use of stance in their written and oral productions.

Pedagogical Implications

Based on the findings, the study proposes the following pedagogical implication:

- 7) Integrating authorial stance within the Academic Writing syllabus and raising students' awareness of its importance.
- 8) Teaching stance markers (hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention) pragmatic and functional use in academic writing.
- 9) Students' should be made aware of their target audience when writing, what is expected of them as writers of different texts should be made clear to them by their teachers.

10) Bringing the differences between home language and English in the academic context to students' attention, as well as distinctive genres rhetorical conventions, through culture studies and genre analysis.

11) Nurturing students' sense of academic authority and helping the growth of their researcher identity.

12) Prompting students to affiliate themselves within the research community of their study field.

GENERAL
Conclusion

General Conclusion

Academic knowledge is the product of the ongoing scholarly conversations. The rhetorical practices of scientific communities provide researchers with the linguistic tool with which readers can be persuaded with the factuality of the claimed knowledge. Central in this persuasion is the writers' authorial stance towards the ideas, text, and readers. Stance serves as a way for the writers to project themselves, their judgments, and their attitudes to claim authority over the text and to gain credibility. There has been ample research conducted on the topic of stance, and this present study aims to investigate it within the rather novel context of Algerian EFL learners.

This descriptive study investigates authorial stance in M'sila University Master 2 Linguistics dissertations and published research articles. It seeks to answer four research questions through the use of a comparative corpus based study along with two questionnaires. It aims to inspect and compare the employment of stance markers use by expert writers and novice researchers in research discussion sections, to investigate students' conception of stance markers, to explore the students' awareness of authorial stance, and to point out the rhetorical expectations of teachers, supervisors and jury members regarding stance taking in master dissertations. Hyland's (2005b) model of interaction was adopted for the study of stance and a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the corpus was carried out.

Overall, the descriptive statistics analysis indicates distinctive application of stance devices between students and expert writers in all categories of stance, most notably in the expression of self-mention and hedging. The functional analysis of stance markers shows that stance-taking for students is impersonal yet assertive; they adopt an overly forceful epistemic stance and display an immature exhibition of affect and presence. The findings also demonstrate

that students are unaware of the concept of stance and that they did not encounter this rhetorical aspect in their educational setting. Furthermore, they are unaware that the written productions, such as the discussion section, require interactive persuasion. Teachers on the other hand emphasize on the importance of stance as an important aspect of academic writing and an element which they put under scrutiny when assessing master dissertations.

In conclusion, the present study strives to contribute to the previous works illustrating the different use and conception between EFL novice writers and expert writers, specifically, to illustrate the status of authorial stance among linguistics master students and teachers within the Algerian University. The study promotes the social aspect of academic writing, and the importance of adopting an interactional view on academic writing, and calls for teaching authorial stance to EFL students as a way of preparing them to become proficient researchers and to elevate the quality of postgraduate research.

