

**A review article of studies on stance-taking:
Definitions and main frameworks^(*)**

**Under the Supervision of
Amira Agameya
Eenas Metwaly**

**Islam Hamdy Mohammed Abdel Maboud
Faculty of Art - Cairo University**

Abstract:

The possibility of reading, hearing, or listening to any type of texts, spoken, or written; formal or informal, which are void of stances is very low. People tend to express their opinions about and show their attitudes towards ideas. They also tend to use some linguistic tools that indicate the degree of (un)certainty of different arguments. In other words, they often take stances. The term *stance-taking* is one of the most enigmatic concepts in linguistics due to the great number of definitions and categorizations introduced to analyze it. This paper aimed at reviewing previous research on stance, and pinpointing the gaps that need to be bridged, thus the method used is the analysis of the definitions and methods presented in the literature. The findings showed that defining stance relies on the objectives of research and the methods adopted for the analysis. Also, analyzing stance in casual conversations was found to be a gap in the literature.

Key words

Stance-taking, stance, hedges, boosters

(*) A review article of studies on stance-taking: Definitions and main frameworks, Vol.12, Issue No.1, January 2023, pp.65-88.

المستخلص

نادرا ما يخلوا نص مكتوب أو منطوق، رسمي أو غير رسمي من اتخاذ موقف تجاه آراء أو أفكار معينة، أو بمعنى آخر اتخاذ رأياً معيناً، فالناس تميل إلى التعبير عن آرائهم إزاء الأفكار المختلفة، وعرض اتجاهاتهم، كما أنهم يميلون إلى اظهار درجة تأكدهم، أو شكهم بشأن اطروحاتهم المختلفة، فلكل المرء موقفا يتخذه، مثل التصديق والتكذيب والشك والتأكد، ولقد حظى موضوع اتخاذ المواقف باهتمام الباحثين في علم اللغة التطبيقي، ولقد اختلف في تعريفه الباحثون أشد اختلاف، واستخدموا مناهج بحث مختلفة لتحليله ودراسه دراسة كمية أو كيفية، لذلك فإن الهدف الرئيس من هذا البحث هو تتبع وتحليل التعريفات والمنهجيات التي قدمها الباحثون في هذا الموضوع، واستنتج البحث ان تعريف مصطلح اتخاذ المواقف يعتمد على اهداف الباحث ومنهجيته، وأن دراسة موضوع اتخاذ المواقف شاع في النصوص الأكاديمية أكثر منها في النصوص الأقل رسمية مثل المحادثات التليفونية وغيرها، لذلك فدراسة اتخاذ المواقف في محادثات غير رسمية ندرت في الدراسات السابقة عن اتخاذ المواقف، ومن ثم تعد فجوة بحثية متاحة ليسدها الباحثون.

الكلمات المفتاحية: اتخاذ موقف لغوي، الموقف اللغوي، العبارات الدالة على اليقين، العبارات الدالة على الشك

Human interaction is based mainly on discourse, written or spoken. In order for the discourse to be efficacious and deeply meaningful, writers or interlocutors perpetually utilize all means of persuasion so that their message could be delivered effectively to readers or interlocutors. The deliverer, or the producer of the text, whether spoken or written, thus, must have a certain stance expressing their feelings or the degree of commitment to the truthfulness of propositions to be able to accomplish this task (Jiang, 2017). The stance taken makes clear where the writer or speaker stands in relation to certain propositions.

The last two decades witnessed a notable upsurge of interest in stance. Even though the concept of stance was salient and widely used in the literature, it seems to be one of the most enigmatic concepts in linguistics due to the variety of definitions and methods of categorizations introduced for the purpose of analyzing the phenomenon of stance (Adams & Quintana-Toledo, 2013). This diversity is attributed to the fact that stance was used in the literature as a synonym to other

concepts such as *evidentiality* (Chafe and Nichols, 1986), *modality* (Palmer 1986) *attitudinal stance* (Biber and Finegan, 1989), *attitude* (Halliday, 1994), *subjectivity* (Langacker, 1990) *affect* (Batson, Oleson, Shaw, 1992), *epistemic modality* (Hyland, 1998), *evaluation* (Hunston, 2000) *approval* (White, 2003), *appraisal* (Martin and white, 2005), *metadiscourse* (Hyland, 2005).

There are various models and frameworks examining the phenomenon of stance. Two of the most frequently used are Biber's (2006) framework of lexico-grammatical stance-conveying devices, and Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse. Notably, no matter how researchers understand the concept of stance, or what methodology they use to analyze it, the point that had the lion's share in the literature was stance-related register variations.

With this in mind, this paper attempted to answer three main questions. Since the term *stance* is highly elusive in the literature, the first question was *how is stance defined in the literature?* Further, in order to help researchers, interested in stance to follow the frameworks used in the literature and adopt the most appropriate framework for their analysis, the second question was *what are the frameworks and models adopted in the literature to analyze the phenomenon of stance?* The third question was *To what extent is stance register-restricted?* The answer of this question would show new gaps in the literature researchers may bridge.

