UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

ESL STUDENTS' WRITING SKILLS: AN ANALYSIS OF AUTHORIAL STANCE IN THE ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAYS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ACCRA METROPOLITAN AREA

ENYONAM JEMIMA ANIBRIKA-MARTINS

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**ENYONAM JEMIMA ANIBRIKA-MARTINS
(220029648)**

A thesis in the Department of Applied Linguistics, Faculty of Foreign Languages Education and Communication, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, in partial fulfillment

**of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Philosophy
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in the University of Education, Winneba**

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DECLARATION

Students Declaration

I, ENYONAM JEMIMA ANIBRIKA-MARTINS, declare that this thesis, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have been identified and duly acknowledged, is truly my own original work, and that no part of it has been submitted either in part or whole for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

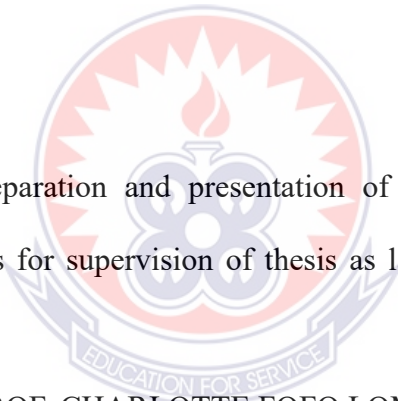SIGNATURE: …………………..…….

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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of thesis as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: PROF. CHARLOTTE FOFO LOMOTEY

SIGNATURE.…………………..…….

DATE: ………………..………..……

DEDICATION

I specially dedicate this research to my daughters and son for their love and being my source of inspiration.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

ABSTRACT

In the composition of writing, writers reveal their thoughts through the use of authorial stance markers, which not only express their stance, but also help them build an interactive relationship with target readers. This thesis investigated the types of authorial stance markers used by Greater Accra SHS students in their argumentative essays and the functions they are used to explore in the language. Using a qualitative approach, data were textually analyzed from 300 purposively sampled scripts of final year General Arts students. The analysis indicates that there was significant use of all the four types of authorial stance markers, expressed through hedges, boosters, Self-mention, and attitude markers. Again, hedges and boosters appeal to their knowledge most. It was also discovered that the markers were used to express certainty, doubt, imprecision, avoid conflicts, minimize face-threatening acts, and mitigate imposition. Other functions are expressing humility, caution, and politeness. Based on the results, it is argued that it is important to take note of what to and how to use authorial stance markers as they help in taking position and making judgements about issues in writing. The study, also suggests that the higher density of authorial stance markers in argumentative essays is not absolutely an indication of a better ability in writing.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1   Background to the study

In the quest to improve students' writing proficiency, English as second language learners (ESL) are often advised by English language teachers to establish an authorial stance in academic writing. This is because an essential aspect of successful academic writing is the writers' ability to establish competent authorial identity by judging the certainty of knowledge claims and to manage their explicit presence in texts. while persuading readers, there is the need for writers to spring up to establish an authorial stance in academic writing and over the years, teachers of English in Ghana have been concerned about students' writing skills. Consequently, some studies have been conducted into these problems. Some of those at the post-secondary level have identified challenges such as poor writer visibility skills and hesitation on the part of students to reveal their real selves. This concept has necessitated several studies on the role of authorial stance in English as a second language (ESL) writing, mainly in the graduate and undergraduate fields. Sperling and Appleman (2011) reveal that the existing literature on authorial stance research broadly defines this concept as referring to "authors, authorship, writing styles, rhetorical stance, language registers, written and speech prosody, the authors stance in texts, as well as a scores of others" (p. 70). They, however, find this broad term problematic and emphasize the necessity for an authorial stance to be clearly defined.

To understand the notion of stance taking, it is essential to make the most prominent importance of the concept of stance. Many researchers have explored stance taking as a research approach which has resulted in an increasing number of studies at present (Englebretson, 2007; Gardner 2001; Hunston & Thompson, 2000; Kärkkäinen, 2003; Wu, 2004). When investigating research on stance, we find many different approaches involving

the phenomenon of "stance". To some extent, they are looking at the same phenomenon using different perspectives (cf. Jaffe, 2009). The corpus linguist Douglas Biber, one of the most influential investigators of stance, has characterized and defined stance in several slightly different ways starting in linguistics. Biber notes how the mechanisms used for personal expressions have been the object of different studies using different labels for the same or very closely related phenomena, for example, "evaluation", "evidentiality", "hedging", and "stance".

According to Biber and Finnegan (1989, p.124) stance is "the lexical and grammatical expression of attitudes, feelings, judgments or commitment concerning the propositional content of a message". Jiang and Hyland (2015) define stance-taking as "the means by which academics take ownership of their work making epistemic and evaluative judgement regarding entities, attributes and the relations between material to persuade readers of their right to speak with authority and to establish their reputations" (p. 20). In Biber (2004, p. 124), stance is the expression of one's personal feelings, attitudes, judgments, or assessments that a speaker or writer has about the viewpoint concerning proposed information. It has been recognized that writers in the domain of academic writing employ various linguistic devices to convey their expressions (Hyland, 2005; Lou, 2014; Yang, 2015). Hyland (2005) points out that academic writing has come to be regarded as a persuasive way for writers to interact with readers. In the composition of academic writing, writers reveal their thoughts, through the use of stance markers, which not only express their stance but also help them build an interactive relationship with target readers. Hyland (2005) claims that stance concerns the extent writers' commitment and attitude towards an entity, a proposition, or the reader is projected. In order to better analyze linguistic resources of stance, Hyland (2005) proposed a framework that says, academic discourse is not just a carrier of factual and objective content but also a way of discussing complex ideas with respect for each person's knowledge level. According to Du

2

Bois (2007, p. 220) stance is "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimensions of the sociocultural field."

Based on Du Bois' definition, it shows that stance emphasizes the point of views of the speaker. Stance-taking is common in many interactions and this stance reveals the identity that the speakers have constructed for themselves. The stance of the speaker in every interaction is also seen as a form of identity construction (Johnstone, 2007). This means that when interlocutors interact, they take stance and at the same time co-construct their identity. In recent years, a plethora of studies concentrated on stance from six aspects. The first aspect focuses on the conceptions of meta discourse (Gray & Biber, 2012). The second aspect explores disciplinary differences in the use of stance markers (Hyland, 2005; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012). The third is the use of stance markers in academic writing (Hyland, 2005; McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012). Then, there is the relationship between stance and disciplinary identity (Hyland,2005). The role of stance in academic argumentation and the sixth, is the impact of stance on reader engagement and persuasion (McGrath & Kuteeva, 2012).