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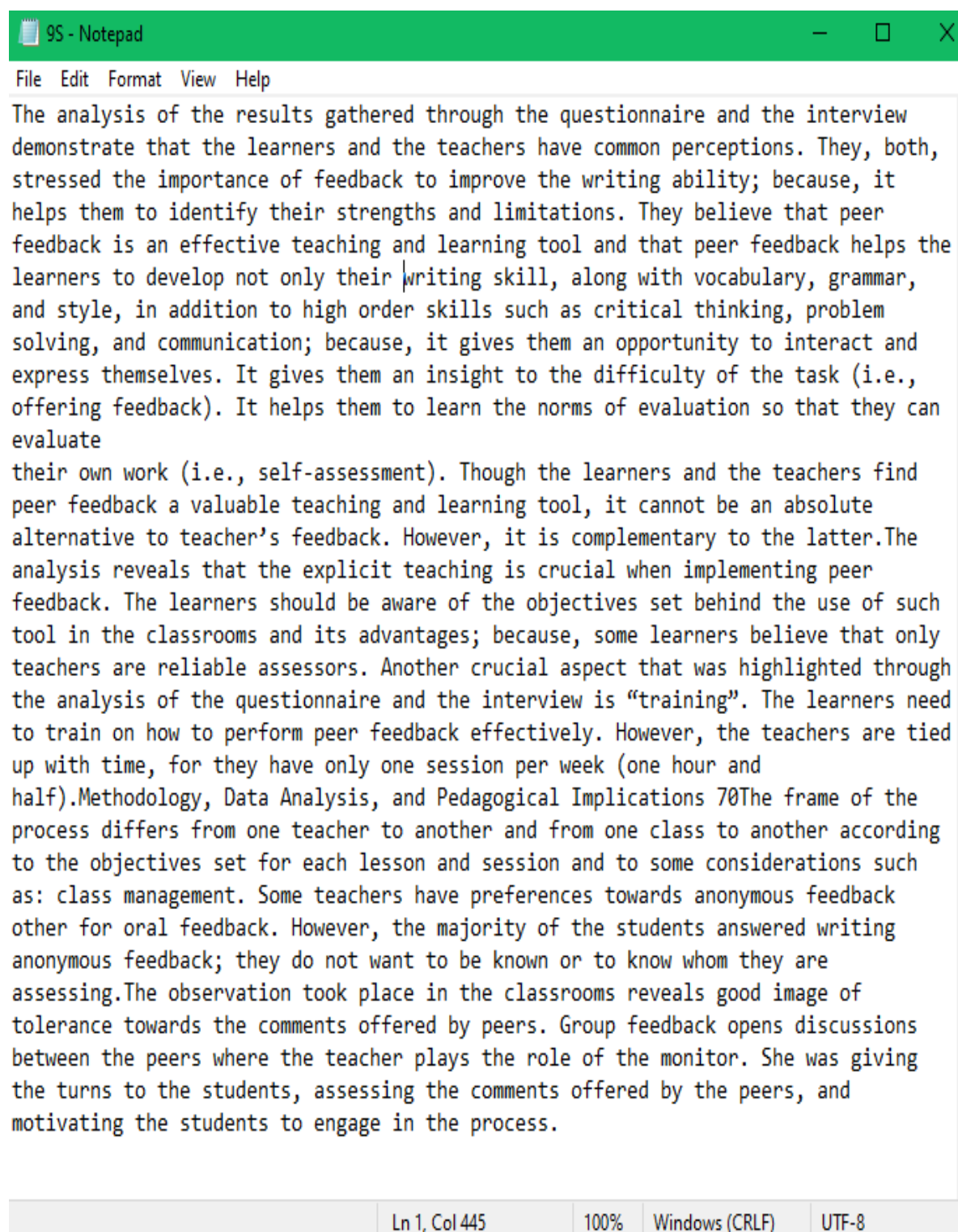
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Appendices

Appendix A: A Screenshot Showing the Final Look of a Treated Text



Appendix B Concordance Results in AntConc for the Word 'may'

The screenshot displays the AntConc 3.5.9 (Windows) 2020: User Settings window. The interface is divided into several sections:

- Corpus Files:** A list of files on the left, including 1S.txt, 2S.txt, 3S.txt, 4S.txt, 5S.txt, 6S.txt, 7S.txt, 8S.txt, 9S.txt, 10S.txt, 11S.txt, 12S.txt, 13S.txt, 14S.txt, 15S.txt, 16S.txt, 17S.txt, 18S.txt, 19S.txt, 20S.txt, 21S.txt, 22S.txt, 23S.txt, 24S.txt, 25S.txt, 26S.txt, 27S.txt, 28S.txt, 29S.txt, 30S.txt, 31S.txt, 32S.txt, 33S.txt, 34S.txt, 35S.txt, and 36S.txt.
- Concordance Hits:** A table showing 63 hits for the word 'may'. The table has columns for Hit, KWIC, and File. The KWIC column shows the word 'may' in context, with the word itself highlighted in red. The File column shows the source file for each hit.
- Search Term:** A text box containing 'may'.
- Search Window Size:** A dropdown menu set to 200.
- Search Options:** Checkboxes for Words, Case, and Regex.
- Advanced:** A button to toggle advanced search options.
- Start, Stop, Sort, Show Every Nth Row:** Buttons for controlling the search process.
- Kwic Sort:** Checkboxes for Level 1, Level 2, and Level 3 sorting.
- Total No.:** A label indicating the total number of hits, which is 40.
- Files Processed:** A green bar indicating the progress of file processing.
- Clone Results:** A button to copy the results to the clipboard.

