Evaluative Language: A Contrastive Analysis of Engagement Resources Used in English and Vietnamese Research Articles

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ABSTRACT

Evaluation can be said to be one of the most fundamental functions of language that merits in-depth research. Therefore, evaluative language has recently attracted a lot of attention from linguists worldwide. However, the term seems rather new in the Vietnamese linguistic community. In order to shed further light on the use of evaluative language in Vietnamese in comparison with that in another language, a contrastive analysis of the use of engagement resources in the Appraisal framework by Martin and White (2005) in a corpus of 72 empirical research articles (36 in Vietnamese and 36 in English) was carried out. Results show that English and Vietnamese writers share a lot of similarities in their ways of thinking and expressing their engagement in research articles. They tend to contract the dialogistic space more than expand it. They make use of the engagement resources the most in the Discussion/ Conclusions section and hardly use engagement in the Methods section. However, English writers express engagement more frequently than their Vietnamese counterparts. The results of the study are hoped to be of reference for article writers as well as to enrich literature materials for the fields of evaluative language and academic writing pedagogy in Vietnam.

Keywords: Evaluative language; Appraisal framework; Engagement; Contract; Expand

INTRODUCTION

According to Alba-Juez & Thompson (Hunston, 2011), evaluation is one of the most fundamental and significant functions of language that merits in-depth research, which is why it has lately been a topic of much interest. Numerous studies have been conducted on linguistic mechanisms used to express and evaluate people's emotions. These studies were primarily approached from the perspectives of the meta-discourse theory (Hyland & Tse, 2004), the language of evaluation (Hunston, 2011), and, in particular, the Appraisal theory of Martin and White (2005) developed from Systemic Functional Linguistic background with emphasis on evaluative meaning from the interpersonal aspect. This theoretical framework has been used in numerous investigations on diverse materials and for varied purposes: (1) to provide evidence that the framework can be applied to a variety of fields and genres, such as political discourses (Mazlum & Afshin, 2016), language of advertisements (Kochetova & Volodchenkova, 2015), fake news (Trnavac, 2024), textbooks and historical materials (Coffin, 2006; Myskow, 2017); (2) to demonstrate pedagogical implications and the viability of using the framework in English teaching and learning (Hu & Choo, 2015; Liu, 2010); (3) to show that the framework may be used in languages other than English, such as Chinese (Kong, 2006), Vietnamese (Ngo, 2013), Korean (Bang & Shin, 2012), Spanish (Taboada & Carretero, 2010), and others.

The use of evaluative language in academic discourses has been investigated in a number of different contexts, including students' essays (Brooke, 2014), sections of master's and doctorate theses (Geng & Wharton, 2016), or academic L2 writing and articles (Al-mudhaffari et al., 2019;

Alotaibi, 2019), etc. The analysis of the evaluative language used in research articles, specifically in the various sections of an article (from Introduction to Conclusions), has not, however, caught the interest of researchers. This is particularly true in Vietnam, where evaluative language and the Appraisal framework are not well known.

This inspires us to conduct a contrastive study on the ways writers employ evaluative language, particularly engagement resources, in publications on linguistic research written in English and Vietnamese. The research is hoped to be of reference for article writers as well as to enrich literature materials for the fields of evaluative language and academic writing pedagogy in Vietnam.

LITERATURE REVIEW

THE APPRAISAL FRAMEWORK

OVERVIEW OF THE FRAMEWORK

In an effort to systematically examine evaluative language, Martin and White (2005) developed the Appraisal Framework, which includes three domains: Attitude, Engagement, and Graduation (Figure 1). The term "Attitude" describes how people feel and behave, including how they interact emotionally, judge others' behaviours, and evaluate things and entities. Engagement is concerned with language strategies that speakers and writers use to express their viewpoints on the value positions in the text. Graduation deals with the gradability of evaluative resources. There are categories and subsystems within each system. For instance, there are three subsystems for Attitude: Affect, Judgment, and Appreciation. Each subsystem is then divided into several categories.
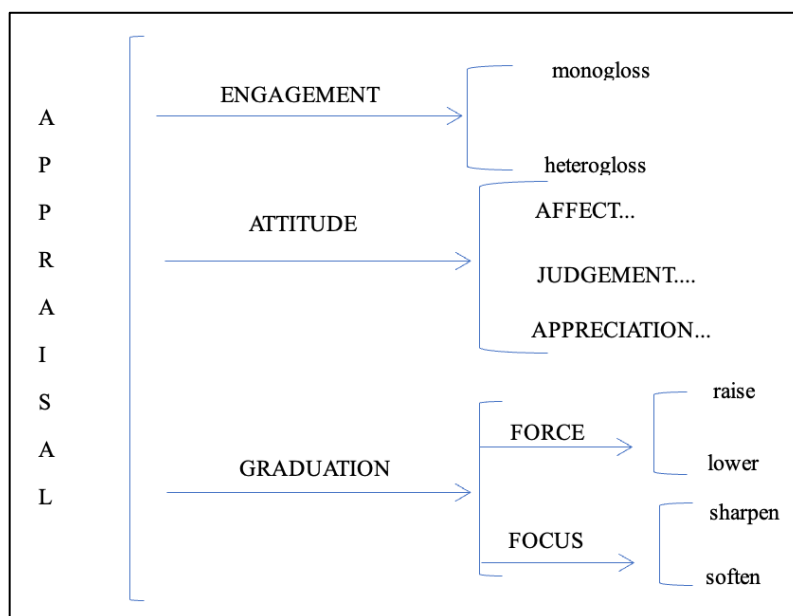

