



Title: Writer-Reader Interaction: Writer's Stance in
English L1 and L2

Name: Hosam Darwish

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**WRITER-READER INTERACTION: WRITER'S STANCE IN
ENGLISH L1 AND L2**

HOSAM DARWISH

A thesis submitted to the University of Bedfordshire, in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

University of Bedfordshire

July 2019

Author's Declaration

I, Hosam Darwish, declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

Writer-Reader Interaction: Writer's Stance in English L1 and L2

I confirm that:

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4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
5. Parts of this work have been presented at academic conferences as indicated in List of Outputs.

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Signature: *Hosam Darwish*

List of Outputs

- Darwish, H. (2018, July). *Write-Reader Interaction: Writer's Stance in English L1 and L2*. Paper presented at the 13th Teaching and Language Corpora Conference, University of Cambridge, UK.
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Abstract

Stance refers to the ways academics annotate their texts to comment on the possible accuracy or creditability of a claim, the extent they want to commit themselves to it, or the attitude they want to convey to an entity, a proposition or the reader. Stance concerns writer-oriented features of interaction which can be presented by four interpersonal categories. These categories are boosters, e.g. '*clearly*', hedges, e.g. '*may*', self-mentions, e.g. '*I*' and attitude markers, e.g. '*interesting*'.

A big number of corpus-based studies have been conducted to analyse stance markers in both L1 and L2 writer's transcripts from the view that texts are independent of specific contexts and outside the personal experiences of authors and audience. This view does not go along with the idea that texts are instances of interaction between the writer and their audience. Therefore, the current study sought to fill this gap in research by adopting a more subjective view through stressing the actions and perceptions of the text writers to better understand them. The aim of this study is to have a more complete picture of the writer-reader interaction by investigating the three elements of interaction: The text, the text writers and the audience.

Adopting Hyland's (2005b) Model of Interaction, a corpus of 80 discussion chapters written by both MA postgraduate Egyptian students (English L2) at Egyptian universities and their British student peers (English L1) at UK universities, were searched both electronically using the Text Inspector tool and manually by two raters to identify more than 200 stance markers in students' academic scripts. Moreover, the study explored the perceptions of twenty of the text writers' (both Egyptian and British) about the functions of certain stance markers and the factors that could affect their understanding and use of these linguistic features. Characteristics of successful stance-taking were suggested after interviewing four expert writers.

The quantitative results found no statistically significant differences in the total number of stance markers, boosters and self-mentions used by students in the two writer groups, but the L1 corpus contained statistically significant more hedges and attitude markers than the L2 one. Furthermore, the L1 texts included noticeably more types of stance markers than the L2 scripts.

The discourse-based interviews conducted indicated that both L1 and L2 writers were aware of the functions of stance markers. However, some of the interviewees (both L1 and L2) had narrow or even faulty conceptions of certain stance markers, e.g. possibility versus probability devices and other attitude markers, e.g. '*important*' and '*significant*'. These features of academic discourse had not been made more conspicuous to them, and this could have affected their employment of these linguistic features. The findings revealed that in addition to the linguistic-cultural aspect, writer's personal linguistic preferences, supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback, previous education and instruction, and the writer's self-confidence were key factors that have played a considerable role in students' lexical decision-making. For instance, L2 students might have used fewer types of stance markers than L1 students due to their lack of confidence and their reluctance to use certain types of devices that they did not master or practised enough. The study, also, suggested that the higher density of stance markers is not absolutely an indication of a better ability in writing or a feature of a well-written academic text. The epistemological stance of the study and the contextual factors do play a significant role in the quantity and type of the stance markers used.

Dedication

This thesis work is dedicated to the soul of my dad who taught me how to be a man, may Allah forgive him. This work is also dedicated to the memory of my late supervisor, Professor Stephen Bax, who inspired me to conduct this project, and always believed in my ability to be successful in the academic arena. You are gone but your belief in me has made this journey possible.

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List of Abbreviations

EAP English for Academic Purposes

EDs Epistemic devices

EFL English as a Foreign Language

DBI Discourse-Based Interview

L1 English as a first language

L2 English as a second/foreign language

NES Native English Speakers

NNS Non-native English Speakers

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This thesis combines corpus-based and interview-based approaches to the investigation of stance markers used by English and Egyptian postgraduate students in their academic texts. The corpus consists of a total of eighty Master's dissertations (discussion chapters) in Applied Linguistics/TEFL written by two groups of writers (forty for each group): EFL Egyptian writers (L2), native Arabic and native English writers (L1). Discourse-based interviews (DBIs) were conducted first, with twelve Egyptian and eight British postgraduate students to report on their perceptions and motivations to use certain stance markers, and second, with four expert writers (two Egyptian and two British) to characterise successful features of stance-taking in English academic writing.

Writing researchers have shown an increasing interest in the social aspect, i.e. the relations between writers and readers, rather than the propositional meaning since the last half of the twentieth century. For instance, Hyland (2005b, p.65) concludes that "Academic writing has gradually lost its traditional tag as an objective, faceless and impersonal form of discourse and come to be seen as a persuasive endeavour involving interaction between writers and readers". Accordingly, the process of academic writing involves a social communication between the writer and the reader; not only does the writer convey their ideas to their readers through the text, but also, they try to establish interpersonal relationships with their audience whether by expressing attitudes, certainty or caution. The text is the place where author and reader meet, and there is a sort of interaction that happens between them. The writer imagines the existence of their audience while writing the text, and the readers imagine the existence of the writer while reading their text. Authors try to predict their readers' expectations regarding the type of information they present in their texts so as to get successful writer-reader interaction. This interaction in the text is realised by certain linguistics features, called metadiscourse (Swales, 1981; Vande Kopple, 1985, Hyland, 2004). According to Hyland (2004, p. 133), "Metadiscourse is self-reflective linguistic expressions that refer to the evolving text, to the writer, and to the imagined readers of

that text”; it not only conveys a writer’s thoughts but also impacts on their formation of social identity, values, and world knowledge (Swales, 1990). In his Interpersonal Model, Hyland (2005b) proposed two scopes of writer-reader interaction: interactive metadiscourse and interactional metadiscourse. While interactive metadiscourse is related to the organisation of the text e.g. transitions ‘*and, but*’, interactional metadiscourse is more personal as it is concerned with the use of language to encode interaction, allowing writers to engage with readers, take on roles and express evaluation and feelings. Hyland (2005b) suggests that the interactional features of metadiscourse are realised by stance and engagement markers; stance markers are the linguistic features which “refer to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions, and commitments” (p. 176). The categories of stance markers are boosters, e.g. ‘*must*’, ‘*definitely*’, hedges, e.g. ‘*may*’, ‘*probably*’, self-mentions, e.g. ‘*I*’, ‘*me*’ and attitude markers, e.g. ‘*important*’, ‘*interesting*’.

Writers use stance markers to express their commitment and attitudes to the reliability of the content they present and their potential impact on the audience. These linguistic features produce interaction between writers and readers which lies in the fact that readers can accept or refute writers’ claims. Thus, writers’ stance choices are shaped to meet audience expectations. This interactional aspect of metadiscourse has been paid considerable attention by several linguists examining both L1 and L2 transcripts; most researchers (e.g. Hyland, 2005b; Lancaster, 2012) agreed on the view that taking a proper stance is challenging for both English L1 and L2 writers, and there are several factors that influence writers’ stance lexical choices.

1.2 Aims and rationale

Bourdieu, Passeron, and de Saint Martin (1996, p. 9) say that “all students are equal in respect of the demands made by academic language ... it is no one’s mother tongue”. That is to say, English academic writing skills are perceived to be of different levels of difficulty for both English L1 and L2 writers. Stance-taking is one area of academic writing that concerns the ways writers step into their texts to convey their attitudes, opinions and degree of epistemic commitment. Adopting a certain stance is influenced by certain criteria and options that reveal how text writers

understand their communities through the lexical choices they make. Taking an appropriate stance has been found to be challenging and needs subtlety and cleverness from both EFL and native English writers across college and postgraduate levels (Markkanen & Schroder, 1997), especially for those who come from non-Anglicized linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Bailey and Pieterick (2008) argue that it is not even easy for experienced native English speakers to write in a proper academic stance, and this could be more challenging for new students in higher education. This is confirmed by Lancaster (2012) who concluded that issues of stance-taking, e.g. elaborating explicitly and consciously were found difficult for experienced writers as “they tend to be deeply embedded within writers’ social knowledge of genre” (p. 4). Thus, writers’ academic language is not mainly made from writers’ nativity, but it contains a certain degree of depersonalization.

With the rapid development of language learning, new technologies have greatly increased the opportunities for students to receive input outside of the classroom and from an early age which would potentially affect the way they produce academic texts and interact with their target readers. Moreover, the recent developments of spoken language may have affected the standards of the written academic language which Connor (2002, p. 505) described as “blurring of standards and norms in written language”. Researchers (e.g. Adel, 2008, Hyland & Jiang, 2017) have noticed a change of the text writers’ academic styles to ones that allow more stylistic variation in a way that implies a closer relationship to readers. This may have suggested a change in the authors’ academic writing behaviour in the recent years.

1.2.1 Background of the literature

Stance features between L1 and L2 writers have been investigated by several researchers highlighting how L2 writers have adopted similar/different stance from their L2 peers. English native writers appear to favour a more tentative and cautious writing style than EFL Arabic writers (Hinkel, 2005; Menkabu, 2017), EFL Bulgarians (Vassileva (2001), EFL Lithuanians (Burneikaite, 2008) and EFL Japanese (Hinkel, 2005), and appear to be more assertive than EFL Eritreans (McEnery & Kifle, 2002), EFL Lithuanians (Burneikaite, 2008) and EFL Iranians

(Abdollahzadeh, 2011). To explain their results, several researchers (e.g. Hinkel, 2005; Vassileva, 2001) adopted Kaplan's (1966, 1987) Contrastive Rhetorical Hypothesis, a view that has been held in many cross-cultural studies, and advocated that EFL writers have different thought patterns that they bring from their L1 experience, and they attributed this variance between the L1 and L2 texts to the view that the schemata of L1 and L2 writers differ in their preferred ways of expressing attitudes, certainty and taking a certain stance in addition there are cultural preconceptions that may influence the communication between the writer and their readers. Moreover, some of them (e.g. Intaraprawat & Steffensen, 1995; Hyland, 2004; Menkabu, 2017) claimed that L1 texts were largely featured of higher use of metadiscourse markers than L2 texts which reflects that L1 writers' are more aware of expressing their opinions and qualified language than the L2 peers, and thus, the presence of a higher density of metadiscourse markers is an indication of better ability in writing. This view assumes that L1/the native speakers' language as the standard norms and the L2 students should learn from what L1/native writers do rather than what reference books say they should do.

However, other studies showed that the native English writers appear to be less tentative than EFL Eritreans (McEnery & Kifle, 2002) and EFL Germans (Lorenz, 1998), and were less assertive than EFL Cantonese (Hyland & Milton, 1997), EFL Arabic and Japanese writers (Hinkel, 2005). Also, in terms of self-reference in the academic texts, EFL Chinese (Hinkel, 2005), EFL French (Petch-Tyson, 1998) and EFL Germans (Callies, 2013) used more self-mentions, but Swedish (Pelch-Tyson, 1998) and EFL Arabic writers (Hinkel, 2005) used fewer than native English writers. These inconsistent results seem to contradict Kaplan's (1966, 1987) Hypothesis and weaken Hyland (2004) and Hinkel's (2005) claims that the lingua-cultural aspect is the major factor for the divergence between L1 and L2 writers, and the view that a successful academic text is the one that includes a big number of metadiscourse markers.

The current research followed Connor's (1996, as cited in Burneikaite, 2008) line of ethno-relativism which "promotes empathy for different behaviours and cultures" (p. 45). That is to say, the high or the low density of stance devices may not be considered as a deviation from the

norm. However, the variation of stance features between the L1 and L2 groups should be regarded as a reflection of differences in the writing conventions which were received in a certain context or culture.

The fact that writers' stance choices index social contexts, the current study argues that there are other considerations that may play an important role in the patterns of stance that L2 as well as L1 writers, adopt in their academic writing. Individual L1 and L2 writers may have a different understanding of directness, tentativeness, academic self-reference, appropriate formality and so on as a result of different ways of expressing their stance which might have resulted from several contextual factors. Understanding these factors should not be based on the researcher's intuition. However, these factors should be reported by the text writers themselves.

While the previous metadiscoursal studies have begun to provide insights of L1 and L2 writers' use of stance markers, we are not still certain why text writers wrote in that way, in what way L1 writers are different from /similar to L2 writers in deploying stance markers, and questions have been raised about how readers from L1 and L2 academic background would interact with students' lexical choices: what is a proper stance-taking and what is not. This is so not only because studies have provided diverse interpretations and results but also because most of the previous research has been corpus-based and represented the contexts of the produced texts in some restricted domain where both writers and readers' experiences of the writing were delimited, providing an alternative to intuition, focusing mainly on the frequencies of words and patterns of stance markers. There is a need to investigate how/why L1 and L2 writers have similar/different conceptions of features of academic stance, i.e. expressing attitudes, expressing un/certainty markers and how they refer to themselves in the academic text from the eyes of the text writers themselves. It is important to examine their perceptions and awareness of the functions of these academic features and the potential factors that may have affected their understanding.

1.2.2 Motivation

The Centre for Developing English Language Teaching (CDELT) at Ain Shams University in Egypt serves the development of English Language Teaching. The goal of this centre is to develop postgraduate students' academic writing skills, such as referencing, organizing the text, developing an argument and taking an appropriate position, aiming to reach to native-like fluency in academic English writing. The Master's thesis (dissertation) may be the most important and challenging task for Egyptian postgraduate students as first, it is their first long piece of writing. Second, many of these students often have difficulty in meeting the demands of the kind of writing required of them at this particular level. Students' MA dissertations must be presented in an appropriate academic style. An academic style is not only the clarity of expressions, grammar, referencing and citation but also adopting a clearly structured approach to validate and justify the presented facts, theories and opinions from a well-defined and clear-cut argument.

As an EAP lecturer, I was teaching Egyptian postgraduate students the academic skills and writing when writing a thesis. Students learn how to write a clear, concise, precise, well-structured and formal language in all the chapters of their theses. Prospective Master's students were required to write micro-samples of a dissertation, i.e. short chapters of an introduction, a literature review, findings, discussion and a conclusion so that they would be prepared to conduct and write the main thesis. Students found the micro-discussion chapter where they should interpret the results and review them with other studies in a logical argument very challenging. To take a proper stance (e.g. being cautious or confident, indicating the strength of a claim, expressing attitudes) was found to be confusing; few range stance markers were used. Also, some students were not aware of the functions of certain stance devices in the academic text. The issue of expressing objectivity was problematic; while students were advised to avoid using explicit personal pronouns and to depersonalise their argumentation, they were encouraged to overtly express their opinions at the same time. Another problematic issue is that EFL Egyptian students appear to be confused by the difference between the target language and the native language. That is to say, students tend to be exposed to and learn from English

academic course books that represent the target English language, but they may come across patterns and writing norms written by semi-novice or novice native English speakers that may contradict what they have learned from the textbooks.

A useful way of instruction is to allow students for more exposure to nuanced presentations of stance-taking models in successful and less successful authentic academic texts written by both L1 and L2 writers at a similar level but in the same genre and discipline. Unfortunately, few examples of academic materials were found that would help teachers explain these academic norms. Most research in the Arab context (e.g. Al-Otaibi, 2015) addressed the interactive meaning (Hyland, 2004) of written discourse, i.e. transition markers '*but*' and frame markers '*finally*'. Less attention has been paid to the interactional (stance-taking) meaning in students' academic texts. Moreover, most EAP materials do not give due attention to the degree of epistemic commitment of the epistemic devices. In most cases, the semantic function of these devices is disregarded and an emphasis is put on the syntactic aspect of some few modal verbs.

Due to the lack of EAP material and resources that address this level of students and this genre of writing, and to gain a fuller picture of the complex reality of using stance markers in written in two different contexts, I have been highly motivated to first, examine quantitatively stance markers used by Egyptian students, native Arabic speakers in their MA TEFL theses (discussion chapter) and native English speaking peers. Second, a contextual perspective was adopted by interviewing some of the text writers and expert writers (both English and Egyptian) to first, learn more about how writers understand what they do when they write, their perceptions of certain linguistic features and the reasons for their rhetorical choices, and second, to characterise successful examples of stance-taking in the students' examined academic texts. A mixed method approach has been adopted to increase the validity of the quantitative findings and better understand how texts are produced and received by L1 and L2 writers and readers.

There is a strong need to provide systematic descriptions of this area of academic language use which is not known to many language users in the Egyptian and Arab context, but which plays an important role in a successful writer-reader interaction. The results of the current study will be

presented and discussed in teacher-training workshops to help EAP instructors be aware of different strategies (successful and less successful) of expressing academic stance which help identify routines and types of language that both L1 and L2 students need to acquire to meet academic audience expectations, and be aware of the textual features which may create an unfavourable impression to academic readers from both Egyptian and English academic cultures. In addition, some findings and examples will serve as useful models and material in EAP courses.

1.3 Research questions and methodological contribution

As set out above, this thesis has two main aims which the research questions seek to investigate and answer through the examination of stance marker frequencies and interviewing some of the text writers and a few expert writers. The research questions are the following:

1. How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and British MA students (English L1 writers) employ stance markers:

- a. What similarities in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?
- b. What differences in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?

2. What stance do some text writers (both Egyptian and British) prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their lexical choices?

3. What are the characteristics of successful stance-taking in academic writing?

In order to answer the above questions, first, a corpus-based approach using the Text Inspector tool (Bax, 2013) was used to quantitatively identify stance markers in MA TEFL theses (80) (discussion chapters) written by Egyptian (40) and English writers (40). The Egyptian theses, which were awarded an Excellent grade (Distinction in the UK) or a Very Good Grade (Merit in the UK), were collected from four Egyptian universities while the English theses were collected from five British universities and were awarded a Distinction or a Merit grade. Then, the major trends of the corpus data analysis were utilised to seed prompts for DBI protocols with twelve Egyptian and eight British participants to report on their thoughts and strategies when using certain stance devices. Finally, four expert writers were interviewed to provide feedback about the characteristics of appropriate stance-taking in academic writing by identifying successful and less successful examples of stance markers in students' academic texts.

The purpose for the quantitative data was based on the fact that comparing between English L1 and L2 writers can yield interesting patterns as to the problematic areas that are specific to each group of writers. In the qualitative data, the trending patterns were discussed with some of the text writers to report on their perceptions and reasons for using these patterns. Text writers' views were validated by comparing them with expert writers' opinions.

Students are always required to follow the Anglo-American rhetorical practices in academic writing. Yet, the feasibility of doing this is questionable (Kachru, 1999) as what these academic conventions are, should be clarified for both L1 and L2 writers. Previous metadiscourse research demonstrated that writers' interpersonal language is not uniform across L2 and L1 users which "questions a monolithic view of academic writing" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 124). Thus there is a need to uncover different stance practices by both L1 and L2 writers which could offer useful tools for understanding and probably correcting inter-cultural linguistic problems in writing.

Accordingly, this study makes a methodological contribution; a mixed method approach was adopted in which the major trends of the findings of the corpus data were used to enrich the

qualitative data collection method (DBIs) to better understand the quantitative findings from several subjective voices of the participants of DBIs. In other words, the frequencies of certain stance markers presented inductively-derived data about non/using certain language features in both groups of writers' texts. These data were used to be predetermined prompts for the DBI protocols which enabled me to compare interviewees' stated perspectives and beliefs about writing with their actual discursive strategies evident in texts. This method strengthened the degree of objectivity to the process of eliciting data from the retrospective interview report, a method that has been criticised for its subjective process in a way that the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee may impact the data collected (Hammersley, 2003). This method helps foster the kinds of meta-reflective capacities required to call forth prior writing thoughts, experiences and strategies and to identify similarities and differences across writing contexts (Jarratt, Mack, Sartor, & Watson, 2009). Moreover, different from most discourse-based research, this study focuses on intra- rather than interdisciplinary similarity and difference in relation to employing stance markers.

1.4 Structure of the thesis

This thesis is organised as follows:

Chapter Two (Literature review) is divided into two main parts: the theoretical part of language functions and the emergence of the terms metadiscourse and stance, and the literature part that reviews the previous literature related to the current research.

Chapter Three (Methodology) sets out the research methodology, methods, a detailed account of the corpus and discourse-based semi-structured interviews which were used in my research, the pilot studies, their implications and the lessons learned for the main study.

Chapter Four (Quantitative results) presents the corpus results of research question one that includes the descriptive and the inferential results.

Chapter Five (Qualitative results) is devoted to the qualitative findings of the discourse-based and semi-structured interviews with the text writers and expert writers.

Chapter Six (Discussion) discusses, interprets and explains the main results in the context of the literature, and the implications of the study.

Chapter Seven (Conclusion) explores an overview of the study, pedagogical implications, limitations and areas of further research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and discusses the theoretical background and literature related to the current study. It is organised into three main sections. In sections 2.1 to 2.6, the propositional and metadiscoursal meanings are defined and differentiated. Hyland's (2005a and 2005b) classifications of metadiscourse, his model of interaction and categories of stance markers are described in detail in section 2.7. Sections 2.8 and 2.9 review some relevant studies focusing on stance features across different L1 and L2 cultures, and highlight the research gap. Finally, section 2.10 provides a summary of the chapter.

2.2 Theoretical background: functions of language

Language fulfils different functions in people's lives; these several meanings of language have been explored by linguists and sociolinguists. Consequently, numerous labels of language function have been proposed in order that people are aware of what language does. Karl Buhler was one of the leading theoreticians of language who spoke about language functions in 1934; he characterised language as a tool of communication to exchange ideas, to make requests and to express feelings and doubts (Buhler, 1934, as cited in Buhler, 1990). Buhler offered three functions of language; first, '*representative*' function which refers to objects in the real world; second '*emotive-expressive*' function which refers to the writer of the text; third, the '*conative* function' which refers to the reader of the text. Based on Buhler's three functions, Jakobson (1960) expanded these to six functions: (1) referential, e.g. "The autumn leaves have all fallen now" referring to objects in the real world, (2) emotive, e.g. "Yuck!" referring to the writer of the text, (3) conative, e.g. "Come here" referring to the reader of the text, (4) phatic, e.g. "Hello?" where the function of language is to establish, maintain, prolong or discontinue communication, (5) metalingual, e.g. "What do you mean by 'krill'?" referring to when the text is focused on the code itself, and (6) poetic, e.g. "Smurf" when the text is focused on the message for its own sake. Jakobson's model was developed by Hymes (1968 as cited in Hymes, 2005) who set up a similar model, but added a seventh function, the 'situational context' (see Figure 1).

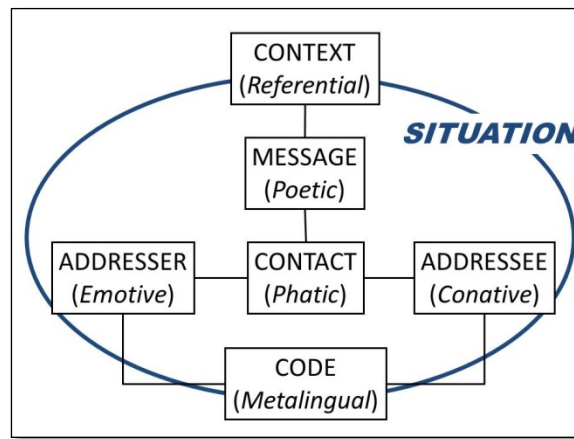


Figure 1: Hymes' (1968) model of language function

Combining both Bühler and Jakobson, Halliday (1973) insisted that the role that language plays is inherently functional; he proposed his systemic functional grammar which dealt with how language is organised, works and what social functions are represented. In order to understand the functions of language, Halliday proposed three metafunctions in his approach: '*ideational*' which refers to content when people talk/write about experience or ideas, '*interpersonal*' which establishes social relations, engage with others and to express and understand evaluations and feelings, and '*textual*' in which linguistic items are used to organise the text itself. These three are interwoven in discourse. According to Halliday, every sentence in a text is multifunctional and has three metafunctions simultaneously. To put it in another way, Halliday sees that the first function of a language is to have an idea or a piece of information. Then, people need to interact with each other by means that language provides so that persons cope with each other and establish social relations through an interpersonal function. The third is the textual function which relates text to context via specific thematic and phonological elements of texture (see Figure 2).

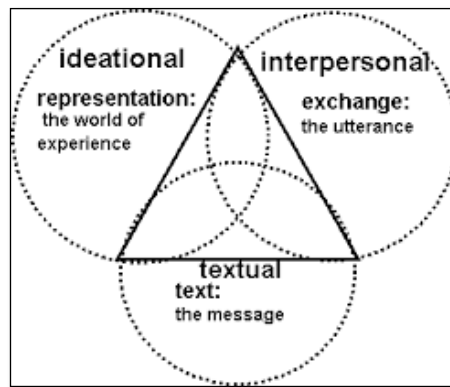


Figure 2: Halliday's (1973) meta-functional model

However, Leech (1983, p. 110) contends that the textual aspect should not be called a function “in the strict sense of relating language to what is not language” for it seems to be different from the interpersonal or ideational as there is no corresponding function in the sense of the use because language makes links with itself and with the situation.

In the light of all these, Halliday’s approach substantially endorses the former models of splitting language functions into referential/content function and a non-referential/interpersonal function, but he added a new triadic ‘textual function’. Conversely, some researchers paid more attention to the transactional language (Brown & Yule, 1983) which serves in the expression of content to convey ‘*propositional*’ information rather than the *interactional* language, which is used to maintain relationships. They tend to regard the contental/referential function as the main one for communication (Brown & Yule, 1983). For instance, both Sapir (1921) and Jakobson (1981) agreed that the ideational reigns supreme in language and the interpersonal aspects come in as secondary factors. In short, some linguistics tended to adopt a limited approach and paid particular attention to language as a means of conveying information rather than its function to establish social interaction between the sender/speaker/writer and the receiver/listener/reader. This research agrees with Halliday’s view that language equally plays three metafunctional roles, i.e. ideational, interpersonal and textual. However, I am under the impression that the interpersonal function may reveal a proposition. For example, when I am listening to a presentation in conference: the presenter frequently refers to themselves by saying ‘I’. The first-person pronoun ‘I’ will have an interpersonal function, e.g. ‘I’ as the opinion holder, ‘I’ as the

originator or refers to involvement which reflects the interpersonal function of the language. At the same time, I 'as a listener' receive an ideational or informational feature that this person seems to be confident, over-confident or their self-reference may reveal something else. Therefore, as far as I understand this, the ideational and the interpersonal features could be realised in one context using the same linguistic patterns. In these situations, the social interaction between the speaker and the listener could be more important than the information conveyed. Literature (e.g. Thompson, 2001) maintains that this interaction is not only limited to verbal situations: the idea of written texts as embodying interaction between the writer and reader exists, as well.

2.3 Writer–reader interaction

'Interaction' is a word that indicates a dialogue between a sender and a receiver who are conceived as the citizens of the discourse. Different from verbal interaction, written discourse displays communication between writers with their readers by using linguistic elements: "The text is the place where author and reader meet" (Sanderson, 2008). The writer and their audience share a text which seems to be a monologue in which the audience cannot reply, and the writer cannot listen. However, there is a sort of interaction that happens between them. The writer imagines the existence of their audience while writing the text, and the readers imagine the existence of the writer while reading their text. Readers exist in the text twice, Thompson and Thetela (1995) argued: once as imagined readers by the writer and the second as the actual readers of the text. Crismore (1983), additionally, says that the relationship between the writer and their imagined audience is not determined beforehand, but is continuously shifting and being negotiated throughout the text. The writer plays the roles of both the author and the reader to conduct this interaction. This means that authors try to guess their readers' expectations regarding to the type of information they present in their texts so as to get successful writer-reader interaction. Thus, an effective academic text is the one in which the text writer develops an awareness of their readers. Not only is the writers' awareness of their audience one of the main elements of effective academic writing, but also how they could reflect their awareness in

the text (Grabe & Kaplan, 1996). Writers reflect this by using linguistic features, such as hedges (e.g. *probably*) which readers expect to indicate the way each move in the interaction fits in.

In spite of this, Thompson (2001) contends that the idea of exploring writer-reader interaction with regard to the writer's implicit guesses about the reaction of the audience gives an incomplete picture; readers are explicitly involved in the texts by the writers' questions, feelings and reactions in a stage managed form of dialogue, and it could reach an 'eye contact' connection if readers react to writers' powerful text (Elbow, 1998). This overt conversational relationship between writers and readers has been well-established by various researchers who confirmed that using effective language manages the interaction between them and their readers. This interaction in the text is realised by certain linguistic features that writers use not only to convey their thoughts and ideas in the text but also to engage their imagined readers. These linguistic resources that are used to organise the text and build an interpersonal relationship between the writer and their readers are called metadiscourse

2.4 Metadiscourse defined

The term metadiscourse is used in writing to describe words or phrases that writers use to mark the direction and the purpose of the text. With this in mind, metadiscourse is still considered as a fuzzy term which does not have a clear-cut definition. Metadiscourse has been defined differently since it was coined by Harris (1959, as cited in Hyland, 2005a) who described metadiscourse as the metalanguage or sentences which speak about discourse. Then the term has been simply defined as "discourse about discourse or communication about communication" (Vande Kopple, 1985, p. 83) or "writing about writing" (Swales, 1981, p. 197). These definitions were unsatisfactory and had a partial view of the concept, as argued by Hyland (2004). Hyland says that metadiscourse includes other features and boundaries that go beyond the textual aspects of Vande Kopple and Swales' definitions. In addition to organising our ideas, metadiscourse is involved in our relationship with our audience: "Metadiscourse is those aspects of the text which explicitly refer to the organisation of the discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader" (Hyland, 2004, p. 109). Though this concept was accepted by

most linguists, there is growing support for Nash's (1992) claim that it is difficult to establish metadiscourse boundaries; a piece of text could be perceived in different stylistic intentions by two individual readers. Hyland (2005a) recognised that the theoretical concept of metadiscourse is basically neat. Yet, he agrees with Nash (1992) and propounds the view that it is difficult to apply in practice because of the "vagueness of its boundaries" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 16).

Not only is the fuzziness related to how readers understand an item, but also how linguists/writers in some way understand the term and are aware of their readers. Mauranen (1993), for example, restricted the concept of metadiscourse to its textual function, i.e. expressions that refer to text itself, e.g. '*We show below that*', and she called this as 'metatext'. What is more, Beauvais (1989) delimited the concept to obvious illocutionary predicates, e.g. '*I think that or we believe that*'. In the light of these, Mauranen (1993) insisted that she wanted to avoid the fuzziness of differentiating metadiscourse from non-metadiscourse items sharpening the categories to only the textual ones, while Beauvais (1989) wanted to preserve the distinction between the propositional information and metadiscourse.

On these grounds, most researchers and linguists show consensus on dealing with metadiscourse in its broader meaning, in spite of its fuzziness, that indicates both the textual and interpersonal categories. Metadiscourse is the writer's linguistic and rhetorical manifestation in the text so as to organise the discourse and show expressive implications of what is being said (Schiffrin, 1980). Vandepol (1985), Crismore, Markkanen & Steffensen (1993) and Hyland (2004) put forward the view that there is a distinction between metadiscourse and the propositional information. Metadiscourse is the writer's overt or non-overt presence in the text in order to direct rather than inform readers; it does not add anything to the content of the text (proposition), but it helps the audience organise, interpret and evaluate the propositional information.

2.5 Metadiscourse as a level of meaning

Several scholars argued that there is a clear distinction between metadiscourse and the propositional information. Williams (1981), for example, informed about two levels of meanings

(called two levels or planes): the first level supplies the content or the information, and the other is the act of writing that helps readers organise, evaluate and interpret the first level. Most recently and following Halliday's (1973) meta-functional approach, Vande Kopple (1985, p. 38) expressed a similar view that there are three different levels of meanings for each text:

“Linguistic elements that convey ideational meaning are concerned with the content of language...; elements that convey interpersonal meaning are concerned with language as the mediator of role that expresses interaction and social interplay with other participants in the communication situation...; finally, elements within the textual set that enable the speaker to organize what he/she is saying”.

Vande Kopple (1985) maintains that the second and third elements do not expand the propositional information of the text.

Consensual with Vande Kopple, Crismore et al. (1993) state that metadiscourse expresses a separate level of meaning; they said that if the metadiscourse markers are removed from a text, the meaning of the text will not be distorted. Yet, several researchers (e.g. Mauranen, 1993; Hyland, 2005a) supported the important role of metadiscourse contending that there is an interrelation between the ideational content of the text and its non-propositional one. Hyland (2005a) argues that claiming that metadiscourse is a separate level of meaning from the content is wrong; the meaning of the text is the result of an interactive process between the writer and the readers, besides the meaning of the text depends on the integration between the propositional and the metadiscoursal elements: “Meaning is not synonymous with content but dependent on all the components of a text” (Hyland, 2004, p. 24). The ideational function is integrated with the metadiscoursal one and could be together in one sentence. The former function is concerned with the external world while the latter with the text and its audience. Yet the propositional/non-propositional approach to identify metadiscourse does not always rule out. Mao (1993, as cited in Hyland, 2005a), for instance, notes that the words ‘I hypothesise’ seem to be a metadiscourse as a speech act to draw the reader’s attention. But if what is acknowledged is a well acknowledged fact, then it will be propositional. Similarly, Crismore (1983) stated that it is difficult to maintain the distinction between propositional information and metadiscourse. For

some researchers, a text was believed to have different levels of meaning, and metadiscourse is one of these levels. Crismore (1983) initially classified metadiscourse as being in a secondary level that helps writers deliver the primary discourse. This was contended by Beauvais (1989) and Mao (1993) maintaining that Crismore's way of viewing metadiscourse relegates it to inferior status. Addressing the issue of propositional and non-propositional, Hyland (2005a, p. 3) proposed a clear comprehensive definition of this concept:

“Metadiscourse is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (speaker) to express a view point and engage with readers as members of a particular community”.

In other words, metadiscourse is involved in the organisation of the text and the author's position rather than the ideas and information that texts carry about the world. This is consistent with Halliday's (1973) metafunctional approach regarding the three functions of language; ideational, textual and interpersonal explained in section 2.2.

2.6 Proposition and metadiscoursal functional analysis

The term 'functional' in metadiscourse studies refers to “how language works to achieve certain communicative purposes for users” (Hyland, 2004, p. 4). However, one of the difficulties of these functional definitions is that any linguistic device or pattern could be interpreted as a metadiscourse. Likewise, Adel (2006, p. 22) believes that “metadiscourse is a functional category that can be realised in a great variety of ways”. She believes that an item which is acting as a metadiscourse at some point due to its relation with its co-text and its use may not be metadiscursive in another. Whatever does not address the subject matter or the content is considered a metadiscourse. Some linguistic items could be considered '*propositional*' in one context and metadiscourse '*non-propositional*' in another. An item like '*possible*' is an example mentioned by Hyland (2004):

- a. It is *possible* that Strauss will also pull out of the tour to Zimbabwe this winter.
- b. A travel card makes it *possible* to visit all these sites in one day.

While (a) is an example of a metadiscourse ‘hedge’ because it comments on the writer’s assessment of possibilities, (b) is propositional because it denotes a result to as related to certain circumstances.

Similarly, the modal verbs, such as ‘*should, have to, need to and must*’, in their propositional meaning, often express obligation and necessity (Quirk, Greenbaum, Leech, & Svartvik, 1985) as in (c) and (d). They also can be examples of metadiscourse markers ‘epistemic modals’ which indicate certainty and probability as in (e) and (f)

- c. Adam *must* see the doctor today.
- d. Sam *should* join the university.
- e. Adam is absent. He *must* be sick.
- f. Sam repaired the fax machine. It *should* work now.

From this, it can be concluded that no linguistic devices are inherited to be metadiscoursal, but they can obtain this characteristic based on the communicative contexts they are in. Thus, it is important to distinguish between the propositional and non-propositional features. Yet, this cannot be permanently maintained because the information of a text is inseparably linked to the way in which the message is delivered. Metadiscourse could include lexical items, e.g. nouns, grammatical features, e.g. passive voice or non-verbal items, e.g. punctuation marks. The functional role is what decides an element as a metadiscourse or not (Hyland, 2005a).

Thus, there is no possible clear-cut list of metadiscourse markers. The number of metadiscourse items that writers use may depend on their personal attitudes and position with the text and their audience. Hence, metadiscourse language is a product of writer–reader interaction as the linguistic metadiscoursal items are comprehended through the readers’ response and reaction. The effective communication between the writer, text and readers is achieved via appropriate use of these expressions in different texts and situations.

2.7 Classifications of metadiscourse

Some researchers (e.g. Schiffrin, 1980; Mauranen, 1993; Adel, 2006) have delimited metadiscourse and dealt with it from a narrow approach claiming that it is used only to achieve textual functions that serve only the organizational features, such as connectives, e.g. 'however' and reviews, e.g. 'so far we have'. They contended that metadiscourse does not include writer–reader interaction, and in addition that the boundary between the textual and the interpersonal features are rather fuzzy. However, most researchers (e.g. Williams, 1981; Vande Kopple, 1985; Crismore et al., 1993; Hyland, 2004; 2005a) have adopted a functional approach (as explained in section 2.6) and considered metadiscourse as performing one of two functions: textual or interpersonal. Those studies link back to Halliday's (1973) distinction between three macro-functions of language: ideational, textual and interpersonal (see section 2.2). The ideational function is the basic one which expresses the cognitive meaning, i.e. language is used to express ideas and experiences. This is roughly matched with the propositional function. The textual function is related to the linguistic features that make the text organised and linked coherently to convey the content. The interpersonal function, on the other hand, is the language used to express feelings, opinions and evaluations toward the propositional content of the text so as to encode interaction between the writer, the text and the reader. Vande Kopple (1985), accordingly, projected the taxonomy in which he classified metadiscourse markers into two main categories: textual and interpersonal.

Vande Kopple (1985, p. 87) defined the textual categories as the elements that “help us show how we link and relate individual propositions so that they form a cohesive and coherent text”. The textual category included four main types: 1. Text Connectives, such as Sequencers, Logical/Temporal Connectors, Reminders, Topicalizers and Announcements; 2. Code Glosses; 3. Illocutionary Markers; and 4. Narrators. The Interpersonal Markers, on the other side, include three main types: 1. Validity Markers, such as Hedges, Emphatics and Attributors; 2. Attitude Markers, such as 'to sum up', 'I hypothesize that'; and 3. Commentary.

Though Vande Kopple's model has been the first systematic attempt to introduce a classification, which triggered several researchers, it has been criticised for its functional overlaps. Beauvais (1989), for example, opposed Vande Kopple's idea of classifying Narrators and Attributers as two different categories as there are no major differences between them. Hyland (2005a), as well, argued that Vande Kopple could not differentiate clearly between Validity markers and Illocutionary markers. Hyland gave an example saying that the sentence 'I suggest' could act as a Validity marker and an Illocutionary marker at the same time. Yet, it should be noticed that Vande Kopple (1985, p. 85) himself referred to this overlap between validity and illocutionary markers: "... it seems that some individual words or groups of words can fulfil the functions of more than one of these kinds. For example, '*I hypothesize that*' probably functions in most texts as both an illocution marker and a validity marker.

Different from Vande Kopple, Hyland (2005a) proposed a model in which he rejected the textual and interpersonal classification of metadiscourse.

2.7.1 Hyland's interpersonal model

Hyland and Tse (2004) contended that metadiscourse should not be regarded as a framework for the message but as part of the message. In other words, metadiscourse is not just comments on the content, but it is a crucial element in the process of communication and a major component of the meaning. Hyland (2005a) sees all metadiscourse as elements that embody the interaction between the writer, text and readers. Hyland rejected classifying metadiscourse into textual and interpersonal arguing that "...all metadiscourse is interpersonal in that it takes account of the reader's knowledge, textual experiences and processing needs and it provides writers with an armoury of rhetorical appeals to achieve this" (p. 41). Hyland justified that saying the textual markers not only organise the propositions of a text but also they relate statement to the readers. They do not function independently, but they work with both the interpersonal markers and the ideas of the text. Therefore, they have another feature of the interpersonal characteristics (see Figure 3) to identify this relationship:

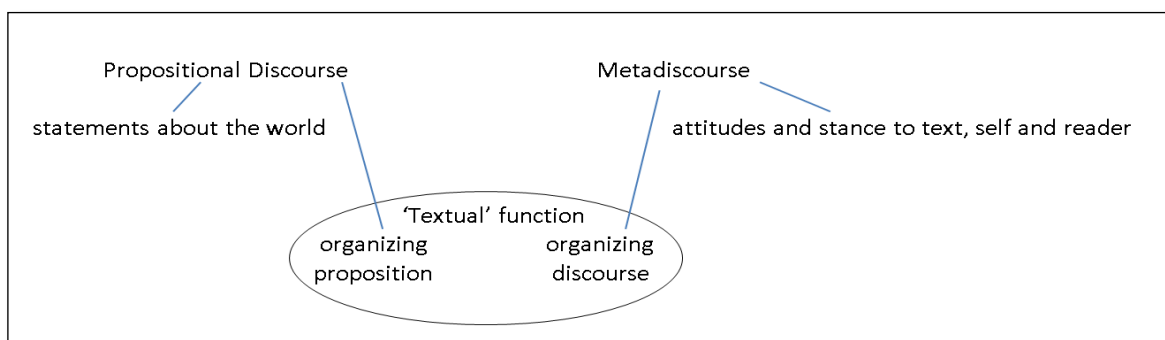


Figure 3: Relationship between proposition and metadiscourse

Accordingly, Hyland (2005a) proposed his Interpersonal Model which includes two scopes of writer–reader interaction: interactive metadiscourse and interactional metadiscourse (see Table 1).

Table 1: Hyland's (2005a) Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive	Assist in guiding the reader through the text	
Transitional	express relations between main clauses	in addition, but, thus
Frame markers	refer to discourse acts, stages and sequences	finally, to conclude
Endophoric markers	refer to information in other part of text	noted above, see Fig.
Evidentials	refer to information from other text	according to X, Z states
Code glosses	elaborate propositional meaning	namely, e.g., such as
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	withhold commitment and open dialogue	might, perhaps, seem
Boosters	emphasise certainty or close dialogue	in fact, definitely
Attitude markers	express writer's attitude to proposition	unfortunately, I agree
Self-mentions	explicit reference to author(s)	I, me, we, my
Engagement markers	explicitly build relationship with readers	consider, note

Interactive metadiscourse is used to guide readers through the text and it “primarily involves the management of information flow” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 44). Categories of interactive metadiscourse are transitional markers, e.g. ‘but, thus’, frame markers, e.g. ‘finally, to conclude’ and so on. On the other hand, interactional metadiscourse is “more personal” (Hyland, 2005a, p. 44) and involves the reader more overtly in the text by commenting on and evaluating the text material. Interactional metadiscourse categories, e.g. hedges, boosters etc. (see Table 1) concern the writers’ attempts to make their views explicit, and to engage the readers by

anticipating their objections and responses to the text. They deal with the expression of the opinion of the writers, and their relationship and interaction with their readers.

Hyland (2005b) maintained that “interaction in academic writing essentially involves ‘positioning’, or adopting a point of view in relation to both the issues discussed in the text and to others who hold points of view on those issues” (p. 175). The interaction arises out of the fact that readers can always refute writers’ claims unless they are persuaded by a valid and effective argument which it gives them an active role in how writers construct their arguments. Therefore, it is essential for writers to display a competence by predicting, accommodating, and/or responding to possible concerns and reactions from their potential readers according to their disciplinary insiders. To achieve their disciplinary goals writer carefully use rhetorical choices which help them conduct interpersonal negotiations and balance claims for the credibility and plausibility of their evidence and work against their readers’ opinions and expectations. Accordingly, Hyland (2005b) extended the interactional categories of metadiscourse by further classification, proposing a model of interaction called ‘stance and engagement’.

2.7.2 Writer’s stance: a model of interaction in academic texts

Over the last three decades, literature has become increasingly interested in the linguistic features used by writers to convey their evaluation and personal feelings. Such investigations have been treated under the umbrella labels of ‘evidentiality’ (Chafe & Nichols, 1986), ‘stance’ (Biber & Finegan, 1989), ‘evaluation’ (Hunston, 1994), ‘hedging’ (Hyland, 1996), ‘positioning’ (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999), ‘appraisal’ (Martin & White, 2005) and ‘metadiscourse’ (Vande-Kopple, 1985; Hyland, 2005b). Hyland is one of the most important researchers and has devoted much of his work to this area of research. According to Hyland’s (2005b) model, interactions are managed by writers in two main ways: stance and engagement (see Figure 4). While the later are reader-oriented features and are used to pull readers to the discourse, focusing their attention and guiding them to interpretations, stance concerns writer-oriented features by which writers present themselves and convey their judgements, opinions and

commitments. Together, stance devices have a “dialogic purpose in that they refer to, anticipate, or otherwise take up the actual or anticipated voices and positions of potential readers” (p. 176).

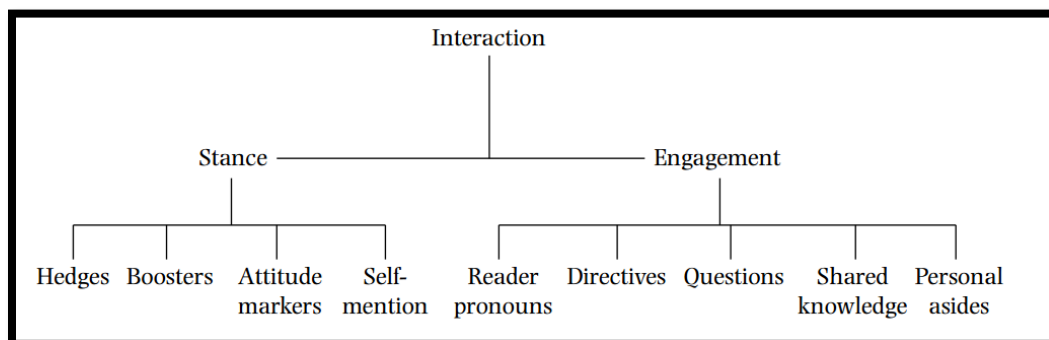


Figure 4: Hyland's (2005b) model of stance and engagement

Hyland (2016) states that stance features “convey three broad meanings: evidentiality (hedges and boosters), affect (attitude markers) and presence (self-mentions)” (p. 6). Writers use these devices to persuade their audience of their claims. Writers must show a competence in what opinion they hold or what their position is with regard to a certain issue. However, writer’s claims should be balanced taking into account their readers’ objections, beliefs, knowledge and rhetoric expectations.

The term stance was introduced in the Appraisal Model (which categorised metadiscoursal devices into attitude, engagement and graduation) used by Martin (2000) to denote the semantic devices that negotiate how authorial opinion is expressed. Likewise, stance was used by Conrad and Biber (as cited in Hunston and Thompson, 2000) to refer to three major categories: epistemic, attitudinal and style. Generally, epistemic stance (boosters and hedges) indicates how certain or reliable the author’s content is, the attitudinal stance refers to the writer’s attitudes or feelings while the style stance reports how the proposition is being presented. While acknowledging this literature into the author’s position in the academic text, the term ‘stance’ defined by Hyland (2005b) is adopted in this research; stance refers to “the ways academics annotate their texts to comment on the possible accuracy or creditability of a claim, the extent they want to commit themselves to it, or the attitude they want to convey to an entity, a proposition or the reader” (p. 178). Hyland’s definition is obviously outlined in his Model of Interaction (see Figure 4). In converse, other theoretical concepts, e.g. Attitude (Halliday, 1994),

Appraisal (Martin, 2000), Evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000) and Identity (Ivanic, 1998), may be unclearly defined to novice researchers. For example, personal pronoun category is not included in Hunston and Thompson's (2000) model, while they are the most important feature in Ivanic's (1998).

Therefore, this study draws from the theory of stance categories introduced by Hyland (2005b). Boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers were examined under the broad term of stance markers. The reason for using Hyland's interaction model is that it is the most widely used, attested in applied linguistics research, and has proved to be productive for more than a decade. Not only is this model an update of the previous taxonomies, but also it is simple, clear (Abdi, Manoochehr, & Tavakoli, 2010) and fairly comprehensive. In addition, it has been adopted by most recent published papers (e.g. Candarli, Bayyurt, & Marti, 2015; Waller, 2015; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Menkabu, 2017). Hyland (2005a) offered a list of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers which were used in this study as a starting point to investigate stance markers in students' academic texts (see Appendix-1). However, there was an obvious method to identify whether an item is acting as a real stance marker in the text or not; this method considered the definitions and meanings of these categories.

2.7.2.1 Boosters

Boosters, also called intensifiers, certainty markers or emphatics interchangeably, are one of the major types of the stance markers in Hyland's categories. They create an emphatic impression in the reader, that is, an impression of certainty, conviction and assurance. Boosters were early defined by Holmes (1984) as features that "express degrees of commitment or seriousness of intention" (p. 347). With hedges, boosters have often been considered as one of the two alternative categories of epistemic modality (Hyland & Milton, 1997). Markers, such as '*definitely*, *must* and *it is clear that*', are frequently used to express "full commitment" to the truth of a proposition (Crismore et al., 1993, p. 52). Boosters are functioned to emphasise the strength of and the confidence in the proposition (Abdi et al., 2010), stress shared information, group

membership, and engagement with readers, and mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with readers (Hyland, 2005b).

Boosters were described by researchers (e.g. Hunston, 1993; Swales, 1990) according to their pragmatic functions; they express evidential or implicit truth, certainty, solidarity and accepted truth. The implicit truth can be realised by writers using verbs like '*show, demonstrate*'; these are the writer's tools to claim their evidentiality and show that they are not making a judgement claim. Hunston (1993) argues that these verbs '*show, demonstrate*' imply certainty due to the convincing nature of the data itself, rather than the writer's skills of persuasion. Swales (1990) calls boosters powerful rhetorical tools for signalling the validation of writer's claims. Similar to implicit truth, Hyland (1998) sees that writers use modal verbs like '*must*' or items like '*obviously, of course*' to show their commitment indicating that their claim is already accepted in the discipline. This is how accepted truth is realised. Both accepted truth and solidarity, e.g. '*it is indeed a well-known fact*' boosters denote that no further explanation is required as the readers are members of the discourse community and the information presented is acknowledged by them.

2.7.2.2 Hedges

Linguists have paid attention to the term 'hedges' in the last 40 years. They first focused on how various lexico-grammatical structures could be employed to denote different degrees of certainty so that writers/speakers could better express perceptions of reality. Accordingly, Lakoff (1973) argued that the information conveyed by writers is neither absolute fact nor nonsense, but true to some extent. Consequently, hedges are used in writers' texts as "words whose job is to make things fuzzy or less fuzzy" (p. 471). Coupled with Lakoff, Vande Kopple (1985) defined hedges as the elements providing lack of full commitment to the propositional content of an utterance. Thus, the technique of hedging is used in order to distinguish between facts and claims. As language has recently been seen as social communication and interaction between writers/speakers and readers/listeners, hedges have been investigated as linguistic items that

affect semantic, as well as, pragmatic meanings which refer to writers' tentative language to be accepted by their readers.

According to the literature (e.g. Vass, 2015), hedges have been defined as a rhetorical strategy that carries out four levels of meanings:

1. The interpersonal level: the writer tones down their language so that their claim is presented as an opinion rather than a fact.
2. The epistemic level: the writer shows their commitment by expressing their degree of uncertainty about the proposition.
3. The social level (subjectivity of a claim): the writer offers alternative viewpoints and opens a discursive space to present these opinions to their reader.
4. The community level: the writer follows a certain writing style of hedges which matches their discourse community.

However, as a result of this broad meaning and these functions of hedges, the quantity of the linguistic patterns of hedges could be endless: "No linguistic items are inherently hedges but can acquire this quality on the communicative context" (Fraser, 2010, p. 23). The items of hedging can be drawn from any lexico-grammatical class. Therefore, several linguists think that hedges should be considered as a separate aspect of language and they should be classified according to their lexico-grammatical elements. Those scholars (e.g. Vartalla, 2001) see that items or expressions of tentativeness and fuzziness could be clearly included into certain lexico-grammatical categories.

Hedges have been classified by Hyland (1996) into two main groups: lexical and strategic. The lexical category comprises epistemic modal verbs, e.g., '*could, may*', lexical verbs, e.g., '*appear, claim*', epistemic adjectives, e.g. '*probable, possible*', epistemic adverbs, e.g. '*possibly, generally*' and epistemic nouns, e.g. '*probability, possibility*'. On the other side, the strategic hedges would be all the other expressions or terms of uncertainty that cannot be included in the lexical category, e.g. "conditional clauses (e.g. **If you're going my way**, I need a lift back., using

questions (e.g. He's coming, **isn't he?**) and some other formulaic phrases (e.g. **As far as I can tell**, you won't have problems)" (Fraser, 2010, p. 24). Nevertheless, the concept of hedges could be broadened to other areas, such as "politeness (e.g. I **must** request that you sit down.), evasion (e.g. A: How is she? B: **In some ways** she is lovely.), and vagueness (when the information you receive from a speaker lacks the expected precision, e.g. American1 asks: Where do you live? American2 answers: North of USA)" (Fraser, 2010, pp. 26–28).

Hyland (2004) maintains that the amount of hedges in academic writing varies from one genre to another and from one discipline to another, but this is often dictated by the level of certainty that a writer has to present and the rhetorical norms of each genre. Hedges are critical elements of managing writer-reader interaction as they protect the writer from being over-assertive, and help them balance conviction with caution using a proper disciplinary persona to be accepted in their discourse community. In contrast, using hedges inappropriately in English academic writing shows the writer as rigid and extreme and dogmatic in their views. Thus, pragmatic competence is essential to achieve effective writer-reader communication. Hedging is considered one feature of this pragmatic ability: "Not only does hedging appropriately help us achieve our communicative goals, but, failing to hedge where it is expected, as well as failing to understand the meaning of the hedging, has great potential for miscommunication" (Fraser, 2010, p. 30).

Epistemic modality

With boosters, hedges are a category of the devices that constitute the writer's epistemic commitment. Epistemic modality is concerned with the different levels of commitment that a writer brings to their writing. It is defined by Coates (1983) as being concerned with the "writer's assumptions or assessment of possibilities and, in most cases, it indicates confidence (or lack of confidence) in the truth of the proposition expressed" (p. 41). Epistemic commitment, which is taken in this study, includes different parts of speech: verbs, adverbs, lexical verbs, adjectives and nouns. Discrete epistemic commitment categories were established on a scale extending from maximum to minimum certainty as used by Hyland and Milton (1997) and McEnery and Kifle (2002). Certainty markers are at the top of the scale to express highest probability, e.g.

'*certainly* and *in fact*', possibility devices are at the bottom of the scale with low probability, e.g. '*may* and *might*' while the probability devices are in the middle of the scale with medial probability, e.g. '*seem* and *would*'. Holmes (1988), Hyland and Milton (1997) and McEneaney and Kifle (2002) note that this aspect of language use is not easy for first and second language learners to acquire: "The need to present claims that are neither overstated nor understated in relation to evidence or reasonable assumption is an area of academic writing which many students, both native and non-native speakers, find seriously challenging" (Hyland & Milton, 1997, p. 186). According to Hunston and Thompson (2000, p. 6) "evaluation' serves three functions: (a) to express the writer's opinion, and in doing so to reflect the value system of that person and their community, (b) to construct and maintain relations between the writer and the reader, and (c) to organise the discourse".

It should be mentioned that hedges and boosters were examined under different categories: 'validity markers' (Vande Kopple, 1985), 'epistemological stance' (Barton, 1993), 'credibility markers' (Hinkel, 1999) or 'qualification and certainty markers' (Hyland & Milton, 1997). Thus, both hedges and boosters are seen as potential defence of claims and a suggestion of the writer's acknowledgement of disciplinary norms of appropriate argument (Hyland, 2005).

2.7.2.3 Self-mentions

For decades, academic writing has been perceived as objective in its expression of ideas, and thus tends to avoid referencing personal opinions. Linguists (e.g. Arnaudet & Barrett, 1984; Biber, 1991; Feak & Swales, 2004) claimed that the first-person pronoun should be eliminated as far as possible; impersonality emphasises objectivity and open-mindedness (Lachwoicz, 1981). On the other side, Hyland (2002a) believes that self-mentions, such as '*I*' or '*my*', help writers make clear where their position is and how they would like their readers to interpret their ideas. Hyland maintains that first-person can be a powerful rhetorical strategy by which "writers express an identity by asserting their claim to speak as an authority, and this is a key element of successful academic writing" (p. 1094). Metadiscourse is defined by Hyland (2005a) as self-reflective expressions to negotiate interactional meanings so these markers help a writer

express their opinions and engage with audiences. This self-reference may contribute to the writer–reader interaction. Accordingly, self-mentions are considered as metadiscoursal items, and have been included for the first time in Hyland and Tse’s (2004) taxonomy as ‘personal markers’ and as self-mentions in Hyland’s (2005a) modified model. These features were not introduced as a separate category in all previous taxonomies, e.g. Vande Kopple (1985) or Crismore et al. (1993).

Similar to hedges and boosters, the pragmatic context plays the major role to define an item as a self-mention or not. For example, when ‘we’ is used to involve both writers and readers in text; in this way, ‘we’ is used to shorten the distance between writers and readers and stresses solidarity with readers. The pronoun ‘we’ here is regarded as a manifestation of positive politeness or what Hyland (2001, p. 559) said is the writer “getting their readers inside”. However, some occurrences of the pronouns ‘I, we’, for example, are not considered as metadiscourse if they express the writer’s feelings, or when used to talk about personal experience. In this case, they are considered as involvement, and are not included in the concept of metadiscourse (Adel, 2010). Involvement, here, means writers sharing personal experiences in discourse-external situations.

Metadiscoursal self-mentions have a number of functions in academic writing. Ivanic’s (1998) study of writer identity has been significant to show how a writer positions themselves in an academic text. Based on Ivanic’s analysis, Tang and John (1999) proposed a taxonomy for the functions of the personal pronoun ‘I’: I as representative, I as the guide, I as the architect, I as the recounter of the research processes, I as the opinion holder and I as the originator. Thus, academic text writers project themselves through their text to communicate academic virtues such as intellectual integrity, involvement or commitment, and to offer a judicious evaluation of their peers. In Hyland’s (2002a) study, self-mention ‘first-person pronouns’ functions were reported to express self-benefits, to state a goal/purpose, to explain a procedure, to elaborate an argument; and finally to state the results/claims. Yet, it has been noticed that EFL writers often indicate employing rather conservative self-reference norms, and follow a tightly controlled

personal involvement, although some changes have been noted, and the use of the first-person pronoun became acceptable in soft sciences (Hyland, 1999). Writers may be advised to avoid using explicit personal pronouns and to depersonalise their argumentation, and to express overtly their opinions at the same time. Also, it cannot be ignored that there could be cultural practices, such as those that value collectivity over individuality, as in Arab culture; or the underuse/non-use of first-person may be assumed as aggressive as in the case of Chinese writers (Thonney, 2013). Furthermore, EFL writers have always experienced conflicting views about using self-mentions in their academic texts. In this study the self-mentions are realised explicitly by using personal pronouns (subject, possessive and object) and implicitly by using terms, such as '*the researcher*', '*the writer*' and/or '*the author*'.