Appendix C

List of stance markers adopted from Hyland (2005a).

Hedges	Boosters
About, almost, apparent, apparently, appear, appeared, appears, approximately, argue, argued, argues, around, assume, assumed, broadly, certain amount, certain extent, certain level, claim, claimed, claims, could, couldn't, doubt, doubtful, essentially, estimate, estimated, fairly, feel, feels, felt, frequently, from my perspective, from our perspective, from this perspective, generally, guess, indicate, indicated, indicates, in general, in most cases, in most instances, in my opinion, in my view, in this view, in our opinion, in our view, largely, likely, mainly, may, maybe, might, mostly, often, on the whole, ought, perhaps, plausible, plausibly, possible, possibly, postulate, postulated, postulates, presumable, presumably, probable, probably, quite, rather, relatively, roughly, seems, should, sometimes, somewhat, suggest, suggested, suggests, suppose, supposed, supposes, suspect, suspects, tend to, tended to, tends to, to my knowledge, to our Knowledge, typical, typically, uncertain, uncertainly, unclear, unclearly, unlikely, usually, would, wouldn't	Actually, always, believe, believed, believes, beyond doubt, certain, certainly, clear, clearly, conclusively, decidedly, definite, definitely, demonstrate, demonstrated, demonstrates, doubtless, establish, established, evident, evidently, find, finds, found, in fact, incontestable, incontestably, incontrovertible, incontrovertibly, indeed, indisputable, indisputably, know, known, must (possibility), never, no doubt, obvious, obviously, of course, prove, proved, proves, realize, realized, realizes, really, show, showed, shown, shows, sure, surely, think, thinks, thought, truly, true, undeniable, undeniably, undisputedly, undoubtedly, without doubt.
Attitude Markers !, admittedly, agree, agrees, agreed, amazed, amazing, amazingly, appropriate, appropriately, astonished, astonishing, astonishingly, correctly, curious, curiously, desirable, desirably,	Self-mention I, we, me, my, our, mine, us, the author, the author's, the writer, the writer's

disappointed, disappointing, disappointingly,
disagree, disagreed, disagrees, dramatic,
dramatically, essential, essentially, even, expected,
expectedly, fortunate, fortunately, hopeful,
hopefully, important, importantly, inappropriate,
inappropriately, interesting, interestingly, prefer,
preferable, preferably, preferred, remarkable,
remarkably, shocked, shocking, shockingly,
striking, strikingly, surprised, surprising,,
surprisingly, unbelievable, unbelievably,
understandable, understandably, unexpected,
unexpectedly, unfortunate, unfortunately, unusual,
unusually, usual

Appendix D: Frequencies of Stance Markers under 0.15 words per 1000

Table D1

Normalized Counts of Hedges in Students Dissertations DS and Published Articles DS (per 1000 words)