FIGURE 1. An Overview of the Appraisal Framework (Martin & White, 2005)

"All utterances are... in some way stance or attitudinal," according to Martin and White (2005, p. 92). This implies that the speaker's attitude or point of view is reflected in whatever he or she says. The speaker's attitude can be a bare assertion (which does not overtly refer to other voices or recognise alternative positions to the text) or be expressed as one view among a range of possible views. In other words, utterances are categorised as "heterogloss" when they allow for or evoke dialogic alternatives but are labelled as "monogloss" when they do not allude to other voices and opinions. For example, "*The project has been very successful*" is monoglossic because here, the proposition that the project has been successful is no longer an issue, not up for discussion or taken for granted. Therefore, it is assumed that there are no alternative points of view on this. Meanwhile, the proposition "*I think the project has been successful*" construes a heteroglossic environment populated by different views on whether the project has been successful or not.

The Engagement system mainly focuses on overtly dialogic locutions and the different heteroglossic diversity which they indicate. Accordingly, the system is split into two major subsystems called Contract and Expand based on the writer's aim to either close down or open up the room for other voices in the text. The Engagement system is illustrated in figure 2.
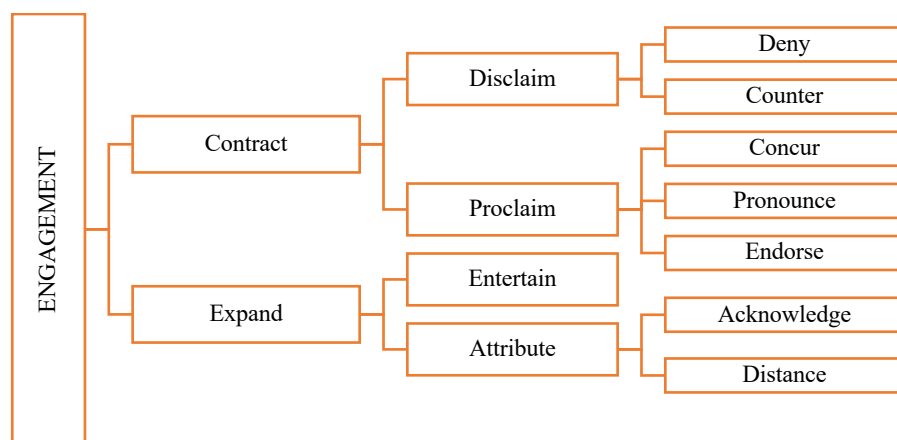

FIGURE 2. The Engagement system (Martin & White, 2005)

Contract. The contract consists of meanings that, though creating a dialogistic backdrop for external voices, constrain or exclude these dialogistic alternatives from the text. This subsystem is classified into two broad categories: Disclaim and Proclaim.

Disclaim deals with the way authorial or textual voice is presented to reject other contrary voices. This can be reflected through Deny or Counter expectations. For example:

Although (Counter) *he had studied very hard, he could* **not** (Deny) *pass the exam.*

Proclaim disqualifies or excludes other viewpoints in order to present the official endorsement or guarantee of a claim. Proclaim is expressed through categories of Concur, Pronounce and Endorse. For example:

Naturally (Concur)*, regular exercise and a healthy diet are good for our health.*

Results show that (Endorse) *analysing evaluative language in reading passages helps improve students' vocabulary quickly.*

We conclude that (Pronounce*) the attitude of students toward study greatly affects their results.*

Expand. Expand refers to meanings which are open for alternative positions and voices beside the authorial voice in the text. Two broad categories of this system are Entertain and Attribute.

Entertain means that the authorial voice is just one of the possible positions and, therefore, creates a dialogistic space for other possibilities and voices. Entertain can be expressed via modal auxiliaries (*may, might, could*, ...), modal adjuncts (*perhaps, probably*, ...), modal attributes (*it's likely that*, ...), and via expressions like, *in my view*, *I think,* etc. For example:

I think he **might** have broken the vase.

Attribute is concerned with the presentation of external voices in the text. Reported speech is the most popular formula to convey this meaning: *X argue that, X believe that, X claim that*, etc. Attribute is divided into Acknowledge and Distance. For example (Martin & White, 2005, p. 104):

… His attack came as the Aboriginal women involved in the case demanded [Acknowledge] *a female minister examine the religious beliefs they claim* [Distance] *are inherent in their fight against a bridge to the island near Goolwa in South Australia*. [Bank of English – OzNews sub-corpus]

MACRO-STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH ARTICLES

In his pioneering work on genre analysis, Swales (1990) asserted that research articles consist of three main sections: Introduction, Methods and Results/Discussion/Conclusions.

The Introduction section presents the topic and aims of the study.

The Methods section describes the methods employed and procedures to collect and analyse data for the research.

The Results/Discussion/Conclusions section: According to a survey conducted by Swales (1990), a majority of articles separate Results and Discussion into two sections (forming the IMRD structure), some combine them into one (IMR), some include additional sub-sections like Conclusions, Implication, Application, etc. Swales compiles them all in Results/Discussion/Conclusions section as a result.

