

## An Exploration of Authorial Stance in SSCI-ranked Journals versus Non-SSCI-ranked Journals

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### ABSTRACT

*Taking an effective authorial stance has been the interest of researchers on academic writing for quite some time. It is agreed upon that the interpersonal aspect of writing is essential in setting up prosody and forcing persuasive argument expected in academic context. This paper is based on a hypothesis that effective and authorial stance is a major principal requirement for publishing in top-ranked journals. Hence, it investigates the linguistic resources employed by authors to realize authorial voices when introducing their research topics and how they relate them with the potential meanings of rhetorical moves to build up persuasive argument. To do this, the study drew on Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal system and Swales' (1990) genre analysis as the two main analytical frameworks for data analysis. The data consisted of sixty research articles (RAs) taken from journals in the linguistics field. Half of the RAs were drawn from SSCI-ranked journals while the other half from other journals that do not have prestigious indexes. The results showed that the percentage of using Monoglossic resources (propositions that contain bare assertions where writer/speaker makes no reference to any alternative viewpoints) is higher in frequency in non-SSCI journals compared to SSCI-ranked journals. Overall, the introduction sections of the two groups of journals have shown a link between the use of evaluative language patterns and the potential meanings of rhetorical moves, which altogether may help project effective authorial stance.*

*Keywords: Appraisal; engagement; move structure; writing for publication; indexing*

### INTRODUCTION

The genre of the research article (RA) has long attracted the attention of researchers. Swales (1990) coined the Create a Research Space (CARS) model to reflect the structure of the Introduction section in RAs. The philosophy of Swale's CARS model is built upon classifying the process of introducing the research into three rhetorical moves: (1) establishing a territory, (2) establishing a niche and (3) occupying the niche. Each of these moves, then, has its rhetorical function that should be achieved by particular linguistic categories. This model has been employed by scholars to examine variations across languages (e.g. Alotaibi, 2016; Hirano, 2009) and across disciplines (e.g. Samraj, 2002). Like the present study, some studies have focused on one discipline (e.g. Chang & Schleppegrell 2011). Nguyen (2018) has linked the mastery of writing RA to successful publication by stating that it is "essential for academics to have a good command of the discourse conventions of this genre for their knowledge production to be accepted for publication" (p. 71). Indeed, publishing in top-tier journals is a major concern for academics and researchers around the world. Some countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, and China adopt "publish or perish" system where academics are under pressure to publish in journals with reputable and prestigious indexes for promotion, gaining tenure, receiving grants, etc. (Lee 2014). Other than job-related factors, researchers may insist to publish in top-ranked journals to be part of an active research community and to gain personal satisfaction (Lee 2014). Yet, according to editors of SSCI-indexed journals, many submissions are rejected for the low quality of the submission such as the "outdated literature review, underdeveloped methodology, and/or inappropriate research design" (Byrnes 2010, p. 639). While these seem

to be the major reasons for rejecting the manuscripts, there are some other crucial reasons such as the weakness of argumentation and presentation (Byrnes, 2010, p. 653). In commenting on this issue, an editor of *Applied Linguistics* asserted that manuscripts can be rejected if “papers lack a critical perspective” (p. 638). Likewise, it has been indicated in the *submissions guidelines for TESOL Quarterly* section that reviewers evaluate a manuscript for publication by considering a number of factors including “the manuscript offers a new, original insight or interpretation and not just a restatement of others’ ideas and views.” Therefore, it is of interest to explore what is the critical/authorial stance or voice that plays an important role in determining the quality of research and hence works as a barrier from publishing in top-tier journals?

Taking authorial stance is widely recognised as one of the difficult parts of academic writing, particularly for novice and EFL/ESL researchers. Hyland (2005), for example, points out that “controlling the level of personality becomes central to building a convincing argument” (p. 173). He further argues that this can be achieved by writers via pursuing interactive relationships with readers, evaluating their own topics, and positioning them with other alternative viewpoints. Lack or difficulty of taking an evaluative stance among novice writers is also acknowledged by some researchers (Chang & Schleppegrell 2011; Cheng & Unsworth 2016; Hood 2004; Loi, Lim & Wharton 2016; Mei 2007). While some of these researchers (e.g. Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011) attributed the lack of stance to teaching instruction, where the main focus is only on grammatical rules in isolation from their use in communicative contexts, others (e.g. Loi, Lim & Wharton 2016) returned it to linguistic and rhetorical variations between English native speakers and EFL/ESL learners.

This paper investigates the linguistic resources and expressions chosen by researchers to project their authorial stance and the possibility of relating these linguistic resources to rhetorical move functions in the manner that serves argumentative and discursive writing expected in academic domain. The integration of linguistic resources and rhetorical move functions can help in mapping the pedagogical framework via investigating which linguistic resources pertaining to effective authorial stance are presented to readers more explicitly, hence facilitates easier practice. For this purpose, this study draws on the Engagement framework in Appraisal theory (Martin & White 2005) and Swales' (1990) rhetorical moves to explain the relationship between the linguistic resources and rhetorical move functions, and to show how they altogether foster the projection of authorial stance in writing. An authorial stance that is considered successful and effective in academic writing is the one that associates the choice of linguistic expressions with rhetorical move functions. Making this relationship between linguistic resources and rhetorical move functions more explicit and stressing on the possibility of getting novice researchers exposed to them through clear pedagogical instructions is one of the purposes of this study.