Hedge	Students'	Published Article	Total
	Dissertations DS	DS	
generally	0.175	0.070	0.140
in general	0.368	0.562	0.140
typically	0.175	0.070	0.140
suggested	0.193	0.000	0.129
possibly	0.175	0.000	0.117
Quite	0.175	0.000	0.117
typical	0.175	0.000	0.117
approximately	0.105	0.105	0.105
plausible	0.158	0.000	0.105

usually	0.123	0.070	0.105
Fairly	0.053	0.176	0.094
Mostly	0.070	0.140	0.094
somewhat	0.105	0.070	0.094
appear	0.123	0.000	0.082
Argued	0.105	0.000	0.070
Essentially	0.018	0.176	0.070
Largely	0.088	0.035	0.070
Appeared	0.070	0.035	0.059
Rather	0.070	0.035	0.059
tended to	0.088	0.000	0.059
Apparently	0.053	0.035	0.047
Broadly	0.070	0.000	0.047
Postulated	0.035	0.070	0.047
Probable	0.070	0.000	0.047
Unclear	0.070	0.000	0.047
Unlikely	0.070	0.000	0.047
Apparent	0.000	0.105	0.035
Around	0.053	0.000	0.035
Ought	0.053	0.000	0.035
presumably	0.053	0.000	0.035
Supposed	0.018	0.070	0.035
Claim	0.018	0.035	0.023
suspect	0.035	0.000	0.023
tends to	0.000	0.070	0.023
to our knowledge	0.035	0.000	0.023
Doubt	0.018	0.000	0.012
Felt	0.018	0.000	0.012
maybe	0.000	0.035	0.012
on the whole	0.018	0.000	0.012
roughly	0.018	0.000	0.012

Table D2

Normalized Counts of Boosters in Students Dissertations DS and Published Articles DS (per 1000 words)

Booster	Students'	Published Article	Total
	Dissertations DS	DS	
known	0.105	0.157	0.140
obvious	0.175	0.087	0.117
Never	0.140	0.105	0.117
evident	0.175	0.070	0.105
obviously	0.105	0.105	0.105
demonstrate	0.105	0.087	0.093
True	0.070	0.105	0.093
always	0.000	0.140	0.093
demonstrates	0.105	0.035	0.058
Think	0.000	0.087	0.058
evidently	0.105	0.017	0.046
Sure	0.070	0.035	0.046
of course	0.035	0.052	0.046
believe	0.000	0.070	0.046
Prove	0.105	0.000	0.035
believed	0.070	0.017	0.035
certain	0.000	0.052	0.035
certainly	0.000	0.052	0.035
proves	0.070	0.000	0.023
must (possibility)	0.035	0.017	0.023
definite	0.000	0.035	0.023
establish	0.000	0.035	0.023
established	0.035	0.000	0.011
realize	0.035	0.000	0.011
Really	0.035	0.000	0.011

undeniable	0.035	0.000	0.011
conclusively	0.000	0.0175	0.011
Definitely	0.000	0.0175	0.011
Finds	0.000	0.0175	0.011
Know	0.000	0.0175	0.011
Surely	0.000	0.0175	0.011

Table D3

Normalized Counts of Attitude Markers in Students Dissertations DS and Published Articles DS

(per 1000 words)

Attitude Marker	Students		
	Dissertation DS	Published article DS	total
Appropriate	0.315	0.000	0.105
Remarkable	0.175	0.069	0.105
Preferred	0.000	0.138	0.093
Interestingly	0.035	0.104	0.081
Essential	0.175	0.017	0.070
Essentially	0.175	0.017	0.070
Surprising	0.035	0.086	0.070
Desirable	0.035	0.069	0.058
Striking	0.000	0.086	0.058
Inappropriate	0.105	0.017	0.046
Unfortunately	0.035	0.052	0.046
Surprisingly	0.035	0.034	0.035
Admittedly	0.000	0.052	0.035
Unfortunate	0.035	0.017	0.023
Correctly	0.000	0.034	0.023
Dramatically	0.000	0.034	0.023
Strikingly	0.000	0.034	0.023

Appropriately	0.035	0.000	0.011
Astonishing	0.035	0.000	0.011
Agree	0.000	0.017	0.011
Agrees	0.000	0.017	0.011
Desirably	0.000	0.017	0.011
Remarkably	0.000	0.017	0.011
Surprised	0.000	0.017	0.011
Understandably	0.000	0.017	0.011
Unexpected	0.000	0.017	0.011
Unusual	0.000	0.017	0.011
Usual	0.000	0.017	0.011