The IMR(D) structure proposed by Swales comprises solely of an article's major parts. Some changes to this structure have been found in other research. For example, Yang and Allison (2004) observed that although the Discussion and Conclusions are included in just two-thirds of the corpus, the Introduction, Methods, and Results are present in every article in their corpus. The researchers also highlighted some uncommon and optional sections, such as the theoretical basis, literature review, research questions, and pedagogical implications after the conclusions.

In this study, research articles are divided into five main sections: the Introduction, the Methods, the Theoretical backgrounds, the Results, and the Discussion/Conclusions. The evaluative language is realised, synthesised and contrasted in terms of frequency and realisations among these main sections.

METHODS OF THE STUDY

CORPUS COMPILATION

The study is based on a corpus of 72 research publications, 36 in Vietnamese and 36 in English, which were chosen at random from recognised linguistic journals both in Vietnam and worldwide. Particularly, papers in Vietnamese were selected from the *Journal of Language*, *Journal of Lexicography and Encyclopaedia*, and *Journal of Language & Life* - three of the most prominent linguistic magazines in Vietnam. Five of the top 10 International Scientific Scimago Journal and Country Ranking (2019) publications yielded English-language papers for selection: (i) *Applied Linguistics*, (ii) *Applied Psycholinguistics*, (iii) *Sociolinguistics*, (iv) *Language*, (v) *Functional Linguistics*.

To provide a variety of resources for examination, the corpora were gathered throughout a six-year period (2017-2022). Each corpus was coded as Eres 1- Eres 36 for English articles and Vres 1- Vres 36 for Vietnamese ones.

DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

The data analysis procedure consists of the following steps:

(i) Analyse the macro-structure of research articles by identifying different sections of the articles.
(ii) Analyse the content of each section to realise Engagement recourses (based on the Appraisal framework) and classify them into appropriate categories.
(iii) Calculate the frequency of different engagement categories in different sections of the article and synthesise the data from the English and Vietnamese corpora.
(iv) Compare and contrast the frequency and realisations of engagement resources of English articles with Vietnamese ones.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

FREQUENCY OF ENGAGEMENT CATEGORIES IN ENGLISH AND VIETNAMESE RESEARCH ARTICLES

The Engagement system is divided into two subsystems: Contract and Expand. The frequency of Engagement resources employed in English and Vietnamese research articles is illustrated in the following figure and table.
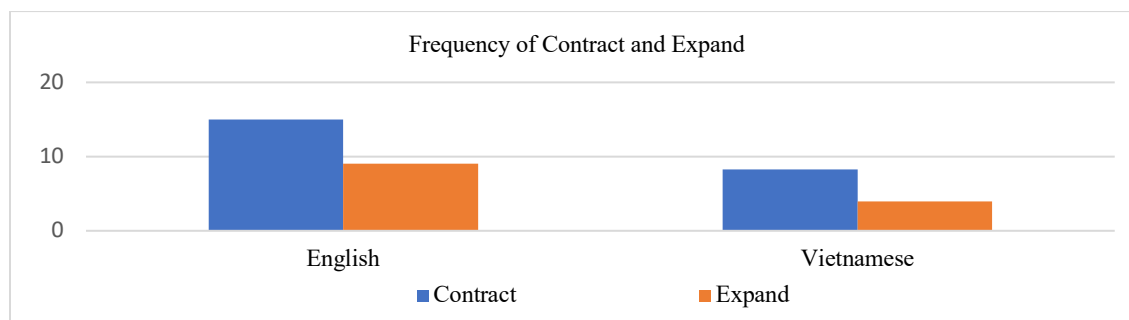

FIGURE 3. Frequency of Contract and Expand in English and Vietnamese research articles

In general, English authors express more Engagement in the text than Vietnamese authors. However, authors of both languages tend to contract the dialogic space rather than expand it for external voices.

TABLE 1. Frequency of evaluative resources in the Engagement system

			English		Vietnamese	
			Per 1000 words	Total	Per 1000 words	Total
Contract	Disclaim	Deny	5.82	12.36	2.98	6.21
		Counter	6.54		3.23	
	Proclaim	Concur	0.32		0.34	
		Pronounce	1.02	2.64	0.42	2.02
		Endorse	1.30		1.26	
Total				15.00		8.23
Expand	Entertain		8.01	8.01	2.89	2.89
	Attribute	Acknowledge	0.83	1.05	1.05	1.08
		Distance	0.22		0.03	
Total				9.06		3.97

As can be seen from Table 1, in the Contract subsystems of the two languages, identified realisations of Disclaim are far higher than those of Proclaim (nearly 5 times higher in English and 3 times higher in Vietnamese). In the category of Disclaim, Counter is used more frequently than Deny, and this category also has higher frequency than all other categories of the Contract subsystem. This makes sense because numerous researchers have confirmed that the language used in scientific papers typically incorporates a large number of voices (outside the text) to highlight the contrast between various points of view and to illustrate the overall picture of the issues discussed, both of which are essential components of scientific research. In the category of Proclaim, authors of the two languages use Endorse the most and Concur the least.

In short, in the Contract subsystem, there is a complete consistence in the correlations among categories of the two corpora though the frequency of resources in English is always higher than in Vietnamese. Both English and Vietnamese authors focus more on Disclaim resources, employing Counter the most and Concur the least.

In the meantime, in the subsystem of Expand, the two corpora both show a more frequent use of Entertain than Attribute. In the category of Attribute, Acknowledge appears more than Distance. The only difference is that Vietnamese authors employ Acknowledge more than English authors.