According to Hyland (2005a, p. 37) academic writing is widely seen as an interactive practice between readers and writers; through which writers assert their expertise and establish an authoritative voice on a particular subject, while also inviting and engaging with their readers in a discursive exchange. Meta discourse is an umbrella term for "the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community". Several taxonomies for meta discourse have been developed over the last two decades (Ädel, 2006; Crismore, Markkanen, & Steffensen, 1993; Hyland, 2005a; Mauranen, 1993; Vande Kopple, 1985). In the majority of these taxonomies, meta discourse is divided into two main categories: textual meta discourse, which refers to textual organization, and

3

interpersonal meta discourse, which is concerned with how writers present themselves and their propositions, and how they engage readers in their writing. Hyland (2005a) points out that all meta discourse categories are interpersonal since "meta discourse expresses writer-reader interactions" (p. 41). Hyland (2009) also observes that writers adopt interaction positions anticipating readers expectations with them.

Despite the various definitions of stance, the current study adopts Hyland's interactional meta discourse model (2005c) which comprises two dimensions: stance and engagement. The stance dimension describes how writers present themselves and express their own views and judgments, and the engagement dimension refers to how writers address their readers and draw them into a dialogue (Hyland, 2005a) which is the aim of this study. The reason for choosing Hyland's notion of stance, is because according to this model, stance can be realized via four resources: (1) Self-mention (e.g. I), which concerns authorial presence through the use of first person pronouns; (2) boosters (e.g. definitely, obvious), which express writers' involvement with the topic and certainty; (3) hedges (e.g. possible, perhaps), which tone down writers' commitment, and (4) attitude markers (e.g. unfortunately, interesting), which reveal writers' attitudes to the propositions. It can be seen that; researchers have described the markers that writers utilize to project themselves and their ideas in a text using different terminologies. Petch-Tyson (1998) terms the concept as 'writer visibility', explaining that it is manifested through Self-mention, emphatics, evaluative modifiers, and references to situation of writing. Authorial presence is used to describe the same concept in several studies (e.g., Clark & Ivanic, 1997; Ivanic & Camps, 2001; Tang & John, 1999.

1.2   Statement of the problem

Of all the four skills, writing has always been considered as a crucial skill in the teaching and learning of English as a second language. Besides, writing is one of the important and integral parts of any tests or exams; thus, if students have excellent English

writing skills, it will be easy to successfully pass all their academic courses. In academic settings, authorial stance in argumentative writing is an essential tool for students who have to write persuasively to make other people accept their point of view on a particular topic. However, argumentative writing has been confirmed by researchers to be the hardest model in writing (Ferretti, Andrews-Weckerly & Lewis, 2007; Neff-van Aertselaer & Dafouz-Milne, 2008). Again, English Language is one of the core subjects that Senior High School graduates need to pass so as to gain admission into any of the post-secondary institutions in Ghana, but records show that even though students' performance in English Language continues to improve annually, the percentage pass does not exceed 50% (Bello & Oke, 2011). An appraisal of candidates' achievement in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) among West African Examination Council member countries by Bello & Oke (2011) indicated that between 2006 and 2009, less than 50% of Ghanaian candidates made credit and above (grade A1-C6).

Du Bois (2007) asserts that stance markers are used for enthusiastic emphasis, to shorten arguments and to escape lengthy written outputs without evaluation, however students are unable to present their feelings and emotions clearly in their argumentative essays (Oshima and Hogue, 2006). They may misuse authorial stance features, underuse the features or have no use of stance at all; the reading is obscured and essays become very difficult to understand (Tiryaki, 2011). The cause of this problem is believed to be the students' writing challenges. Apart from the linguistic competence (vocabulary, grammar, coherence and background knowledge) which are also factors that influence students' writing ability in their argumentative essays, it is more and more important to know and learn the skill of authorial stance in argumentative essays. Furthermore, Chief examiners' reports for Ghana have also highlighted a consistent decline in students' performance in both the May/June and the November/December WASSCE and SSSCE examinations, in the English

Language Paper 2, which tests candidates' writings. (http://www.waecheadquartersgh.org /2009). The story is not different in my schools as analysis of students' performance in the WASSCE between 2016 and 2022 revealed low achievements in English Language as compared to the other core subjects (Mathematics, Social Studies and Integrated Science). Teachers in the English Language department in Accra metropolitan area meet annually, after marking students' mock examination scripts, to discuss students' performance. During such meetings, a key problem that features is students' inability to write, connected to their bad writing skills in their argumentative essays. Hyland (2005) observes that writers adopt interaction positions anticipating readers' expectations with them. Hunston and Thompson (2000) also describe these linguistic resources of interpersonal meaning and interaction as evaluation. In every discourse, writers need to make clear statements in order to make good judgment to take a position on the topic under discussion. The choice of stance markers however has great effect on the language in argumentative essays, this means that it is important for writers to know the types of stances and the functions they perform in their argumentative essays. Every effort to identify and manage the deficiencies in the argumentative essays of senior high school students in the greater Accra metropolitan area, will go a long way to improve the quality of writings and the standard of English in Ghanaian senior high schools in Accra. Being aware of students' difficulties in writing argumentative essays, some previous researchers have investigated and found various difficulties in writing argumentative essays in relation to stance, that students often encounter at the tertiary level, for example is *Authorial stance in academic writing: issues and implications* by Hunston and Thompson (1999) which explores the role of authorial stance in constructing discourse in written and spoken language and '*Creating the authorial self in academic texts: Evidence from the expert* Hyland (2012) which is an analysis of stance expression. However, little work has been done on stance in English at the senior high school level in Ghana. The motivation

6

for the present study is the fact that complaining about students' writing deficiencies in their argumentative essays alone would not solve the problem. There is the need for a scientific approach to identifying the problem, analyzing and explaining it, and making recommendations that would help tackle the issue. The focus of this study is therefore on investigating the types of stance markers that senior high school students use in English language in their argumentative essays in Accra metropolitan area in Ghana, and the functions these stances are used to express in the students' argumentative essays based on the concept as comprehensively explained by Hyland (2005).

1.3   Research objectives

The objectives of this study are to:

1. investigate the types of stances markers senior high school students in Greater Accra metropolitan area use in their argumentative essays in English language.

2. examine the functions stance markers perform in the argumentative essays of senior high school students in English language in Greater Accra metropolitan area.

1.4   Research questions

The following questions support and guide the study:

1. What are the types of stance markers senior high school students in Greater Accra metropolitan area use in English language in their argumentative essays?

2. What are the functions of stance markers that senior high school students in Greater Accra metropolitan area use in English language in their argumentative essays?

1.5   Significance of the study

It is hoped that this study will contribute to knowledge on students' use of stance features in their essays and also provide research data that will serve as a reference point for future researchers. The knowledge of students' use of authorial stance will enable me, as a teacher of English, to focus more on the types of features that students use and why they use

them, and also intend to share my discoveries with teachers of English at the senior high school level. This will go a long way to help improve their writing skills. Additionally, findings of this work would help all who have a duty to equip students with the English language writing skills, necessary for tertiary education. Furthermore, the study will assist students, especially those in the senior high schools, minimize the problems they have intruding their stance in argumentative essays, stance for that matter, and improve on their writing's skills.