Table D4

Normalized Counts of Self-mention in Students Dissertations DS and Published Articles DS (per 1000 words)

Self-mention	Students'		Total
	Dissertations DS	Published Article DS	
My	0.000	0.035	0.052
Me	0.000	0.011	0.017

Appendix E: Stance markers that were not found in the corpus

Table E1

Hedges that were not found in the corpus

Students' dissertation DS	Published Articles DS
wouldn't, argues, certain amount, certain extent, certain level, claimed, claims, couldn't, doubtful, estimate, feel, feels, from my	wouldn't, apparent, tends to, maybe, argues, certain amount, certain extent, certain level, claimed, claims, couldn't, doubtful, estimate,

perspective, from our perspective, from this perspective, guess, in most cases, in most instances, in my opinion, in my view, in our opinion, in our view, in this view, plausibly, postulate, postulates, presumable, suppose, supposes, suspects, to my knowledge, uncertain, uncertainly, unclearly, tended to, doubt, felt, on the whole, to our knowledge, around, ought, presumably, broadly, probable, unclear, unlikely, argued, appear, appears, frequently, quite, typically, plausible, about, suggested, argue, assume.	feel, feels, from my perspective, from our perspective, from this perspective, guess, in most cases, in most instances, in my opinion, in my view, in our opinion, in our view, in this view, plausibly, postulate, postulates, presumable, suppose, supposes, suspects, to my knowledge, uncertain, uncertainly, unclearly.
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Table E2

Boosters that were not found in the corpus

Students' dissertation DS	Published Articles DS
Always, think, believe, certain, certainly, definite, establish, conclusively, definitely, finds, know, surely, believes, beyond doubt, decidedly, doubtless, incontestable, incontestably, incontrovertible, incontrovertibly, indisputable, indisputably, no doubt, realized, realizes, thinks, thought, truly, undeniable, undisputedly, undoubtedly, without doubt.	Believes, beyond doubt, decidedly, doubtless, incontestable, incontestably, incontrovertible, incontrovertibly, indisputable, indisputably, no doubt, realized, realizes, thinks, thought, truly, undeniable, undisputedly, undoubtedly, without doubt, established, realize, really, undeniable, proves, prove.

Table E3

Attitude Markers that were not found in the corpus

Students' dissertation DS	Published Articles DS
!, admittedly, agree, agrees, agreed, amazed, amazing, amazingly, astonished, astonishingly, correctly, curious , curiously, desirably, disappointed, disappointing, disappointingly, disagree, disagreed, disagrees, dramatic, dramatically, expectedly, fortunate, fortunately, hopeful, hopefully, inappropriately, prefer, preferable, preferably, preferred, remarkably, shocked, shocking, shockingly, striking, strikingly, surprised, surprisingly, unbelievable, unbelievably, understandable, understandably, unexpected, unexpectedly, unusual, unusually, usual	!, appropriate, appropriately, astonishing, agreed, amazed, amazing, amazingly, astonished, astonishingly, curious, curiously, disagree, disagreed, disappointed, disappointing, disappointingly, dramatic, expectedly, fortunate, fortunately, hopeful, hopefully, inappropriately, prefer, preferable, preferably, shocked, shocking, shockingly, unbelievably, understandable, understandably, unexpectedly, unusually.

Table E4

Self-mention that were not found in the corpus

Students' dissertation DS	Published Articles DS
My, me, mine, the author, the author', the writer, the writer's.	Mine, the author, the author', the writer, the writer's.

Appendix F: Students' Questionnaire

Section 1 of 3

Surveying Students Awareness of Authorial Stance

This questionnaire is part of a linguistics master research project from M'sila University department of Letters and English Language. It is addressed to master linguistics students and it aims to explore the students' conception of authorial stance. You are kindly invited to answer in this questionnaire, your responses are very much appreciated.
Your answers will remain confidential.