1. Towards the Definition of the Concept of Stance

The term *stance* was initially investigated in the mid-1980s emanating from a variety of linguistic fields such as sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, functional linguistics, linguistic anthropology and conversation analysis (Haddington, 2004). The term seems to be ambiguous to the extent that a reader may read two articles addressing different ideas, yet having the same label *stance*. The reader may also read about the same ideas in two articles labeled differently: *stance*, *evidentiality*, *appraisal* etc.

Haddington (2004) added to the complexity of the term as he distinguished between two terms used interchangeably in the literature, namely, *stance* and *stance-taking*. *Stance* according to him refers to

writers and speakers' positions or viewpoints about something, someone or a certain proposition. *Stance-taking*, on the other hand, refers to an interpersonal activity where participants manipulate various linguistic devices to exchange viewpoints. In other words, *stance-taking* can be considered as the usage of linguistic mechanisms to reflect a dialogical stance where interlocutors position themselves in relation to each other's viewpoint.

According to this distinction the term *stance* is close, if not equal, to the concept of *subjectivity*, which was used in the literature to refer to the degree of commitment of the speaker to a given proposition (Stubbs, 1996). *Stance-taking*, on the other hand, is equal to *intersubjectivity* which relies, first and foremost, on the existence of two subjectivities in the process of interaction (Du Bois, 2007). Each subject, or stance actor, does not express his or her stance in isolation from the other interlocutor's previous stance. To minimize the complexity of defining the stance phenomenon in the literature, we can identify two main approaches to stance, the subjective, and the intersubjective.

1.1 The Definition of Stance from a Subjective Perspective

Stance as subjective phenomenon was addressed in the literature using different labels such as *Evidentiality*, *affect*, *evaluation* and *appraisal*. *Evidentiality* refers to clarifying the assessment of the reliability of information (Chafe & Nichols, 1986). In other words, it is concerned with a person's viewpoints about a certain proposition in terms of (un)certainty. However, the term does not refer to a person's attitudes and feelings. Consequently, using *Evidentiality* as an equal term to *stance* is problematic as it should be regarded as solely one of its components. Another concept as crucial as *evidentiality*, and which could be regarded as the second side of the coin of *stance* is *affect*. Ochs and Schieffelin (1989) developed the concept of *affect* to refer to writers' expression of their feelings and attitudes.

With regard to *evaluation*, it was defined by Hunston (2000) as "the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance toward, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about" (p. 5). In light of this definition, the concept of

evaluation focuses on the expression of writers or speakers' both viewpoints and attitudes. Hence, evaluation is a cover-all term that focuses on stance as a linguistic phenomenon.

The term *stance* as a subjective phenomenon was defined differently in the literature. Biber&Finegan (1988) defined stance as "The overt expression of an author's or speaker's attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the message" (p. 1). In light of this definition, stance can be considered as solely *stance markers* i.e. the lexico-grammatical devices used for expressing attitudes, feelings, viewpoints or epistemicity. Defining stance as the *overt* expression excludes non-linguistic and paralinguistic stance devices, explained in detail below.

A similar definition was presented by Biber, Conrad, Finegan, Johansson, and Leech (1999). They defined it as "personal feelings, attitudes, judgments, or assessments that a speaker or writer has about information in a proposition". This definition does not regard stance as merely certain devices employed to express feelings or judgments. Instead, it was a person's feelings, attitudes, judgments, and assessments that were considered as stance.

Biber's (2006) definition is the most comprehensive of his definitions as it comprises all the types of stances epistemic, attitudinal and style. He defined stance as the expression of "many different kinds of personal feelings and assessments, including attitudes that a speaker has about certain information, how certain they are about its veracity, how they obtained access to the information, and what perspective they are taking" (p. 99). This left the devices conveying stance with no limitations.

According to Biber (2006), there are three principal categories of stance conveying devices: *Paralinguistic, non-linguistic, and linguistic devices*. Paralinguistic devices are limited to stance in the spoken discourse where attitudinal meanings can be conveyed through prosody devices such as pitch, duration, and intensity. The second type, non-linguistic devices, is employed in only conversations as they are not expressed via linguistic mechanisms as meanings are conveyed only

through facial expressions and body language. The last category, *linguistic devices*, is used in both written and spoken discourses. Linguistic devices are lexico-grammatical devices such as *adverbs*, and *adjective that-clause* constructions.

Even though Biber's (2006) definition is highly comprehensive, it has a limitation since it disregards the identity of the writer or speaker in the course of expressing their position. In response of the negligence of self-mention in the literature, Hyland (2005) paid much attention to it, and considered it a main component of stance. Hyland (2005) expanded the concept of stance to contain, besides *evidentiality* and *affect*, the notion of *self-presence*, or *self-mention*. Stance is viewed, according to Hyland (2005), as writers' decision to use linguistic mechanisms that enable them to present themselves.

1.2 The Definition of Stance from an Intersubjective Perspective

Unlike subjectivity, which is a one-way method of self-expression relying on the writer or speaker's evaluation of a certain proposition, *intersubjectivity* necessitates the expression of this evaluation as part and parcel of a dialogue with an interlocutor: Subject x presents a proposition, which is approved or disapproved by Subject y. Then, subject x comments on or shows certain attitudes towards Subject y's stance towards his/her proposition etc.

