



P-ISSN 2355-2794
E-ISSN 2461-0275

Stance-Marking of Interaction in Research Articles Written by Non-native Speakers of English: An Analytical Study

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Abstract

Stance-marking of interaction is considered an important element for achieving effective communication in any academic discourse. Based on a descriptive-analytic approach, the present study addresses a two-fold objective: a) analyzing and comparing stance-marking of interaction across disciplines in the research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English, and b) describing how researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research articles would constrain readers from interacting with the arguments and opinions they expressed in their academic articles. The corpus data comprised forty research articles selected randomly from two disciplines: sciences (ten engineering and ten medicine) and humanities (ten education and ten applied linguistics). The findings of the study showed an evident lack of stance-marking in research articles written in English by Arab researchers. A total of 307 occurrences of lack of stance markers were detected in the study corpus. Arab non-native researchers' deficiency in employing stance markers in their research articles is likely to be attributed to their lack of knowledge and awareness about the effectiveness of stance-marking of interaction in academic writing. The results also show that science discipline articles have a higher frequency of lack of stance markers than humanities discipline articles. The difference between the two disciplines could be attributed to the distinctive persuasive nature of each discipline.

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Citation in APA style: Al-Zubeiry, H. Y. A., & Assaggaf, H. T. (2023). Stance-marking of interaction in research articles written by non-native speakers of English: An analytical study. *Studies in English Language and Education*, 10(1), 235-250.

Received June 29, 2022; Revised October 2, 2022; Accepted November 21, 2022; Published Online January 31, 2023

<https://doi.org/10.24815/siele.v10i1.26648>

The study concluded with some recommendations, including the inclusion of stance-marking of interaction in evaluating papers for publication and teaching academic writing to Arab non-native English postgraduate students.

Keywords: Academic interaction, metadiscourse, research articles, stance markers.

1. INTRODUCTION

A researcher's stance-marking of interaction is an essential factor for appraising any academic article. Some researchers postulate that an academic article needs to encompass metadiscourse markers as resources that enable the researcher to reflect on his stance and attitude toward his arguments (see, e.g., Hyland, 2004, 2005b; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Swales, 1984, 2004). Hyland (2005b, p. 173) maintains that "the ability of writers to deploy metadiscourse markers effectively to acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations is deemed as a defining feature of an academic discourse".

A plethora of research studies over the last 20 years has been conducted to examine the use, function, and type of metadiscourse markers/resources in several contexts, disciplines, and genres, such as Ph.D. theses (Bunton, 1999), textbooks, and academic writing (Hyland, 2004), academic articles (Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995), lecture comprehension (Pérez & Macià, 2002), and academic lectures (Thompson, 2003). Other studies have compared the use of metadiscourse devices and their various types across languages and disciplines, such as research on English and Arab non-native speakers of English (Al-Zubeiry, 2019), sociology and English (Bruce, 2010), English L1 and L2 (Burneikaitė, 2008), and English and Persian (Faghih & Rahimpour, 2009). These studies focus on exploring the metadiscourse markers in different academic discourses and comparing their use across languages and fields.

However, further studies are necessitated to appraise writers' stance-marking of interaction in research articles and to account for how writers' lack of using interpersonal markers in expressing their stance and relating to readers (Hyland, 2005b) is likely to pose difficulty to the prospective readers in evaluating their views and arguments. Filling this gap of research, the present study attempts to address a two-fold objective: a) analyzing and comparing stance-marking of interaction across disciplines in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English, and b) describing how researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research articles would constrain readers from interacting with their opinions expressed in the propositional content of their articles. In line with the study objectives, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What stance-marking of interaction do Arab non-native speakers of English lack in their across-disciplines research articles?
2. How would Arab researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research articles constrain readers from interacting with their opinions expressed in the propositional content of their articles?