2.7.2.4 Attitude markers

Unlike boosters and hedges that have epistemic function, attitude markers indicate "the writer's affective and attitude to propositions, conveying surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, rather than commitment" (Hyland, 2005b, p. 180). Attitude markers are mostly signalled by attitude verbs, e.g. '*agree, prefer*', adverbs, e.g. '*unfortunately, hopefully*', and adjectives, e.g. '*interesting, remarkable*'. By indicating an assumption of shared values, attitudes, feelings and reactions to content, "writers both express a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgements" (ibid, p. 180). Attitude markers were found to be used fewer than boosters and hedges in corpus research (see Biber, Conrad & Reppen, 1998). Yet, that was not viewed as surprising taking into account the traditional view of academic writing, as explained by Arnaudet and Barrett (1984), which considers writing as a scientific task that should be objective and does not include the feelings and the attitudes of the writers. This understanding may contradict the view that academic writing is not so rigid, and different disciplines have a variety of subject-specific forms of argument and expression taking into account the epistemological underpinnings and the institutional contexts (Jones, Turner & Street, 1999).

2.7.3 The Arabic Stance

Arabic is often stereotypically described as a language characterised by exaggeration and over-assertion (Kaplan, 1966). In fact, Arabic speakers may tend to be over-assertive without its necessarily being functional, probably because of lessons received in schools in the use of the exaggerating language in poetry and its beauty that fail to address the motivation for its use and treat it simply as an example of highly literate and literary style (Ibrahim, 2004). This might explain why EFL Arab writers employed more boosters and fewer hedges than Native English writers as it would be displayed later in the literature review. However, this claim may apply to the Arabic spoken language. For example, the Arabic marker (*Qad*), which does not have a direct equivalent in English and is similar to the English marker (*may*), is commonly and highly used in academic Arabic texts while the English texts may include various words like (*may*, *might*, *can*, *could* and *would*) which will indicate the same meaning. Al-Otaibi (2015) found that most Arabic texts in his corpus begins with *Qad* which stresses the point discussed, and also *Laqad* which further stresses the point. Al-Otaibi concluded that Arabic texts are not merely telling about the components of the article but underscore these components which can be considered as a rhetorical usage that draws the audience's attention and seeks their trust. Al-Otaibi (2015, p.7) thinks that Arab writers' restriction of the use of hedging to only use the marker *Qad* may result from their awareness that *Qad* is considered in Arabic to be all inclusive and therefore it may sound redundant to replace it with any other hedging markers". The marker (*Qad*) functions also to stress the proposition and in this case, it cannot be considered as a hedging marker. However, this marker (*Qad*) is rarely used in the spoken or colloquial language and the marker (*Momken*) is usually used instead.

Moving to self-mentions, the Arabic first-person pronoun (*ana*) (*I* in English) reflects pride and courage or when someone has the pride of doing something. This pronoun can be used detached which occurs as a full word with its own meaning as in English or it can be attached pronoun and appears at the end of the word. This pronoun cannot be used separately, e.g. with verbs (*ibtasamtu*) (*I smiled*) and nouns (*bayty*) (*my house*). "The purpose beyond its use is conciseness. The attached pronouns are considered as briefer than the detached ones. That's

why, the attached pronouns are preferred to be used than the detached ones (Al-Anbary, 1982, p. 383)". Also, this might be one of the reasons why Arab writers use fewer self-mentions in their academic text.

2.8 Writer–reader interaction: big culture vs small cultures

Language always conveys meanings beyond itself. The meanings that are carried by language characterize social groups' culture. Thus, language and culture have been seen as inextricably linked, and it is commonly known that language is culturally embedded. A person's culture will be present not only in their oral and written language, but also in their behaviour and how to interact and communicate with others. This was emphasised by Samovar, Porter and Jain (1981):

"Culture and communication are inseparable because culture not only dictates who talks to whom, about what, and how the communication proceeds, it also helps to determine how people encode messages, the meanings they have for messages, and the conditions and circumstances under which various messages may or may not be sent, noticed, or interpreted... Culture...is the foundation of communication (p. 24)".

The cultural values which are reflected in and carried out through language, are likely to influence writers' perceptions, language and communication. This approach which has been adopted by a number of second language researcher, e.g. Kaplan (1966, 1987) and Grabe and Kaplan (1996) who argued that cultural factors may cause L2 writers to bring with them linguistic alternatives from their L1 when writing in L2. It was assumed that L2 writers would use different rhetorical choices and different writing styles from L1 writers as a result of the differences in their cultural backgrounds. Commenting on Kaplan's view, Atkinson (2003 as cited on Connor, 2004) argues that this approach views culture as a product rather than a process and focused on the 'big culture' that highlights' learners' nationality, first language and ethnicity. Atkinson introduced the term 'intercultural' that considers "the complexly interacting small cultures in any educational or any intercultural situation" (Connor, 2004, p. 292). Atkinson maintained that small cultures, i.e. classroom culture, disciplinary culture, youth culture, student culture, etc. interact with the national culture and formulate people's language.

Therefore, cross-cultural researchers have been encouraged to focus on contexts as well as texts, and to investigate the ways by which small cultures interact with the national cultures, affect as well as construct the individual's rhetoric;

Culture is not deterministic as individuals may resist or ignore cultural patterns. Both individual and community experience interacts with and constructs the individual's cultural model, and individuals should not be differentiated according to crude cultural dichotomies as argued by Hyland (2005a) who stresses the cross-cutting influences of individuals and communities. He concludes that "individuals from the same country cannot be lumped together as an undifferentiated group... writers have individual identities beyond the language and culture they were born into" (p. 115).

Another controversial aspect that arises is the relationship between the language users' employment of metadiscourse and their language proficiency.

2.9 Metadiscourse and language proficiency

The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which is an international standard for describing language ability, identifies the higher levels of successful language writers as their ability to meet their audience expectations, and it proposes that discourse competence is a key feature in marking out proficiency at the higher levels of the framework from level B2+ onwards (Council of Europe, 2001). With Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model, more proficient users of language should be better able to take into account shared experience and knowledge in order to tailor their texts. Hence, these proficient users would be expected to show more proficiency in the use of the interpersonal markers and more awareness of their readers' expectations than the lower-level users.

However, this could be controversial with unskilled and EFL writers as it is not clear how language learners, even high levels from B2 upwards, are aware of this interpersonal function (Waller, 2015). For example, Burneikaite (2008) concluded that there was significant overuse of text-connectives and a general underuse of reader-orientated markers when she compared

between L1 and L2 writers. Likewise, studies by Kennedy, Dudley-Evans, & Thorp (2001) as well as Hawkey and Barker (2004) suggest that it is possible that learners, even at the higher levels, still see metadiscourse as being a textual aspect that manages and organises their texts. Similarly, Carlsen (2010) found that lower-level Norwegian learners commonly used certain connective metadiscourse markers which they used for several purposes whereas the use of some high-frequency connectives, while very frequent in the lower levels, tended to decrease as proficiency increased, replaced by lower-frequency connectives to carry out the same function. Studies, e.g. Bax, Nataksuhara and Waller (2013) suggested that overall the differences between different levels of language users can be found in the types of metadiscourse markers used (interactional or textual), but there is little difference in the amount of metadiscourse markers used by those users.

2.10 Related literature

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the lingua-cultural variations that may affect writers' employment of the interpersonal meaning of metadiscourse in various genres of writing. Most researchers (e.g. Hyland & Milton, 1997; Hinkel, 2005; Burneikaite, 2008; Crompton, 2012; Ozdemir & Longo, 2014) adopted a corpus-based approach by which academic texts have been usually examined descriptively looking at the systems of choices, and then, interpreting these choices and relating them to the users' communities and lingua-cultural backgrounds. However, little research (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lee, 2009; Candarli et al., 2015; Menkabu, 2017) has adopted a mixed method approach and conducted interviews with the text writers.

2.10.1 Corpus-based studies

A corpus-based approach is defined as a technique that analyses large collection actual patterns of language in a text by using computer tools and depending on quantitative and qualitative techniques (Biber et al., 1998). Most of the metadiscoursal studies have mainly adopted this approach to collect quantitative data while the qualitative data have been restricted to interpretations to the salient patterns of the quantitative findings. In other words, the data

analysis method has been typically conducted in this way: 1. collecting the corpus, 2. examining the texts to identify potential lexical items using a concordance tool, 3. manual check to examine the functionality of each identified pattern/item, 4. quantitative analyses to compare between genres, disciplines, language backgrounds or texts writers, and 5. qualitative analyses of the salient patterns or features identified in the texts and building up relationships and interpretations between these patterns and first/second language acquisition theories. Numerous studies have attempted to investigate metadiscourse markers between native English writers and EFL/ESL peers, e.g. Cantonese school leavers (Hyland & Milton, 1997), Eritrean undergraduates (McEnery & Kifle, 2002), Chinese undergraduates (Lee & Deakin, 2016), Lithuanian MA students (Burneikaite, 2008), Turkish MA students (Ozdemir & Longo, 2014), and Arab undergraduates (Hinkel, 2005; Crompton, 2012).

2.10.1.1 Hyland and Milton (1997)

Inspecting qualifications and certainty markers in secondary school students' essays, Hyland and Milton (1997) examined a large corpus of one million words of test papers of English L1 and L2 students. The examined essays were from 900 Cantonese-speaking students and 770 British English-speaking counterparts at similar age and educational level. The L1 corpus contained the best performance (i.e. only papers awarded 'A' and 'B') while the L2 Cantonese corpus consisted of samples from six grade ranges so that the L2 scripts at each proficiency level could be compared with the L1 target level.

Hyland and Milton categorised the epistemic hedges according to their degrees of certainty, i.e. capturing the general semantic meaning of the used devices from maximum to minimum certainty as explained earlier in section 2.7.2.2. This method was so risky as the writer's awareness of the semantic aspect of each item could be limited. This concern was clearly admitted by both researchers saying: "that categorisation is uncertain in some cases and precise quantification hazardous (p. 189)". The findings revealed that the most frequently used modality devices were modal verbs which made up about 40% of the total number of devices. The data demonstrated that there was not any difference in the overall use of epistemic items between the

two groups of writers; each group used an epistemic device per 55 words. Moreover, '*will, may, would* and *always*' were the most frequent used devices in both corpora. However, Hyland and Milton found that Cantonese writers tended to employ a limited range of terms that express epistemic commitment, and extensively used the expression '*I think*'. By contrast, the L1 students employed more in number and types of verbs and adverbs to express uncertainty. They also indicated that the L2 scripts had more certainty markers and authoritative tone while the L1 writers were more cautious and doubtful when reporting their propositions. For example, the L2 students used the epistemic '*will*' (which marked certainty) twice as much as their L1 peers, whereas '*would*' (which was used to express doubt) was employed by the L1 writers twice as much as by the L2 counterparts. Hyland and Milton attributed these differences to L1 transfer or/and to L2 students' inadequate linguistic knowledge of the semantic forms of English which they related to the disproportionate attention Cantonese students received in L2 pedagogical writing instruction.

Unlike Hyland and Milton, McEnery and Kifle (2002) found that L2 texts contained more hedges and fewer boosters than L1 counterparts (see below).

2.10.1.2 McEnery and Kifle (2002)

Similarly, McEnery and Kifle (2002) investigated the use of epistemic modality in two corpora: one written by native English speakers (L1) and the other by Eritrean EFL student writers (L2). The L1 corpus was compiled from argumentative essays written by 16-year-old Eritrean students, the L2 corpus contained 92 short compositions. The most significant finding was that the most frequently used modality devices were modal verbs which made up about 72% of the total number of devices. Also, the L1 writers used roughly half as many epistemic devices (EDs) as the L2 writers; the English writers used three devices per hundred words while the Eritreans used two. Nonetheless, the Eritrean students used considerably more epistemic possibility devices, but less assertive language than the native speakers contradicting the results of several studies (e.g. Hyland & Milton, 1997; Hinkel, 2005) which showed L2 writers as more assertive than L1 peers. McEnery and Kifle attributed Eritrean students' use of more possibility devices,

particularly modal verbs and adverbs, to the EFL course books and classroom resources which were in the form of modal verbs and adverbs. Also, they found that the students' textbook contained a limited range of EDs in a list of modal verbs, adverbs and quantifiers without any elucidation of which of these devices are more common in English academic writing.

A broader perspective has been adopted by Lee and Deakin (2016) who examined all interactional metadiscourse markers written by L2 students (high achievers and low achievers) with L1 transcripts (see the following section).

2.10.1.3 Lee and Deakin (2016)

Concerning undergraduate students' writing, Lee and Deakin (2016) investigated interactional metadiscourse in 25 successful and 25 less successful argumentative essays written in English by undergraduate Chinese students at a US university, and compared the results with 25 high rated essays written by L1 students. Using Hyland's (2005a) model, Lee and Deakin found that both successful essay L2 writers and L1 writers used statistically significant more hedges than less successful writers, but there were no significant differences between the three groups regarding the other categories of interpersonal metadiscourse. The study suggested that Chinese ESL students, contrasting L1 students, were substantially reluctant to establish an authorial identity and they preferred to use an impersonal and detached writing style, which both writers considered as a safe and familiar style of writing. Though the study concluded significant results to differentiate between English and Chinese writers, interviews with text writers could have been a better choice to validate the quantitative data and to learn more about text writers' reasons to adopt a reluctant authorial presence (as for the Chinese writers) or being confident to express authorial identity (as for the English writers). Also, readers' expectations should have been considered, as reflected by Lee and Deakin who suggested further research that combines text-based interviews with corpus analysis, and to examine if the frequency of interactional items, in any way, affects texts' assessment.

Moving now to a corpus similar to my current research, i.e. MA Applied Linguistics/Linguistics texts, Burneikaite (2008) and Ozdemir and Longo (2014) compared native speaker MA texts with EFL peers highlighting the cross-cultural differences.

2.10.1.4 Burneikaite (2008)

Burneikaite (2008) studied the use of metadiscourse markers between English and Lithuanian writers' in forty (20 for each group) MA Linguistics theses. Devising her own model, Burneikaite divided metadiscourse into three major categories: text-organising category to signpost the structure of the text, participant-oriented category to make the writer visible and engage the readers and finally, evaluative metadiscourse category so that the writer positions themselves and expresses their attitudes. The self-mentions were in the participant-oriented category while hedges and boosters were in the last category. Compared to NES texts, Burneikaite revealed that Lithuanian students underused all evaluative markers in general and emphatics in particular. Based on her intuition, Burneikaite maintained that the difference in the use of metadiscourse markers was due to the writers' mother tongue, cultural background, their own specific style of writing, and the institutional commonalities and traditions. She attributed students' reluctance to express their opinions and feelings to their unfamiliarity with critical evaluation in academic writing which she claimed is almost non-existent in the Lithuanian writing tradition. Burneikaite recommended more descriptive studies of MA theses from a range of cultural/linguistic backgrounds with an aim of identifying the most typical patterns used by native and non-native writers as the results of these studies could be analysed on academic writing courses by both L2 and L1 students and teachers. It should be considered that Burneikaite (2008, p. 45) argued that "the overuse or underuse of metadiscourse in L2 texts is not treated here as a 'deviation' from the norm, but merely as a culture-based peculiarity of inter-language texts". The current study applied Burneikaite's argument that the underuse or the overuse of stance markers was not treated as a deviation from the norms.

2.10.1.5 Ozdemir and Longo (2014)

Similarly, investigating the cultural variations, Ozdemir and Longo (2014) examined 52 Turkish and American MA students' thesis abstracts (Applied Linguistics) written in English, 26 students for each group of writers (Turkish and American). Different from Burneikaite (2008) and Hyland and Milton's (1997) results, the analyses revealed that both two groups used hedges similarly, and interestingly, the American students used boosters 26 times more than Turkish students. The frequencies of attitude markers and self-mentions were higher in American students' work. Ozdemir and Longo attributed this to some cultural differences between the two text writer groups. They suggested that academic writing instruction to non-native speakers should include awareness of interactional metadiscourse markers, which confirms what Hyland (2005a) said, that writing instruction highly affects writers' use of metadiscourse.

Though there is a rapidly growing literature on the interpersonal metadiscourse, the context of EFL writers, native speakers of Arabic, is still under-researched. Most EFL Arab writers' research examined the interactive (textual) metadiscourse, although less attention has been paid to the interpersonal meaning in writers' texts (e.g. Hinkel, 2005; Crompton, 2012, Al-Sharafi, 2014; Al-Rubaye, 2015).

2.10.1.6 Hinkel (2005)

In terms of hedges and boosters specifically, Hinkel (2005) compared 745 essays written by native English writers and by international EFL students, e.g. Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Indonesian, Vietnamese and Arab students in four US universities during placement and diagnostic tests. The results of the Arab EFL students in relation to the native English speakers were reviewed with more focus as this is relevant to my current research. Adopting a semantic classification process like Hyland and Milton (1997), which seems to be hazardous as explained in section 2.9.1.1, Hinkel found that Arab students used fewer hedges than native English speakers. In terms of boosters, Arab students used a few more assertive pronouns (e.g. *any*, *some*), frequency adverbs (e.g. *often*) and emphatics (e.g. *sure*) than native English speakers. Hinkel said that Arab students had difficulties in expressing levels of commitment, and she

attributed their lower use of hedges to the interference of the Arabic language which did not place a high value on hedges as a means of persuasion: the Arabic writing tradition, in contrast to formal English prose, “does not place a high value on hedges and understatement, and amplification and exaggeration are considered to be an appropriate means of persuasion” (p. 34).

While Arab students used boosters to ratify their claims which seemed to be inflated, native English speakers were able to express their ideas without using emphatics to the same extent. Hinkel (2005) affirmed her findings saying that in the Arabic language, “amplification is seen as a valid and eloquent rhetorical device to convey the writer’s power of conviction and/or desirability (see Sa’adeddin, 1989). Hinkel attributed the low use of lexically advanced hedging to the fact that EFL students receive their main source of English language input from conversational discourse; therefore, they use hedges used in most common spoken language.

2.10.1.7 Crompton (2012)

Crompton (2012) compared hedges in 204 short essays written by undergraduate Arab students studying at an English-medium university in the United Arab Emirates with two groups of texts: 189 essays written by native English students of similar ages and levels of education and 189 newspaper editorials written by native English professional writers. Crompton found that Arab students used fewer hedges than native English writers overall, and they used fewer epistemic verbs and adjectives, in particular. He referred this variation to intercultural factors. He concluded that Arab students needed help in learning how to hedge in English academic discourse. Crompton called for more qualitative research on students’ hedging language, and he suggested that the quantity and type of hedging language used by English native writers could serve as useful models in EAP courses. Thus, Crompton assumed the native speakers’ patterns in his corpus as the standard norm, a view that was opposed by (Hunston, 2002) as this assumption ignores the standard norms of writing in the reference books. It can be noted that both Hinkel and Crompton concluded that EFL undergraduate Arab students used fewer hedges and substantially more boosters than English writers. Each of the scholars attributed the reasons

for that divergence to different factors based on the experience that their text writers had (spoken language influence for Hinkel and intercultural factors for Crompton) without taking account of text writers' attitudes, thoughts and opinions.

2.10.1.8 Al-Sharafi (2014)

Al-Sharafi (2014) investigated the patterns of modality in texts written by Arab Omani university students. He analysed a corpus of 15 academic essays written by third-year students in the English department in an Omani university. He also traced how his students used modal devices to express their identity as members of the academic community. Al-Sharafi used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods of analysis. By using Microsoft Word's search function, he looked for 99 items of modality while the qualitative method was used to ascertain that the potential item was actually expressing modality. The findings revealed that the most frequently used modality devices were modal verbs, which made up about 43% of the total number of devices, which was not surprising as his data supported Hyland and Milton (1997) and McEneaney and Kifle's (2002) results (40% and 72%, respectively). The lexical verbs, e.g. '*seem, appear*' came second with about 21%, while adjectives were the least used items with about 6%. Al-Sharafi attributes this to the teaching methodologies and learning materials which tended to emphasise the modal verbs as the only and the ultimate resource for expressing modality.

2.10.1.9 Al-Rubaye (2015)

In the postgraduate context, Al-Rubaye examined 35 research papers written by 25 MA in Applied Linguistics students (15 Arab EFL learners and 10 American native English speakers) sharing almost the same background. The Arab students were pursuing their MA degrees at Iraqi universities while the American students were doing theirs at US universities. Al-Rubaye considered the data collected from the NES group a benchmark for comparing and contrasting the use of metadiscourse by the Iraqi group. For the interactional categories, results revealed that the Arab EFL writers used significantly more boosters but fewer hedges than the NES.

Al-Rubaye called for explicit instruction in the rhetorical features of English academic writing at early stages of writing instruction. He also suggested that classroom practices, e.g. identifying

metadiscourse markers and their functions in well-written texts, were reported as effective in raising students' awareness of how metadiscourse can serve the rhetorical functions.

Thus, the previous corpus-based studies were quantitative-based, and did not pay attention to the contextual relation of the text as both writers and readers' experience of the writing/reading was delimited, providing an alternative to intuition, focusing mainly on the frequencies of words and patterns of metadiscourse.

Therefore, to gain a fuller picture of the complex reality of using metadiscourse markers in writing, a mixed method approach has been adopted by few researchers (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lee, 2009, Candarli et al., 2015; Menkabu, 2017) to increase the validity of the quantitative findings and better understand how texts are produced by writers and received by readers: "It is the combination of methods which help make explicit the tacit knowledge or strategies that writers and readers bring to acts of composing or assessing writing" (Hyland, 2016, p. 121). Interviewing the text writer accounts for a detailed description of the meaning and use of the lexical patterns. This contextual perspective helps to learn more about how writers understand what they do when they write, their attitudes to writing and the reasons for their rhetorical choices, revealing findings which are difficult to predict by objective methods.

2.10.2 Mixed-methods research

In an attempt to understand the broader socio-cultural meaning of authors' written discourse, few researchers (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lee, 2009; Candarli et al., 2015; Menkabu, 2017) have adopted a mixed method approach. Focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews and DBIs were used to ratify text analysis results and report more data about the text writers' attitudes to, insights into and awareness of certain linguistic terms and of academic writing processes in general.

2.10.2.1 Hyland (2004)

In a corpus of 240 Doctoral and Master's theses in six academic disciplines: Applied Linguistics, Biology, Public Administration, Business Studies, Computer Science and Electronic Engineering,

Hyland (2004) investigated how metadiscourse markers were employed by Hong Kong postgraduate students. This study is very significant as Hyland first proposed his classification model for metadiscourse markers. Since the corpus was large and covered different sizes of disciplines, Hyland, first, used MonoConc Pro (Barlow, 2000), a text analysis and concordance program to identify potential metadiscourse markers, and then, he randomly generated 50 sentences from each discipline from the corpus to be analysed in their contexts to ensure they were functioning as metadiscourse. The final figure was calculated as a proportion of the sample size multiplied by the total number of words in each discipline and degree. Though this approach provided an overview of writers' lexical choices in different disciplines and backgrounds, it can be noted that using large corpora would likely to hamper the feasibility of the functional analysis. Metadiscourse cannot be viewed as a strictly linguistic aspect, but should be regarded as a rhetoric and pragmatic one.

Hyland conducted focus group discussions with some students to report on the process of academic writing. The findings showed that PhD students used more hedges, boosters and self-mentions than MA students. In the interviews, there were certain confusions about using self-mentions: MA students said that they would avoid them as they thought that the audience might see it inappropriate to show their explicit presence in the text because that might be interpreted as strong claims, but PhD students were more comfortable using them. Hyland concluded that the students' disciplinary communities and L2 writing instruction have crucially influenced the writers' decisions when using metadiscourse markers to engage with their readers. Though the interviews substantially helped to shed light on the disciplinary and writers (MA or PhD) differences and their understanding of metadiscourse, the number of interviewees was relatively small (two for each discipline) and they were not the actual text writers.

2.10.2.2 Lee (2009)

Investigating both genre and first language, Lee (2009) examined how differences in both language and genre affect writers' patterns of metadiscourse. Lee used a corpus of 25 assignments written by native English-speaking and 30 by non-native English-speaking

postgraduate students beside a corpus of 50 research articles written by expert writers. Using the WordSmith concordance tool (Scott, 2004), Lee indicated that native English speakers used more interpersonal (interactional) markers than their non-native peers. Based on the quantitative analysis and 14 interviews with the actual writers of the texts (unlike Hyland who interviewed representatives of each discipline), Lee denoted these differences mainly to L1 interference factors. Lee's interviews were conducted with both native and non-native English-speaking students. His interview questions were adapted from Hyland's (2004) that focused on students' attitudes and opinions towards the process of academic writing (e.g. Can you use "I" in your academic writing? Will your reader approve of this? Do you think it is important to give your attitude to what you are writing about or should you be neutral?). These types of questions are too broad and may not provide the study with deep answers about writers' real motivations and perceptions about certain markers or what these markers do in the text. These questions are not sufficient if the researcher wanted to display lingua-cultural variances between L1 and L2 text writers and the effect of genre on students' writing as elucidated in Lee's study aims. More data should have been collected about writers' decisions, genre knowledge and knowledge of metadiscourse markers.

2.10.2.3 Candarli et al. (2015)

Using a corpus-based analysis method and a retrospective interview with ten Turkish students, Candarli et al. (2015) investigated stance features in argumentative essays of Turkish and American students. Using Hyland's model (2005a) and the AntConc tool (Anthony, 2014), the study focused on the use of self-mentions, boosters and attitude markers. The quantitative findings indicated that the use of boosters, self-mentions and attitude markers in English essays by Turkish students was similar to the use of these markers in writing by novice native English-speaking writers. Though the study aimed at eliciting students' own accounts of why they had used specific markers in their essays, the interview protocol questions to students were "Why did you use this number of self-mentions....? What is your opinion about using self-mentions, attitude markers...?" These interview questions did not reflect or elicit students' thoughts of using specific items. The interviews concluded that students had a limited understanding of the

role played by stance in the development of their arguments. Candarli et al. (2015) suggested that more explicit instruction is required for those norms of academic writing.

In the Arabic context, to my knowledge, only one study exists that has examined stance markers conducting both approaches, corpus and interviews: Menkabu (2017).

2.10.2.4 Menkabu (2017)

More recently, Menkabu (2017) examined the ways English native and Arab EFL student writers in a UK university from two disciplines (Linguistics and Literature) use stance and engagement in their MA dissertations to interact with readers. Her corpus included 39 dissertations (20 from Linguistics and 19 from Literature), 19 written by native speakers of English and 20 by Arab EFL writers, all in UK universities. Adopting Hyland's (2005b) Model of Interaction, Menkabu used the AntConc tool (Anthony, 2014) and manual analysis to examine nine categories in students' theses, i.e. hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, reader references, directives, asides, questions, and references to shared knowledge, to reveal which features were overused and which ones were underused. After that, DBIs were inducted with 15 of the text writers (eleven EFL Arab writers and four native English speakers) to discover more about how and why the writer participants used such features in their academic writing. To collect data from her participants, Menkabu adopted Harwood's (2006) interview protocol model, which was adapted and used in this research. This is explained later in section 3.11.3.

The quantitative results showed that the two disciplines in focus did not significantly differ in their uses of stance or engagement as a whole category. However, Linguistics made considerably higher use of hedges and directives while Literature employed significantly more reader references. With regard to the use of stance markers by the two group writers, statistical analyses revealed that the Arab EFL writers within both disciplines underused not only hedges but also boosters, which contradicts the findings of Hinkel (2005) and Hyland and Milton (1997) which stated that while hedges were more frequently used in the L1 corpus, the L2 corpus tended to be more emphatic and assertive. The DBIs suggested the reasons that the Arab EFL writers' underused hedges as well as boosters resulted from a number of factors, other than

cultural and L1 transference as Hinkel and Hyland and Milton (1997) mentioned. Menkabu argued that factors such as instruction on L2 pragmatic knowledge, supervisors' advice and feedback, and the learners' narrow conceptions of audience and what constitutes appropriate academic writing, which in turn shake their confidence and affect their attitudes towards writing, have a major and more discernible impact on the learners' uses of stance and engagement markers in general and boosters and hedges in particular. It was revealed from her data that L1 students would probably encounter challenges when using stance and engagement devices in their academic writing, but these challenges are absolute for L2 students, as Menkabu said. Menkabu indicated the inadvisability of relying on theories of L1 transfer to explain differences between native English and non-native English discourse and suggested that more attention should be given to such issues in order to help learners construct academically appropriate stance.

Though Menkabu interview results revealed important implications and findings, the fact that her EFL participants were studying in UK universities delimited some inter-cultural differences between the L1 and L2 contexts, i.e. institutional and academic community practices (e.g. supervisors' and colleague's feedback).

2.10.3 Research gap

It can be concluded that most metadiscoursal research (see section 2.9.1) has been quantitative-based, examining the interpersonal meaning of metadiscourse from the view that texts are an artefact of activity, independent of specific contexts and outside the personal experiences of authors and audience. This view overlooks the idea that texts are instances of communication which is fundamental in the interpersonal meaning of metadiscourse.

Researchers suggested a few reasons for the discrepancies between L1 and L2 writers. While all these explanations could be reasonable, they appear to be intuition-based. None of the literature reviewed in section 2.9.1 consulted the writers or allowed them to talk about their perceptions about their lexical choices in their academic texts.

Few studies (see section 2.9.2) adopted an empathetic stance to understand the contexts of texts from the writers' point of view; however, there are major limitations concerning these studies: a) there are obvious limitations with the kind of corpus approach adopted by Hyland (2004), Lee (2009) and Menkabu (2017). In a corpus study, it is demanding to provide information about where stance features are likely to cluster. When examining the whole thesis, findings may be skewed because of the non-author portions of text (quotes and data). Many researchers (e.g. Gosden, 1993; Hanania and Akhtar, 1985, as cited in Hyland, 2005b) recommended examining the Discussion or the Introduction chapters as "greater writer intrusion is a characteristic of Introduction and Discussion sections, where argument is emphasized and decisions, claims and justifications are usually found" (p. 190). Furthermore, using large corpora would hamper the feasibility of the functional analysis. Therefore, Hyland (2004) had to examine a small representative corpus rather than the original one.

With regard to the interviews, using broad questions (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Lee 2009) may be useful to elicit writer' attitudes towards academic writing rather than the reasons for using certain stance markers. Furthermore, the reader's role in these studies was almost ignored, as most of them focused on the text and the writers, a method which disregarded an important element in the writing interaction process.

Moreover, it seems that most studies (see sections 2.9.1 and 2.9.2) considered L1 writing as the target language not the native language which is serious because most EFL novice writers attend writing classes and tend to be exposed constantly to English academic texts in order to adapt to writing conventions that are more like the target language rather than the native language. Though these studies allowed researchers to compare and contrast L1 and L2 learners' writing practices, uncovering distinguishing features between L2 and L1 writers, one of the drawbacks of these studies' approach is that it assumes the native speakers' language as the standard norm; these studies allow researchers to understand what learners do and "what native/expert speakers actually do rather than what reference books say they do" (Hunston, 2002, p. 2012).

Most importantly is that most of the previous studies (e.g. Hinkel, 2005, Burneikaite, 2008; Ozdemir and Longo, 2014) dealt with culture from its static meaning (Kaplan's big culture) rather than viewing culture as dynamic (Atkinson's small cultures) which may inform more detailed information about writer's motivations and reasons for using metadiscourse markers.

Accordingly, first, there is a need for more descriptive studies of MA theses from a range of cultural/linguistic backgrounds, as suggested by Burneikaite (2008). Second, more qualitative research is necessary in the interactional part of metadiscourse as proposed by (Crompton, 2012; Lee & Deakin, 2016) to better understand L1 and L2 text writers' thoughts, routines and strategies when using certain markers, and how their lexical choices meet their readers' expectations. This will display quantitatively and qualitatively possible variances between novice L1 and L2 text writers, and may imply lingua-cultural differences between them.

The current study, hence, sought to fill this gap in research by adopting a more subjective view through stressing the actions and perceptions of the text writers to better understand them.

A mixed method approach was adopted through which certain quantitative data from the corpus results were utilized to support DBIs with some of the actual Egyptian and British text writers to report on their thoughts, strategies and knowledge when using certain stance devices.

Furthermore, semi-structured and DBIs were conducted with some of the academic audience, i.e. EAP lecturers/supervisors (both native and non-native English speakers) to report on examples of successful and less successful examples of stance markers from the used corpora and to inform their feedback about appropriate stance-taking in academic writing.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to set out the theoretical background and the related literature to the current study. Sections 2.1 to 2.8 considered the theoretical background, i.e. when and how linguists became interested in the interaction functions of language, the emergence of the term 'metadiscourse', and how the metadiscoursal meaning differs from the propositional meaning. Then, Hyland's (2005a, 2005b) two models of Metadiscourse and Interaction were presented, and more explanation of the term stance and its categories was explored.

The literature review has shown that while there are several studies into stance markers, there are few studies which have undertaken a more subjective stance to understand the contexts of texts from both writers and readers' points of view. It is still unclear why text writers adopted certain stances, or why they wrote in the way they did.

Chapter Three sets out the research approach, the research design and the methods used for the pilot study and main study.

Chapter Three: Methodology of the Study

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides detailed accounts of the methods used in the current study, the study approach, the corpus and rationale, the participants, the pilot studies, the procedures taken to collect the data, and the data analysis for each instrument. But first, the approach of the study is presented in section 3.2, and then the study design is explored in section 3.3.

3.2 Approach of the study

Language research methodologies have been conducted in a number of dimensions; quantitative research, for instance, which essentially involves quantified and verified numerical data and is analysed using statistical methods, has been seen to contrast with qualitative research which is more holistic, is analysed non-statistically (typically descriptive) and is collected via open-ended methods, e.g. interviews or observations.

Traditionally, researchers have often adopted different philosophical stances which reflect the principles of their research approaches. The approach that is taken in a study determines the type of data collected (quantitative or qualitative). Studies have generally been divided between two commonly used approaches, i.e. positivism and constructivism. While the positivistic approach undertakes an objective view where the research findings are usually observable and quantifiable, constructivists perceive reality as subjective, socially constructed and mainly associated with qualitative methods, and the researcher, therefore, adopts an empathetic stance to interpret the meaning of a phenomenon through several subjective voices of the research participants. Crotty (2003) defines constructivism as “the view of that all knowledge and therefore all meaningful reality as such is contingent upon human practices, being constructed in and out of interaction between human beings and their world and developed and transmitted within an essentially social context” (p. 42). In the constructivist view, the research aim is to mainly rely on the participants' views of the situation being studied (Creswell, 2014). In other words, constructivists often investigate the processes of interaction among individuals on certain contexts in order to understand the settings of the participants. Accordingly, it is more likely that

the constructivists rely on qualitative data collection methods and analysis (solely) or a mixed method of both quantitative and qualitative data. In the mixed methods, quantitative data may be used in a way that supports qualitative data to better understand the statistical findings via relying on the participants' views of the situation being studied taking into account the influence of their own background and experience on the data collected. Dornyei (2007) recommends adopting a mixed methods approach for two reasons: first, data triangulation, which is verifying data from different resources. Second, the mixed methods allow a full understanding of a phenomenon, resulting in a real-world construct which sometimes could be complex, multi-layered and possibly contradictory in some aspects.

This study is informed by the interpretive paradigm which "seeks for interpretations of the social world that we live" (Crotty, 2003). Interpretivism is used in applied linguistics research maintaining the fact that there are multiple interpretations of situations and participants should be involved in explaining these situations rather than only the eyes of the researcher (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013). Thus, the epistemological stance used in this study is constructionism, which perceives reality as subjective, aiming at understanding the context in which situations occur and the participants act, informing us from an emic opinion why they have taken place. In the emic approach, which is adopted in this research, the phenomena are looked at through the perspective of individuals of the particular cultural context, and thus researchers tend not to use concepts and measures from other cultures, but the focus on one culture where research attempts to study the behaviors of interest through the lens of a member of the culture. Therefore the participant of the current study explained their intentions and motivations of using certain stance markers and the contextual factors that might have influenced their choices. By contrast, when adopting an etic approach as applied in several studies, a set of universal values are used by the researchers onto that culture (Olive, 2014).

The current study mainly views writing as a process emphasising its social nature. According to this view, a writer considers other contextual factors, such as their target audience, particular culture or discipline and structural conventions (Hyland, 2005a).

3.3 Research design

A research design is the systematic procedures applied by the researcher for data collection, analysis, interpretation and implication pertaining to solve the research problem. In Applied Linguistics research, it is certainly popular to characterize three types of designs: quantitative research, qualitative research and mixed methods research. To better understand the mixed methods approach that is adopted in this study, it is helpful to start with working definitions of the quantitative and qualitative approaches or the two types of research as defined by Dornyei (2007) below.

Quantitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in numerical data which is then analysed primarily by statistical method. Quantitative research is mainly characterised by using numbers, using a priori categorisation, variables rather than cases, standardised procedures to assess objective reality and a quest for generalizability. A typical example is a questionnaire analysed by the statistical software SPSS.

Qualitative research involves data collection procedures that result primarily in open-ended, non-numerical data which are then analysed primarily by non-statistical methods. Qualitative research is mainly characterised with emergent research design, natural setting, insider meaning, small sample size and interpretive analysis. A typical example is an interview research (Dornyei, 2007).

Each of the above approaches has its own weaknesses and limitations. While the context of the study is ignored in the quantitative research, the researcher of the qualitative research is heavily involved in the process, which gives the researcher a subjective view of the study and its participants (Miles & Huberman, 1994). However, Dornyei (2007, p. 42) sees that “the quantitative and qualitative inquiry can support and inform each other”. Accordingly, a third approach emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Such studies that combine quantitative and qualitative approaches have been conducted under a variety of names, e.g. multi-trait-multimethod research, interrelating qualitative and quantitative data, methodological triangulation, multi-methodological research and mixed methods research (Creswell, 2014).

3.3.1 Mixed method research design

A mixed methods approach combines both the quantitative and qualitative methods. Creswell and Clark (2007, p. 5) defined mixed methods research as follow:

“Mixed methods research is a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. As a methodology, it involves philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches in many phases in the research process. As a method, it focuses on collecting, analysing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies. Its central premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone.”

3.3.1.1 The purpose and types of mixed methods research

When quantitative and qualitative methods are combined, they may provide two main purposes: first, they may provide in-depth understanding of the target phenomenon or the numerical findings in the quantitative data so as to achieve a full understanding of a complex matter by looking at it from different angles (Dornyei, 2007). Second, a mixed methods approach may be used to improve the validity of research by testing the agreement of findings obtained from different measuring instruments. From this perspective, the mixed methods approach offers a number of research designs that could be used to support rigorous analyses of promising ideas. However, Creswell (2014) identified the three basic mixed methods designs as follow.

Convergent Parallel Mixed Methods

According to Creswell (2014), this method focuses on collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data separately at roughly the same time in order to provide a better understanding of the research problem. The researcher compares the overall results from the analysis of both datasets, integrates the information and makes interpretations as to whether the results support or contradict each other (see Figure 5).

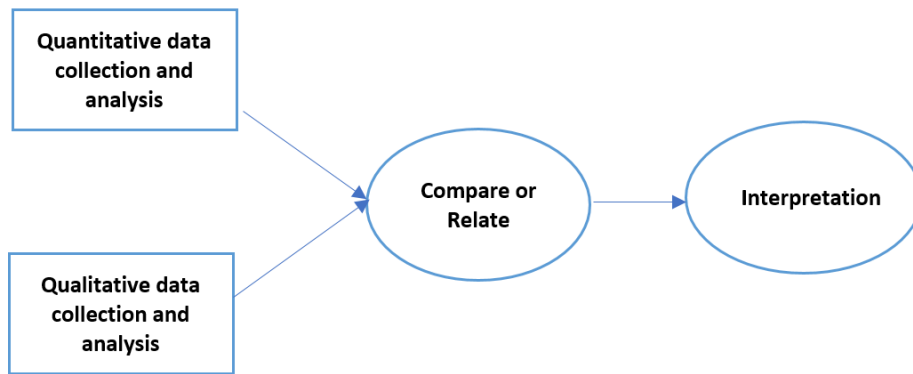


Figure 5: Creswell's 'Convergent Parallel Mixed Method'

Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods

In this method, there are two phases: in the first phase, the researcher collects the quantitative data, analyses the results and then, in the second phase the researcher builds on the results to explain them in more detail with a qualitative approach. This explanation model is used when a researcher needs qualitative data to explain or expand on quantitative results (Creswell & Clark, 2007). This design is popular in fields with a strong quantitative orientation. In this model, the researcher identifies certain quantitative findings which need additional explanation, such as statistical differences among groups. The researcher then collects qualitative data from participants who can best help explain these findings. This is the method that was conducted in this study (see Figure 6).

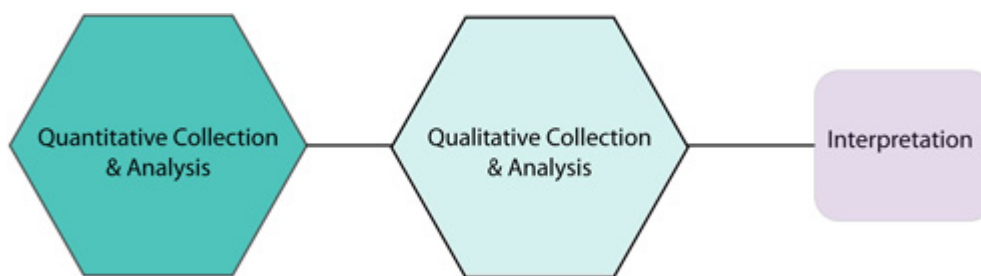


Figure 6: Creswell's 'Explanatory Sequential Mixed Methods'

Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods

This method is a reverse sequence from the explanatory sequential design explained above. The researcher collects qualitative data and explores the views of participants in the first phase. Then, the data are analysed to build into a second quantitative phase. The purpose of

an exploratory sequential mixed methods design involves the procedure of first gathering qualitative data to explore a phenomenon and then collecting quantitative data to explain relationships found in the qualitative data. In this type of studies, the focus is primarily on quantitative data (see Figure 7).

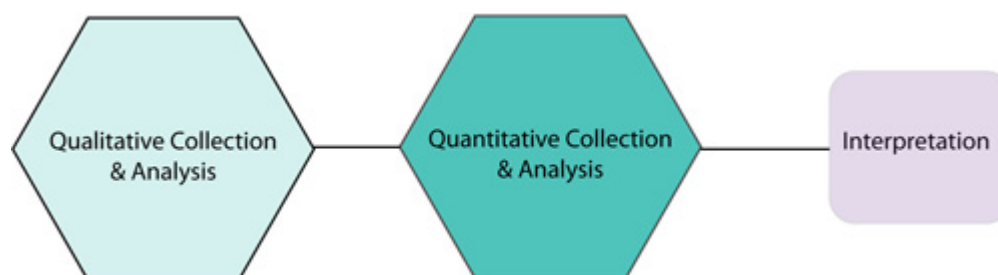


Figure 7: Creswell's 'Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods'

Thus, the mixed methods approach helps the researchers bring out the best of both methods: the quantitative and the qualitative. Also, combining both methods strengthens the research: “The strength of one method can be utilised to overcome the weakness of the other” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 45). For example, the qualitative approach researchers have been seen as biased when conducting their interviews, but if the selection of the participants and the interview protocol is based on the quantitative results, the sampling bias can be cancelled. Moreover, the weakness of the decontextualized data of the quantitative method will be neutralised when followed by a qualitative one which will add “depth to the quantitative results and thereby putting flesh on the bones” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 45). However, Dornyei (2007) argued that the mixed methods approach requires well-trained researchers in both methods. Otherwise, this will be a realistic danger to the research. In light of my research questions, the mixed methods research seemed to be the most appropriate method to use. In the following section the mixed method design applied to this research is described.

3.3.2 Study design: corpus-based and interview-based approaches

The study combined a corpus-based approach and a discourse-based approach. The corpus approach could provide us with insights into broad tendencies concerning stance marker (boosters, hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions) frequencies, nevertheless they could not

access a writer's intentions and perceptions; but the interview-based approach offered 'an emic perspective' (Harwood & Petric, 2012) on writers'/audience perceptions and thoughts that a corpus-based account could not provide. This emic perspective therefore aims to provide an interpretation of writers' stance behaviour from their own perspective and can result in insights into the writers' rhetorical intentions and purposes regardless of whether these intentions are visible on the surface of the text.

3.3.2.1 A corpus-based approach

What? "A corpus is a collection of (1) machine-readable (2) authentic texts (including transcripts of spoken data) which is (3) sampled to be (4) representative of a particular language or language variety" (McEnery, Xiao & Tono, 2006, p. 5). According to Biber (1993), a corpus could range from 100,000 to 500,000 words. However, Baker (2010) argues that there are no clear rules about the size of a corpus; what matters is how the corpus is used.

Why? Biber (2017) states that "corpus linguistics is a research approach that has developed over the past few decades to support empirical investigations of language variation and use, resulting in research findings which have much greater generalisability and validity than would otherwise be feasible. Corpus-based research assumes the validity of linguistic forms and structures derived from linguistic theory. The primary goal of research is to analyse the systematic patterns of variation and use for those pre-defined linguistic features" (p. 1). A corpus is made for the study of language to test existing linguistic hypotheses or theory and this is called 'a corpus-driven' approach. Another approach calls for observing the corpora first then generating and verifying new linguistic hypotheses; this rival view of corpus linguistics methodology is usually referred to a 'corpus-based' approach (McEnery & Hardie, 2012), which is adopted in the current study. The corpus-based approach to linguistics and language education has gained prominence over the past four decades. That is because it provides empirical evidence which makes the linguistic analysis more objective while previous studies relied on intuition about the variance and the use certain linguistic items.

It is argued by Meyer and Nelson (2006) that relying excessively on intuitions may blind the analyst to the realities of language usage because they tend to notice the unusual but overlook the commonplace. Biber et al., (1998) supported this, saying that

“Analyses cannot rely on intuitions or anecdotal evidence. In many cases, humans tend to notice unusual occurrences more than typical occurrences. Furthermore, we need to analyze a large amount of language collected from many speakers, to make sure that we are not basing conclusions on a few speakers' idiosyncrasies” (p. 3).

Linguists cannot keep up with language change. Thus, a constantly updated corpus can reflect even recent changes in the language. Not only do these corpus-based methods involve quantitative analysis where researchers count only certain linguistic patterns, but interpretations are made of those patterns; this method was adopted in the present research. However, Widdowson (2000) argues that one of the main criticisms of corpus studies is that they do not take account of contextual aspects, i.e. the text writers' thoughts or feelings are not considered.

Reliability of the corpus analysis: How? The success of the corpus analysis approach is intrinsically related to the methods used to access, analyse and display the results of corpus searches. A major concern of any quantitative analysis of metadiscourse studies is the possibility of omitting and overlapping some metadiscourse markers because of their multi-functionality (Hyland, 2005a). Several tools and software have been debatably used to analyse researchers' corpora. In the current study, the Text Inspector tool (2013) was used as a starting point to analyse and identify probable stance markers in each text investigated. However, to enhance the reliability of corpus analysis, ideally two raters worked on the data independently for both the quantitative analysis, as recommended by Crismore et al. (1993) to make sure that each identified stance marker was a real one.

3.3.2.2 An interview-based approach

As a method of data collection, interviews have widely been used in recent applied linguistics research. They are significant methods when gaining insight into the intentions, feelings, purposes and comprehensions of the interviewee (Dornyei, 2007). The interview can also

provide visions into how interviewees interpret themselves and how they interpret the phenomenon under study. Potter (1996) noted that “interviews have been used extensively in discourse analysis” (p. 134). They can provide non-linguistic data that may explain or analyse the linguistic statistics from the discourse analysis. There are three fundamental types of research interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Structured interviews allow researchers to create a list of predetermined questions to be covered closely with every interviewee. They are quick and easy to administer. However, there is very little flexibility in the way questions are asked and there is no scope for follow-up questions (Dornyei, 2007).

Unstructured interviews do not reflect any preconceived ideas and are performed with little or no organisation. They allow maximum flexibility to follow the interviewee responses; the aim for this is to allow a relaxed atmosphere so that the interviewee may reveal more information (Dornyei, 2007). However, they can be very time-consuming and difficult to manage (Patton, 2015).

Semi-structured interviews consist of a number of key questions which help to define the areas to be explored. While the interview guide offers the same basic questions to be pursued with each interviewee, it allows the researcher/interviewer to probe the interviewee's responses to explore an idea or response in more detail. Dornyei (2007) recommends this kind of interview if the researcher is knowledgeable enough about the phenomenon and is able to develop broad questions about the topic investigated; this format needs an interview guide that should be piloted in advance.

Due to the positive rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee, its simplicity and high validity (Dornyei, 2007), a semi-structured interview was thought to be an appropriate method for this study to retrospectively reflect upon interviewees' thoughts about using certain stance markers and the potential factors that could have affected their use of these items. However, the issue of veridicality, i.e. the accuracy of the information from the interviewees, was a main concern. There was a long time between the submitted texts and participants' recalling that

could have caused cognitive burden to the interviewees, which might affect the validity of students' recalling data. Prior (2004) argues that the longer the period between the writing and the interview, the more the account will likely contain conventionalization and simplification where details may drop out and new ones may be added. Another important limitation was the issue of subjectivity which can bias the researcher and preclude objectively understanding the interviewee's real perceptions or their psychological reality. This issue is related to the act of interviewing itself when the rapport between the interviewer and the interviewee may affect the validity of the information as noted by Hammersley (2003, as cited in Harwood and Petric, 2012) that what people say in interviews is driven by a preoccupation with self-presentation and/or with persuasion of others, rather than being concerned primarily with presenting facts about the world.

To overcome the above problems related to semi-structured interviews, it was important to use certain examples from interviewees' academic texts as suggested by Greene and Higgins (1994) which helped to create the writer's thinking and recall their motivations for their lexical choices, which reduced the issue of the interviewer's subjectivity and created more focused and accurate responses. Therefore, a DBI method, developed by Odell, Goswami and Herrington (1983), was proposed to provide the researcher with a productive method for tapping into interviewees' perceptions by querying them about their writing choices, perceptions and judgments. This method was used by several researchers recently to investigate: writers' perceptions of using person markers (Harwood & Petric, 2012), writers' tacit knowledge of their stance in academic writing (Lancaster, 2016), and their perceptions of using stance and engagement markers (Menkabu, 2017).

- Discourse-based Interviews

A discourse-based interview is one of the productive methods, developed by Odell et al. (1983), that ensure use of 'concrete examples' and 'contextual cues' (Greene & Higgins, 1994) in writing research that has been used to find out the writers' rhetorical choices and judgments rather than motivating writers to speak about their writing behaviour in general. It is the process of taking

comparable texts written by the writer and asking them questions about their decisions and judgements so as to get their sense of rhetorical appropriateness (Odell et al., 1983). DBIs could be more useful than semi-structured interviews to find out about writers' choices by collecting certain patterns from their own texts where writers used different wording. The writer/interviewee is encouraged to inform the probable reasons for using certain lexical choices. During the DBI, Odell et al. (1983, p. 223) propose two main questions: "Here you do X. In other pieces of writing, you do Y or Z. In this passage, would you be willing to do Y or Z rather than X? What basis do you have for preferring one alternative to the other?" Hence, DBIs foster meta-reflective processes that help call forth prior writing experiences and techniques to identify similarities and differences in different writing contexts (Jarrat et al., 2009). After the text analysis stage, text writers or sometimes instructors are encouraged to account for textual details; thus, researchers are able to probe the rhetorical bases of writing performances and judgments.

A good example of using corpus techniques and discourses-based interviews was reflected by Lancaster (2016) who conducted a case study of an undergraduate native English speaker student to show how the text analysis of the student's writing informed DBIs with him and with his professor. The text analysis of 15 papers of the student's submitted work revealed that the student expressed an epistemic stance pattern in his essays. Lancaster used a comparative approach by comparing the participant's writing and patterns of stance with successful (A-graded) papers written by senior undergraduate students. During the DBI, the participant was asked to examine passages that were selected from his essays, prompted to select choices in wording, either the original selections the participant made or an alternative version that was constructed by Lancaster. Then, Lancaster discussed the survey's responses with the student. Moreover, a semi-structured interview was conducted with the participant's university tutor. The interviews showed that neither the student nor his tutor were consciously aware of these stance patterns. Lancaster points to the importance of conducting corpus techniques, e.g. text analysis prior the DBI to identify meaningful patterns of students' linguistic choices. He demonstrated how results of systematic text analysis might be used to guide and enrich DBIs with academic writers, revealing important uses of language that likely otherwise would be missed.

A similar method proposed by Ivanic (2004) and used by Lillis (2009) was called ‘talk around the text’. Ivanic draws on Odell’s DBI in three ways: first, using a text as a base for the interview discussion; second, the practice of using alternative lexical patterns as a way to enrich the interview discussion; third, focusing on certain linguistic features. It can be noticed that DBIs are different from Talk around the Text interviews in the way that DBIs help the interviewer to gain access to the interviewee tacit knowledge. In addition, the researcher uses certain data from the quantitative results as prompts to lead the DBI. In contrast, the interviewee in the Talk around the Text interview is encouraged to identify aspects in the texts that they may believe they are important to analyse.

Greene and Higgins (1994) recommended using a mixed method approach which may reveal the richness and complexity of what is involved in writers’ composing. In the same vein, it was argued by Harwood (2006) that there is a need for an integrated approach that combines the strengths of both corpus analysis and interviews. While the quantitative data of the corpus analysis could reveal frequencies of items and types of the examined rhetorical features, the DBI approach can inform about the text writers’ perceptions, intentions and thoughts. However, I am aware of the limitation that it is difficult for writers to fully articulate their rhetorical choices. It is challenging, if not impossible, for writers to articulate the full range of their discursive goals and judgments (Lancaster, 2016).

The Current research

Thus, this study adopted a sequential explanatory quantitative–qualitative design (Creswell, 2014) in which collection and analysis of quantitative data were followed by the collection and analysis of qualitative data. However, the findings of both types of data were integrated during the interpretation phase of the study (see Figure 8).

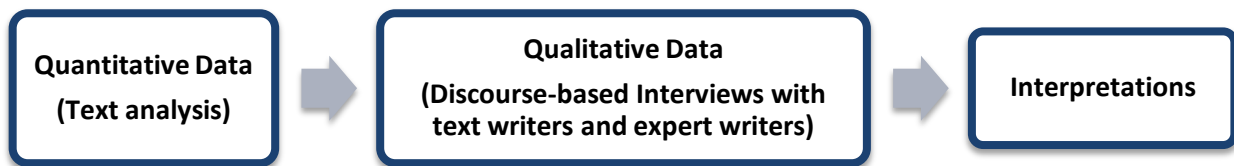


Figure 8: A sequential explanatory quantitative-qualitative design, adapted from Creswell (2014)

It should be emphasising that the focus in this study is not primarily on the quantitative data as the number of texts (discussion chapters) in my corpus is not big enough so that generalisation can be made from the findings. Instead, this study is more concerned to find out why the text writers wrote in that way and how their academic audience interacted with their stance lexical choices.

This mixed method approach, which combined a corpus-based and DBIs, was adopted in this study to examine the use of stance markers by two groups of writers, Egyptian and British. Certain findings of the quantitative data (text analysis) were used to identify criteria for the selection of certain stance markers to support the collection of the qualitative data (DBIs) to decrease the level of subjectivity from the interviewer in the interview protocol. The findings from the interviews interpreted and explained the quantitative data, i.e. writers' motivations and perceptions towards certain stance markers, and how expert audience characterised samples of students' stance-taking.

First, RQ-1 was addressed through a corpus-based approach which explored the similarities and differences in the frequencies of use of tokens and types of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers (stance markers) in academic texts written by two groups of students, both of whom were studying for an MA in Applied Linguistics/TEFL: namely native Egyptian/Arabic speakers writing in English as a foreign language and British English L1 writing in their native language. Two corpora of eighty discussion chapters (MA theses in English in Applied Linguistics/TEFL) were compiled: a corpus of forty chapters written by L1 writers and another of forty by Egyptian writers who are non-native English writers. Then, for RQ-2, the major trends of the quantitative findings of RQ-1 were utilized to guide DBIs with twenty participants of the text writers, twelve Egyptians and eight British, to report on their thoughts when using certain stance

markers (boosters, hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions), and why they wrote in that way. Finally, for RQ-3, four expert writers (two Egyptians and two British) were interviewed to provide feedback about using appropriate stance in academic writing. In the following section, the research corpora and participants are profiled, and then the data collection are presented.

3.4 Selecting the discipline

A number of considerations influenced my choice to use the discipline of Applied Linguistics TEFL. First, the pedagogical applicability, as it was envisaged that EAP lecturers might use the results of this research to inform their materials when teaching postgraduate students in Egypt. Most postgraduate students at Egyptian public universities write their MA or PhD theses in Arabic except those who study English-delivered Applied Linguistics and Linguistics; they write in English. Hence, it made sense to study MA Applied Linguistics as most of the graduates would be novice researchers and probably future EAP teachers. It should be noted that the MA in Applied Linguistics is named differently in British universities, e.g. MA in Applied Linguistics (TEFL) as at University of Bedfordshire, MA Applied Linguistics with TESOL as at University of Birmingham, MA in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages as at University of Bath and University of Exeter. In most Egyptian universities, this Master's is named 'MA in English Language Methodology'.

3.5 Selecting the corpora

Bearing in mind that some of the text writers would be interviewed, selecting both the Egyptian and the British corpora was a main concern. The theses were not selected randomly from Egyptian and British universities, rather I used my personal contacts with the course coordinators of MA Applied Linguistics in a few universities in Egypt and Britain. Before compiling the corpora, a large number of the text writers were contacted to make sure at least 20% of the writers primarily accepted to participate in the interviews. The Egyptian corpus was collected from four Egyptian public universities while the British corpus were selected from five universities based in Britain. It was aimed not to collect all dissertations from only one Egyptian university and one British University for the fact that collecting from one institution would mean

that it would not be possible to make firm claims that the study findings about stance marker use in University of Bedfordshire TEFL theses, for example, would apply equally to other TEFL theses written at other universities. This approach has been recommended by Harwood (2005) as different institutions require different types of student writing, so using stance markers may vary from one institution to another. However, the only specific condition why those institutions were selected was my ability to access the theses and contact the text writers.

3.6 Writer's L1 and L2

It was decided that the English corpus was to be written by English L1 writers. In this study English L1 writers refer to British Master's students who have been immersed in the English language during their childhood and youth and exposed to it for most of their education. The reason for selecting only British English theses is first, the easy access to British theses and their writers; second, to give more validity to this research since a few studies have showed that American and British writers demonstrated significant differences in terms of interpersonal metadiscourse use (Adel, 2006; Precht, 2003). The same issue was applied the Egyptian corpus as there are twenty-two Arab countries; each of which represents a different academic culture and a different educational system. Findings of Al-Otaibi's study (2015) about metadiscourse makers applied to Saudi students were different from another study on Iraqi students conducted by Sultan (2011). Therefore, this study took controls for these variations in rhetorical practice that may affect the results.

The public Egyptian universities are mono-cultural where most of the students, teachers and everyone involved in the academic community are Egyptians, native speakers of Arabic and have received most of their education in the Egyptian context. Thus, it was easy to make sure from the librarians of the Egyptian universities that all the text writers are Egyptian-natives of Arabic. To ensure the British corpus was in all likelihood written by English L1 writers, the coordinators/librarians of the British universities were contacted to make sure that the selected corpus written by British students who had received most of their education in the UK. I contacted text writers' universities to make sure of their L1 language and to receive information

about students' thesis grade. This was very difficult as some universities refused to provide me with the theses' grades. Thus, only the ones that I had enough information about to make sure they met all criteria were included in my corpus. It should be noted that both L1 and L2 transcripts used in the data collection were considered as equally valid representatives of the genre, and any variation of the results would be attributed to other factors (based on the writer's interview) rather than mainly the writers' L1.

3.7 Selecting distinction/merit-level theses

It was decided to collect theses that must have been awarded 'Distinction' or 'Merit' which equals 'Excellent' and 'Very Good' in Egypt in order to ensure that those pieces of writing had been judged to be successful. Also, for pedagogical applicability as certain successful models of stance markers would be used in EAP instruction. However, I am aware that the differences between the two corpora in adopting different stances cannot be attributed to the grade of the thesis. Also, the 'Distinction' award of the thesis is likely related to the content of the thesis rather than the writing style.