In particular, this study compares the evaluative language patterns in introduction sections of two groups of journals. The first group is journals that have prestigious indexes such as SSCI and Scopus while the second group is journals that do not have these indexes. The main objective in this study is twofold: 1) to explore the way writers in each group of journals employ the linguistic resources to realize particular rhetorical move and construe authorial stance; and 2) to show variations in the evaluative language of the two groups and the extent to which they may have influence on publishing requirements and authorship credibility. It is in this last point that the current study may differ from the previous studies that used the Appraisal system as the main analytical tool. Hence, the present study's problem stems from the need to investigate whether the use of authorial stance, based on Appraisal theory, plays a major role for publishing in top-ranked journals. Specifically, answers to the following questions are pursued:

1. What are the most prevalent patterns of evaluative language in the two corpora? And how are they related to rhetorical move meanings?
2. What are the possible variations of evaluative language in the two sets of analysed RAs?
3. To what degree may such variations influence authorship credibility?

## AUTHORIAL STANCE AND ENGAGEMENT

The notion of authorial stance as an interpersonal aspect of academic writing was taken up by different scholars and researchers, particularly in Systemic Functional Linguistics and Sociolinguistics literature in a number of ways. Scholars have used different terms to define the ways writers choose linguistic resources to express opinions towards research topics of their own and situate them in relation to other alternatives. Hunston and Thompson (2000), for example, called it *evaluation* while Adel (2006) used the term *metadiscourse*, Biber (2006) called it *stance*, and Martin and White (2005) employed the term *appraisal*. The central point around which all the efforts of these scholars revolve is finding the best ways of manipulating the linguistic resources to formulate effective authorial stance. In this paper, I adopt the Appraisal system following Martin and White's (2005) taxonomies to account for and analyse the language of authorial stance.

The Engagement domain is part of the Appraisal theory developed by Martin and White (2005) as an analytical framework within which features of authorial and evaluative stance can be analysed. Inspired by Halliday's seminal work of Systemic Functional Linguistics, Martin and White (2005) based their theoretical philosophy of Engagement on discourse semantics and used it as a framework for characterising possibilities for stance-taking found in a language. This implies that there are linguistic resources in a particular language where interpersonal meanings are encoded. In other words, these meanings are expressed by specific lexico-grammatical patterns and it is the proper manifestation of these patterns in discourse that determines evaluative stance as effective and authoritative. With Bakhtin's (1981) influential notions of dialogism in mind, Martin and White (2005) set forth the framework of Engagement to account for how interpersonal meanings, positioning, and alternative viewpoints can be realized linguistically. Engagement falls into two main categories: Monoglossic and Heteroglossic.

Monoglossic is a term used by Bakhtin (1981) to describe a proposition containing bare assertions where a writer/speaker makes no reference to any alternative viewpoints. However, Heteroglossic is when the writer/speaker invokes or allows some space for dialogistic alternatives. The Heteroglossic domain is further subdivided into two broad categories: Contracting and Expanding. The Contracting category is turned on when a text producer engages himself or herself with other alternative viewpoints either through endorsing, denying, challenging, or narrowing dialogic space for these alternative voices. It further falls into two groups: Proclaim and Disclaim. In Proclaim, the proposition is taken as valid, agreed upon, and reliable. Therefore, textual voice rules out external voices and positions. It comprises three subcategories: Concur (realized linguistically with words such as *naturally, of course, obviously*); Pronounce (encoded in lexical expressions like: *I contend that, there is no doubt, the matter is that*); Endorse (expressed by verbs: *show, demonstrate, point out, find, etc.*). The textual voice in Disclaim, on the other hand, rejects any contrary position. It is further classified into two types: Deny and Counter. The former is usually articulated by negative lexical items as (*not, no, never*), whereas the latter by using (*but, although, however, etc.*).

The second category of Engagement according to Martin and White's (2005) taxonomy is Expanding. It comprises, a) Attribute, with subcategories: Acknowledge and

Distance, and b) Entertain. The first provokes other alternatives, either through acknowledging or distancing them, and therefore opens up discussion. The Acknowledge options are usually encoded in reported verbs such as (*said, report, believe.*) or phrases like (*according to, in a viewpoint of*), while Distance options are linguistically realized by words like (*claim, it is rumored that*). With Entertain, the textual voice is construed but as one of possible positions, hence provokes other alternative viewpoints. Compared to other Engagement categories and subcategories, Entertain seems to have no limited parameters. However, it can be achieved via linguistic devices such as (*perhaps, apparently, it seems, I suspect that, the evidence suggests*). Detailed explanation of the Engagement taxonomy is provided in Figure 1.