Drawing on Hyland's (2005b, p. 174) negotiation of the necessity of adopting a "model of interpersonal discourse that unites and integrate linguistic features that

assure effective persuasive communication”, we take on Hyland’s (2005b) ‘stance and engagement model of interaction’ as a framework for appraising stance-marking of interaction in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English. Hyland’s (2005b) model of authorial stance and voice in academic discourse has been widely used among applied linguistics researchers as it has proven to be simple, clear, and comprehensive (Abdi et al., 2010; Al-Zumor, 2021; Çandarlı et al., 2015; Sayah & Hashemi, 2014).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Persuasive Writing

Hyland (2005b) believes that academic writing is no longer perceived as a form of discourse that is evaluated considering its traditional tag of being impersonal and objective. He believes academic writing is “a persuasive endeavor that entails social interaction between writers and their potential readers/audience” (Hyland, 2005b, p. 173). An effective persuasive writing is demonstrated through the writers’ competence in using language that establishes social relationships and achieves their personal and academic goals. Hyland (2005b, p. 173) also confirms that a “successful academic text displays the writer’s awareness of both its readers and its consequences”. As a matter of fact, a distinctive feature of professional academic discourse should reflect the writer’s competence in deploying interactional markers that construct the writer’s authorial stance and facilitate writer-reader textual interaction (Al-Zumor, 2021; Alotaibi & Arabi, 2020).

A vast array of research has been undertaken to elucidate how writers and speakers deploy linguistic resources to express their opinions, judgments, and attitudes in their academic discourse. Accordingly, diverse terms have been used by researchers to refer to these linguistic resources, such as appraisal (Martin, 2000; White, 2003), attitude (Halliday, 1994), epistemic modality (Hyland, 1998), evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000), metadiscourse (Crismore, 1989; Hyland & Tse, 2004), stance (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Hyland, 1999; Johnstone, 2009), and writer identity (Ivanič, 1998; Hyland, 2002; Sanderson, 2008). Regardless of which term is preferred to be used by researchers to refer to these resources, “their common interests are to explore how various linguistic devices reflect authors’ beliefs and values and help authors establish effective interpersonal relationships with their readers” (Shen & Tao, 2021, pp. 1-2).

2.2 Interpersonal Relationships in Writing

Representation of interpersonal relationships in writing is closely associated with two prominent discourse studies approaches, systemic functional linguistics and social constructionism (Hyland, 2005b, p. 174). According to these approaches, writers’ language in their academic discourse is governed by social, cultural, and institutional contexts. This can be manifested in the ways writers use linguistic resources to create interpersonal relationships when they comment on their propositions and shape their texts to the expectations of their audiences (Hyland, 2005b). Within systemic functional linguistics, Martin’s (2000) appraisal approach is counted as an appropriate typology of the English evaluative linguistic resources as it

attempts to explain how language is used in evaluating, adopting stances, constructing textual persona, and managing interpersonal positioning and relationship (Wei et al., 2015, p. 235). Hyland (2005b), however, points out that this approach falls short of providing explicit details about “how far these resources are used in certain registers and to what extent they are realized having specific meanings in given contexts of use” (p. 175).

Based on his view that the selection of a model of evaluative discourse should emerge from a study of stereotypes of linguistic features in academic writing, Hyland (2005b) analyzed 240 research articles from eight disciplines to explore how academic writers use language to express their stance and relate to their readers. In light of his research findings, he propounded a model in which the writer-reader interaction is evaluated with reference to two major components: stance and engagement.

2.3 Key Resources of Academic Interaction

Hyland (2005b, pp. 176-178) refers to stance as the “writer-oriented features of interaction,” and it concerns “the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions, and commitments, or the attitude they want to express to a proposition or the reader”. Engagement, on the other hand, refers to “reader-oriented features of interaction” and concerns “the ways writers relate with their readers with respect to the positions advanced in the text”. Hyland’s (2005b) conceptualization of his model is represented in Figure 1.

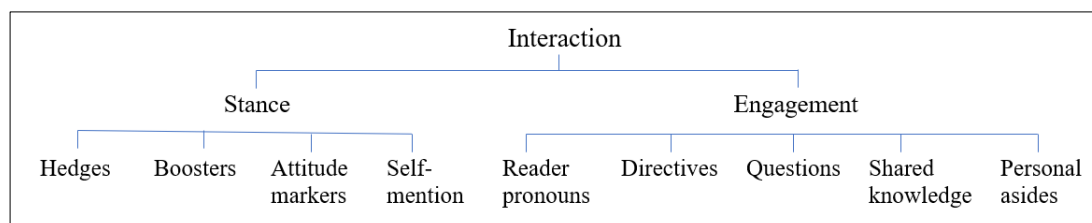


Figure 1. Key resources of academic interaction (Hyland, 2005b, p. 177).