3.8 MA TEFL theses in Egypt and the UK, similarities and differences

A Master's dissertation involves the production of a substantial piece of work. Generally, an MA TEFL thesis ranges from 15,000 to 22,000 words in UK universities while it ranges from 12,000 to 15,000 in Egyptian universities.

In both countries, the thesis is the final stage of the Master's degree, and students should show that they have gained the necessary skills and knowledge in order to do a research project. They should demonstrate understanding of relevant ideas (theoretical and applied) and critical approach of evaluation, analysis and interpretation techniques. Dissertations need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding beyond undergraduate level and should also reach a level of scope and depth beyond that taught in class. Students' theses should be presented in a proper academic style and format to ensure that the precise aims of the dissertation are met. Students are expected to critically analyse the literature and to take stance, expressing their own

voice by challenging existing claims, concepts and theories. Students should support their argument with evidence from their data or from the literature but avoid a 'cherry picking' approach that may ignore any contra-arguments or evidence which contradicts or goes against their own views. Students' argument or position should be presented accurately and confidently but without bias. The language used should be neutral not dismissive or confrontational.

However, Egypt and the UK have differing regulations with regard to the assessment criteria. In the UK, all dissertations will be read by two internal examiners including the academic supervisor. In addition, some dissertations may be read by an external examiner to ensure a uniform standard is maintained. An agreed mark (Distinction, Merit, Pass or Fail) is awarded for the dissertation according to the assessment criteria set for this qualification (see Appendix 2).

In Egypt, theses are submitted to two external examiners who specify a date/time for the student to defend their thesis. At the end of the viva voce, the examiners and the student's supervisors consult and determine the student's grade (Excellent, Very Good, Good, Pass or Fail).

3.9 Profiling the text writers

The Egyptian Master's students are all native Arabic speakers who have received their education in Egyptian schools and universities. Arabic is the medium language in all their primary, preparatory and secondary education and it is studied intensively every year (5 hours/week). Students learn to write Arabic compositions from prompts at Year-4. By Year-12, students should be able to write long argumentative and descriptive Arabic essays (around 1000 words). Most Egyptian students start studying English as a foreign language when they are 6 years old, Year-1. At the age of 15, Year-10, students study another foreign language according to their own choices (French, German or Italian). English is taught 3 hours/week at primary education, and then, 4 hours/week in preparatory and secondary education. Students learn how to write a composition in English from prompts (in the elementary school) to free essay writing (about 250 words) in the secondary level. The educational Egyptian assessment system is exam-based from primary to undergraduate levels. Care is taken that their marks in the Secondary School Leaving Examination in English should not be less than forty-five out of sixty

to be able to join a Department of English in the Faculty of Education where the medium of learning is English. All the participants hold a BA degree in Education and TEFL. They have studied a minimum four years at their university. Essay writing has been a major subject in the four years of undergraduate education and had been taught in the lecture mode. Also, care is taken that their final grade, at Year-4, should not be less than V. Good (Merit in the UK) to be able to apply for a postgraduate degree. According to the requirements of applying for an MA TEFL degree in Egypt, the minimum English level for students is IELTS band 5.0 score. The text writers' grades varied from 5.5 to 7.5 score; therefore, one might get IELTS 5.5 while another could get IELTS 7.5 score, this needs to be borne in mind as an individual difference within the Egyptian theses' writers. The Master's degree takes around three years. In the first two years, students receive General Diploma for Teacher Preparation in Arts, specialized in English and Professional Diploma in Education (exam-based). Meanwhile, they study Curriculum and Teaching Methods (in English language) and Foundations of Education, Mental Health, Educational Psychology, Comparative Education and Special Education (in Arabic). In the third year, students conduct and submit their MA project (thesis around 12,000 words).

On the other side, the English participants (text writers) are English L1 speakers who received most of their education in the UK. The downloaded theses were awarded Merit/Distinction. It was not possible to get the grade of each one individually. The theses were downloaded from the data base of each university and the text writers' nationalities/grades and educational backgrounds were checked by the online bio-data for each researcher or via personal contact. It was not possible to obtain information about the exact educational history of text writers, but generally (according to the requirements for BA degrees in UK), all of them obtained the General Certificate of Education (GCE) Advanced Level, or A Level, which is a secondary school leaving qualification in the United Kingdom. To apply for an MA TEFL course at most UK universities, home students need an upper second-class honours degree, or equivalent, in Applied Linguistics, Linguistics, English Language or another relevant subject (e.g. TEFL/TESL/TESOL, Translation Studies, English Literature or Communication Studies). However, students with undergraduate degree at honours level and a little work experience in teaching are considered.

3.10 Building the corpora

Decisions about the size and the design of the corpora were made according to the purpose of the study. Since the first question is comparison-based examining the stance markers used by two groups of writers Egyptians and British, the whole corpora consisted of eighty discussion chapters: forty by Egyptians and forty by British people. All the selected theses were submitted recently within a span of six years (2012–2017). The reason for this is to reduce the time gap between the thesis writing and the interviews as some text writers of the submitted theses were interviewed in the second stage of the study. Another feature of the corpora is that all the theses were awarded Distinction/Excellent or Merit/Very Good.

The Egyptian theses were collected from four universities in Egypt: Ain Shams University, Al-Azhar University, Helwan University and Benha University (see Table 2).

Table 2: The Egyptian Dissertations

Egyptian universities	Number of dissertations	Awarded Grades	
		Excellent	V. Good
Ain Shams University	14	32	8
Al-Azhar University	10		
Helwan University	8		
Benha University	8		

On the other side, the British corpus were collected from five British universities: University of Bedfordshire, University of Birmingham, University of Nottingham, University of Bath and University of Exeter (see Table 3).

Table 3: The British Dissertations

UK universities	Number of dissertations	Awarded Grades	
		Distinction	Merit
University of Bedfordshire	15	6	34
University of Birmingham	12		
University of Nottingham	5		
University of Bath	5		
University of Exeter	3		

Dissertations were collected via official channels either from universities' digital libraries or from the writers themselves, particularly those who were interviewed later. In the Egyptian context, I got the contacts of a few postgraduate students from their supervisors. Then, I sent them an

email inviting them to participate in my study. Once I got approval, a time/date for the interview was determined.

In the British context, I had the advantage of receiving my MA in TEFL from University of Bedfordshire as I have a few English friends who were in the same class. Also, my personal contacts with the MA course coordinators at University of Bedfordshire and University of Birmingham helped to recruit English participants.

All dissertations were converted into Word format. In most of the Egyptian theses and a few of the British theses the discussion chapter was combined with the findings chapter where the writer presented the findings then another part of the chapter was titled 'Discussion'. The discussion chapter/section only was selected from each thesis and all other chapters were deleted.

Although the issues of the dissertation quality and selecting theses from several universities were taken into consideration so as to control variables and to maintain comparable groups, the theses in my corpora cannot be said to be representative of all dissertations submitted in Egyptian and British universities due to the relatively small number of dissertations.

3.11 Selecting and piloting the instruments

A pilot study is a crucial element for a good study and can provide valuable insights for the main study (Van Teijlingen & Hudley, 2010). Conducting pilot studies helped to trial statistical instruments and qualitative methods used to answer the three research questions so that adjustments could be made before the main study. In the following section, the rationale for using each instrument is demonstrated.

3.11.1 RQ-1: Text analysis instruments

A textual analysis method was used to answer RQ-1: *'How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and similar students who are English L1 writers use stance markers in terms of overall quantity / frequencies of types of stance markers, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mention*

and attitude markers?'. For the purpose of this study, it was believed that a text analysis tool would be utilized as a starting point coupled with a manual analysis to identify and count the instances of the stance markers in writers' texts. Anthony (2013, p. 146) argues that "the value of a corpus is clearly dependent not on its size but on what kind of information we can extract from it. Therein lies the importance of corpus tools; we need to have tools that can provide us with the information that we desire".

Corpus linguistics scholars recommended using software/tools to facilitate the text analysis process. McEnery and Hardie (2011) suggest that a concordance tool helps the researcher search through their discourse data for all the occurrences of a certain pattern, and then see the surrounding context for each occurrence that is found. It is supposed that the studies of corpus linguistics to be replicable and to have verifiable results as it is an empirical approach. However, corpus researchers have become more aware of the tools they use than before, especially, when their results do not match when they are replicated with a different tool. One of the reasons for this discrepancy is that the examined linguistic features are not being counted in the same way by the tools, as reflected by Menkabu (2017) in her study when she used the AntConc concordance tool (Anthony, 2014); Menkabu found out that many of the words in the examined lists unsurprisingly did not appear in her sample. Another problem is that some tools, e.g. Wordsmith (Scott, 2012) are only compatible with the Windows Operating System which would not be useful for me as I am a Macintosh user. Most of the text analysis common tools, e.g. Wordsmith (Scott, 2012), MonoConc Pro (Barlow, 2000) and AntConc (Anthony, 2014) could be considered as "overkill" as described by (Anthony, 2013, p. 152) if the corpus is not very big, as in my research as they require the data to be cleaned, processed, reformatted, indexed and finally, uploaded to a server before the analysis can begin.

The Text Inspector tool (Bax, 2013) was proposed to identify the use of more than 200 potential expressions of stance markers, as classified by Hyland (2004). The rationale for thinking of Text Inspector is that it is custom-designed to analyse metadiscourse markers in texts unlike most of the other tools, such as Wordsmith, AntConc and MonoConc Pro that require creating custom

search lists for the required markers manually before processing the data analysis, and this process would be tedious and would take a long time. In addition, Text Inspector allows users to check manually each example of coding to ensure that it performed as a metadiscourse, and it would be possible to amend it or exclude it from the analysis. This would help to weed out irrelevant occurrences and to take account of the context of the stance markers identified to ensure that they are functioning as real stance markers so as to come to a more accurate picture of the incidence of stance markers in the dataset.

3.11.1.1 Trialling using Text Inspector

Twelve discussion chapters (six Egyptians and six British) were analysed quantitatively to count the frequencies of stance markers of each group of writers. Hyland's (2005a) list of metadiscourse markers was used as a starting point to identify stance markers in students' academic texts. Hyland's list is well established and has been used in several metadiscourse studies, e.g. Lancaster (2016) and Menkabu (2017). However, the initial list was revised at all stages to ensure that it includes all types of stance markers required for RQ-1. Text Inspector analyses written texts according to metadiscourse markers first listed by Hyland (2004). The tool has a feature that makes the user choose the metadiscourse categories they want to analyse. It should be noted that Text Inspector adopts Hyland's (2004) model where boosters are labelled (emphatics) and self-mentions are labelled (person markers).

The trial showed that Text Inspector failed to highlight certain stance markers, e.g. *appear*, *interesting* and *significant* though they functioned as real stance markers (see examples below):

- This is an **interesting** result as, in the questionnaire, native readers claimed that they did not predict when reading a text for enjoyment whereas the advanced learners claimed that they 'usually' did this (questions 3 and 4). (Br-2)

- It **appears** to be problematic and the process is rather long. (BR-2)

- Although the situation in EAP is different in so far as teachers, in the UK context at least, **seem** to have considerable prior teaching experience, there are nevertheless significant 'new' challenges associated with beginning to teach EAP. (Br-4)

Another problematic issue was that Text Inspector highlighted ‘*demonstrate*’ but it did not highlight ‘*demonstrates*’; it highlighted *show* but did not highlight *showed* and *shows*; it highlighted ‘*seems*’ but did not highlight ‘*seem*’, when they all functioned as real stance markers. However, all those problems were sorted out in the manual analysis. Text Inspector had the feature to modify the analysis. It had the advantage that it is an online tool and it can be used with Windows or Macintosh systems. It can work with Word and PDF files. Each text took a few seconds to analyse. Text Inspector easily allowed seeing any particular word in its context and allowed a file view as well. Thus, Text Inspector was seen as the most appropriate tool that can be used with the manual analysis for the purpose of this study.

3.11.1.2 Manual analysis

The manual analysis proved to be essential for many reasons:

1. Text Inspector counts and results were validated by me by counting manually the identified tokens and types of stance markers for five randomly chosen discussion chapters, and I compared my statistics with Text Inspector and they were identical.
2. Identifying the stance markers that were missed by Text Inspector as explained in the previous section.
3. Making a decision for each potential stance marker because of the fuzzy picture of certain stance markers, e.g.:

1. The verb ‘*show*’ was used in different ways in students’ texts. In example-A, it works as a booster as it expresses epistemic certainty while it means *display* in example-B, and it is not, therefore, a booster.

<p>A) This research shows how this theory can’t be applied in all classrooms’ activities. (EGY-2)</p> <p>B) This table shows the number of participants used in each task. (EGY-6)</p>
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2. Some stance markers are multifunctional. For example, the word ‘*should*’; while Text Inspector identified it as a booster in three examples, it was an epistemic modality in just one

occurrence (example-E), but it was an attitude marker, showing obligation in example-D and an engagement marker as a directive in example-C:

C) It **should** be revealed that there are no significant differences between the two groups. (EGY-4)
D) The analysis **should** be understood in relation to the table below. (BR-1)
E) After practising a few listening exercises, students **should** understand this listening task. (BR-3)

3. The word 'could' functions as a hedge to demonstrate possibility in example-F but it is not in example-G as it shows ability:

F) This **could** be attributed to the lack of awareness of the EMA writers... (EGY-1)
G) Students **could** identify what they needed to work on and consequently they developed their writing skills. (EGY-1)

It was sometimes necessary to ask EAP teachers for help to make decisions on certain potential stance markers. The coding and the calculations process of the markers was not an easy task for me as I had to repeat this process several times to make sure I had the correct results.

Thus, it was concluded from the trial that two raters should be appointed to validate my decisions and results in the main study, and to increase the reliability of corpus analysis.

3.11.1.3 RQ-1: Data collection and data analysis of the main study

To answer RQ-1, a text analysis method was used to identify stance markers in eighty discussion chapters: forty written by MA TEFL Egyptian students and forty by MA TEFL British students.

All texts were uploaded separately to Text Inspector to identify potential stance markers in students' academic texts. Text Inspector results were validated by the researcher and another two raters.

3.11.1.4 Profiling the raters

Both raters are native English speakers. The first rater (called R-1) holds a BA in Linguistics and has been teaching English and EFL in UK universities for three years. The second rater (called the cross-check rater) holds an MA in Applied Linguistics TEFL and has been teaching EAP for about seven years.

3.11.1.5 Approaches and procedures of identifying stance markers

A full list of stance items was collected from Hyland's metadiscourse markers (2005a, pp. 218–224), and was shared with the other raters. It was decided that R-1 and I would do the identification of stance markers in the raw data while the cross-check rater would intervene in case of divergence. Since identifying the functionality of each stance marker depended on raters' judgement as adopted in most previous studies (e.g. Burneikaite, 2008; Lee, 2009; Waller, 2015), it was found that training the raters and sharing useful techniques would be more useful to agree on criteria or principles which could facilitate identifying each stance marker.

3.11.1.6 Training of raters

A two-hour training session was held with R-1 and the cross-check rater to assign the strategy by which Text Inspector was used and the way in which potential patterns of stance markers were checked in relation to the context they occurred. In addition to the stance marker categories definitions, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter (see section 2.7.2), Hyland and Tse's (2004) criteria (see below) were set up to be the key principles for identifying stance markers (which are parts of metadiscourse markers).

1. "Metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse.
2. It refers to those aspects of the text that embody writer-reader interactions.
3. Metadiscourse distinguishes relations which are external to the text from those that are internal". (p. 159)

Hyland and Tse's three principles confirm the fact that metadiscourse is different from the propositional context of the text; however, it supports it by making it coherent, intelligible and persuasive to a certain audience.

Moreover, it was decided that Hyland's (2005a) '*Metadiscourse*' and Fraser's (2010) '*Pragmatic competence: The case of hedging*' would be very appropriate and comprehensive resources that defined and explained the nature of each category and ploy-pragmatic functions of various stance markers. Certain examples were highlighted in each resource to be used as model examples. Also, a few techniques from previous studies were discussed to be employed to reduce the possibility of omitting and overlapping some stance elements because of their multi-functionality, e.g. substitution/addition tests such as those suggested by Crompton (1997) and Vold (2006) and used by Lee (2009) (see Appendix 3). At the end of the training session, a coding scheme comprising definitions/explanations (of stance markers), examples, a coding strategy and detailed instructions was suggested to be followed by R-1 and me. It was decided that both R-1 and I would work independently by using Text Inspector, manual checks, coding stance markers and doing calculations, then R-1, the cross-check rater and I met to check inter-raters' agreement and sort out instances of difference.

3.11.1.7 Text analysis process

A) Once data were fully coded and quantified, all texts were uploaded separately to Text Inspector to identify potential stance markers in students' academic texts.

Steps of the text analysis process

1. Uploading a text to Text Inspector

Enter text

Copy and paste, or type text into the box below. Then click ANALYSE. You can also analyse multiple documents by separating them with '#' or any other delimiter token. If you want to do this, tick *split* and choose the delimiter in the options below.

Your account is limited to 13000 words per document. To process larger documents contact your organisation manager.

The data gathered here shows a very positive picture of the resourcefulness of teachers, and their ability to use their own initiative in order to meet the challenges of teaching EAP. In the early stages of their EAP careers, teachers report having learned a lot from activities such as reading, looking things up, talking to other EAP teachers and talking to subject specialists. These findings support those of Alexander (2007) who found that only 20% of respondents reported using formal routes for professional development. More than half reported that formal routes were not available to them and that instead they found value in informal routes such as 'sharing ideas with colleagues, using EAP coursebooks, reading books or journals and attending meetings' (p.4). However, the present study also demonstrated that time constraints can again come into play, as one less-experienced EAP teacher reports feeling unable to approach more experienced teachers informally for help, because they are too busy. As argued above, it may therefore make sense to formally build space into teacher's timetables, particularly for those who are new to the profession, which is dedicated to teacher development activities. Here EAP could take its model from the PgCE (Post-Graduate Certificate in Education) programme where, during their first year of employment, new teachers are allocated a larger number of 'free' periods, both in order to pursue development opportunities, and in recognition of the extra work that teachers put in at the early stages of their career. Although the situation in EAP is different in so far as teachers, in the UK context at least, seem to have considerable prior teaching experience, there are nevertheless significant 'new' challenges associated with beginning to teach EAP. The present study shows that teachers feel they will benefit from more opportunities to pursue their own professional development, whether by formal or informal means.

Is this student writing, or a reading/listening text? Choose the correct mode below for an accurate score.

ANALYSE

Figure 9: Uploading the text

2. Potential stance markers highlighted

the data gathered here **shows Emphatic** a very positive picture of the resourcefulness of teachers and their ability to use their own initiative in order to meet the challenges of teaching eap in the early stages of their eap careers teachers report having learned a lot from activities such as reading looking things up talking to other eap teachers and talking to subject specialists these findings support those of alexander 2007 who found that only 20 of respondents reported using formal routes for professional development more than half reported that formal routes were not available to them and that instead they found value in informal routes such as 'sharing ideas with colleagues using eap coursebooks reading books or journals and attending meetings' p 4 however the present study also demonstrated that time constraints can again come into play as one less experienced eap teacher reports feeling unable to approach more experienced teachers informally for help because they are too busy as argued above it **may Hedge** therefore make sense to formally build space into teacher's timetables particularly for those who are new to the profession which is dedicated to teacher development activities here eap **could Hedge** take its model from the pgce post graduate certificate in

Figure 10: Potential stance markers are highlighted by Text Inspector

3. Manual analysis to make sure each highlighted word is a real stance marker and to weed out the wrong ones and add real ones. E.g.1- The word 'seem' in (Figure 11) is a real hedge and it was not highlighted. E.g.2- The word 'significant' in (Figure 12) was a real attitude marker and was not highlighted by Text Inspector. Therefore, the researcher/R-1 corrects the analysis, goes to the Input below, changes the tag, then clicks 'Update' (see Figure 13).

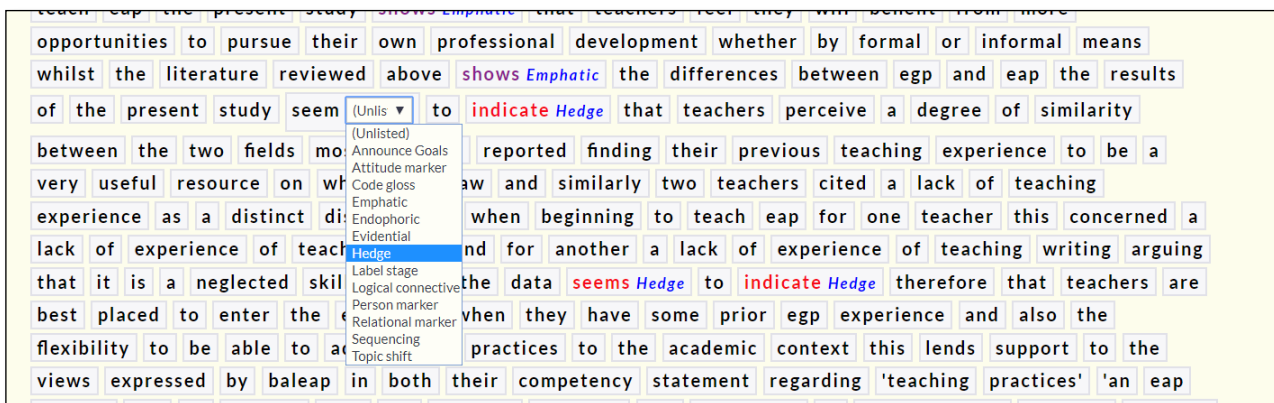


Figure 11: Manual analysis (Amending)



Figure 12: Manual Analysis (Amending)

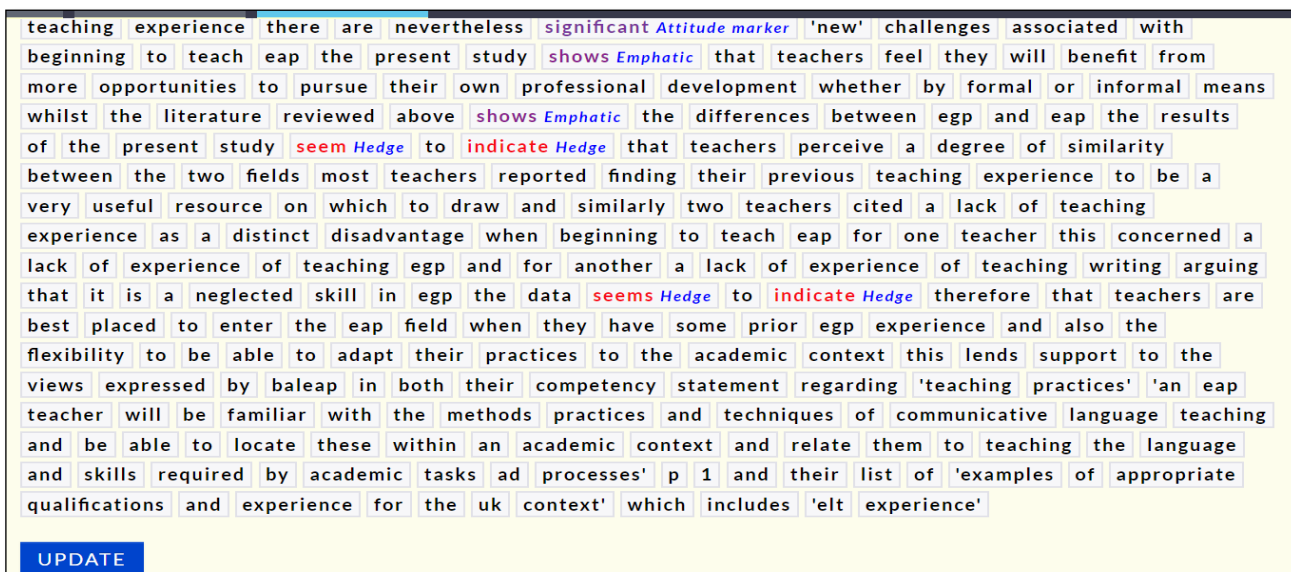


Figure 13: Updating the results

4. The tool shows the statistical summary of the tokens and types (figures 14 and 15) of the results. Then the statistics were exported in an Excel file.

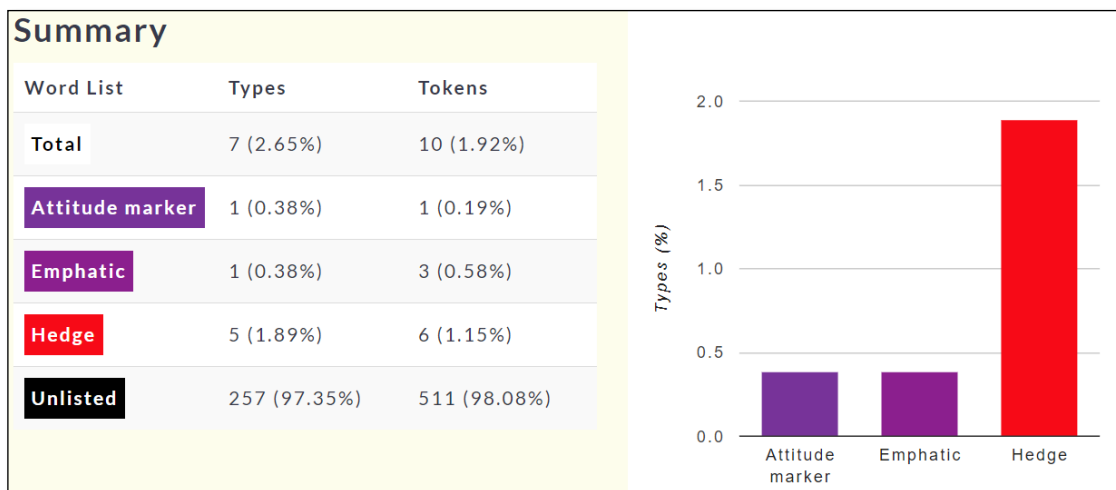


Figure 14: Final results (percentages)

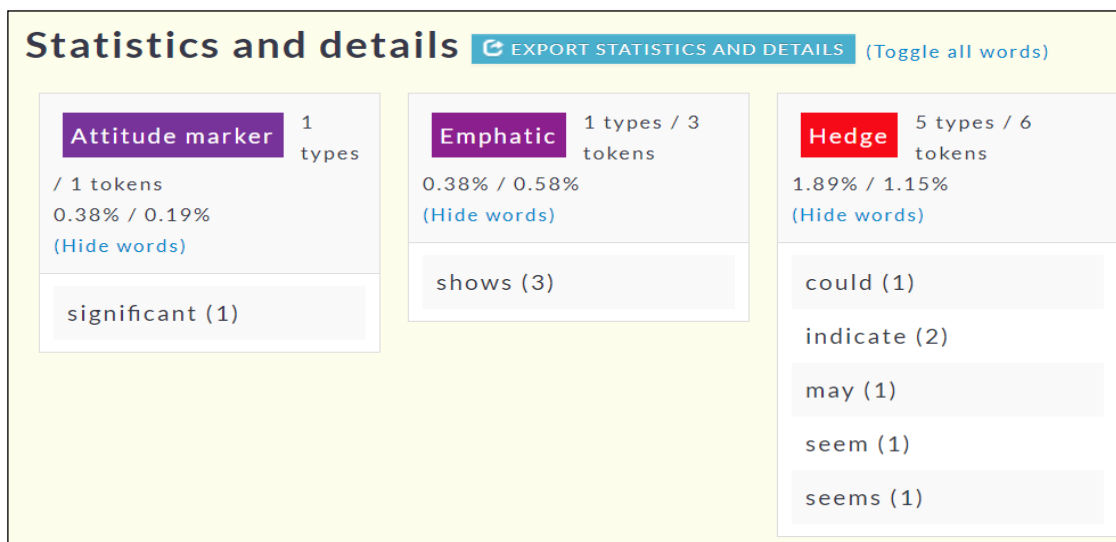


Figure 15: Final results (frequencies of tokens and types)

3.11.1.8 Inter-raters' agreement

Next, inter-rater agreement was calculated for each category manually as the corpora were not very large in size. All decisions were calculated by dividing the total number of decisions by the number in agreement to get a fraction, then that was converted to percentage. Researcher and R-1 agreement was high; the statistics ranged from 92% (boosters), 83% (hedges), 78% (attitude markers) and 100% (self-mentions) with a mean of 88.5% for all four categories combined. Instances where there was disagreement between the researcher and R-1 were sent to the cross-check rater, and disagreements were discussed and resolved.

At the end of the text analysis, two new markers not listed in Hyland's (2005a) framework were found:

1. *Tentatively* was categorised as a hedge
2. *Unquestionably* was categorised as a booster.

3.11.1.9 Statistical analysis and interpretations

The final calculations of the real stance items were entered to IBM-SPSS (version 21.0) to compare frequencies of both tokens and types of all stance markers in each corpus. After that, each item of stance marker was broken down into their lexico-grammatical forms (see Table 4).

Table 4: Subcategories of hedges, boosters and attitude markers

Category	Epistemic modal verbs	Lexical verbs	Adjectives	Adverbs	Nouns
Hedges	might	tend	probable	probably	possibility
Boosters	must	Demonstrate	undisputed	certainly	fact
Attitude M	-	Prefer	interesting	surprisingly	importance

Self-mentions were categorised into:

- **Explicit self-mentions**, e.g. *I, we, our, my*
- **Implicit self-mentions**, e.g. *the author, the writer*

This classification showed the patterns of stance markers that were used by each group of writers. Moreover, it provided a comparison for the most/least/never used categories/items between the two groups of writers. The lexico-grammatical forms of hedges, boosters and attitude markers went beyond the lexical preference as they indicated which grammatical forms those writers preferred. Further analysis and calculations were carried out to list epistemic devices for each group according to their degree of commitment, i.e. certainty, probability and possibility according to Hyland and Milton's (1997) list. Though writers interpret their results in the discussion chapter, they use other writers' quotes to link their results to the literature in several cases which may have some influence on the data.

3.11.2 RQ-2 Discourse-based interviews with the text writers

Though a semi-structured interview is rather a natural way of interaction and mutual understanding between the interviewer and the interviewee (Dornyei, 2007), investigating lexical academic choices using this method can be criticised at various levels. First, two interview participants may understand the same question in different ways which may surround the talk with ambiguity and complexity (Mishler, 1986). Second, Patton (2015) argued that the issues of recall error and lack of self-awareness can affect reliability. In other words, there is a possibility that the interviewees may not be adequately aware of the academic features that they had already used. Interviewees may say that they use certain features in one way, but in reality, they use them in another way. To minimise these limitations Harwood (2006) argues that getting writers to talk about their employment of certain lexical choices with reference to excerpts of their own writing is clearly a solution for ambiguity, the recall error and lack of self-awareness problems. However, I am aware of the subjectivity issue (Hammersley, 2003) of the interview performance itself in which the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee may affect the discourse.

DBI was conducted with twenty of the text writers (twelve Egyptians and eight British) to answer RQ-2: '*What stance do some text writers (both Egyptian and British) prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their lexical choices?*'. My interview protocol was adapted from Odell et al. (1983) and similar to Harwood's Heuristic approach (2006) in which he described the interview as "qualitative and emic in nature" (p. 429). The aim of adopting this approach was to understand the interview participants' perceptions of the appropriateness of using certain stance markers that emerged as trends in the corpus analysis which provided 'insider accounts', and helped to apprehend the social context in which these academic writing features occurred. To minimise bias and subjectivity, and increase the reliability and validity of the interview, Creswell (2014) suggests avoiding leading questions, taking notes as well as recording, and conducting a pilot study.

3.11.2.1 Piloting the DBI

The main purpose of the pilot is to make sure that every interviewee not only understands the questions, but understands them in the same way. Also, to see if any questions might make interviewees feel uncomfortable, and if any question might take a longer time to answer than expected.

In the interview protocol (schedule), I identified the stance markers that trended in the data collected from the corpus analysis of RQ-1 (e.g. '*show*' and '*the fact that*' in boosters, '*may*' and '*seem*' in hedges, '*important*' and '*significant*' in attitude markers and '*I*' and '*the researcher*' in self-mentions), and used these emergent academic features as prompts to lead the interview questions. Thus, certain stance markers were highlighted to the interviewees and they were asked to comment on both their own and their colleagues' use of these linguistic features.

Two interviewees (a British and an Egyptian) participated in the pilot study. Because of the distance constraint, the interview with the Egyptian participant was carried out via the video call recording program Skype while it was face to face with the British student. The Skype screen sharing feature was used so that the participant could see the text and the highlighted words. The interviews were recorded to capture all the words and that the interviewer could concentrate on listening and responding to the interviewees. Two recording devices (a mobile device and MacBook Quick Time player) were used to overcome any device failure. A major issue was the language of the interview with the Egyptian participants. Using interviews in writing studies is well-established. However, much of this research has been conducted on participants' native language (Ekbatani & Pierson, 2012). Most research (e.g. Mackey & Gass, 2015; Miller, 2011) recommends conducting interviews in the participants' first language to allow them to speak more comfortably and to alleviate the concerns about the interviewee's proficiency which may impact the quality of the data. There could be cognitive burdens that EFL learners have when reporting what they were thinking of while writing in a second language. The higher level of the writers' target language, the less the cognitive burden when reporting at the same time of writing (Green, 1998). Therefore, it was decided to give the Egyptian participants the choice how to

respond to my questions. In the pilot study, I asked the questions in English, I felt that the interviewee was slightly confused and had to answer in English. I noticed that she did not feel completely comfortable to express all her views at the beginning of the interview, so I changed my technique and started to ask questions in both English and Arabic, and she, in turn, replied in English and in Arabic when she struggled. Therefore, I adopted the later technique (English and Arabic) in the main study. While some participants used the same technique, others felt comfortable to reply in English which gave me the confidence to conduct the whole interview in English.

The interview protocol was divided into five sections:

In section one, interviewees were invited to talk about their educational backgrounds, degrees, their learning and teaching experiences. Starting with factual questions help interviewees “relax and consequently encourage them to open up” (Dornyei, 2007, p. 137).

In section two, certain excerpts (used as prompt cards) were taken from participants’ discussion chapters and certain stance markers were highlighted (see below).

Q-2: Could you please tell me what impressions you wanted to convey or create with the underlined/emboldened words in each sentence?

- There also appears to be no studies that compare native and non-native speakers of English. As it may be the case that native and non-native speakers of English might have similar needs, it is of interest to investigate the impact of an EAP course and student needs of both groups in the same study.

In the section three, participants were given the frequencies of their use of the highlighted items, and they were invited to comment (see below).

Q-3: Here’s the frequency of certain words in your discussion chapter. Any comments?

The word	Frequency	The word	Frequency
Indicate/ suggest	10/0	Can/could	2/3
Seem/Appear	0	Might/may	0

In section four, participants were shown excerpts from their colleagues' texts and were asked why they used those words (see below).

Q-a) Please comment on the use of the underlined/emboldened words the writers used in their dissertations. b) To what extent do you feel these words can be used appropriately in academic writing? Why?

-This leads me to **believe** that it is perhaps difficult for teachers to assess the fluency of their learners in the way this study attempted to do.

- Also, in reference to the point that RP is the accent for certain professions and that doctors who speak RP are more trusted than those who don't, I **think** this can be easily interpreted as linguistic or even cultural intolerance, since language conveys culture.

- Student-9 tends to be the first speaker in every lesson and exhibits, **in my opinion**, a deeper knowledge of grammar and vocabulary than other learners in the class.

In the fifth section, participants were asked about their stance preferences and the academic support they received via multiple choice questions, adapted from Lancaster (2016) (see below).

SECTION FIVE: Lexical Preferences

The following questions ask for your perceptions of taking a position.

1. Which of these statements best describes the relationship you try to establish with your reader (that is, the real or imagined person who is reading your text)?

- a. I try to express my position in an assertive (or, highly committed) manner.
- b. I try to express my position in a measured (or, carefully qualified) manner.
- c. Some other manner. Please explain.

- Which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals and etc.?

2. Which of these statements best describes the way you try to refer to yourself in the text?

- a. I feel free to use the personal pronouns in my text to refer to myself.
- b. I prefer using implicit references, such as the researcher or the author.
- c. I never refer to myself in the text.
- d. Some other manner. (Please explain)

3. Which of these statements best describes the way you try to show your attitude in the academic text?

- a. I feel free to show my attitude in my text
- b. I avoid using attitude words like important, significant, interesting, agree etc.
- c. It depends. (Please, explain)

- Which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals...etc.?

Implications for the main study

The pilot interview worked well in a way that all questions were trialled. As a result, some questions were modified, and others were added/deleted:

- Both interviewees suggested if they could see the whole text of the discussion chapter and they would be asked about highlighted markers as that way would show them more contextual view for each linguistic item.

- The Egyptian participant could not perceive immediately the part-two question: *'Could you please tell me what impressions you wanted to convey or create with the emboldened words in each sentence?'*. A better phrasing was suggested: *'What impressions did you want to your reader to have when you used the highlighted words?'*.

- In section five, the Egyptian interviewee asked for clarification for the word *position*. Therefore, the following complement was added to explain what is meant by writer's position: *'How to express your views in academic writing—that is, how you express your degree of certainty/uncertainty'*.

- Each interview lasted around seventy minutes, which was considered a long time by the participants. Therefore, section three was deleted as it did not provide any important responses.

3.11.2.2 DBI protocol of the main study

Thus, the final version of the interview protocol (see Appendix 4) was designed as follows.

Section one: Introductory questions about the interviewees' educational backgrounds, degrees and grades, learning and teaching experiences.

Section two: Participants commented on their stance choices on their discussion chapter (certain markers were highlighted in a full view of the chapter; see below).

Q-2: What impressions did you want your reader to have from using the emboldened words?

There will be follow up questions, such as (Referring to the emboldened words in the extracts above):

- Is there a difference between e.g. (MIGHT and MAY), (APPEARS and SEEMS)? In their usages or meanings?
- If yes, how do they differ?
- If not, which one do you prefer/use more frequently in your writing? Why?

The stance markers highlighted represented the main trends that emerged in the corpus analysis; certain hedges, e.g. '*may, might, seem, appear*', certain boosters, e.g. '*show, demonstrate*', attitude markers, e.g. '*important, significant*', and self-mentions, e.g. '*I, the researcher*'.

Section three: Participants were shown excerpts from their colleagues' texts and were asked to give their thoughts on why their colleagues used the highlighted words.

Section four: Participants were asked about their stance preferences and the academic support they received via multiple choice questions.

Accordingly, the main interviews were conducted after the interview protocol was modified. In the following section, the interviewees of the main study are profiled.

3.11.2.3 Participants' profiles

All the interview participants were from the text writers who. It was a target for me to interview writers of the most recent submitted theses.

Twelve Egyptian participants from four different Egyptian universities were interviewed; all these universities are based in Greater Cairo which facilitated the pre-interview procedures. Seven of the interviewees submitted their theses in 2017, four in 2016 and one in 2015. Three interviewees received their Master's with Very Good grade (Merit in the UK) while the others received it with Excellent Grade (Distinction in the UK). All of them had teaching experience,

which ranged from three to sixteen years. Their IELTS grades or TOEFL equivalent ranged from 6 to 7.5 (see Table 5).

Table 5: Egyptian English L2 Participants

Code	Gender	University	Year of submission	Thesis grade	IELTS Writing grade	Teaching experience (Years)
EGY-1	M	Ain Shams	2016	Excellent	7	10
EGY-2	F	Ain Shams	2017	V. good	6	5
EGY-3	M	Ain Shams	2016	Excellent	7	15
EGY-4	F	Benha	2017	Excellent	7.5	4
EGY-5	F	Benha	2016	Excellent	6	3
EGY-6	F	Ain Shams	2017	Excellent	6.5	8
EGY-7	M	Al-Azhar	2015	Excellent	7.5	6
EGY-8	M	Al-Azhar	2017	Excellent	6.5	4
EGY-9	F	Ain Shams	2017	Excellent	6	11
EGY-10	F	Ain Shams	2017	V. good	6	9
EGY-11	F	Al-Azhar	2017	Excellent	7	5
EGY-12	M	Ain Shams	2016	V. good	6	16

On the other side, eight British participants from three different universities in the UK were interviewed; three of them submitted their theses in 2017, two in 2016, two in 2015, and one in 2014. Six interviewees received their Master's with Merit while only one received it with Distinction. All of them had teaching experience, which could be less than the Egyptian counterparts, which ranged from one to seven years (see Table 6).

Table 6: British English L1 Participants

Code	Gender	University	Year of Thesis submission	Thesis grade	Teaching experience (Years)
BR-1	F	Bedfordshire	2017	Merit	2
BR-2	M	Bedfordshire	2015	Merit	4
BR-3	F	Bedfordshire	2017	Merit	1
BR-4	F	Birmingham	2015	Merit	6
BR-5	F	Bedfordshire	2017	Merit	7
BR-6	F	Bedfordshire	2014	Merit	7
BR-7	M	Birmingham	2016	Merit	3
BR-8	F	Nottingham	2016	Distinction	6

3.11.2.4 Interview procedures

The interview procedures started while collecting the two corpora as my goal was to be able to interview some of the text writers. Therefore, I collected some of the text writer's contacts during the corpora collection. I started to contact them via emails and some instant messaging service and software applications during the quantitative analysis.

The DBIs were first conducted with the Egyptian text writers in Egypt. The information sheet and the consent (see Appendix 5) form were sent to each potential interviewee. Phone calls were the main way of contact while I was in Egypt. Interviewees were informed that they would be asked about certain linguistic features they used in their discussion chapters. The terms, stance markers, hedges, boosters or self-mentions were not mentioned at all before and during the interviews. Once I received the consent form signed, the data and time of the interview were confirmed. Nine of the interviews were conducted at Ain Shams University in Cairo as all of the interviewees were based or temporarily living in Cairo. The other three interviews were conducted in three different places where there was a quiet place suitable for the interview. The interviewees were given the choice of using English, Arabic or a mix of both to answer my questions. I saw it would be face-threatening if I used English as some of them would not be very confident or comfortable to express all their ideas, or if I used Arabic which might indicate that I judged their spoken English as low. I found it face-saving to start the interview in Arabic, e.g. greetings, thanking and talking about their thesis submission data and grade, and then I used English when asking about their stance marker choices. Some of them replied in English and continued till the end of the interview, but others used Arabic and English. That way kept the interview in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere, and the participants could express themselves freely without any restrictions.

For the British participants, it was not possible to recruit more than eight interviewees as most British MA students travel to teach overseas after they complete their MA degree. Five interviews were conducted face to face at the University of Bedfordshire library while due to the distance constraint three of them were conducted via Skype using the share-screen feature that

was trialled during the pilot study. The same pre-interview procedures as with the Egyptian students were almost repeated with the British students (contacting and consent form).

To ensure the validity of the data collected from interviews, I elicited interviewees' thoughts without leading them by designing prepared probable questions suitable for different situations. Green (1998) notes that the researcher's script should standardise the interaction between the interviewer and their interviewees, and the interviewer's reporting prompts must be applied consistently with all interviewees to avoid variations in responses. Therefore, consistent questions were asked of each participant, though the probes varied according to each participant's responses. Probes were a very useful tool as they used to clarify certain responses, increase the richness of the responses or when the interview responses were drifting a bit (see below).

I: how would you like to refer to yourself in the text
EGY-4: *we should not use 'I'*
I: what is your reason for saying that
EGY-4: *it is not academic.*
I: why? where did you get this impression from
EGY-4: *we have been taught not to use it as it is subjective*
I: taught by who
EGY-4: *my ma supervisor*
I: how did he/she explain this
EGY-4: *he said that the study findings reflect*
I: who else affected your decision

3.11.2.5 Data analysis

Dornyei (2007, p. 243) states that “most qualitative data analysis is inherently a language-based analysis”. Thus, the qualitative data collected from the interviews were transformed into a textual form. Once interviews were conducted, it was necessary to “organize them into a manageable, easily understandable, and analysable base of information” (Mackey & Gass, 2015, p. 221). In the following sections, the interviews transcription and the data analysis methods are indicated.

- Interviews' transcription and translation

First, the interview recordings were transformed into text. Arabic Interviews were translated into English first by me and the translation was revised by another PhD candidate who is a bilingual English /Arabic speaker. Then, all Interviews were transcribed using Nvivo 11. NVivo has a TranscribeME feature that allowed me to upload/listen & watch my video media files professionally.

Verbatim transcription was performed. In addition to cues of nonverbal behaviour, e.g. pauses, word emphases and interjections so as to establish reliability, dependability, and trustworthiness of the study. Certain characters were used in the transcription, e.g. (..) was used to indicate pauses of less than 2 seconds while (...) for pauses than 2 seconds (see the table below for the transcription technique while see Appendix 6 for a sample of transcribed interview).

Table 7: Transcription techniques

P: ..first, i see how i want to express my certainty mm ... i mean the degree of certainty ..then after that .. i .. i try to use a word that expresses the meaning i want ... and ..and at the same time i try not to repeat words. (Egy-1)
--

Thus, full transcripts of the interviews were produced. Hence, all 20 interviews were transcribed and prepared for coding and analysis in order to make sense of them. What follows is a detailed account of how coding was done.

- Coding and template approach

Dörnyei (2007) defined coding as an approach that “aimed at reducing or simplifying the data while highlighting special features of certain data segments in order to link them to broader topics or concepts”(p. 222). Miles & Huberman (1994) define codes as “tags or labels for assigning units of meaning to the descriptive or inferential information compiled during a study” (p. 56). That is to say, every piece of text in the transcriptions that contains a piece of information should be labelled and named so that the raw data could be organized into conceptual categories.

Before starting with coding, it was vital for me to immerse myself with the data to be familiarized with the depth and breadth of the content by repeated reading of the data in an active way, reflecting on them, jotting down my thoughts and searching for meanings and patterns in order

to obtain a general sense of the data. Dörnyei (2007) proposed this method calling it a “pre-coding move ... shape our thinking about the data and influence the way we will go about coding it ... give way to a more formal and structured coding process” (p.250). This method helped me decide the appropriate approach for coding.

- **Approach of coding:** Based on the research philosophical perspective, it was decided to apply the template coding approach, where the analysis can be used within a ‘contextual constructivist’ position. It is assumed that that “there are always multiple interpretations to be made of any phenomenon, which depend upon the position of then researcher and the context of the research” (King, 2004, p.256). The template analysis is related to group of techniques for thematically organizing and analysing textual data. The template analysis was basically based on producing a list of codes by the researcher called ‘template’ representing themes identified in their textual data. Some of these are usually defined a priori. However, these themes were modified and added to while I was reading and interpreting the texts. Returning to my research question and the literature, a top-down analysis was found more suitable. After reading the interviews’ transcripts several times, three main themes emerged (these were called pattern codes): 1. The interviewees beliefs about the functions of each category of stance markers, i.e. functions of boosters, functions of hedges, functions of self-mentions and functions of attitude markers. Under these themes, several sub-themes (these were called descriptive codes) emerged as functions of each category.

More clearly, the purpose of RQ-2 helped in identifying A priori pattern codes while the functions of each category of stance markers in the literature did the same job for the descriptive codes. King (2004) recommends defining the descriptive codes to identify the points in the text where the interviewee mentions particular words related to the descriptive code. However, I was aware of the problem that many pre-defined codes may prevent from considering data which conflict with my assumptions. So flexibility was considered as a considerable criterion to add, modify or delete codes when required. See Table 8 as an example of functions of boosters:

Table 8: Generating codes (functions of boosters)

Pattern code: Functions of boosters		
Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts

1.	To express a high degree of confidence in the indications provided by the results acquired through the study	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's confidence when using a booster	- The reason for using the word ' show 'I have the significance and the evidence to be clear and assertive . If I do not have the evidence, I may say something else. (EGY-4) - I assume that ' demonstrate ' here... <i>this helped me present clear findings with strong positions...I am confident and certain of the results I reached...</i> (BR-2)
2.	To convey the writer's interpretation to a generally accepted idea or fact	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's interpretations towards facts or generally accepted ideas when using a booster	- The reason for using the word ' show '.... I am taking about something here that has been tested. This programme has been used and approved to be successful. No deny for that . (EGY-11) - ... the fact that was used here..... <i>Dictionaries are normally the main source of that. This is commonly known among language learners.</i> (BR-8)
3.	To convey the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way	Words or expressions that refer to the interviewee's opinion when using a booster	- Here I am evaluating the text book. I used ' the fact that ' to show the reader that my opinion is based on evidence that was mentioned after that. (BR-8) - ' Believe ' because... <i>May be that I have a strong belief that those studies would be useful for my study though they were not conducted in the Middle East context.</i>

The second pattern code was the interviewees' other perceptions towards certain stance markers. In fact, this broad theme was not considered in the template themes as it was not mentioned before in the literature. Yet it emerged as a prominent code in the data analysis for hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers (see Table 9 about interviewees' perceptions about self-mentions).

Table 9: Generating codes (interviewees' perceptions about self-mentions)

Pattern code: Other perceptions about self-mentions			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Objectivity vs subjectivity	Words or expressions that refer to objectivity/subjectivity of	- The reason for using the word ' show 'I have the significance and the evidence to be clear and assertive . If I do not have

		the writer when not/using self-mentions	<i>the evidence, I may say something else. (EGY-4)</i> - I assume that 'demonstrate' here...this helped me present clear findings with strong positions...I am confident and certain of the results I reached...(BR-2)
2.	I vs the researcher	Words or expressions that refer to using 'I/the researcher' in the text	- The reason for using the word 'show' I am taking about something here that has been tested. This programme has been used and approved to be successful. No deny for that. (EGY-11) - ... the fact that was used here...Dictionaries are normally the main source of that. This is commonly known among language learners.(BR-8)

The third pattern describes the interviewees' reasons for not/using stance markers in their discussion chapter. Several codes were identified under this broad theme (see Table 10).

Table 10: Generating themes (interviewees reasons for not/using stance markers)

Pattern code: Factors affecting writers' use of stance markers			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Writer's personal linguistic preferences	Words or expressions that refer to objectivity/subjectivity of the writer when not/using self-mentions	- I have never ever used first-person. ..This is what I feel should be done. The emphasis should be on the information that I want to give and the arguments I want to make, rather than me. (BR-6) - it is the researcher who deals with those data...It is a personal belief based on my experiences as a writer. I acquired this throughout my academic life. (EGY-9)
2.	Supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback	Words or expressions that refer to using 'I/the researcher' in the text	- If my supervisor is not confident enough that I had established a well-structured argument, my claim would not be justified (EGY-2) - I was told by my lecturers and colleagues not to use the word I (BR-3)
3	Cultural and L1 interference	Words or expressions that refer to using the interviewees' L1 or culture in the transcript.	- I do not know, but I may be affected by my native Arabic language because MAY means MOMKEN in Arabic and this is the meaning that I wanted to give (EGY-7).

			- I think English people plant hedges in their speech all the time to soften what they say. This might indicate to an important part of polite conversation in order (BR-7).
4	Previous education and instruction	Words or expressions that refer to interviewees previous schooling, learning, teachers and etc.	- I remember I was told in my A-level from a teacher in every time I write 'I think'. She says 'I am not interested in what you think (BR-5). - I was told in my academic writing course not to use I in that way...(EGY-1)
5	Writer's self-confidence	Words or expressions that refer to interviewees' self-confidence, power, supervisor's power and etc.	- No, I <i>am still a novice writer</i> while he is an expert one. We should not argue with senior lecturers. - Yes, <i>that was a form of challenge for me...</i> He had to accept that because <i>that's what I wanted to say</i> (BR-2).

* **Check-coding:** Miles & Huberman (1994, p. 64) argue that "Check-coding not only aids definitional clarity but also is a good reliability check". Another PhD researcher worked independently on the initial coding process. In the check-coding process, both, the independent researcher's and my coding and definitions were reviewed by checking each rendition together. The inter-coder reliability was calculated using the following formula:

$$reliability = \frac{\text{number of agreements}}{\text{total number of (agreements+disagreements)}}$$

The inter-coding reliability was 62% which was expected; Miles and Huberman (1994) notice that inter-coder reliability will not be more than 70% at first as each coder has their own preferences and vision. Then, the initial coding and definitions were reviewed and refined by the other coder and I especially where naming certain codes were subject to different interpretations. Both coders, agreed on renaming and redefining codes that met issues of differences after collaborative discussion till the coders-reliability reached 92%. A little disagreement was found. Therefore, agreement on each theme/subtheme was achieved "through collaborative discussion rather than independent corroboration" (Smagorinsky, 2008, p. 401). To provide a measure of intra-coder reliability, I repeated the whole process of coding a

week later, to examine the coders' consistency, and the agreement level was 98% which is a high percentage as agreed by Green (1998) (see the final themes template in Appendix 8)

3.11.3 RQ-3 Discourse-based interviews with the expert audience

Discourse-based and semi-structured interviews were carried out with four expert writers to answer RQ-3 "*What are the characteristics of successful stance-taking in academic texts?*". The aim of this question is to identify and describe successful and less successful stance-taking patterns in students' MA TEFL discussion chapters.

3.11.3.1 Piloting the interview and implications for the Main Study

A combined discourse-based and semi-structured interview was conducted with two expert writers: one was English working in a UK university for about three years and held a BA in Linguistics and the other is Egyptian working in a Saudi university for three years, and holds a PhD in Applied Linguistics.

The pilot interview protocol was divided into three main sections: the introductory questions (background questions), text evaluation questions (evaluating two examples of TEXTs A and B) and feedback questions (elements that show using appropriate stance). Two main implications resulted from the trial:

1. In section two, two samples of the discussion chapter were shared with the interviewees: A and B, and were encouraged to decide which one was more successful in taking an appropriate stance, and they were encouraged to support their decisions by providing evidence from the texts. Both interviewees suggested that I would send them that question via email to take their time to read and evaluate each text.
2. In section three, interviewees were asked first to give feedback to students concerning using hedges, boosters, attitude markers and self-mentions appropriately, then interviewees were asked to opine what sort of elements could be found in a rubric to grade students use of stance

markers in an MA discussion chapter. It was noticed that the answer to the later task was repetitive and both interviewees used to say “as I said before”.

Implications for the Main Study: In the main study it was decided that the main questions, especially section two (TEXTs A and B) of the interview questions were sent to the interviews a few days before the interview so that they would be more familiar with the questions and would have more time for brainstorming to answer the questions; also interviewees were encouraged to write notes. The interviewees answered most of the questions and left the interview for probing their answers. That worked well with them and me as I had time to prepare for the probing questions that would appropriately answer my research question.

The rubric part was deleted, and the questions feedback were found to be enough, especially, one of the trial interviews lasted about eighty minutes, which was found to be very demanding.

3.11.3.2 The Interview protocol

Based on the pilot study findings, the interview questions of the main study (see Appendix 7) were as follows:

Section one: Bio data questions (see below):

Section one: Background questions:

1. How long have you been teaching EAP?
2. What level of students have you been teaching (undergrads/postgrads)?
3. Were your students Egyptian, English, international or mixed?
4. Have you ever supervised MA TEFL /Linguistics/ELT students? If yes, How long?

Section two: Text evaluation question (Evaluating TEXT-A and TEXT-B), identifying elements of strengths and weaknesses (see below):

Section two: Evaluating students' use of certain words: TEXT-A and TEXT-B:

Here are two samples of discussion chapters: A and B. Can you please underline expressions that indicate doubt, certainty, attitudes and writer's self-reference?

- a. How successful do you consider text A and B in terms of using un/certainty, attitude and self-reference markers? Which is the most successful?
- b. Let's, please, identify the points that made it successful/unsuccessful.

Section three: Taking appropriate stance feedback (see below):

Section Three: Feedback:

1. Answer the questions under each category of stance markers:
 - a. **Certainty markers (e.g. show, clearly)**
 - What difficulties that postgraduate students may face when expressing their certainty?
 - To reach high level of academic writing, what feedback can you give to students when expressing certainty markers when writing their MA dissertations?
 - b. **Uncertainty/evaluation markers (e.g. may, could, probably)**
 - What difficulties that postgraduate students may face when using evaluation/uncertainty markers?
 - To reach high level of academic writing, what feedback can you give to students when expressing uncertainty markers when writing their MA dissertations?

3.11.3.3 Procedures and criteria for selecting Texts A and B

For section two, it was fundamental to choose two examples of discussion chapters from the corpora: one is successful, and one is less successful in terms of using stance markers, so that interviewees could identify elements of strengths and weaknesses and how that affected the quality of the chapter and academic writing. I could identify four successful examples (two in the Egyptian corpus and two in the British one), but it was challenging to identify less successful ones as most of the theses were revised, edited, proofread and graded as generally successful. For the less successful, I could identify two chapters (one British and one Egyptian).

My decision about successful and less successful stance-taking was based on Hinkel's (2004) 'Teaching Academic ESL Writing' and Fraser's (2010) 'Pragmatic competence: The case of hedging'. Stance markers could be used inappropriately in the following cases:

Inappropriate hedge/booster to an expression that should be hedged:

E.g. Computers *will* replace teachers in 2050. (*may*)

Attaching a hedge/booster to an expression that should not be hedged:

E.g. The researcher *might* explain the pros and cons of this process in the paragraph below. (*will*)

Not attaching a hedge/booster to an expression that should be hedged:

E.g. Water shortages cause conflict between countries. (*may* cause)

Attaching a self-mention to a sentence that the writer's presence should be eliminated:

- In this paper, *I will argue* against the idea that lecturing should not be allowed in classrooms

This paper *will argue*.....

Inappropriate direct self-reference of the writer in the text

E.g. The interviews will be conducted by *us*. (The pronoun 'us' does not clearly indicate which persons.)

The interviews will be conducted by *the researchers*.

Inappropriate absence of self-mentions

E.g. On the basis of this data, *it is claimed* that

On the basis of *my* data *I would* claim that....

However, a key point to determine which chapters were to be representative of successful and less successful ones for RQ-3 was their length, as I did not want the task for the expert writers to be demanding. For the selected chapters, I deleted/changed all the wording that referred to the author's identity or the context of the study (e.g. names of schools, Arabic references) to avoid any probable bias from the lecturers interviewed.

3.11.3.4 Profiling the interviewees

Experts are usually defined by their qualifications, experience and track records (Collins & Evans, 2008). The targeted lecturers were those who have ample experience in teaching EAP and have been supervising postgraduate students. Priority was given to:

- Years of experience in teaching English Academic Writing courses for university students
- Years of supervising and marking MA students' theses in Applied Linguistics and TEFL

- Experience/publications in rhetoric discourse studies.

However, the selection decisions were mainly based on their availability and the fact that they taught writing. Four lecturers participated in the interviews: two Egyptians and two English (see Table 11).

Table 11: Lecturers' Profiles

Participant ID	Nationality	Educational background	Years (MA supervisor)	Years of teaching Experience	Research area
EG-L-1	Egyptian	PhD in Education	4	6	EFL writing
EG-L-2	Egyptian	PhD in Applied Linguistics	8	13	Corpus linguistics
BR-L-1	British	MA in TEFL	2	9	Language and Culture
BR-L-2	British	PhD in Linguistics	8	20	Discourse Analysis

Pseudonyms were given to the expert writers. Reem and Basil for the Egyptian ones, and Tim and Andy for the British informants.

However, due to the diverse responses that were collected concerning the expert write' views about non/using self-mentions and attitude markers as explored in the qualitative chapter, other expert writers were asked to opine on their perceptions on these issues. Those new expert writers are from different backgrounds, and have done recognised research in the field of metadiscoursal. In addition to Reem, Basil, Andy and Tim, those new participants were coded as EXPERT-1, EXPERT-2, EXPERT-3 and EXPERT-4.