Ultimately, it is believed that if the writing skills of senior high school students improve, writing problems in our post-secondary institutions will be minimal, again Ghanaian students are significant in the Ghanaian educational landscape due to a continuing high number of enrolments in the higher education sector. Their experiences, however, as writers in the Ghanaian ESL context tend to be under-researched or an essentialist's influence view of language and culture (Tran, 2007 & Arkoudis). The view of Ghanaian learners as problematic in the context of Ghanaian students is still manifest across ESL settings (Borland & Pearce, 2002; Cadman, 1997; Hellsten & Prescott, 2002; McInnes, 2001; Nichols,2003). One of the broad focuses of this research project is to contribute to research that advances beyond the deficit technique used in Ghanaian SHS students' ESL writing.

1.6   Scope of the study

Within the broad subject of L2 writing research, this thesis uses a qualitative textual analysis design. The research was carried out at three senior high secondary schools in Greater-Accra. The Ghanaian SHS students recruited for this study were invited from within the General Arts Departments. The key data set for this investigation was the participants' L2 essays. The chosen texts were argumentative essays, as this is the most common language in the SHS environment when it comes to evaluating authorial stance features. The content analysis approach was used as the major analytic method, which was based on Hyland (2005)

epistemology of authorial stance. At the conclusion of the text analysis, a series of stance types for each of the participants was generated and detailed. Inter-rater reliability was applied to the interpretive coding via the involvement of two colleagues. Interpretive codes were added to, and refined through this process.

1.7   Justification for the study

The focus on the essays of senior high school final year students is timely because teachers of English in post-secondary institutions in Ghana lament daily about the writing problems in the essays of their students generally, and particularly third year students. Key among these problems is the lack of competent writing skills, students' inability to present their feelings and emotions clearly in their argumentative essays. Candidates may either write disconnected ideas or misuse authorial stance features. As a result, their essays become very difficult to understand. Since it is the final year senior high school students who eventually become the first-year students in the post-secondary institutions, any efforts to identify and manage if not eradicate the deficiencies in their writing's skills will go a long way to not only reduce the burdens of teachers in those institutions but also, help improve the quality of writings and the standard of English of post-secondary students and ultimately, the general standard of education.

1.8   Limitations

Several factors constrain the application of the data related to this research project. The research drew on data from a self-selected population from three senior high school sites and the results are, therefore, not generalizable outside of the context of the particular texts and participants. The data was also drawn from a content analysis of the participant texts, and is pioneering insofar as there is no published research, outside of the original conception of the method, which applies the particular framework to academic writing. The nature of the content analysis was also interpretive and subject to the limitations of the views of the

researcher. The stance markers analyzed in this study are based on Hyland's (2005) model of stance markers, therefore, other patterns or types of stances are not included in the study. In order to apply this stance typology, additional coding and inter-rater reliability were added to the data analysis, thus, strengthening the internal validity of the data. The sample size is also relatively small due to the limited number of Ghanaian S.H.S students studying within the Humanities strand at the particular S.H.S. The results of the content analysis do, however, add knowledge to the field of stance studies, in addition to augmenting, present understandings of Ghanaian S.H.S students as writers in the Ghanaian context.

1.9   Organization of the study

The rest of the thesis is organized as follows: This thesis contains five chapters in total. In addition to this opening chapter, the thesis includes of a literature review chapter, a Methodology Chapter, as well as the chapter on findings and discussion. The findings were recorded in a particular way with the aim of increasing the readability and presentation of the stance coding. Chapter 5 consists of the summary and conclusion section of the research project.

1.10   Conclusion

This chapter has provided the research context and background which underpins this research project. The senior high school student context in Ghanaian higher education was, first, outlined with a specific focus on Ghanaian background learners, followed by an overview of several salient theoretical principles related to the nature of academic writing and argumentative essays. The notion of an authorial stance in L2 writing research was also introduced. This chapter, then, delineated the research aims and methods, alongside the ethical considerations and limitations associated with the project. The following Literature Review chapter will detail the historical and theoretical concepts relevant to stance research, thereby, establishing a broad theoretical framework for the remaining thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introducción

This literature review discusses the conceptualization of identity, authorial identity, stance, voice and communicative functions. Authorial identity is a central concept underlying my research. A writer can portray many identities in a piece of writing. Authorial identity as the expression of the academic self and how the writer positions him/herself in the discipline portraying an authorial image while engaging in the academic community. Olmos-López (2015) notes that authorial identity embraces two main components; voice and stance. According to Olmos-López (2015) voice is the expression of the self-negotiated in discourse within a discipline, and stance, the position the writer takes while constructing his/her voice. Writers' voice is expressed in the selection of linguistic choices among many other factors which show their engagement with their reading audience whereas the writers' stance is the position they take regarding their view of authorial identity in the writing.

2.1   Writing

Writing is a productive skill which involves cognitive processes (Jebreil et al., 2015) such as expressing intentions, composing ideas, problem-solving, and critical thinking (Fareed et al., 2016; Ginting, 2019). Writing is also a process of gathering and working the ideas presented in polished and comprehensible product to readers (Linse, 2005). Besides, Cumming (1998) has precisely defined writing as not only referred to as a text in the written script but also as the acts of thinking, composing, and encoding language into such text. Thus, in writing, one is highly required to involve an entirely different set of competencies (Brown, 2000) as it implicates extra efforts in understanding, thinking, planning, and revising. Similarly, students' emotions, such as the interest in writing, anxiety, lack of self-efficacy and confusion, play a pivotal role for the development of individual learning

11

(Driscoll & Powell, 2016). What is more, the teacher's instruction can also shape students' emotions and attitudes while writing. In an academic context, writing has become the most important skill that students must master (Fareed et al., 2016; Tseng, 2019). Bailey (2015), Meyers (2014), and Van Geyte (2013) continue to argue that the essay still remains the most popular type of assignment. Not surprisingly, it has become a central topic of language teaching and research.

In texts, the lexical words help with meaning formation while grammatical words enable one to arrange the meanings coherently. When the meaning is not presented clearly, the message will not be articulated well. These basic conventions of writing need to be acquired by the learners for effective writing. However, low proficiency second language (L2) learners face challenges in completing writing tasks, mainly due to lack of lexical and grammatical knowledge to put forth their thinking into words that convey a certain meaning or story. In acquiring a second language, writing is known to pose the greatest challenge to the learners and the teachers. In a writing task, learners are required to deliver their stance, ideas, feelings, thoughts and experiences into text (Grabe, 2001; Hyland, 2003; Zainal & Husin, 2011). Likewise, the teachers need to convey and deliver the content. So, the teachers inevitably need the expertise and ability to teach the students to write and express their stance effectively (Hyland, 2003).

Studies have shown that learners of English as a Second Language (ESL) have the tendency to use their first language (L1) in their second language (L2) writing practices to make up for linguistic deficiencies. This commonly occurs when the students need to convey the complete meaning and the L1 is used as a writing strategy in their L2 writing tasks (Kim & Yoon, 2014). Writing difficulties also affect the students' attitude towards writing (Ismail, Hussin & Darus, 2012). Students need to perceive the writing tasks positively in order to acquire the skills effectively. When the students perceive the text positively, they will then

have a lower level of apprehension towards the writing tasks and thus increase their readiness to write (Abdul Rahim et al., 2016). The lack of vocabulary also contributes to the difficulty of writing for a second/foreign language learner (Astika, 1993) and it is one of the most important features that determine one's writing quality (Lekki & Carson, 1994; Walters & Wolf, 1996).