In view of the main purpose of the present study, which is analytical in nature, the study delimits its scope to stance-marking as a writer-oriented feature of interaction. Writers’ stance-marking features are subcategorized into hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions, as shown in the figure above. Hedges are linguistic markers such as ‘possible’, ‘might’, ‘perhaps’, which refer to the writer’s evaluation of different voices and lessen his entire commitment to a proposition. Boosters are devices such as ‘clearly’, ‘obviously’, which refer to the writer’s assurance over a proposition, claim, or evaluation. Attitude markers such as ‘agree’, ‘interestingly’, or ‘sufficient’ express the writer’s opinion or affective attitude toward propositions that convey importance, surprise, agreement, and frustration. Self-mentions such as ‘I’ ‘we’, or ‘the researcher’ refer to the degree of explicit or implicit writer’s presence in the text (Hyland, 2005a, 2005b).

2.4 Studies on Writer’s Stance-Marking of Interaction

A number of research studies have been done in exploring and investigating writer’s stance-marking of interaction in different genres and fields and across

disciplines, languages, and cultures, such as research on Saudi EFL academic writing (Al-Zubeiry, 2019; Al-Zumor, 2021), academic writing (Babaii et al., 2015; Bunton, 1999; Darwish, 2019; Hyland, 2004), journal author guidelines (Hyland & Milton, 1997; Messabhia, 2020; Moini & Salami, 2015), book reviews (Nayernia & Ashouri, 2019), research articles (Qomariana & Soetama, 2021), and doctoral dissertation and Master's theses (Sayah & Hashemi, 2014; Taymaz, 2021). For the convenience of presentation and the limitation of the current study, we attempt to review the most relevant studies to better understand related literature.

To begin, Hyland and Milton (1997) compared the writing styles of Chinese and British learners in their exam scripts written in English. The researchers found that nativeness is counted as an important factor for high occurrences of 'hedges' and 'boosters' markers in expressing certainty and doubt. They concluded that non-native learners had problems expressing their certainty as they lacked knowledge of the effective use of such devices. Then Sayah and Hashemi (2014) conducted a study aiming at exploring the stance and engagement devices across three disciplines: sociology, linguistics, and education. The researchers believe that the highly frequent use of stance-marking devices, boosters, and hedges which were realized in many articles across the three disciplines, reflects their importance in preference of communicative style, interpersonal strategies, and organized preconceptions of each researcher in writing research articles.

Moini and Salami (2015) explored stance and engagement markers in a corpus of 280 author guidelines in seven international journals in humanities and social sciences. The major findings of the study showed that macro and micro interactional metadiscourse were statistically significant. According to the researchers, such overuse of macro interactional metadiscourse devices gives credit to interaction devices for assuring effective communication in journal author guidelines. Babaii et al. (2015) further investigated whether there is a relationship between disciplinary conventions and stance-marking in English. The researchers explored the stance-marking of writer-reader interaction in research abstracts in psychology and sociology. The research findings showed that stance-marking was constrained by disciplinary communities and science conventions.

Al-Zubeiry (2019) used Hyland's (2005a) model in analyzing and comparing forty English scientific research articles written by English and Arab researchers. The researcher noticed that native English writers of scientific articles are more proficient in English academic writing than Arab English researchers, as it was found that their articles embraced more interactional linguistic resources than their Arab counterparts. Raissi and El-Khatib (2018) delved into evidential marking, conveying their stance in the literature review of MA theses in linguistics. The researchers followed a descriptive-analytic approach in their methodology. The study findings revealed that the students had variations in their competence in using different types of evidential marking. They were competent in deploying reporting and inferring markers; however, they still had problems using sensory and belief types of evidential marking.

Darwish (2019) investigated three elements of writer-reader interaction, namely, the text, the text-writers, and the audience. Adopting Hyland's (2005b) model, the researcher analyzed 80 English scripts of the discussion chapters written by MA postgraduate Egyptian students at Egyptian universities and their British student peers at UK universities. The study findings indicated that the UK corpus encompassed more 'hedges' and 'attitude markers' compared to the Egyptian ones. The researcher also

used an interview instrument to elicit four experts' views about the factors that play a role in students' lexical decision-making. The findings showed that these factors were ascribed to "the writer's personal linguistic preferences, supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback, previous education and instruction, and the writer's self-confidence" (Darwish, 2019, p. 7).