Among studies, which focused on this intersubjective perspective of stance (e.g. Karkkainen, 2006; Kiesling, 2009; Keisanen, 2007; Martin, 2000; Prechet, 2003; White, 2003), Du Bois (2007) is the most frequently cited. Du Bois (2007) defined stance from an intersubjective perspective as follows:

“Stance is a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (self and others), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field” (p. 163)

Du Bois's (2007) definition, as is evident, focuses on the dynamicity of the stance-taking process. It is, according to him, no longer an individual

act as it involves more than one “subject”, with whom the stance-taker agrees or disagrees.

As such, Du Bois (2007) formed the “theory of stance” in response to *subjectivity*. In his viewpoint, relying on linguistic expressions, as Biber (1999, 2006) and others did, is inadequate as in that case the context is neglected. Du Bois’s (2007) “stance theory” is discussed in detail in section 2.2 below. Finally, Scherer (2005) looked at stance from a broader perspective. Stance, for him, is the spontaneous effect of interaction, which includes politeness, contempt, supportiveness, no matter how they are expressed.

In conclusion, in order to define *stance*, one unified definition seems to be a sort of impossibility, yet it could be defined according to three criteria: the analytical foci, methodologies and objectives as pointed out by (Haddington, 2004). As for methodologies, researchers select a framework or a model most appropriate for their analysis. Next section presents the most crucial models and frameworks used to analyze the phenomenon of stance.

2. Main Models and Frameworks for Analyzing Stance

Along the few past decades, various models and frameworks have been developed to thoroughly explore the issue of stance aiming at reaching an in-depth understanding of such a phenomenon. Three of these models stand out since they exhibit great cogency and effectiveness for the process of persuasion: (1) Du Bois’ (2007) framework of interactional stance, (2) Hyland’s (2005) metadiscourse model, and Biber’s (2006) framework of lexico-grammatical stance devices. Du Bois’ framework was a reflection of his comprehension of stance as an interactive process. Both Hyland and Biber’s frameworks, in contrast, were a reflection of their conception of stance as a subjective process where writers or speakers take certain positions towards given propositions using lexical and grammatical devices.

2.1. Main Framework for Analyzing Stance from an Intersubjective Perspective

Du Boi (2007) introduced the notion of "stance theory", labeled

also as "stance triangle", where a "stance act" in conversation is composed of three constituents, precisely "evaluation, position, alignment". In the course of conversation, both interlocutors, termed in the model as "subjects", *evaluate* an "object". The term "object" widens the scope of what is evaluated to include not only a proposition, but anything or anyone as well. Thus, both interlocutors *position* themselves through making their standpoint about that object. Both subjects agree or disagree to each other's evaluation and, in turn, to each other's position. This (dis)agreement is a process Du Bois (2007) call *alignment*.

This interactional sociolinguistic concept of stance was investigated through this main conceptual framework created by Du Bois (2007). It seems that there are no other efforts done to create frameworks for the examination of stance from an intersubjective perspective. The reason may be that sociolinguists are not interested in investigating stance as much as other issues such as politeness and formality (Fitzpatrick & Pavalanathan, 2017). In the literature, however, greater work was conducted on the models and frameworks created to analyze stance from a subjective perspective. These frameworks will be discussed in the following section.

2.2. Main Frameworks for Analyzing Stance from a Subjective Perspective

In order to study the concept of stance from a subjective perspective various frameworks were used. Each framework focused on a certain aspect and disregarded another. This variety of frameworks presents to researchers an opportunity to select the one most appropriate for their work. Among these frameworks two stand out as they are the most comprehensive and frequently-used: Biber's (2006) framework of lexico-grammatical stance devices, and Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model.

Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model could be considered the most frequently used framework in the area of writer-reader interaction particularly in academic registers. Nonetheless, Hyland was not the first to introduce this idea of meta-discourse. Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model drew mainly on Thompson's (2001) model of metadiscourse,

which classified the methods writers use to communicate information into two aspects: *interactive*, and *interactional*. The interactive aspects refer to how the text is smoothly organized and the ideas therein are coherently written, while the interactional aspects, on the other hand, pertain to the ways through which writers explicitly interact with readers. Hyland (2005) expanded Thompson's (2001) model by introducing examples of these two main dimensions. For interactive aspects, he presented methods of text organization, namely, *transitions* (e.g. besides), *frame markers* (e.g. to sum up), *endophoric markers* (e.g. See section 1), *evidentials* (e.g. according to), *code glosses* (e.g. like, such as).

As for the second dimension, *interactional*, two main categories were presented; reader-oriented labeled *engagement*, and writer-oriented, labeled *stance*. Regarding *engagement*, it refers to tactics used to involve the reader in the text (e.g. questions, the third-person pronoun you). With respect to stance, the focus of the current review, it has four categories in Hyland's (2005) model: *Hedges*, *boosters*, *attitude markers*, and *self-mention*.

Hedging, labeled also as *claim making*, is a strategy used to “withhold complete commitment to a proposition, allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than accredited fact” (Hyland, 2005, p. 178). *Hedges*, as indicated in the definition, are lexical or grammatical language devices that show less commitment to, and more tentativeness about the truthfulness of a certain proposition, such as *seemingly*, and *may*. Boosters, on the other hand, according to Hyland (2005) are linguistic devices which allow “writers to express their certainty in what they say and to mark involvement with the topic and solidarity with their audience” (p. 179). This definition clearly shows full commitment to propositions (e.g. doubtless and unquestionably). The third category, *attitude markers*, convey “surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, rather than commitment” (Hyland, 2005, p. 180). To put it another way, attitude markers show the writer or speaker's feelings towards a proposition, such as *significant* and *importantly*.