COMPARISON OF ENGAGEMENT RESOURCES BETWEEN ENGLISH
AND VIETNAMESE RESEARCH ARTICLES

CONTRACT

Realisations of Contract resources are used quite frequently; however, the frequency varies between categories. There are two main broad categories in this subsystem: Disclaim and Proclaim.

Disclaim. According to the Appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), to Disclaim, the writer can use Deny or Counter expectation. The frequency of Deny and Counter according to the structure of a research article is presented in Table 2.

TABLE 2. Frequency of Disclaim (per 1000 words)

Sections	Deny		Counter	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Introduction	5.11	3.12	7.93	4.43
Theoretical backgrounds	4.13	2.76	6.18	2.43
Methods	4.25	1.52	3.63	1.36
Results	7.36	3.26	6.35	3.28
Discussion/Conclusions	8.25	4.24	8.61	4.65
The whole article	5.82	2.98	6.54	3.23

Frequency of Disclaim

Deny. From the dialogistic perspective, negation is a source of introducing another positive position into the dialogue, and thus, it acknowledges or denies that view (Martin & White, 2005). The above table shows that in the English corpus, the writers use Deny a lot. Deny is used most densely in the Discussion/Conclusions section and most sparsely in the Theoretical Backgrounds section. In the Vietnamese corpus, the Discussion/Conclusions section also has the highest number of negative expressions, while the Methods section has the lowest.

A contrast view of the two corpora reveals some similarities between articles of the two languages such as: frequency of Deny is highest in the Discussion/Conclusions section and lowest in the Theoretical backgrounds and Methods sections. However, the difference is that the frequency of Deny in English articles is higher than in Vietnamese (approximately twice).

Counter. The counter is to reflect a concession or counter expectation. As illustrated in Table 1, the Counter has the highest frequency in the Contract subsystem. The frequent use of counter-resources may be due to the nature of scientific research, which aims to discover paradoxes and problems and offer solutions to them. Therefore, the countering language might be the centre of critical thinking in research and the thorough voice of scientific research. Perhaps scientists are all well aware of this and make great use of this strategy to clarify their purposes. At the same time, this clearly demonstrates that writers have already mastered it and presented their study in the right spirit of academic writing.

Table 2 shows that Counter in English articles is densely used in almost all sections, in which, like Deny, the Discussion/Conclusions section also has the highest frequency. The Methods section uses Counter the least. In Vietnamese corpus, the Discussion/Conclusions section also uses a lot of Counter resources and the Methods section rarely uses this strategy.

The two corpora show a complete similarity in the distribution of Counter resources among different sections of a research article (ranking from the highest to the lowest frequency: Discussion/Conclusions – Introduction – Results – Theoretical backgrounds – Methods).

Realisations of Disclaim

Deny. In the English corpus, Deny is employed 1592 times, expressed through 50 formulations via 35 core words, mainly *not* (1267), or *not only* (45), *not ... the case* (13). Besides, writers can deny by using *no* (234), *neither ... nor* (32), negative prefixes *im-* (14), *un-* (9), the word families of *absent/ absence* (15), *lack* (41) and *fail/fails/failed/failure* (9). For example:

(1) ***No*** *social factors emerged as significant, and **neither** did vowels.* (Eres 21)

In the Vietnamese corpus, Deny is used 458 times in 25 different expressions, among which *không (no/ not)* appears 383 times in various structures (*không bị, không còn, không được, etc.* (*no/ not + adjective/ verb/ noun*)). *Chưa* (*not yet*) appears 72 times in structures like *chưa được, chưa phải, chưa thể* (*not yet + verb*) while *thiếu/ vắng* (*lack/ absent*) is used 16 times in different expressions. It is noted that there are word variations in Vietnamese, such as *không bị, không còn, không được; chưa được, chưa phải, chưa thể* (equivalent to *not/ not yet* in English), making the number of expressions in Vietnamese far exceed that in English.

It is also noteworthy that Vietnamese have negative expressions of *không hề* (*by no means*) to upscale intensification while *không hoàn toàn, không mấy* (*not really*) to downscale intensification. For example:

(2) *Ở Việt Nam nghiên cứu về mối quan hệ giữa giới và tương tác ngôn ngữ trên lớp học hầu* ***như thiếu vắng****. (In Vietnam, research on the relationship between gender and language interaction in the classroom is **almost absent**)* (Vres 1)

Counter. There are a total of 1908 expressions of Counter in English, realised via 16 adverbs/ conjunctions, of which the most frequently used are: *but* (592), and then *however* (347), *while* (258), *although* (135), *even* (119), *though* (102), *till* (75), etc. In many cases, the writer uses more than one counterexpression in a statement to emphasise his countering position. For example:

(3) ***However****, the competitor may* ***still*** *have had an effect.* (Eres 21)
(4) *...* ***but surprisingly****, ...* ***no*** *studies have explicitly investigated similarities or differences between the two.* (Eres 20)