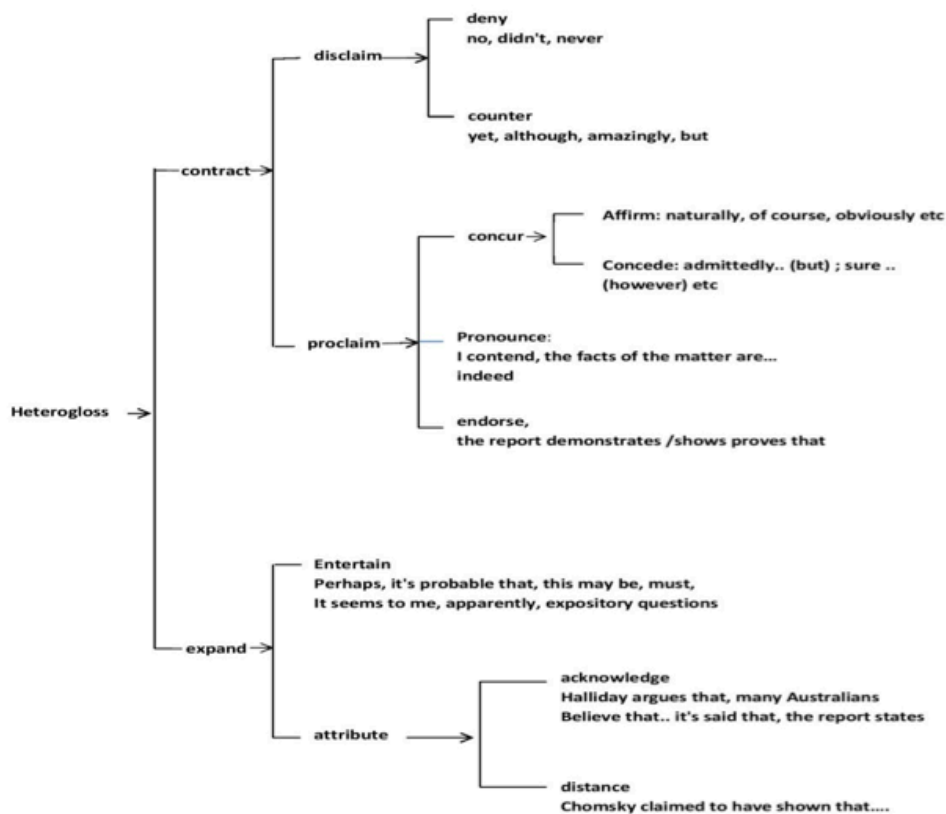


FIGURE 1. Engagement taxonomy adapted from Martin and White (2005)

The Appraisal system was used as the main analytical framework to investigate authorial stance-taking in academic writing. Lio, Lim and Wharton (2016), for example, compared the conclusion sections of RAs written by Malay researchers with those by their English counterparts to examine the difference in linguistic patterns chosen by both groups to show their authorial stance when concluding the research. The results revealed some balance of assertion and mitigation in English conclusions. Malay conclusions, however, carried less dialogic instances of authorial stance since writers tended to draw on Contracting resources. An earlier study by Hood (2004) arrived at the fact that published writers showed more effective and authoritative authorial stance by employing linguistic resources associating with "Appreciation" of Appraisal theory (Martin & White 2005). Students writers, in contrast, were less dialogistic tending to use resources of "Judgment" and "Affect". Geng and Wharton (2016) examined the linguistic resources of evaluative stance in discussion sections of doctoral theses by L1 Chinese writers and compared them to those by L1 English writers. Their study showed no statistically significant differences between the choice of linguistic

resources by the two groups. They maintained that variability in languages may not affect the choice of evaluative language. Student writing is also examined in Mei (2007) who compared high-rated essays to low-rated essays written by undergraduate students. The findings indicated that high-rated essays tended to use more instances of Engagement resources, especially Entertain options. The low-rated essays, on the other hand, showed more preference of using Monoglossic resources, i.e. bare assertions.

## METHODOLOGY

The present paper investigates the employment of Engagement resources within Appraisal framework in top-ranked and other linguistics journals. The top-ranked journals were selected randomly based on the Journal Citation Report (JCR) issued by Thompson Reuters (Social Science Citation Index - SSCI) in 2016. The second set of journals were selected randomly with the following selection criteria a) have steady publications in the last six years 2012-2017, b) have a clear list of indexing resources, c) the indexing list does not include SSCI or Scopus. The analysis was restricted to the Introduction section of each paper. The selected papers were published in 2016 and 2017. Table 1 shows the number of the journals and RAs investigated in each journal. Additionally, it includes the total and average number of words in each group.

TABLE 1. The size of the corpus

SSCI-ranked Journals	No. of RAs selected	Non-SSCI-ranked Journals	No. of RAs selected
Applied Linguistics	6	Applied Research on English Language	6
TESOL Quarterly	6	The Linguistics Journal	6
Journal of Second Language Writing	6	World Journal of English	6
Journal of English for Academic Purposes	6	English Language Teaching	6
System	6	International Journal of Linguistics	6
Total number of papers	30	Total number of papers	30
Total number of words	23517	Total number of words	23992
Average number of words	783.9	Average number of words	799.73

As indicated earlier, the study investigates how the linguistic resources relate to other strategies at discourse level (rhetorical moves) to serve convincing argumentation. For this reason, the study employs both Martin and White's (2005) Engagement system and Swales' (1990) CARS model as analytical frameworks. To perform the analysis, the texts were first classified into two groups. The first group includes the RAs taken from the top-ranked journals, and the second group includes the texts from non-SSCI journals. Then, following the CARS model, the rhetorical moves were identified and each text was assigned to one of the three moves: Move 1: Establishing a territory, Move 2: Establishing a niche, and Move 3: Occupying the niche. The following excerpt shows the analysis concerning the move structure.

- (1) Developing research capacity and advanced writing skills for scholarly publication is essential for many academics and graduate students in most hard and soft discipline. Due to the fast globalization of higher education and scholar publishing, many Asian and European universities have taken stringent measures to enhance their reputation and competitiveness by requiring their faculty members and doctoral students to publish in internationally indexed journals (Kwan, 2013; Li, 2016; Lillis & Curry, 2010). [*move 1*]  
 However, most of these studies focus on experiences and perspectives of early-career practicing academics and/or mid-career scholars. Less research has been devoted to examining the influences of this pressure to publish on NES and EAL doctoral students in either sciences or social sciences, and most of these studies have focused on only one or two particular students... Furthermore, important issues have been underexplored. ... More specifically, it has

not been well documented regarding how and why doctoral students negotiate the direction and manuscript revision... More studies are thus needed to shed light on "what is happening in ...." [ *move 2*]  
Drawing on ..., this study extends the previous literature by exploring how 19 Taiwanese EAL doctoral students in the hard sciences exercise agency to create opportunities for fuller participation in manuscript drafting (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and to negotiate with more powerful members in their disciplinary community during their writing and publishing endeavors. In addition, how the EAL doctoral students navigate the publication-oriented writing process with minimal advisory guidance and feedback will also be investigated. [ *move 3*]

The second step was the identification of Engagement resources. The propositions bearing any of linguistic resources (where Engagement values were realized) were identified by the researcher and negotiated with an expert in applied linguistics and writing studies to arrive at the most exact interpretations. We specified to which each Engagement category or subcategory belongs. The following excerpt is an example of this part of analysis where the linguistic resource is underlined, and the category/subcategory is written in bold and between parentheses.