Self-mention, the fourth category in the model, refers to expressing self-presence. The first person pronouns, *I*, and *we* are examples par

excellence of self-mention (Hyland, 2008). Hyland (2005) showed writers' purposes of expressing their self-presence: "the use of the first person is closely related to the desire to both strongly identify oneself with a particular argument and to gain credit for an individual perspective" (p. 181).

In sum, Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model of stance is a comprehensive framework, yet it does not present an extensive number of stance markers under each stance category. The focus of the framework was the classification of stance into different categories not a list of stance markers that express these categories. Even the few stance markers presented under each stance category were extracted from academic texts, which make them suitable only for the study of stance in written discourses.

Unlike Hyland's (2005) model, Biber's (2006) framework of lexico-grammatical features included a great number of stance markers, extracted from both spoken and written texts, which highly guarantees the reliability of the results of studies adopting it for analysis. Biber (2006) extended the frameworks of Biber and Finegan (1988), and Biber et al.'s (1999) as he introduced a huge list of lexico-grammatical stance devices, and classified them into the following categories: Modals and semi-modals, adverbs, and complement clauses controlled by nouns, adjectives and verbs.

Each device was classified into the stance functions it serves. Suffice it to mention two instances of lexico-grammatical mechanisms and the semantic functions they perform. The first example is *Modals and semi-modals*, which served three functions in the framework: (1) *possibility/permission/ability* (e.g. can, could, may), (2) *necessity/obligation* (e.g. must, have to), (3) *prediction/ volition* (e.g. will, would). The second instance is *adverbials*, classified under four functions: (1) *certainty* (e.g. indeed, actually), (2) *likelihood* (e.g. apparently, evidently), (3) *attitude* (e.g. amazingly, astonishingly), (4) *style* (e.g. according to, mainly).

It is worth mentioning that this framework relies on Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English (LGSWE), a corpus-based

grammatical book. The analysis in this book, and by turn, Biber's (2006) framework relied on the 40-million-word corpus: Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus. It comprises 37, 000 texts of both British and American English. The corpus focuses on various registers, namely, transcribed conversations, fiction, news, academic prose, non-conversational speech, and general prose. The fact that Biber's (2006) framework is based on a huge corpus compiled from a diversity of registers as well as the great number of stance makers included render it the most reliable framework to analyze stance.

Yantandu (2017) criticized Biber's (2006) framework as, in Yantandu's viewpoint, it neglected some stance markers such as "*posit, assert, reveal, note, contend, describe, opine*". Nevertheless, it was the criterion of frequency that Biber (2006) based his selection of stance markers on, which adds to the representativeness of the framework. In other words, researchers would use the stance markers in the framework to reach conclusions and findings related to stance issues. The more these stance markers are frequent, the more the results are reliable. Thus, the exclusion of some stance markers would not be a limitation of the framework. The usage of different word classes for the same word such as *possible* and *possibly* is considered a drawback as well by Yantandu (2017). I do not agree that this is a sort of repetition since it is a general framework for researchers to use. One researcher could use only one word class or compare two word classes, which makes this distinction required.

However, the only limitation in Biber's (2006) framework, seems to be the negligence of a crucial aspect of stance, namely, whether the identity of the speaker or writer is present or not. It can be assumed that Biber's (2006) framework is to a great extent suitable for corpus-based studies since they include a huge amount of text. The frequency of occurrence of each stance marker in the framework can easily be identified in a corpus.

Having discussed the controversy around the definition of stance in Section 1, and the models and frameworks used to investigate the phenomenon of stance in Section 2, it can be concluded that conducting

research on stance requires the determination of what line of research to adopt. In other words, researchers should be clear from what perspective and adopting what methodology they study the topic of stance.

2.3. Research in the Previous Studies

Stance as a subjective phenomenon was extensively examined in the literature mostly in corpus-based studies. In this line of research, most, if not all, studies relied on quantitative numerical analysis of stance markers. Some of these studies examined stance in one particular register (Abdollahzadeh, 2011; Adams & Quintana-Toledo, 2013; Ahmad & Mehrjooseresht, 2012; Kuteeva, & McGrath, 2012; SalagerMeyer, 1994), while numerous studies investigated it in different registers to examine register variations (Biber&Finegan, 1988; Abdi, 2002; Hyland, 2005; Kong, 2006; Millan, 2008; Pho, 2008; Hyland, 2011; Sayah& Hashemi, 2014; Silver, 2003; Taki & Jafarpour, 2012; Biber, 2006; Vassileva, 2001; Vold, 2006a). Section 2.3.1. reviews studies addressing register variations in terms of stance in the written discourse. Section 2.3.2 presents research on stance-related register variations in the spoken discourse, which, compared to the written, attracted less attention. Section 2.3.3. presents the gaps in the literature that needs to be bridged.