Messabhia (2020) explored the frequency and types of stance markers deployed in the research review sections of twenty research articles written by native and non-native writers of English (Britishers and Algerians). Based on Hyland's (2005b) framework of stance interactional metadiscourse markers, the study results showed that the non-native researchers employed limited numbers of stance markers of interaction compared to the native researchers. The researcher attributed such results to the reason that those non-native researchers are "unknowledgeable and unaware of the necessity of stance taking, particularly in the research review section". She suggested that "non-native research writers should not give up their authority as writers by silencing their voice; they must assert their presence and take the responsibility of guiding their readers to discover the intended organization" (Messabhia, 2020, p. 63).

Qomariana and Soetama (2021) analyzed the stance markers of Indonesian writers in social and science journal articles written in English using a qualitative method by investigating the use of linguistic features employed in 16 journal articles written by Indonesian researchers. The study concluded that social science researchers used more stance markers compared to the others. The study also found that self-mention was less employed among the aspects of stance markers.

Considering the above-reviewed studies, we notice that research studies are scarce on appraising stance-marking of interaction in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English. Therefore, the contribution of the present study lies in its endeavor to address this gap by analyzing researchers' stance-marking of interaction in academic articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English and describing how researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research articles would constrain readers from interacting with their arguments and opinions in the propositional content of their articles.

3. METHODS

3.1 Corpus of the Study

The study aims to analyze and describe Arab non-native English researchers' stance-marking of interaction in academic articles in accordance with Hyland's (2005b) model of stance-marking subcategories. A corpus of 40 research articles was selected randomly from two disciplines: sciences (ten engineering and ten medicine), and humanities (ten education and ten applied linguistics).

Cross disciplines sampling is believed to be conducive to obtaining a relatively broad view about the nature of interactional stance-marking cross-section academic practices. The corpus was limited to articles comprising 15-25 pages and to publications in indexed journals (excluding SCI/SCOPUS) and the duration of 2019-2021. We excluded reputable indexed journals since these journals usually have reviewers and editors much involved in providing suggestions for revisions and in the editing process before publication. Meanwhile, we wanted to fully investigate stance-

marking of interaction in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English. Based on our experiences, non-reputable indexed journals have reviewers and editors less involved in the revisions and in the editing process before publication.

3.2 Procedure of Data Analysis

The study followed a descriptive technique of data analysis. Every article of the corpus study was scrutinized to identify the writer's lack of stance markers. This process included all the different sections of each article. When a lack of stance-marking was identified in the articles, it was categorized and described. The categorization analysis was based on Hyland's (2005b) interactional stance-marking which is subcategorized into hedges (e.g., 'possible', 'might', 'perhaps'), boosters (e.g., 'clearly', 'obviously'), attitude markers (e.g., 'agree', 'interestingly', 'sufficient'), and self-mention (e.g., 'I', 'we', 'the researcher'). Our perception of the lack of stance markers is grounded on the context where the writer's ideational negotiations necessitate the use of stance markers prompting potential readers to evaluate the credibility of his arguments and opinions and to evaluate his stance and attitude towards his arguments. We adopted Hinkel's (2004), and Hyland's (2005a) references to gain better insights into how to evaluate the research writer's stance-marking.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The main objective of the present study is to analyze the stance-marking of interaction in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English by identifying the researcher's lack of stance markers. The analysis and description of the study results are organized into two major sections addressing the two research questions: a) highlighting the frequencies and percentages of the lack of stance markers in the corpus and comparing them across the two disciplines, and b) describing the researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research articles and how it would constrain readers from interacting with their opinions expressed in the propositional content of their articles.

4.1 Analysis of Stance-Marking of Interaction across Disciplines

The first research question of this study is concerned with the analysis and comparison of stance-marking of interaction across disciplines in research articles written by Arab non-native speakers of English. The result is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of lack of stance markers across disciplines.

Disciplines	Science		Humanities		Total	
	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %	Freq.	Per. %
Hedges	53	33.54	71	47.65	124	40.39
Boosters	31	19.62	35	23.49	66	21.50
Attitude markers	43	27.22	29	19.46	72	23.45
Self-mention	31	19.62	14	9.40	45	14.66
Total	158		149		307	
Per. %	51.47%		48.53%		100%	

Table 1 shows that a total of 307 occurrences of lack of stance markers were found in the corpus. This finding indicates that Arab non-native English researchers have problems deploying stance markers evaluating the credibility of their arguments and opinions and expressing their attitude and certainty towards them. This finding seems to match with the findings obtained by Hyland and Milton (1997), who found that non-native writers had problems in expressing certainty, which is likely due to their lacking knowledge of the effective use of the interactional devices such as stance markers. This finding also conforms to what has been concluded by Al-Zubeiry (2019) and Darwish (2019), who asserted that non-native writers of English use less interactional devices than their native counterparts.