- (2) Prior research related to the issue of text type in L2 listening comprehension is sparse (**Contract: Disclaim**). Although previous researchers have claimed that (**Expand: Attribute**) text type has been employed as a variable in L2 listening comprehension (Bacon, 1992; Shohamy & Inbar, 1991) (**Expand: Attribute**), "such comparisons have rarely been undertaken (**Contract: Disclaim**) in L2 language listening comprehension research" (Berne, 1992, p.6). (**Expand: Attribute**).

In illustrative examples, I will only point out the Engagement resources that I am discussing without indicating other resources even if they are present in the example. For example, when "Contract: Disclaim" is discussed, only Contract: Disclaim resources are highlighted, and others, if any, will be left unmarked.

There are words/expressions in the analysed texts in the present study that are classified as linguistic resources of Engagement even if they are not directly mentioned in Martin and White's (2005) taxonomy. Words/expressions like: "crucial," "significant," "pivotal," "necessary," "there is a need," and "very important" are assigned as "Contract: Proclaim" resources, since they bear meanings and contextual values that may collocate with what technically labeled "Contract: Proclaim" in Martin and White's (2005) categorisation. Likewise, lexical items: "sparse," "very few," "less," "lack," "still insufficient," "rare," and "paucity," etc. are considered "Contract: Disclaim" options as they imply negative attitudes.

All terms that belong to each category and subcategory in the Engagement domain were counted and their total number was divided by the total number of words in each set of journals and then multiplied by 100. When investigating Proclaim resources in SSCI-ranked journals group, for instance, this formula was used: Total number of Proclaim resources / Total number of words in the 30 texts \* 100 (308/23517\*100= 1.309). This procedure was undertaken in order to reach an exact percentage since the length of the texts in each group of journals varied.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the investigation of Engagement resources in the two sets of journals are summarised in Table 2 (also, see Fig 2, Fig 3, Fig 4, and Fig 5 for more details). It is evident from Table 2 that the propositions of introduction sections of the analysed corpus are Heteroglossic as the employment of Contracting and Expanding resources in both groups was much more than Monoglossic options: (4.35% vs. 0.493% in top-ranked journals, and 4.32% vs. 1.36% in non-SSCI-ranked journals). Yet, we see a slight preference of using Contracting and Expanding options in the first group of journals (4.36%) compared to the second set of journals (4.32%). It is also apparent that there is a somewhat balanced

employment of Contracting and Expanding options in SSCI-ranked group (2.2% and 2.15%). Whereas, in non-SSCI-ranked journals, the number of Expanding resources (2.25%) is comparatively bigger than Contracting (2.067%). However, the balance is unseen at the subcategory level in both sets of journals as Proclaim options were more employed compared to the Disclaim resources in the Contracting domain and the same case with the Attribute compared to the Entertain in the Expanding domain. Finally, the most evident finding is that the writers of texts in non-SSCI-ranked journals drew on Monoglossic options nearly three times more than the writers of texts in SSCI-ranked journals did (1.36% vs. 0.493%). This last finding is in line with that in Mei’s (2007) study where low-rated essays written by undergraduate students included more instances of Monoglossic recourses compared to high-rated essays.

TABLE 2. Percentage of the employment of Engagement Resources in both groups of journals

Engagement resources		SSCI-Ranked Journals (%)		Non-SSCI-Ranked Journals (%)		
Heterogloss	Contracting	Proclaim	1.309	2.2	1.287	2.067
		Disclaim	0.897	4.36	0.779	4.32
	Expanding	Attribute	1.573	2.15	1.6	2.25
		Entertain	0.58		0.65	
Monogloss		0.493		1.36		

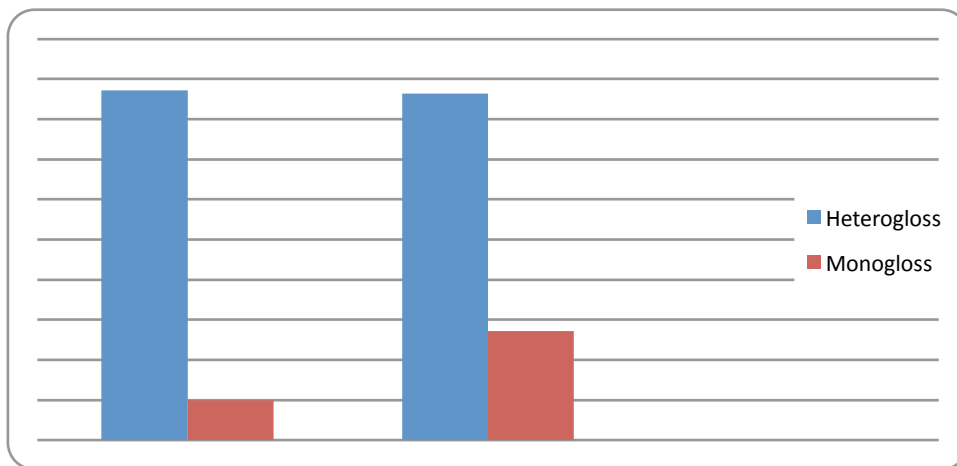


FIGURE 2. The percentage of using Heterogloss and Monogloss resources in both sets of journals