The Vietnamese corpus has 513 Counter expressions, realised via 27 words or phrases, of which the conjunction *nhưng (but* - 176) has the highest frequency. Other popular words/ phrases include *tuy nhưng/ tuy nhiên/ tuy vậy* (*however* - 151); *mặc cho/ mặc dù/ mặc dầu* (*although* - 52); phrases with *dù* (*though* - 31) such as *cho dù, dù, dù sao* and *trong khi (đó)* (*while* - 48); the least frequently used is *ngạc nhiên* (*surprising* - 4) và *trong lúc (đó)* (*meanwhile* - 4). One noteworthy point is that to show a contradictory opinion, after the conjunction *nhưng* (*but*), Vietnamese people often add *lại* to create a phrase *nhưng lại* (*but*), after *cũng* (*also*), there frequently have *chỉ* (*only*) to make an emphasis *cũng chỉ.* For example:

(5) ***Tuy nhiên****, có một số tài liệu* ***dù không*** *phải kinh điển* ***nhưng lại*** *quá cũ, lỗi thời,* ***trong khi*** *các khuynh hướng ngôn ngữ học hiện nay cung cấp rất nhiều nội dung mới và thú vị. (**However**, there are some documents that, **although not** classic, are too old and outdated, **while** current linguistic trends provide a lot of new and interesting content.)* (Vres 25)

Overall, findings from two corpora of this study allow us to affirm the argument by Martin and White (2005) that Counter usually goes with Deny in which the negative proposition directly contrasts with the expectation in the previous proposition (see examples 4, 5). Martin's conclusion is withdrawn from English materials, but the analysis of Vietnamese articles also shows a similar feature. This reflects a similarity in the ways of thinking and expressing ideas between English and Vietnamese people, which goes beyond language and cultural differences. In other words, to

express a contrary idea, both English and Vietnamese writers tend to deny another thing. Therefore, they usually combine these two strategies in an utterance.

Proclaim. In the Contract resources, Proclaim is not used as much as Disclaim. Proclaim consists of three categories: Concur, Pronounce and Endorse. Generally, the frequency of these categories is rather low, with Endorse having the highest frequency and Concur having the lowest. Details are presented in the following table.

TABLE 3. Frequency of Proclaim (per 1000 words)

Sections	Concur		Pronounce		Endorse	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Introduction	0.53	0.41	1.29	0.39	1.36	1.05
Theoretical backgrounds	0.20	0.40	0.84	0.52	1.52	1.15
Methods	0.08	0.00	0.47	0.23	0.48	0.71
Results	0.35	0.46	0.81	0.48	1.31	1.45
Discussion/Conclusions	0.44	0.43	1.69	0.48	1.83	1.94
The whole article	0.32	0.34	1.02	0.42	1.30	1.26

Frequency of Proclaim

Concur. Concur formulations explicitly state that the addresser agrees with or has the same knowledge as some assumed dialogic partners. Concurrence is realised by such locutions as, *of course*, *naturally*, *not surprisingly*, etc.

Results of the study show that English writers express Concur more in the Introduction section of the article, next comes the Discussion/Conclusions section. The Methods section has the least expressions of Concur. In the Vietnamese corpus, Concur is also rarely used. Discussion/Conclusions and Results sections have the highest number of Concur realisations. There are no Concur expressions in the Methods section.

In general, Concur is not frequently used in the two corpora, and it is especially rarely used in the Methods section. Vietnamese writers employ this evaluative resource more than their English counterparts and focus more on the Results section, while English writers use Concur mostly in the Introduction section.

Pronounce. Pronounce consists of formulations through which the writer tries to emphasise his/her viewpoints or explicitly show his/her interventions or interpolations in the text.

As can be seen from Table 3, Pronounce is employed most frequently in the Discussion/Conclusions section of English articles. The Introduction section also shows quite a lot of Pronounce formulations. Unsurprisingly, the Methods section continues to be the section with the lowest frequency of Pronounce.

In Vietnamese articles, Pronounce tends to appear most densely in the Theoretical backgrounds section. On the contrary, this strategy appears the least in the Methods section.

Comparing the two corpora we can see that English articles employ more Pronounce than Vietnamese (more than twice). Beside the only similarity that Pronounce is used the least in the Methods section, there are some differences such as English articles have the highest number of Pronounce realisations in the Discussion/Conclusions section while Vietnamese articles have the most Pronounce in the Theoretical backgrounds section.

In academic discourses, especially scientific research, we think the fact that Pronounce (or a concluding announcement) is seldom used is completely understandable since a scientific statement needs a lot of evidence and discussion. That statement must be accurate and highly reliable and present the quality of the research. Therefore, statements cannot be given arbitrarily;

they must be selective and be the final conclusions. Pronounce is used less than other categories because each study is expected to draw out a certain number of conclusions only.

Endorse. A popular way to announce the position of the writer is through Endorsement. By Endorsement, the writer uses certain formulations to source propositions in the text to external resources and voices that these propositions are correct, undeniable, or maximally warrantable. In the corpus of research articles, Endorse proves to be the most prevalent method to express the opinions of writers, regardless of language (English or Vietnamese).

The two corpora show a totally similar style of using Endorse. The distribution of Endorse resources among different sections of an article is the same between the two languages (though frequency in English is a little higher than in Vietnamese): the Discussion/Conclusions section uses Endorse the most, and the Methods section uses it the least. This might be the category where the two corpora have the highest level of similarity. This means English and Vietnamese writers have the same ways of endorsing the results of other studies in their research articles.

Realisations of Proclaim

Concur. There are 16 words or structures used to express 98 realisations of Concur in English, based on eight core words, mainly adverbs (*certainly, unsurprisingly, admittedly, ...*) or fixed collocations (*of course, no doubt, it is not surprising that, ...*). The most frequently used is, *of course*.