After section 1 Continue to next section

Section 2 of 3

Overview on Academic Writing

Description (optional)

gender *

☐ Female

☐ Male

For how many years have you been taught English Academic Writing at university? *

☐ 1

☐ 2

☐ 3

☐ 4

☐ 5

Do you think that it was enough to prepare you for writing your masters dissertation? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat

What do you most consider when you are writing your dissertation? *

- ☐ Following the structure of research paper
- ☐ Persuading the reader to accept your findings
- ☐ Providing evidence to your claims
- ☐ Reporting facts
- ☐ Using grammatically correct language

How much do you think your academic writing represent your field of study (i.e. Linguistics genre) *

- | | | | | | | |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | |
| Not at All | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Completely |

When writing, do you imagine you are arguing with an audience that you have to persuade with the correctness of your claims? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

As an author, when writing your dissertation's discussion section you: *

- ☐ Try to show your personal point of view
- ☐ Keep out your personal point of view to be objective
- ☐ Do not consider either and write freely

If you chose the first option in the previous question, how do you achieve that?

Long answer text

After section 2 Continue to next section

Section 3 of 3

Stance in Academic Writing



Description (optional)

Are you familiar with the concept of "authorial stance" (i.e. the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the content of a message)? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

As defined above, do you think stance is important in academic writing? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Where do you think this importance lies?

Short answer text
.....

Were you taught how to project appropriate stance in your academic writing? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you try to convey your stance in your dissertation? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Somewhat

Do you get feedback from your supervisor on your use of stance in your dissertation? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

When writing your dissertation's discussion section, usually you: *

- ☐ Present your claims strongly (e.g. The students must lack motivation)
- ☐ Present your claims cautiously (e.g. The students may lack motivation)
- ☐ Present your claims as facts (e.g. The students lack motivation)

Do you think showing a certain degree of emotions (e.g. surprise, interest, appreciation) does not adhere to the norms of academic writing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Do you think it is appropriate to use pronouns (e.g. I, we, our, us) in your academic writing? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Can you please elaborate on your answer of the previous question

Long answer text

.....

Do you think the application of boosters (e.g. must, show, clearly) is important in the discussion *
of results in your dissertation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you think the application of hedges (e.g. may, possibly, appear) is important in the discussion *
of results in your dissertation?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Do you think it would be helpful to you, in the writing of your dissertation, to know how to *
properly convey your authorial stance?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Appendix G: Teachers' Questionnaire

Section 1 of 2

The Assessment of Authorial Stance in Students' Master Dissertations

This questionnaire is part of a linguistics master research project from M'sila University department of Letters and English Language. It is addressed to teachers experienced in assessing linguistics students' master dissertations. The questionnaire aims to investigate teachers' assessment of authorial stance in students' master dissertations.

You are kindly invited to answer the questions carefully. Your insights will greatly help the success of this study, for that we thank you in advance.

After section 1 Continue to next section

Section 2 of 2

Questionnaire

Description (optional)

How long have you been assessing linguistics students' master dissertations?

Short answer text

How would you evaluate the overall quality of students' academic writing? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Poor	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Good

How important do you think stance is in academic writing? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not Important	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Important

Do you give any consideration to authorial stance while evaluating/grading the work of students? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use hedges in the discussion section?

☐ Yes

☐ No

From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use boosters in the discussion section?

☐ Yes

☐ No

From your experience, generally, do you find students to properly use attitude markers in the discussion section?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What do you think is the most important characteristic of master dissertations? *

- ☐ The novelty of the topic
- ☐ The appropriate use of research tools and methods
- ☐ The quality of persuasive sound academic writing
- ☐ The applicable and valuable results
- ☐ Other...

Do you find the writing in students' master dissertations rhetorically interactive? (i.e. anticipates * the writer-reader dialogue)

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat

How strong/weak do you find the students' authorial presence to be in their master * dissertations?