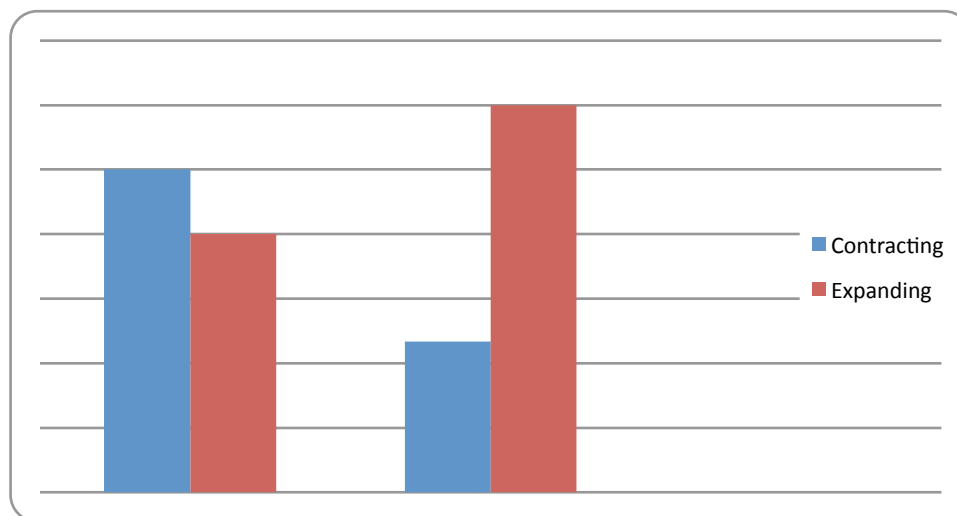


FIGURE 3. The percentage of using Contracting and Expanding resources in both sets of journals

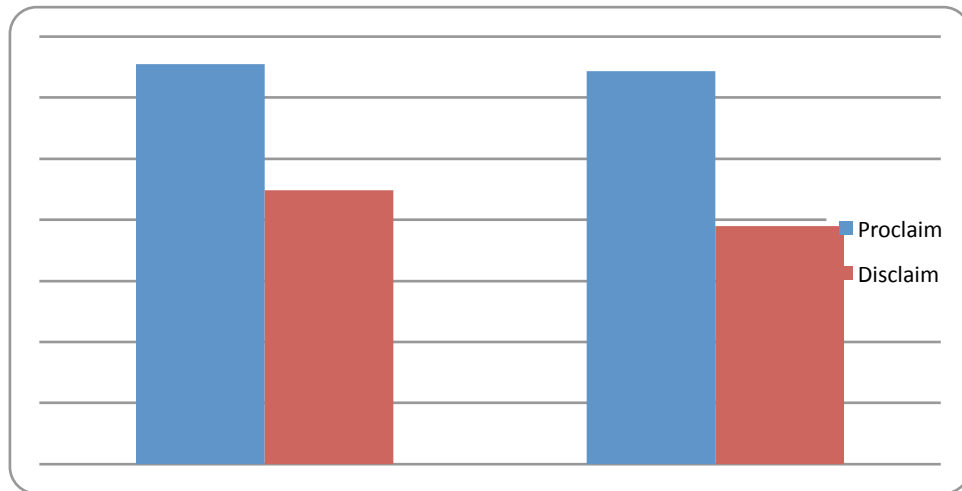


FIGURE 4. The percentage of using Proclaim and Disclaim resources in both sets of journals

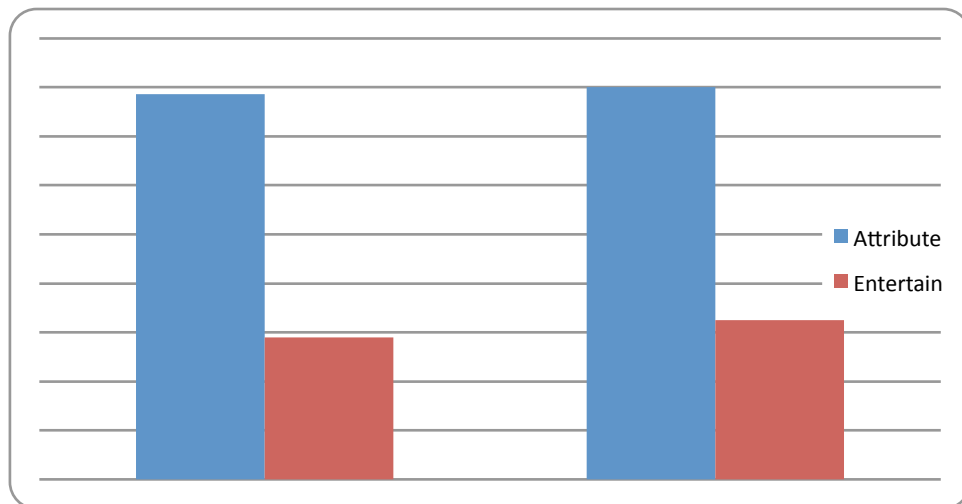


FIGURE 5. The percentage of using Attribute and Entertain resources in both sets of journals

The results also revealed the presence of the three rhetorical moves: Move 1 (establishing the territory), Move 2 (establishing a niche) and Move 3 (occupying the territory). In relation with rhetorical move meanings, the results also showed the association of most of Engagement resources with Move 1. The Attribute options are the most predominant Engagement resources employed in Move 1 in the two sets of journals. Also, the largest proportion of Disclaim resources in the SSCI-ranked journals is used in Move 2, while in non-SSCI-ranked journals, Move 2 contains the second most frequent employment of Disclaim options.

It is also evident that the highest proportion of Engagement resources throughout the present study are associated with Move 1 (establishing a territory) in the introductions of the two sets of journals. This could be attributed to two factors: first, the largest space and number of words are devoted to Move 1; second, the authors draw on several Engagement strategies to intend one rhetorical move function. In arguing for the significance of their research topics, the writers either endorse evident findings (drawing on Proclaim resources) or cite supportive theories (employing Attribute options) from prior literature.

This result seems to reiterate one of Chang and Schleppegrell's (2011) findings that "different lexico-grammatical choices can be mobilised to realise the same rhetorical goals equally convincingly" (p. 148). Contracting resources were found much more associated with



either highlighting the importance of a research topic or revealing faults and limitations of previous research findings as a condition for creating a gap for the current research. Attribute options are employed more frequently to cite theories found in prior literature and relate them with the topic of the research study.