(6) *The difference between word and morpheme boundaries is **certainly** not as robust in this data set as in experiment 1.* (Eres 21)

There are 46 realisations of Concur in Vietnamese, built from 9 words, including mostly adjectives, of which the most common are *rõ ràng* (*obvious*) and *tất yếu* (*inevitable*). For example:

(7) ***Đương nhiên**, tiêu đề phải thống nhất với nội dung. (**Of course**, the title must be consistent with the content.)* (Vres 18)

Pronounce. Pronounce is employed 271 times in the English corpus, expressed via 32 formulations, including 64 nouns, 39 verbs, 19 adjectives, 108 adverbs and 45 idioms (*in fact, in reality*). The most common lexical devices are *indeed* (73), *the fact (that)* (59) and *in fact* (42). For example:

(8) *In this sense, **we can conclude that** aspects of identity performance are **indeed** achieved at this level of linguistic production*. (Eres 26)

There are 25 expressions for 47 Pronounce statements in the Vietnamese corpus, including 26 clauses with compounded subjects (including subjects and objects of communication) and impersonal pronouns such as *chúng tôi* (*we* - 7), *chúng ta* (*we* - 6), *ai* (*one* - 5), *ta* (*we* - 7), *người ta* (*people* - 2) and *non-subject* (4). The most commonly-used expression for Pronounce is *thực tế* (*the fact* - 21). For example:

(9) ***Thực tế đã chứng minh** việc sử dụng sơ đồ tư duy là hết sức phổ biến trong việc dạy và học ngoại ngữ ... (It is **the fact** that the use of mind maps is extremely popular in teaching and learning foreign languages ...)* (Vres 26)

Endorse. There are a total of 345 Endorse realisations in the English corpus, expressed via 42 structures built from 35-word families. The most common core word is *show* (162), used in different forms like *show, shows, showed, showing*; the next common word is *demonstrate* (53) in forms of *demonstrate, demonstrates, demonstrating, demonstrated, ...*; besides, *find* (47), *evidence* (39) and *confirm* (7) are also regularly used. For example:

(10) *The **evidence confirms** that the students found this exercise easier ...* (Eres 10)
There are 181 Endorse expressions in Vietnamese articles, realised via 15 formulations.

The most common verbs are *cho thấy* (*show* - 124), *chỉ ra* (*indicate* - 22), *khẳng định* (*affirm* - 11), *chứng minh* (*prove* - 6), *chỉ rõ* (*clearly show* - 3), etc. Popular structures are: *results/ analysis/ statistics/ figures/ study ... + show/ prove/ indicate that*. For example:

(11) *Nhiều nghiên cứu đã **khẳng định** rằng phạm vi từ vựng có vai trò quan trọng đến việc hình thành nên năng lực sử dụng ngoại ngữ.* (***Many studies have confirmed** that vocabulary range plays an important role in forming the ability to use a foreign language.*) (Vres 19)

EXPAND

Of the heteroglossic dialogistic strategies, besides Contraction, writers can also choose to Expand the space for a proposition to be discussed in the text. By the term Expansion, we refer to the introduction of other voices into the text. Expand consists of two categories: Entertain and Attribute.

Entertain. When the writer wants to show that his/her idea is just one of the possibilities, then, to a certain extent, this expands the dialogistic space for other possibilities. In other words, this is when the writer is Entertaining the proposition with potential readers and is open to other ideas. In the statement, "*While **perhaps** surprising, this effect is **likely** due to the high frequency of nonce words in the task focusing participants' attention away from the lexicon.* (Eres 9)" the writer uses two realisations of Entertain "*perhaps*" and "*likely*" to express that what he mentions is just one of the possibilities and uncertain. The reader can have different views. The writer is willing to welcome mixed views toward this proposition, and thus, this opens or expands the dialogistic space.

Frequency of Entertain. In comparison with other categories, Entertain is used more frequently. In other words, Expand is mainly expressed through Entertain. Specifically, in English articles, the Discussion/ Conclusions section has the highest frequency of Entertain. On the contrary, the Methods section has the lowest frequency.

TABLE 4. Frequency of Entertain (per 1000 words)

Sections	English	Vietnamese
Introduction	7.89	1.79
Theoretical backgrounds	6.96	3.18
Methods	4.43	1.31
Results	7.31	2.88
Discussion/ Conclusions	13.46	5.29
The whole article	8.01	2.89

In Vietnamese articles, Entertain is the most frequently used category of the Expand subsystem and has the third highest frequency in the Engagement system (2,89/‰). Like English writers, Vietnamese writers use Entertain the most in the Discussion/Conclusions section and the least in the Methods section.

In summary, Entertain is more preferred among English writers, using this nearly 3 times higher than Vietnamese writers. Both writers of the two languages use Entertain a lot in the Discussion/Conclusions section.

Realisations of Entertain. There are 11 ways of expressing 2267 Entertain realisations in English, based on 42 core words including 18 nouns, 1386 modal verbs, 475 verbs, 271 adjectives, 119 adverbs, 21 prefixes *un-* and 16 negative words *not*. The most common structures are: *Research/ analysis/ study… suggests that …* (138); *I/we suggest* (21). Besides the most commonly used verb, *suggest* (157), *appear, argue, and seem* are also frequently used. In addition, the adjective *possible* and some adverbs (*probably*, *likely*) also regularly appear. The most common realisation of Entertain is modal verbs like *can (not), may (not), might, should (not), etc.* In this category, for the purpose of discussing and inviting other ideas, the first personal pronouns (*I/ We*) are also employed very frequently (*I* – 48 times and *We* – 72 times).