2.3.1 Stance in the Written Discourse

Research on stance in the written discourse focused extensively on academic writing, particularly on how stance is expressed differently according to register variations, labeled also as discipline variations. Notably, academic writing, as a general register, encompasses different registers such as *research articles (RAs)*, *essays*, and *dissertations*. Of all the academic disciplines RAs stand out for the huge amount of research they attract in this area of stance. Cross-register variations in the area of stance in RAs were investigated extensively in the last two decades (Haddington, 2004). Suffice it here to review 3 studies.

Hyland (2011)

Hyland (2011) examined stance in a corpus of 240 research articles divided equally between hard fields; *molecular biology*, *mechanical engineering*, *electronic engineering*, *magnetic physics*, and soft fields;

sociology, philosophy, marketing, applied linguistics. Overall, the most frequent stance category was found to be *hedges*, then *attitude markers*, then *boosters*. The least frequency was of *self-mention*. Regarding hard-soft discipline variations, *boosters* and *hedges* were more frequent in soft disciplines particularly humanities and social sciences.

Hyland (2011) attributed this higher frequency especially of *hedges* in the soft-knowledge fields to the fact that these fields are “more interpretative”, “less abstract” than hard sciences. In addition, in hard sciences there is more control of variables, which is why writers of hard sciences feel more confident while reporting results. Therefore, they report them like facts with no need to self-presence, or assuring the results using *boosters*, or expressing less commitment to the truthfulness of results using *hedges*.

According to Hyland (2011), *boosters* were found to be more frequent in soft-knowledge fields as a means of restricting other imaginative alternative voices. For instance, in the hypothesized example *it is unquestionable that hard sciences attract less self-mentions* the writer imagines that a potential reader would doubt the truthfulness of the proposition *hard sciences attract less self-mentions*. That is why the booster *it is unquestionable that* functions as a tool to put an end to any potential skepticism. Likewise, *self-mentions* were less frequent in hard sciences to suggest that results would be the same no matter who the researcher was. *Attitude markers* were less frequent in hard sciences since researchers in this type of text endeavor to disentangle their own feelings in order for the results to be fact-like as pointed out by Hyland (2011).

Hyland (2011) concluded that hard sciences establish or refute hypotheses relying on clear-cut criteria, which is reflected in a tendency to use factual language, and to avoid using stance markers in general and self-mention in particular in order for their findings to be more generalized and less personalized. Soft sciences, on the other hand, tend to use affect markers, i.e. attitude markers, and self-mention as a persuasive method, and to generate “personal credibility”. In fact, Hyland wrote other studies addressing cross-discipline variations in relation to

stance in academic research articles (e.g. Hyland, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2008).

Jiang (2017)

Along similar lines, Jiang (2017), relying on Hyland's (2005) model, explored stance in a corpus of 60 journal articles extracted from the British National Corpus (BNC). The importance of this study lies in its extensive analysis of Hyland's (2005) self-mention notion as will be discussed below. Noting that previous research on stance-taking in academic writing ignored noun-*that* constructions, he examined their functions, and to what extent these functions are influenced by register variations. The importance of noun-*that* constructions lies in the fact that they represent three of the components of stance, or in other words, stance functions, in Hyland's (2005) model: *Hedges*, *boosters*, and *attitudes*. When choosing, for instance, the head noun *suggestion* in the hypothetical example *my suggestion that binomials show more order flexibility in the spoken genre than in the academic ...*, the writer shows little commitment to the proposal s/he introduces as s/he used the *hedge* marker *suggest*. By contrast, if the same proposition is preceded by the *booster* marker *belief that*, the speaker expresses full commitment towards it. *Hope that* and *need that* are examples of *attitude markers* expressing certain feelings towards a proposition.

Jiang (2017) investigated three issues: The functions of stance nouns, whether writers prefer to express them in their own voice, or in other voices, and finally whether register is a variable that influences the findings pertaining to the other two issues. Jiang (2017) found that noun-*that* constructions have three main categories in his sample. First, nouns referring to "entities" such as an "object" (e.g. report), an "event" (e.g. change), "discourse" (e.g. argument), or "cognition" (e.g. idea). The second category refers to "attribute" including "quality" (e.g. value), "manner" (e.g. method), and "status" (e.g. possibility). Finally, nouns referring to "relation" like "cause-effect" (e.g. reason). Jiang (2017) found also four ways writers use to express their stances, which Jiang labeled as *stance sources*: (1) "Overt averred", where writers voice their own stance, "other human", (2) where they supplement their argument

through a stance taken by a certain human, (3) “concealed” where the stance taker is not mentioned, and (4) “abstract entity” where stance is taken by a country, organization, etc.

Most importantly, Jiang (2017) found that stance nouns frequency and functions were influenced by the discipline they are used in. He compared noun-*that* structures in six disciplines, namely, *humanities, social sciences, political law, medicine, technical engineering and natural science*. He selected ten articles from each discipline. All in all, noun-*that* stance markers were used more frequently in soft fields than in hard ones. Similar to Hyland’s (2011) findings, the results yielded showed a great tendency in both soft and hard sciences to conceal the identity of the researcher so as to stress the objective nature of research. Nonetheless, this tendency is greater in hard sciences. The results also demonstrated that the attribute category, used to evaluate entities, was used more frequently in soft fields. This finding goes in line with Hyland (2011) as he found that attitude markers are of greater frequency in soft sciences. In sum, the results yielded, indicate that the functions and frequencies of stance markers differ according to the register where they occur.