In the following, some examples of using Engagement resources are presented. The main focus is on how Engagement meanings are realised within and beyond sentence boundaries and how they interact with rhetorical moves to build up prosodies in the introductions of the analysed papers. Some comparisons will be made between the two groups of journals to measure possible differences between them. Contracting resources will be illustrated first, and then the Expanding options will be highlighted.

#### CONTRACTING RESOURCES

As reported earlier, the writers in SSCI-ranked journals made a balance between using Contracting and Expanding resources, while those in non-SSCI-ranked journals used Expanding options more than Contracting resources. The percentage of Contracting options was 2.2 in the former set of journals while it was 2.067 in the latter group. Based on this result, writers in SSCI-ranked journals seemed to have more tendency to close down other voices. In dialogic contraction, according to Martin and White (2005), the writer closes down or at least constrains the space for discussion usually through ruling out or fending off other alternatives. In the following paragraph, there are instances where the writers employ both categories.

- (3) Argumentative writing is *prominent* in academic contexts, *not only* in writing courses *but* also (**Contract: Proclaim**) in the disciplines (Hirvela, 2017; Lee & Deakin, 2016). When students reach university, they are expected to be able to write arguments using evidence from source texts (Christie & Derewianka, 2010). While this *can* be a reasonable expectation for many students who have been exposed to argumentative writing in high school (**Contract: Proclaim**), some students *have not* had such exposure (**Contract: Disclaim**). (*Excerpt taken from the group of SSCI-ranked journals; JSLW*)

The writers in this excerpt introduced their research topic about argumentative writing. As one step towards highlighting the research topic, they proclaimed the importance of argumentative writing by employing linguistic resources like *prominent* and *not only... but also*. Although they invoked another external voice by referencing proposition via Attribute option (which is not dealt with here), the writers in the first sentence held the importance of argumentative writing as true and unquestionable, therefore assertively ruled out any alternatives, allowing no space for discussion. Proclaiming is intentionally used by the writers to lay argument and justification for the research topic. In the second and third sentences, the authors similarly agreed upon the expectation that students at university level should be able to write argumentatively using a Proclaim option *can be a reasonable*. This expectation is based on the fact that many students were exposed to argumentative writing in high school and that they were supposed to make them capable of writing argumentatively at university level. But while they endorsed the condition for improving argumentative writing among many students, they turned on Disclaim options *have not* to show the limitations of such a condition (it is not available to some other students).

Drawing on Proclaim options seems to be a strategy used by writers to praise the research topic of their own. This is evident in the following example where the author tried to explain the importance of academic English writing, as English has become a medium of communication for so many students worldwide besides the crucial role English plays in academic community.

- (4) Academic English writing, especially in the scenario of EFL/ESL, still has been receiving a great deal of attention from teachers and, specifically, learners of EFL/ESL (**Monogloss**). Particularly true (**Contract: Proclaim**) in the real academic situations, the number of EFL/ESL students worldwide has been growing since English has obtained the status of a lingua franca or ELF (**Contract: Proclaim**), used as a medium of communication (Manuranaen, 2011). Moreover, English is one of the influential languages (**Contract: Proclaim**), and it plays a pivotal role in academic community (**Contract: Proclaim**), e.g. English language teaching, research, and scholarship (Hyland, 2006b). (*Excerpt taken from the group of non-SSCI-ranked journals; ELT*)

Unlike the excerpt in Example (3), the writer of this text introduced his research topic by drawing on Monoglossic option where he took for granted that *academic English writing ... still has been receiving a great deal of attention from teachers...* He further developed this proposition with a series of other supporting formulations in which the importance of academic English writing is stressed. The writer encoded proclaim values in linguistic resources like *particularly true*, *has been growing*, *influential*, and *pivotal role* to emphasise the importance of academic English writing. He first began the argument for his research topic by endorsing the increasing number of EFL/ESL students, and the reality of English being a medium of communication (in the 2nd sentence). He continued justifying how his research topic warrants investigation by means of announcing English as an influential language and its role in academic community as pivotal (in the 3<sup>rd</sup> sentence). Although the writer dissociated his authorial voice from his statements by attributing them to external voice (Manuranaen 2011; Hyland 2006b), he showed his commitment to these statements and took them as valid. In doing so, the writer left less or no space for debate.

In addition, it seems that some authors employ Proclaim options as a strategy for creating a research gap (establishing a niche). In the following sentence, for example, the writers used the adverb clause of concession to demonstrate both the importance of academic English writing and the problems it may cause to students which they counter in the second part of the sentence.

- (5) Despite argumentative writing's importance (**Contract: Proclaim**) and the challenges it poses for students and instructors (**Contract: Proclaim**), it is still underresearched (**Contract: Disclaim**) in L2 writing (Hirvela, 2017). (*Excerpt taken from the group of SSCI-ranked journals; JSLW*)

In this example, the authors formulated two contrast clauses. The first is subordinate and grammatically began with *despite*, a preposition that has similar meaning to the adverbs of concession such as *although* and *though*. The second clause (non-subordinate) is the one that supposed to carry the contrast meaning. Depending on such concession formulations, the authors have managed to confirm the importance of academic writing together with the challenge it poses and which is expected to be met with intensive researching; but the fact is that *it is still underresearched*. In other words, they used Proclaim options *despite the importance* and *the challenge it poses*; and Disclaim resource *still underresearched* to counter the expected meaning in the second clause, which is, most likely, intended to uncover faults in previous literature and then create a gap for the current research.

Other researchers in the corpus, however, implicitly indicated the inadequacy or inefficiency of research studies conducted so far by calling for further investigations (rather than directly announcing the faults) in the field in question as a strategy of finding a gap for the research of their own. This can be illustrated in example (4).