The results also demonstrate that science appears to have more lack in stance markers than humanities. In total, out of the 307 gaps in the use of stance markers in the corpus, 158 occurrences (51.47%) are in the articles of science compared to in the articles of humanities which receive 149 occurrences (48.53%). The difference between the two disciplines is perhaps due to the varied peculiarities of each discipline. This finding coincides with the previous research findings such as Hyland (2004), who found that sciences include less interactional devices than soft fields such as applied linguistics. This can be justified by the nature of science based on experimental proof for accepted new knowledge, which necessitates reporting experimental; unlike the nature of humanities that requires more lengthy claims for arguments, and thus employs more stance markers (Hyland, 2011).

4.2 Describing Lack of Using Stance-Marking

The second research question of the present study focuses on describing researchers' lack of using interactional linguistic markers in their research. Based on the study model, the presentation of the analysis of this question is divided into four subcategories of stance-marking, namely hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention.

4.2.1 Hedges

Hedges are devices employed in academic writing to express writers' commitment. When researchers make claims in their writing, they must refrain from expressing such claims with certainty. For this purpose, they would need to acknowledge "the reader's role in ratifying [these] claims" (Hyland, 1995, p. 34).

The study results (Table 1) show that hedges markers constitute the highest lacking category, with a total of 124 (40.39%) out of 307 occurrences of lacking stance markers identified in the study corpus. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Al-Mudhaffari et al. (2020) and Messabhia (2020), who found that non-native writers use unhedged statements when introducing their claims. Humanities articles receive a higher frequency of lack of hedges stance markers, i.e., 71 occurrences (47.65%), compared to science articles which receive 53 occurrences (33.54%). This finding is corroborated by Hyland (2004), who found that science fields used less hedging devices than the fields such as humanities. The claims-based argumentation that distinguishes research writing in the discipline of humanities accounts for the high frequency of lack of hedges markers. In fact, such a persuasive strategy drives the

researchers to use more hedges markers that reduce the un/certainty of their arguments and opinions.

Based on Hyland's (2005b) model, hedges are subdivided into three types: lexical verbs, modal verbs, and epistemic devices. These subtypes of hedges are explained below.

a. Lexical verbs

Lexical verbs represent one way of expressing hedging. These are verbs such as 'believe', 'seem', and 'appear'. The analysis of the study shows that non-native English researchers tend to impose their claims and opinions on the audience and leave no chance for their negotiation. Consider the following illustrative examples selected from the corpus:

- (1) The system with SSW achieved better performance. (Science, article 1)
- (2) There is a major need to investigate teachers' perspectives on the principle and goal of global awareness. (Humanities, article 4)

Examples 1 and 2 appear to express strong claims that do not allow for the potential opposing views of the readers. In example 1, the writer makes a strong claim about 'the system with 'SSW''. However, when a hedging verb such as 'seem' or 'appear' is imposed, the claim would be softer. The sentence will then read like: 'The system with SSW seems to have achieved better performance'. The same applies to example 2, where a hedging verb would reduce its certainty. As such, the sentence can read: 'There appears to be a major need to investigate ...'.

b. Modal verbs

Modal verbs such as 'may' or 'could' are widely employed in academic writing to help writers reduce their un/certainty of their arguments. Considering the analysis of the researchers' arguments in their articles, we have observed that they failed to employ these modal verbs in their arguments. Here are selected illustrative examples:

- (3) VSC (Static Var Compensator) is better than CSC [Current Source Converter] because CSC has certain limitations. (Science, article 12)
- (4) ... the findings that constitute a real contribution to the existing literature. (Humanities, article 15)

Regarding example 3, with the use of a lexical verb only, the claim is certainly strong; however, when a modal verb is imposed, it will be reduced. The sentence then may appear as: 'VSC (Static Var Compensator) might be better than CSC ...'. The same also applies to example 4. Here is a better suggestion using a hedging modal verb: '... the findings that may constitute a real contribution to the existing literature'.