Mina and Biria (2017)

Hyland (2011) and Jiang (2017), as is clear, compared whole RAs in soft vs. hard sciences. Unlike them, Mina and Biria (2017) limited their analysis to the discussion chapter in social versus medical science research articles. They adopted Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscourse to analyze a corpus of randomly selected articles. They selected 100 research articles written by Iranians and published between 2010 and 2016. The results, surprisingly, disclosed that the frequency of the stance categories *hedges, boosters, and self-mention* was higher in medical sciences than in social. With respect to *attitude markers*, there was no significant difference between their frequency in both domains. As is evident, the results go against Hyland (2011), Jiang (2017), and almost all research in this area. This could be for the reason that the corpus used for the analysis was limited in comparison with the corpus used in Hyland (2011) and Jiang (2017), or for the influence of non-nativeness,

as the corpus compiled was limited to the discussion section written by only Iranian researchers.

In conclusion, stance was extensively investigated in academic writing especially in the area of register variation. However, the most extensive research in this area was conducted in RAs. The overall result is that register is an evident variable in stance-related studies in the written discourse. The following section presents stance-related register variations in the spoken discourse.

2.3.2 Stance in the Spoken Discourse

In the spoken discourse little research was conducted in the area of stance in general and stance-related register variations in particular. Most of, or almost all, the very few exceptions are in the *academic* spoken discourse (e.g. Poos & Simpson, 2002; Yang, 2014; Biber & Finnegan 1988; Biber 2006; Larsson 2019). Some research in this area compared two spoken academic registers (e.g. Yang 2014), others compared a set of both spoken and written registers (e.g. Biber & Finnegan 1988; Biber 2006). The following is examples of these studies.

Yang (2014)

Another study that examined stance in the academic spoken discourse is Yang (2014). Relying on Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model, he investigated variations of stance expression in soft versus hard sciences. Yang (2014) relied on the corpus of British Academic Spoken English (BASE). The soft sciences sub-corpora, namely, *Arts and humanity*, and *social studies* were compared to the hard sciences sub-corpora: *medical* and *physical sciences*. He excluded *self-mention*, and *attitude markers* from the analysis and focused only on epistemic stance functions; *hedges*, *boosters*, and one engagement marker, namely, *reader pronoun*.

Subtle differences were found between the frequencies of occurrence of these stance categories in the soft versus hard sciences. Surprisingly, although hard sciences depend on clear-cut results, and therefore are supposed to scarcely attract stance and engagement elements, they attracted a number almost equal to that in soft sciences. The reason of

this unexpected similarity might be the interactional spontaneity, which is one of the characteristics of the spoken discourse. Thus, discussing a hard-knowledge topic in the spoken discourse permits no opportunities of revising and editing. These opportunities are, by contrast, available in the written discourse.

Biber & Finnegan (1988)

A few studies examined stance combining both the written and spoken registers (e.g. Biber & Finnegan 1988; and Biber 2006). Biber & Finnegan (1988) identified all stance adverbials in Lancaster-Oslo/Bergen (LOB), and London-Lund corpora, and revised the context to exclude any false hits. They further divided stance adverbials into six categories: (a) *honestly*, referring to manner of speaking e.g. “*strictly speaking*”, (b) *generally*, expressing generalization e.g. “*in general*”, (c) *surely*, expressing certainty e.g. *of course*, (d) *actually*, expressing actuality and emphasis e.g. “*in fact*”, (e) *maybe*, expressing possibility e.g. “*apparently*”, (f) *amazingly*, expressing attitudes e.g. “*fortunately*”. The frequency of occurrence of each category was identified in different registers including writing and speaking registers.

The following are the most important findings: *Face-to-face* and *telephone* conversations attracted the highest frequency of the *actually* adverbials. Biber & Finnegan (1988) interpreted this finding as interlocutors in this register tend to seek solidarity and intimacy emphasizing a strong commitment towards a certain proposition. In *editorials*, *interviews*, and *public speech*, *surely* adverbials were of high frequency as they invite listeners or readers’ agreement or affirmation. As for *press texts*, *official documents*, *academic prose* and *essays*, very few stance adverbials occurred. This is interpreted as writers in these registers attempt to be objective and to avoid explicit expression of views. *Maybe* adverbials were relatively frequent in *academic prose* and *essays* since writers tend to make very careful assessments. Overall, the results yielded reveal that the stance phenomenon is approached differently in accordance with different registers.

Biber (2006)

Noticing that relying on adverbials only is not sufficient to have

in-depth analysis of stance, Biber (2006) used a wide-range of lexicogrammatical markers. As mentioned in section 2.2, Biber (2006) created a framework of the most frequent stance markers in Longman Spoken and Written English Corpus. He classified them according to their grammatical and semantic usage (See Section 2.2 for details about the framework). Biber (2006) aimed at identifying differences between registers in terms of stance meanings. The registers under investigation were two spoken: Classroom teaching, class management, and two written syllabi, i.e. written course management, and textbooks. The study relied on a corpus representing spoken and written university language, namely, the TOEFL 2000 Spoken and Written Academic Language (T2K-SWAL) (2.7 million words).