Given the difficulties surrounding the conventions of writing, it is important for one to obtain the necessary input so that the attitude and perception towards writing become a facilitative one. The right input to deliver a fairly comprehensible output will enable students to engage themselves with the text; otherwise, their interest will be hampered. Studies have shown that having the right input of reading is important when a second/foreign language is concerned (Renandya, 2007). Additionally, frequent reading and writing exercises have a positive impact on writing performance (Tsang, 1996). However, as mentioned earlier, the writing process poses problems to both native and non-native speakers. Non-native students tend to face an added burden due to lack of vocabulary acquisition, inaccurate use of grammatical structure and poor command of lexical variety. Hence, one method of enhancing the grammatical and lexical mastery is via reading; a notion that gives emphasis to the impact of extensive reading (Renandya, 2007).

2.1.1 Argumentative writing

There are a lot of definitions of argumentative essay mentioned by different researchers. White and Billings (2008) define an argument as "a form of discourse in which the writer or speaker presents a pattern of reasoning, reinforced by detailed evidence and refutation of challenging claims, that tries to persuade an audience to accept the claim" (p.4). Argumentation requires one to be able to take a stance, foresee the audience opposing ideas, have the ability to refute those ideas as well as convince the reader to trust that stand with sufficient supporting evidence (Chase, 2011). Moreover, according to Oshima and Hogue

13

(2006), an argumentative essay can be defined as an essay in which writers agree or disagree with a particular issue and afterwards, use reasons to support their opinion. It is quite clear then that, when students write an argumentative essay, they should be able to provide the clear and logical presentation facts (premises) so as to arrive at valid conclusions. An argumentative essay is also defined as "a paper grounded on logical, structured evidence that attempts to convince the reader to accept an opinion, take some action or do both" (Reinking et al., 1993, p. 140 as cited in Zhu, 2001). Writing an argumentative essay is thus more challenging because producing an argument is more cognitively demanding than producing narrative (Crowhurst, 1990).

In argumentative writing, the writer holds a position on a controversial issue, provides reasons and opinions, clarifies, and illustrates those opinions to persuade the audience to agree or disagree with an issue (Reid, 1988). Applebee (1984) defines argumentative writing in a narrow perspective as "the writing that has a hierarchical, analytic structure and requires critical arguments to be systematically supported" (p. 87). Also, Connor (1987) gives a broad definition of argumentative writing: "written persuasive discourse integrates the rational and affective appeals and the appeals to credibility" (p. 185). Choi (1988) defines argumentative writing as "one kind of writing whose main purpose is to persuade the reader to accept the writer's belief or opinion" (p. 17). Based on the definitions, it can be deduced that an argumentative essay is a kind of essay organized around a clear thesis statement. The purpose of writing is to argue the controversial topic or issue to convince readers to accept or agree with the writer's point of view. To achieve the goal of argumentative writing, the writer takes a position or makes a claim (thesis) and provides reasons and evidence to support his claim/point of view or position with logical arguments, and refute possible counterarguments.

According to Bean and Johnson (2007), argumentative writing is undeniably a very complex form of writing. In writing argumentative essays, students do not understand the

structure of the argumentative essay and the function of each part of the essay, so they write in an unclear and unstructured manner. Similarly, Tiryaki (2011) shows that the low quality of argumentations in argumentative essays cannot be separated from the low understanding of the essay structure and the sharpness of the argument. Correspondingly, many students have difficulty finding ideas for essays. This is because they cannot develop ideas and do not know how to organize them properly. In the process of learning language, writing is not an easy skill. According to Umar and Radhakrishnan (2012), writing is the most difficult language skill to master for first as well as ESL learners. In particular, writing an argumentative essay is one of the most common types of assignments set in the SHS and it is considered a big challenge for students. Most students struggle with various difficulties in writing argumentative essays.

In argumentative essays, writers present brief description of the issue which usually starts by a hook to catch readers' attention at the first time reading. According to Smalley and Ruetten (1986), an introduction is used to introduce the topic which needs to be discussed as well as the central idea, which is also called the thesis statement in an essay. In argumentative essays, thesis statements are classified into two types: debatable and non-debatable. A debatable statement is a point of view which people might or might not agree with, while a non-debatable statement refers to a thesis with no one disagrees with (Bailey, 2003). The thesis statement is very important because it tells the reader what they will be reading. Setyaningsih and Rahardi (2017) emphasize that an argumentative essay must have the thesis statement. Without the presence of such proper thesis statements, it is impossible for a writing to be correctly described as an argumentative writing. Therefore, the thesis statement should be clear and concise so the reader can identify it and efficiently understand the main idea of the essay. If this is done, students can clearly intrude to stamp in their stance and feelings towards their arguments. However, one of the core problems students have with writing is

15

that they are not able to write a clear, understandable and strong thesis statement (Langan 2010).

During the second stage of writing, every paragraph in this part should be organized according to a logical manner. According to Meyers (2005), this part also aims to develop and to support the thesis by breaking it down into smaller ideas. Langan (2010) notes that every supporting paragraph in the body of the essay should start with a topic sentence. Likewise, according to Hogue (2008, p. 38), the topic sentence also tells readers "What they are going to read about". Each point in a paragraph should then be supported with logical reasoning and evidence from reliable sources (Whitaker, 2009). Effective connection of sentences thus would imply the significance of good language use. Batteiger (1994) also observes that when writing the body paragraphs, one should "provide evidence, reasons and reasoning" to support your initial stance (p. 40). Nevertheless, when writing an argumentative essay, students often do not provide enough proof or evidence to clarify their arguments. If students want to write a good essay, they need strong evidence to support their ideas; this problem is sometimes due to a lack of vocabulary which will may eventually lead to students' inability to take a clear and precise stance on the issue of discussion.

According to Fulwiler (2002), the evidence is the information that supports a claim and persuades others to believe you. Thus, providing evidence is an essential part of argumentation; without showing any proof, convincing a reader of your stance would prove to be an arduous task. It is at this stage that persuasive appeals are to be addressed for the readers to believe one's stance (White & Billings, 2009). In the body section, students often meet difficulties in writing the counterargument paragraph. A counterargument is an opposing viewpoint. Here, you think about what people on the other side of the issue would argue, and offer a refutation. It means that you refute the other viewpoint and explain why it is wrong. However, recent studies have found that counterarguments become the most difficult

obstacles that students face when writing an argumentative essay. Contrell (2005) also points out that most of the students do not provide opposing arguments and even ignore them.