	1	2	3	4	5	
Very Weak	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very Strong

How effective do you find the persuasion in students' discussion sections writing? *

	1	2	3	4	5	
Ineffective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	Very effective

Do you think students should use self-mention (e.g. I, we, our, us) in their master dissertations? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

Can you please elaborate on your answer of the previous question? *

Long answer text
.....

As a supervisor, have you ever highlighted the importance of stance to your supervisees or trained them to project an appropriate authorial stance? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

☐ Other...

As a jury member during your evaluation, have you highlighted the absence of authorial stance, * and the corresponding impact, to the concerned students?

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Sometimes

☐ Other...

As a teacher, do you encourage your students to reflect on the differences of academic and rhetorical practices in English and their first language?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

As a teacher, do you task your students to analyze the academic genres they are expected to write? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Sometimes

Do you believe the explicit integration of authorial stance in students Academic Writing classes can be useful? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Somewhat

Some might argue that academic writing is complex enough as it is without adding more things, * like stance, to teach. What do you think about this argument?

Long answer text

المخلص

أظهر البحث في الوظائف الخطابية التي تسمح بالتواصل بين الأشخاص في الكتابة الأكاديمية قدراً كبيراً من الاهتمام بالإنتاج الأكاديمي لمتعلمي اللغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية. في ضوء ذلك، تحاول الدراسة الحالية استطلاع كيفية استخدام المبتدئين في أطروحات الكتاب الجزائريين المبتدئين الذي يتعلمون الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية كأداة لغوية للتعبير عن موقفهم وحكمهم وحضورهم لأظهار موقفهم الخطابية. تهدف الدراسة للبحث في المفهوم للموقف الخطابية من قبل طلاب ماستر 2/ في علم اللغة بجامعة المسيلة. إضافةً لذلك فإنها تسعى لإسقاط الضوء على وعي الطلاب على هذا التمرکز البين ذاتي و اظهار أفكار المعلمين حول الموضوع باعتبارهم الجمهور الرئيسي لكتابات الطلاب. هذه الدراسة المقارنة اعتمدت على نموذج هايلند للتفاعل (2005) كإطار لدراسة الموقف الخطابية في مدونة مكونة من 80 قسم مناقشة، نصفها من كتابات الطلاب ونصفها الآخر من قبل الكتاب الخبراء. خضعت البيانات المأخوذة من هذه الدراسة لتحليل كمي ونوعي بالاستعانة من أدوات مستكشف سياقي. بالإضافة لذلك تم تصميم استبيانين لجمع المعلومات المطلوبة من الطلاب والمعلمين. كشفت النتائج أن الطلاب يستخدمون علامات الموقف بشكل مختلف عن الكتاب الخبراء. أظهر التحليل الكمي أنهم يستعملون أدوات مواقف أقل، لا سيما في التعبير عن الذات والاحتياط، بينما أظهر التحليل النوعي أن الطلاب يمتلكون تصور جد جازم عن الموقف الخطابية ولكن بشكل غير شخصي. علاوة على ذلك، تبين أن الطلاب يفتقرون للوعي بمفهوم الموقف الخطابية وباستخدام علامات الموقف وأقر المعلمون بأهمية الموقف الخطابية وكشفوا أنهم يأخذونه في الاعتبار أثناء تقييم أطروحات الطلاب غير أنهم لا يشجعون إبراز الذات. لذلك، فإن هذه الدراسة تزيد من وعي المعلمين والطلاب حول موضوع الموقف الخطابية وتسليط الضوء على أهميته و تدعوا الى إدراجه في البرنامج الدراسي للمتعلمين المبتدئين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية.

عبارات مفتاحية: الموقف الخطابية، علامات الموقف، الكتابة الأكاديمية، المتعلمين المبتدئين للغة الإنكليزية كلغة أجنبية، الكتاب الخبراء.