Overall, the spoken registers attracted a greater number of stance markers than the written registers. Stance adverbs and complement clauses occurred more frequently in the spoken than in the written registers. This could be due to the fact that interaction in speaker-listener relationship is more powerful than that in the writer-reader relationship, which results in the usage of more stance markers in the spoken discourse. The study showed many interesting results. Suffice it here to reveal the results related to the present study, namely, related to the stance devices used in the current study: Adverbs and adjective-*that* clauses.

As for stance adverbs, they were shown to be more frequent in the spoken registers than in the written. Among stance adverbs, those that function as epistemic stance markers were the most frequent, particularly “*certainty adverbs*”. Style adverbs (e.g. generally, and typically) are less frequent than the two epistemic adverbs *certainty* and *likelihood*. However, in textbooks they showed a considerably high frequency. With respect to stance adjectives and noun clauses, they are rare in general. However, *to*-clauses are more frequent than *that*-clauses particularly in the written registers. Textbooks are the least to attract stance adjectives and nouns.

Most importantly, the results showed that some grammatical types were preferred in speech and others in writing, and the total number

of the grammatical devices showed higher frequency in the spoken registers than the written. As a result, register was found to be a variable that affects the findings of studies on stance. Another very important finding is that the topic of writing or conversation was not found to be a variable since no difference between the frequency of occurrences of stance functions was found between the two main topics *academic* and *management*.

2.3. Summary and the Gaps in the Literature

In the previous research on stance, much attention was paid to how it is expressed differently according to the register where it occurs. Nevertheless, the focus was on writing, particularly on academic writing. The stance phenomenon in general attracted little attention in the spoken discourse. None of the few studies, investigating stance in the spoken discourse, focused on the comparison between two non-academic registers. The focus was, rather, on comparing two academic spoken registers or between spoken versus written registers. As a result, this paper suggests for further research the examination of stance in casual conversation registers such as TV, movies, news-broadcasting, talk shows.

References

- Abdi, R., 2002. Interpersonal metadiscourse: an indicator of interaction and identity. *Discourse Studies*, 4, 139–145.
- Abdollahzadeh, E. (2011). Poring over the findings: Interpersonal authorial engagement in applied linguistics papers. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 43(1), 288-297.
- Adams, H., & Quintana-toledo, E. (2013). Adverbial stance marking in the introduction and aconclusion sections of legal research articles. *Revista de Lingüística y Lenguas Aplicadas*, 8(1), 13-22.
- Ahmad, U., & Mehrjooseresht, M. (2012). Stance adverbials in engineering theses abstracts. *Procedia- Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 66, 29-36.
- Batson, C. D., Shaw, L. L., & Oleson, K. C. (1992). *Differentiating affect, mood, and emotion: Toward functionally based conceptual distinctions*. In M. S. Clark (Eds.), *Review of personality and social psychology, No. 13. Emotion* (pp. 294–326). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Biber, D. & Finegan, E. (1988). Adverbial stance types of in English, *Discourse Processes*, (11), 1–34.
- _____. (1989). Styles of stance: lexical and grammatical marking of evidentiality and affect. *Text*, 9(1), 93-124.
- Biber, D., Johansson, G, Leech, G., Conrad, S. and Finegan, E. (1999). *The Longman grammar of spoken and written English*. London: Longman.
- Biber, D. (2004). Historical patterns for the grammatical marking of stance. A cross-registered comparison. *Journal of Historical Pragmatics*, 5(1), 107–136.
- _____. (2006). Stance in spoken and written university registers. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 5(2), 97–116.

- Chafe, W. (1986). Evidentiality in English Conversation and Academic Writing. In: Chafe, W. and Nichols, J. (eds) *Evidentiality: The linguistic coding of epistemology* (pp. 261-272). Norwood, New Jersey: Ablex Publishing Corporation.
- Chang, P., & Schleppegrell, M. (2011). Taking an effective authorial stance in academic writing: Making the linguistic resources explicit for L2 writers in the social sciences. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 10, 85-106.
- Du Bois, J. W. (2004). Stance and Intersubjectivity. In *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction* (pp. 139–182). Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing company.
- _____. (2007). The stance triangle. In R. Englebretson (Eds), *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity in interactionsymposium*. Rice Univesity, Houston, April 3.
- Haddington, P. (2004) Stance taking and news interviews. *SKY Journal of Linguistics*, (17), 101-142.
- Halliday, M.A.K. (1994). *An introduction to functional grammar*. London: Arnold.
- Hunston, S., & Thompson, G. (2000). *Evaluation in text*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hyland, K. (1998). Boosting, hedging and the negotiation of academic knowledge. *Text & Talk*, 18(3), 349-382.
- _____. (2005). Stance and engagement: A model of interaction in academic discourse. *Discourse Studies*, 7(2), 173–192.
- _____. (2008). Persuasion, interaction and the construction of knowledge: Representing self and others in research writing. *International Journal of English Studies*, 8(2), 1–23.
- _____. (2011). Academic discourse. In K. Hyland, & B. Paltridge (Eds.), *Continuum companion to discourse analysis* (pp. 171-184). London/New York: Continuum International Publishing Group.