One more noteworthy point is that, in order to increase or decrease the engagement or certainty of the writer with the proposition, the writer might use more than one lexical source at the same time such as *could probably, might seem, would suggest, seems to suggest, etc.*

In short, to give information with the purpose of inviting external ideas, different resources are used, including (1) modal verbs, adverbs (*may, might, must, maybe, perhaps, probably, likely, unlikely*), (2) verbs (*believe, think, appear, seem, propose*) or phrases and fixed collocations (*it is possible that, on the assumption that*). Among these expressions, the most common words are "*may*", "*likely*", "*might*", and "*must*". For example:

(12) *Rather, this exchange **appears** as part of a larger light-hearted discussion between two users who are **seemingly** friends.* (Eres 29)

(13) ***I argue** that SFL **must** develop more robust criteria for making this distinction.* (Eres 8)

Similar to the English corpus, to open space for other voices in the text, Vietnamese writers overtly express their opinions via the first-person pronouns *chúng tôi/ chúng ta* (*we*) and the level of certainty towards the proposition and other possibilities through words like *chắc chắn (sure), dường như (seem), có thể (can), có lẽ (perhaps), nên (should), phải (must),* etc., of which the most common word is *có lẽ* (*perhaps*) (19). In total, there are 383 realisations of Entertain, expressed in 48 ways. For example:

(14) *Ở những đối thoại khác giới, cách xưng hô, **theo cảm nhận của chúng tôi, hình như** có chút khoảng cách, chứ không thân mật, bỗ bã kiểu mày-tao như trên. (In conversations with people of the opposite gender, the ways of addressing each other, **in our opinion**, **seem** to be more distanced, not the informal mày-tao (you-me) style like above)* (Vres 11)

Comments. The highest frequency of Entertain in the subsystem of Expand is to satisfy the purpose of creating dialogistic space for readers by writers. They might use various structures or expressions to open the possibilities for other ideas. This is the tool through which writers can fulfil the aim of the academic writing style, as stated by Dontcheva-Navratilova (2009), to create

room for discussions or evaluation of their proposition in order to build a relationship with the discourse community.

Results of this part is somehow similar to those of Geng and Wharton (2016), Fryer (2013) and Swain (2010) as they discovered that Entertain is most frequently used in the Discussion section of Doctoral theses in Applied linguistics, medical journals and assignments of students. In this corpus, though Entertain is not the most commonly used category, it has the second highest frequency of the whole Engagement system with much higher density than other categories.

The use of modal verbs (*may, can, might*) or adverbs (*possibly, probably*) may make readers think that the knowledge of the writer might still be modest and not enough to announce a statement. However, these modal verbs/adverbs have their pragmatic functions as Myers (1989, p. 12) recognised that one function of such locutions is to indicate that the assertion is "unknown by the discourse community" rather than to indicate that the claim is dubious.

Attribute. Under the category of "Attribution", we deal with formulations that detach the idea from the text's internal authorial voice by attributing it to an outside source. Attribute is typically realised via the reported speech. Attribute is divided into Acknowledge and Distance.
Frequency of Attribute

TABLE 5. Frequency of Attribute (per 1000 words)

Sections	Acknowledge		Distance	
	English	Vietnamese	English	Vietnamese
Introduction	0.49	0.6	0.23	0.00
Theoretical backgrounds	1.89	2.83	0.32	0.00
Methods	0.29	0.37	0.12	0.00
Results	0.39	0.9	0.18	0.03
Discussion/ Conclusions	1.09	0.55	0.25	0.00
The whole article	0.83	1.05	0.22	0.03

Acknowledge. With Acknowledge, there are no overt signs in the proposition for the reader to identify the voice of the writer. For example:

(15) **Deuchar (1984),** *therefore***, comments** *that "more research is needed to relate (the variants of BSL) to their social context and to determine the relative importance of social factors such as formality/informality of setting".* (Eres 3)

This is a pure report of Deuchar's comment that there should be more studies relating to social contexts. This report is completely objective, we cannot see the viewpoint of the writer in the proposition.

In general, English writers do not use much acknowledgement. They tend to Acknowledge other viewpoints the most in the Theoretical Backgrounds section and the least in the Methods section. Vietnamese writers seem to employ Acknowledge quite frequently but mainly in the Theoretical section.

Findings of this part are quite interesting in that this is rarely the case that evaluative realisations in English are less common than in Vietnamese. The similarity between the two corpora is Acknowledge most densely appears in the Theoretical backgrounds where writers report arguments or opinions of other scientists in previous studies. And, like other categories, Acknowledge appears the least in the Methods section.

Distance. This category is named Distance as through sematic resources, there is a clear distance between the voice of the writer and the attributed proposition. Martin and White (2005, p. 113) particularly emphasized   that by using the typical reporting verb *claim*, the writer completely "detaches him/herself from responsibility for what is being reported".

Distance is seldom used. In the English corpus, Distance is most common in the Theoretical backgrounds section. Next comes the Discussion/Conclusions section. In the Vietnamese corpus, Distance is only used in the Results section.