The final stage, the conclusion in the essay, is as important as writing the introduction. It helps readers summarize the writer's point of view and understand the issue the writer is arguing. This part usually restates the stance and summarizes the main idea. Cottrel (2005) claims that the conclusion should be clear and based on the evidence. In other words, the conclusion must summarize all reasons and evidence to settle the writer's point of view. However, students do not restate the thesis statement clearly at the beginning of the paragraph. The conclusion does not briefly summarize the main ideas. According to Siwaporn (2010), the conclusion is often missed or ignored by students, and it can lead to a bad impression on their stance.

2.2   Meaning of identity: The self, person, persona, subject

Many researchers variously make reference to the self, persona, person and subject (Ivanič, 1998) as cited in Olmos-López (2015). Authorial identity construction is one of the main rhetorical strategies that interest genre analysts. Through this strategy, authors try to construct their 'persona' (that is, authorial identity or voice) as a representation of themselves or their works, and to identify the community which they belong. The persona engages the readers with the authors' argument; in other words, it engages the readers with the propositions the authors argue or evaluate in the writing. Additionally, authorial identity also serves as a personal signifier that demonstrates their seniority, experience, credibility, and works (Azar & Azirah, 2019). The visibility of an author's persona in a writing is made possible through several rhetorical strategies, one of which is explicit Self-mention markers, especially 'first-person pronouns' (that is, 'I,' 'we')

2.2.1 The self

Conceptualization of authorial identity may make reference to the expression of the 'academic self', "medical self", "engineering self", "economic self" or "financial self" if the author writes on academics, medicine, economy and finance respectively. According to Goffman (1959) as cited in Olmos-López (2015) when referring to the "self", it implies that there are many available and possible social roles and in each one the person represents him/herself in consideration to the broad social purposes of a given social group. Therefore, self can be about both the "individual self" as a 'unique' entity with distinctive personal traits, and the "multiple self" with diverse social identities as proposed in social constructionist theory. For instance, Olmos-López (2015) states that her understanding of the "self" when conceptualizing authorial identity is the individual's performance in an academic context, therefore, serving the social purposes of his/her academic community since she was writing to academic thesis.

2.2.2 Persona

The term "persona" also denotes the social roles that the writer might display when producing a particular piece of writing (Ivanić, 1998) as cited in Olmos-López (2015). In terms of writing, Elliott (1982 as cited in Olmos-López, 2015) claims "the word *persona* is used to clarify the relationship between the writer –the historical person– and the characters the writer creates". That is, the writer (the actual person who writes) produces a text in which his/her social role(s) (persona) is exhibited. For example, Olmos-López (2015) states that in the writing of her thesis, her academic persona is foregrounded while her other social roles and individual traits are downplayed. Hence, there is a disjunction between notions of an *author* and the writer's *authorial presence*. This *authorial presence* can indeed be seen as an aspect of the writer's identity, hence, the pertinence of these concepts (*person, persona*) (Olmos-López, 2015).

18

Cherry (1988 as cited in Olmos-López, 2015) adds that accordingly *persona* in written discourse in terms of authorial presence, relates to the writer's ability to "portray the elements of the rhetorical situation to the writer's advantage by fulfilling or creating a certain role (or roles) in the discourse community in which they are operating" (p.265). Some researchers suggest that a writer might adopt several personae either simultaneously or in different parts of the text (Ivanić, 1998) as cited in Olmos-López (2015). Olmos-López (2015) adds that Tang and John (1999) expanded Ivanić's point by proposing three main levels wherein a person performs roles: societal, discourse and genre.

- The *societal* roles are "the identities that are, in a sense, inherent to a person (e.g., mother, father, son, daughter, American, Singaporean";

- *discourse* roles refer to the identities a person obtains for participating in a particular discourse community, e.g., doctor and patient in the medical discourse community, and

- *genre* roles are associated with particular genres in the discourse community, e.g., in the writing of this thesis I can access the 'guide' role for the reader, or I can adopt 'recounter', 'representative', 'architect', 'opinion-holder', or 'originator roles.

2.2.3 Subject/identity

Subject is another term often used to refer to the individual in studies of identity. Ivanić (1998) as cited in Olmos-López (2015) emphasizes the social theory view of *subject* as a "way in which people's identities are affected (if not determined) by the discourses and social practices in which they participate" (p. 10). In other words, individuals are social beings who interact with each other, and this interaction influences their identity. Ivanič (1998) as cited in Olmos-López (2015) further explores the terms 'subjectivity', 'subjectivities', and 'positionings' and elaborates her own term; possibilities for self-hood, which carries the meaning of identity as socially understood such as in the physician

19

example, but also aims to see this identity as multiple, hybrid (e.g. the mixture of the societal and discourse levels as previously discussed) and fluid (easily reshaped) where interweaving positions of the individual occur due to the interaction influence.

2.2.4 Summary

It is realized that identity also influences one's stance taking during conversation. Speaker's choice of expression of stance markers is bound by the natural generation of the language that involves the content word choice. So, the word classes used in stance taking are placed close together according to what the language accepts. Identity is defined as people's concepts of which they are, of what sort of people they are, and how they relate to others. It gives people an understanding or idea about themselves of who they are and how they relate to each other. It is shown that identity is manifested through one's talk or discourse, which can be individually or institutionally constructed.

2.3 Stance and academic writing

Academic discourse involves a socialization process by which individuals learn to take part in the academic community; a key part of the socialization process is to perform one's identity as a writer (Olmos-López, 2015). In performing one's academic identity, the individual works with the conventions of written academic discourse within the discipline they are in. In the same line of conceiving discourse as a social practice, the social constructionist perspective on identity examines people's own understanding of the self in relation to others and according to the social group purpose (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). Identity is seen as an academic product; the image is exposed by the person, but also constructed in relation to a given academic community. That is, the individual goes through a socialization process which places them as members of a social group. Socializing into the academic community requires learning academic discourse, that is, a specialized language (of

the discipline) as well as taking part in specific social practices in academic settings (Bazerman et al., 2005).

Academic discourse is a "social practice reflecting its 'linguistic environment' – a social practice reflecting the ideologically-loaded epistemological beliefs and behavioral norms privileged by particular disciplinary groups" (Tang, 2004, p. 39). That is, the discourse reflects ideologies and beliefs that conform to the aims of that particular academic community. Academic written discourse is a cognitive process (Kroll, 1990) which takes place in a university or educational institution (Hamp-Lyons, 1993) because it requires instruction (Clark & Ivanić, 1997) and this is where the socialization process occurs. Here, students are expected to satisfy the academic conventions established in the institution which involve "language conventions, academic literacy, a much wider range of practices, skills, and interactions that bring students into intellectual engagement with knowledge, thought, and the work of professions" (Bazerman et al., 2005, p. 8). Hence, in written academic discourse, the writer deals with ideological constructs and conventions from the institution, the academy and the discipline itself.

Clark and Ivanić (1997) suggest that academic writing identity is one of the most difficult identities for individuals to perform due to the fact that the expression of the author relates not only to the individualities of the person, but also to the conventions of written academic discourse. Olmos-López (2015) notes academic identity is the identity the writer deliberately (or not) performs through the choices he/she makes in his/her writing. These choices follow the academic discourse conventions of the community of practice, that is, the self-representation of the person in his/her writing is being shaped by the social practice.