- (6) There have been studies analyzing individual sections of theses/dissertations, e.g. Introduction (Bunton, 2002; Samraj, 2008; Cheung, 2012), literature review (Kwan, 2006), and Discussion (Hopckins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Rasmeenin, 2006; Salmani Nodoushan, 2012). However, (**Contract: Disclaim**) a thesis Introduction chapter is still worth (**Contracting: Proclaim**) being further investigated. (*Excerpt taken from the group of non-SSCI-ranked journals; ELT*)

Drawing on the linguistic resource *however*, the writer implied that Introduction sections had not received the research attention they deserve. This is intended to reveal the gap to be filled in the current study. The writer, therefore, proclaimed the need for further research *still worth being further investigated* in the field of Introduction chapters.

Propositions containing Contract resources, as the ones presented above, are considered dialogic (Martin & White 2005), yet there is neither opportunity to recognise others' contribution nor open up discussion.

#### EXPANDING RESOURCES

Unlike Contraction, the employment of Expanding options invokes other alternatives to negotiate ideas and claims by drawing on two sets of linguistics categories which technically named by Martin and White (2005) as Attribute and Entertain. As shown earlier, non-SSCI-ranked journals showed some inclination to using Expanding options over Contracting recourses, while SSCI-ranked journals showed a balance between the two domains.

As indicated earlier, the subcategory of Attribute was the most prevalent Engagement resources, within the Expanding domain, drawn upon by writers in both sets of journals. In the following excerpt, the author addresses the contribution of collaborative writing in fostering EFL/ESL learning process and how researchers in EFL/ESL field have been occupied with investigating such type of writing. He explains some factors that ensure collaborative writing practicability.

- (7) Collaborative writing has gained attention in second and foreign language learning contexts during the last three decades (**Monogloss**). Informed by sociocultural theory, collaborative writing provides a cognitive and social activity in which students pool collective knowledge and co-construct learning through scaffolded interactions (Donato, 1994; Swain, 1995) (**Expand: Attribute**). Ede and Lunsford (1990) described three distinct features of collaborative writing: a) substantive interaction throughout the writing process; b) shared decision-making and responsibility for the text produced; and c) a single written product (**Expand: Attribute**). Based on this former work, Storch (2013) clarified that collaboration entails individuals' coordinated effort to complete a task together throughout the writing process... (**Expand: Attribute**). (*Excerpt taken from the group of SSCI-ranked journals; JSLW*)

In the first sentence of the paragraph, the authors presented information (*collaborative writing has gained attention...*) that they might think agreed upon by the readers, hence expressed it in a Monoglossic proposition. In so doing, the writers left no chance for others' contribution and rendered their authorial voice assertive. Such a Monoglossic proposition is pursued by some writers as a general background about the research topic and what supposed to be sustained with definitional and explanatory theories from literature of the field in question. However, when trying to argue for *collaborative writing*, by providing some specifications and explanatory theories, the authors seemed to be more dialogistic by acknowledging successive claims attributed to three references in literature (*Donato, 1994; Swain, 1985*), (*Ede & Lunsford, 1995*) and (*Storch, 2013*). Propositions like *Ede and Lunsford (1990) described...* and *Storch (2013) clarified...* are good indications of recognizing others' contributions by the authors and this make their authorial stance more dialogic and authoritative.

Different from example (7) above, the authors in example (8) shifted directly to the discussion by presenting a referenced definitional theory *individual learner differences are a set of factors...* (*Domyei, 2005*). They acknowledged Domyei's claim that learner's inner characteristics determine the variations of individual acquisition of language. The authors further invoked other external viewpoint *Ellis (2008) notes* to sustain the argument for the crucial role of individual learner characteristics in language learning. To make his textual voice more authoritative, the authors recognised Ellis's claim that L2 acquisition never gain

success without considering the individual learner's characteristics. In such a way, they opened up the discussion and dialogically allowed other viewpoints into the text.

- (8) Individual learner differences are a set of factors that influence the acquisition of a second/foreign language in general and vary from one learner to another and differ according to a learner's inner characteristics (Domyei, 2005). **(Expand: Attribute)**. As Ellis (2008) notes, individual learner characteristics enjoy a central place in current second language acquisition (SLA) research and language pedagogy and no account of L2 acquisition will be complete without due consideration of these individual learner differences **(Expand: Attribute)**. *(Excerpt taken from the group of non-SSCI-ranked journals; AREL)*

The following two excerpts discern the different ways in which authors employ Entertain resources. The writers of the following paragraph discussed the importance of vocabulary acquisition in language learning. In the first paragraph, they counted strategies that help expressing ideas in speech and writing and showed two most prominent strategies, intralingual and interlingual. The former involves the exclusive use of an L2 vocabulary learning, and the latter takes stock of the L1 for enhancing vocabulary based on possibilities of word association. Drawing on Attribute resources, the authors ascribed these statements to studies found in the literature. As the text unfolds, however, the authors used some Entertain options while critically comparing between the two aforementioned strategies.