3.11.3.5 The interview procedures

The lecturers' interviews started after interviewing both Egyptian and British students. The criteria for selecting the expert writers may have played a role on interviewing only four lecturers, as it was demanding to find lecturers who supervise MA TEFL students, teach academic writing and are knowledgeable about this area of academic writing, i.e. stance-taking. Selected participants were contacted via formal channels. After receiving the consent form and information sheet, participants were sent the interview protocol. They had the freedom to decide whether to take notes before the interview, answer the questions fully and leave the interview for

probing questions or only having a look at the questions. All interviewees answered the questions fully, then I arranged for an interview for probing their responses.

The interview lengths ranged from 40 minutes to 75 minutes as that depended on the participants' answers and availability. The interview techniques, which were used in students' interviews, were used with the lecturers, e.g. not asking leading questions, but asking probing questions. It was noticed that two of the participants used short and brief answers for the questions. Therefore, I tried hard to elicit certain points and encourage them to give more details by adopting a story-telling method rather than pushing them by questions like "Explain more, please".

3.11.3.7 Data analysis

Once the interviews were transcribed (the same process of RQ-2 see 3.11.4.3), a similar thematic analysis to RQ-2 was adopted by identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data. The template analysis approach was easier to follow in RQ-3 as the data obtained from the informants were controlled by the interview protocol questions. There were two main themes (pattern codes), i.e. Section two (identifying successful and less successful patterns of stance markers in TEXTs A&B and characteristics of successful stance-taking in general for section three. The four descriptive codes (sub-themes) for each section were: 1. characteristics of successful boosters' use 2. characteristics of successful hedging use 3. characteristics of successful self-men's use 4. characteristics of successful attitude markers' use (see Figure 16):

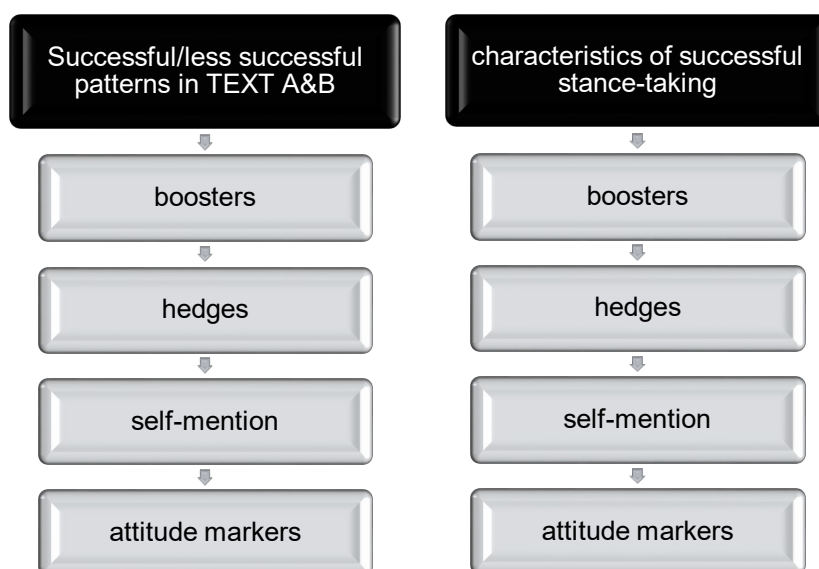


Figure 16: Themes template for RQ-3

Table 12 summarises the main changes made from the piloting to the main study for each method so as to provide an overview and a summary of those main developments.

Table 12: The main changes made from the piloting to the main study

Pilot study	Main study
RQ-1 tools	
1) It is only I who carried out the text analysis and the manual analysis.	1) Two other raters worked in the manual analysis and calculations.
RQ-2 DBI	
1) Interviewees were shown stance markers in sentences.	1) Interviewees were shown the whole discussion chapter and the target stance markers were highlighted.
2) The phrasing of Section-2 question was: <i>'Could you please tell me what impressions you wanted to convey or create with the emboldened words in each sentence?'</i>	2) A better phrasing was suggested: <i>'What impressions did you want to your reader to have when you used the highlighted words?'</i>
3) The term 'writer's position' was not defined and was unclear for participants.	3) The following complement was added to explain what is meant by writer's position: <i>'How to express your views in academic writing—that is, how you express your degree of certainty/uncertainty and attitudes'</i> .
4) The pilot interview was too long, so unnecessary questions were deleted.	4) Section three in the pilot study protocol was deleted as interviewees' answers did not provide any important information.

RQ-3: semi-structured and discourse-based interview with expert writers	
1) All interview questions were carried out in one session.	1) Interviewees were sent TEXTs A and B a few days before the interview, then they were asked about their answers.
2) There was a rubric question.	2) The rubric question was deleted.

3.11.4 Ethical considerations

An ethical research approval form had been filled in and approved by my university's Research Institute Ethics Committee before my data collection commenced. Downloading students' theses was through official channels. The interviewees/raters were sent the consent form and the information sheet before data collection. However, permission was taken from the heads of the Faculty of Education of four universities in Egypt to contact postgraduate students and lecturers and to carry out the current study. I emphasised that they could withdraw at any time of the study or refuse to answer any questions without consequences. It was emphasised that the participants' names would be anonymous in the research findings; participants' names were replaced by pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality and privacy. Interviewees were informed that their data would be stored in a secure place where only I could access it. All study data will be disposed of as soon as my research is completed. Finally, the participants were asked for permission to use quotations from their interviews. My university email address was available for them to contact me if they needed help.

Interviewees were informed that the interviews would be recorded. Interviews took from 40 to 50 minutes, and all of them were recorded using two devices: my MacBook Quick Time Player application, that allowed screen recording, and a recording application in my personal mobile phone. Both my Mackintosh and mobile had passwords known only by me to protect participants' data in case they were lost.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter the research methods and analysis tools have been set out. At the end of the data analysis, there were three main types of findings; all of them achieved the aims of the

research. First, the text analysis results provided quantitative data to understand writers' employment of stance markers. Second, the main trends of the corpus analysis were used to seed prompts to guide DBIs with some of the text writers to report on their thoughts, perceptions and the reasons for using certain stance items. Finally, discourse-based and semi structured interviews with the text academic audience provided feedback for students of how to take appropriate stance in academic writing. By triangulating the quantitative and qualitative data using different methods and through various stages, a more complete picture of two groups of writers' employment of stance markers was realised from two facets: the product facet (how patterns of stance written and evaluated) and the process facet (strategies and thoughts).

Chapter Four now explores the quantitative findings collected from RQ-1 and Chapter Five explores the qualitative results from RQs-2 and 3. Both sets of findings are discussed in Chapter Six, bringing the two types of results together.

Chapter Four: Quantitative Results

4.1 Introduction

Chapters Four and Five report the findings from the main study. This chapter deals with the quantitative analyses collected from the text analysis process of the two corpora of texts. The chapter answers the first research question:

1. How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and British MA students (English L1 writers) employ stance markers:
 - a. What similarities in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?
 - b. What differences in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?

Chapter Five reports the largely qualitative results collected from the DBIs with twenty participants of the text writers and four expert writers, which relates to research questions two and three.

Chapter Four reports first the descriptive analyses in section 4.2, which compare the overall instances of stance markers (tokens and types) in the two corpora. Next, inferential analyses will be explored in 4.3 compare statistical results of the instances of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers in the two corpora.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

An initial step when describing categorical data is to describe the basic features of the data by providing simple summaries about the corpora and the measures, e.g. counting the number of instances in each category and measuring the mean of each category. These statistics are of great interest, particularly where is a comparison between the two writer groups.

4.2.1 Recap on the text-selection process

As set out in Chapter Three, all the collected texts (Egyptian and British discussion chapters) were analysed using both Text Inspector and manual analysis to identify markers of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitudes based on Hyland's categories and lists (2005a). All the instances of stance markers were examined manually according to the working definition and those that did not fit were excluded from the counting of stance markers. Table 13 shows the different categories of stance markers, the number of the lexical markers included initially and the markers that were added during the analysis of the texts.

Table 13: Stance markers categories based on Hyland's (2005a, p. 220-224) and additional items

Stance Category	No. of lexical items in Hyland's (2005a) scheme	Examples of lexical items	No. of additional items	Added items
Boosters	48	<i>show, indeed</i>	5	<i>by far, apparent, determine, certainty</i>
Hedges	70	<i>may, indicate</i>	4	<i>can (epistemic), suggestive, feasible, little</i>
Self-mentions	11	<i>I, the author</i>	1	<i>the researcher</i>
Attitude markers	59	<i>important, agree</i>	4	<i>significant, significance, insignificant, unimportant</i>
Total	188		14	14
Overall total	202			

4.2.2 Tokens, types and means

Before discussing group differences, an overview of the results of the analysis in terms of descriptive statistics is needed "to provide a summary of the data" (Dornyei, 2007, p. 209). This includes the raw frequencies of stance categories, mean frequencies of each category and the different use of stance markers in the two groups.

The total number of words in the L2 scripts is 89,438 with an average of 2,236 words per chapter while the L1 texts contain 108,154 words with an average of 2,704 words per chapter (see Table 14).

Table 14: Comparison of the whole number of the words in each corpus

Writers group	Number of chapters	Number of the whole words	Average of words per each chapter
L2 writers	40	89,438	2,236
L1 writers	40	108,154	2,704
Total number of words in the corpus		197,592	

It is worth reiterating that the study is not by any means claiming that the discussion chapters in each corpus are representative of all discussion chapters submitted in the Applied Linguistics and TEFL disciplines and therefore it is not one of the study aims to generalise from the findings. Instead, the current research is largely qualitative and is seeking to find out about the student writers' own perspectives and motivations about using certain stance features, and how expert writers see students' use of these linguistic features.

4.2.2.1 Tokens

As Table 15 shows, the total number of stance markers is 1,128 in the English L2 texts while it is 2,548 in the L1. A general overview shows that Egyptian English L2 used slightly more than half the markers used by L1 writers in the total number. This striking difference appears clearly in using hedges, self-mentions with 707 and 26, respectively, by L2 writers, and 1380 and 278, respectively, by L1 writers.

Table 15: Raw frequencies of stance markers

Writers' group	Boosters	Hedges	Self-mentions	Attitude Markers	All stance markers
L2 writers' words: (89,438)	239	707	26	156	1128
L1 writers' words: (108,154)	348	1380	37	278	2043
Total	587	2087	63	434	3171

4.2.2.2 Types

Moving to the types of stance markers, it is clearly noticed that the L1 writers used overall more types of stance markers with 100 types compared to 69 types used by L2 writers. The striking

difference is found in the types of attitude markers and hedges where L1 writers used considerably more types than the L2 (see Table 16).

Table 16: Raw number of Types of each category of stance markers

Writers' group	Types of boosters	Types of hedges	Types of self-mentions	Types of attitude markers	All types
L2 writers	25	28	3	13	69
L1 writers	31	43	5	21	100

However, it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the figures for the two groups, as the total number of words in each corpus is different as mentioned earlier (89,438 in the L2 texts and 108,154 in the L1 texts). Therefore, the occurrences of each category of stance markers were calculated for each text. Then, the data were normalised by expressing them in terms of frequency per 1000 words which allowed a valid comparison of L1 and L2 corpora. The following formula was used to calculate the stance markers' frequency per 1000 words for each chapter in each group corpus:

$$\frac{\text{stance markers per text} \times 1000}{\text{words per text}}$$

Then the mean frequencies of each category of stance markers were calculated per 1000 words. After that, Mann–Whitney tests were employed to find out the statistical differences of the frequency of using boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers between the two writer groups.

4.2.2.3 Means of overall tokens and types (per 1000 words)

Table 17 shows the average value of both tokens and types used by the two groups of writers. It can be seen that the L1 writers' means of whole tokens and types of stance markers are numerically higher than the L2 writers. While the British (L1) means of tokens are remarkably higher than those of the Egyptian (L2), the average value of the L2 types (0.77 type per 1000 words) is slightly fewer than the L1 types (0.92 type per 1000 words).

Table 17: Means of all Tokens and Types per 1000 words

Writer group		Tokens	Types
L2 writers	Mean	12.61	0.77
L1 writers	Mean	18.89	0.92

4.2.2.4 Means of each category (tokens and types) per 1000 words

Table 18 and Figure 17 show that both writer groups used hedges more frequently than the other categories of stance markers with total of 20.6 compared to 5.9 for boosters, which came second. It can be seen that the L1 mean figures are noticeably higher than those of the L2 writers' in all stance categories, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers. The means of the L1 hedges (12.75) and attitude markers (2.57) are considerably higher than the L2's, 7.9 and 1.74, respectively. Also, the L1 boosters and self-mentions are slightly higher than the L2's.

Table 18: Means of tokens

Writers		Boosters	Hedges	Self-mentions	Attitudes
L2	Mean	2.6727	7.9053	.2910	1.7455
	N	40	40	40	40
	Std. Deviation	2.81378	5.92276	.38572	1.17232
L1	Mean	3.2190	12.7590	.3422	2.5715
	N	40	40	40	40
	Std. Deviation	2.02692	6.76729	.33919	1.73535

Variations between the writer group within the EFL writers in boosters and self-mentions (SD= 2.81 and 0.38) are higher than that within the English L1 group (SD= 2.02 and 0.33), respectively, indicating that the L1 writers are more consistent with each other than the L2s in the number of boosters and self-mentions they used. However, the L2 writers showed more consistency in terms of hedges and attitude markers (5.92 and 1.17) than the L1 writers (SD= 6.76 and 1.73), respectively.

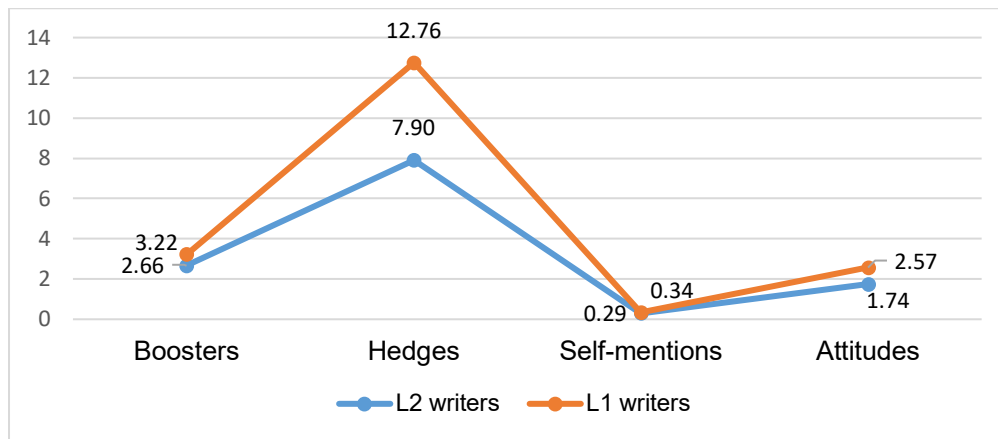


Figure 17: Means of tokens per 1000 words

Similar to the means of tokens, both the L1 and the L2 writers used substantially more types of hedges than other categories, which seems to be reasonable as hedges have the highest number of types according to Hyland's scheme (101 types), see Table 19 and Figure 18. The data in the table indicates that the L2 writers used fewer types of stance markers than the L1 writers in all categories.

Table 19: Means of types per 1000 words

Writer group	Boosters	Hedges	Self-mentions	Attitude markers
L2	0.28	0.31	0.03	0.15
L1	0.29	0.40	0.05	0.19

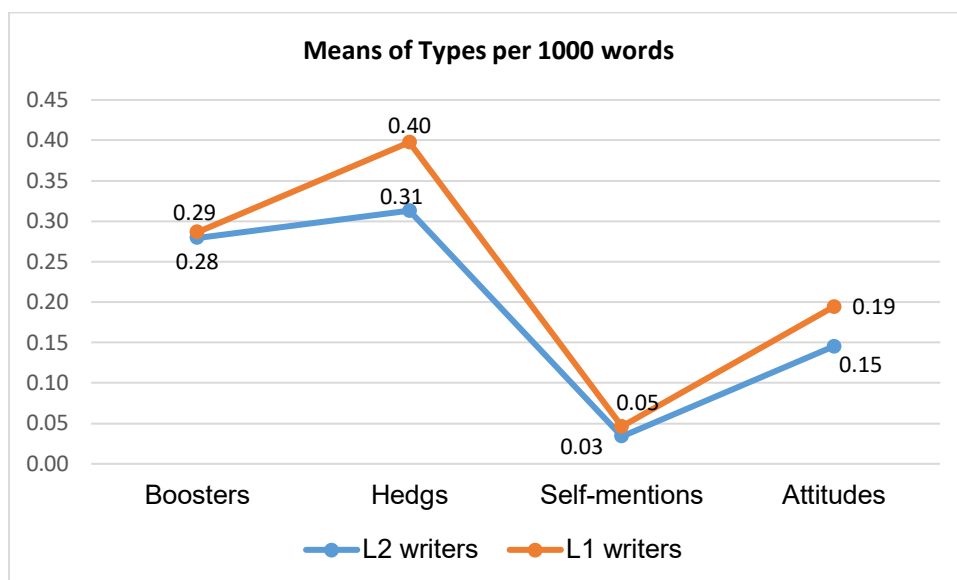


Figure 18: Means of types

The following section presents the inferential statistics that help to make generalisations about the two writer groups, i.e. to make judgements of the probability that the observed difference mentioned in the descriptive statistics between the two groups is a dependable one.

4.3 Inferential statistics

Before applying statistical tests to the data, it was necessary to determine whether or not the data collected from the Egyptian and British corpora was normally distributed. Connolly (2007) and Dornyei (2007) report that normal distribution is a prerequisite for parametric tests and where data is not distributed normally, non-parametric tests must be used.

A Shapiro–Wilk test was used to determine if the data were normally distributed or not, as recommended by Connolly (2007). The distribution of the categories of stance markers was found not to be normally distributed in terms of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers (see Table 20).

Table 20: Shapiro–Wilk Test

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Boosters	.876	80	.000*
Hedges	.953	80	.005*
Self-mentions	.813	80	.000*
Attitudes	.914	80	.000*

* The significance level is .05

While Dornyei (2007) identifies that parametric tests, e.g. the independent T-test, has more statistical power, i.e. identifying statistically significant results, they are not suitable for use when the data are not normally distributed. Therefore, the Mann–Whitney U test was used as it is often considered the non-parametric alternative to the independent T-test when data are not normally distributed. Moreover, it is recommended for use when two nominal variables are being compared (Connolly, 2007; Pallant, 2005,).

The Mann–Whitney U test was applied to the overall data to determine whether there was any statistically significant difference in the total number and for each category of stance markers used by L2 writers and L1 writers. Though, numerically, the English L1 writers used more stance

markers than the Egyptian EFL writers in all categories of stance markers (see Table 21), Mann–Whitney test results show that the two groups of text writers did not significantly differ (Mann–Whitney U = .000, Z = -1.00, p = 0.317 two-tailed) in terms of the total number of stance markers, boosters and self-mentions (the p value ‘asympt. sig. 2-tailed’ is not less than 0.05). However, the test shows there is a statistically significant difference in terms of hedges and attitude markers (p = .022, .034), respectively, between the L2 and L1 writers (see Table 21).

Table 21: Mann–Whitney Test

	Boosters	Hedges	Self-mentions	Attitudes	All stance markers
Mann–Whitney U	613.000	473.000	756.000	580.000	.000
Wilcoxon W	1433.000	1293.000	1576.000	1400.000	1.000
Z	-1.802	-3.149	-.450	-2.125	-1.000
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.072	.002*	.652	.034*	.317
* The significance level is .05 Grouping variables: L2 vs L1					

Hence, the general overview of the corpus analysis reveals broad differences between the two groups of writers in two categories of stance, i.e. hedges and attitude markers. However, considerable commonalities in the use of boosters, self-mentions and the total number of stance markers.

In the following sections, the results from individual categories, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers, are used to explore the differences and similarities between the two group texts in more detail. The frequencies of the whole tokens, the types and the frequencies of each written marker are explored into their grammatical categories in a way that compares and contrasts the use of these markers between the two writer groups to answer the first research question.

4.3.1 Boosters

It should be noticed that the category of boosters did not show any statistically significant differences (p = 0.072) between the two corpora (see Table 21). The total number of lexical devices used in the L2 corpus to express emphatic meanings is 239 boosters employing 2.67

devices for every 1000 words while there were 348 boosters in the L1 corpus employing 3.22 devices per 1000 words.

It is useful to categorise the items into grammatical classes for comparison as suggested by Hyland and Milton (1997). Table 22 shows that both writer groups tended to use verbs which constitute around one third (245 out of 587) of all boosters to express their degree of certainty. Adverbs came second as the most used device with 156 devices used in both corpora. Nouns and modals have the lowest numbers of boosters between the two writer groups.

Table 22: Grammatical categories of boosters (raw and per 1000 words)

Grammatical Category	L2 writers			L1 writers		
	Raw No.	/1000 w	% of all boosters	Raw No.	/1000 w	% of all boosters
Verbs	104	1.16	43.51	141	1.30	40.52
Modals	4	0.04	1.67	7	0.06	2.01
Adjectives	14	0.16	5.86	64	0.59	18.39
Adverbs	69	0.77	28.87	87	0.80	25.00
Nouns	2	0.02	0.84	0	0.00	0.00
Others	46	0.51	19.25	49	0.45	14.08
Total	239	2.66		348	3.22	

The data in Figure 19 illustrates that there is a quite broad agreement in the use of lexical verbs, adverbs and others between the two writer groups, but marked differences in the use of adjectives for the L1 group.

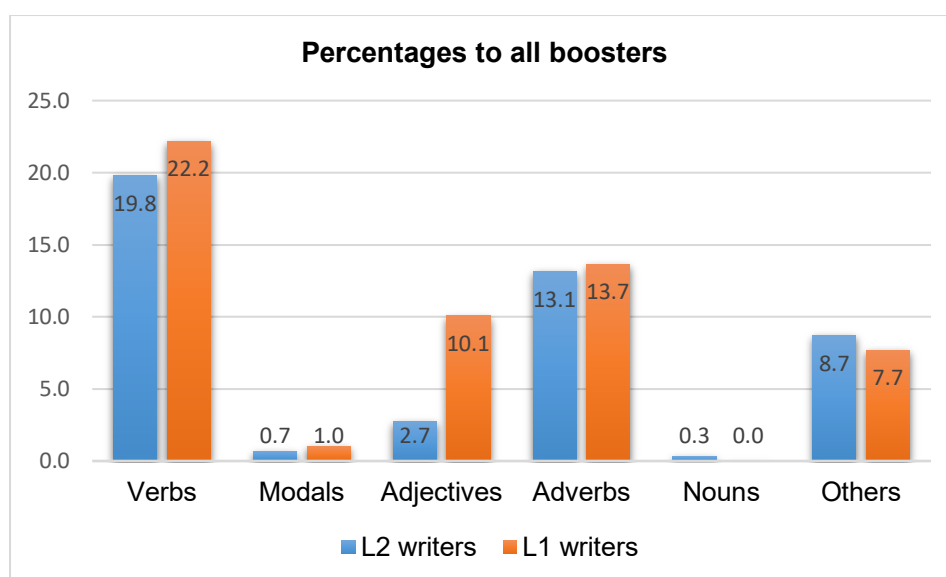


Figure 19: Grammatical categories percentages to total categories

Overall, the L2 corpus contains a more restricted range of emphatic markers with 25 types of boosters compared to 31 types used in the L1 corpus. Nevertheless, both writer groups used less than 75% of the total boosters (48 types) which are listed in Hyland's scheme (see Appendix 1). The L2 writers' five most frequently used items account for 70.7% of the total booster items. In fact, the top five devices constitute almost two thirds of the L2 boosters, while the top five boosting items in the L1 corpus constitute approximately half of all boosters. Only the top three items appeared in more than thirty discussion chapters in the L2 data, but only 'show' was used in more than 30 texts in the L1 corpus. In fact, 'show' was heavily used in both corpora with 30.5% in the Egyptian one and one fifth of all boosters in the L1 texts (see Table 23). It should be noticed that while the word 'think' is underused by both writer groups (2 times by the L2 and the L1); the word 'believe' was used only once in the L1 corpus.

Table 23: Most frequent types of boosters

Word/s	L2 writers		Word/s	L1 writers	
	Raw occurrence (No. of texts)	% of total boosters		Raw occurrence (No of texts)	% of total boosters
show	73 (40)	30.5	show	71 (40)	20.4
the fact that	43 (24)	18.0	demonstrate	36 (28)	10.3
clearly	32 (12)	13.4	the fact that	32 (26)	9.2
actually	11 (6)	4.6	clearly	30 (19)	8.6
prove	10 (7)	4.2	true	14 (8)	4.0
Total no. of types	25 types		Total no. of types	31 types	

While the devices 'definitely' (4 times), 'certainty' (2 times) and 'without doubt' (1 time) appeared only in the Egyptian texts, eight items appeared in the English corpus and did not occur in the EFL Egyptian's; they are 'apparent' (11 times), 'certain' (11 times), 'certainly' (11 times), 'in fact' (10 times) 'incontestable' (4 times), 'believe' (3 times), 'by far' (2 times), 'surely' (1 time) and 'find' (1 time).

Though ten types of Hyland's list did not occur in both corpora, e.g. 'conclusively, incontrovertible, realise, undeniable, unbelievable and indisputably', items like 'doubtless, evidently and definite' appeared in a different grammatical form, e.g. 'without doubt, evident and definitely'.

4.3.2 Hedges

The hedging features are one of two categories that showed that they were used more significantly in the L1 corpus than in the L2 one ($p = .002$). The total number of lexical devices used in the L2 corpus to express tentative meanings is 707 hedges employing 7.9 devices for every 1000 words while there were 1380 hedges in the L1 corpus employing 12.8 devices per 1000 words (see Table 24). The table illustrates that hedges are the most used devices between the two groups in terms of both tokens and types.

Table 24: Grammatical categories of hedges

Grammatical Category	L2 writers			L1 writers		
	Raw No.	/1000 w	% of all hedges	Raw No.	/1000 w	% of all hedges
Verbs	106	1.19	14.99	278	2.57	20.14
Modals	456	5.10	64.50	759	7.02	55.00
Adjectives	31	0.35	4.38	81	0.75	5.87
Adverbs	92	1.03	13.01	247	2.28	17.90
Nouns	0	0.00	0.00	7	0.06	0.51
Others	22	0.25	3.11	8	0.07	0.58
Total	707	7.90	100	1380	12.76	100

Figure 20 shows that modal verbs are noticeably the most used features by both Egyptian students and British students, containing 64.5% of the total L2 hedges and 55% in the L1 hedging corpus. This trend is one of the few that indicate L2 writers' higher proportion of any stance features more than the L1's, though the density of the modal verbs in the L1 texts is higher than those in the L2 with 7.02 per 1000 words compared to 5.1 per 1000 words in the L2 scripts.

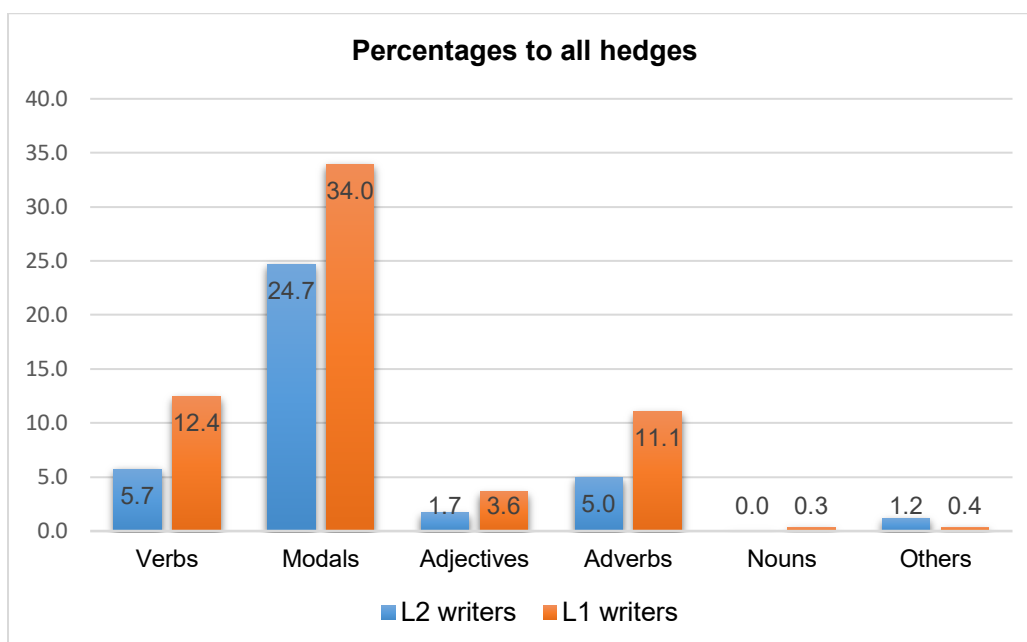


Figure 20: Percentages of grammatical categories to all hedges

It is apparent from the data that the L1 writers employed remarkably more types of hedges (43 types) than the L2s (28 types) while the types combined constitute more than 40% of the total types of stance markers used in both corpora (see Table 16). Largely, the Egyptian corpus contains a significantly more restricted range of tentative lexical devices. Despite the differences in the types, there is a considerable similarity in the items used by L2 and L1 writers. It can be seen from Table 23 that the epistemic lexical items ‘*may*, *could* and *indicate*’ appear in the top five most frequent devices by both writer groups. The only differences are that ‘*might* and *can*’ appeared in the Egyptian L2 list while ‘*would* and *appear*’ were instead in the L1 list. As seen in the table, the frequencies of ‘*may*, *might*, *could*, *can* and *indicate*’ are considered 64.6% of the total hedges used in the Egyptian corpus while the top five hedges in the L1 corpus constitute 59.2 % of the used hedges. Though ‘*may*’ is on the top list of the most frequent hedges in the L2 list, the L2’s frequencies of ‘*may*’ (134) are more than 50% fewer than that (321) in the L1 corpus. Only one lexical verb appeared in the L2 list ‘*appear*’ while two appeared in the L1 list ‘*indicate* and *appear*’. It is important to find that the most frequent words in both lists occurred in most of the scripts: the Egyptian top five and the epistemic modal verbs in the L1 corpus were used by more than 30 writers in each corpus (see Table 25).

Table 25: Most frequent hedges

Word/s	L2 writers		L1 writers		
	Raw occurrences (No. of texts)	% of total hedges	Word/s	Raw occurrences (No. of texts)	% of total hedges
<i>may</i>	134 (38)	19.0	<i>may</i>	321 (37)	23.3
<i>might</i>	116 (34)	16.4	<i>could</i>	226 (35)	16.4
<i>could</i>	86 (33)	12.2	<i>would</i>	121 (28)	8.8
<i>can</i>	82 (31)	11.6	<i>indicate</i>	84 (30)	6.1
<i>indicate</i>	39 (33)	5.5	<i>appear</i>	65 (23)	4.7
Total		64.6			59.2

What is interesting in this data is that the epistemic lexical verbs, e.g. *seem* and '*appear*' did not occur in the top list of the L2 corpus as '*seem*' came sixth in the list (20 times) and '*appear*' at the bottom of the list (7 times), but those lexical verbs ranked fifth and sixth in the L1 list (51 times and 65 times), respectively. This shows that the frequencies of '*seem*' and '*appear*' in the L2 corpus are one fifth of the L1 frequencies. Also, the most frequent used adjective was *possible* in both corpora 27 times in the L2 and 64 times in the L1's, but '*probable*', for example, was underused in the L1 texts (1 time) and did occur in the L2 corpus.

Fifteen hedges occurred only in the British corpus; the most frequent are '*generally*' (44 times) and '*probably*' (31 times). Only four hedging exponents appeared in the L2 texts and did not appear in the L1's: they are '*mostly*' (7 times), '*uncertain*' (2), '*argue*' (4) and '*claim*' (1). In the following section, the data collected from boosters and hedges are combined together to explore the use of hedging and boosting devices according to their semantic categories.

4.3.3 Semantic categories: epistemic commitment

The difference between the Egyptian L2 and the British L1 corpora is explored in terms of the distribution of the epistemic commitment devices across semantic categories. In the following section, writer groups are differentiated according to their use of three different semantic categories: certainty, probability and possibility.

An overview of the raw data indicates that both corpora contain 2122 epistemic devices (EDs). When calculating this data per 1000 words, it was found that both writer groups used 21.07 EDs per 1000 words; about sixty nine percent of these devices were used by the British L1 writers while the rest was used by the Egyptian L2 (see Figure 21). EDs in the L2 and L1 corpora total

8.39 and 12.69 (per 1000 words), respectively. The L1 writers use roughly 10% more as many EDs as the L2 writers.

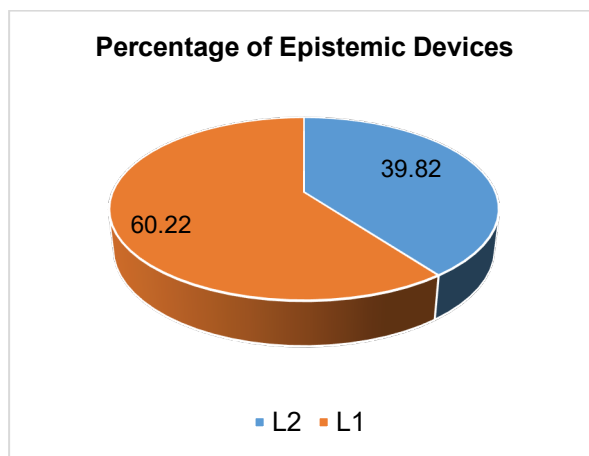


Figure 21: Percentages of semantic categories between L2 and L1 writers

The pie chart in Figure 22 reveals that the possibility devices are the most used markers as they constitute more than half of the total used devices (11.42 per 1000 words); the probability devices came second (33%) with 6.92 devices per 1000 words and finally, the certainty markers (13%) with 2.76 per 1000 words.

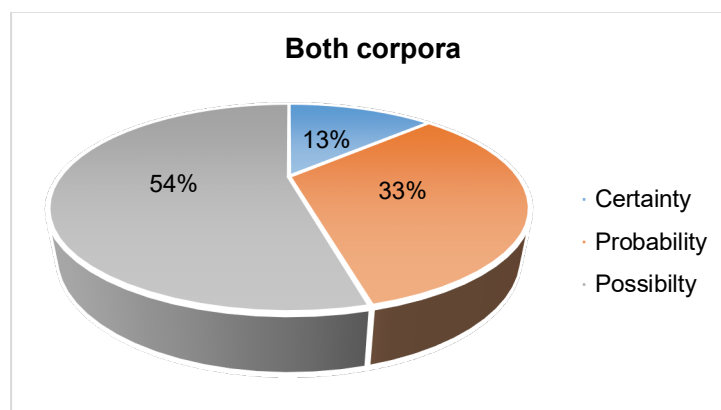


Figure 22: Percentages of total epistemic commitment devices

It is clear from the data in Figure 23 that in all semantic categories, the devices appeared more often in the L1 corpus than the L2 one. It can be noticed that there is a slight difference between the percentages of the certainty devices used between the L2 and the L1 (49.05% to 50.95%), respectively, but there is a substantial difference in terms of possibility devices (44.83% to

55.17%), and a remarkable difference when using the probability devices (27.81 % to 72.19%), respectively.

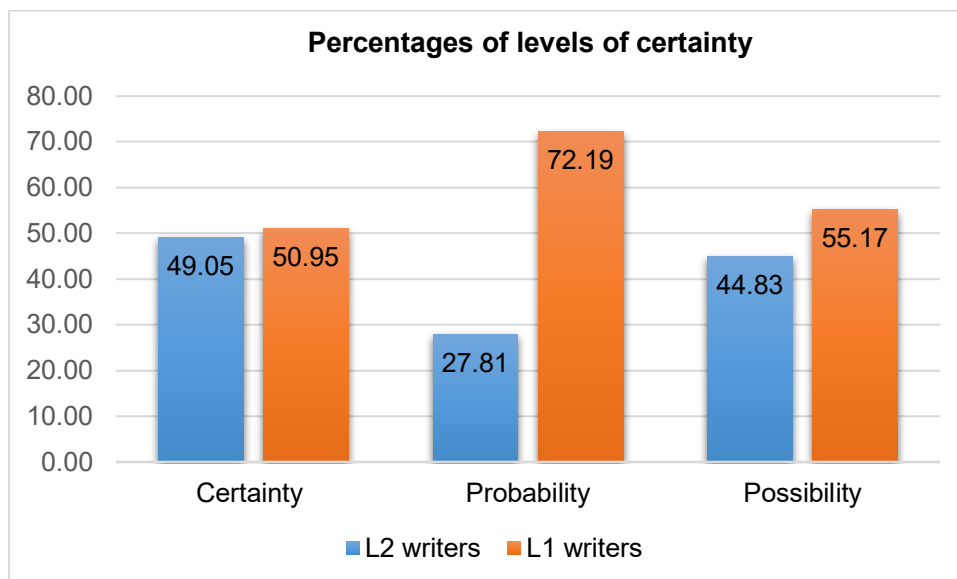


Figure 23: Percentages of levels of epistemic commitment between the two corpora

As Table 26 reveals, the L2 writers' use 1.35, 1.92 and 5.11 devices per 1000 words in terms of certainty, probability and possibility, respectively, while the L1 writers' use 1.41, 4.99 and 6.92 per 1000 words. The L2 writers used also a wider range of EDs (3 more certainty, 9 more probability and 3 more possibility) than the L2, and this was expected as the text analysis of boosters and hedges in the previous sections illustrated this.

Table 26: Semantic categories: Raw number and per 1000 words

Writer Group	Certainty	Probability	Possibility
L2 writers	121 (1.35)	172 (1.92)	457 (5.11)
L1 writers	152 (1.41)	540 (4.99)	680 (6.29)
Total	273 (2.76)	712 (6.92)	1137(11.40)

Though standardising the frequencies give more valid data for comparison between the two writer groups, the raw data are presented to demonstrate the most frequent certainty, probability and possibility devices to provide more numerical clarity.

Table 27 shows the top 10 items of the most frequent certainty devices in both the L2 and L1 corpora. Those items constitute around 96% of the L2 corpus and about 92% of in the L1 corpus of the total frequencies of EDs. The table reports that *the fact that* and *clearly* are the most

frequent items in both corpora with more than 50% of the total used devices. Even though the number of markers used differs, both groups show significant similarities in their use of those devices listed among the 10 most frequent. Eight devices, i.e. *'the fact that, clearly, actually, always, indeed, prove, must and never'*, are common to both writer groups although the frequency of occurrence for each such word is different between the groups. For instance, *'prove'* was used 10 times in the L2 corpus, but 3 times in the L1 corpus.

Table 27: Raw No. of certainty devices between L2 and L1 writers

Rank	Certainty Devices	L2 writers	% to all certainty devices	L1 writers	% to all certainty devices
1	the fact that	43	35.54	32	21.05
2	clearly	32	26.45	30	19.74
3	actually	11	9.09	9	5.92
4	always	6	4.96	11	7.24
5	indeed	8	6.61	7	4.61
6	certainly	0	0.00	11	7.24
7	certain	0	0.00	11	7.24
8	prove	10	8.26	3	1.97
9	must	4	3.31	7	4.61
10	never	2	1.65	9	5.92
	Total	121		152	

The most remarkable aspect of the data is that the adverbs are reported to be the preferred devices when expressing certainty by both text writers. As can be seen from the table, the most frequent five devices after *the fact that* in the L1 data are adverbs *'clearly, actually, always, indeed and certainly'* constituting more than 40% of the total certainty items. Similarly, the L2 figures show that the second, third, fourth and fifth most frequent devices *'clearly, actually, always and indeed'* constitute more than 45% of the total certainty devices.

Turning now to the probability devices, Table 28 reveals that the top 10 items constitute about 99% of the L2 corpus and about 92% of the L1's of the total frequencies of the probability devices. The modal verb *would* is reported to be the most frequent probability device in both corpora. Yet, the figures show that the epistemic verbs *'indicate, seem, suggest and appear'* are preferred by both text writers as they constitute around 60% in the L2 texts and about 46% in the L1 one. Interestingly, there were, yet, differences in the proportions as epistemic *would* occurs three times and *indicate* is represented twice as frequently in the L1 data compared to the L2

corpus. Also, *appear* occurs very often in the L1 texts (12.04% of the probability devices) while it is represented very rarely in the L2 scripts (4.04%). Both '*probably* and *generally*' occur 73 times in the L1 texts, but they do not occur in the L2 corpus.

Table 28: Raw No. of probability devices between L2 and L1 writers

Rank	Probability Devices	L2 writers	% to all probability devices	L1 writers	% to all probability devices
1	would	38	22.09	121	22.41
2	indicate	38	22.09	84	15.56
3	seem	20	11.63	51	9.44
4	suggest	23	13.37	42	7.78
5	appear	7	4.04	65	12.04
6	generally	0	0.00	41	7.79
7	likely	10	5.81	25	4.63
8	in general	22	12.79	8	1.48
9	probably	0	0.00	31	5.74
10	often	9	5.23	22	4.07
	Total	172		540	

Moving to the possibility devices, which constitute more than half of the total epistemic items (56%), it is clear from the data in Table 28 that both writer groups used '*may*' more often than any other possibility device with 29.32% in the L2 and 47.21% in the L1; however, it is represented more than twice as often in the L1 texts than the L2's. However, the data reports that the L2 writers used '*might*' three times more often than the L1 and used '*can*' and '*possible*' considerably more frequently than the British English L1. Another similarity between the two corpora is that both writer groups prefer using modal verbs when expressing possibility as the top four possibility words are '*may, could, might* and *can*' in both corpora constituting more than 90% of all possibility devices in in both corpora (see Table 29).

Table 29: Raw No. of possibility devices between L2 and L1 writers

Rank	Possibility Devices	L2 writers	% of all possibility devices	L1 writers	% of all possibility devices
1	may	134	29.32	321	47.21
2	could	86	18.82	226	33.23
3	might	116	25.38	38	5.59
4	can	82	17.94	53	7.79
5	possible	27	5.91	4	0.59
6	sometimes	7	1.53	4	0.59
7	perhaps	5	1.09	22	3.24
8	possibility	0	0	5	0.74
9	possibly	0	0	4	0.59
10	tentatively	0	0	3	0.44
	Total	457		608	

Taken together, these results suggest that the L1 corpus contains considerably more certainty, probability and possibility devices than the L2 one including about 60% of the total devices while the L2 scripts contain the other 40%. The possibility markers are the most frequent devices in the two corpora with around 56% whereas the certainty devices were the least used (13%). There are significant similarities between the two writer groups as they mostly share the top ten list of each category of epistemic meaning. However, there is a remarkable difference in the frequencies of each device, as it is noticed that the L1 writers sometimes used some devices three times more frequently than the L2, e.g. '*would*' in the probability devices, and other devices are used in the L1 corpora twice more often than in the L2, e.g. '*may* and *could*' in the possibility category. Finally, when considering the part-of-speech used to realise epistemic modality by the two writer groups further similarities become apparent. Epistemic modal verbs were preferred by both writer groups when expressing possibility while epistemic lexical verbs were used mostly when expressing probability, but adverbs were their favourite devices to express certainty.

4.3.4 Self-mentions

Self-mentions refer to the lexical devices that refer to the writer in the text whether explicitly by using person pronouns, possessive adjectives etc., e.g. '*I, we, me*' etc. or implicitly, e.g. '*the author, the researcher*' etc. It is a matter of the writers' choice whether they decide to be present or absent in their transcripts. The self-mention features are one of two categories that did not show any statistically significant differences between the L2 writers and the L1 peers ($p=.652$). The results from the descriptive text analysis reveals that both writer group corpora contain only 2% of the total stance markers (see Table 30). It can be seen from the table that the text writers preferred to refer implicitly to themselves in the texts as the implicit references constitute 70% of the total self-mentions. However, it is noticed that the L1 corpus contains remarkably more explicit self-mentions than the L2 corpus (3 to 18, respectively).

Table 30: Frequencies and percentages of self-mentions

	L2 writers		L1 writers	
	Raw number	% of all self-mentions	Raw number	% of all self-mentions
Explicit	3 (22 text)	11.5	18 (13 texts)	48.6
Implicit	23	88.5	19 (7 text)	51.4
Total	26		37	

Moving to the frequencies of the self-mentions, both text writers used five types out of eleven (Hyland's list): three types by the L2 writers and five types by the L1. It is clear that *the researcher* is significantly the most used device by both text writers (88.5%) in the L2 texts and (48.6%) in the L1. The person pronoun 'I' appeared fifteen times in five texts of the L1 corpus while it is mentioned only once in one text in the L2 corpus. Yet, it should be mentioned that the personal pronoun I appeared nine times in only one text in the L1 transcripts. It was noticed that the L2 writers preferred to be objective and never to refer to themselves explicitly or implicitly in twenty-two transcripts whereas the self-mentions did not appear in eighteen of the L2 texts. The features '*the author* and *me*' appeared once each in the L1 corpus but never seen in the L2 texts (see Table 31).

Table 31: Frequencies of self-mentions

Word/s	L2 writers			Word/s	L1 writers		
	Raw No. (No of texts)	/1000 words	% of total self-mentions		Raw No. (No of texts)	/1000 words	% of total self-mentions
The researcher	23 (20)	0.26	88.5	The researcher	18 (12)	0.17	64.9
my	2 (1)	0.02	7.7	I	15 (5)	0.14	24.3
I	1 (1)	0.01	3.8	my	2 (2)	0.02	5.4
				me	1 (1)	0.01	2.7
				The author	1 (1)	0.01	2.7

4.3.5 Attitude markers

Writer's attitude markers, e.g. '*agree, important, surprisingly*', refer to their affective attitude rather than to epistemic propositions. They may convey interest, surprise, agreement, importance, etc., rather than commitment. The attitude features are the second devices, after hedges that showed statistically significant difference between the two writer groups. The L1 writers employed more significantly attitude markers than the L2 texts ($p = .034$). The total raw number of the lexical devices used by both text writers to express attitudinal meanings is (2.2 per 1000 words) constituting 13.7% of the total stance markers with 59.6% used by the L1

writers and 40.4% by the L2 peers. Table 32 shows that adjectives and adverbs constitute the most attitude devices in both corpora with a raw number of 385 devices out of 434. The L1 writers' use of adjectives (158 devices) is approximately doubled when compared with L2 writers (74 devices). Also, the data shows verbs and nouns are underused in both writer group texts.

Table 32: Grammatical categories of attitude markers

Grammatical Categories	L2 writers			L1 writers		
	Raw No.	/1000 words	% of all Attitudes	Raw No.	/1000 words	% of all Attitudes
Adjectives	74	0.83	47.44	158	1.5	56.8
Adverbs	70	0.78	44.87	83	0.77	29.9
Nouns	8	0.09	5.13	29	0.3	10.4
Verbs	4	0.04	2.56	8	0.1	2.9
Total	156	1.74	100.00	278	2.6	100.0

Figure 24 indicates

ates that adjectives constitute more than 50% of the attitude categories in both corpora, adverbs came second with around 35% while verbs came last with less than 3%. The graph shows that the L2 writers used adjectives about 19% of all attitude markers in both corpora which is about 12% less than the adjectives used by the L1 writers. There is a similarity between the writer groups in terms of using adverbs (about 18%) and both of them underused nouns and verbs. The Figures report that the L2 writers have balance in using adjectives and adverbs with 19.18% for adjectives and 18.1% for adverbs, but the L1 writers largely preferred the adjectives.

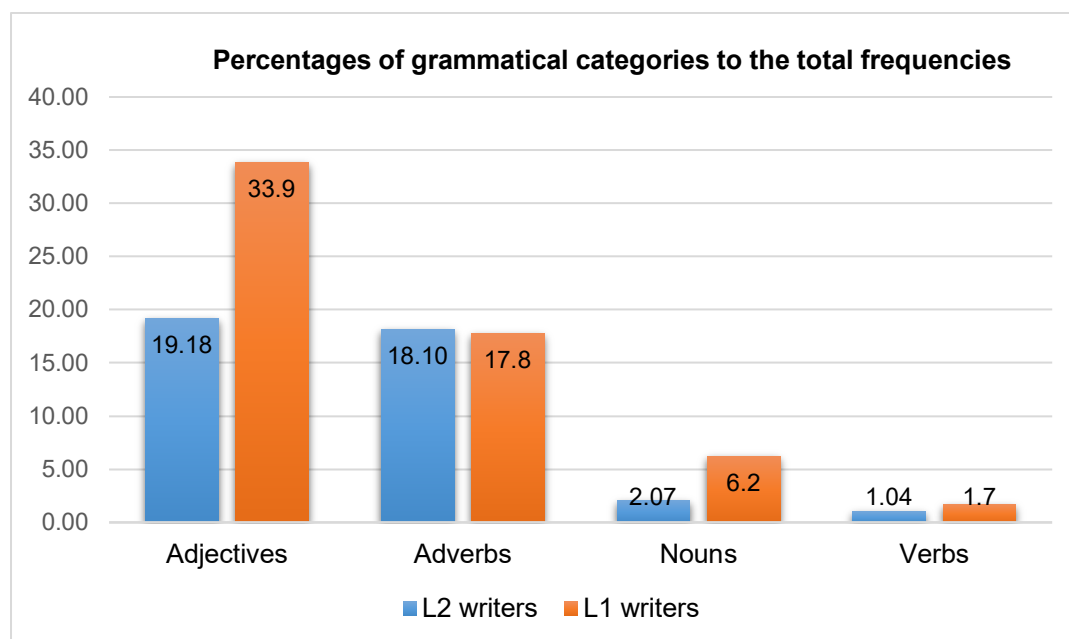


Figure 24: Percentages of grammatical categories

The data collected revealed that like hedges, boosters and self-mentions, the L1 writers use a larger range of attitude markers than the L2 writers. The L2 writers employed 13 types of attitude markers while the L1 writers used 21 types which constitute about 20% of the total types of stance markers (20 out of 169). There is a slight difference in the top five used devices by each writer group; the data shows that they share the items '*important, even and significant*' while '*correctly and interest*' are only in the top L2 list; '*interestingly and unfortunately*' are only in the L1 top list.

Table 33: Most frequent attitude markers

Word/s	L2 writers		Word/s	L1 writers	
	Raw occurrences (No. of texts)	% of total Attitudes		Raw occurrences (No. of texts)	% of total attitudes
<i>important</i>	42 (32)	26.9	<i>important</i>	87 (35)	31.3
<i>even</i>	36 (21)	23.1	<i>significant</i>	48 (27)	17.3
<i>significant</i>	29 (18)	18.6	<i>interestingly</i>	29 (25)	10.4
<i>correctly</i>	27 (6)	17.3	<i>unfortunately</i>	15 (13)	5.4
<i>interest</i>	4 (4)	2.6	<i>even</i>	15 (9)	5.4
Total		88.5			69.8

As seen in the table above, the frequencies of *important* and *significant* constitute about 45% of the total attitude markers used in each corpus. It is important to say that though the word '*correctly*' occurred 27 times in the Egyptian texts, only six text writers used it; it was noticed that one Egyptian writer used it 12 times in their discussion chapter. However, there is a balance of the occurrences of the other attitude words in most of the analysed texts.

4.3.6 Using the quantitative data to guide the interviews

The aim of RQ-1 is to uncover patterns of students' lexical choices. As discussed in the methodology section, the main trends of the quantitative findings were used as prompts in the DBIs in the qualitative data collection. Therefore, a few stance markers in each category were selected to guide the interview protocol; these markers are:

Boosters: '*show, demonstrate, the fact that, believe, think*'

Hedges: '*can, could, may might, indicate, suggest, probably, possibly, seem, appear*'

Self-mentions: '*the researcher, I*'

Attitude markers: *'important, significant, interestingly, surprisingly, even'*

However, during the interview protocol, the above devices were used in chunks to investigate interviewees' perception and knowledge of the similarities and differences among them, e.g.

Chunk one: *show, demonstrate, suggest and indicate* when revealing un/certainty

Chunk two: epistemic *'may, might, can, could, would'*

Chunk three: epistemic *'seem and appear'*

Chunk four: *'probably and possibly'*

Chunk five: *'I' and 'the researcher'*

Chunk six: *'important and significant'*

Chunk seven: *'interestingly and surprisingly'*

Chunk eight: *'believe and think'*

Chunk nine: *'the fact that'*

Chunk ten: *'even'*

4.4 Conclusion

Based on the statistical analysis of data obtained, the following findings have been established:

1. How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and British MA students (English L1 writers) employ stance markers:

a. What similarities in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:

I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,

There is no statistically significant difference between the total numbers of stance markers between the two writer groups.

II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,

There is no statistically significant difference in using boosters and self-mentions between the two writer groups. Also, there do not appear to be noticeable differences in the way individual

categories of stance markers are used by both writer groups. Both text writers used nearly similar types of hedges, boosters and attitude markers.

III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,

Both writer groups showed similarities in the preferences of lexical verbs in case of boosters, epistemic modal verbs in the case of hedges and adjectives in the case of attitude markers.

Concerning self-mentions, the implicit self-reference '*the researcher*' was the preferred lexical item in both corpora.

IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?

Possibility devices were found the most in both corpora (56% of all devices).

b. What differences in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:

I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,

The British L1 writers used considerably more types (100) compared to (69) types used by the Egyptian L2 writers.

II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,

There is a statistically significant difference in terms of using hedges and attitude markers; the L1 writers used significantly more hedges and attitude markers than the L2 writers. Also, the data reported that the L1 writers used noticeably more types of hedges (43) and attitude markers (12) than the L2 writers (28 and 18, respectively). Moreover, a difference was found in using self-mentions, i.e. the personal pronoun 'I'.

III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,

The only difference is that very few instances of the person pronoun 'I' were found in the L2 texts (0.01 per 1000 words) compared to the instances in the L1 scripts (0.22 per 1000 words).

IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?

The L1 group used considerably more EDs (60.2%) in the total number of devices, particularly when using probability devices (72.4%) compared to (27.6%) to the L2 group.

The results in the conclusion are discussed in relation to the research questions and literature review in Chapter Six. Moreover, a few findings of the quantitative data were used to guide the interviews with some of the text writers in the following chapter as explained in section 4.3.6.

Chapter Five: Qualitative Results (RQs 2&3)

5.1 Introduction

The quantitative results reveal that L1 writers used statistically significant more hedges and attitude markers while there is no significant difference between the two writer groups in terms of the overall quantity of stance markers, boosters and self-mentions. Further analysis indicates that the markers most used by L1 and L2 writers (with a slight variation) are epistemic modals, e.g. *may* and *could*, epistemic verbs, e.g. *show* and *demonstrate*, and attitudinal markers e.g. *important* and *significant*. It was noticed also that L1 writers referred to themselves implicitly and explicitly by using both *the researcher* and *I* while the L2 writers preferred using the implicit reference *the researcher*.

The main trends of the quantitative results (see Table 34) were be used to seed prompts for the discourse-based interviews with some of the text writers.

Table 34: A list of the used stance markers in the DBI

Boosters	<i>show, demonstrate, the fact that, believe, think</i>
Hedges	<i>may, might, can, could, would, indicate, suggest, seem, appear, probably, possibly</i>
Attitude markers	<i>important(ly), significant(ly), interesting(ly), surprising(ly), even</i>
Self-mentions	<i>I, the researcher</i>

Discourse-based semi-structured interviews were conducted to answer RQ-2: “*What stance do some text writers (both Egyptian and British) prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their lexical choices?*”.

Twenty of the text writers were interviewed to investigate their perceptions towards using certain linguistic features, namely, these devices’ functions and their degree of certainty in case of boosters and hedges while at the same time the interviews provided accounts of the reasons that motivated text writers to choose and use these linguistic features. It was considered in the interview that each interview protocol would include contexts of the selected prompts whether in the interviewee’s own text as in stage-2 or from other discussion chapters as in stage-3 (see Appendix-4) to make sure each interviewee would be asked about the same prompts.

A systematic approach was conducted during the interview in a way that the prompts were divided into chunks, i.e. epistemic modals '*may, might, can, could, would*', epistemic verbs '*seem, appear, indicate, show*', attitude markers '*important, significant*', attitude markers '*interesting/ly, surprising/ly*', and self-mentions '*I, the researcher*'. The following excerpt taken from (BR-3 interview) displays the flow of the interview questions/probes to investigate the interviewee's perceptions about the epistemic modal verb *could*. (I) refers to me (the interviewer) while (BR-3) refers to the participant or the interviewee (BR=British, EGY=Egyptian). The word or the prompt that the questions were about are emboldened in the student's academic text (the first shaded table below) while it will be capitalised in the interview transcript (the zigzag lines Table).

Excerpt from BR-3 discussion chapter:

*The communicative language classroom promotes not only the spoken language but group and pair work with discussions that have no clear structure and thus **could** be perceived as disorganised as the GTM classroom is very structured. (BR-3)*

Excerpt from BR-3 interview:

I: *What impression did you want your reader to have from using the word **COULD**?*

BR-3: *again.. i couldn't conclusively point out through my findings.. i wasn't explicit in my questionnaire and my interviews therefore.. i didn't have conclusive answers so it may not have a conclusive structure and 'this **COULD** be perceived as disorganised...**COULD** be*

I: *if you use **IS** instead of **COULD BE**, will you have the same meaning*

BR-3: *wo no.... this is absolute certainty...in this context...i am not certain.. i avoid being certain...mm.. because my findings didn't show absolute certainty... **COULD** is the right word.*

I: *well... if we put **CAN** instead of **COULD***

BR-3: *...no **COULD** is more academically... professional... **CAN** is rather.. mm.. informal. It's something you would speak not something you'd write*

I: *what about **MAY**...if I say 'this **MAY** be perceived' ...do you see a difference?*

BR-3: *no...no.. i don't see any difference but i wouldn't use **MAY** ... because I've used it there so it's repetition.*

I: *if you haven't used it there, will you use it*

BR-3: *mm.. yeah but **MAY BE** is a very bland form of expression ...**COULD** is more definite.*

I: *what do you mean by definite*

BR-3: *mmm... more definite i mean stronger*

As seen above, first the interviewee's belief about the function of the word '*could*' is elicited. And then, it was probed their perception of the difference if '*can* or '*may*' were used instead.

The fact that both the L1 and L2 writers used hedges more than boosters does not indicate that they used hedges excessively or they should have used more boosters, since these uses needed extensive study of the context which would be too time consuming for a study of this size. Yet, the functions of some boosters, hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions were explored and how they were used and perceived by the text writers.

DBIs were conducted with twenty participants (twelve Egyptians and eight British) to answer RQ-2 “*What stance do some text writers -both Egyptian and British- prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their lexical choices?*”. Participants’ stance preferences are explored in section 5.2; participants’ perceptions about certain stance markers are explored in sections 5.3, 5.4, 5.5 and 5.6. It should be noticed that students’ perceptions in this study refers to what functions stance markers do in their texts, their awareness of the epistemic commitment of boosters and hedges, and their views about the selected stance devices. Finally, the potential reasons behind text writers’ use of stance markers are outlined in section 5.7.

5.2 Participants’ stance preferences

To answer the first part “*What stance do some text writers -both Egyptian and British- prefer to take?*”, participants answered section four (1, 2 and 3) in the interview (see Appendix 4). When the participants were asked to describe the relationship they try to establish with their readers, all the L1 participants (8) said that they prefer taking a measured stance when writing in academic English, while only half of the L2 participants (6) agreed with the L1s. Three English L2 participants preferred an assertive stance, especially if they are analysing quantitative data in their research, but the other three stated that ‘it depends’. When their responses were probed (What do you mean by ‘It depends?’), they argued that if we are talking about statistics and the obtained data are fixed, we may take an assertive stance, but when dealing with qualitative data, a measured stance would be better (see Figures 25 and 26).