c. Epistemic devices

Epistemic devices "are crucial to negotiating knowledge claims with a potentially sceptical audience" (Hyland 2005a, p. 98). These markers help writers raise ideas and claims that the audience might find them to be appropriate and convincing. They also add more politeness to the written text by reducing the writers'

accountability (Rhee, 2011). Here are selected illustrative examples from the corpus that exhibit lacking use of such markers:

- (5) In this paper, a new compact butterfly single element is introduced that supports 5G requirements of wide bandwidth. (Science, article 19)
- (6) This is due to the loss of a few number[s] of oxygen. (Science, article 6)

The above examples express strong claims that do not allow space for the readers' potential opposing views. If epistemic devices had been used here, the statements would have been more appropriate in terms of relationship with the readers. Inserting an epistemic device in example 5, the statement will then read as: '... that would probably support 5G requirements of wide bandwidth'. Example 6 will show a clearer stance when an epistemic hedging device is used. The example could be like this: 'This is possibly due to the loss ...'.

The insertion of proper hedging markers in the examples above has reduced the researchers' claims, and they have become open to any alternative interpretations by the readers. This is one of the reasons why stance markers such as hedges should be employed in writing, particularly by non-native writers who still seem to be short in using them (Darwish, 2019; Hyland & Milton, 1997; Messabhia, 2020).

4.2.2 Boosters

Boosters are words such as 'clearly' and 'obviously', which can help writers "emphasize certainty and constructs rapport by marking involvement with the topic and solidarity with an audience, taking a joint position against their voices" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 53).

The study results summarized in Table 1 demonstrate that the lack of boosters accounts for 66 occurrences (21.50%) of the total lack of stance markers identified in the corpus. This result is consistent with what has been found by Serholt (2012) and Al-Zumor (2021), whom both reported that non-native writers exhibited a deficiency in employing boosters in their academic writings. The results also indicate that humanities articles mark slightly more lack with 35 occurrences (23.49%) as compared to science articles, which reach 31 occurrences (19.62%). This might be attributed to the difference between humanities and science. Science researchers use boosters more as they deal with facts, while humanities researchers deal with views and opinions, and as a result, they are likely to use less boosting markers. The following examples illustrate the lack the use of boosters found in the corpus:

- (7) Teaching reading comprehension to multileveled classes is [...] a big challenge. [undoubtedly] (Humanities, article 15)
- (8) [...] The electric motors are joined with suitable inverters. (Science, article 14)
- (9) This [...] indicates that the technique is efficient and reliable for a wide range of potential applications. (Science, article 16)

Although the examples above express the writers' views about the points they discuss, it seems that they are still short in presenting a clear stance. Using a booster would give a clearer voice to the writers. Therefore, adverbs like 'undoubtedly', 'obviously', and 'genuinely' can be added to examples 7, 8, and 9 to substantiate the writers' stance. These statements can read respectively as: 'Teaching reading comprehension to multileveled classes is undoubtedly a big challenge'; 'obviously, the

electric motors are joined with suitable inverters'; and 'this would genuinely indicate that the technique is efficient ...'. We notice that adding the words to the above examples has assigned more power to the views expressed by the researchers.

4.2.3 Attitude markers

It is common in academic writing that writers express their shared attitudes by using markers such as 'hopefully' and 'unfortunately' (Hyland, 2005b). In fact, these markers are used to signal writers' shared values and attitudes that both express "a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgments" (p. 180).

The study results in Table 1 show that the lack of attitude markers receives 72 occurrences (23.45%) of the total number of lack of stance markers identified in the corpus. This finding is in accordance with the findings of Al-Zubeiry (2019) and Messabhia (2020), who reported that non-native writers used less attitude markers when compared to their native counterparts. The results also indicate that science articles mark more lack with 43 occurrences (27.22%) compared to humanities ones, which reach 29 occurrences (19.46%). Here are some selected illustrative examples:

- (10) Water storage for later use is specifically [...] essential for Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. (Science, article 12)
- (11) Exploring these factors [...] helps the researcher to approach a holistic understanding of the course design process. (Humanities, article 3)

The above examples expressed the researchers' views and opinions, but their statements do not reflect their apparent attitudes. In research articles, researchers' attitudes are sometimes important to emphasize their arguments' persuasiveness (Hyland, 2005a, p. 70). The researchers' attitudes in the above examples would look more convincing and clearer when adding attitude markers. Explicitly, sentence 10 can read as this: 'Water storage for later use is significantly essential for ...'. As for sentence 11, it can look like this: 'Exploring these factors is expected to help the researcher to ...'.