2.4 The significance of voice in writing

The renewal of interest in voice in recent times has led to further criticism of the importance of voice-related phenomena in ESL writing research and instruction (Elbow,

2007; Stapleton (2002). Stapleton (2003) questioned the viability of elevating voice as significant in ESL writing research in place of more crucial elements such as sentence-level proficiency, grammar, content development, and genre. Stapleton (2002) designed a voice intensity rating scale that evaluated the authorial voice present in high rated ESL texts comprising assertiveness – as evident in the use of hedges and intensifiers, self-identification – via the use of first-person pronouns, and the active voice, a reiteration of the major topic, as well as the authorial presence and thought autonomy. The study found no correlation between text quality and the intensity of voice, reinforcing Helms, Park, and Stapleton's view that studies of authorial voice have little theoretical relevance for ESL writers and teachers of English.

In response to Stapleton (2002), Matsuda and Tardy (2007) criticized the voice intensity scale as prefaced on an individualist, post-enlightenment voice typology. Zhao and Llosa (2008) also responded to Helms-Park and Stapleton's critique of voice, applying the equal voice depth rating scale to each high and low rated ESL text establishing, in contrast, a substantial link between voice indices of high intensity and high-quality writing. While there are discrepancies in studies that seek to determine an explicit correlation between text quality and voice, audience-related studies of voice indicate that readers do construct and, more significantly, actively assess voice in texts.

Matsuda and Tardy (2007) undertook two studies investigating the reception of a writer's voice during the review process, demonstrating that the reader detected an identifiable voice across elements such as topic choice, representation of the field, and use of particular sentence structures and genre conventions. Further, the use of linguistic resources which aligned with the dominant conventions of the discourse community has been found to mark the writer's voice as belonging to particular communities (Guinda & Hyland, 2012; Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). A study by Benwell and Stokoe (2006) also demonstrated that

readers construct the background, ethnicity, and status of the writer within the disciplinary community as they read. According to Johansson (2003), voice is also prevalent in writing assessment rubrics in the United States and comprises a key element of essayist literacy in American universities.

For non-native speakers of English, acquiring the stance and voice types of the academic community is often impeded by a lack of familiarity with the rules as well as the influence of rhetorical patterns in the L1 (Tang, 2004). Voice, in this way, acquires significance as it is central to the development of competence with the target academic repertoire and, hence, the site of struggle for non-native speakers. In Hirvela and Belchers' (2001) study of three Latin American doctoral students' voices was found, for example, to be the lens through which these mature writers theorized their struggles to establish themselves as effective writers. Recent studies in an Australian setting by Viète and Phan (2007) and Phan (2009) also emphasize non-native speakers' desire to acquire the voices of the academic discourse community as well as to maintain their L1 voices during the acquisition of the ESL. One of the central roles of the authorial voice, therefore, is in shaping a credible academic persona that is indicative of membership in the target community (Hyland, 2002). Hirvela and Belcher (2011), Matsuda and Johnson (2003), and Guinda and Hyland (2012) argue to demonstrate that the high capital voices of the academy need to be explicitly underscored for non-native speakers.

Hence, while voice research is replete with a range of different approaches - including its relationship to high-quality writing, it is important for both individual students as well as academic research as it affords a way of examining issues of power and exclusion in relation to non-native speakers and the academy. It also provides a lens through which the negotiations of international students as ESL writers can be viewed as agentive rather than as "victims of discursive discourses" (Casanave, 2003, p. 143). Indeed, Lensmire and

Satanovsky (1998) postulated voice as the nexus wherein students choose or struggle to choose their own identities and voices.

2.5   Authorial stance

Authorial stance refers to "the expression of feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments [which] may be expressed in lots of ways, together with grammatical devices, phrase choice, and paralinguistic devices" (Biber et al., 1999, p. 966). According to Olmos-López (2015), one aspect of stance deals with the assessment of ideas and one's position towards them. With regard to writing, stance can be expressed through many linguistic features such as skill, grammar and lexis. In contrast to voice, which is reader-oriented, that is, the expression of the self in consideration of the chosen community, stance is author-oriented (Hyland, 2012). That is, stance is the actual position of the writer towards the argument in discussion and because this position can vary depending on the argument, there can be different kinds of stance. Therefore, the way I am integrating the concept of stance in my thesis is that of the writer's position taken in the arguments he/she constructs (Olmos-López, 2015). Olmos-López (2015) defines stance as the author's role and evaluation of an issue claimed with the aid of using distinct linguistic developments with specific mindset, evaluation, and commitment. These factors may be realized with the aid of using distinct linguistic functions together with hedges, boosters, lexical words, adverbs, mindset words, clauses, and terms, amongst others.

Since its introduction in the late 1960s, authorial stance has been imagined in a variety of ways, based on a variety of theoretical frameworks found in the literature. Stance has traditionally been seen as a purely individual trait (especially in the area of L1 writing) and as a result, it has come to be seen as a reflection of the writer's personality and expressiveness in writing (Bowden, 1999; Elbow, 1999). According to Elbow (1999), authorial stance is a writer's rhetorical power to develop writing that "captures the sounds of

24

the individual on the page" (p. 287). As a result, self-identification statements like 'in my opinion...' or 'I believe that...', as well as intensifiers like 'absolutely', 'surely', or 'must' are among the indications of authorial stance in a piece of writing.

In a similar manner, Olmos-López (2015) also describes what he refers to as an authentic stance in writing as the appearance of the essential individuality of a particular writer. From this perspective, stance has mostly been associated with writers' styles of manifesting their unique stances and identities by adopting and merging the linguistic resources at their disposal (Johnstone, 2003), as well as the use of certain linguistic resources (e.g., lexical, syntactic, punctuation) features in their writing. A section of researchers (Hyland, 2010; Matsuda, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999) maintains that in defying the purely individualistic view of authorial stance, the concept of stance ought to be viewed as the amalgamative effect of discursive and non-discursive qualities that language users select, consciously or unconsciously, from a socially available but constantly changing repertoire. Broadly speaking, the idea that the way writers manifest their identities is determined by their society and their respective cultures is reminiscent of Bakhtin's (1986) social theory of language use. This is where all instances of language use are in response to previous utterances/texts and with anticipation of future utterances/texts. Extending the Bakhtinian perspective to the notion of stance in writing raises the idea that writers always deal with responding to other voices.

In accordance with the sociocultural view of the authorial stance, Olmos-López (2015) states that writing is a recursive process that necessitates the reconstruction of the previously written text so that what we add is properly connected to what has come before. Therefore, projecting one's stance in writing can be regarded as a social act, which is performed as a response to previous stances and ideas. In view of these and given Hyland's (2010) argument that writers manifest their identities in writing by using culturally available

25

resources, it is reasonable to conclude that the authorial stance is both social and cultural in nature.