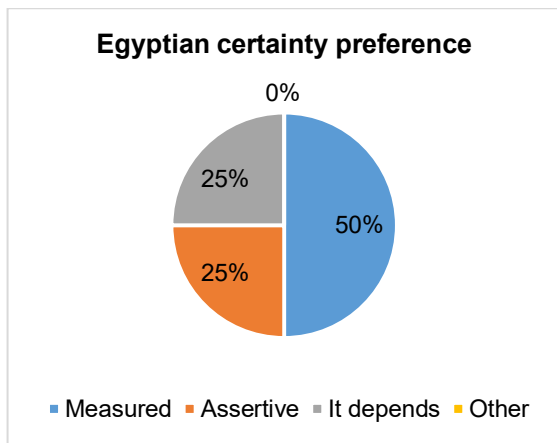


Figure 25: L2 writers' certainty preference

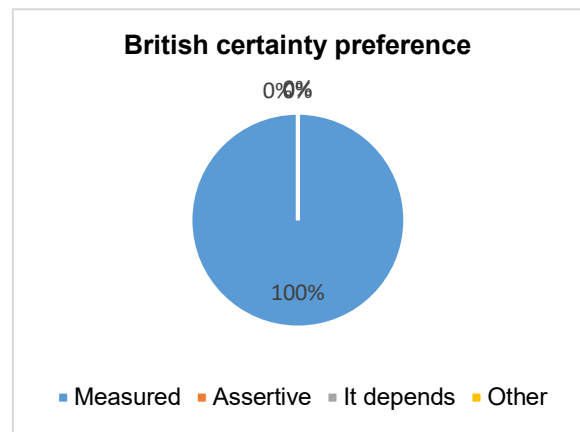


Figure 26: L1 writers' certainty preference

The second question was how they describe the way they try to refer to themselves in the text. The pie charts in Figures 27 and 28 suggest similar percentages between the two groups concerning preferring using implicit references '*the researcher*' in the academic text. Eight Egyptian (67%) and five British (63%) participants preferred *the researcher* while three Egyptian and one British participants would like to use the person pronoun '*I*'.

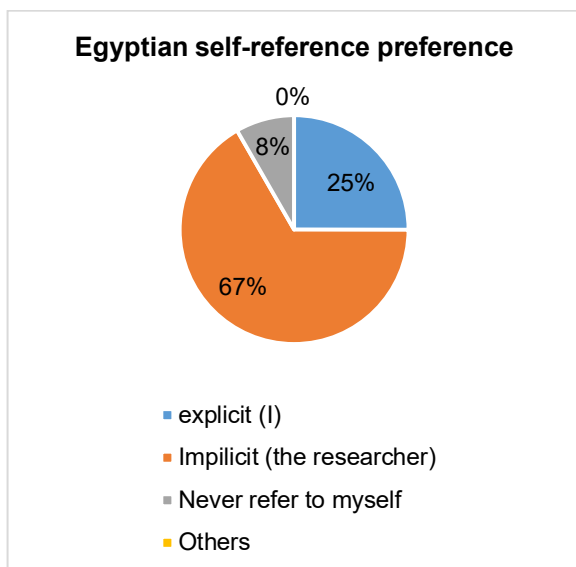


Figure 27: L2 writers' self-reference in the text

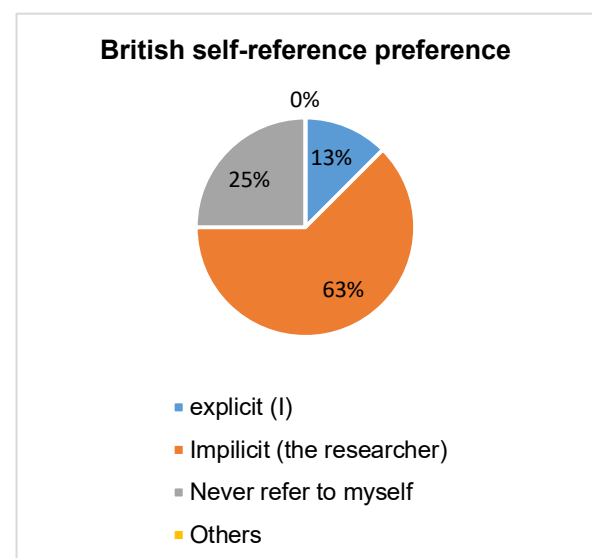


Figure 28: L1 writers' reference in the text

The pie charts in Figures 29 and 30 show that the majority of both group's participants said 'it depends' when expressing their attitudes in the academic texts. They argued that they express their attitudes according to the contexts, i.e. they usually use attitude words such as '*important*' and '*significant*'; however, they have concerns about words like '*surprising*' or '*interesting*'. Some

of them said that they must not be used in the academic texts as they are informal or spoken words. Yet, only a few said that these words *'surprising or interesting'* could be used in limited cases when the study has unexpected results.

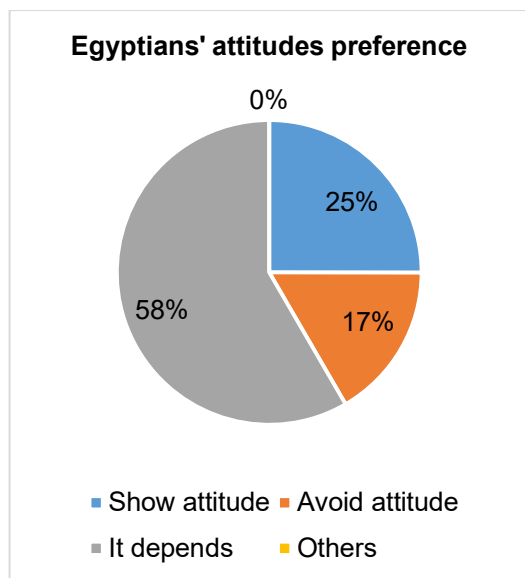


Figure 29: L2 writers' attitude preferences

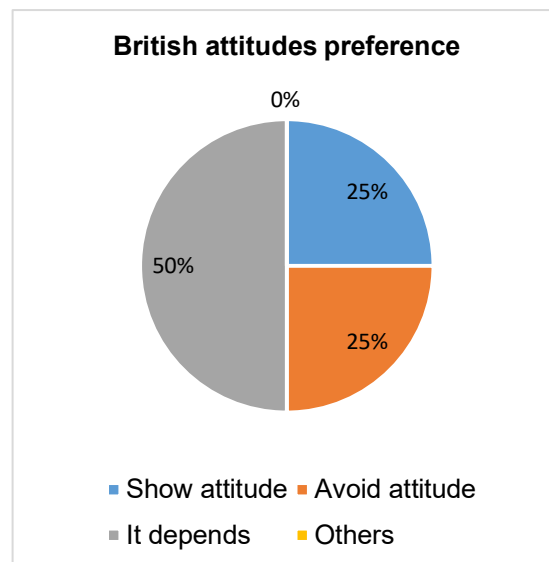


Figure 30: L1 writers' attitudes preferences

Both L2 and L1 participants expressed similar views about their perceptions of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers. The word 'perceptions' in this study refers to the functions of the used markers and in which context they use these words, and the participants' views about using certain stance markers. Therefore, the following sections explore how both L2 and L1 participants used certain stance markers and their functions. Based on the participants' views, the functions of the categories of stance marker, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers are stated. First, excerpts from the participants' discussion chapters are presented with stance markers highlighted. Then, the quotes that explain why the text writers (participants) wrote in that way is presented afterwards.

5.3 Boosters

Boosters are a type of language use which text writers employ to indicate high level of certainty. Both L2 and L1 participants used the selected boosters to express a certain function in the context they are in. In section 5.3.1 participants report functions of their boosters used in the text.

5.3.1 Functions of boosters

According to the interview participants, three main functions of boosters were reported: expressing a high degree of confidence in the indications provided by the results acquired through the study, conveying the writer's interpretation as a generally accepted idea or fact and conveying the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way. Each function is explored based on excerpts taken from the study corpora and the interviewees' responses.

The main reason for using assertive words was justified by most students of the quantitative data they collected.

5.3.1.1 To express a high degree of confidence in the indications provided by the results acquired through the study

Examples 1–4 show some extracts including boosters from both corpora: examples 1 and 3 are from the Egyptian corpus while examples 2 and 4 are from the British one. These examples include some of the highlighted boosters in the quantitative data. Each participant was shown their text with their booster highlighted and participants were asked about the impression they wanted to convey to their readers when they wrote these words.

1. *The researcher would argue that these results **show** that there is definite similarity between the opinions of ... (EGY-5)*
2. *The quantitative data **demonstrate** a clear evidence of the impact of the gender on ... (BR-2)*
3. *From the previous table, it is **believed** that using technology in language learning is ... (EGY-7)*
4. ***The fact that** all of the NS participants, as opposed to two thirds of NNS from the questionnaire, responded positively to the question is an indication that NS participants have more positive attitudes towards teaching the subject in this regard. (BR-7)*

Participants EGY-5, BR-2, EGY-7 and BR-7 stated that they usually use the above highlighted words '*show, demonstrate, believed and the fact that*' when they are certain and confident of their statements; they say that the results of the study make them more confident to express a

strong stance towards the ideas stated. Quantitative results provide them with appropriate evidence to affirm that their position. Participant EGY-5 confirmed that 'show' is usually used by him when writing about their quantitative results. These data give him the confidence to be assertive in his claims.

EGY-5: *i used to write the word SHOW when writing my results...because this is a result ...especially it is a quantitative result not interpretation of mine ... i have the significance and the evidence to be clear and assertive. if i do not have the evidence.. i may say something else.*

I: *like what?*

EGY-5: *i will say ... SUGGEST for example.*

In the same way, BR-2 said that getting quantitative results from objective measurements make him more self-assured to use words like 'demonstrate' or 'show' when reporting his results.

BR-2: *i used quantitative methods in my studyi used objective measurements and did numerical analysis of data collected through surveys... this helped me present clear findings with strong positions...i am confident and certain of the results i reached...*

With reference to examples-3 and 4, EGY-7 and BR-7 (respectively) said that they used the words 'believed / the fact that' because they were sure of the statistical results they received.

EGY-7: *i guess i used it because this is the part where i demonstrate the statistical part. i used this word BELIEVED because i am sure of my data...*

BR-7: *i am talking about the results of my questionnaire. i have numbers and i am sure of these numbers.. so i wanted to convey to my reader that this is a fact based on my results.*

The second function of using boosters (see below) is that they are consistent with accepted facts or ideas.

5.3.1.2 To convey the writer's interpretation to a generally accepted idea or fact

Examples 5–7 below show some extracts taken from EGY-11, EGY-7 and BR-8 texts. The following examples include the boosters '*the fact that* and *show*'.

5. *This program provided the students with good opportunities to express themselves freely, especially that middle adolescents are in an urgent need to have an outlet to **show** their opinions and reflect their personalities, **a fact that** might have contributed to developing students' attitudes towards learning EFL. (EGY-11)*

6. *The research sample was a 'non-probability' one that only focused on specific teachers teaching IELTS classes and 11th and 12th graders studying for the exam at the IAT. Despite **the fact that** such sampling could lead to bias as suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000), it satisfied the researcher's need to measure the exam impact on the actual concerned parties. (EGY-7)*

7. *Considering the relatively considerable amount of lexical material in the book, it can be assumed that there should be more guidance regarding to aspects of word knowledge, for example collocation and colligation) and to **the fact that** often this information can be found in dictionaries. (BR-8)*

The participants said that they used the above emboldened boosters to convey or show their interpretation to generally accepted ideas, facts or theories. This occurred frequently when asking about the phrase '*the fact that*' or a few other words, e.g. '*show*'. EGY-11 stated that '*show* and *a fact that*' were used because she was talking about a programme that has been generally accepted for a long time. That's why she sees that these words are appropriate in this context.

EGY-11: i am talking about something here... that has been tested... this programme has been used and approved to be successful... no deny for that.

Similarly, EGY-7 argued that she was referring to opinions received from well-known scholars; these opinions are considered as facts in the literature as they are commonly accepted and known by others.

EGY-7: ..here i am referring to a generally accepted conclusion or.. or opinion by well-known scholars that ... small sample could lead to bias...this is a general fact in research and an idea that is accepted by the literature... it is like a fact ...there is no doubt of that.

In the same vein, BR-8 said that she was referring to dictionaries which are generally accepted sources of information among learners.

BR-8: i wanted to say that generally this kind of information about the aspects of word knowledge like collocation and colligation are found in dictionaries .. dictionaries are normally the main source of that...this is commonly known among language learners.

5.3.1.3 To convey the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way

In addition to their certainty and confidence to the presented facts, the research participants stated that one of the other functions of boosters used in their texts is to express their positions and opinions in a discrete way. Examples 8, 9 and 10 below are taken from BR-8, EGY-12 and EGY-9's texts.

8. Furthermore, **the fact that** the book includes learning advice related to other approaches and techniques that may support independent learning, e.g. extensive reading and keeping a notebook, makes excluding dictionaries the most striking. (BR-8)

9. However, the study emphasises **the fact that** more research is necessary in this field to include all the variables that may affect ICT learning. (EGY-12)

10. Although none of those studies was conducted in the Middle-East, it is **believed that** they could enrich the insight of the researcher.(EGY-9)

The emboldened words '*the fact that* and *believed*' were used in the examples above to convey the writer's viewpoint in a distinct way which is based on the writer's personal opinion, as neither of these statements contains references to other sources. BR-8 said that '*the fact that*' was used based on evidence mentioned later in the text.

BR-8: here i am evaluating the text book. I used THE FACT THAT to show the reader that my opinion is based on evidence that was mentioned after that.

With regard to example-9, EGY-12 established his statement from the fact that his study did not cover all elements and that more research is required to cover all variable in the ICT field (see below).

EGY-12: i wanted to say that it was clear that my study did not cover all the variables that affect using computer in language learning so i wanted to say that my opinion is attributed to that fact...

Similarly, EGY-9 said that he believed from his personal view that certain studies were important for his research though they were not conducted in the Middle East context (see below).

EGY-9: ...may be that I have a strong belief that those studies would be useful for my study though they were not conducted in the middle east context...

The following section explores interviewees' perceptions about hedges used in their academic texts.

5.4 Hedges

Hedging linguistic features function to conform to an established writing style in English. The collected data from the interviewees inform that they are aware of the importance of hedges in academic writing. In general, writers use hedges to suggest an idea based on plausible reasoning rather than on certain knowledge.

5.4.1 Functions of hedges

The interview participants reported four functions of the hedges they used in their submitted MA texts. These are showing lack of certainty, avoiding the reader's potential attack, being more precise in reporting results and mitigating the writer's claim for the purpose of politeness. Each function is explored based on excerpts taken from the study corpora and the interviewees' responses.

5.4.1.1 To show lack of certainty

Participants explained that hedges, such as ‘*seem, might, may, can* and *possibly*’ allow them to express their uncertainty in what they say since they cannot provide clear and strong evidence to support their claims (see examples 11, 12, 13 and 14 below).

11. *The vast numbers of independent variables that accompany it **seem** to work in some settings rather than others..... (EGY-9)*
12. *These differences have resulted in some modifications in the way of how theories of false memory **might** be applied to the result of the current investigation. (EGY-4)*
13. *This anomaly **may** be due to the subconscious nature of the skill where proficient readers are not aware. (BR-8)*
14. *Learners should be provided the opportunity to see how elements have grammar and lexis become grammaticalized ... Not including this **can possibly** reduce the learners’ pragmatic understandings of words and phrases. (BR-6)*

With regard to the example-11, EGY-9 reported that he as the researcher was uncertain of the statement, and the word ‘*seem*’ appropriately expressed his stance in that sentence (see below).

***EGY-9:** ...here you are saying there are many factors and you are not sure which one will give you the final effect .. so you are talking about the independent variable.. and the researcher is not certain which one has more effect.. Is he sure?.. no... that is what SEEM does in the sentence...*

Similarly, both EGY-4 and BR-8 said that they wanted to say that they were not sure of a certain idea, and that is why they used the words ‘*might* and *may*’ before the main verb in examples 12 and 13 (see below).

***EGY-4:** i want to convey that i am not very certain that these theories would be applicable to my study...*

***BR-8:** i want to show that i am not sure enough to say that ‘this anomaly is due to the subconscious nature of the skill..*

In the same vein, BR-6 explained that the epistemic ‘can’ was used in the context to minimise the possibility of the claim; in academic writing, a hedging style should be adopted to reduce the strength of the statement, especially when talking about abstract concepts. It should be noted that this participant is one of three interviewees who mentioned the term ‘hedging’ (see below).

BR-6: i am always told when you're talking academic english .. you need to show some proximate hedging ..you cannot say that something is absolute ..you got to show there is a possibility of something ... to say CAN POSSIBLY is that it is not always going to happen ... i am talking about an abstract concept ... putting CAN.. it shows that there is only some of it is going to happen...

5.4.1.2 To avoid reader’s potential attack

Another role that hedges play in academic writing is that they protect the writer from the reader’s potential attack. That is to say hedging strategies protect writers from making false statements by indicating lack of complete commitment to the proposition (see examples 15, 16 and 17 below).

15. *Based on the observation it is highly likely that the behaviour of the students **may** be culturally linked and educating students of these differences can help avoid stereotyping and conflicts occurring such as that in observation 2 and 3. (BR-1)*

16. *This observation led to that there **might** be a connection between the age of pupils and their disruptive behaviour. (EGY-2)*

17. *Findings **indicated** that there is a need for nurse educators to model critical thinking in all aspects of nursing education. (EGY-12)*

The interviewees revealed that that they were aware of their audience potential disagreement with their statements, therefore they used hedges to acknowledge their readers’ opinions and accommodate their expectations. Hedges play a role here to allow audience to be engaged in the argument to avoid their attack. BR-1, EGY-2 and EGY-12 stated that they used the hedging devices (*may, possibility, might and indicated*) to mitigate their statements; this is a favourable academic writing practice when the writer is not sure and wanted to distance themselves from their claims and give space to the readers to accept or refuse their claims; they confirmed that

writers should remain vague in their language in a way that they make their readers feel that they (the writers) do not have the final word on the subject or the claim (see below).

***BR-1:** ...it would be a problem if I do not use MAY here..in academic writing you should not be so certain because you have to be aware of other views.. MAY here is a qualifying device that means there is a possibility of things.. you are taking a viewpoint and other people may take other views.*

***EGY-2:** i wanted to propose something here...it is not an obligatory suggestion ..it is a possible one..it can be applicable or not..the readers have the choice to accept or refuse.*

***EGY-12:** i wanted to give the reader the impression that he can refuse my supposition that ... i am sure that there is a need for that but i wanted to leave space for the reader to evaluate what i said.*

5.4.1.3 To be more precise in reporting results

Hedges can be used to present the true state of the writers' understanding, and to negotiate an accurate representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion. Writers in academic writing may avoid to present stronger statements because their statements might not be supported by evidence from the data. Therefore, writers try to be more precise in reporting results to reflect their stance from the data (see examples 18, 19 and 20 below).

18. The overall pass rate was slightly higher for males, at 38%, than females, at 35%. Although this is not highly significant, it **may** nevertheless **indicate** that the test content **possibly** favours male participants over females. (BR-2)

19. This **probably** shows that as students adjust to the learner centred approach they start to participate in it and enjoy their experience. (BR-3)

20. Therefore the findings **may** be difficult to compare with other studies that have included other hedging strategies or other lexical devices not included in this study.(EGY-11)

Participants indicated that they should express a more realistic claim better than reflecting the actual results of their research findings. BR-2 stated that his results should be reported

accurately, and his interpretations of them should be cautious because he had small samples (see below).

BR-2: *the words in bold reflect my findings and stats.. i should be uncertain... yes ...and even less uncertain than before because of the number... and... because my samples are very, very small...though there is not much difference here 35% and 38% so it's POSSIBLY, and MAY.*

Likewise, BR-3 confirmed the idea that limited samples or research participants require a tentative language that reflect the reality of this situation. She had few participants in her study so she had to be more tentative when reporting the findings of the study (see below).

BR-3: *i had only eight participants in my study...it is difficult to ...but even .. it is not academic to generalize here... i mean ... i cannot emphasise... my participants were small. i must say PROBABLY before SHOW.*

EGY-11 said that the results of her study should be interpreted and reported accurately as they are not confirmed and open for debate (see below).

Egy-11: *i am interpreting my results, and i should be accurate when doing this. i was comparing my results with others and i found that they are quite different from other studies based on my findings ... my results are not definite here... but they are debatable ... therefore i should use a more careful language.*

5.4.1.4 To mitigate the writer's claim for the purpose of politeness

The last reason why these research participants used hedges in their texts was functionally pragmatic, i.e. to express personal modesty and politeness, concepts which are very important in academic writing and maintain the writer-reader interaction (Hyland, 1996). The following examples (21, 22 and 23) are reported by participants to include hedging devices 'suggested, may, seem and could' that were used to convey a politeness strategy.

21. A comparison of the experimental group participants' responses in the role-plays in the pre-test and post-test **suggested** a considerable degree of improvement towards the socio-pragmatic norms of the target language. (EGY-8)

22. It **may seem** logical to say that the respondents to online ideas and campaigns may resist the ideas or endorse them. (EGY-10)

23. The reason for this result is not known, but **could** relate to differences in grades leading to different attitudes. (BR-8)

EGY-8 and EGY-10 reported that they may use hedges to enable them to devise a politeness strategy where they are able to acknowledge that there may be flaws in their claims indicating that their claims are not marked as absolute fact, and in another way that they should not impose their views or findings on the readers.

***EGY-8:** i am using SUGGESTED as a hedging device because the researcher cannot impose their opinions on the readers as I cannot ensure that all my data are perfect..it is politer to use it here...*

***EGY-10:** in research.. you need to consider your reader...you always need to use probability words like MAY.. MIGHT and COULD.. if you really like saying this is what really happens, then either you prove it by statistics ... if you are too assertive.. this may show disrespect to your academic reader, and you may lose them..*

Similarly, BR-8 stated that they should present their viewpoints in a reserved way, indicating that this displays their respect to the reader (see below).

***BR-8:** i am not sure 100% of my claim..that's why i said..the reason COULD relate... I think this is a good strategy in academic writing to show my reservedness in making claims.*

***I:** how do you think this may have an impact on the reader?*

***BR-8:** ...most importantly, this shows my deference to the readers.*

The following section investigates interviewees' perceptions and awareness of the functions of EDs, their uses and degrees of commitment.

5.4.2 Awareness of epistemic commitment devices

In the previous chapter, writers' use of stance markers was categorised according to their epistemic commitment, i.e. certainty, probability and possibility. Forms of epistemic commitment include, modal verbs (e.g. *may, must*), adverbs (e.g. *probably, possibly*), modal adjectives (e.g. *possible, probable*), lexical verbs (e.g. *think, believe*) and link verbs (e.g. *seem, appear*). In the interview protocol, participants were asked questions to assess their awareness of the level of commitment, i.e. certainty, probability and possibility (see Table 35). For example, if the writer uses the word *show*, they were asked: (*if show is replaced by indicate, would the meaning be different?*).

Table 35: Epistemic commitment categories

Certainty	<i>show, demonstrate</i>
Probability	<i>indicate, suggest, seem, appear, probably, would</i>
Possibility	<i>may, might, can, could, possible</i>

Most interviewed students (both Egyptian and British) showed an unsure awareness of degrees of certainty. When asked about exchanging EDs (e.g. *might vs may or would, seem vs appear, possible vs probable or show vs indicate*), most Egyptian and British interviewed students demonstrated a blurry conception of these linguistic features. While a group of the participants said that they use these linguistic features interchangeably, another group stated that there is a difference in meaning between each pair of words. Another group said that one word could be academic while the other is not.

5.4.2.1 Interchangeable use

The following excerpt includes the possibility modal verbs '*may* and *might*'. EGY-5 was shown the example below. Then, they were asked if '*may* or *would*' were swapped with '*might*', would the meaning be different?

24. *If holistic quality were high among all groups, it **might** indicate that second language writing is easily acquired by second language learners and an emphasis on writing **may** not be necessary in school.*

EGY-5 said that there is no difference between 'may, would, might, can and could'. He uses them interchangeably. For him, they all have the same level of epistemic commitment.

I: if we swab MIGHT with MAY or vice versa, do you think there would be the same meaning?

EGY-5: it is the same...i use them interchangeably

I: ok if i put WOULD instead of MIGHT, what do you think?

EGY-5: It is the same... WOULD, CAN, MAY, MIGHT, MAY have all the same meaning. in my opinion..

In the same way, 'probably and possibly' were emboldened in the following examples, and participants' awareness of their epistemic commitment was investigated (see examples below).

25- Computers **probably** will not replace the teachers, but will supplement their efforts, as has been the pattern with other technologies.

- These are especially important to the L2 learners since they provide a channel through which ideas to be conveyed can **possibly** be realised when the lexical knowledge is limited.

EGY-8 and EGY-2 argued that both words *probably* and *possibly* have the same meaning and they can be used interchangeably.

EGY-8: i guess we can switch both words.. they are the same... the writer here is not sure so that's ok if we swap.

EGY-2: yes.. we can swap..both have the same meaning.

In example (26) below, the word '*indicated*' was emboldened, and BR-4 was asked what would happen if '*showed* or '*demonstrated*' were used instead.

26- Additionally, there was noticeable repetition or overuse of particular strategies which **indicated** a dependence on the same types of strategies.

BR-4 stated that '*indicated*, '*showed* and '*demonstrated*' have all the same meaning, and they are synonyms for each other, but she saw that '*suggest*' was different from them as it shows less mitigation.

I: can we drop INDICATED here and put SHOWED instead?

BR-4: yes.. it is a synonym for the word INDICATED.

I: what about DEMONSTRATED?

BR-4: a synonym I assume..

I: SUGGEST?

BR-4: i think SUGGEST is weaker..

Moving to 'appear and seem', EGY-1, EGY-12, BR-1 and BR-8 said that both words have the same meaning and they can use them interchangeably whether in the context below or any other context when they indicate epistemic meaning.

27- Based on the interviewees' responses, it **appears** that setting clear goals is a significant factor in success in any classroom.

- According to the literature, it **seems** that reading and writing are the most frequently addressed skill areas.

In converse, other interviewees thought that the emboldened words in examples 24, 25, 26 and 26 above cannot be used interchangeably as they indicate different epistemic commitment.

5.4.2.2 Different degrees of certainty

When 'might and may' were shown to BR-1, BR-3, BR-6, EGY-1 and EGY-4 to investigate their awareness of their epistemic commitment, they answered differently from interviewees in section 5.4.2.1.

28- If holistic quality were high among all groups, it **might** indicate that second language writing is easily acquired by second language learners and an emphasis on writing **may** not be necessary in school.

For instance, BR-6 stated that 'may' is similar to 'would' but they are different from 'might'; she sees that 'might and would' are stronger than 'might' (see below).

BR-6: no.. i wouldn't switch here. MAY refers to something in the past. MIGHT is more in the present..... MAY is a weaker form if we are talking about possibility

I: what about WOULD? If it is used instead of MAY or MIGHT?

BR-6: I think ..WOULD is similar to MIGHT...

Moving to '*probably* and *possibly*', BR-3, BR-1, BR-6, EGY-1 and EGY-4 were asked about their perceptions about these words.

29- Computers **probably** will not replace the teachers, but will supplement their efforts, as has been the pattern with other technologies.

- These are especially important to the L2 learners since they provide a channel through which ideas to be conveyed can **possibly** be realised when the lexical knowledge is limited.

BR-3, BR-1, BR-6 argued that '*probably*' gives more certainty and stronger than '*possibly*'.

BR-3: PROBABLY is more of certainty than POSSIBLY.. it is possible but PROBABLY is more CERTAIN ...so it depends on the context if you are more certain you use PROBABLY...

BR-1: i think ..the stronger one is PROBABLY... POSSIBLY ...it's just.... it's just for me i don't know in my mind it just seems like you know you are a bit unsure.

BR-6: ...not quite... when probably.. it is more likely to happen.. POSSIBLY is less likely to happen.. so it depends on what the writer wants to show...

In contrast, EGY-1 and EGY-4 stated that '*possibly*' gives more certainty than '*probably*'.

EGY-1: i think POSSIBLY is stronger than PROBABLY..

EGY-4: POSSIBILITY for me refers to something happened and can be happened once again... but PROBABILITY ... something that has not been tried before ... i have this sense... i match this with the arabic meaning MOMKEN and IMKANIYAH...so I feel that POSSIBLY is stronger than PROBABLY.

Another group of participants thought that it is not an issue of a degree of certainty, but some of these words can be used in academic texts and others cannot.

5.4.2.3 Academic vs non-academic

Other participants believed that certain words are different not on the epistemic level but because one of them is academic and the other is not, or one is formal and the other is informal. These views were raised when participants were asked about ‘*appear* and *seem*’, ‘*demonstrate* and *show*’, and ‘*may* and *might*’ (see the examples below).

30- Based on the interviewees’ responses, it **appears** that setting clear goals is a significant factor in success in any classroom.

- According to the literature, it **seems** that reading and writing are the most frequently addressed skill areas.

BR-5 thinks that ‘*appear* and *seem*’ have the same meaning; however, *appear* sounds more formal for her. She added that the word collocation plays a role in their word-choice as well.

BR-5: generally.. APPEARS and SEEM have the same meaning... APPEARS is more formal ... but again it is a point of word collocation ... if i choose one not the other.. i will say that APPEAR is more formal than SEEM..

On the contrary, EGY-3, EGY-10 and EGY-2 argue that ‘*appear*’ does not have any epistemic meaning; it can be used only to describe physical features, but ‘*seem*’ can do the epistemic job as it can be used with abstract things or ideas (see below).

EGY-3: ..for me.. i would not use APPEAR...i will use SEEM in both examples... i think that APPEAR is about physical features.. but we can use SEEM to talk about abstract things....

EGY-10: i think SEEM is more appropriate here because in both examples we talk about ideas more than visible things where APPEAR would be more appropriate...

EGY-2: APPEAR ..i think ..something that APPEAR...visible thing... but SEEM refers to something abstract..so i will not use appear in both examples

With regard to 'demonstrate, indicate and show', BR-4 and EGY-3 maintain that the three words have the same meaning, but both 'indicate and demonstrate' sound more academic than show (see examples below).

31- The statistical analysis of the students' responses to the writing apprehension questionnaire **demonstrated** that direct corrective feedback was ineffective in reducing the writing apprehension among the study participants.

BR-4: i tend to use INDICATE and DEMONSTRATE in my academic text but maybe not SHOW ...it is less academic..

Though EGY-3 argues that 'indicate and demonstrate' have the same meaning and can be used in the academic text rather than show, he would have to use 'show' in the text to avoid repeating certain words.

EGY-3: i think i may use INDICATE here but i will not use SHOW... DEMONSTRATE and INDICATE are more academic than SHOW... but the problem that i may use SHOW somewhere else to avoid repetition..

Talking about 'may and might' in the example below, BR-5 had a different view as she claimed that it is not a point of epistemic commitment to compare between them, but she see 'might' could be more used in the spoken language than 'may'.

32- If holistic quality were high among all groups, it **might** indicate that second language writing is easily acquired by second language learners and an emphasis on writing **may** not be necessary in school.

Thus, BR-5 believes that 'may' is more formal than 'might' when writing in academic English (see below).

BR-5: i would not say that one is more slightly stronger than the other.. in terms of certainty.. i just think MIGHT is used a lot when we speak.. and MAY is less commonly used... when speaking about the formality or the academic use of words.. MAY is probably more commonly used than MIGHT..

The same point of formality was raised by EGY-11 when talking about '*probably* and *possibly*'. The participant said that they both express uncertainty, but '*probably*' is more formal than '*possibly*' (see the examples and quotation below).

33- Computers **probably** will not replace the teachers, but will supplement their efforts, as has been the pattern with other technologies.

- These are especially important to the L2 learners since they provide a channel through which ideas to be conveyed can **possibly** be realised when the lexical knowledge is limited.

EGY-11: ..regardless of the examples here.. both express uncertainty.. but i see that **PROBABLY** is more formal than **POSSIBLY**..

The interviews' analysis moves now to one of the most controversial issue in this research, students' perceptions about self-mentions.

5.5 Self-mentions

The current study text analysis data showed that slightly more than half of the text writers referred to themselves when writing their discussion chapters (63 instances in 45 texts). While most of the L2 writers preferred to refer to themselves implicitly by using the third person '*the researcher*' (23 instances out of 26 incidents), the L1 writers showed a noticeable preference to using the third person phrase *the researcher* (24 instances) rather than the first-person pronoun *I* (9 instances).

5.5.1 Functions of self-mentions

Participants who referred to themselves in the text argued that they had to show their authorial presence, as the used self-mentions had a few functions in their academic texts. These functions include hedging an argument or holding an opinion, stating, interpreting, comparing and assessing the results, explaining a procedure and stating an expectation or a wish.

5.5.1.1 To hedge an argument or to hold an opinion

An effective argument depends to great extent on the writer's success in convincing the audience of their reasonableness and credibility. This stance is achieved by balancing caution with commitment, and by the writer holding an opinion related to their research using self-mentions. Below are examples (34, 35, 36 and 37) from a few texts in the corpora where writers hedged an argument to have an opinion.

34- *More emphasis could be given to the texts themselves but I believe there would be two different levels.* BR-8

35- *This section highlights some of the perceived challenges with the current LUK and potential for providing an alternative LUK curriculum. Firstly, I think what this does is to implicitly accept the general need for such a programme for 'citizenship'.* BR-2

36- **The researcher** *thinks that the teacher behaved in a good way by forcing the pupils to write the lesson in a paper to be involved with her in the lesson.* EGY-2

37- *I think that they needed too much effort to be able to read or write. Some of them did not know the letters of the alphabet.* EGY-2

When BR-8 was asked about the function of the first-person 'I' in example 34, she said:

BR-8: ..i am aware that an argument is not strengthened by writing 'i believe', but rather by providing relevant supporting evidence... however, i wanted to highlight my opinion here as there would be two different levels of ...

Likewise, BR-2 states that he used 'I think' in example 35 as word collocation to hedge his opinion in that context.

BR-2: ..it is word collocations...i think... i wanted to be tentative here when expressing my opinion.

It was important to ask EGY-2 about using both the first-person pronoun and the third person phrase *the researcher* in the same text.

EGY-2: @i don't know actually... this is <@>what came to my mind.. i did not realise that then...

R: what impression did you want to convey when you used THE RESEARCHER in example-26 and i in example-25?

EGY-2: in my methodology.. i was observing student teachers in the classroom.. and i was supposed to interpret why they used certain strategies during the lessons... so.. i used I THINK and THE RESEARCHER THINKS to express my opinion ...and ..and to give space to the readers that these interpretations are based on my opinions.. and there could be other reasons ...

5.5.1.2 To state, interpret, compare, assess the results

In this context, writers employ self-mentions to represent their role in constructing a plausible interpretation for a phenomenon, and by establishing a personal authority based on confidence and command of their arguments. Examples (38, 39, 40 and 41) written by EGY-2, EGY-4 and EGY-10 elaborate the writer's role to state, interpret, compare and assess the results.

*38- In understanding how four Egyptian English teachers navigated their own teaching in large classes, **the researcher** reports the analysis of the data from the four participants. EGY-2*

*39- The modelling of strategies carried out in this study **by the researcher** proved to be an effective technique that aided students in how to go about vocabulary learning strategically. EGY-4*

*40- In an attempt to clarify the insignificant statistically difference at 0.05 level in lexical density of EFL majors' oral performance, **the researcher** compared the learners' word family size to verify whether the length of discourse had a negative impact on lexical density. EGY-4*

*41- In order to do this, **the researcher** investigated the main political power players in Egypt in relation to the main events that took place in Egypt from Jan 25th, 2011 to June 2014. EGY-10*

The participants seem to be aware of the various rhetorical functions of self-mentions as explained in the literature review. For example, EGY-2 said that '*the researcher*' in example-38 explains their role in the research by stating the data analysis of their study as they see that their contribution should be stated clearly here in this stage.

EGY-2: *i am talking about the data analysis of the qualitative data.. i do not see any problem to refer to myself here as it is clear that this data analysis task was achieved only by me ... THE RESEARCHER.*

Similarly, EGY-4 was asked about referring to themselves three times in examples 39 and 40. They said that *the researcher* in example 29 has the function of declaring clearly the researcher's influence on the results. But, in example 30, they compare their results to check the validity of certain data.

EGY-4: *in example 39.. i am talking about the model that i designed for the sake of the study and how it was effective for the learners ... so my presence was important here... i cannot replace it with anything else... in example-30.. i am talking about the data comparison that i had done to verify if the length of the discourse had a negative impact on the lexical density... so i am evaluating the data by comparing and contrasting certain variables..*

With regard to example 41, EGY-10 said that it is a stage of examining their data to reach valid results.

EGY-10: *i see that my self-reference is crucial here because i wanted to state clearly that the main political power players during the revolution had been investigated by me not anyone else... this is a major point for the study.*

5.5.1.3 To explain a procedure

The textual analysis revealed that the text writers used self-mentions several times to talk about the research process or explain a certain procedure. Reporting the research methods as in examples 32, 34 and 36 and procedures as in examples 43, 45 and 47 seem to be the 'personal' part of the research where writers feel more comfortable to refer to themselves whether explicitly (example 32) or implicitly (examples 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47) in their academic writing.

42- *I have used the following principles in my lesson planning in order to reach my research aims and the following section contrasts ... BR-8*

43- *The researcher will address the main elements they are talking about during the study. They listed number of difficulties and difficulties. EGY-2*

44- *The researcher utilizes the false memory paradigm in the procedure to measure learning. ... EGY-4*

45- *The researcher entirely depended on the literature review and the feedback obtained from the jury members ... EGY-5*

46- *Since t-test does only provide the statistical significance and its direction, the researcher used Eta Square (η^2) – a measure that describes the proportion of variance ... EGY-4*

47- *In the light of the research design, sample, and results, the researcher will discuss the research results in the following few pages. EGY-12*

With regard to example 42, BR-8 said that she was describing how she collected the data in her study so it was important to refer to herself.

BR-8: ..this is an introductory paragraph in which i explain to the reader the principles undertaken when planning my lessons which helped me achieve my research aims... i am describing how data were collected...

In the same way in example 47, EGY-12 said that they wanted to tell the reader that the following procedure was reporting the research results.

EGY-12: here i am reporting the results of my study based on the methodology i applied to gather information.. it is important to me to clearly show my presence.

5.5.1.4 To state an expectation or a wish

In a few examples, the text writers of the collected corpora used self-mentions to state an expectation or a wish during reporting the study results. Examples 48 and 49 show how the self-mention 'the researcher' was used for this purpose.

48- Despite the fact that, it satisfies **the researcher's** need to measure the exam impact on the actual concerned parties. EGY-9

49- **The researcher** assumes that when people find the calls of the NSMs relevant to their life, the probability to get engaged is higher...EGY-10

When asked about using '*the researcher*' in example 49, EGY-10 said that he was expecting something from their research participants (see below).

EGY-10: *i had an assumption of my research citizens behaviour that they would get engaged to learning when they find nsms call relevant to their lives..*

R: *why did not you say IT IS ASSUMED instead for example?*

EGY-10: *mmm.. i think this is better and clearer because later i am taking about an assumption by cohen so it is important to clearly relate the first assumption to me as THE RESEARCHER.*

The interviewed students expressed different views about non/using self-mentions explicitly or implicitly in their academic text.

5.5.2 Other perceptions about self-mentions

Self-mentions are powerful devices that writers use to express their presence in the text.

However, using these devices have been always controversial among text writers. While a self-mention free text is seen as a robust way to interact with the reader directly, others see that writers should have a clear authorial presence when writing their thesis.

5.5.2.1 Objectivity vs subjectivity

The issue of being objective or subjective has been always controversial in academic thesis writing. The objectivity supporters see that the author should not be mentioned in the academic text as the main emphasis should be on the information given and the arguments made, rather than the researcher themselves. On the other hand, researchers are always encouraged to show their opinions and have a clear position in the text which might require explicit reference to themselves in the text. The interview participants expressed different views concerning this issue.

BR-6 said that the academic thesis should be objective and considered using self-mentions in the academic text as a big mistake.

BR-6: i have never ever used first-person... to me.. first-person is big no.. you should learn how to use the passive form...

EGY-1 sees that an academic text should be objective. No one is interested to know what the researcher believes or thinks, but rather what the findings suggest. The focus should be on the study. Only expert writers may refer to themselves as they are more confident to do that.

EGY-1: my understanding is... the main concern of the reader is the paper ... there is nothing personal here so when you refer to yourself as the paper or the study.. it implies the person who developed the study ...

R: but sometimes we read research papers in which the authors refer to themselves explicitly and use the first pronoun I.. what do you think of this?

EGY-1:.. it is a master dissertation... this is not a paper written by a professor who has many years of experience in the field ...

EGY-5 and EGY-6 argued that if there is presence for the writer, the research will be biased. The researcher should be modest and avoid using the person pronoun *I*.

EGY-5: ..no I can't use the word I because here in egypt we recognise the speaker's pronouns I or WE as biased...we should not do this...using I is an arrogant expression...

EGY-6: ..never to use I ..as my colleagues say ..because the researcher should be modest... not to say I....

EGY-3 had an interesting view why writers should be objective in our academic writing. He said that this is something religious-related that is instilled in our (Egyptian) characters. He agreed with EGY-3 and said that culturally, researchers should be modest and not to refer to themselves or contributions plausibly, and religious as Satan was the creature who used to say *I* in his speech.

EGY-3: ..when i was young..in the faculty.. they told me that the english writing likes the passive.. also my instructors when i was a student said that .
R: but we can see I or THE RESEARCHER in several academic papers?
EGY-3: mmm.. I saw this ..but I have learnt and in our arabic culture.. we do not use the first person I ... we don't use the word ANA (I in English) in academic arabic... we always refer to the person or the speaker's name because ANA MEN ALSHAITAN (In english this means ... I from the devil/Satan)... I have an inner feeling to avoid this word ..

Those who are for objectivity argue that that other techniques, e.g. passive should be used instead:

BR-1: i try to actually never use that so i would say the data collection i would like this way for example 'the present study suggests' or 'it may be concluded'

On the other side, a few participants encouraged researchers to be subjective and they saw that this is a kind of deception if researchers hide their identity in the text. Researchers should feel comfortable and use 'I or the researcher' whenever they like because it is they who conducted the research. BR-2 is aware of the idea that he should be neutral when presenting his results. Yet he affirmed that he had feelings and beliefs which cannot be disregarded.

BR-2: ..i think it's a bit of a deception really.. there is an element of bias whether you like it or not ..and some social researchers think that they could take themselves away from their research and becoming partial and so they're looking at things in a researcher ..and this is kind of deceptive .. i'm responsible for this analysis this is my interpretation only my interpretation... beliefs, behaviour ... conclusion.

EGY-8 favoured using the self-person pronoun though she did not as she was advised not to.

EGY-8: i wanted in many situations to use I but it was prohibited.. i was banned from using I... i am not convinced enough why not using I ..

The debate moves to students' perceptions about 'I and the researcher'. Though some interviewees think that 'the researcher' is indication of objectivity, others say that it is as subjective as 'I'.

5.5.2.2 I vs the researcher

The conflict between participants' views was not only attributed to the objective camp and the subjective one, but the issue is their understanding of what objectivity/subjectivity is. Some of the interviewees said that *'the researcher/ the author'* helps writer to be objective.

BR-5: *academic writing should not include first person pronoun..it seems arbitrary..it is accepted rules of academic writing like you are not allowed to use contractions... i think it is quite problematic.. i personally use the word THE AUTHOR..*

BR-3: *academically in the uk for me to use the pronoun 'I'.. it is very unprofessional although i have read it...you should keep it neutral with THE RESEARCHER.*

Those who are against using the first person pronoun argue that the study should be viewed from the researcher's eyes. EGY-10 argues that using *'the researcher'* indicates the modesty of the researcher which would be accepted by their readers.

EGY-10: *i think that THE RESEARCHER... it is modest and academic and shows that it is not about me it is about the research...so it gives more weight to what the reader is reading. you are not celebrity... i am just reading because the topic is important... this gives more weight to the topic than you as a person...*

Others say that the self-mention *'the researcher'* reflects the study, the tools and the instruments used in the study, and everything related to the research. Using *'I'* could be considered as an un-academic device. Both EGY-9 and EGY-5 have similar view that favours using *'the researcher'* rather than *'I'*.

EGY-9: *...when they say THE RESEARCHER ..it means i am tackling the subject from a research point of view not from a personal point of view...you are talking about the tools.. the questionnaire .. the analysis the instruments ... so when you deal with these things it is not you .. it is the researcher who deals with those data .. you analysed it ... with a bit of objectivity so i believe the word THE RESEARCHER suits the research than i..*

EGY-5: ..the speaker's pronouns I or We ...biased ..so we use the word THE RESEARCHER to neglect the personality of the researcher .. his character as a researcher ... if you say THE RESEARCHER means that any researcher who can follow these steps will get the same results or the same conclusion so the word researcher refers to anyone who follows the same steps of this study will get the same results ... THE RESEARCHER reflects the research and its context.

5.6 Attitude Markers

Attitude markers refer to the writer's attitude towards an idea or the propositional. These markers are realised by attitude verbs (e.g. *agree, prefer*), sentence adverbs (e.g. *unfortunately, hopefully*), and adjectives (e.g. *appropriate, important*).

5.6.1 Functions of attitude markers

The research participants defined two main functions of attitude markers in their texts: indicating a value judgement or identify information as worthy of particular attention and providing an assessment of expectations.

5.6.1.1 To indicate a value judgement or identify information as worthy of particular attention

'*Important* and *significant*' are the most used attitude markers in the two corpora which were used as a subjective complement as in example 50 or as a prenominal modifier as in example 51.

50- *As this research was intended to focus on grammar teaching it was **important** to establish the different viewpoints of what grammar is or entails.*
BR-6

51- *These models have predicted the **significant** role which across-item semantic relations plays in the generation of false memories.* EGY-4

When participants were asked about the functions of attitude markers in the above examples, they said that the word '*important*' was used to describe their feelings about certain content so

that readers would take more notice of these. BR-6 stated that she wanted to highlight the importance of foregrounding different views about the concept of grammar as this was so relevant for their study.

BR-6: i am highlighting the value of establishing different opinions from the literature of what grammar is...

Similarly, EGY-4 wanted to shed light the role of cross-item semantic relations in their study; this information was valuable and she wanted to highlight this.

EGY-4: my aim of writing this word here is to give impression to the reader that this piece of information has a point in the line of the research.. so it is significant and if i drop it from the line of research it may affect the meaning..

5.6.1.2 To provide an assessment of expectations

Adverbs, e.g. '*interestingly* and *even*' functioning as sentence adverbials (examples 52, 54, and 56) and predefining adjectives, e.g. '*interesting*' (examples 53 and 55) were used by research participants to provide assessment of expectations of the results or data collected in their studies (see below). Similarly, '*even*' was used by EGY-12 in example 56 to convey an attitude by focusing attention on the writer's assessment of the relative unexpectedness of something being the case.

52- *Interestingly*, force feeding was an expression used by one of the candidates to describe her experience of learning the LUK content. BR-2

53- This raises an *interesting* dilemma: if 'integration' is one of the purposes of LUK, what kind of 'integration' is it pointing to and in whose terms? BR-2

54- *Interestingly*, 30% of the learners suggest that the LUK test did help them communicate better. BR-2

55- The study produced some *interesting* results on this restricted sample but has potentially limitations as it would need to be carried ... BR-8

56- *Even* those learners who were not quite familiar with computers found no difficulty in using the program CD after receiving brief ... EGY-12

Talking about examples 53 and 54, BR-2 argued that both ideas were not expected; that's why he used the words '*interesting* and *interestingly*' to describe the word 'dilemma' in example 53 and the results suggested in example 54.

BR-2: for example-43, that problem was not expected and also the results in example 44..mm.. i wanted to draw the reader's attention to these results...

Likewise, EGY-12 used the word *even* in example 46; their study learners' performance was surprising and unexpected for them and they wanted to refer to this.

EGY-12: i thought the students in my research would struggle when using my proposed program cd... i thought they would take too much time to understand.. however.. only the brief instructions given to them were enough and that was surprising to me... so i said EVEN meaning i did not expect that..

5.6.2 Other perceptions about certain attitude markers

In addition to investigating how the research participants used certain attitude markers, it was important to get further and deeper information about how they perceive certain attitude words. The study focused on examining participants' perceptions and sense of appropriateness concerning the attitude words '*important/ly* vs *significant/ly*' and '*interesting/ly* and *surprisingly/ly*'.

5.6.2.1 *Important/ly* and *significant/ly* (interchangeably vs different use)

While some participants saw that they can use both attitude markers interchangeably, others argue that they are different when they commented on example 47 below.

57- This integration is very ***important*** in facilitating acquisition of English vocabulary. Also, the experimental group achieved ***significant*** progress in their performance in vocabulary acquisition after the treatment as compared to their overall performance in vocabulary acquisition before the treatment.

A) Interchangeably

Six students from the interviewed participants claimed that they would use '*important*' and '*significant*' interchangeably in the above context or any other context as they see that they are synonyms.

BR-1: *i suppose IMPORTANT does the same meaning as SIGNIFICANT...in several contexts i use them interchangeably..*

EGY-5: *they are very similar ...i think IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT, CRUCIAL something like that.*

I: *do you use them interchangeably?*

EGY-5: *yes.. interchangeably..*

EGY-12: *there is no real difference. they're just synonymous with each other..*

B) Different Use

The other twelve students argued that 'important/ly and significant/ly' are different in certain ways. Some interviewees think that 'significant/ly' is stronger than 'important/ly'.

BR-3: *no SIGNIFICANT would not carry the same way as IMPORTANT... SIGNIFICANT is really significant because it changed something IMPORTANT it's just IMPORTANT..mmm. well a lot of things are IMPORTANT so SIGNIFICANT is probably stronger than IMPORTANT*

EGY-7: *They are different ... SIGNIFICANT IS stronger... i use it when i have the evidence, but IMPORTANT..mm.. Something IMPORTANT but it does not signify anything.. it has implications of relative or quantifiable importance.. like in the example above...*

EGY-6: *i think IMPORTANT is weaker than SIGNIFICANT..*

BR-6: *regardless of the example above.. i think they are semantically different... SIGNIFICANCE is something that is the most important... that is to say..the quality of being worthy of attention..*

BR-7: *they are different.. IMPORTANT is to describe something that have crucial value like integration in the example but SIGNIFICANT to signify something.. i mean something that carries meaning which is noticeable..*

On the other side EGY-9 believes that *significant/ly* is academic but *important/ly* is not.

EGY-9: for several reasons.. IMPORTANT is not an academic word.. this is number one. Number 2, IMPORTANT does not give the exact meaning .. you can not use IMPORTANT here instead of SIGNIFICANT... it can be wrong use.. totally wrong... you can't even use it you can use other words like....mmmmm... like considerable ...but IMPORTANT would not give the exact attitude..

5.6.2.2 'Interesting and Surprising' (academic vs un-academic)

Figures 29 and 30 showed that the majority of both group participants argued that they express their attitudes according to the contexts, i.e. they usually use attitude words such as *important* and *significant*; however, they have concerns about words like *surprising* or *interesting*. Some of them said that they must not be used in the academic texts as they are informal or spoken words. Yet, only few said that these words (*surprising* or *interesting*) could be used in limited cases when the study has unexpected results.

When commenting on the below example and other examples that contained '*interesting/ly* or *surprising/ly*', participants reported different views: some said these attitudinal features are academic, while others argued they are not.

58- **Surprisingly**, this result corroborates the findings of classroom observations and recordings that showed that there weren't any switches to Arabic for reviewing a previous lesson.

A) Academic

Some participants think that these attitude words are academic and can be used in academic writing in case they are used properly. If the results show unexpected findings, '*interesting*, *surprising*' or any other similar words could be used to describe that according to the context they are in (see below).

BR-6: ..i think it is ok if there is something interesting .. when something comes up when it is completely different ..i would use things like MORE INTERESTINGLY.. but I don't really use if something is not significantly different..

BR-4: yes .. if the outcome of the research was surprising ..or if i was basically struck by some comments made by the teachers or the results i don't see why not so you use ..they are academic and it is okay..

EGY-9: SURPRISING OR INTERESTING? ...you can say harmer had an interesting use of this tool in such study... or it was surprising to come up with such result with someone like green...no problem to use them but it has to be the proper use..

B) Non-academic

In contrast other participants argued that '*interesting/ly* and *surprising/ly*' are vague or non-academic and cannot be used in academic papers.

BR-5: i would not use interesting as it is...it is a little bit vague...if you say the results are interesting.. you need to explain in what way they are interesting... i don't think they are informative at this stage..

BR-1 states that she has an inner feeling not to use these words in research writing. However, they may be relevant in fictional and story-telling writing.

BR-1: ..you could use it but i don't know.. i wouldn't like using it. i don't know why.. i try to avoid it .. maybe it's not something that would come to me naturally... may be.. for example in a story writing or fictional writing you can use this kind of language...

While EGY-1 said that these words can be used in a very limited context; however, they may be un-academic, EGY-2 sees that they may use '*interesting*' but not '*surprising*'.

EGY-1: INTERESTING in very limited contexts... you need to use it in the right context. but i think the right context for it rarely happens in thesis writing or research writing ... e.g. some researchers find this point interesting.. well ... this can be acceptable... it's not perfect but i wouldn't say it's proper..

I: do you consider it an academic word?

EGY-1: no ... but it can be used to a specific meaning in a specific context..

EGY-2: i may use INTERESTING but not SURPRISING...i think i will not use it in my academic writing... SURPRISING for something that is unexpected... it will be risky for me if i use it...

EGY-11 said that they can use them in the literature review when describing other researchers' work.

EGY-11: i will never use them in my results ... only when talking about someone else's work...because i am waiting for the audience to judge this not me...

But EGY-4 argues that these words are subjective and are related to the writer's opinion so they are not relevant to academic writing.

*EGY-4: ..no.. i don't tend to use these words.....i will never use them .. they refer to opinions....what interesting... what makes it interesting..... on which basis?
R: probably something unexpected..?
EGY-4: i don't think i will use them... they are not applicable in the context of my study..*

5.7 Potential reasons behind students' lexical choices

Based on the interviewees' accounts, five broad themes emerged from the analysis which seem to have played a role in the way writers take a particular stance in their discussion chapter.

These five potential factors can be outlined as: writer's personal linguistic preferences, supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback, cultural and L1 interference, previous education and instruction and the writer's self-confidence.

5.7.1 Writer's personal linguistic preferences

Many Interviewees said that they would use or avoid using a particular stance marker not because it is right or wrong, but simply because this is not their way to use words. It was perceived from the interviews that every writer had a unique style that cannot be taught. This style was acquired through education, reading and language exposure. However, they could refine their personal writing style by reading expert writers, and through plenty of writing practice and experience.

Most participants preferred to be objective and to avoid the first-person pronoun *I*. Though most of these participants were influenced by their supervisors' views of being objective or using '*the researcher*', a few of them believed that they tend to be objective because they feel this is the proper way of writing academically. When asked, 'what affected this feeling', they said that it was only their writing style.

BR-6: *i have never ever used first person...*

I: *how did you receive this impression?*

BR-6: *i don't know.. this is what i feel should be done...*

Even, some of the participants who used '*the researcher*', believed that this is common sense and that should be done in research.

EGY-9: *... I believe the word THE RESEARCHER suits the research than i..*

I: *where did you get this belief from?*

EGY-9: *it is a personal belief .. based on my experiences as a writer... i acquired this throughout my academic life...*

On the other side, BR-2 who is for using the first-person pronoun 'I' denied the idea that 'I' must be prohibited and he argued that that was some kind of deception. He felt that using the first-person pronoun is the style he liked to use in academic writing.

BR-2: *...some social researchers think that they could take themselves away from their research and becoming partial and so they're looking at things in- () a researcher and this is kind of deceptive...*

I: *did you try to use THE RESEARCHER instead?*

BR-2: *@ why? I is THE RESEARCHER...but even the word THE RESEARCHER sounds informal.. and i gives strength to the claim and confidence to the writer... this my preferred writing style...*

Writer's personal stylistic preference not only did affect writers' choices of self-mentions, but it also influenced writer's lexical choices of certain boosters, hedges and attitude markers. Regarding to hedges, BR-4 stated that she used epistemic '*may, might and could*' interchangeably. When she was asked why epistemic modal '*can*' was not used instead. She replied that this was her style and that was what had come to her mind.

BR-4: *i don't know why i used MAY not CAN...maybe it's a word collocation or stylistic preference to use MAY..i don't know..this is what came to my mind..it just comes.*

In the same vein, EGY-8 was asked about why using *possibly* not *probably* in a certain context. She said that she tended to use '*possibly*' rather than '*probably*' though they have the same meaning as she believed.

I: *..what makes you make the decision to say POSSIBLY OR PRBABLY?*

EGY-8: *in this context .. in this structure.. i think possible fits well..*

I: *Why?*

EGY-2: *This is my linguistic taste... POSSIBLE acceptable corrections if PROBABLE acceptance corrections is weird...*

The writer's personal linguistic preference appeared also in using boosters. Words like '*show*, *demonstrate* and *indicate*' were used by BR-8 naturally without explaining clearly the reasons behind their linguistic choice.

BR-8: *...just I used here SHOW and there INDICATE naturally... i don't think while writing what i write here what i write there.. this is my writing style... i think my lexical choices and writing styles evolve naturally ...*

Also, participants' preferable lexical choices appeared in using the attitude words '*important* and *significant*'. BR-3 stated that there was a difference between the two attitude words. However, she could not identify exactly how both words differ.

BR-3: *..the point is if my choices are deliberate.. i'll have more control over how the reader reacts to my argument... i do that unconsciously... for me SIGNIFICANT here makes sense but IMPORTANT does not..*

5.7.2 Supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback

Supervisors' feedback in thesis writing is particularly important for students because in many respects it replaces the type of instruction other students received in lecture and classroom approaches. Supervisors' effect on students' thesis writing was noticed in the last two questions of the interview protocol (see Appendix 4). The majority of both Egyptian and British students

reported that they received most help and advice from their supervisors when during their thesis writing (see Figures 31 and 32).

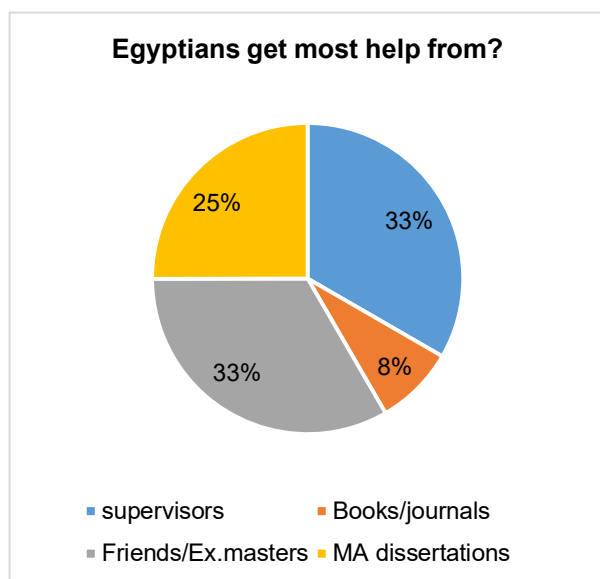


Figure 31: Sources of help for L2 writers

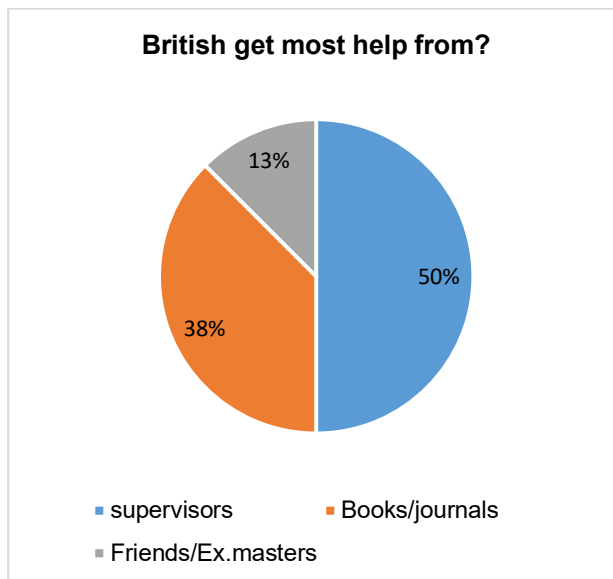


Figure 32: Sources of help for L1 writers

In addition, most of them said that their MA supervisors and examiners were the main party they were addressing when writing their MA theses (see Figures 33 and 34).