4.2.4 Self-mention

Self-mention refers to using "first person pronouns and possessive adjectives to present propositional, affective, and interpersonal information" (Hyland, 2005b, p. 181). Currently, it is considered an important feature in academic writing as it is believed to establish "an appropriately authorial persona and [maintain] an effective degree of personal engagement with one's audience in order to connect the two sides and have them engaged to a great deal in the argument" (Hyland, 2005b, p. 148).

The analysis results in Table 1 demonstrate that lack of self-mention stance markers receives the least, with 45 occurrences (14.66%) of the total 307 occurrences of lack of stance markers in the corpus. This finding conforms to the findings of Darwish (2019), who reported a shortage of self-mention among Egyptian and British writers. The results also reveal that science articles mark more lack with 31 occurrences (19.62%) compared to humanities articles which reach 14 occurrences (9.40%). This finding agrees with those of Hyland (2004), who found that science fields use less self-mention as compared to soft fields such as applied linguistics. This

is likely due to the differences between the nature of the two disciplines, as science writers seem to strive for establishing “empirical uniformities through precise measurement and scrutiny of a limited number of controlled variables”, whereas soft sciences such as humanities deal with entities that are less measurable and less clear-cut (Hyland, 2005a, p. 148). This finding is also in accordance with Qomariana and Soetama (2021), who found that self-mention was less among Indonesian researchers.

The data demonstrate two problematic issues concerning self-mention: excessive use of passive voice instead of active and implicit expressions of self-mention such as ‘the writer’, ‘the author’, and ‘the researcher’. The following selected examples give a clear picture of these problems:

- (12) The number of images used in this stage was 275. (Science, article 11)
- (13) In this study, the researcher tries to unveil the difficulties encountered by multileveled class. (Humanities, article 15)

Example 12 lacks the agent of the action. Adding the pronoun ‘we’, the researcher would create an opportunity for the reader to be part of the research discussion. The sentence then can read as: ‘the number of images we used in this ...’. As for sentence 13, even though the implicit use of self-mention by using these expressions is possible in academic writing, researchers also need to display their own self-representation explicitly in what they write by using personal pronouns as a way for “distinguishing their own work from the work of the others and giving individual consumers the impression that they are being addressed personally” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 72).

5. CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the stance-marking of interaction in research articles written by Arab non-native writers of English. The findings of the study showed an evident lack of stance-marking in the targeted researchers’ articles. A total of 307 occurrences of lack of stance markers were found in the study corpus. Arab non-native researchers’ deficiency in employing stance markers in their research articles could be attributed to their lack of knowledge and awareness about the effectiveness of stance-marking of interaction in academic writing. The findings also demonstrated that science discipline articles receive a higher frequency of lack of stance markers, i.e., 158 occurrences (51.47%), as compared to humanities discipline articles which receive 149 occurrences (48.53%). The difference between the two disciplines is likely ascribed to each discipline’s distinctive persuasive nature. Regarding the results of the subcategories of stance-marking, the study findings indicated that hedges markers constituted the highest lacking category, with a total of 124 occurrences (40.39%). Attitude markers and boosters came next with 72 occurrences (23.45%) and 66 occurrences (21.50%), respectively. Self-mention received the least, i.e., 45 occurrences (14.66%).

In view of the findings of this study, the following recommendations can be suggested. Stance-marking of interaction should be considered in evaluating papers for publication in professional journals. Stance-marking of interaction should be counted in teaching academic writing for native and non-native English postgraduate students. Novice researchers should be exposed to actual examples from authentic works on how stance markers can be appropriately employed. Issues such as boosting

one's writing and marking self-representation with the use of pronouns such as 'we, my, and our' must be encouraged among prospective research writers.

Limitations of the present study lie in the sample size used. Further research can be conducted using samples from different sub-disciplines, which is likely to get further insights into the nature and peculiarities of other disciplines. The study is also limited to research written by non-native English speakers. Using data from researchers from other contexts and across cultures may lead to gaining a better understanding of the factors accounting for researchers' lack of using stance markers in academic discourse.

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