Authorial stance involves the interaction between the authorial voice and other voices in the text, including the putative reader. The process of interaction is accomplished when the writer carefully chooses certain linguistic patterns during the writing process. This enables him/her to meet the expectations of the discourse community in exchanging information, while at the same time, demonstrating the skills in expressing his/her thoughts in discussing, affirming, inviting other voices in the text, and creating solidarity with the readers. In addition, authorial stance expresses the author's viewpoint on the material they are referring to with different lexical items (Hyland, 2008). Gaining reader acceptance about an argument which is deemed reasonable depends on type of claims recognized by the disciplinary community. Reasonable claims contribute to adopting the most certain and general position that readers are likely to accept (Hyland, 1997). Consequently, professional writers such as medical writers mainly need to consider specific norms and conventions in their discipline, including certain constraints, to ensure that readers, as well as specialists of their discourse, community accept their work. Hyland and Tse (2004) intimate that academic writing implies an engagement between the writer and the reader, and that writers need to project themselves into discourse to show their commitment to the contents as well as to the reader in the text.

Consequently, skilled writers do not only adopt a variety of sentence structure and vocabulary with respect to specific readers but also modify their style and procedures in accordance with particular requirements of the discourse. That is, to show their ability or skill to explain complex issues, they tend to provide and support their opinion via developing discussions and hypotheses (ACTFL, 2012). The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language (ACTFL) (2012) views skillful authors as not merely those who communicate information regarding a proposition, but who also employ their writing skills to

build a relationship with their readers, and evaluate and access each other's contributions. In other words, authors are expected to employ language to position authority in their own propositions and respond to other voices through engaging dialogically (i.e., positioning an authorial voice with respect to other voices which exist in the text as well as the propositional content, which is discussed constantly, and known as stance). It is likely that the patterns of authorial stance could be influenced by many factors such as writing experience, or the purpose of the writing, among others. It is important to state that for writers who are non-native speakers, their language background and writing genres might also serve as important factors.

Another study which is worthy of mention here is Hood's (2004) work in examining stance taking by published writers and student writers using the Appraisal theory (e.g., Martin & Rose, 2003). She found that published writers used more linguistic resources relating to the Appreciation kind of Attitude to evaluate findings while student writers constructed their texts as more personal and subjective by using Affect and Judgment Attitudes. In her study, she incorporated the resources of Attitude and Graduation to reconfigure the Engagement network as one of Alignment. In her Alignment network, she demonstrated that the observer's voice role is used by writers to evaluate aspects related to domain while the researcher's voice role is used to evaluate aspects related to the writer's own research.

On a separate note, Arkoudis' (2017) study constituted an explanation of stance not in the context of academic writing but professional discussion by teachers in an Australian school. Similarly, they drew on the Appraisal theory (e.g., Martin, 1995) as their analysis framework to illustrate a range of opinions, attitudes and positions that teacher adopt towards Chinese international students by situating the discussions in a single case study context. Love and Arkoudis (2006) made an interesting comment with regard to the stance adopted by some teachers. They held that such stances are the realization of the gender expectations of

the teachers' culture, that "women are conversationally supportive while men are more conversationally performative" (Eggins, 1994 cited in Love & Arkoudis, 2006, p. 274).

2.6   The process view of authorial stance

The interaction or expressivist writing development was described by a shift, in both research and teaching, from the written product made by the author, to what the individual writer was doing and thinking during the writing cycle. This perspective of writing imagined a noticeable authorial presence in texts and privileged the thought of the individual self of the writer. That is, the exceptional point of composing guidance was to help the writer in getting to and communicating their actual selves by permitting the author to foster an individual, personal authorial stance free of amendment or direction. The disclosure of this self or authorial stance was remembered to give both momenta to the creative writing cycle as well as quality to the completed text.

Process compositionists of this period, like Elbow (1968), argued, for instance, that without this personal authorial stance, students writing needed authenticity (Goffman, 1959). Different advocates of authorial stance, including Hashemi and Sayah (2014) and Stewart (1972), additionally depicted the advancement of personal authorial stance as the most important component of successful discourse with Hashemi and Sayah (2014) expressing that "when educators discuss the great characteristics of students writing, one of their terms is "authorial stance. Good student writing has it; terrible students writing does it" (p. 70). Endeavours at characterizing authorial stance during this time mirror the accentuation put on the personal and individual, going from arrangements of traits, for example, "energy, humour, uniqueness, music, mood, pace, stream, shock, credibility" (Murray, 1969, p. 144), to "the words some way or another issue from the writer's focus" (Elbow, 1968, p. 298), and, further, in perusing the text we hear the authorial stance of a genuine person talking to real people (Page & Dykeman, 2022). The lack of empirical meaning of authorial stance really intended

28

that, in the process of writing, the authorial stance came to mean nearly anything (Elbow, 2017) and was generally firmly related to the utilization of personal pronouns across the personal classification. Nonetheless, while writers attempted to define authorial stance as far as in a message, they were likewise fervent in the conviction that authorial stance was promptly recognizable as one or the other present or missing in a text or message.

The interaction perspective on authorial stance likewise emphasized the engaging nature of developing an individual's authorial stance. This is reflected in the educational spotlight on students' own point decisions and situating the writer's knowledge, contemplations, and convictions at the center of the writing cycle (Matsuda, 2015). Also, traditional guidance writing structures were thought to prevent students' writing progress, and permitting the writer's authorial stance to show up without limitation was viewed as crucial to great writing. Freeing the writer's authorial stance was, along these lines, thought to liberate the author from mistreatment and injustice (Matsuda, 2015).

2.6.1 Authorial stance and individualism

Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) declare that authorial stance assumes that the author has a separate identity that is brought together, and which can be given overt gestures in a phonetic way of behaving that is clear, expressive, confident, and demonstrative. In Ramanathan and Kaplans' study, for example, the idea of authorial stance as treated in ten freshman reading material established that authorial stance was framed in cultural conventions out of reach to the non-local speaker (Wang & Nelson, 2012) Obvious articulation and declaration as related to the cycling perspective on authorial stance are attributes key to cultures that valorize the individual, polarizing other cultural and discourse practices, which value, for instance, association, subtlety, and understanding. Bowden and Kelly (2013) expressed, to illustrate, that the authorial stance was a "logocentric, Eurocentric, patriarchal way to deal with communication" (p. viii), acting to prohibit non-Western students

29

who do not approach a comparable conceptualization of being an individual. This study additionally reselects Gilbert's evaluation of the authorial stance as a romanticized, childlike vision of the individual which capacities to discount the problem of grown-up human experience (Toscano, 2019). The independent adaptation of the authorial stance is likewise tested as far as a class as pundits like Clark (2023). stressed the working-class nature of an individualistic, singular writer's authorial stance (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993).