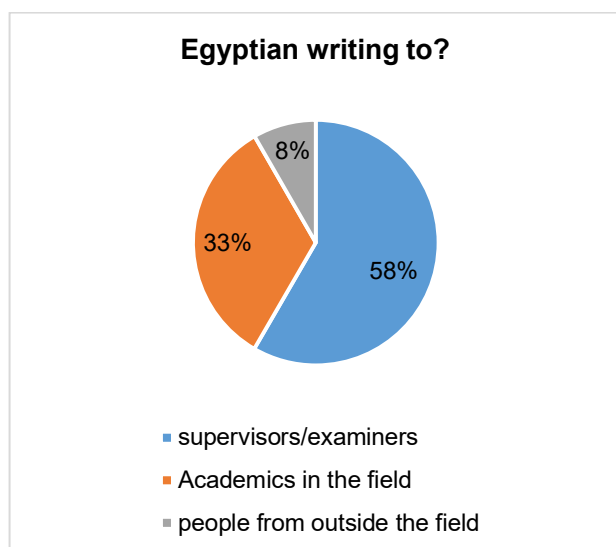


Figure 33: Parties L2 writers writing to

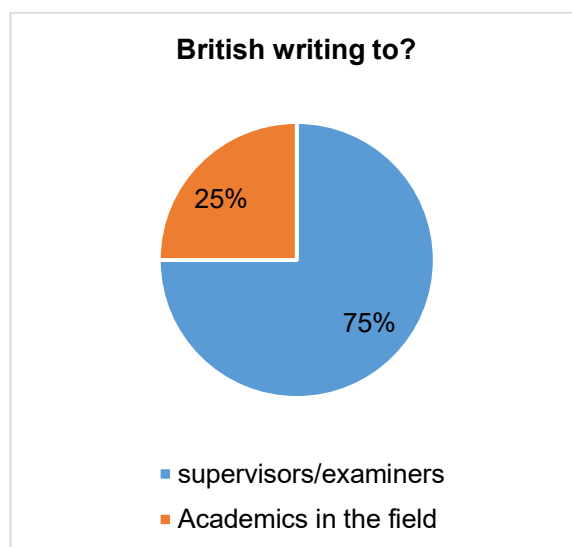


Figure 34: Parties L1 writers writing to

So, no wonder that supervisors' feedback appeared in students' use of hedges, boosters and attitude markers. It should be noticed that supervisors particularly influenced the writers' use of self-mentions. The twenty research participants were asked to provide examples of their

supervisors' feedback concerning their certainty, uncertainty and attitudinal linguistic features on their theses drafts: only three of them (EGY-2, EGY-6 and BR-3) agreed to provide this. Yet, a few examples of supervisors' feedback were found useful and appropriate for the purpose of the current study and are presented in this section. For example, EGY-2 explains:

EGY-2: ...if ...i... for example imply that i reached a finding...if my supervisor is not confident enough that i had established a well-structured argument.. my claim would not be justified and would not be accepted by him...for instance, here he underlined the word 'prove' and told me i feel that your degree of confidence here is very assertive... you did not demonstrate enough argument to be able to say 'my study proves'... your reader will not accept this...

EGY-2 added that the supervisor's feedback about the appropriate writing style in the discussion chapter was not everything. She said that as MA students they used to attend academic writing lectures before starting writing their theses, and they used to receive valuable feedback when presenting the results in the discussion chapters. The participant said that these sessions were done by other lecturers at the university who are specialised in academic writing. The participant was very cooperative and showed me a few comments she wrote down from other lecturers (see below).

When writing your discussion chapter, use a tentative language (cautions or careful language). Tentative language plays an important role in presenting a convincing argument or claim. Students should indicate the strength of the evidence on which they are basing your claims.

However, EGY-2 was misguided by certain feedback. One of the lecturers disapproved of their use of the word *appear* as equivalent to *seem* and he told them that that word is only attributed to physical appearance and cannot be used to express uncertainty.

EGY-2: i remember that one of my colleagues used the word APPEAR to mean SEEM but our lecturer argued that APPEAR is not appropriate in that context as it is only related to the physical appearance to something that is visible.. but recently i found out that he was wrong..

The supervisor's feedback was more direct and straightforward to EGY-6 as the supervisor showed the student real examples of inappropriate use of certain words and he suggested better choices. EGY-6 said that their supervisor recommended not to use strong and assertive language when presenting the findings. The participant showed me examples of comments written by their supervisor regarding using inappropriate language.

EGY-6: ..when i sent my supervisor my first draft of the thesis.. she sent me her feedback...in her email she summarised her feedback by saying –EGY-6 is reading from a notebook- 'avoid using expressions like clearly.. undoubtedly.. certainly.. obviously, never etc...use a cautious language by using words.. such as apparently.. suggest.. indicate.. possibly etc. i corrected a few examples for you... please apply this for the whole of your writing'... inside my draft, there were examples where i was more assertive than required...

R: can you show me some of these examples please?

EGY-6: ok no problem..

The following excerpt contains examples that EGY-6 highlighted and corrected.

1. It is **crystal clear** that the Egyptian teachers don't have many opportunities to improve their professional development. This can be said because all the means are under 4.00.

(student's writing)

- It is **apparent** that the Egyptian teachers don't have many opportunities to improve their professional development. This can be said because all the means are under 4.00.

(supervisor's correction)

2. While the data in Table-3 **shows** that English teachers **do not apply** for any postgraduate studies or courses, there are several situations where some teachers **have degree of awareness**. **(student's writing)**

-While the data in Table-3 **suggest** that English teachers **tend not to** apply for postgraduate studies or courses, there are **apparently** several situations where some teachers have **some degree of awareness**. **(supervisor's correction)**

It was apparent that the supervisor's feedback had affected the participant's use of hedges and boosters as her chapter showed a large number of hedges compared to other Egyptian students.

R: *did this feedback affect your use of these linguistic features?*

EGY-6: *of course, to a big extent.. when i sent my second draft to him.. my supervisor was very happy and he noticed a big improvement in my writing style...*

With regard to using attitude markers, supervisors did not inform students so much about this; however, EGY-5 affirmed that they have been taught by their supervisors not to use attitudinal words, such as 'surprising, interesting', as this is not academic (see below).

EGY-5: *...again the research should be objective and expressing any attitudes is subjective.. this is what i learned from my lecturers and supervisors... attitude words are like using explicitly the first pronoun I.. they are un-academic...*

The self-mentions were reported to be the most debatable issue that might have demonstrated arguments among students and supervisors. The twelve Egyptian participants were informed explicitly not to use the first-person pronoun 'I' and use the word 'the researcher' instead. Ten of the Egyptian participants were convinced that being objective or using 'the researcher' is the right decision.

EGY-1 was reading his two supervisors' research papers and they never refer to themselves in the academic text, and this seemed affected his writing style.

EGY-1: *X who was my supervisor ... he never used I ... x-2 who was my second supervisor never used I ... so why i use I.. we learn from them*

I: *did you talk with your supervisors about this point?*

EGY-1: *yes with x. he said there is no need to be overly subjective you can do the job without to referring to yourself at all...but if there is an urgent need you can use THE RESEARCHER.*

I: *were you influenced by his point of view?*

EGY-1: *yes...*

Another participant believed that *the researcher* would be the right decision as they learned from expert writers. The stages of the research should be conducted from the eyes of the researcher.

I: why did you use THE RESEARCHER in your chapter? why not 'I'?

EGY-5: this is what we have learnt from our professors...

However, two participants (EGY-3 and EGY-8) were not in a complete agreement with their supervisors' advice, and wanted to use 'I'. Yet, those students were compliant to their academic community decision and did not use 'I', and they did not even try to defend their point of view with their own supervisors.

EGY-3: my supervisor recommended that i should use THE RESEARCHER.. and i am following him.

I: what about you? are you convinced of this?

EGY-3: i feel more comfortable to use I... there are many situations where i prefer to use I but I could not...

I: did you try to discuss this with you supervisor?

EGY-3: ..no <@>.. i cannot do that.. no way.. no.

On the other side, most of the British participants tended to avoid the first-person pronoun as they have learned to be objective from other lecturers (see BR-6 and BR-3).

I: how did you get this strong impression?

BR-6: from my lecturers during my undergrad course...

BR-3 had been told by her lecturers as well not to use the first-person pronoun, though she feels that 'I' may be used in academic writing.

BR-3: ..i was told by my lecturers and colleagues not to use the word I.. but me personally i don't have a problem with it... because it is me but it needs to be academically detached from me therefore i put the word THE RESERACHER..

It is clear that the British academic community in this discipline tends to encourage students to avoid the first-person pronoun 'I', however, a few students who wanted to use it resisted and defended their view. BR-2 said that he challenged his supervisor and used 'I' in his dissertation.

I: what was your supervisor's opinion?

BR-2: he recommended avoiding I.. and using passive instead...

I: what did you do?

BR-2: i argued with him many times and said that that is my research why i do deceive the audience.. it's me who does the research..

Interviewees' L1 and culture played an important role in their use of stance devices. This is explored in the following section.

5.7.3 Cultural and L1 interference

Cultural transfer is a kind of influence made by the difference between L1 and L2. L2 writers tend to express themselves with their own habits from their own culture. The lexical transfer from the first language to the second language appeared in the responses of a few Egyptian participants. When I asked about certain lexical decisions, participants said that their selected words were the direct translation from Arabic to the meaning they wanted to deliver.

I: why did you use MAY here not WOULD for example?

EGY-7: ... i do not know.. but i may be affected by my native arabic language ...because MAY means MOMKEN in arabic and this is the meaning that i wanted...

Similarly, explaining the difference between 'possibility and probability' showed the effect of the L1 interference in the participants' responses.

R: how do you see the difference between POSSIBLE and PROBABLE?

EGY-4:.. i match my arabic ...MOMKEN I and IMKANIYA in this context..... i feel POSSIBILITY is stronger than PROBABILITY....

Likewise, another participant (EGY-12) linked his lexical decision to choose 'seem' rather than 'appear' to the influence of his Arabic language.

EGY-12: ... i look for the english word that mean the arabic word YABDO then i choose it.. may be i do this or this is what comes to my mind at that time.

Religion is a part of people's culture, and it has been linked to numerous communication traits and behaviours. This could be an explanation to the response of EGY-3 when asked about using the first-person 'I' in his MA dissertation. EGY-3 is one of three participants who received their MA and education from Al-Azhar University whose mission is to propagate Islamic culture. EGY-3 explained his reasons for not using 'I' that it is usually related to Satan in Arabic culture.

EGY-3: i have learnt and in our arabic culture we do not use the first person I ... we don't use the word ANA (i in english) in academic arabic... we always refer to the person or the speaker's name because ANA MEN ALSHAITAN.. (in english this means i from the devil/satan)... i have an inner feeling to avoid this word and this is our culture..

Culture may play a role in the use of hedges by L1 writers in this study. L1 writers tend to use hedges in their spoken language all the time which might affect their use of hedges in academic writing. This is what BR-7 said when asked about the reason for using a big number of uncertainty markers in his discussion chapter.

BR-7: i think.. english people plant hedges in their speech ..all the time to soften what they say .. this might indicate to an important part of polite conversation in order to make what they say less direct... i might be influenced with my spoken language.. may be..

In addition to writer's stylistics preferences and supervisor's feedback, previous education and culture were found to be important factors that had an impact on students' lexical choices.

5.7.4 Previous education and instruction

Understanding how to use boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers is an important skill that both L1 and L2 learners may acquire during formal classroom settings in the secondary and undergraduate levels, attending academic sessions in the postgraduate level or throughout ongoing reading of academic texts.

With regard to being subjective or objective in academic writing, British students affirmed that their former education in the secondary and the undergraduate levels have affected and constituted their thoughts of taking an objective position in academic writing.

BR-3: *i was encouraged explicitly throughout my ba and ma to keep away from using I in my academic writing so i got this perception while you are writing..*

Even in their A-level, L1 students were discouraged from writing their opinions in their academic texts by their teachers.

BR-5: *i remember i was told in my a-level from a teacher in every time i write 'I THINK'.. she says 'i am not interested in what you think.. i am interested in what you have read...*

In addition to L1 participants, L2 Egyptian participants indicated to the role of their previous education to form their perceptions towards being objective.

EGY-3: *: when i was young..in the faculty.. they told me that the english writing likes the passive... when you write english , try to use the passive as much as you can.. also my instructors in the secondary school when i was a student said that...*

Similarly, EGY-1 stated that they have been taught in the academic writing preparatory sessions before writing their MA thesis to avoid 'I'.

EGY-1: *i was told in my academic writing course not to use I... in that way in a research paper ..or in a dissertation...*

Not only previous instruction did affect writers' use of stance markers, but also their reading experience had a strong impact on their understanding of certain hedges.

I: *why do you think that MAY, MIGHTT, CAN, WOULD have the same meaning? where did you get this impression from?*
EGY-11: *i have read many academic productions... authors use MAY, WOULD, COULD, MIGHT interchangeably...*

Previous reading may have a crucial role in the decision-making process by L1 participants. They usually write naturally what comes to their mind and with a tacit knowledge of appropriateness of using certain words and not using others.

BR-5: ...i was not conscious about the decision making process while writing... i think i feel more comfortable with words than the others... my decision could be related to my previous reading... that may be guiding my vocabulary choices.

Writer's self-confidence appeared to be an important theme in interviewees' answers as follows.

5.7.5 Writer's self-confidence

The last main factor that could have affected participants' use of stance markers is their self-confidence. Writer's confidence seems to be simmering in academic writing. Lack of confidence could lead to writer's reluctance to express their views or taking a proper stance, but too much confidence may lead to inappropriate writer's lexical epistemic or attitudinal choices which may lead to inappropriate stance-taking.

It appeared from the interviews that a few students took what senior lecturers or supervisors said for granted though they were not fully convinced. For example, EGY-8 and BR-3 wanted to use the first person pronoun 'I' as they saw it in several publications. However, they did not have the confidence to defend their views with their supervisor (see below).

I: did you try to discuss this with your supervisor?

EGY-8: ...mmm...actually no... there was no need to discuss that... there is a general tendency among academics in egypt not to use i in academic papers... there is no need to argue.

Similarly, EGY-11 and EGY-3 students did not try to use the word 'would' in their texts as uncertainty markers, because they were not confident enough of the proper use of the word.

EGY-11: i feel that WOULD could be used instead of MAY or MIGHT... i saw it in several academic text.. but honestly i am not confident enough to use it... it will be risky for me if i use it... i want to be in the safe side..

Expressing views was a major concern for EGY-12; he wanted to say 'in my opinion' in several situations as he sees that he should express his opinion especially at the end of his discussion chapter, but he declined to do that and followed blindly what his supervisor recommended. The participant thought that he did not have enough experience to argue with his supervisor.

R: did you discuss your opinion with you supervisor?

EGY-12: ..no.. i am still a novice writer while he is an expert one... we should not argue with senior lecturers..

Though lack of self-confidence prevented some text writers to make certain lexical decisions or defend their views with their supervisors, too much confidence seemed to cause conflict with supervisors. BR-2 was very keen to challenge his supervisor and he was so confident of his position.

BR-2: but i know that my supervisor was keen on commenting that i should not use many words like INTERESTINGLY. the first person pronoun I...he thought that i was too involved in research and i thought that was an unfair comment... everyone has an opinion ..not in all cases i must do what they want... this is my own research and this what i want to write....

5.8 RQ-3 Characteristics of successful stance-taking

Four expert writers (called informants), two Egyptians and two British, were selected to answer RQ-3 “*What are the characteristics of successful stance-taking in academic texts?*” The informants were selected based on their availability and the fact that they teach EAP and supervise MA Applied Linguistics/TEFL students at Egyptian and British universities. The interview protocol was intended to be as short as possible as the lecturers’ availability was a major concern. The interviewed informants were given pseudonyms when displaying the data. The Egyptian participants are named Basil and Reem while the British lecturers were provided with Andy and Tim. In the first part of the interview, each informant was given two discussion chapters (A and B) from the examined corpora. The two texts contained several examples of stance markers, and the informants were asked to identify successful and unsuccessful patterns of boosters, hedges, attitude markers and self-mentions. One challenge of this task was that the participants were not able to evaluate certain stance markers as they needed to access the whole thesis. In the second part of the interview, informants gave feedback about taking a proper stance.

5.8.1 Why taking a stance?

Before analysing TEXT-A and TEXT-B, informants emphasised that writers should make it clear to the audience what opinion and attitude they have with regard to a certain issue when writing in academic English.

Basil: *it is not enough for students to simply describe the facts when writing their dissertations... particularly the discussion chapter... postgraduate students need to take a position themselves in relation to these facts...*

It was highlighted by the informants that the writer's view, i.e. assertive, cautious towards the facts in the academic texts should be justified.

Andy: *to make sure that their stance on a topic is appropriately analytical, a student should ask themselves... why have i taken this particular stance?... am i biased?... if a proposition was described as important or unimportant.. why did i do so?... is there any evaluation or attitude to a proposition that may cause your audience to discount your judgement as biased?... if so .. i as a writer should reconsider my stance towards the proposition...*

Andy emphasised the reader's perspective, i.e. the text writer should consider their readers. A writer should consider what the reader knows about the topic and what stance they have towards it.

Andy: *..when a writer is deciding on a rhetorical stance.. they should choose one that allows them to be sincere... they should not take an authoritative stance...*
R: *what do you mean by authoritative? can you explain, please?*
Andy: *i mean if they are not confident about what they are saying... they should take a tentative stance..*

This view was echoed by Basil who considered the fact that a writer should take a stance and their stance should consider the reader.

Basil: *...a student should have a position even if he/she are of two minds towards an idea... he or she should declare that to their audience...*

5.8.2 Which text is more successful: A or B?

Answering the first part of section two (see Appendix-7), the informants were unanimous in the view that stance markers in TEXT-A are more successful than those in B.

Reem: despite some weaknesses in text A.. it is much better than text B.

Tim: i found text A's use of the markers rather more successful than B's.

Basil explained briefly why he found TEXT-A better. He states that the variety of the types of stance markers used in TEXT-A refined the level of academic writing in the text to an expert proficiency.

Basil: text A seems to be well balanced with respect to the use of stance markerswhereby a variety of linguistics means.. nouns.. adverbs.. verbs, auxiliaries... the resources used by the writer in Text A escalate the level of academic writing close to what can be found in expert writing...

5.8.3 Successful patterns in TEXT A

In this section, the successful examples that were identified by informants are displayed before the comments. The excerpt below shows examples of certainty markers (TEXT-A) that were appropriately used as referred by Reem.

TEXT-A: *The results from the training parts of the questionnaire **strongly indicate** that the tutors would like to acquire this knowledge through closer cooperation with academics in various departments at UNNC... Their work points out that the genres of writing and vocabulary found within various disciplines are **significantly** different and that therefore these differences have to be taken into account when designing EAP/ESAP courses and materials.*

Reem thinks that the highlighted certainty markers above are properly used; they reflect the certainty stance of the writer. The findings part provided the writer with evidence that made him/her express justified certainty.

Reem: ..in text A.. certainty markers are properly used in their context.. in the sense that they are used only when the researcher is sure about their results as in results from the training parts of the questionnaire strongly indicate... or when conclusions are based on others' findings as is in ...their work points out that the genres of writing and vocabulary found within various disciplines are significantly different...

With regard to tentative devices, hedging devices, e.g. 'seem and could' (see excerpt below) were identified by Reem.

TEXT-A: *The lack of content-specific knowledge of an ESAP subject also **seems** to affect tutors' need for ESAP training. Most tutors felt comfortable teaching an ESAP topic if they have a familiarity with Only five UG tutors (23%) said they would be interested in giving an ESAP-related training session. This contrasts with four PM tutors (67%). One reason for this **could be** that the training sessions identified as being most desirable by both UG and PM tutors are having*

Reem argues that the used hedges are appropriately used as it is shown that the author suggests possible interpretations.

*Reem: in terms of uncertainty markers In text A.. also..uncertainty markers are also appropriately deployed in cases where the author is suggesting possible interpretations or conclusions as in the lack of content-specific knowledge of an ESAP subject also **seems** to or in one reason for this **could be** that*

The use of the reporting verb 'suggest' and the epistemic modal verb 'may' in the following excerpt was approved by Andy.

TEXT-A: *The findings **suggest** that to effectively teach ESAP the respondents feel that EAP tutors need to This **may** be through putting in extra preparation as shown in Figure 7 rather than having a The findings **suggest** that they obtain this knowledge through hard work and extra*

Andy says that TEXT-A writer used two strategies to report on the data of their results. First, the writer distanced themselves from the claim or the results by using the verb 'suggest' twice. Second, the claim presented in the second sentence in the excerpt above implied that the statement is true though it is not supported with strong evidence. Therefore the claim is qualified by the writer by using the epistemic modal verb 'may'.

Andy: ... discussing results involves making claims about interpretation and significance..a student is expected to distinguish carefully between knowledge they are sure of because they have reliable evidence for it and other knowledge they are less sure of.. to report their attitude in the reporting verbs, writers should distance themselves from their claims and acknowledge potential controversy... and this is appropriately achieved by using the verb SUGGEST... for MAY... the claim that putting in extra preparation rather than having a direct background in English for specific purposes is qualified.

For Basil, he highlighted certain positions of stance markers in TEXT-B that he highly approved (see examples below).

TEXT-A: It **seems** that these EAP tutors support that view... Both the quantitative data in Figure 11 and the qualitative data below it **clearly** show this... The findings **suggest** that they obtain this knowledge through hard work and extra preparation reading up on the carrier content... This quote **suggests** that to advise students on the content of ... marking for content in the above topics would **probably** require support in terms of what content is accept... However, this **suggestion** that the split (eight UG streams and four PM) is too specific **would** go against the recent findings of Nesi and Gardner (2012) and Hyland's work on discipline specificity ...the results from the training parts of the questionnaire strongly **indicate** that the tutors would like to ... although the majority of PM and UG tutors believe that the CPD programme **could be** used to provide specific ESAP-related training...

Basil recommends the writer's adopting a variety of strategies and exponents to express their certainty and tentativeness.

Basil: i highly favour the writer's using several exponents and strategies to express their academic position..he employed epistemic modals.. for example.. COULD, epistemic verbs like..SEEM and INDICATE.. proverbs.. like.. PROBABLY.. and so on.

Concerning using attitude words, TEXT-A contained a few attitude words e.g. 'important and surprisingly'.

TEXT-A: ... Just over fifty per cent of the UG tutors stated that eight-streams are too many for the UG programme. **Surprisingly**, four PM tutors out of the five that answered this question ...

Tim approved the use of *surprisingly* in TEXT-A as the motivation for it is justified by the text writer.

Tim: In respect of text A.. i didn't find anything in particular that i objected to - perhaps SURPRISINGLY ... but i can see the motivation for it from the context.

In the same vein, Basil supported Tim that attitude words could be used but appropriately. Otherwise, the text loses its formality.

Basil: A students should be objective and reduce expressing their attitudes.. it does not mean they must not use attitude words .. but i mean they can use some of them but appropriately and where there is a need for that... but using emotionally charged language makes the text sound weird.. and thus reducing its objectivity and credibility.

Concerning using self-mentions, TEXT-A does not show any instances of self-mentions whether implicitly or explicitly which was approved by the four informants (though informants showed different opinions regarding using self-mentions in the academic text as presented in section 5.8.6).

TEXT-A: The findings of this research support those of Bell's (1996); that is, all but one UG and one PM tutor believe that EAP tutors ... **The findings suggest** that to effectively teach ESAP the respondents

It was clear that the text writer used an objective tone which avoided using the first person pronoun or the third person noun. The writer preferred structures like 'the findings suggest... this suggests.... The results indicate'. All four informants indicated that the writer could present and back up their argument successfully and objectively.

Reem: the writer maintained an objective tone which kept the formality of the text..he used a combination of evidence (details and facts) and clear explanations of logical reasoning to support their claims so that he/she can persuade their reader..

5.8.4 Less successful patterns in TEXT-B

In contrast to TEXT-A, informants unanimously argue that the academic language in TEXT-B includes many writing flaws which reflected an inappropriate stance-taking by the writers and thus it was a less successful text in terms of using stance markers. In many cases very assertive language is used where a cautious language would be preferred (see below).

TEXT-B: *This **confirms** the effect of the program of the study. ... For example, the results of Chen's study **showed** that the Jigsaw method of cooperative learning is a good way to involve all students ... The results of this study which **showed clearly** that the Program based some active learning strategies ... Also the results of this study coincides **clearly** with the findings of Mark (2004) who found that the use of co-operative learning program improves... This gives evidence that the use of some active learning strategies **proves effective** in developing writing skills...*

All informants agreed that TEXT-B's writer adopted a strong stance in many instances of the text. Reem stated the writer used emphatic lexical verbs, e.g. 'show, confirms, proves' to report on their results which sounded overly assertive. Using more tentative words, e.g. SUGGEST may have been a better decision in this context.

Reem: *the writer in text b, however, fails to properly use certainty ...using very strong verbs.. such as CONFIRMS, PROVE and SHOW and the adverb CLEARLY two times in a way that the texts sounds informal and exaggerated.*

I: *how does this affect the quality of the text?*

Reem: *...the writer will lose his credibility with the reader... does not give any space to the reader to oppose him/her...*

I: *can you clarify please with example?*

Reem: *for example the results of the study which SHOWED CLEARLY that Program based some active learning strategies etc... this is too strong...the writer should have given the reader the opportunity to evaluate what is said... he should have said .. the results of the study which SUGGESTS that Program based some active learning strategies etc...*

In agreement with Reem, Basil criticised the chapter; he described the text as sounding weird in certain instances, and described the writer as not proficient.

Basil: text B stands out a bit weird owing to a few cases as an example ..the results of this study which SHOWED CLEARLY that... The writer is too certain!
..this is not proper academic writing.

I: what should he/she write instead?

Basil: verbs like SUGGEST, PROPOSE, INDICATE

I: what else you do not like?

Basil: this sentence THE RESEARCHER thinks the present study SHOWED that the active learning strategies.. he is actually inserting a position which means the writer is not proficient enough in stating the overall contribution of the study...there is no need to express the belief of the researcher here.

Tim, in the same line, referred to the writer's adopting strong positions without evidence from the data.

Tim: the writer of text B does something similar on several occasions e.g. in para 4 - a case of making something so by calling it so but without adequate available substantiation..

Andy recommended that a writer should protect themselves by using cautious language in different techniques: by using epistemic modals, e.g. 'may, might', verbs like 'seem, suggest and indicate' to distance themselves from the findings, and therefore avoid making strong claims.

With regard to attitude markers, many instances of attitude devices which used irrelevantly were detected by the informants (see Reem and Tim's comments below).

Reem: .. can have a REMARKABLE effect... and .. the results of this study INTERESTINGLY coincide with the findings of .. several occasions of wrong use of attitude markers...

Tim: in text B, I noticed that its writer has a liking for REMARKABLE and the use of INTERESTING vaguely inappropriate in an academic context - too much of a personal/subjective comment - the same goes for in THE RESEARCHER'S opinion...

Andy argued that TEXT-B sounded emotional, and thus it may have lost proper persuasiveness.

Andy: TEXT-B sounds subjective and emotional, and may be regarded as depending on feelings and attitudes rather than establishing evidence-based argument. It loses persuasiveness.

Finally, the couple of instances of self-mentions were judged by the four informants whether they were supporters of objectivity or subjectivity as explored later in 5.8.5.

TEXT-B: *In addition to that in **the researcher's** opinion, the findings of the speaking test were... **The researcher** thinks the present study showed that*

Expressing beliefs and opinions explicitly is not recommended in academic writing as noted by Andy, particularly there is no strong evidence that support this opinion.

Andy: ..expressing writer's thoughts generally..e.g. THE RESEARCHER'S opinion and the RESEARCHER thinks... are unnecessary because first this is too subjective.. and second any statement that isn't cited should be the writer's...

The informants on the whole recommended using the third person in ways like 'the study shows, the current research suggests' rather than expressing the thirds person noun by saying '*the researcher*'.

Basil: i am not 100% against using the third person noun THE RESEARCHER.. but i see that the two positions here are irrelevant and sound too subjective... the best way is to use structures like... the study suggests the research indicates... this is the safest way...

After identifying successful and unsuccessful patterns of stance markers, informants were invited to provide postgraduate students with feedback about each category of stance markers. The following sections include feedback from the research informants about taking an appropriate stance.

5.8.5 Lecturers' feedback about boosters and hedges

The informants preferred to combine both boosters and hedges under the category of degrees of certainty from the highest degree (boosters) to the lowest degree (hedges). Informants argued that expressing doubt and certainty appropriately by novice writers is a hard task which may lead to unsuccessful academic text. Reem and Tim referred to some of the difficulties that text writers may have when expressing their certainty and doubt. Both of them saw that students tend to make assertions which are not supported by evidence from the text. This will definitely affect the reader's assessment of the quality of the text in terms of the referential and affective aspects.

***Reem:** ...the problem again stems from the fact that students are not aware of why and how such markers are used in academic writing... difficulties could stem from the fact that they do not fully trust their claims or results they introduce in their research or when they are not aware of the importance of using such tools for argumentation...*

***Tim:** ...what i have noticed is that things come up much more strongly than justified by the evidence provided...*

Informants confirmed that it is important in academic writing to present a credible argument; a writer should be cautious in their claims unless they are established. Andy advised students to express doubt or certainty by using words that reflect their real degree of confidence towards the claim based on the data presented.

***Andy:** ...writers' devices of certainty and uncertainty markers could be guns since they could be both protective and damaging... if they are used appropriately.. they protect writers from readers' potential attack.. if not.. the text will lose its credibility and writers will lose audience deference.*

While informants encouraged students to use cautious language rather than assertive one, Reem suggests emphatic words, such as *show*, *clearly*, etc. to be used when presenting quantitative data or when there is agreement on a certain issue in the literature.

Reem: certainty markers could be a double-edged sword and they have to be very careful about how and where they are used in their dissertation...they are generally useful when presenting quantitative findings ... or when explaining other researchers' arguments.. but only when there is some kind of consensus within the literature on those arguments or conclusions...

Tim argued that students should be careful when using certainty words, e.g. 'prove' in the discussion chapter as he maintained that it indicates over-assertion which may influence the accuracy of the statement.

Tim: i noticed in both NNS and NES texts that students they overtake strong statement...one word I hate is PROVE. It never ever does.... It's not much a language point... it's the accuracy of the statement...

Tim gave an example from TEXT-B about inappropriate use of the word *prove*:

TEXT-B: ... is another example that **proves** effective of some active learning strategies in developing writing skills...

Therefore, Reem recommends students use epistemic verbs or modal verbs when presenting their research findings.

Reem: u-..use these markers each time you are not fully sure of your claim or interpretation..for example.. instead of saying ..these results show ..students should say.. these results indicate... instead of ..this research demonstrates.. say this research proposes or suggests...

In general, it is recommended that research students should use tentative language in their claims due to the fact that it is impossible that they have examined all likely evidence. Moreover the results of a certain study may be later to be shown as inaccurate as it could be interpreted improperly (see below).

***Basil:** ..it is acknowledged in academic writing now the concept of cautious language... it is important for postgraduate students to make decisions about their stance on the strength of the claims they are making...if not 100% proven.. claims are debatable and should be expressed carefully with cautious language... generally.. the results of most studies cannot be presented as facts... how do you know they were interpreted correctly or based on false assumptions?... new discoveries are made every day.. and results can be interpreted in different ways..*

5.8.6 Lecturers' feedback about self-mentions

Writers in different disciplines represent themselves, their work and their readers in different ways. In the social sciences, writers tend to take more explicit personal positions than in hard sciences (Hyland, 2005a). Using first person could be negatively related to subjectivity and informality while writing in the third person noun may indicate a neutral basis and thus result in the omission of important information in the text. Thus, academic writing has been seen as objective until recently. Divergent and often conflicting discourses emerged concerning this issue. It should be pointed out that the informants' views in this study are related to the discipline of Applied Linguistics and the MA thesis genre. Due to the diverse responses that were received in this issue, other expert writers were asked to opine on their perceptions on objectivity vs subjectivity in this genre of writing in the field of Applied Linguistics. As mentioned in the methodology chapter in 3.11.5.4, the new informants were coded as EXPERT-1, EXPERT-2, EXPERT-3 and EXPERT-4.

EXPERT-4 noted that her students have been reported to ask 'should we be objective or subjective in our dissertations? Do we use the first person pronoun 'I' or the third person noun *the researcher*? Do we express our opinion explicitly or not?'

***EXPERT-4:** this issue pops up often in my academic writing classes..*

Tim, who has been teaching academic writing for several years, said that this issue is confusing and problematic for both undergraduate and postgraduate students (L1 and L2).

***Tim:** i used to get students who are always puzzled by how exactly deal with that .. they say ..'can we give our opinions?'*

Views about writer's self-reference in the academic text varied from adhering objective writing to adopting a subjective stance. Those who support objectivity in academic writing argue that using the first person or personal comments, e.g. '*I think* or *in my opinion*' indicates biased opinions rather than logical argument based on evidence. Reem thinks that MA students are novice writers who are not confident enough to overtly express their presence in the text.

Reem: *..at ma level.. students do not have sufficient knowledge, experience and self-confidence to overtly express opinions.. or to refer to themselves in the text by using I or THE AUTHOR or to criticise existing knowledge....*

Andy maintains that academic writing should be objective and evidence-based. There is no place for personal pronouns, attitudes or for the writer's views. These aspects may influence the formality of a text. The language of academic writing should be objective and impersonal.

Andy: *..if an academic text has personal pronouns or subjective.. it may lose its persuasiveness.. and.. will be viewed as relying on personal views and attitudes rather than building an evidence-based argument... this is serious as it creates an informal tone..*

Tim sees that it is not a matter of opinions but it is a matter of evidence-based opinions.

Tim: *..my standard answer is that ..to be frank we are not interested in your personal opinion because it is your opinion... we are interested in your opinion if it happens to be true... so it is nothing about your opinion... it is about whether you can persuade me I also have that opinion... so you do that not by 'I THINK' but by raising argument using evidence...*

Other informants showed flexibility on the objectivity/subjectivity issue. EXPERT-1 for example, argues that academic writing should focus on clarity and using the first personal pronoun may be accepted depending on the context. However, EXPERT-1, who is Anglo-Saxon, did not recommend using '*the researcher*'.

EXPERT-1: *...we tend to advise students to focus on clarity... writers are responsible for this... if it is relevant to refer to yourself.. then use the clearest and simplest language... this of course includes pronouns like I ME and MY.*

I: *what about their opinions in the text?*

EXPERT-2: *expressing opinions is not taboo.. but must always be relevant to the argument.*

I: *can students use THE RESEARCHER?*

EXPERT-2: *why use the third person! I is miles better..*

Similarly, EXPERT-2 is not in favour of or against any writing style, but looks at the context to assess to what extent the explicit reference is used relevantly or not.

EXPERT-2: *...some students use 'I' because they haven't really developed their understanding of the primary material or their use of secondary material so rather than forwarding an argument.. other students may lack confidence to use 'I' and.. instead.. favour hedging phrases such as 'it could be argued' or 'arguably..' rather than making statements...*

Tim adopted a similar view to EXPERT-1 and EXPERT-2 concerning using 'I' where is relevant and disapproving using '*the researcher or the present writer*'.

Tim: *.. it depends on the rhetorical context... it is better to avoid saying 'I'. Instead of saying 'I aim in this research to ..', say 'this research aims to...'. Make it more impersonal and subjective.*

I: *What about the word THE RESEARCHER? Do you see it like 'I'?*

Tim: *I really hate that. This is a personal thing.. it just jar-.. I do not know why.. may be other people do not mind .. so much also I don't like THE PRESENT WRITER that makes my skin crawls!...*

It seems that using the third person noun '*the researcher*' is enormously disfavoured by another Anglo-Saxon expert writer which described this style as being vague.

EXPERT-3: *..when i am examining i dislike the convention of an author writing about themselves in the third person as this causes textual ambiguity.. this happens commonly in the discussion part when the findings of the research i read is compared with findings from other literature... more than once, as a reader i have had to read three times to figure out whether 'THE RESEARCHER found' refers to THE RESEARCHERS of the last-mentioned piece of literature or the authorial candidate.*

On the other side, other informants favoured using '*the researcher* or the first person pronoun *I*'. Basil and EXPERT-5, for example, recommended using this style. It should be noticed that both of them view '*the researcher*' as a term that ensures the text formality and objectivity.

Basil: *I think using THE RESEARCHER if needed is OK... writing a thesis is like a story... Using the third person gives the reader a rather omniscient perspective of the story... The researcher is able to describe everything they experience in their study... it enables researchers to show that you are being objective and not biased.*

I: *But THE RESEARCHER means I. It is the same thing. How is it objective?*

Basil: *no(@> as a researcher you are free from any attitudes or bias... everything is done in a scientific way... each step can be repeated by any other researcher and we will have the same results...*

EXPERT-5: *I would say MA students should use THE RESEARCHER rather than I when they are referring themselves because of formality and indirectness...*

On the contrary, other informants (e.g. EXPERT-4 and EXPERT-6) argued that there appears to be a trend towards using '*I*' in academic writing in recent years. The first person pronoun may be used to clarify meanings by eliminating passive voice constructions that may indicate ambiguity.

EXPERT-4: *...writing in the first person may dissolve ambiguities: just imagine you administer a test to your students the fact that they are your students and that you conduct the test in person may constitute variables in your study ..they can affect results because the students may feel more relaxed.. confident.. disinhibited... those aspects can never be conveyed by the passive voice...so, why not say "**I administered** the test ...*

EXPERT-6, who is from Egypt, said that the new trend is using the first person pronoun in students' dissertation. She confirmed that even senior staff who used to support using '*the researcher*', and she was one of them, began to change their views.

***EXPERT-6:** we are now strongly encouraging students to refer to themselves using "I" to show their voice and highlight their contribution... now we keep correcting the students' work every time they use vague terms such as "THE RESEARCHER"... also, passive voice is becoming very disliked in research writing practice... even old fashioned supervisors who belong to the senior generation of professors are now more accepting of seeing the "I" pronoun in students' thesis.*

When I informed EXERT-6 that the words '*the researcher*' appeared more frequently than the first person pronoun 'I' which appeared only once in my Egyptian corpus, she argued that she was a *the researcher* fan, but she changed her mind once she travelled to the US. She is expecting change in following years. She said that researchers in Egypt would be encouraged to use 'I' rather than '*the researcher*'.

***EXPERT-6:** i just prefer to keep away from using vague terms such as THE RESEARCHER... I personally find it very odd when we refer to ourselves with the third person...i was in the camp of THE RESEARCHER for a long time, but after my US experience i started to feel that THE RESEARCHER is too much artificial...maybe over time in 5 more years.. you will start seeing this diachronic change in egyptian ma and phd theses... we will then see the first person more frequent...*

EXPERT-4 agreed with EXPERT-6 agreed concerning using '*the researcher*' and affirmed that it indicates fake distance, and using it is not suitable for scientific research.

***EXPERT-4:** The use of "THE RESEARCHER" instead of "I",... my view is that it oozes a fake distant tone which sounds unnatural, something similar to the 'majestic we.. when there is only one author. "THE RESEARCHER" is besides conceited because it takes for granted that the writer has reached the status of a full-fledged researcher... what if the methodology he/she has used is flawed and the research poorly conducted?... then he/she would not deserve such qualification. would not be more humble and realistic to say " I did x"??...*

Finally, informants were asked to provide students with a few tips to follow when they refer to themselves in the academic text. Reem suggested that students should first follow their academic community norms, i.e. supervisors and examiners.

Reem: this clearly depends on personal preferences of supervisors and perhaps even jury members...the student has to abide by the norms of writing set or agreed upon by the research community to which they belong ...

Similarly, EXPERT-1 and EXPERT-2 agreed that there is no right or wrong way, but students should adopt a style that is appropriate for their discipline and for them.

EXPERT-1:..t things to think about.. First ask yourself how it helps the discussion to refer to yourself.. how is it relevant? ..second pay attention to writers that they find easier to follow and try to emulate their style...

EXPERT-2: i tell them that there is no one right way of writing but that they need to find a style which works for them...

EXPERT-4 encouraged students to be subjective and refer to themselves using the first pronoun I as this gives more credibility to the information. However, she advises students not to start sentences with a personal pronoun because this may unnecessarily distract the reader's attention.

EXPERT-4: ..always avoid starting a sentence with a personal pronoun if you are adopting this style... this is a noticeable position.. and draws unnecessary readers' attention.. unless.. of course.. that was your intent..

EXPERT-6 echoed what EXPERT-4 said stressing that the first person pronoun is recommended with qualitative research, but objectivity is favoured with quantitative research.

EXPERT-6: ...it also depends on the type of data ..or qualitative.. the field.. the type of publication.. if your research is quantities based.. being objective could be recommended... but if you are conducting a qualitative research.. you can be subjective and use first person pronoun if needed...

5.8.7 Lecturers' feedback about attitude markers

Attitude markers are the devices that writers use to express their affective values toward the text or the readers of the text. The attitude language could be expressions of surprise, interest, thinking that something is important, of concession, of agreement etc.

There was a sense of disagreement among the interviewees concerning the formality of attitude markers. While some respondents argued that these markers, like first person pronouns, are subjective and contradict the objectivity of the writing (e.g. EXPERT-6).

***EXPERT-6:** what i do not encourage is the use of attitude markers.. they do make the researcher sound subjective and they are not scientific..*

Tim argues that it in some occasions they are used inappropriately as was clarified in section 5.8.4. Yet, it depends on the context and the voice that the writer is taking.

***Tim:** ..no again ..well first of all it's irrelevant.. it's beside the point... it doesn't further an argument, but again...the context is... it depends on the context ..*

On the other side, other informants contended that writers' can use their attitudes in social sciences freely as academic language is dynamic and shaped by its users. EXPERT-4 said that according to Hyland and Jiang (2017) academic writing is evolving towards informality and personalisation.

***EXPERT-4:** ..not using attitudes can be accepted in hard sciences but in soft sciences there is no problem.. attitudinals engage the reader.. facilitate reading by focusing on what deserves special attention.. and give the writer a small margin for opinion in the scientific text.. which does not need to be written in a strictly sanitized style... i see no drawbacks in their use.. only advantages...*

Reem agrees with EXPERT-4 saying that expressions of importance or surprise can be used to describe writers' results. However, words which indicate strong attitudes like 'AMAZING, WONDERFUL' should not be used as they are too subjective.

Reem: ..yes they can, but not always and not in any manner... words like SURPRISING, SURPRISINGLY, IMPORTANT, IMPORTANCE can be used to describe results or to comment on other researchers' claims and conclusions or to compare etc..... a word like AMAZING, WONDERFUL or NICE which are completely subjective attitudes should not be used...

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, the interviews with the L1 and L2 text writers which was largely centred on the writers' motivations behind their use/non-use of certain stance features answered RQ-2. The results revealed that both L1 and L2 writers interviewed were aware of the functions stance markers have in their academic texts. However, there was a fuzzy understanding of the levels of epistemic commitment that most EDs have. Five potential reasons behind students' use of stance markers were reported. To answer RQ-3, interviews were conducted with four expert writers. A variety of perspectives were expressed concerning stance markers. Informants agreed on the way students express their un/certainty in academic text, but opinions differed regarding self-mentions and attitude markers.

Chapter Six: Discussion

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores and draws together the results set out in Chapters Four and Five, and attempts to answer the research questions based on this data. The chapter is structured using the research questions (sections 6.2 and 6.3), but draws on both quantitative and qualitative results.

6.2 RQ-1

1. How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and British MA students (English L1 writers) employ stance markers:

- a. What similarities in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?
- b. What differences in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:
 - I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,
 - II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,
 - III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,
 - IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?

The frequency counts indicate the importance of stance markers to MA students when writing discussion chapters in their MA theses in the field of Applied Linguistics / TEFL, with 3,172 cases in 197,592 words, or one device every 62.3 words. The inferential statistics show that the two groups of text writers did not differ significantly in terms of the total number of stance markers (Mann-Whitney $U = .000$, $Z = -1.00$, $p = 0.317$ two-tailed). In terms of types, 107 types were used by both group writers with 67 exponents by the L2 group and 100 exponents by the L1 group in all categories of stance markers. Both writer groups shared 61 exponents while

there were 6 exponents in only the L2 corpus in comparison with 39 exponents only in the L1 corpus.

Table 36 compares the counts of stance markers (per 1000 words) in the current research with other studies in the field of Linguistics/Applied Linguistics. It should be noticed that the L1 writers diverged in using stance markers in the below studies. The L1 text writers in the current study used frequencies of stance markers (18.9) similar to those L1 writers (both British) in Menkabu (2017), but remarkably more than those American English L1 writers in Al-Rubaye (2015), and noticeably less than those in Ozdemir and Longo (2014) with 16.8, 11.1 and 27.1, respectively. This may confirm what a few studies (e.g. Adel, 2006; Precht, 2003) have shown: that American and British English L1 writers demonstrated significant differences in terms of using interpersonal metadiscourse.

Table 36: Stance markers (per 1000 w) in the current research and other studies

Study	Text writers	Stance markers per 1000 words	Discipline/genre of the writing
Current research	EFL Arabic	12.6	MA Applied Linguistics dissertations (discussion)
	British English L1	18.9	
Hyland (2004)	EFL Cantonese	21.9	Postgraduate Applied Linguistics dissertations
Burneikaite (2008)	EFL Lithuanians	2.3	MA Linguistics dissertations
Lee (2009)	EFL writers (Arabic, Japanese, Chinese and Korean) British English L1 writers Expert writers	7.8	Postgraduate assignments in Applied Linguistics and Cross-Cultural Communication Research articles
		9.1	
		8.8	
Ozdemir and Longo (2014)	EFL Turkish	12.2	MA Applied Linguistics dissertations
	American NES	27.1	
Al-Rubaye (2015)	EFL MA Arabic students	10.3	Research papers in Applied Linguistics
	American MA English L1	11.2	
Menkabu (2017)	EFL Arabic	12.4	MA Linguistics and Literature dissertations
	British English L1	16.8	

Interestingly, the EFL Arabic speakers in the current study employed very similar stance markers to those in Menkabu (2017) with 12.6 and 12.4, respectively, which may indicate similar stance-taking strategies used by those writers. Similar to EFL Arabic speakers, the EFL Turkish students (Ozdemir & Longo, 2014) used 12.2 stance markers per 1000 words. However, EFL Lithuanians (Burneikaite, 2008) and EFL international students (Lee, 2009) used considerably

fewer stance markers than the other writer groups in other studies. Remarkably, stance markers used by expert writers (Lee, 2009) are fewer than EFL Arabic, Cantonese, Turkish and NES in the studies in Table 36. This may contradict Intaraprawat and Steffensen (1995) and Hyland's (2004) claim that the presence of a higher density of metadiscourse markers is a feature of NES texts and an indication of a more sophisticated and advanced level writing. However, this supports the current study findings that it is not the presence or absence of metadiscourse markers *per se* which demonstrates a writer's abilities of discourse competence but the way in which these markers are actually used. For example, BR-2 transcript includes 54 stance markers, but looking closely into the text, it was found that there were several occurrences of stance devices that should not have been in the text, e.g. the self-mention 'I' in example 1, the hedge 'appears' in example 2, and the attitude marker 'unsurprisingly' in example 3.

1. *In this chapter I will provide a) a detailed analysis and evaluation of my findings, and ... As the major focus of this research is on pedagogical implications of the LUK test, I will consider this in each section. (BR-2)*
2. *Indeed, Table 4.3 **appears** to show a link between pass rates and level of English proficiency; firstly...*
3. *When a single question is worth more than 4% of the test, we may expect it to be of significant value; perhaps, not too **unsurprisingly**, this was the only question which all the candidates answered correctly.*

The next sections explore each of the categories of analysis, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers. Each category is discussed, first in terms of RQ-1.

6.2.1 Boosters

The inferential results did not show any statistical differences ($p=0.072$) between the two writer groups when employing boosters. This finding concurs with EFL Turkish students in Candarli et al. (2015), but is in contrast with Menkabu (2017) that showed that EFL Arab students used significantly fewer boosters than L1 writers. Her finding contradicts previous studies (e.g. Hinkel, 2005 and Al-Rubaye, 2015) that showed that EFL Arab writers used significantly more boosters than the English L1 writers. Hinkel (2005, p. 5) attributed her findings to a lingua-cultural aspect saying that in the Arabic language, "amplification is seen as a valid and eloquent rhetorical

device to convey the writer's power of conviction and/or desirability". Menkabu (2017) argued that this widespread cultural stereotype did not seem to affect her EFL Arab writers. With regard to grammatical classes, both writer groups tended to use lexical verbs which constituted around one third (245 out of 587) of all boosters to express their degree of certainty. Adverbs came second as the most used device with 156 devices used in both L2 and L1 corpora in this study. L1 and L2 writers may have found emphatic adverbs as an easy way to emphasise their statements as Hyland and Milton (1997) reasoned that "Adverbials offer a far simpler means for writers to express an attitude to their statements and adjust the strength of their claims without such grammatical and lexical complications" (p. 192).

Both text writers used similar types of boosters, e.g. '*show* and *the fact that*' which came on the top three in both corpora. A big range of types was used by both of writer groups that may be indicative of increased confidence in their willingness to support the points that they make in their arguments and may link to the findings. However, the use of boosters could be a double-edged sword. It could be positive if the writer's claim is evidenced. Otherwise, it will be a point of weakness (see more details in section 6.3.4.1). The further five types in the L1 corpus (31) than in the L2 one (26) could be related to the different sizes of the two corpora (89,438 words in the L2 and 108,154 words in the L1).

6.2.2 Hedges

Hedges are the most used devices by both group writers with 65.8% of the total stance markers in both corpora. In addition, twenty-six hedging types were used by both group writers. Hyland (2008) maintains that "Hedging is a culturally accepted and expected persuasive technique in academic writing" (p. 2), and it is a characteristic of many rhetorical traditions. Writers use hedges frequently to decrease their responsibility for their truth-value and to project politeness, hesitation and uncertainty. Based on previous research, Hyland (2008) reports that experienced academic writers, such as academics and successful English L1 writers use a hedge about one word in every 50 words (20 per 1000 words) on average. This number is far from the current study as the L1 writers used 12.8 hedging devices per 1000 words while 7.9 per 1000 words

were used in the English L2 scripts. Similar to several comparative metadiscourse studies (e.g. Menkabu, 2017; Crompton, 2012; Lee, 2009; Hinkel, 2005), the current study data show that the L1 writers used significantly more hedges than the L2 writers. There is, as well, a remarkable difference in the exponents used by each writer group as the L1 writers used 43 exponents in comparison with 28 by the L2. Thus, the results may support Burneikaite's (2008) suggestion that L2 writers tend to underuse hedges, a behaviour which could be attributed to learning methods, rather than the writer's native language or culture as claimed by Sa'adeddin (1989) who argued that Arabic speaking writers tend to be over-assertive and have a straightforward style which may explain their underuse of hedges when writing in English. Differently, Hyland (2008) argues that it is a matter of learning and textbook-related as these devices used to be under-represented in the writing textbooks, and in addition teaching materials argue that hedging robs writing of its certainty and power. Hyland's opinion is largely supported by some of the text writer interviewees (both Egyptian and British) who attributed their use of some hedging devices to a textbook approach (e.g. EGY-4) or a previous learning advice (as mentioned by BR-5).

***EGY-4:** .. generally I use MAY.. when i am not certain... this word was mentioned frequently in our textbooks in the secondary school... i thought that it was the only way to express uncertainty .. probably with.. PERHAPS... unfortunately .. a small range of uncertainty words was mentioned in our textbooks...*

***BR-5:** ..my teachers used to encourage us to use hedging techniques.. especially when writing academic texts since the goal of the research is questioning.. one of my teachers used to say ..hedging language puts forth ideas as ideas.. rather than offering ideas as definite answers..*

However, culture when it is related to learner's L1 cannot be ignored as an important factor-but not the main factor-as having an impact on writer's hedging strategies. EGY-3's first language influenced his hedging lexical choices (see below) as the Arabic language tends to be over-assertive, as noted by Sa'adeddin (1989).

EGY-3: i do not tend to express uncertainty when we use Arabic.. our language is strong... i mean factual... this may explain why i used few words like 'may, might', etc.. i don't know!

The findings revealed that the most frequently favoured modality devices for the L2 writers were modal verbs which made up about 25% of the total number of devices; this is not surprising as this data supports Al-Sharafi's (2014) study in which Arab EFL university students' modal verbs constituted 43% of the total EDs. The results also confirm Hyland and Milton (1997) and McEnery and Kifle's (2002) findings in which modal auxiliaries were the most used devices in EFL Chinese and Eritrean students' writing as they were about 40% and 72%, respectively of the total EDs.

This cross-cultural agreement among three different EFL writers of three different L1s may rule out the cultural factor that was claimed by Kaplan (1966, 1987) and other previous studies (e.g. Hinkel, 2005; Burneikaite, 2008, Menkabu, 2017). First, if it had been the culture that largely affected students' use of these devices in their academic writing, there might have been some variations. Second, the results of the current study and those of Hyland and Milton's (1997) and McEnery and Kifle's (2002) interestingly demonstrated a similar trend in terms of preference for grammatical classes to express not only modality but also attitude markers with a clear dominance of modal verbs in hedges, verbs in boosters and adjectives in attitude markers in both corpora of L1 and L2. This trend weakens Kaplan's argument as it indicates that both native English writers and EFL writers appear to use similar stance devices, but even adopted similar views about using certain stance markers as the case in my discourse-based interviews. For instance, six participants (4 Egyptians and two British) thought wrongly that 'may', 'might' and 'would' are modal verbs that have the same degree of certainty and can be used interchangeably (see below).

EGY-5: i would use MAY, MIGHT, CAN, COULD and WOULD interchangeably... they give the same meaning...

BR-2: MAY and WOULD ...i think they are similar ... MAY could be stronger...

This point signals a need to socialise both L1 and L2 novice writers towards the conventions of academic writing. The varied preference patterns among L1 and L2 writers are best explained, I believe, in terms of the situational factors or small cultures (Atkinson,2003) that have a strong influence on the language learning and teaching rather than fixed cultural strategies. It should be emphasised that ‘small cultures’ here refer to all the other factors that may affect learners’ thoughts and way of writing, e.g. a classroom culture, a reading culture, the academic community culture, a student–supervisor relationship culture etc. However, I do not mean to downplay the role of culture that is linked to L1 in its broad meaning, but this the lingua-cultural aspect can be considered as one of these small cultures.

In terms of individual types of lexical exponents, both groups make substantial use of ‘*may*, ‘*would* and ‘*could*’, which are their favourite three devices. Similarly, Hyland and Jiang (2018) noticed that ‘*may*, ‘*would*, ‘*should*, ‘*could* and ‘*might*’ represented 34% of all hedges in applied linguistics in 2015. The noticeable difference is that L2 writers appear to prefer using the epistemic modal ‘*can*’ which appeared more frequently in the L2 list while L1 writers favour ‘*would*’ instead. The overuse of ‘*can* and ‘*may*’ by the L2 writers may be due to the L1 transfer as this was emphasised by two Egyptian participants EGY-3 and EGY-7 (see below).

I: why did you use MAY here not WOULD for example?

EGY-7: i do not know.. but i may be affected by my native arabic language because MAY means MOMKEN in arabic and this is the meaning that i wanted to give...

I: what about WOULD? What does it mean in arabic?

EGY-7: i learned that WOULD could be used to express uncertainty so it is a synonym to MAY.. but what comes to mind to say MOMKEN is the word MAY..

‘*Indicate*, ‘*appear*, ‘*seem* and ‘*suggest*’ were in the top ten used devices in the L1 list while they were used in a notably lower proportion by the L2. The underuse of the epistemic lexical verbs in the Egyptian corpus may attest to the disproportionate attention they have received in L2 pedagogical writing materials, as argued before by Hyland & Milton (1997) and highlighted by one of the Egyptian participants.

*EGY-12: if I want to express uncertaintywhat comes to my mind is using MAY
CAN MIGHT*

R: what about verbs like SEEM, APPEAR etc.?

*EGY-12: i may use them as well but modal verbs are used more commonly ... we
used to practice uncertainty with modal verbs at school not verbs... i remember this*

This leads to what Crompton (2012) said that writing instructors can positively affect EFL learners' use of hedges in writing by drawing their attention to English language hedge forms.

As regards **the levels of epistemic commitment**, the results are in line with McEnery and Kifle's (2002) which revealed that the two groups of writers differ remarkably in the degree of probability as the L1 writers used 72.19% of the probability items, and slightly in the degree of possibility with 55.17% devices in the L1 corpus. Nevertheless, both groups of writers used similar amounts of devices when expressing certainty. The results seem to contradict the views of many comparative metadiscourse researchers (e.g. Hinkel, 2005; Hyland & Milton, 1997) who assumed that L2 writers tend to use "firmer assertions, more authoritative tones and stronger writer commitments when compared with native speaker discourse" (Hyland & Milton, 1997, p. 193). While this may be true for L2 Cantonese writers, it does not appear to be true for the Egyptian, native Arabic writers in the current study or the Eritrean writers in McEnery and Kifle's (2002). However, the common trend in most epistemic commitment studies is that EFL learners tend to prefer modal verbs rather than epistemic verbs or adverbs. This higher use of epistemic modals can be justified in the Egyptian EFL context as modal verbs receive inordinate attention in the EFL materials and textbooks used by English language learners and teachers in Egypt and the Arab World in general, which pays scant attention to other epistemic categories (Al-Sharafi, 2014). This is confirmed by Holmes (1988, p. 40) who analysed the use of epistemic modality in ELT textbooks: "Many [textbooks]... provide an unjustifiably large amount of attention to modal verbs, neglecting alternative linguistic strategies for expressing doubt and certainly." The Egyptian EFL textbooks highlight the use of modal verbs, e.g. '*may* and *might*', then proverbs, e.g. '*probably*' as the most important and easiest way to express uncertainty in English from the early stages of EFL learning, paying less attention to other tentative grammatical

features like epistemic verbs or adjectives. This is instilled in EFL learners from their early ages till they become mature and expert EFL writers.

However, it should be noticed that a large number of the interviewed students are not aware of the degree of commitment when employing their hedging lexical choices. That is to say, based on students' responses in the interviews, there seems to be a blurry conception of the degree of probability and possibility. This is realised clearly when participants were asked to differentiate, for example, between '*possibly vs probably*' and/or '*may/might vs would*'. While '*would*' indicates probability, which gives more certainty than '*may/might*', BR-6 failed to identify this difference.

BR-6:...no i wouldn't switch here...MAY refers to something in the past.. MIGHT is more in the present..... MAY is a weaker form if we are talking about possibility.
I: what about WOULD if it is used instead of MAY or MIGHT?
BR-6: ..i think WOULD is similar to MIGHT...

Similarly, two Egyptian interviewees wrongly thought that 'possibility' gives more certainty or is stronger than probability, for example EGY-4:

EGY-4: 'POSSIBILITY' for me refers to something happened and can be happened once again, but PROBABILITY ... something that has not been tried before ... i have this sense... i match this with the arabic meaning 'MOMKEN and IMKANIYAH'... so i feel that POSSIBLY is stronger than PROBABLY...