- Hyland, k. (2017). Metadiscourse: What is it and where is it going? *Journal of Pragmatics*, 113, 16-29.
- Jiang, K. (2017). Stance and voice in academic writing: The “noun + that” construction and disciplinary variation. *International Journal of Corpus Linguistics*, 22(1), 85-106.
- Kärkkäinen, K. (2006). Stance-taking in conversation: From subjectivity to intersubjectivity. *Text & Talk*26(6), 699-731.
- Keisanen T. (2007). Stancetaking as an interactional activity. Challenging the prior speaker. In R. Englebretson (eds.), *Stancetaking in Discourse: Subjectivity, Evaluation, Interaction*(253-281). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Kielsing, S. F. (2009). Style as stance: Stance as the explanation for patterns of sociolinguistic variation. In A.Jaffe (eds.), *Stance: Sociolinguistic Perspectives* (pp. 171-194). Oxford University Press.
- Kerren, A., Kucher, k., Paradis, c., Sahigren, M., Simaki, v., Skeppstedt, M. (2017). Annotating speaker stance in discourse: the Brexit Blog Corpus. *Corpus Linguistics andLinguistic Theory*, 1-34
- Kerren, A., Paradis, c., Simaki, v., (2018). Evaluating stance-annotated sentences from the Brexit Blog Corpus: A quantitative linguistic analysis. *ICAME Journal*, 42, 133-165.
- Kong, C.C.K., 2006. Linguistic resources as evaluators in English and Chinese research articles. *Multilingua*, 25, 183–216.
- Kuteeva, M., & McGrath, L., (2012). Stance and engagement in pure mathematics research articles: Linking discourse features to disciplinary practices. *English for Specific Purposes*, 31(3), 161- 173.
- Langacker, R. W. (1990). Subjectification. *Cognitive Linguistics*, 1(1), 5–38.
- Larsson, T., (2019). Grammatical stance marking across registers, Revisiting the formal-Informal dichotomy. *Register Studies*,1 (2), 243–268.
- Martin, J. R. (2000). Beyond exchange: Appraisal systems in English.

- Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Martin, J. P., & White, P. (2005). *The language of evaluation: Appraisal in English*. Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Millan, E.L., 2008. Epistemic and approximative meaning revisited: the use of hedges boosters and approximators when writing research in different disciplines. In: S., Burgess, P., Marti'n-Marti'n, (Eds.), *English as an Additional Language in Research Publication and Communication* (pp. 65–82). Peter Lang: Bern, Germany.
- Biria, R., & Mina, k. G. (2011). Exploring Interactive and Interactional Metadiscourse Markers in Discussion Sections of Social and Medical Science Articles, *International Journal for English Education*, 2, 11-29.
- Ochs, E., & Schieffelin, B. (1989). Language has a heart, *Text*, 9(1), 7-25.
- Palmer, F.R. (1986). *Mood and modality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pho, P.D., (2008). Research article abstracts in applied linguistics and educational technology: A study of linguistic realizations of rhetorical structure and authorial stance. *Discourse Studies*, 10, 231–250.
- Poos, D., & Simpton, D. (2002). Cross-disciplinary comparisons of hedging. In D. L Biber, Fitzmaurice, S., & Reppen, R. (eds.), *Using Corpus to Explore Linguistic Variations* (3-24). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Precht, K. (2003). Stance moods in spoken English: Evidentiality and affect in British and American conversation, *Text*, 23, 239-257.
- Salager-Meyer, F. (1994). Hedges and textual communicative function in medical English written discourse. *English for Specific Purposes*, 13(2), 149-170.
- Sayah, L., & Hashemi, M. R. (2014). Exploring Stance and Engagement Features in Discourse Analysis Papers. *Theory and Practice in*

- Language Studies*, 4(3), 593-601.
- Scherer, K. R. (2005). What are emotions? And how can they be measured?" *Social Science Information*, 44(4), 695-729.
- Silver, M. (2003). The stance of stance: A critical look at ways stance is expressed and modeled in academic discourse. *Journal of English for Academic Purposes*, 2, 359-374
- Stubbs, M. (1986). A matter of prolonged field work: notes toward a modal grammar of English. *Applied Linguistics*, 7, 1–25.
- _____. (1996). *Text and corpus analysis: Computer-assisted studies of language and culture film narratives*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Taki, S., & Jafarpour, F. (2012). Engagement and stance in academic writing: A study of English and Persian research articles. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences*, 3(1).
- White, P. (2003). Beyond modality and hedging: A dialogic view of the language of intersubjective stance. *Text*, 23(2), 2594-2598.
- Thompson, P. (2001). *A pedagogically-motivated corpus-based examination of PhD theses: Macrostructure, citation practices and uses of modal verbs*. [Unpublished PhD thesis]. University of Reading: Reading, UK.
- Vassileva, I., 2001. Commitment and detachment in English and Bulgarian academic writing *English for Specific Purposes*, 20, 83–102.
- Vold, E.T., 2006. The choice and use of epistemic modality markers in linguistics and medical research articles. In K., Hyland, M., Bondi, (Eds.), *Academic Discourse Across Disciplines* (pp. 225–249). Peter Lang: Bern.
- Yantandu, S. (2017) *Authorial stance in accounting PhD theses in a Nigerian university*. [PhD dissertation], University of Leeds.
- Yang, W. (2014). Stance and engagement: A corpus-based analysis of academic spoken discourse across science domains. *LSP*, 62-78.