- (9) The disadvantages of both intralingual and interlingual strategies are apparent from prior empirical studies. The translation strategy facilitates understanding of L2 words readily with L1 concepts (Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus 1996). However, marginal glosses take away learners' need to search and evaluate the word meanings through inferencing, consequently reducing lexical retention-retrieval (Laufer & Hulstijn 2011). Findings from a recent study by Jung (2016), which was based on word and meaning recognition test results suggested that glossing aids L2 vocabulary learning **(Expand: Entertain)**. However, recognition is typically easier than free recall because of the presence of target word forms and meanings as stimuli (Anderson, 1983). Since recognition may not be predictive of recall, Jung's (2016) study suffers one severe shortcoming **(Expand: Entertain)**. His study should have tested free recall of target words and their meanings in order to reveal the intricate relationships underlying recall. Jung's (2016) study also suffers another shortcoming in that using L1 translations as an accurate measure of L2 word recognition might be problematic **(Expand: Entertain)**, as L1 translations are not sensitized to semantic prosody. There may not **(Expand: Entertain)** always be exact one-to-one semantic correspondences between languages and this may result in L2 lexical fossilization **(Expand: Entertain)**- translation errors that are fossilized in learners due to their inaccurate use of L1 concepts to explain L2 near-equivalents (Jiang 2004). This problem is exacerbated in the case of non-lexicalization, or L2 words that lack semantic equivalents in the L1 (Chen & Truscott, 2010). The contextualized approach, in contrast, encourages the inference of L2 conceptual word meanings from context presented in L2 medium text that may lead to context-sensitive inferred meanings **(Expand: Entertain)**. That said, this approach might not **(Expand: Entertain)** be within the competent reach of L2 learners (Jiang 2004). Thus, there is a need for an effective vocabulary strategy that draws on the strengths of the two afore-mentioned strategies and minimizes the impact of their shortcomings. *(Excerpt taken from the group of SSCI-ranked journals; System)*

The authors began with sketching some contrasts between the two strategies (based on evidence from previous studies). While they showed that the interlingual (translation) is a useful strategy for L2 word understanding, they came to explain how this strategy may delay learners' efforts of inferring the meaning of words from the contexts and in turn impede their abilities of retaining the words. The writers' authorial voice is dissociated from the two opposing claims as they ascribed (by drawing on Attribute resources) them to external voices: (Hulstijn, Hollander & Greidanus 1996) and (Laufer & Hulstijn 2011), respectively. In the third sentence, the authors provided another alternative (Jung 2016) to offer evidence for the advantages of interlingual strategy by stating that *Findings from a recent study by Jung (2016)... suggested that glossing aids L2 vocabulary learning*. They further supported this evidence by bringing into the text Anderson's (1983) claim that *recognition is typically easier than free recall*. The writers in the last two propositions employed the two Expanding subcategories (Entertain and Attribute), most likely, to build up dialogic and authoritative stance alike. In the coming statements, however, they drew heavily on Entertain resources besides other Contracting options (Proclaim and Disclaim) that may enable them to open up or close down discussion where/whenever necessary in the course of argumentation. The

authors in sentence 6, for example, endorsed some shortcomings of Jung's (2016) findings by using the Proclaim option *severe shortcoming*. They prepared for this endorsement by employing the Entertain option *since recognition may not be predictive of recall* to give logical reason of the shortcoming. The rest of the text, then, shows a series of Entertain employment along with some Contract-Disclaim options where the writers counted problematic sides of interlingual strategy: drawing on Entertain resources may indicate the writers' intention of being dialogistic, expanding space for debate when providing evidence of arguing for/ against the interlingual strategy based on the findings of prior research studies. However, the writers turned their authorial voice more assertive when claiming faults and limitations of previous research findings, most probably as a matter of setting up conditions for announcing the gap of their own research topic: *Thus, there is a need for an effective vocabulary strategy...*

To sum up, it could be said that the writers of examples (7), (8) and (9) allow some space for discussion and negotiation either by acknowledging others' contributions (drawing on Attribute resources) or entertaining external alternative viewpoints (drawing on Entertain resources). Unlike the first four examples (where there is a heavy employment of Contracting options), the textual voice in the three last examples tends to be more effective, dialogistic and authoritative.

In conclusion, it could be said in relation to the first research question that the overall results of the present study have shown considerable employment of the linguistic resources that realise Engagement values in both categories: Contracting and Expanding. The results also proved that the use of these Engagement resources is linked with the potential meanings of rhetorical moves, which may yield the projection of effective authorial stances.

Concerning the second research question, the results have not revealed any significant differences between the number of Engagement resources used in the two sets of SSCI-ranked journals and non-SSCI-ranked journals. There was almost equal employment of Contracting and Expanding options in the Introduction sections of both groups, with very slight preference of Contracting resources over Expanding in SSCI-ranked journals, and Expanding over Contracting in non-SSCI-ranked journals. This balance of using Contracting and Expanding, which was seen clearly in SSCI-ranked journals, may imply that there is a considerable equilibrium in writers' authorial stance of being assertive and more dialogistic and authoritative. The only most notable variation found in the study was in Monoglossic resources employment. The authors in non-SSCI-ranked journals drew on Monoglossic options almost three times more than the writers in SSCI-ranked journals did. In the light of the Appraisal theory, Monogloss is one of the two main categories of Engagement where a proposition is a bare assertion, the authorial voice barely acknowledges others' contributions or alternative views, and allows no space for dialogue at all. Therefore, the authorial stance is considered not authoritative or at least not dialogistic. Addressing the third research question about authorship credibility, the Monoglossic resources overuse in non-SSCI-ranked journals may be one of the reasons why authors in this group were not able to have their papers published in more prestigious journals. Other than this interpretation, I may hypothesise that the use of Engagement resources might not be a criterion that editors of prestigious journals consider.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study have shown considerable employment of Engagement resources in both groups which may imply the authors' awareness of engagement as an important interpersonal aspect of research writing. In addition, the results have yielded some variations

between the two groups. The findings altogether may be of importance to researchers to gain some insights of research writing conventions. These results, however, might not be generalised as the scope of the present study was limited to only one Appraisal resource, Engagement, and single academic discipline, applied linguistics, and more importantly, one section of the RA, i.e. the introduction part. Hence, for more comprehensive findings, future studies should apply the other two domains of the Appraisal theory, i.e. Attitude and Graduation, and expand the scope of investigation to include other disciplines, and investigate other sections of the RA or perhaps examine all sections in RAs for a better understanding of this line of investigation.

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