In general, as maintained by (Swales, 1990), hedges are considered to be necessary with the general purpose of projecting "honesty, modesty, proper caution" (p. 174). These devices are highly conventionalised and seem to be requisite in academic writing. Yet, it is not a matter of quantity that determines the quality of the text. Swales (1990) confirms that the appropriateness of using the hedging devices and the awareness of their epistemic commitment is crucial and depends on the norms of a particular academic community.

6.2.3 Self-mentions

Self-mentions, in the current study, refer whether to the use of the first-person pronoun and possessive adjectives '*me*' (explicit use), or to the third person noun '*the researcher / the*

author' (implicit use) to present interpersonal information. Self-mentions are the fewest frequent devices with 2% of the total stance markers. The inferential results do not show any statistical significant differences between the two groups of writers with regard to the total counts of self-mentions for each group, which is complemented by Menkabu (2017) and Candarli et al. (2015), but contradicts Ozdemir and Longo (2014) who revealed that EFL Turkish MA students used significantly fewer self-mentions than native English speakers.

The discourse-based interviews with some of the text writers suggested three main factors that probably affected students' non/use of certain self-mentions in both L1 and L2 corpora: first, students were told to use/avoid self-mentions altogether by colleagues, lecturers and their supervisors, second students themselves (felt/did not feel) sufficiently secure to risk face-threatening interpersonal intervention in their texts as noted by Harwood (2005), third, students (may/may not) have believed that appropriate academic writing is largely self-mention-free.

For the first, the interviews with both students and expert writers revealed that the students' academic community practices had a significant role in affecting students' self-mention choices and decisions. BR-3 and EGY-5 decisions to have a free self-mention text, for example, were influenced by their supervisors and lecturers.

BR-3: ..i was told by my lecturers and colleagues not to use the word I but me personally i don't have a problem with it therefore i put THE RESERACHER..

EGY-5: no i can't use the word I... this is what we have learnt from our professors.

This factor was highlighted by Lester and Lester (2012) and Hyland (2004). Lester and Lester referred to the fact that the students were told to avoid personal pronouns in their academic writing during their education. Likewise, Hyland's (2004) comments that postgraduate students are generally instructed to avoid first person pronouns as they are viewed as signs of informal writing.

Second, students themselves might have been very confident to use self-mentions as in the case of BR-2 who challenged his supervisor and his transcript included several occurrences of the first-person pronoun 'I'. In converse other students were not sufficiently secure to risk face-threatening interpersonal intervention in their academic texts. This was realised in the interview with, e.g. EGY-12:

EGY-12: .. i am still a novice writer .. i should not have a clear voice in my writing.. who am i .. to say..I...probably.. i will use i when i finish a phd...

Third, students' decisions might be from their individual perceptions about the appropriate use of self-reference in the academic text. This was disclosed in the interviews with, e.g. BR-8.

BR-8: ..i think it is academic and formal to use I in my dissertation...any academic text is subjective... there is some subjectivity... as long as I is used where needed ..it is ok..

However, students' individual beliefs were usually confronted with the authority of their supervisors which affected their final lexical decision (see EGY-8).

EGY-8: i wanted in many situations to use I but it was prohibited.. i was banned from using I... i am not convinced enough why not using i ..

In spite of similarities of self-mention counts between the two writer groups, one unanticipated finding was that while the frequencies of the implicit and the explicit self-mentions in the L1 corpus are to a great extent proportionate (18 and 19, respectively), the average of using explicit self-mentions to the implicit ones is 1:8 in the L2 scripts. The main explanation for that is that Egyptian supervisors encourage their students to avoid using the first pronoun 'I', but rather use 'the researcher' as a term that ensures the students' objectivity in the academic text, as they believed (see below excerpts from EGY-5 and Basil 'an expert writer).

EGY-5: *...no i can't use the word I because here in egypt we recognise the speaker's pronouns I or WE as biased...we should not do this...using I is an arrogant expression... but THE RESEARCHER is academic and maintains my objective voice in the text...*

Basil: *i think using THE RESEARCHER if needed is OK... as a researcher you are free from any attitudes or bias... everything is done in a scientific way...*

Swales and Feak (2004) explicitly stated that using the first-person pronoun in academic writing diminishes the objective tone in writing. This view may have influenced Applied Linguistics authors in the current millennium as Hyland and Jiang (2018) noticed a dramatic fall in the self-mentions in the Applied Linguistics fields (6.7 /1000 w in 2015 compared to 8.8/1000 w in 1985). “Applied linguistics authors are now taking a more objective, less personal stance towards their material” (p. 26). Approximately half of the Egyptian and British text writers have echoed Swales and Feak’s (2004) views as self-mentions did not appear in 18 Egyptian and 20 British texts.

6.2.4 Attitude markers

Attitude markers refer to the writers’ affective values and attitudes towards the content or the readers rather than the commitment to the truth value. They constituted around 13.7% of the total stance markers in both corpora with 59.6% used by the L1 writers and 40.4% by the L2 writer peers. Attitude markers are the second category after hedges to show statistical differences between the two writer groups. The L1 corpus included statistically significant more attitude markers than the L2 one ($p = .034$). Although these results are consistent with those of Menkabu (2017) and Al-Rubaye (2015) which revealed that NES used statistically significant more attitude markers than NNS peers, they differ from other studies, e.g. Lee (2009) which showed no statistical differences between the two writer groups. In contrast, the attitude markers were significantly more in the L2 corpus than the L1’s in Candarli et al. (2015) in the Turkish case.

The findings revealed that adjectives are the most used category of attitudes constituting more than 50% of the total number while adverbs came second with 35%. Expressions of importance, e.g. *'important, significant and even'* strikingly constituted more than 50% of the total of attitude devices in both corpora. This may be consistent with Hyland and Jiang's (2018) results that *'important and even'*, while declining in numbers in the current millennium, have remained the most popular forms of affect across all Applied Linguistics and social fields, "enabling writers to present a positive evaluation which simultaneously aligns their stance with community-recognized assessments of value" (p. 26).

The data suggested that L1 students were probably more confident to use attitude words, which could explain the extensive use of attitude markers in the L1 corpus. In contrast, L2 students were more reluctant to use these expressions though the survey question during the interview revealed that 25% of the participants in each group felt comfortable using attitude markers in their academic texts. However, the responses should not be generalised due to the small number of students interviewed in this study.

To sum up, L1 writers may have a distinct edge when writing English as they may do this naturally. On the other side, EFL Master's students may not pay too much attention to the technicalities of professional-level writing, for example, using proper hedging devices, attitude markers etc. while writing their thesis. However, they would focus more on the research content, i.e. tools, procedures, findings etc. This view was proposed by Basil (an expert writer) when asked about his explanation why the EFL writers used fewer hedges and attitude markers.

***Basil:** ma students are more interested in the content of their research rather than writing technicalities.. while british students are more comfortable to use hedges or attitude markers as they do this naturally... It is inherited in their linguistic system.*

6.3 RQ-2 and RQ-3

RQ-2-: What stance do some text writers -both Egyptian and British- prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their choices?

RQ-3: What are the characteristics of successful stance-taking in academic writing?

This section explores and draws together the results set out in Chapter Five, i.e. qualitative results (semi-structured and DBIs with twenty of the text writers and expert writers). The quantitative results in the current research proved that there are no statistically significant differences between the two writer groups, i.e. the Egyptian L2 writers and the British L1 peers in terms of the total frequencies of stance markers, boosters and self-mentions. Nevertheless, statistically significant differences were identified concerning hedges and attitude markers in addition to a few discrepancies in the non/use of certain exponents or preferring certain grammatical forms. The DBIs with some of the text writers and a few expert writers suggested that there are in/consistencies of the participants' perceptions and opinions towards stance markers regardless of their L1.

The literature review (e.g. Menkabu, 2017; Hinkel, 2005) indicated that there is a substantial influence of culture and L1 on writer's use of stance markers. However, it can be suggested that these discrepancies among participants do not appear to be solely due to participants' cultural background or L1, but they were likely related to the nature of each study (its epistemological stance, quantitative or qualitative), its contextual factors which may be stronger than the mother tongue or culture specifically. Text writers may interact and perceive their intended reader in what Burneikaite (2008) called an 'idiosyncratic way' which is determined by their individual personal characteristics. Based on the collected qualitative data, writer's personal linguistic preferences, supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback, previous education and writer's self-confidence seemed to be important factors that may have a key role in the writer's use of stance markers and affect their perceptions about certain stance markers. Also, it cannot be ignored that the epistemological stance of the study (quantitative or qualitative) largely determines the

stance that writers take when reporting their results in the discussion chapter. The emergent themes from the interviews (with students and expert writers) are discussed in the following sections (6.3.1, 6.3.2 and 6.3.3).

6.3.1 Lingua-cultural perspectives

The cultural aspect in this study concerns the L1 and religion facets and how they influenced writer's choices. As shown in most comparative studies (e.g. Menkabu, 2017; Crompton, 2012; Lee, 2009; Hinkel, 2005; Vassileva, 2001), the NES used significantly more hedges than the NNS. Though these studies showed no significant statistical difference between the two writer groups, other studies, e.g. Hinkel (2005) and Al-Rubaye (2015) revealed that EFL Arabic speakers tend to be more emphatic and assertive than the L2s.

With respect to L1, some writers, e.g. EGY-4, perceive the Arabic translation of their lexical choices before making decisions to use them. This was clearly depicted when interviewees tended to use the word (momken) as a direct translation of (probably) in English.

I: how do you see the difference between POSSIBLE and PROBABLE?

EGY-4: They are different. POSSIBILILITY for me refers to something happened... and it can happen once again, but ... PROBABILITY... something that has not been tried before...i have this sense..... i match my arabic ...MOMKEN I and IMKANIYA in this context..... i feel POSSIBILITY is stronger than PROBABILITY....

Not only does L1 affect writer's choices, but also religion as the Arabic culture is highly influenced by Islam (Rass, 2011). This was defined by Al-Anbary (1982) who indicated that the first-person pronoun reflects pride. The Arabic writer assumes that the reader is in complete agreement with them because of cultural consensus. That was revealed clearly in EGY-3's response when he was asked why he did not use 'I' in his text.

EGY-3: *i have learnt and in our arabic culture we do not use the first person I ... we don't use the word ANA (I in english) in academic arabic... we always refer to the person or the speaker's name because ANA MEN ALSHAITAN.. (In English this means I from the devil/Satan)... i have an inner feeling to avoid this word and this is our culture..*

EGY-3's opinion of the required modesty of the writer may be consistent with Biber's (1991) expression of the ego-involvement in a text when writers tend to use the first-person pronoun 'I' in the academic text.

Regarding hedging language, one of the Egyptian expert writers (Reem) thinks that the underused hedges in the Egyptian corpus may be attributed to lingua-cultural factors. Using hedges is a strategy that is used in English to emphasise avoidance of imposition on the reader. British writers adopt a negative face strategy to remain autonomous, so the writer is more apt to include an out for the reader through distancing styles, such as hedges or indirect language.

Reem: *it is a cultural training.. something about how they prefer to write...in english there are two levels of language ... you know... or two levels of faces... negative face and positive face... the writer should take care of both levels to protect their own and the reader's face.. we do not have too much of this in arabic i think. british people make distance with their readers to be polite, but the egyptian do not do that... it is cultural point....*

This was supported by BR-7 when she explained why there are many hedges in her academic text.

BR-7: *I think.. english people plant hedges in their speech ..all the time to soften what they say .. this might indicate to an important part of a polite conversation in order to make what they say less direct... i might be influenced with my spoken language.. may be..*

However, some L1 students may depend on their native spoken language rather than the target academic language which may have a negative influence on their academic writing practices.

This was mentioned by BR-5 (see below).

BR-5: I just think MIGHT is used a lot when we speak.. and MAY is less commonly used... when speaking about the formality or the academic use of words.. MAY is probably more commonly used than MIGHT.... some english students write what they speak ...

Thus, cultural factor may play an important role on writer's stance-taking. However, the research participants' views in the current study may tend to support Atkinson's (2003) inter-cultural aspect rather than Kaplan's (1987) lingua-cultural facet. A combination of social contexts and small cultures may affect writers' lexical choices in the academic text.

6.3.2 Instruction influence

Taking an appropriate stance in academic writing has been found to be challenging and needs subtlety and cleverness from both EFL and native English writers across college and postgraduate levels (Markkanen & Schroder, 1997; Lancaster, 2012). Explicit instruction at this high-level of academic writing, i.e. stance-taking, is required for both L1 and L2 contexts. British students (L1) have an edge of being trained during their secondary level to produce texts displaying objectivity, a high degree of clarity, consistency, and a logical formal layout as mentioned by BR-5:

BR-5: i remember i was told in my a-level from a teacher in every time i write I THINK... she says 'i am not interested in what you think... i am interested in what you have read...'

However, expressing an accurate degree of tentativeness is a major concern for both L1 and L2 writers as most interviewees showed a fuzzy understanding of probability and possibility EDs. Also, some L1 students may depend on their native spoken language rather than the target academic language which may have a negative influence on their academic writing practices. This was mentioned by BR-5 as mentioned in the previous page.

In the case of types of stance markers, the quantitative results revealed that L1 writers used more types (exponents) than L2 writers. One important explanation here is the way of instruction

that L1 writers receive or what Bailey and Pieterick (2008) called “teacher input ... home students (L1) may have been echoing ideas from lessons in which they explored the academic argument and how to structure it” (p. 3). By contrast, the traditional educational system in Egypt and most Arabic-speaking countries is exam-based and encourages students to memorise information rather than developing critical thinking: “The assessment criteria of the exams are based on grammatical, spelling and punctuation accuracy; these practices are product oriented and the process writing aim is to develop the thinking, creativity of learners and to make them well-acquainted with the cultural, rhetoric and linguistic norms of the target language” (Darwish, 2016, p. 50). This approach makes completing a long piece of writing, such as an MA thesis is demanding work. Generally, Egyptian university students have two years of study in academic writing: a basic writing course in the first year and an academic course in the second. Theoretically, therefore, the main focus in the first year will be on structural, organisational rules, and the second year will raise the basic grounds of writing critically and meeting the Anglo-Saxon writing standards. This is relevant to Mauranen’s (1993) comments that in traditional language teaching, teachers seem not to focus on metadiscoursal features, which probably leads to lack of awareness of these textual features. In a short time, most L2 postgraduate students do their best to perceive and produce an academic text that should meet the Anglo-Saxon academic writing norms, and eventually satisfy their supervisors. In the EFL Egyptian context, academic writing skills were developed as a marginal goal in the undergraduate level; the main focus is on learning correct grammatical forms and using high-level vocabulary. Basil echoed this when he was explaining what postgraduate students do before writing their MA thesis.

***Basil:** the secondary school and undergraduate educational system are exam-based... students rarely write a long piece of writing... curricula do not include units about critical writing.. audience.. stance or anything like that... most of the writing teaching is based on organising the text and using linking words...thus.. postgraduate students struggle in the postgraduate level.. in a few months they are required to learn all what they need to know about writing a thesis... it is their first time to hear about writing style.. references.. argumentative writing.. evidence-based argument and so on...*

While content-based writing instruction helps students to develop thinking, researching and writing skills needed for an academic writing task, Egyptian students are still under the dominance of grammar-based instruction; most EFL teachers still spend the vast majority of class hours teaching and testing grammar rules.

In the same vein, Casanave (2008, as cited in Zhao, 2017) argues that the challenges perceived by many L2 academic writers are not language related. They are a result of “lack of familiarity with genre conventions” which includes “awkward and difficult-to-process syntax and inappropriate lexicon” (p. 48). Andy echoed what Casanave said, viewing that most students pay more attention to grammar rather than genre, stance or high-level skills.

***Andy:** ...novice writers regard grammar as their priority... i think one of the possible explanations for that is their lack of awareness of genre.. voice construction and other important academic writing conventions that are essential at this level...*

All of the participants in this study are language teachers in primary, secondary or tertiary education. The content and the level they are teaching have influenced their perceptions and the way they took a certain stance. EGY-8, for example, is one of the few participants who used the term ‘hedges’, and her text analysis results show a variety of hedges and boosters. When asked about factors that affected her writing, she said she was teaching academic writing in a college, and EAP teaching helped her substantially in her academic writing. She was aware of the importance of hedges in academic writing, and when to be assertive or use attitude words, as she said.

***EGY-8:** i am teaching academic writing skills in my college for five years. i have been teaching and learning at the same time... i used a variety of academic words in my thesis.. high level words.. hedging techniques.. i wrote objectively...used appropriate attitude words according to the context.*

Four participants, both Egyptian and British, expressed explicitly that they received the academic vocabulary corpus from reading academic articles and dissertations that helped them use relevant lexicons while writing their dissertations.

EGY-9: *i have seen all these styles in many published research articles ... ok... if it is the final statement... i would use IN MY VIEW... if it is published in a forum... it is better to say IN MY VIEW also...it has to be MY VIEW so that you can convince the people.. but if it is in a dissertation I would say the passive or THE PRESENT STUDY or THE STUDY SAID etc..*

BR-8: *..just i used here SHOW and there INDICATE naturally... I don't think while writing what I write here what I write there...this is my writing style... i think my lexical choices and writing styles evolve naturally over time through reading and writing academic papers...*

Thus, in addition to the experience of teaching, instruction at school or the university level, or self-learning may influence student academic writing ability.

6.3.3 Writer's personal traits and the academic community practices

Along with the cultural and instructional influences, the results have revealed differences in the individual personal traits and writing styles within the same writer group. Four text writer participants (one British and three Egyptians) maintained that they would prefer using 'I' when referring to themselves in the text. However, when analysing their texts, two of the Egyptian writers used '*the researcher*' (EGY-3 and EGY-12), but the third (EGY-8) did not refer to herself in the text. On the other side, the British student (BR-2) used '*I*' nine times in his text though this was not recommended by his supervisor. BR-2 was more confident than the Egyptian students and challenged his supervisor.

BR-2: *i argued with him/her many times and said that that is my research why i do deceive the audience... it's me who does the research...*

On the other side, the Egyptian participants did not confront, and they preferred what they called 'the safe side'. EGY-7's interview indicates that there is a major power imbalance between the supervisor and the student.

EGY-7: *..no... no argument... why i make problems with him... i prefer to take the safe side...*

This echoes what Candarli et al. (2015) said: “the power relationship between students and instructors in the institutional context might have affected the learners' tendency to eschew I” (p. 197). Therefore, the study assumes that the use of the self-mention ‘I’ in students’ writing was influenced by what Hyland (2005b) called the authors’ “personality, confidence, experience and ideological preference” (p. 191). Similarly, Clark and Ivanič (1997) say that it is important to observe how text writers present themselves and how authoritative they feel in the academic text as “writing cannot be separated from the writer’s identity” (p. 134). Writer’s identity has a power over readers when presenting their ideas or taking a certain position. So it could be assumed that if the L2 students in this study had had the same academic community experience of the L1 peers, their confidence and personal traits could have informed their real self-mention preferences.

However, it should be clear that the study does not suggest that postgraduate students should always argue with their supervisors, but they should be given the space to defend their opinions. Text writers should consider their audience and meet their expectations based on requirements of the genre and discipline of their writing.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that the L1 corpus included more types of boosters, hedges and attitude markers, 69 types used by Egyptian students compared to 100 exponents by the L1s. Writer’s self-confidence could be one explanation for this. This view is supported by what EGY-11 said that she was aware of most of the lexical choices, the low and high level of them, but she used only the ones that she was confident to write.

***EGY-11:** ..i have a large linguistic inventory but i am reluctant to use words i am not fully acquainted with ..i am aware of most of the sophisticated terms that could be used.. but i do not dare to employ it in my own writing...*

The study has revealed that different students within the same university department may use a very different amount of stance markers. A deeper qualitative analysis for each stance marker is required to be able to make a valid judgement of the criteria for the quantity.

It has been noticed that most interviewees (Egyptian and British) who are working and engaged in a university context were more informative in the interview, more confident of their views and it seemed that they practised answering some of the question, e.g. questions related to objectivity and subjectivity. EGY-5, for example, who is a lecturer at one of the universities, was so confident during the interview and most of his views were with evidence from his lecturers or the literature. While most of the MA students who are in a school context, e.g. EGY-3, EGY-7 and EGY-12, seemed less confident and tended to give short answers to the interview questions. This highlights the importance of exposing and involving students in an academic culture context. Reading books or research papers is not enough to develop students, but involving them in an academic research culture boosts their abilities and knowledge. Students need to discuss views with colleagues in a research-based context to develop their research skills. These observations are consistent with Menkabu's (2017) interviewees' (EFL Arab MA students studying in UK universities) opinions as they said that their writing and skills developed remarkably after they were increasingly exposed to academic writing contexts; "they claim that generally their beliefs and writing have changed considerably and that they have become more confident about their opinions" (p. 255). Dressen-Hammouda (2014) confirms the importance of students' exposure to academic contexts, arguing "the features of disciplinary voice evolve in correlation with a writer's professional experience" (p. 22). Thus, students' academic development may make them have the feeling of being members of their disciplinary community which will help them discuss views with more experienced colleagues about research writing, practices and rhetorical lexical choices.

Inter-cultural factors (small cultures), such as student's self-confidence, the student-staff relationship and the perception of power-relations, degree of formality in communication or general degree of interactivity between the novice members and professional members of the academic discourse community are all factors that determine postgraduate students both L1 and L2 lexical choices in their MA theses. These findings concur with Tse and Hyland's (2008) view that writer's metadiscoursal choices are constructed by social practices drawn by a particular social setting and negotiated by the need to adhere to their disciplinary discourses, and to what

Hyland (2005b) said, that supervisors' and lecturers' feedback has played a significant role on constituting writers' linguistic behaviours and beliefs. Likewise, most Egyptian participants referred to their supervisors as a dominant power over their use of self-mentions as mentioned in 6.2.3 in detail.

The study results may not concur with Sa'Adeddin's (1989) view that divergence between L1 and L2 writers is attributed to writers' ignorance of the sociolinguistic expectations of the receivers. Most MA students (66%) believe that their supervisors are their main audience and their writing should meet their expectations, and they prefer to take an academic stance that pleases their supervisors or examiners. Hunston and Thompson's (2000) argued that text writers express their opinion in a way that reflects the value system of that person and their community, and to construct and maintain relations between the writer and the reader (the student's supervisor in this context). The study results suggested that the academic audience expectations differ concerning certain stance markers, and what one reader accepts, another may not. This idea was reflected clearly when exploring the expert writers' views about writer's referring to themselves in the text, and the idea of objectivity versus subjectivity in the academic text.

Reem: ...ma students learn traditions of academic writing before writing up their theses.. but the problem is that their supervisors may have different views from the traditions they learned...students are worried about their supervisors' opinions and they want to please them so sometime they write what is expected from them according to their supervisors' views not the tradition of academic writing..

6.3.4 Features of stance-taking:

Novice academic writers should be explicitly taught how to take an appropriate stance and achieve successful interaction with their readers in their academic writing. Most of the text writer interviews revealed awareness of the functions of stance categories, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers. However, the interviews revealed a blurry understanding of

degrees of possibility and probability among interviewees, both Egyptian and British. Moreover, the theme of 'it is academic vs it is unacademic' was raised not only by student interviewees but also by expert writers relating to certain stance markers. Using advanced level or sophisticated vocabulary appears to be considerable for expert writers when evaluating students' dissertations. They stated that students should write formally; when asked 'What does a formal writing mean?' Andy said:

Andy: students should have a tone that is clear.. concise.. confident, and courteous.. for postgraduate students.. the writing level should be advanced and quite sophisticated.. but not pretentious...

In the following sections, features of stance-taking are discussed in terms of stance categories, i.e. boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers.

6.3.4.1 Boosters

EAP informants affirmed the fact that every claim is subject to the reader's interpretation, and it is the responsibility of the text writers to enhance their content and viewpoints by framing their arguments with boosting and hedging devices. Boosters can be used to achieve the writers' need to convince their readership of the truth in their propositions; however, writers' assertions should be supported by evidence from the text. Otherwise, as clarified by Reem, this may affect the reader's assessment of the quality of the text in terms of the referential and affective aspects.

Reem: ..difficulties could stem from the fact that they do not fully trust their claims or results they introduce in their research or when they are not aware of the importance of using such tools for argumentation... students' emphatic language should be supported by strong evidence or statistics that make it easy for the reader to accept writer's confidence...

Boosters are "apparently risky tactics" as described by Hyland (1998, p.2) which rhetorically manipulate consensual understandings through interacting with one's peer based on shared community membership. Using boosters leaves little room for the reader's own interpretation and "closes down alternatives" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 52). Therefore, Basil suggests that students

may use boosters more comfortably in quantitative results where they are more confident with their data.

***Basil:** ...i always encourage my students to use cautious language in reporting their data.. particularly if they were qualitative-based ..otherwise.. boosters are recommended in quantitative-based studies ..where students should show a strong conviction for their results which would be accepted by their audience..*

The interviewed expert writers agreed with Hyland that the use of boosters could be risky if they are not supported by evidence from the data or the literature in a way that the reader may accept the strong position of the writer. Otherwise, the text writer seems rigid and extreme and dogmatic in their views (see the example below).

***TEXT-B:** This **confirms** the effect of the program of the study... The results of this study which **showed clearly** that the Program based some active learningthe results of this study coincides **clearly** with the findings of Mark (2004) who found*

Basil argued that the text above seems to be taken from a qualitative study which requires the writer or the researcher to adopt a tentative voice. However, the writers used words like ‘*confirms / showing clearly and proves effective*’ which could be acceptable if the data presented are quantitative or statistic. Andy supported Basil saying that using epistemic verbs, such as *indicate* or *suggest* would be more valid and useful than ‘*confirms and prove*’. Moreover, ‘*clearly and effective*’ are over-used here in this context. There is no strong evidence provided to ground opinions on it.

This is consistent with what Hunston (1993) maintained: that emphatic verbs, such as ‘*show, demonstrate*’ imply certainty due to the convincing nature of the data itself, rather than the writer’s skills of persuasion. Similarly, Koutsantoni (2004, as cited in Orta and Giner, 2009) argues that boosters “can be motivated by epistemological reasons and be based on the results and findings themselves, and combined with social goals in scientific communities, such as gaining agreement and consensus by appealing to common knowledge and shared understandings” (p. 224).

The results indicate that both Egyptian and British text writers are aware of the functions of boosters in the academic text. Students reported three main functions of boosters: to express a high degree of confidence in the indications provided by the results acquired through the study, to convey the writer's interpretation to a generally accepted idea or fact and finally, to convey the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way. Similarly, the used boosters in Menkabu's (2017) results showed that they seem to express conviction and assert a proposition with confidence and to represent a strong claim about a state of affairs.

Thus, writers use boosters to demonstrate their confidence in the content of a particular proposition. Their aim is essentially to affect their audience to which the text is addressed and convince them of the conclusions drawn by the researcher. However, some writers do not consider their reader's evaluation of their claims. An example of this is the position of EGY-31 in the excerpt below.

*... **the fact that** there are **a lot of** Arabic Islamic expressions and words that don't have English counterparts, have the same meaning and connotation of the original Islamic word. EGY-31*

The sentence sounds over-assertive. The writer confirmed that a lot of Arabic Islamic expressions and words that don't have English counterparts, "have the same meaning and connotation of the original Islamic word...." Using '*the fact that*' and '*a lot of*' without using a hedging device before '*have*' sounded too strong. The sentence below is vulnerable to the reader's attacks.

In contrast, the use of '*demonstrated*' below is justified by EGY-4 writer as they presented statistical data first, then they adopted an assertive position and used the certainty verb '*demonstrated*' to support their claim.

*The statistical analysis of the students' responses to the writing apprehension questionnaire **demonstrated** that direct corrective feedback was ineffective in reducing the writing apprehension among the study participants. EGY-4*

6.3.4.2 Hedges

The MA students of the current study showed a stronger preference for hedges than other stance categories, and they were also aware of the importance of showing simultaneously uncertainty and confidence while making an argument which may make their arguments more persuasive. All expert writers in the current study agreed that it is prudent for writers to be cautious in their statements in order to distinguish between facts and claims. The informants agreed that cautious language is very important in the Applied Linguistics discipline as results are more often not conclusive. This echoes what Hyland (2005b) said: that writer's statements should be evaluated and interpreted "through a prism of disciplinary assumptions writers must calculate what weight to give to an assertion, attesting to the degree of precision or reliability that they want it to carry" (pp. 178–179). Andy highlighted that the stance devices are tools that could be properly used, and this would protect the writer and their proposition or misused, and this would make the text open to readers' attacks (see below).

Andy: ...writers' devices of certainty and uncertainty markers could be guns since they could be both protective and damaging...if they are used appropriately.. these tools protect writers from readers' potential attack...if not.. the text will lose its credibility and writers will lose audience deference...

Hedges, therefore, as Hyland (2005b) maintains, "imply that a statement is based on plausible reasoning rather than certain knowledge, indicating the degree of confidence it is prudent to attribute to it" (p. 179). A successful example for using hedges was TEXT-A as the writers adopted a tentative stance, used varied devices of hedges and most importantly, the writer's uncertain language is consistent with their subjective epistemological stance in the research study itself (see below).

TEXT-A: It seems that these EAP tutors support that view..... Both the quantitative data The findings suggest that they obtain this knowledge through hard work and extra preparation reading up on the carrier content... Likewise, marking for content in the above topics would probably require support in terms of what content is acceptable

Four functions of hedges were reported by the text writers: showing lack of certainty, avoiding reader's potential attack, being more precise in reporting results and mitigating the writer's claim for the purpose of politeness. This shows students' awareness of the functions of hedges which are consistent with those mentioned in the literature by Hyland (2004) and Vass (2015) (see section 2.7.2.2). Likewise, Lee and Deakin (2015) explained that their text writers used modal verbs, e.g. '*may* and *could*' to mitigate the certainty of their claims while '*would* and *should*' were used to soften the force of the proposals made in writers' efforts to "anticipate readers' potential objections, and thus they avoid compelling readers, who may hold different viewpoints, to comply with their insistence" (p. 28). Hyland (2005b) added that text writers in his study used hedges to balance objective information, subjective evaluation and interpersonal negotiation. Hyland argued that this strategy can be a powerful factor in gaining acceptance for claims. Nevertheless, Hyland pinpointed that claim-making may be risky if it will contradict existing literature or challenge the research of writer's audience. Consequently, writer's arguments must accommodate audience expectations that they will be allowed to participate in a dialogue and that their own opinions will be acknowledged in the discourse.

In spite of the agreement among the research interviewees about the functions of boosters and hedges, some students, both Egyptian and British showed a noticeable blurry conception of the epistemic modality of hedges. Largely, students showed pragmatic competence concerning necessity markers, e.g. '*clearly* and *show*', but some devices that denote possibility or probability were misunderstood by some of them. In addition, a few hedges were reported by a few interviewees as being unacademic or informal. Mastering modality was reported to appear difficult for Arab students as cited in Scarcella and Brunak (1981). The results match Hyland and Milton's (1997) view that "not all native speaker writers are equally competent in the manipulation of rhetorical aspects of argument ... L1 speakers clearly have difficulties in qualifying relationships between their grounds and claims" (p. 184).

According to literature and grammar books by various authors (e.g. Halliday, 1994; Leech & Svartvik, 1994; Quirk et al., 1972 as cited in Hyland and Milton, 1997, p. 192), epistemic

categories are located on a scale extending from maximum to minimum certainty. Certainty devices, e.g. *in fact, must, clearly, prove* are on the strongest maximum commitment scale. Then they are followed by probability devices, e.g. *would, seem, appear, indicate, suggest, probable* etc., and then possibility devices, e.g. *may, might, can, could, possible* etc.

Yet, some participants said that '*may*' refers to the past but '*might*' to the present, and '*would*' has the same commitment as '*might*' (see below):

BR-6: *...no, i wouldn't switch here... MAY refers to something in the past... MIGHT is more in the present..... MAY is a weaker form if we are talking about possibility...*

I: *what about WOULD? if it is used instead of MAY or MIGHT?*

BR-6: *i think WOULD is similar to MIGHT...*

Others said that '*probably*' is more formal than '*possibly*'.

EGY-11: *regardless of the examples here, both express uncertainty... but i see that 'PROBABLY' is more formal than 'POSSIBLY'...*

The main trend among the Egyptian interviews is their misunderstanding of the possibility and probability devices. Most of them, e.g. EGY-3, EGY-10 and EGY-2, argued that APPEAR does not have any epistemic meaning; it can be used only to describe physical features, but SEEM can do the epistemic job as it can be used with abstract things or ideas.

EGY-3: *for me, i would not use 'APPEAR'...i will use 'SEEM' in both examples. i think that 'APPEAR' is about physical features, but we can use 'SEEM' to talk about abstract things....*

Others, like EGY-1, EGY-12, BR-1 and BR-8, said they would use them interchangeably. Only one participant, i.e. BR-5, maintained that both are the same but *appear* is more formal than *seem*, a response which is consistent with the Longman dictionary (Mayor, 2009).

BR-5: *...generally.. APPEARS and SEEM have the same meaning... APPEARS is more formal, but again it is a point of word collocation.. if i choose one not the other.. i will say that 'APPEAR' is more formal than 'SEEM'...*

These views may affect the writers' pragmatic competence and may cause difficulties when expressing their epistemic commitment. These comments from my interview data suggest the importance perceiving the epistemic commitment balance right, as Hyland (2018) affirms that writers must weigh up the commitment they want to invest in their arguments based on their epistemic status and the effect this commitment might have on readers' responses.

6.3.4.3 Self-mentions

The interviewed participants argued that the self-mentions used in their texts helped to create functional pragmatic effects in their academic texts by hedging an argument or holding an opinion, stating and assessing the results, explaining a procedure and finally, stating an expectation or a wish. These functions were echoed in a number of corpus-based research, e.g. Hyland (2001), Harwood (2005) and Menkabu (2017).

However, the results revealed clearly that the use/non-use of self-mentions (first person pronoun or third person noun) by research students is the subject of much debate among both students and expert writers. The literature (e.g. Macintyre, 2009) seems to indicate that using self-reference in academic writing is a much more complicated picture than is usually portrayed. Supported by the traditional view of scientific research and academic writing, a number of L1 and L2 interviewees (both Egyptian and British) maintained that academic research writing should be objective, explaining that readers are concerned about the research results and facts. This view was supported by EGY-1 and Tim who said:

EGY-1: my understanding is the focus is on the paper ... the main concern of the reader is the paper ... there is nothing personal here

Tim: ..we are interested in your opinion if it happens to be true ..so it is nothing about your opinion...

The above opinion is strongly supported by many textbooks and linguists, e.g. Feak and Swales (2004) who explicitly stated that text writers should not refer to themselves in the academic text because their use diminishes the objective tone in writing. In the same vein, Arnaudet and

Barrett (1984) recommend avoiding the first-person pronoun in research in order to project objectivity and lend credibility to writing. Andy argued that writers should take an objective stance by showing both sides of an argument and avoiding making value judgements. It should be an objective stance presented as a logical argument. The quality of the evidence presented through a well-documented, coherent and logically structured piece of writing.

Andy: *...if an academic text has first person pronouns or if it seems subjective.. it may lose its persuasiveness.. will be viewed as relying on personal views and attitudes rather than building an evidence-based argument.. this is serious as it creates an informal tone.. the language of academic writing should be objective and impersonal...*

Most text writers and the British expert writers preferred using passive voice or using third person phrases like *'the present study shows'* or *'this research concludes'* instead of explicit person pronouns. This opinion is supported by Biber (1991) who argued that the use of *'I'* is often associated with ego-involvement in a text, a strategy which was described as arrogant and biased by EGY-5.

EGY-5: *...no I can't use the word I because here in egypt we recognise the speaker's pronouns I or WE as biased.. we should not do this... using I is an arrogant expression...*

By contrast, this view is contradicted by Gastel and Day (2012) who called this false modesty. They described this verbose *'it may be concluded'* as a strategy by researchers to avoid the short, unambiguous *'I conclude that'*. The agent of the action should be known, they maintained. Similarly, Lipton (1998) stated that linking objectivity to modesty is meaningless. Lipton said the reader wants to know who did the thinking or assuming, the author, or some other expert.

It should be noted that some text writers (e.g. EGY-1, EGY-5) and Basil see that using the third person noun *'the researcher'* or *'the author'* is a strategy of objectivity.

Basil: *using the third person gives the reader a rather omniscient perspective of the story the researcher ..show that you are being objective and not biased.*

Basil, EGY-1 and EGY-5 based their views on academic books, e.g. Wilkinson's (1991) book '*The scientist's handbook for writing papers and dissertations*'. Wilkinson argues that by using the third person, the writer conveys that anyone else considering the same evidence would come to the same conclusion.

The anti-third person noun supporters, e.g. Tim, BR-2, EXPERT-4 and EXPERT-4, assessed the use of the third person noun as unnatural, vague, deceptive, and as a fake distance.

EXPERT-4: *the use of THE RESEARCHER instead of I... my view is that it oozes a fake distant tone which sounds unnatural... something similar to the 'majestic we' when there is only one author...*

EXPERT-6: *...i just prefer to keep away from using vague terms such as THE RESEARCHER... i personally find it very odd when we refer to ourselves with the third person..*

This self-reference style, i.e. '*the researcher*', was refused firmly by BR-2 who described it as a deceptive style.

BR-2: *i think it's a bit of a deception really...*

BR-2 attitude was explained by Bailey and Pieterick (2008) who argued that native English speaker students may view academic writing as artificial: "academic discourse contains a strange degree of depersonalisation, the suppression of the author's person, and therefore it seems artificial" (p. 6).

This also accords with Webb (1992) who maintains that using the third person in quantitative research may be deceptive as it obliterates the social elements of the research process.

Similarly, Biber (1991) described using third person markers as devices of inexact reference to persons and objects outside the immediately accessible scope of the author's view.

Thus, EXPERT-4 and EXPERT-6 encourage students to be subjective and refer to themselves using the first-person pronoun '*I*' as this gives more credibility to the information. Both expert

writers stressed that the first person pronoun is recommended in qualitative research, but objectivity is favoured in quantitative research.

***EXPERT-6:** ...it also depends on the type of data quantitative vs qualitative, the field, the type of publication...if your research is quantitative-based.. being objective could be recommended...but if you are conducting a qualitative research.. you can be subjective and use first person pronoun if needed...*

EXPERT-6's view corroborates the ideas of Webb (1992) who suggests using the first person in qualitative research to keep with the epistemologies of the research and in the pursuit of reflexivity. Hyland (2002b) encourages researchers to use self-mentions in social sciences from the fact that arguments in these domains are "less precisely measurable and clear-cut than in the hard sciences, and the extent to which a personal stance can help promote an impression of confidence and authority. Authors make a personal standing in their texts to establish a credible scholarly identity, and to underline what they have to say" (p. 353). Text writer's "personality, confidence, experience, and ideological preference" (Hyland, 2005a, p. 191) may all participate in shaping their self-mentions preferences. Readers are looking for good research and clear writing.

In my opinion, the way I see the debate is expressed from two points of view: as a scholar and as an EAP teacher. **As a scholar**, I see it as a sign of a period of change: researchers have been brought up in different traditions, and therefore they defend different positions. There are also differences between fields of research and research traditions in this matter: it would be surprising to see researchers doing qualitative studies and demanding impersonality, but in experimental and quantitative approaches this is more common. Using self-mentions (explicitly or implicitly) may be acceptable if used to help emphasise a point. This can be seen in BR-35 and EGY-26 transcripts (see below).

1. *The negative correlation for reading would seem to demonstrate the difference in reading gains between TOEIC and TIC. As the listening scores are also inverse to the TOEIC scores, I would have expected a negative correlation with the listening tests as well. BR-35*

2. *Similar findings were made with register: there were no noticeable differences 54 between test administrations. I feel that this stems largely from too few tasks being specifically designed to measure this particular competence. BR-35*

3. *However, because the differences among the three groups were not statistically significant ($F=1.009$, $P<.371$), **the researcher** assumed that the three groups started on equal footing, and so conclusions based on the differences in the pattern of their performance starting from week 2 could be made. EGY-26*

Unlike Gastel and Day (2012), I assume that self-mentions can be used when stating a non-standard assumption or when explaining a personal observation as the two examples taken from BR-35 transcript above. However, excessive use of them distracts the readers from the main findings or may lead the study to be viewed as over-subjective. An example of this was found in BR-2, EGY-22 and EGY-31's transcripts (see below).

1. *In this chapter I will provide a) a detailed analysis and evaluation of my findings, and b) a comprehensive discussion on the implications on teaching and learning. As the major focus of this research is on pedagogical implications of the LUK test, I will consider this in each section. (BR-2)*

2. *In the light of the statistical results, **the researcher** concluded the following... (EGY-22)*

3. ***The researcher** justifies the students' negative attitudes towards using Arabic to maintain order as they are adult university students so there is a little need for classroom control discourse... (EGY-31)*

The writing in the excerpt above seems too subjective where the writer used the self-mention 'I' explicitly in two positions yet using the passive voice would sound more academic and objective, particularly if the study is quantitative-based. Research writers should limit the self-mentions to descriptions of procedures of the research, e.g. 'I interviewed six participants' or as mentioned

above in the BR-2 text. Most importantly, writers should follow the conventions of their academic community.

As an **EAP teacher**, the debate seems to me pointless. Successful academic writing involves the ability to incorporate clarity, consistency, conciseness, variety and formality in students' writing. This can be done in many ways. Self-mentions may be acceptable if used in a limited fashion and to enhance clarity. In a well-written text, writers can alternate between choices so as not to appear too monotonous. Students should not pepper their writing with self-mentions. However, they don't have to rigidly avoid self-mentions either. Most importantly, EAP teachers should teach students tactics and practices for how to be objective or subjective.

6.3.4.4 Attitude markers

Though attitude markers are not as important as boosters, hedges and self-mentions in academic writing (Hyland, 2017), their excessive or misuse may influence the credibility of the arguments. The research participants were able to identify two main functions of attitude markers in their texts: first, indicating a value judgement or identifying information as worthy of particular attention by using mainly '*significant* and *important*' and second, providing an assessment of expectations by using devices like '*interesting* and *even*'. By sharing attitudes and reactions to content, "writers both express a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgements" (Hyland, 2005b, p. 180).

However, the study has revealed that different students within the same university may have different perceptions about certain attitude words. While all text writers agreed on using expressions of importance, i.e. '*important, significant*', most of them were reserved about using expressions of surprise or interest. The latter expressions were defined as vague by BR-5 or unacademic by EGY-12.

BR-5: i would not use INTERESTING as it is...it is a little bit vague..if you say the results are interesting.. you need to explain in what way they are interesting... I don't think they are informative at this stage...

EGY-12: *i would not use them in my dissertation..*

I: *why?*

EGY-12: *i think it is not academic to use these types of words...*

The students' views are supported by expert writers EXPERT-4 and EXPERT-6 who argued that these attitudinal expressions make the text too subjective. Being objective makes the text more formal and believable.

EXPERT-6: *what i do not encourage is the use of attitude markers..they do make the researcher sound subjective and they are not scientific...*

On the other hand, Basil, Tim and Andy contended, saying that it depends on the context. If these words are used relevantly in the context, they will strengthen the writer's position and stance. Otherwise, the text will be over-subjective.

Tim: *it depends on the context again you can make generalization ... it depends on the more that the writer is making ... the voice he is taking...*

Tim exemplified TEXT-A and TEXT-B writers who both used attitude words. The use of 'surprisingly' was approved by Tim in the context below as he argued that its use is justified in the context.

TEXT-A: *The findings on whether CELE should have eight-different content-specific streams for UG and four for PM are mixed. Just over fifty per cent of the UG tutors stated that eight-streams are too many for the UG programme. Surprisingly, four PM tutors out of the five that answered this question also felt that having four-content specific streams are too many.*

In contrast, Tim criticized TEXT-B's writer for using many unjustified and vague attitude words in their writing below:

TEXT-B: *The results of this study which showed clearly that the Program based some active learning strategies (Jigsaw & Semantic mapping) can have a remarkable effect on developing speaking skills..... Also the results of this study interestingly coincide with the findings of Adam (2006) who found that training first year English majors of the faculty of Education.*

Andy, Reem and Basil agreed with Tim and said that TEXT-B writer used emotionally charged language which makes the text sound emotional, and thus it may lose proper persuasiveness. Thus, it is concluded that what makes a word academic or unacademic is its position in the text. If it is used appropriately, it may help the writer construct a persuasive argument and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement. Otherwise, the argument will be over-subjective and vulnerable. Labaree (2009) in his book '*Research Guides: Academic Writing Style*' recommends writers to present their arguments and those of others fairly and with an appropriate tone using a relevant attitudinal language. If the writer is taking a position that they disagree with, the argument should be described accurately and without ambiguous, loaded or biased language.

6.4 Conclusion

Bringing together the results from both the quantitative and qualitative data of the study suggests that differences can be observed in the frequencies of the used stance markers by the Egyptian English L2 writers and their English L1 peers. However, the results showed that the intensity of stance markers is not absolutely an indication or evidence of an advanced level of stance-taking.

Text writer interviewees expressed various, similar and sometimes conflicting views about using stance markers. The divergence of the perceptions and views can be found in the same group of writers rather than in the same university. These results supported the study assumption there are several factors, called in this study small cultures, in addition to the lingua-cultural aspect that has a significant impact on text writers' (both L1 and L2) stance lexical choices and decision making.

Expert writers, both Egyptian and British, largely agreed on the main characteristics for successful use of boosters, hedges and attitude markers. It is the context of the study and of the proposition that determines the use/non-use of a stance device. However, a noticeable difference was detected concerning the writer's self-reference in the academic text: some supported the objective stance, others encouraged the subjective position, while others approved the contextual authorial presence, i.e. it depends on the context and the epistemological stance of the study. However, with a small sample size, caution must be

applied, as the findings might not be generalisable. The conclusion, the pedagogical implications and the study limitations are discussed in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with providing an overview of the study in section 8.2, before considering the limitations of the results in section 8.3. The pedagogical section for language teaching based on the findings is proposed in section 8.4. Finally, directions for further research are suggested in section 8.5.

7.2 Overview of the study

This study sets out to uncover the writer–reader interaction from three facets: the text, the writer and the reader. Adopting Hyland’s (2005b) Model of Interaction, the text analysis results (80 transcripts) revealed how two different groups of writers with different cultural backgrounds, i.e. Egyptian EFL writers, native Arabic and British writers, and native English diverge/converge in the way they position themselves and their readers in their MA TEFL discussion chapters. Then, the results from the discourse-based and semi structured interviews suggested why some of the text writers (20 participants) wrote in the way they did, and how their readers (4 informants) perceived their use of certain lexical choices.

The results have confirmed my assumption that the lingua-cultural aspect (Kaplan, 1987) is not the only or rather the main factor that may affect writers’ linguistic choices. The analysis of the DBIs undertaken in this research, dealt with the cultural aspect as one of the small cultures that may have affected writers’ lexical choices, and this concept was delimited to the L1 and religion facets in this study. The qualitative data has extended our knowledge of other factors that seem to have an important impact on the way writers position themselves and readers, e.g. writer’s personal linguistic preferences, supervisor’s and other lecturers’ feedback, previous education and instruction and writer’s self-confidence. These factors seemed to constitute writers’ understandings, decisions and conceptions of taking a certain stance when writing their discussion chapter, though these understandings are narrow and faulty at times (e.g. awareness of levels of epistemic commitment). Lack of self-confidence may sometimes prevent L2 writers from using more sophisticated and advanced stance markers, which is probably one of the

reasons why L1 writers used more types of stance markers. Being the main reader, supervisors, who have institutional power to assess students' writing and award grades, had a strong impact on writers' self-mention choices.

The study has gone some way towards enhancing our understanding of expert writers (audience) interaction and their views of what characterise successful stance-taking. In spite of the controversial issue of what is academic and what is not, the expert writers interviewed informed that it is important for students to distinguish between facts or claims, indicate the level of certainty in relation to the evidence provided, and finally, use an advanced level and sophisticated – but not pretentious – writing language.

Synthesising the main areas covered generally in this study, I turn now to look more specifically at how the data spoke to the research questions.

RQ-1: How do both Egyptian MA students (English L2 writers) and British MA students (English L1 writers) employ stance markers:

a. What similarities in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:

- I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,*
- II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,*
- III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,*
- IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?*

b. What differences in performance are there between L2 and L1 writers in terms of:

- I. the overall quantity of tokens / types of stance markers,*
- II. the frequencies of tokens/types of each category,*
- III. the preferred lexico-grammatical forms,*
- IV. and levels of epistemic commitment?*

The Mann–Whitney test results showed that the two writer groups did not differ significantly in terms of the total number of stance markers ($p = 0.317$), boosters ($p = .072$) and self-mentions ($p = .652$). However, the L1 corpus contained significantly more hedges ($p = .022$) and attitude

markers ($p = .034$) than the L2 corpus. The L1 writers used overall more types of stance markers, with 100 types compared to 69 types used by L2 writers. The L1 text writers in the current study used frequencies of stance markers (18.9) similar to those of L1 writers (both British) in Menkabu (2017), but considerably more than those of American English L1 writers in Al-Rubaye (2015), and noticeably less than those in Ozdemir and Longo (2014) with 16.8, 11.1 and 27.1, respectively. Also, the L2 writers employed very similar stance markers to those in Menkabu (2017) with 12.6 and 12.4, respectively, as well as the EFL Turkish students (Ozdemir & Longo, 2014) with 12.2 stance markers per 1000 words which may indicate similar stance-taking strategies used by those writers.

The striking difference was found in the types of hedges and attitude markers which L1 writers used (43 and 21, respectively) in comparison with 28 and 13 by the L2 writers. These results may support Burneikaite's (2008) suggestion that L2 writers tend to underuse hedges, a behaviour which could be attributed to learning methods, rather than the writer's native language or culture as claimed by Sa'adeddin (1989) who argued that Arabic speaking writers tend to be over-assertive and have a straightforward style which may explain their underuse of hedges when writing in English. In fact, the interviews indicated that L2 writers preferred to use the vocabulary they had mastered and were confident to use. Like previous research (e.g. Hyland & Milton, 1997), both writer groups showed similarities in their preferences for grammatical categories and individual stance devices, except for self-mentions. With regard to boosters, both L2 and L1 writers preferred using verbs as emphatic words rather than any other grammatical category. '*Show, the fact that and clearly*' were found to be the most used devices in both corpora. Hedging devices were the most used items with 65.8% of the total stance markers in both corpora which showed writers' awareness of their disciplinary community practices. The expert writers interviewed advised MA TEFL students to be tentative in their claims as evidence is almost never conclusive in this discipline. Remarkably, epistemic modal verbs were used the most, and '*may, could and indicate*' were students' preferred used devices. Possibility devices, e.g. '*can, may*' were found more often in both corpora than probability devices, e.g. '*would, indicate*' and certainty devices, e.g. '*clearly, must*' (56%, 31% and 13%, respectively). While the

L2 writers used 5.2 (per 1000 words) possibility devices, there were 6.5 (per 1000 words) in the L1 transcripts. Yet, these data must be interpreted with caution because the interviews provided evidence that most participants had a blurry understanding of the difference between probability and possibility devices. The substantial difference between the L2 and the L1 writers was evidenced in the appearance of self-mentions in their texts. Nearly half of the text writers in each group preferred to be objective and never used self-mentions in their discussion chapters. With respect to the other half, though the L1 writers balanced the use of first-person pronoun 'I' and the third person noun '*the researcher*' in their scripts, the L2 writers tended largely to use '*the researcher*'. For attitude markers, adjectives then adverbs were the most used category in both writer groups. The results showed similarities in the top five used devices in each group. '*Important* and '*significant*' constituted slightly less than half of the used exponents.

RQ-2: What stance do some text writers (both Egyptian and British) prefer to take? What are their perceptions towards certain stance markers? What factors may have affected their choices?

The interviews showed that all L1 writers preferred taking a measured stance while half of the L2 writers preferred this position. As regards self-mentions, more than half of each interviewed group tended to use an implicit self-reference, i.e. '*the researcher*' in academic text. Using attitude words was favoured by a quarter of the interviewees in each group while more than half said they would use expressions of importance but would use with care expressions of surprise or frustration. Student interviewees' stance preferences are largely consistent with expert writers' suggestions concerning taking a proper stance.

Student interviewees showed awareness of the functions of boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers as their views matched generally what is mentioned in the literature, e.g. (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2005b; Menkabu, 2017). However, most interviewees both L1 and L2 showed narrow or even faulty conceptions of certain stance markers, e.g. possibility vs probability devices; in addition, a few devices were defined as unacademic, e.g. '*appear*' and

'important'. These fuzzy perceptions could have shaken their confidence and influenced their attitudes towards using these words, which might have influenced their stance lexical choices.

The results suggested that not only does the lingua-cultural aspect have the only effect on L2 writers lexical choices as mentioned in previous literature (e.g. Hyland, 2004; Burneikaite, 2008; Candarli et al., 2015), but also the writer's personal linguistic preferences, supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback, previous education and instruction and the writer's self-confidence are main factors that have played a considerable role on students' lexical decision-making.

RQ-3: What are the characteristics of successful and less successful stance-taking?

All interview informants (expert writers) mostly agreed on the positions students should adopt when writing their MA TEFL thesis, except for using self-mentions, an issue which seems to be generally controversial in academia. The interview informants first affirmed that postgraduate students need to have an effective stance towards their readers and their writing. In applied linguistics research, writers should make it clear to their readers what their position is towards a certain issue.

A proper stance-taking is the one where boosters are used to express a writer's evaluation towards commonly accepted ideas based on the evidence presented so as to show the writer's certainty and commitment. The writer aims mainly to affect their readers' response and to convince them. However, some of the informants highlighted the issue of epistemology and agreed with Koutsantoni (2004, as cited in Orta and Giner, 2009) that the use of boosters "can be motivated by epistemological reasons and be based on the results and findings themselves" (p. 172).

With respect to hedges, research informants confirmed that the hedging language protects writer's claims which allows writer's ideas to be presented as an opinion rather than accredited facts. This consequently increases their chance of ratification and reduces the risk of negation or being easily dismissed by their readers. The informants agreed that cautious language is very

important in the Applied Linguistics discipline as results are more often not conclusive and should be evaluated through awareness of the disciplinary requirements.

The research informants proposed conflicting opinions concerning writer's self-reference in the academic text varying from adhering to objective writing to adopting a subjective stance. British English informants tended to support objectivity, and argued that using self-mentions (both explicit and implicit) indicate biased opinions which contradicts the nature of academic writing that should be objective and evidence-based. Other L1 expert writers argued that academic writing should focus on clarity and using first person pronoun not the third person noun may be accepted depending on the context to assess to what extent the explicit reference is used relevantly or not. This argument is supported by most textbooks and linguists, e.g. Feak and Swales (2004) who argued that first person diminishes the objective tone in writing. On the other side, some L2 expert writers favoured using '*the researcher*' or the first-person pronoun '*I*'. Some informants considered using the third person noun '*the researcher*' ensures formality and objectivity of the text, an opinion which is recommended in some textbooks like Wilkinson's (1991) '*The scientist's handbook for writing papers and dissertations*'. Nonetheless, others argue that '*the researcher*' denotes ambiguity and indicates fake distance; using the first-person pronoun has become very common recently and novice researchers are highly encouraged to use it as it helps to clarify meanings by eliminating passive voice constructions that may indicate vagueness. Generally speaking, research informants encouraged students to abide by the norms of writing set or agreed upon by the research community to which they belong, and they should adopt a style that is appropriate for their discipline, the research epistemology and is recommended by their audience. This is echoed by Webb (1992) who suggested using the first person in qualitative research to keep with the epistemologies of the research and in the pursuit of reflexivity.

For attitude markers, some expert writers argued that these devices, e.g. '*interesting, surprising*' may make the text too subjective which might affect the formality of the text. On the other side, others contended that if used relevantly in the context, attitude markers may strengthen the

writer's position and would help the writer construct a persuasive argument and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement. Therefore, writers should be cautious of using unjustified and attitudinal devices that may make the text sound emotional, and thus it may lose proper persuasiveness.

However, it was not possible in the current study to examine all transcripts qualitatively to pinpoint instances of successful and less successful stance taking (only two transcripts were examined). Thus, more qualitative research is required to examine qualitatively academic transcripts and identify successful and less successful examples of stance-taking by both L1 and L2 writers.

7.3 Limitations

The generalisability of these results is subject to certain limitations. The major limitation of this study is that the numbers of research participants, i.e. text writer and expert writer interviewees were relatively small. For the text writers, few native English speakers are interested in a MA TEFL course; more than half of the students in these courses are international or EU students. Even, home students, who completed the course, travelled overseas. Also, it was a major issue to find expert writers who have been both supervising MA TEFL students and teaching academic writing at the same time. Lecturers' availability was a major concern in this study.

The conducted DBIs were used to examine writers' perceptions of certain lexical choices. However, one of the limitations was that it was difficult for writers to fully articulate their rhetorical choices. It is challenging, if not impossible, for writers to articulate the full range of their discursive goals and judgements (Lancaster, 2016). Also, it was not possible to conduct verbal reports with MA students due to the nature of the Master's theses which may be written within months. Therefore, the results need to be viewed with caution.

Also, the instances of successful and less successful stance taking identified by expert writers are restricted to only two academic texts from the two corpora.

7.4 Pedagogical implications

As discussed above, the results from this study have limitations, but they do suggest some implications for the development of materials and for English for academic purposes teachers and for MA supervisions. It should be stressed that the overuse or underuse of stance markers in both corpora is not treated here “as a deviation from a norm” (Burneikaite, 2008, p. 45). Both L1 and L2 transcripts are considered as equally valid representatives of the genre. The study suggests the linguistics variability is not only lingua-cultural-based. Instruction, writer’s individual style and the academic context are key factors that constitute a writer’s lexical decision. Students from the same university may use different amounts of stance devices, differently and have divergence in attitude towards certain devices. In the same vein, supervisors from the same department may have different views about an academic issue. Therefore, the study suggests that writers’ individual characteristics may play a considerable role in the way they interact and perceive their intended reader.

As maintained by Hyland (2002b), effective academic writing is based on proper linguistic choices that maintain successful interaction between the writer and the reader. However, EAP textbooks and teachers still focus on the features that first, affect the content (meaning) of the text and second, the organisation of the text, rather than the interpersonal features that give an impression of the position of the writer. These features are essential to academic argument and to university success (Macintyre, 2009). The current research corpora evidenced to include models of appropriate positioning that are of a suitable target proficiency. Students should be given the opportunities to reflect on their lexical preferences, and to develop a sensitivity to how to make use of their linguistic repertoire in a way that helps them meet target contexts. Students could learn about different types of hedging from exposure to such text. EAP instructors need to be pragmatic and introduce to students various and different forms of positioning, e.g. devices that show different epistemic commitment, examples of objective and subjective authorial positioning and attitudinal and non-attitudinal contexts. It is suggested that these types of writer’s stance be explained to students explicitly, especially at the postgraduate level to demonstrate how their stance devices may affect both the text and the reader. Furthermore, the interview L2

participants maintained that their MA thesis was their first long piece of writing, and if they were to rewrite it, their lexical choices would be better and different. Thus, EAP teachers should provide students with long writing assignments that expose them with a similar experience to their MAs so as to practise using stance devices that they are not very confident with, and then be given feedback on the interpersonal meaning as well as the textual content. Most importantly, EAP teachers avoid non-evidenced views about norms of academic writing and be aware of the standards of the Anglo-Saxon academic writing norms.