Realisations of Attribute. Since almost all attribute resources are acknowledged, we will focus on the realisations of acknowledgement in this paper.

In the English corpus, as mentioned in Martin and White (2005), the typical structure for this category is indirect sentences. With the outstanding feature of research articles, subjects of indirect sentences are pronouns or personal names of scientists such as *scholars, he, they, and author(s)* (hereafter called X) going with reporting verbs like *argue, suggest, report, conclude*, etc. The most common verb is *argue*d (e.g. *Bernstein (2010) argues*). Besides, other common structures are *According to X, as in X's, following X, ….*

Acknowledge is used 231 times in the whole English corpus, realised via 97 formulations based on 43 core words, mainly verbs. Nouns are not used as much (12 times), and only one adverb (*reportedly*) is used. For example:

(16) ***They report that*** *they try not to use too much English in their Polish.* ***All argue that*** *they do not approve of having an English accent in Polish*. (Eres 30)

There are 157 realisations of acknowledgement in Vietnamese, expressed via 48 formulations. Verbs are the major source (109); another common structure is the phrase *the + danh từ/ đại từ* (*according to + N/ Pronoun* - 46), and the least frequently used is nouns or noun phrases (13). The typical structure is *X (năm xuất bản) + khẳng định/ viết/ nhận định/ kết luận (X (year of publication + affirm/ write/ conclude)*. For example:

(17) ***Schmitt, N, Schmitt, D & Clapham (2001) khẳng định*** *rằng các từ thường xuyên xuất hiện là các từ được học trước tiên và do đó sẽ là các từ dễ nhất. (**Schmitt, N, Schmitt, D & Clapham (2001) assert that** frequently occurring words are the words that are learned first and will therefore be the easiest words)* (Vres 19)

DISCUSSION

In terms of categories of the Engagement system, it seems that writers of the two languages tend to contract the dialogistic space more than expand it. Especially, they use Attribute the least in their articles. One reason for the inferiority of creating space for external voices may be that the acknowledgment of other ideas in the paper may restrict the possibility for countering and exchanging the writer's value position in the text.

Perhaps because of this, our results are quite similar to those of Geng and Wharton (2016) on the corpus of Discussion sections of Doctoral theses in Applied linguistics. Geng and Wharton argued that English writers are well aware of integrating other voices into the writing. More specifically, the writers used Disclaim more than Proclaim, which is similar to the results of this study and to those of Lancaster (2011) on the corpus of economic articles. Expand is even used the

most in the whole engagement system, the same result as that of Fryer (2013) and Swain (2010) on medical journals and students' essays.

TABLE 6. Frequency of Engagement (per 1000 words)

Sections	English	Vietnamese
Introduction	25.1	11.75
Theoretical backgrounds	22.58	13.2
Methods	14.29	5.73
Results	23.62	12.74
Discussion/ Conclusions	34.71	17.58
The whole article	24.06	12.20

In terms of Engagement resources, according to different sections of a research article, table 6 shows that English writers engage voices in the text more than Vietnamese writers. Writers of the two languages express their Engagement the most in the Discussion/Conclusions section and the least in the Methods section. This reveals the similarity in the way of thinking and the use of evaluative language between English and Vietnamese writers.

The results of the study suggest some remarkable points in expressing the Engagement of writers in a research article. To create a highly reliable paper and to show the connection and implication of the study with the current context of the field, the writer needs to make his/her writing persuasive by engaging their voices in specific sections of the article. For example, Deny and Counter are employed more frequently in the Introduction section in order to indicate the gap in the study, show the critical view of the writer, and highlight the rationale of the study. In the Theoretical backgrounds section, in the process of reviewing related studies and theories, the writer uses Acknowledge resources to prove the objectivity and non-involvement with previous studies. Endorse is also frequently used to make statistical figures more objective when presenting the study results. Entertain is a source of expressing the writer's voice and expanding the dialogistic space, which is employed regularly when the writer discusses and draws out the conclusions of the study. The main function of Entertain resources (especially modal verbs) in this part, as affirmed by Myers (1989) and Hyland (2000), is both a hedging device to express the modesty of the researcher and an indication that the arguments stated are new in the discourse community. Though Vietnamese writers generally have similar strategies of expressing Engagement as English writers, they, perhaps, should be more confident in expressing their voices throughout the article, both in Contracting and Expanding the dialogistic space. When the impression made by the writer is clear enough, the reader will feel as if he/she is communicating with the writer, not just reading a scientific report. This will enhance the attractiveness and effectiveness of the research article.

CONCLUSION

In general, English and Vietnamese writers share a lot of similarities in their ways of thinking and expressing their Engagement in research articles. They tend to contract the dialogistic space more than expand it. They restrict the Endorsement of other arguments in their publication. They make use of Engagement resources the most in the Discussion/Conclusions section and hardly use Engagement in the Methods section. The only difference found between the two corpora is that English writers express Engagement more frequently than their Vietnamese counterparts.

These results illustrate the similar thinking beyond language differences in expressing Engagement in research papers. The writers make use of various strategies and resources to Expand the dialogistic space for other voices or to Contract the space to announce their voices with the aim of satisfying the communicative objectives of different sections in a research article. Engagement strategies are an effective tool to increase the persuasiveness and attractiveness of the article. Thus, these noteworthy points can be a useful reference for academic writers in general and novice researchers in particular in the process of making their study published.

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