Secondly, the results of this research have revealed the pivotal role of supervisors' opinions and feedback on student writing in general and on the way they express their authorial personae. The interviews with L2 students indicated that some students used implicit self-mentions, though not fully convinced, but to meet their supervisors' expectations. An implication of this is the possibility that supervisors discuss with students one to one the writing expectations required from them at this level and in accord with their discipline's writing norms. They should provide students with resources, and spend more time discussing their writing expectations and what is acceptable with relevant resources that help them produce appropriate academic writing and at the same time support students' independence and feelings of self-confidence. Supervisors should support and encourage students in a way they feel qualified enough to have their individual opinions, so students have the confidence to adopt a critical stance with respect to supervisors' or to others' arguments. Supervisors should use their position and privilege to empower students and challenge them to have a position and defend it, not to have a useless argument.

7.5 Further research

This research has thrown up many questions in need of further investigation. The text writer interviewees stated that their lexical choices and attitudes towards writing would be different if they had the opportunity to rewrite their theses. Thus, more research is required to examine EFL Arab students' PhD Applied Linguistics theses to understand to what extent their stance and writing styles could be developed.

The study revealed influence of instruction on postgraduate students' stance-taking and decision-making when using certain stance devices. More qualitative and quantitative research is required to investigate EAP teachers' implicit awareness of stance features and genre knowledge when teaching/assessing postgraduate students' work, and how they would respond to students' wording choices. Are the areas of epistemic commitment, writer's self-reference and attitude markers under their implicit awareness when teaching postgraduate students?

While my student corpora are admittedly small, large corpora studies are recommended to compare and contrast stance markers written by EFL Arab student writers in different disciplines to examine to what extent the discipline may affect student's positioning in academic text. Also, it is recommended that these analyses be followed by DBIs to understand why students would write in that way.

Though there were several advantages of the DBI conducted in this study, such as the rapport between the interviewer and participants, the issue of veridicality, i.e. the accuracy of the information from the interviewees, their thoughts when using certain stance markers, was still there. There were several months between the submitted texts and participants' recalling, which caused cognitive burden to the interviewees, which might affect the validity of students' recalling data. What is now needed is more research that uses verbal protocols, a method that may increase the veridicality of data where participants perform a writing task and report immediately what they were thinking of when taking a certain position. It is not possible to conduct verbal reports with MA students due to the nature of the Master's thesis which may be written within months. Instead, students may be interviewed while writing their pre-Master's assignments about the reasons for using certain stance devices.

Further research is required to examine qualitatively larger corpora of L1 and L2 writers and to identify successful and less successful instances of stance-taking to inform both L1 and L2 writers of these academic features.

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Appendices

Appendix-1: Hyland's (2005a) list of stance markers

<p>BOOSTERS</p> <p>actually always believe/s/ed beyond doubt certain certainly clear clearly conclusively decidedly definite definitely demonstrate/s/ed doubtless establish evident evidently find/s/found in fact incontestable incontestably incontrovertible incontrovertibly indeed indisputable indisputably know/s/known must never no doubt obvious obviously of course prove/s/ed realize/s/ed really show/s/ed/shown shown sure surely think/s/thought truly true undeniable undeniably undisputedly undoubtedly without doubt</p>	<p>HEDGES</p> <p>about almost apparent apparently appear/s/ed approximately argue/s/ed around assume/s/ed broadly certain amount certain extent claim/s/ed could/not doubt doubtful essentially estimate/s/ed fairly feel/s/felt frequently from my/this/our perspective generally guess indicate/s/ed in general in most cases in most instances in my/our/this opinion in my/our/this view largely likely mainly may might mostly often on the whole ought perhaps plausible plausibly possibly postulate/s/ed presumable presumably</p>	<p>Probable/Probably quite rather relatively roughly seem should sometimes somewhat suggest/s/ed suppose/s/ed suspect/s/ed tend/s/ed to to my knowledge typical typically uncertain uncertainty unclear unclearly unlikely usually would/not</p> <p>Self-mentions</p> <p>I we me my our mine us the author the author's the writer the writer's</p> <p>Attitude markers</p> <p>! admittedly agree/s/d amazed amazing amazingly appropriate appropriately astonished astonishing astonishingly</p>	<p>correctly curious curiously desirable desirably disappointed disappointing disappointingly disagree/s/d dramatic dramatically essential essentially even expected expectedly fortunate fortunately hopefully important importantly inappropriate inappropriately interesting interestingly prefer/s/ed preferable remarkable remarkably shocked shocking shockingly striking strikingly surprised surprising surprisingly unbelievable unbelievably understandable understandably unexpected unexpectedly unfortunate unfortunately unusual unusually usual</p>
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Appendix-2: Marking Scale for MA TEFL Dissertations (Essex University, as cited in Menkabu, 2017)

Table A-7-1: The Marking Scale for MA dissertations according to L&L

	Distinction (70 and above)	Merit (60-69)	Pass (50-59)	Fail (below 50)
External sources used: Usually bibliographic, but also could be data from a corpus or informants where empirical work is involved	An excellent range of suitable sources is accessed, with intelligent/ enterprising choice of those beyond the basic/ those provided	A good range of suitable sources is used, some beyond the basic ones/ those provided	A minimally adequate range of sources/ informants is accessed	Seemingly little or no use of information or those used are not relevant
Student's own knowledge: Understanding of relevant ideas (theoretical or applied) and techniques (such as research methods, transcription or statistics)	Shows first rate understanding of the relevant concepts and techniques	There is good understanding of most of the relevant concepts and techniques	Sufficient understanding of some relevant concepts and techniques, but some misunderstandings	Exceptionally poor grasp of relevant concepts and/ or deep misunderstandings of how to transcribe, use statistics etc.
Student's thinking: e.g. critical evaluation, synthesis, formulation of questions/ hypotheses, interpretation, argumentation, analysis, use of evidence, structure and coherence	Information and ideas have been thoroughly processed to produce a really well-argued and exemplified, logical account, maybe with touches of originality	There is generally good thinking, analysis, argumentation etc., with some lapses	Thinking, organization, analysis and argumentation are minimally adequate	Information is presented with little or no proper work done on it in the form of critique or analysis; it is disorganized or incoherent
Coverage and balance: e.g. lack of digression or omission of relevant topics; appropriacy of content for the purpose of the task, relevance of conclusion to title	The material included is all relevant and no pertinent matters have been left out. Individual topics are given their due weight	There are some minor digressions and/ or omissions, but overall the coverage and balance is good	There is some digression and/ or topics omitted, but overall the coverage and balance is adequate	Much information is given that is irrelevant and/ or important topics are omitted
Expression: e.g. clarity and fluency of written English, appropriacy of style and use of terminology, audience awareness	The style is highly appropriate and the whole text is expressed beautifully clearly and fluently	Good clarity and style, fully comprehensible despite some minor weaknesses of expression	There are lapses of language or style and some dysfluency or poor intonation, but overall the expression is adequate	There are parts that are incomprehensible and/ or the style is not appropriately academic
Presentation: e.g. titling, sectioning style, numbering, fonts, visual layout, table/ graph quality, referencing style, appendices	Presentation is highly professional in all aspects	Presentation is good with maybe a few weaknesses	There are some weaknesses of referencing, sectioning style, etc., but overall presentation is satisfactory	There are careless features such as: insufficient titles and sectioning
Source: L&L Guidelines (2009-2110, p. 40)				

Appendix-3: A substitution/addition test (example):

To make sure that the following item 'may' is a hedge or not, the item was deleted and was replaced with the phrase 'I am not sure'. The result was that the sentence sounded neutral, hence the item 'may' was considered to be a hedge.

- Non-native speakers tend to measure their accent against native speaker norms and may feel that they cannot teach pronunciation as good as native speakers. (BR-1)

Appendix-4: Students' (text writers) interview protocol

* SECTION ONE: Introductory questions

- What was your BA programme? Do you have any other degrees or qualifications?
- Where did you receive your MA? When?
- What was your grade?
- Did you take any EAP/ IELTS preparation courses before or during your MA? If yes, in which fields?
- Do you have any teaching experience? If yes, how long and which level? Do you think that your teaching English experience had affected the way you wrote your dissertation or probably had drawn your attention to some aspects of language used in writing? If so, could you explain, please?

* SECTION TWO: What impressions did you want your reader to have from using the emboldened words?

There will be follow up questions, such as (referring to the emboldened words in the extracts above):

- Is there a difference between MIGHT and MAY (APPEARS and SEEMS)? In their usages or meanings?
- If yes, how do they differ? Which one is stronger in certainty?
- If not, which one do you prefer/use more frequently in your writing? Why?

A part of a discussion chapter:

Both native readers and advanced learners were using prediction to facilitate their reading.

From the first sentence 'It began at midnight', the group of native readers immediately started to predict e.g. on hearing a noise, 'Garden intruders? Wildlife?' Their comments related to what was happening and what would happen next. Two of the comments made by the advanced learners **seemed** to be more related to not understanding the word and using prediction to guess their meaning e.g. What did it mean? as opposed to predicting what the text as a whole may be about.

One comment e.g. 'ok, let's see' made by a student appeared more passive as opposed to a more dynamic starting point for interacting and questioning the text. This more passive reaction **may** imply that the reader takes his or her cue from the text as opposed to the more dynamic approach of referring to background knowledge, hazarding a guess and then correcting when more information is available (Davies, 1995). This is an assumption as the reader did not verbalize and did not appear to predict i.e. offer possibilities of what could be happening.

Prediction is **important** as the process engages the reader and activates personal and background schemata. It contextualizes the information, sets the scene and provides engagement (Tomlinson, 1998). This phase would correspond to the pre-reading phase in a language lesson where the teacher would hope to engage the students. This is a point which will be emphasized in the lessons; students' attention will be drawn to the importance of this phase to facilitate reading for enjoyment.

This is an **interesting** result as, in the questionnaire, native readers claimed that they did not predict when reading a text for enjoyment whereas the advanced learners claimed that they 'usually' did this (questions 3 and 4). This anomaly **may** be due to the subconscious nature of the skill where proficient readers are not aware. Advanced learners claimed to predict and yet there was little evidence of this in the think-aloud.

During the think-aloud, it **seems** that the learners tended to stop upon encountering an unknown word. Although they stated in the questionnaire (question 6) that in this case they would try to guess the meaning, there is only some evidence of them actually doing this. It **appears** to be problematic and the process is rather long. It would appear that they stop and ask themselves the question and do not necessarily keep their pace and try to guess the meaning. Many learners constantly repeated words saying 'I don't know what it means'.

For this restricted sample, the findings **demonstrate** that reading is not being taught in an optimal manner today and that improvements could be made, moving away from the surface-level learning to a more student-oriented approach, leading to a deeper-level of understanding and interpretation. More emphasis **could** be given to the texts themselves but **I believe** there would be two different levels. Firstly, for upper intermediate students, similar to those I have taught in the reading programme, the emphasis would be on drawing attention to what they are actually doing when they are reading and encouraging them, by demonstration, how they can change the way they read in order to 'experience' the text and not remain outside it.

*** SECTION THREE: Here are some extracts taken from different dissertations.**

a) Please comment on the use of the underlined/emboldened words the writers used in their dissertations. b) To what extent do you feel these words can be used appropriately in academic writing? Why?

(1) -Computers **probably** will not replace the teachers, but will supplement their efforts, as has been the pattern with other technologies.

- These are especially important to the L2 learners since they provide a channel through which ideas to be conveyed can **possibly** be realised when the lexical knowledge is limited.

(2) Based on the interviewees' responses, it **appears** that setting clear goals is a significant factor in success in any classroom.

- According to the literature, it **seems** that reading and writing are the most frequently addressed skill areas.

(3) If holistic quality were high among all groups, it **might** indicate that second language writing is easily acquired by second language learners and an emphasis on writing **may** not be necessary in school.

(4) **The fact that** all of the NS participants, as opposed to two thirds of NNS from the questionnaire, responded positively to the question is an indication that NS participants have more positive attitudes towards teaching the subject in this regard.

(5) This leads me to **believe** that it is perhaps difficult for teachers to assess the fluency of their learners in the way this study attempted to do.

- Also, in reference to the point that RP is the accent for certain professions and that doctors who speak RP are more trusted than those who don't, I **think** this can be easily interpreted as linguistic or even cultural intolerance, since language conveys culture.

- Student-9 tends to be the first speaker in every lesson and exhibits, **in my opinion**, a deeper knowledge of grammar and vocabulary than other learners in the class.

(6) -**I** would like to rework the study with a proper leveling of learners as well as a revised ranking scale. By adding an objective element and assessment by other rankers, **I** could perhaps reduce the bias my ranking obviously shows.

- In the present study, **the researcher** presented first the strategic competence components to students before applying the program.

- In **my** view, however, giving students real exposure and freedom to choose freedom to choose will necessitate exposing them to a variety of not just non-native accents, but also native accents.

- It **may be concluded** that the difficulties experienced by the adult learners in the process of second language acquisition is the force that propels them to eliminate or retain the L1 as a strategy.

- **The present study suggested** a new approach for developing secondary school students' strategic competence through integrating the direct and indirect approaches in teaching conversation.

(7) This integration is very **important** in facilitating acquisition of English vocabulary. Also, the experimental group achieved **significant** progress in their performance in vocabulary acquisition after the treatment as compared to their overall performance in vocabulary acquisition before the treatment.

- **Surprisingly**, this result corroborates the findings of classroom observations and recordings that showed that there weren't any switches to Arabic for reviewing a previous lesson.

SECTION FOUR: Lexical Preferences

-The following questions ask for your perceptions of taking a position (how to express your views) in academic writing—that is, how you express your degree of certainty/uncertainty, self-reference and attitudes.

1. Which of these statements best describes the relationship you try to establish with your reader (that is, the real or imagined person who is reading your text)?

- a. I try to express my position in an assertive (or, highly committed) manner.
- b. I try to express my position in a measured (or, carefully qualified) manner.
- c. Some other manner. Please explain.

- Which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals...etc.?

2. Which of these statements best describes the way you try to refer to yourself in the text?

- a. I feel free to use the personal pronouns in my text
- b. I prefer using implicit references, such as the researcher or the author.
- c. I never refer to myself in the text.
- d. Some other manner. (Please explain)

3. Which of these statements best describes the way you try to show your attitude in the academic text?

- a. I feel free to show my attitude in my text
- b. I avoid using attitude words like important, significant, interesting, agree. etc.
- c. It depends. (Please, explain)

- Which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals...etc.?

4. What other writing do you do at present? Do you find that the criteria for MA thesis writing in your field differ in any way from the criteria of this writing.....?

YES NO Please explain how.

5. When you wrote your dissertation,

a) Did you get help from any of these? b) Could you please talk about it (them)?

c) To what extent do you think it was (they were) helpful? How?

d) Did you receive any language feedback about using a proper academic writing?

- Your supervisor(s)
- Friends/ colleagues
- Lecturers
- English Language tutors, other tutors or lecturers
- Ex-master's students
- Previous dissertations in your field
- Books (What kind of books: grammar books, vocabulary books, writing books?)
- Journal articles
- Websites (which?)
- Departmental Guidelines/ handbook
- Others?

6. Which party/ parties were you writing for? Why?

a) To what extent did writing for these parties have an impact on the way you wrote?

- Your supervisor (s)
- The markers
- Academics from the same field
- Students from the same field
- People from outside your field who are interested in your topic

7. Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or comment on about what we have discussed?

THANKS

Appendix-5: Consent Form and Information Sheet



CRELLA Research Centre

STUDENT'S CONSENT FORM

Researcher: Hosam Darwish

Email: hosam.darwish@study.beds.ac.uk

Please Initial Box

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.

2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.

3. I agree to take part in the above study.

4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded

5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.

Name of the Participant: _____

Signature: _____

Date: / /2017

Name of the Researcher: Hosam Darwish

Signature: H M S Darwish

Date:

03/08/2017

Information Sheet

Dear Respondent,

I am a student doing a PhD in Applied Linguistics at University of Bedfordshire at the UK. I am conducting a study which will mainly look at texts written by MA Egyptian and British students, but I want to get an idea of how postgraduate students see this process, how they interact with their readers, what affect their writing and why they write in that way. The interview outcomes will hopefully assist teaching EFL academic writing in the future.

You will be interviewed face to face. The interview will take from 30:40 minutes, and it will be recorded using '*Quick-time Player*' on Apple MacBook. During the interview, you will be asked some questions about using certain lexical items, about your own experience and views about academic writing. This research will lead to a dissertation that is part of my PhD at CRELLA Research Institute, University of Bedfordshire, UK.

My supervisor is Dr. Claudia Saraceni whom you may contact if you have any questions about this research at: Claudia.Saraceni@beds.ac.uk

If you agree to help, put your initials on the accompanying Consent Form. You will be contacted to arrange for an interview at a time convenient to you. If you have any enquiries, do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Sincerely,

Hosam Darwish

Email: hosam.darwish@study.beds.ac.uk

Appendix-6: A sample of an interview transcript

I used to call my participants by their names in order to make them feel relaxed. So X will be written instead of the participant's name.

Transcription symbols

(..)	pause of less than 2 seconds
(...)	pause of more than two seconds
()	unclear word
(did)	guess at unclear word
@	laugh
<@>	utterances spoken laughingly
=	overlap
-	a part of a word is missing

The interview transcript

I: first of all i'd like to thank you very much for taking part in my research and for meeting me today..

Participant (P): don't mention that.

I: let me start with the first question ..what is your ba degree?

P: ba in arts and education.. faculty of education..ain shams university

I: did you have any other degrees or qualifications after your ba?

P: ..i have the cambridge celta and the canadian tefl... there is an australian certificate in teaching as well.. but both are mainly in teaching not in linguistics

I: well..when did you get your master X?

P: ..look<@> ..I started in 2011 and stopped for around 3 years for personal reasons then finally i received it this year 2017

I: when did you submit your ma thesis?

P: mmm around four months ago.

I: did you take any ielts exams?

P: yes.. before and after my master?

I: the latest one?

P: ..the latest one was ... a month ago and that was 7.5?

I: can you tell me your writing score?

P: the writing ...7..i think

I: have you ever got any eap english for academic purposes courses?

P: as a student no as a teacher yes

I: were teaching eap or studying eap?

P: I taught some English for academic purposes courses.

I: which level?

P: several levels.. from beginners to advanced

I: did you benefit from your teaching?

P: definitely because when you teach you still get some of the skills

I: to what extent have your teaching affected your academic writing in your ma thesis?

P: ...i think so i have been teaching writing for several years...one of the books is english for academic research.. was very useful for me...and and improved certainly my writing while teaching it

I: how?

P: for instance.. writing complicated sentences...using sophisticated vocabulary...referencing and etc.

I: now we will move to the second stage of the interview..i will show some excerpts from your discussion chapter and certain words are highlighted ..ok.. my question will be what impression did you want your reader to have from using the emboldened word..... OK .. are you ready..

P: OK

I: the first word is SHOW...what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word ..SHOW?

P: mm...actually here i was referring to the importance of the findings ...ok....because ...(he's reading the context of the word).... no no .. i was referring to ielts exams... and why the institute was showing their ability as a new academic provider for ielts exam

I: if i drop the word SHOW and use the word INDICATE.. do you think the meaning will be different?

P: definitely definitely

I: to what extent?

P: ..because there is a big difference between showing and indicating... showing could be making belief ... you know... doing it in the sake of showing...ok... which is the case here.....here.. i am referring to an actual procedure that this institute takes to show ... to provide like ..substantial evidence... so ... see ... but INDICATE ..something different ..it is when i am not sure 100 percent .. SHOW is definitely stronger than INDICATE.

I: well the second word X is SUGGEST again .. my question is .. what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word suggest here?

P: ...(X is reading the context)..... here i am just referring to green's study.. ok so the previous point .. the idea that was mentioned is mainly ..suggested.. in green's hypothesis.. so .. it.. i suggest that green's hypothesis here to ..to .. be related to ..my results..

I: well x if i drop SUGGEST and use INDICATE .. do you think both words may give the same meaning..?

P: no...i think SUGGEST here was used for a reason... it is only a suggestion ..not indication...?

I: can you explain more please?

P: ... i mean this is something i suggest to the readers...the reader may accept or not... but INDICATE.. it is like SHOW but weaker as I

... if i say INDICATE here the context will not be right.

I: let's move to another word... SIGNIFICANT.. what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word SIGNIFICANT here?

P:...(P is reading).. actually i am talking here.. here.. about how the study of al-rashed is significant.. to my findings...my results are related to the results of this study that's why it is important..*for several reasons, IMPORTANT is not an academic word, this is number one. number 2, IMPORTANT does not give the exact meaning .. you can not use IMPORTANT here instead of SIGNIFICANT. it can be wrong use.. totally wrong... you can't even use it you can use other words like....mmmmm... like considerable ...but IMPORTANT would not give the exact attitude.*

I: if we say IMPORTANT instead will this be ok?

P: @ no..no <@> for several reasons, IMPORTANT is not an academic word, this is number one. Number 2, IMPORTANT does not give the exact meaning .. you cannot use IMPORTANT here instead of SIGNIFICANT. It can be wrong use.. totally wrong... you can't even use it you can

use other words like...mmmmm... like considerable ...but IMPORTANT would not give the exact magnitude.

I: so you did use the word SIGNIFICANT and not IMPORTANT because the later is non academic or what? I see you never used IMPORTANT/IMPORTANCE in the whole text?

P: i don't think i did it on purpose...i may do this implicitly..may be..IMPORTANT could be less academic than SIGNIFICANT

I: let's move to another word...here the word MAY ... what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word.. MAY.. here?

P: i chose the word ..MAY here... because I didn't want to give an impression of certainty about the claim I am raising here... i think...i don't remember, but i imagine i will expand on that later, ... and so i wanted to make it clear at that point that that i couldn't establish that claim without further demonstration.

I: can we drop it from the sentence?

P: It will be wrong ... here we are talking about elt classes and the exam preparation classes ... ok.. i cannot say elt classes contain because not all of them contain a wide selection of activities and not all of them lack a wide selection.. so you are just avoiding generalisation ... if I drop MAY I will be generalising.. it will be totally wrong.. ok.. you may assume that elt classes contain a wide selection of activities.. not all of them ..

I: what about if i use MIGHT instead?

P: you cannot use MIGHT... because if i say the elt classes MIGHT contain .. it means the minority used it ..which is not true.. it would sound too uncertain.

I: so do you see a difference between MAY and MIGHT?

P: ...i think there is some difference.. yes..yes.. MAY is stronger...

I: what about ..WOULD?

P: ..wow..this is stronger..it is closer to certatinty..yes..yes..

I: let's move to another word ... here the word SEEM... what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word ..seem ?

R: ...SEEMS to ...(P is reading the context)... in the example .. here you are saying there are many factors and you are not sure which one will give you the final effect .. so you are talking about the independent variable.. and the researcher is not certain which one has more effect.. ss he sure?.. no... that is what SEEM does in the sentence...

I: if we say APPEAR ..instead?

P: ...mmm... i thinkAPPEARS ..is related to something visible ..not abstract things like the example here....no ..i would not use ...appear here...it does not sound good for me..no

I: what about ..MAY..?

P: ..no... different meaning ... completely different because if you say may.. it could mean may or may not work but if we say seem it means they work together... but you are not sure which one is the affecting one...

I: what about seem in that context what happens if we drop it?

P: ...actually what comes after explains itreading.....the meaning without seem could be OK but with might SEEM refers to whoever reads this chapter ok... so I was trying to communicate with the reader ... so .. if it seems difficult to you but previous studies proven to be successful so looking from aside may look different however then ..no... we cannot.. drop ...

I: another word ... here an expression... THE FACT THAT...what impression did you want your reader to have from using the ..this expression?

P: ..ok i think here despite THE FACT THAT is trying to ignore one of the fact that might affect or actually acknowledging the presence of this fact however.....

I: how is this expression strengthening your idea?

P: here...there is acknowledging the writer is saying that there is a fact....

I: another word... COULD ..here.. can we use MAY instead?

P: mm...i think COULD is better than may... because ..MAY means may or may not ... but COULD ..refers to the ability of this fact of changing the result ...however what's coming may be ..unrelated so again different meaning we cannot use may...

I: what about this example ... the word MAY...what impression did you want your reader to have from using the word ..MAY?

P: ..here ..may .. is the best word when presenting my results because it expresses my level of certainty when presenting the results..it is 50/50...

I: can you use WOULD instead?

P:i said before.. would is stronger...i can't here...the reader will not accept it...too strong..

I: COULD?

P: ...also... we can't use COULD...we can't use COULD here because MAY here means there is a possibility that I may use and I think what is meant to be said here is one of the options

COULD has no use here it can't be replaced.... so i believed that when i wrote this i was not sure MAY be yes may be no i was not used.

I: another words is BELIEVED.. what impression did you want your reader to have from using this word ?

P: ..it is believed....mm .. *may be that I have a strong belief that those studies would be useful for my study though they were not conducted in the Middle East context...*

I: What about THINK instead?

P: THINK is weaker ..of course ..weaker

I: let's move to another word ... here the word THE RESEARCHER... what impression did you want your reader to have from using this word ?

P: i mean i... sorry... i could not get your question this time?

I: why did not use the passive voice here for the example? what did the word RESEARCHER do in the sentence?

P: @@ i got what you mean... look here i am evaluating my data.. so i should mention myself...as i am the person...who has the authority to assess the results compared to other findings in other studies that's why it shouldn't be in passive.. it's me...THE RESEARCHER?

I: why didn't you use I?

P: ...mmmm... two reasons number one it is an advice from my supervisor.. not to use I... the second reason is the use of this word THE RESEARCHER puts you at a distance from the research so there is no subjectivity ... when you say THE RESEARCHER .. not my ideas not my thoughts means the research.. it is not I ... it is not my ideas it is the research.

I: but you are the researcher, explain please?

P: yeah....but ...but.. you know those people who keep using I ..I..I .. in the normal talk what do you feel about them...?

I: what do you feel about them?

P: i am asking now.. reply please?

I: ... probably they are more confident?

P: ..not always ...ok.. but when they say THE RESEARCHER ..it means i am tackling the subject from a research point of view not from a personal point of view.....

I: what do mean exactly from the research point of view .. opinions.. or what...? ...explain more please?

P: not only the ideas ..you are talking about the tools ...the.. the questionnaire .. the analysis ..the instruments ... so when you deal with these things it is not you .. it is the researcher who deals with those data ... you analysed it.. with a bit of objectivity so I believe the word THE RESEARCHER suits the research than I ... may be expert writers can use I not me at this time..

I: where did you get this impression from?

P: I don't know but you know ...it is THE RESEARCHER who deals with those data...It is a personal belief based on my experiences as a writer... I acquired this throughout my academic life

I: if you do a PhD will you use THE RESEARCHER or I?

P: ...probably.. I will use I in the recommendation chapter only...may be...

I: when then may you use the word I in a research article for example.. or what?

P: ...you have to be a guru.. to use it you have to be one of those gods ... you know....so if .. someone like Harmer says I... you would accept it but not less than Harmer ...may be...

I: fair enough X... let's go now to the second third stage of the interview I will show you some extracts taken from different dissertations....please comment on the use of the emboldened words which the writers used in their dissertations... tell me to what extent do you feel these words can be used appropriately here or in academic writing in general ..and why? ..The first two examples are PROBABLY and POSSIBLY?

P: ...(P is reading the examples) ... you can substitute it but not drop ...we can use PROBABLY and POSSIBLY interchangeably because in the sentence it is probably and possibility.... because you are expecting something to happen in the near future... how certain is the researcher about this... i believe most of us would agree with the statement like ... it is PROBABLY rather than it is POSSIBLY... because POSSIBLY you are saying ...there..there is possibility but you are not sure if it could happen ...but PROBABLY you are almost probably it is like 75 to 90 % will happen...

I: the second two examples ...APPEARS and SEEMS?

P:...I don't like the use of APPEAR here .. and if it were me I would not use APPEAR.

I: what will you say?

P: i would say these figures show/demonstrates/ explains ... but i i won't use APPEAR....

I: why?

P: ..again..you know.. the word APPEAR.. you try to say that something came into vision... ok....

I: what about SEEMS instead?

P: ..no no ... i would say that it will SEEM when i am not sure ..probably before the findings APPEAR could be used after you analyse the data ...and and you reach a conclusion... because again... something was not there and came into your vision... ok.. so before that... how can we use APPEAR...!

I: the next examples.. MIGHT and MAY?

P: ...(P is reading)... no we can't swap here.... you know why..... he is referring to a study ..then he is going to a conclusion which he is not sure about ...so he said MIGHT... this is fine....then taking the findings into considerations ..that could be an emphasis on writing may not be necessary in schools again here he is given the choice to the people so he may use it or not use it ... that is a proper use ... we cannot swap.

I: BELIEVE and THINK?

you have to be that sure to come up to thisTHINK is fine ..but BELIEVE ... may be at the end of the thesis ... but again after you use all your tools and you analyse the data and sure of your findings you can use it.

I: you mean BELIEVE or THINK?

P: ..BELIEVE is stronger ..so if you have the golden ratio which is not .05 then you can say BELIEVE but before that no ... and if it were me I would use the passive here... I would not use the active... here...

I: how does this matter?

P: if i use the passive ..it means that anyone reading the analysis and the findings would come to this conclusion ... but if i say I.. there .. there is a bit of subjectivity ... but when i say conveying the findings ..it is believed it would mean that anyone looking at the findings would agree...

I: is MY OPINION subjective as I?

P: it is in a- .. our theses.. so it is adding to the sentence...reading...that's a very good use and I agree with it for many reasons... this is part of the descriptive tools ... it is a qualitative tool ... you are writing your own observations so here it is fine... because your opinion matters here...

I: which structure would you like to use to summarise your findings from the list in number 6?

P: i have seen all these styles in many published research articles ... OK... if it is the final statement... I would use IN MY VIEW... if it is published in a forum.... it is better to say IN MY VIEW also...it has to be MY VIEW so that you can convince the people.. but if it is in a dissertation I would say the passive or THE PRESENT STUDY or THE STUDY SAID etc.

I: what about words like INTERESTING or SURPRISING as in the last examples? can you use theme in your thesis

P: SURPRISING or INTERESTING ...you can say Harmer had an interesting use of this tool in such study... or it was surprising to come up with such result with someone like Green... no problem to use them but it has to be the proper use.... when something is really interesting or surprising...

I: the last stage X your lexical preferences...the following questions ask for your perceptions of taking a position.. how to express your views.. in academic writing ..that is. how you express your degree of certainty/uncertainty.. self-reference and attitudes...number one...Which of these statements best describes the relationship you try to establish with your reader ..that is, the real or imagined person who is reading your text..?

a. i try to express my position in an assertive ..or, highly committed.. manner...**b.**... i try to express my position in a measured ..or, carefully qualified manner... **c.** some other manner.

P: I would choose B

I: which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals...etc.?

p: all grammatical forms...

i: number 2... which of these statements best describes the way you try to refer to yourself in the text?... **a.** i feel free to use the personal pronouns in my text ...**b.** i prefer using implicit references, such as THE RESEARCHER or THE AUTHOR... **c.** i never refer to myself in the text. ...**d.** some other manner.

p: i choose B

I: number 3... Which of these statements best describes the way you try to show your attitude in the academic text? ...**a.** I feel free to show my attitude in my text ...**b.** I avoid using attitude words like IMPORTANT, SIGNIFICANT, INTERESTING, AGREE. etc...**c.** it depends.

P: ...it depends... like in your introduction you can't show your opinion.. in the literature review it is not you at all... in the findings and the discussion and the conclusion you can use them...

I: which grammatical forms do you prefer to express this, i.e. verbs, modals...etc?

P: all of them

I: question number 4... What other writing do you do at present? do you find that the criteria for an ma thesis writing in your field differ in any way from the criteria of this writing...?

P: i am just writing my lesson plans...no more long writing...i am taking a rest....

I: do you find that the criteria for an ma thesis writing in your field differ in any way from the criteria of this writing...?

P: not to a great extent.... but writing a thesis would be different in structure but the language would be similar... if writing formal reports the formality would be high like writing a thesis.....

I: number 5...when you wrote your dissertation...a..did you get help from any of these?...b.. could you please talk about it or them?...c..to what extent do you think it was (they were) helpful? how?...d.. did you receive any language feedback about using a proper academic writing?

P: mmmm Ok.. mmm.. previous dissertations in the field , books and journals and articles.

I: did you get writing feedback?

P: I did... from my supervisor.. both wrote comments ..

I: what kind of comments?

P: the ideas ,... the use of the language...but not on what we have discussed...not sure exactly...

I: question six... which party.. or.. parties were you writing for? ...your supervisor ...the markers...academics from the same field... students from the same field...people from outside your field who are interested in your topic and why?..

P: ..anyone who reads what i write... but my focus would be to explain .. convey.. and convince...that is my style... explain it first then .. show the evidence... go to a conclusion.. then discuss it and convince the reader about the validity of the ideas.

I: to what extent did writing for these parties have an impact on the way you wrote?

P: i does not matter for me...i try as i said to write a clear consistent language that is readable and understood by my reader

I: good...anything else you want to add?

P: I don't think so...

I: perfect... thank you very much X.. that was really helpful.

P: you're welcome

Appendix-7: Lecturer's Questionnaire

Section one: Background questions:

5. How long have you been teaching EAP?
6. What level of students have you been teaching (undergrads/postgrads)?
7. Were your students Egyptian, English, international or mixed?
8. Have you ever supervised MA TEFL /Linguistics/ELT students? If yes, How long?

Section two: Evaluating students' use of certain words: TEXT-A and TEXT-B:

Here are two samples of discussion chapters: A and B. Can you please underline expressions that indicate doubt, certainty, attitudes and writer's self-reference?

- c. How successful do you consider text A and B in terms of using un/certainty, attitude and self-reference markers? Which is the most successful?
- d. Let's, please, identify the points that made it successful/unsuccessful.

SEE ATTACHMENT TEXT (A) AND (B)

Section Three: Feedback:

2. Answer the questions under each category of stance markers:
 - c. **Certainty markers (e.g. show, clearly)**
 - What difficulties that postgraduate students may face when expressing their certainty?
 - To reach high level of academic writing, what feedback can you give to students when expressing certainty markers when writing their MA dissertations?
 - d. **Uncertainty/evaluation markers (e.g. may, could, probably)**
 - What difficulties that postgraduate students may face when using evaluation/ uncertainty markers?
 - To reach high level of academic writing, what feedback can you give to students when expressing certainty markers when writing their MA dissertations
 - e. **Attitude markers (e.g. amazing, surprising, important, significant)**
 - Do you think that students can express their attitudes in their academic text? If yes, when and what type of attitude markers can be used?
 - Are there any certain attitude words which can't be academic? If yes like what?
 - f. **Self-mentions (I, the researcher, me)?**
 - Academic writing has been perceived as objective in its expression of ideas, and thus tends to avoid referencing to personal opinions. However, students are recommended to express overtly their opinions at the same time. How can students balance this and that?
 - Do you think writers can express their presence in the text using the first-personal pronoun 'I' or the 'the researcher' in their MA thesis? Why? Is there a difference if they use 'I' or 'the researcher'?
 - **Finally, is there anything else you would like to add or comment on about what have discussed?**

TEXT-A

This chapter addresses the two research questions. The first was to explore EAP tutor perceptions at UNNC (A name of an institution) of teaching and assessing English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) and whether and to what extent they felt they required ESAP training. The second was to ascertain to what extent they felt our existing training, weekly CPD, met their ESAP training needs.

5.2 Teachers' experience and qualifications

One important finding is that, with regard to staff qualifications and length of experience, this study replicates the findings of the BALEAP study (Alexander 2010) mentioned in the literature review. This the British Association of Lecturers in English for Academic Purposes (BALEAP) study found that all the respondents who had approximately five years teaching experience had a postgraduate degree and over half a teaching qualification such as the DELTA. EAP tutors at UNNC compare favourably with 83% of PM and 64% of UG tutors having an MA in TESOL/Linguistics. Thirty-six per cent of the UG tutors surveyed had the DELTA and 18% had the PG certificate in EAP. All the tutors have been teaching EAP for some time: half the UG tutors have three-four years EAP teaching experience; the rest over six years. All the PM tutors had six or more years EAP teaching experience.

5.3 Findings related to tutors' perceptions of teaching and assessing ESAP

5.3.1 EAP Tutors' perceptions of teaching and assessing ESAP

All undergraduate (UG) and postmaster (PM) tutors believe that teaching ESAP is beneficial to EAP students. This supports the work of Jordan (1997), Dudley-Evans and St John (1998), Liyanage and Birch (2001) and Brant (2009) who contend that if students can see a direct benefit to their future studies, they will be more motivated. There is evidence of this in the qualitative findings (below Figure five), that the tutors believe the second semester ESAP curriculum is more motivating for students than teaching EGAP all year. Furthermore, all the tutors except one UG tutors thought teaching ESAP is beneficial to their careers. Ten years ago Hyland (2002, p393) commented that teaching ESAP can help to "make our teaching effective and practices professional". It seems that these EAP tutors support that view.

As well as the belief that ESAP is beneficial to their careers, all respondents are interested in ESAP. This supports the earlier work of Hutchinson and Waters (1987) who stated the importance of an EAP tutor having an interest in the carrier content being used to teach the language and vocabulary used in the ESP [ESAP] classroom. However, some tutors felt that they weren't adequately prepared to teach ESAP when the new curriculum was introduced which supports Brandt's (2009) research and is evidenced by this quote from PMF 3: "it got peoples' backs up the way it was done [introduction of the ESAP curriculum]. There was no real preparation. They got the new curriculum in but it kind of didn't bring the teachers in with it". Nevertheless, all except one PM tutor stated they felt able to teach ESAP. One of the most contentious issues over the teaching of ESAP, which dates back to the Spack-Hyland debate of 'How far should we go?', is whether EAP tutors need subject-specific knowledge of the content material used in the ESAP lesson. The findings of this research support those of Bell's (1996); that is, all but one UG and one PM tutor believe that EAP tutors do need some subject-specific knowledge of the ESAP subject. Both the quantitative data in Figure 11 and the qualitative data below it clearly show this. UGF 5 was adamant that a background in the subject is needed when s/he stressed: "I've got a science background so I don't mind doing engineering. But there are

other people here that I know have got engineering degrees and they are teaching business. It doesn't make sense".

The findings suggest that to effectively teach ESAP the respondents feel that EAP tutors need to acquire some background knowledge of the subject. This may be through putting in extra preparation as shown in Figure 7 rather than having a direct background in the ESAP subject. To illustrate this, in relation to teaching the ESAP Engineering stream and the tutor having no previous Science/Engineering experience UGF 7 mentioned in reference to a colleague: "She/he was very stressed and spent a lot of extra hours. She was trying to learn about engineering. She was going home and reading books about engineering because she didn't have a background and it just became a lot." The tutors also believe that it is part of their remit to acquire knowledge of the content of the ESAP subject being taught: one PM tutor and four UG stated that it was their responsibility to acquire this knowledge. The findings suggest that they obtain this knowledge through hard work and extra preparation reading up on the carrier content.

5.3.2 Marking and advising on the content of students' work

As shown in Table 1, all tutors agree that EAP tutors should advise students on the organization and language used in their work and assess this. What is of interest, is that all tutors except one UG and one PM believe that EAP tutors should advise students on the content of their ESAP work and assess this when summatively assessing students' work. However, the findings for these two questions were a little weaker than for advising on and marking for organization and language. More research participants ticked 'partly agree' for these two questions, but they ticked 'agree' and 'strongly agree' for advising and marking for language and organization. This may suggest that the EAP tutors are less sure of the issue around marking for content and assessing content in students' ESAP work. For the PM tutors, the Independent Research Project (IRP) seemed very challenging in regard to advising and marking for content. An illustration of this was when PMQ 1 expressed:

"The challenge is not the module we call ESAC but the 2,500 word discipline specific Independent Research Projects that premaster's students have to write. This term I have had to manage 28 research projects from Applied Linguistics and ELT, History, Political Science, Interpretation and translation, Media Studies, Cultural Studies, Women Studies and Communication and Entrepreneurship. Argumentation and the way discourse works ranges tremendously across these fields of study".

This quote suggests that to advise students on the content of such topics is extremely challenging and requires a significant investment in time. Likewise, marking for content in the above topics would probably require support in terms of what content is acceptable.

5.3.3 Knowledge of the written genres and academic tasks required in students' future disciplines.

Most UG and PM tutors would like to know more about the disciplines that their students are aspiring to. Figures 13 and 14 showed that most tutors were not too confident of the types of writing their students are required to do in their disciplines and this was supported by some of the qualitative data given below Figure 14. Many tutors stated '*partly agree*', '*partly disagree*' or '*disagree*' in relation to the two questions on whether the tutors felt they had knowledge of the academic tasks and written genres their students are required to do in their disciplines. The results from the training parts of the questionnaire strongly indicate that the tutors would like to acquire this knowledge through closer cooperation with academics in various departments at UNNC. This would be in the form of training sessions and/or talks given by departmental

academics. One-hundred per cent of PM tutors and ninety six per cent of UG would attend a talk provided by a departmental academic on the written genres their students have to perform and the problems their students have with English in their respective disciplines.

5.3.4 How specific should we go?

The findings on whether CELE should have eight-different content-specific streams for UG and four for PM are mixed. Just over fifty per cent of the UG tutors stated that eight-streams are too many for the UG programme. Surprisingly, four PM tutors out of the five that answered this question also felt that having four-content specific streams are too many. This is probably down to the IRP which means that although there are only four Social Science and Humanities streams in the PM course, the range of topics that students can write on within these four streams is very wide and this is a burden on EAP tutors when advising students on the content of their written work and requires them to have some subject knowledge to be able to advise and assess students' work. Similarly, the majority of UG tutors (15) believe that changing the stream you teach each year is not a good idea. The results for PM are similar with four out of six tutors disagreeing that it is a good idea to change the ESAP stream one teaches from year-to-year. This suggests that tutors want to acquire knowledge of the content used in the ESAP subject they teach. This supports Flowerdew and Peacock's (2001) assertion that EAP tutors familiarize themselves with the content used in subject-specific ESAP classes. In addition, when UGF 13 stated '...it's always a good idea to feel just one or even half a step ahead of your students' s/he seems to support Spack's (1988), Bell's (1996) and Basturkmen's (2010) speculation that lacking knowledge of the carrier content used within an ESAP classroom can be problematic or 'uncomfortable' for EAP instructors.

However, this suggestion that the split (eight UG streams and four PM) is too specific would go against the recent findings of Nesi and Gardner (2012) and Hyland's work on discipline specificity (2002, 2006, 2011). Their work points out that the genres of writing and vocabulary found within various disciplines are significantly different and that therefore these differences have to be taken into account when designing EAP/ESAP courses and materials. Their work implies, therefore, that the more specific any EAP course is the better it is for the students as it more directly meets the students' needs. It may be that some of the EAP tutors are against this narrow split not because they do not see a need for it, but because it requires too much extra work for the tutor and those designing the ESAP courses. As UGF 17 commented:

"I think we could have split in two rather than eight distinct groups: an English for Social Sciences/Humanities stream and English for Science and Engineering. There are problems going narrower than that. People responsible for the courses have to produce eight rather than two and perhaps spreading themselves too thin. If you switch from IC to IS you have to learn a lot of content. With two streams even if you have to switch stream, you only have to do it once".

5.4 Tutors' attitudes towards training.

All the PM tutors and the majority of UG (17 out of 22) believe that the current training does not meet their needs of how to teach and assess ESAP. All but two UG tutors and one PM say they would attend training sessions specifically aimed at improving their ability to teach ESAP and all but four UG and one PM at sessions to improve their ability to assess ESAP. Furthermore, the majority of both PM and UG tutors have not received specific training on how to teach and assess ESAP as can be seen in Figures 18 and 19. Eleven UG tutors (50%) and three PM (60% - only five answered) are not entirely satisfied with the current CPD programme. Furthermore, although the majority of PM and UG tutors believe that the CPD programme could be used to provide specific ESAP-related training, several tutors do not want to see the current CPD

programme replaced with training specifically related to this. This can be seen in some of the qualitative data presented under Table 2. The data shows that although the tutors are interested in having ESAP-related training, they feel this should be taken into account when planning teachers' workloads and when and how the training is delivered. PMF 5 shows this when s/he stated:

“Management have to take into account demands on people’s time, if you take professional development seriously, you set aside time from the beginning of the semester and pay people for this... If CELE is concerned about improving the quality of its [ESAP] programme, then it will put aside some time and effort into it [training] and “Give them something that makes it worth their while to attend. The motivation to attend, the motivation to present, the motivation to improve their practices”.

The lack of content-specific knowledge of an ESAP subject also seems to affect tutors' need for ESAP training. Most tutors felt comfortable teaching an ESAP topic if they have a familiarity with the written genres students are required to do in their disciplines. For example, those who have a science background stated that they would feel more comfortable teaching UG engineering classes than the tutors who said they come from an arts or social science background.

Finally, although Hays (1994) believes that it is important to involve tutors in delivering training, the findings from the UG tutors oppose this. Only five UG tutors (23%) said they would be interested in giving an ESAP-related training session. This contrasts with four PM tutors (67%). One reason for this could be that the training sessions identified as being most desirable by both UG and PM tutors are having an academic give a talk on the written genres their students need to perform in their disciplines and the difficulties they have in doing this. This training could not be delivered by EAP tutors, but only by experts from the disciplines.

TEXT-B

The present study investigates the effectiveness of using some active learning strategies in teaching vocabulary in developing fifth graders' speaking and writing skills and their attitudes towards EFL. The results of the study will be discussed in details in the following points:

The Speaking Test

The aforementioned results obtained on the post tests of the speaking test suggest that the first hypothesis (There are statistically significant differences [favouring the experimental group] between means of scores obtained by subjects of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-test of speaking skills) was accepted. This confirms the effect of the program of the study. It reflected that the active learning program enhanced the performance of the experimental group in the speaking skills.

This result is consistent with Chen (2005), Makarove (1997), Moore and Fetterolf, (1997), and (Moore, 1996). For example, the results of Chen's study showed that the Jigsaw method of cooperative learning is a good way to involve all students in speaking and learning in the classroom. The results of this study which showed clearly that the Program based some active learning strategies (Jigsaw & Semantic mapping) can have a remarkable effect on developing speaking skills.

Also the results of this study coincides clearly with the findings of Mark (2004) who found that the use of co-operative learning program improves pupils' vocabulary in the four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Also the results of this study are consistent with Aziz (2004) who found out that the creative dramatics program is effective in developing both the communicative listening comprehension and speaking skills of the selected sample.

In addition to that in the researcher's opinion, the findings of the speaking test were supported by the findings of Makarove (1997) who found out that using games and amusing activities in phonetics and pronunciation classes can motivate students, make them active in class and consequently improve their pronunciation.

The Writing Test

The aforementioned results obtained on the post tests of the writing test suggest that the second hypothesis (There are statistically significant differences (favoring the experimental group) between means of scores obtained by subjects of the experimental group and those of the control one in the post-test of writing skills) was accepted. This confirms the effect of the program of the study. It reflected that the active learning program enhanced the experimental group's performance in writing skills. Such result coincides with the findings of Wagner (2008), Adam (2006), Lorber (2004), Darayseh (2003), Donovan (1998) and Meyer (1995).

For example, (Wagner, 2008) found out that the graphic organizer has an interesting effect on improving writing skills as he used the language experience approach, brainstorming, semantic mapping, and jigsaw Strategies. This gives evidence that the use of some active learning strategies proves effective in developing writing skills.

Also the results of this study interestingly coincide with the findings of Adam (2006) who found that training first year English majors of the faculty of Education in integrating creative reading and writing skills has an interesting effect on their performance in these skills, as she used many strategies in implementing the program such as: language experience approach, brainstorming, semantic mapping, and jigsaw.

In addition to that the findings of the writing test were supported by the findings of Darayseh (2003) who found that a proposed program based on semantic mapping and brainstorming strategies has a remarkable effect on developing the first scientific secondary students' English writing and reading ability. Meyer's study (1995) is another example that proves effective of some active learning strategies in developing writing skills, as he found that the students using the graphic organizers showed an improvement in their creative writing.

The Attitude Scale

This third hypothesis predicted that there are statistically significant differences (favouring the experimental group) between means of scores obtained by subjects of the experimental group and those of the control one in the attitude scale. The aforementioned results obtained on the post-test of the attitude scale confirmed this hypothesis. Thus, this study showed that active learning enhanced pupils' positive attitudes towards learning EFL. This result goes in accordance with Latchanna and Dagnew (2008), Gomleksiz (2007), Karahan (2007), İnal, Evin and Saracaloğlu (2007), Chen (2005), Honeycutt (2005), Huyen and Nga (2003) and Maneekul (1996). For example, the results of İnal, Evin, and Saracaloğlu's study (2007) showed that there is a significant relation between student's academic achievement and student's attitude towards foreign language. The results of the present study revealed that the program based on some active learning strategies (jigsaw and semantic mapping) has an interesting effect on developing speaking and writing skills and their attitude towards learning English as a foreign language.

Also the results of the present study coincides with the findings of Gomleksiz (2007) who found that the cooperative jigsaw II method had effects on improving vocabulary knowledge and active-passive voice in English as a foreign language for engineering students and the students' attitudes towards learning English. His attitude scale results showed that the cooperative learning experience had a significant positive effect on students' attitudes towards learning English and promoted better interactions among students as well.

In addition to that, the findings of the attitude scale were supported by the findings of Huyen and Nga (2003) who found that students in classes are gradually progressing in English vocabulary and games have been shown to have advantages and effectiveness in learning vocabulary in various ways.

First, games help them to learn new words and phrases. Second, games bring in relaxation and fun for students, thus help them learn and retain new words more easily. Third, games usually involve friendly competition and they keep learners interested. These create the motivation for learners of English to get involved and participate actively in the learning activities. Fourth, vocabulary games bring real world context into the classroom, and enhance students' use of English in a flexible, communicative way. So the present study coincides with these advantages as active learning strategies affected positively on pupils' attitude towards leaning English as a foreign language as active leaning strategies help them to study in an interested, fun and relaxed class.

The researcher thinks the present study showed that the active learning strategies, specially jigsaw and semantic mapping, lead to the feelings of comfort. Less pressure and motivation and many students expressed pleasure and enjoyment. Also these results may coincide with the findings of Chen (2005) who found that cooperative learning (CL) activities, incorporating the multiple intelligence and the whole language approach (WLA) in college EFL classrooms have a positive effect on students' language proficiency and attitude.

Appendix-8: Themes template

Pattern code: Functions of boosters			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	To express a high degree of confidence in the indications provided by the results acquired through the study	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's confidence when using a booster	<p>- The reason for using the word 'show'I have the significance and the evidence to be clear and assertive. If I do not have the evidence, I may say something else. (EGY-4)</p> <p>- I assume that 'demonstrate' here...this helped me present clear findings with strong positions...I am confident and certain of the results I reached...(BR-2)</p>
2.	To convey the writer's interpretation to a generally accepted idea or fact	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's interpretations towards facts or generally accepted ideas when using a booster	<p>- The reason for using the word 'show'.... I am taking about something here that has been tested. This programme has been used and approved to be successful. No deny for that. (EGY-11)</p> <p>- ...the fact that was used here.....Dictionaries are normally the main source of that. This is commonly known among language learners.(BR-8)</p>
3.	To convey the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way	Words or expressions that refer to the interviewee's opinion when using a booster	<p>- Here I am evaluating the text book. I used 'the fact that' to show the reader that my opinion is based on evidence that was mentioned after that. (BR-8)</p> <p>- 'Believe' because...May be that I have a strong belief that those studies would be useful for my study though they were not conducted in the Middle East context. (EGY-9)</p>
Pattern code: Functions of hedges			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	To show lack of certainty	Words or expressions that the interviewee uses to refer to lack of certainty when using hedges	<p>- ... and the researcher is not certain which one has more effect.. Is he sure?.. no... that is what SEEM does in the sentence... (EGY-9)</p> <p>- I want to show that I am not sure enough to say that 'his anomaly is due to the subconscious nature of the skill. (BR-8)</p>
2.	To avoid reader's	Words or expressions	- . MAY here is a qualifying device that

	potential attack	that the interviewee uses to refer to avoiding reader's potential attack when using hedges	<i>means there is a possibility of things.. you are taking a viewpoint and other people may take other views. (BR-1)</i> <i>- I wanted to propose something here...it is not an obligatory suggestion..it is a possible one..it can be applicable or not..the readers have the choice to accept or refuse. (EGY-2)</i>
3.	To be more precise in reporting results	Words or expressions that refer to the interviewee's being precise when using hedges	<i>- I had only eight participants in my study... it is not academic to generalize here... I mean ... I cannot emphasise... my participants were small. I must say PROBABLY before SHOW (BR-3)</i> <i>- I am interpreting my results, and I should be accurate when doing this. ... therefore I should use a more careful language. (EGY-11)</i>
4.	To mitigate the writer's claim for the purpose of politeness	Words or expressions that interviewees say to refer to being polite when using hedges	<i>- .. all my data are perfect ..it is politer to use it here.... (EGY-8)</i> <i>- ...most importantly, this shows my deference to the readers. (BR-8)</i>
Pattern code: Functions of self-mentions			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	To hedge an argument or to hold an opinion	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's hedging an argument or holding an opinion when using a self-mention	<i>- .. I wanted to highlight my opinion here as there would be two different levels of .. (BR-8)</i> <i>- .. It is word collocations...I think... I wanted to be tentative here when expressing my opinion ...(BR-2)</i>
2.	To state, interpret, compare, assess the results	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's interpreting, comparing and assessing results when using a self-mention	<i>- ...I do not see any problem to refer to myself here as it is clear that this data analysis task was achieved only by me (EGY-2)</i> <i>- so I am evaluating the data by comparing and contrasting certain variables..(EGY-4)</i>
3.	To explain a procedure	Words or expressions that refer to the interviewee's explaining a procedure when using a self-mention	<i>- ... I am describing how data were collected (BR-8)</i> <i>- Here I am reporting the results of my study. (EGY-12)</i>

4.	To state an expectation or a wish	Words or expressions that refer to the interviewee's stating an expectation or a wish when using a self-mention	- .. <i>I think this is better and clearer because later I am talking about an assumption by Cohen so it is important to clearly relate the first assumption to me as the researcher.</i> (EGY-10)
Pattern code: Functions of attitude markers			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	To indicate a value judgement or identify information as worthy of particular attention	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's indicating a value when using an attitude marker	- <i>I am highlighting the value of establishing different opinions from the literature of what grammar is... (BR-6)</i> - <i>my aim of writing this word here is to give impression to the reader that this piece of information has a point in the line of the research.. so it is significant and if I drop it from the line of research it may affect the meaning.</i> (EGY-4)
2.	To provide an assessment of expectations	Words or expressions that indicate the interviewee's providing an assessment of expectation when using an attitude marker	- <i>that problem was not expected and also the results in example 44..mm.. I wanted to draw the reader's attention to these results...</i> (BR-2) - <i>only the brief instructions given to them were enough and that was surprising to me... so I said EVEN meaning I did not expect that..</i> (EGY-12)

Pattern code: Awareness of epistemic commitment devices			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Interchangeable use	Words or expressions that refer to writer's using certain hedges interchangeably	- <i>I guess we can switch both words.. they are the same... the writer here is not sure so that's ok if we swap.</i> (EGY-8) - <i>It is the same... WOULD, CAN, MAY, MIGHT, MAY have all the same meaning, in my opinion.</i> (EGY-5)
2.	Different degrees of certainty	Words or expressions that refer to writers' viewing certain hedges/boosters having different degrees of certainty	- <i>No, I wouldn't switch here. MAY refers to something in the past. MIGHT is more in the present..... MAY is a weaker form if we are talking about possibility.</i> (BR-6) - <i>I think ..the stronger one is PROBABLY... POSSIBLY ...it's just.... it's just for me I don't know in my mind it just</i>

			<i>seems like you know you are a bit unsure..(BR-2)</i>
3.	Academic vs non-academic	Words or expressions that refer to writer's viewing certain hedges/boosters as academic or non-academic	- Generally, APPEARS and SEEM have the same meaning... APPEARS is more formal ... but again it is a point of word collocation (BR-5) - I tend to use INDICATE and DEMONSTRATE in my academic text but maybe not SHOW ... it is less academic. (BR-4)
Pattern code: Other perceptions about self-mentions			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Objectivity vs subjectivity	Words or expressions that refer to objectivity/subjectivity of the writer when not/using self-mentions	- The reason for using the word ' show ' I have the significance and the evidence to be clear and assertive. If I do not have the evidence, I may say something else. (EGY-4) - I assume that ' demonstrate ' here...this helped me present clear findings with strong positions...I am confident and certain of the results I reached...(BR-2)
2.	I vs the researcher	Words or expressions that refer to using ' I/the researcher ' in the text	- The reason for using the word ' show '.... I am taking about something here that has been tested. This programme has been used and approved to be successful. No deny for that. (EGY-11) - ... the fact that was used here...Dictionaries are normally the main source of that. This is commonly known among language learners.(BR-8)
Pattern code: Other perceptions about attitude markers			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Important/ly and significant/ly (interchangeably)	Words or expressions that refer to writers' using important/significant interchangeably	- I suppose IMPORTANT does the same meaning as SIGNIFICANT ...in several contexts I use them interchangeably.. (BR-1) - There is no real difference. They're just synonymous with each other.. (EGY-12)
2.	Important/ly and significant/ly (Different use)	Words or expressions that refer to writers' viewing	- ..no SIGNIFICANT would not carry the same way as IMPORTANT ... SIGNIFICANT is really significant because

		important/significant differently	<i>it changed something IMPORTANT it's just IMPORTANT..mmm. well a lot of things are IMPORTANT so SIGNIFICANT is probably stronger than IMPORTANT (BR-6) - I think IMPORTANT is weaker than SIGNIFICANT. (EGY-6)</i>
3	'Interesting/Surprising' (academic vs un-academic)	Words or expressions that refer to writers' viewing 'Interesting/Surprising' as academic or un-academic	<i>- ..I think it is ok if there is something interesting .. when something comes up when it is completely different .. (BR-6) - I may use INTERESTING but not SURPRISING...I think I will not use it in my academic writing... SURPRISING for something that is unexpected... It will be risky for me if I use it... (EGY-9)</i>

Pattern code: Factors affecting writers' use of stance markers			
	Descriptive codes	Codes definition	Excerpts from the transcripts
1.	Writer's personal linguistic preferences	Words or expressions that refer to objectivity/subjectivity of the writer when not/using self-mentions	<i>- I have never ever used first person. ..This is what I feel should be done. The emphasis should be on the information that I want to give and the arguments I want to make, rather than me. (BR-6) - it is the researcher who deals with those data...It is a personal belief based on my experiences as a writer. I acquired this throughout my academic life. (EGY-9)</i>
2.	Supervisor's and other lecturers' feedback	Words or expressions that refer to using 'I/the researcher' in the text	<i>- If my supervisor is not confident enough that I had established a well-structured argument, my claim would not be justified (EGY-2) - I was told by my lecturers and colleagues not to use the word I (BR-3)</i>
3	Cultural and L1 interference	Words or expressions that refer to using the interviewees' L1 or culture in the transcript.	<i>- I do not know, but I may be affected by my native Arabic language because MAY means MOMKEN in Arabic and this is the meaning that I wanted to give (EGY-7). - I think English people plant hedges in their speech all the time to soften what</i>

			<i>they say. This might indicate to an important part of polite conversation in order (BR-7).</i>
4	Previous education and instruction	Words or expressions that refer to interviewees previous schooling, learning, teachers and etc.	- I remember I was told in my A-level from a teacher in every time I write 'I think'. She says 'I am not interested in what you think (BR-5). - I was told in my academic writing course not to use I in that way...(EGY-1)
5	Writer's self-confidence	Words or expressions that refer to interviewees' self-confidence, power, supervisor's power and etc.	- No I <i>am still a novice writer</i> while he is an expert one. We should not argue with senior lecturers. - <i>Yes that was a form of challenge for me... He had to accept that because that's what I wanted to say (BR-2).</i>