A few examinations in ESL writing support the idea that culturally different developments of self and stance present hardships for students from South East Asia in developing an English writing authorial stance. Accounts confirmed by Wang and Jiang (2018), for instance, feature the unfamiliarity of an individualized authorial stance in writing, framing the struggles experienced by Chinese authors in moving towards an ESL writing stance as examined from their perspective. From the work of Shen, we observe different cases of struggle that centre on issues of voice and authorial stance for non-English talking foundation students (NESB) in ESL settings are additionally described in Canagarajah (2001) and Hirvela and Belcher (2001). In the Australian setting, Phan (2014) recorded her feeling of exclusion from the prevailing scholarly authorial stance practices, as well as her determination to integrate her L1 authorial stance types into her new academic stance. Nonetheless, a perspective on individuality as a solely Western standard is progressively risky (Elbow, 2017).

Conversations of authorial stance as derivative of an ideological individual are, first, usually grounded in a glorified perspective on individuals in the West as a homogenous group of bound together, assertive, and self-interested entities. This is, further, compared to the East as a monolithic and self-effacing agreeable, and keeping in mind that the philosophy of Individualism is, from a certain perspective, dominant in Western countries, especially in the US, individual variation across both the US and South East Asia is noted by, among others

(White, 2001). Also, the nonappearance of a clear philosophy of independence in South East Asian nations does not imply that writers from collectivist societies are not individuals. Authorial stance and Individualism are not really inclusive of each other as, regardless of cultural provenance, all writers are individuals to the extent that all humans are individuals. Matsuda further hypothesized that writers from collectivist cultures truly do develop an authorial stance in their ESL writing, though not necessarily the decisive authorial stance generally firmly connected with writing in English.

There is additional proof of variation comparable to Southeast Asian students as ESL writers. White's (2001) investigation of Taiwanese and American students exhibited significant Taiwanese learners' differences between collective self-indices and, sometimes, less proof of adjusting to cultural convention than students from the US. They proposed that Triandis' (1990) unique origination of the collectivist/individualism partition is not necessarily contradictory as far as their discoveries as Triandis referred to a bunch of propensities which both the East and West have despite various accentuation across cultures. Reactions of the individual authorial stance inherent to process writing implied that authorial stance, concerning both exploration and teaching method, fell into neglect. Interest was recharged, in any case, in 2001 when the *Journal of Second Language Composing Research* devoted an exceptional issue to authorial stance, with one of the expressed points being to shift authorial stance paradigms to a social constructivist viewpoint.

2.6.2 Authorial stance in the social view

The social constructivist perspective on *the* authorial stance *has been* impacted by the authority of critical discourse analysis in applied linguistics and education investigation from the mid-1990s (e.g., Giroux, 2004). A social perspective on authorial stance is started on the understanding that authorial stance doesn't come from within the writer. For sure, there is no such thing as the writer's genuine, true personhood exuding from the text; rather, the

authorial stance is to be perceived according to other people and is, similarly, developed in relation to other people (Sato & Lensmire, 2009). In a social view, the authorial stance is situated as something that happens beyond the texts in response to other different texts, characters, and authorial stances (Sato & Lensmire, 2009). Influences by discourse analysis, a social perspective on authorial stance, for the most part, keep up with that a writer doesn't have a unified, individual authorial stance showing up constantly in writing. However, that authorial stance is a reaction to and changes as per the focus *of* the writer, the circumstance, the reader, the point, and the genre. Shen's (1989) account is indicative of her struggle to embrace the authorial stance conventions of the particular academic society as well as of a specific historical moment.

A super social constructivist position is taken on by Fulwiler (1994), who argues that an individual authorial stance could not really exist. That is, the authorial stance is developed externally to the self as well as inadvertently by the author. Fulwiler recommended, for instance, that authorial stance in written form is essentially an aftereffect of the position *that* the writer takes because of the specific topic at hand, expressing that "our authorial stances are mostly formed outside of ourselves, based on our places of residence and employment, our reading habits, and the people we associate with" (Fulwiler, 1994, p. 157).

A social view, in this way, sees an authorial stance beyond the writer due to the books he or she has read, the author's ideal, projected identity, and the stance of the shapers (Matsuda & Tardy, 2007). This view portrays a writer's authorial stance as a type of selfhood built from social resources; that is, a writer's authorial stance has a place or belongs to the social resources available for authorial stance or authorial stances (Elbow, 2017). Implied in social epistemology is the thought of various authorial stances (Elbow, 2017). Harris (1987) argues, for instance, that assuming an authorial stance is somewhat a response to the specific context of writing, then it is a blend of the authorial stances accessible to the author,

including the perspectives and encounters of others as found in different texts. This is corroborated by Bakhtin's (1981) social semiotic theory, which recognizes that each expression is a collaboration to the extent that words are exchanged with the social world, including history, culture, and social groupings and strata: "the word is born in dialogue as a living rejoinder within it" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 279). The goal of Bakhtin's theory of heteroglossia was to show that multiple viewpoints, histories, tales, meanings, and values can be found in linguistic utterances.

This means that words are always polyphonic or have many-authorial stances. Therefore, every use of language, in Bakhtin's view, involves endlessly reinforcing the ideas and words of others. That is, words are a multi-authorial stance because they are of the world. At any rate, in the social view of authorial stance, texts are multi-authorial stance and multilayered. They are a composite of cultural authorial stances, and individual selves or, an "amalgam of other-selves, authorial stances, and experiences" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 161). In particular, in the process of writing, the author secures the authorial stances of others in developing their own authorial stance (Cummins, 2000). The idea of intertextuality involves one more approach to describing the complex idea of authorial stance.

Bakhtin's (1981) social semiotic is likewise premised on the dialogic rule to the extent that each expression has adhesivity or is placed as a continuous response to or discourse with earlier, present, and future examples of language use (p. 99). This focuses on one of the salient attributes of Bakhtin's semiotic, which describes expressions as a continuous course of transformation and change (Chandrasoma et al., 2004). In Bakhtin's (1981) dialogic, authorial stance is additionally agentive and generative to the extent that words and ideologies do not necessarily act to co-opt the creator, however, is appropriated and populated with the author's own aim. Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) dialogic recommends that the manner in which we use language is by perpetually voicing the expressions of others. Not to the extent

that language is passively gotten, however, that words and texts are likewise populated by the author's own aims, alongside the authorial stances of different texts which have been acquired and appropriated to fill the need of the author. Along these lines, Bakhtin's (1981, 1986) authorial stance is generative as opposed to just regenerative, and the authorial stance assets which may be socially accessible are co-opted by means of the demonstration of self-creation.

Authorial stance in the social view is additionally, accordingly, about power as authorial stances in texts mirror specific social and political affiliations. With regards to the academy, authorial stance as a social act focu*se*s on what and how things can be said, inevitably entrenching dominant, high capital authorial stance practices (Bakhtin, 1981). A social view, therefore, recognizes the authorial stance as the site of strain. *C*ertainly, involvement between the reader and author as the writer conveys the prevailing discourses at work in a specific academic context (Weinreich & Saunderson, 2003).

In a divergence from the earlier, more individualist perspective on authorial stance, a social perspective on authorial stance likewise accentuated the potential educational outcomes of adding to the social world. The accentuation in this view moved from building an individualist authorial stance to utilizing the writer's authorial stance to take an interest in the social world, the development of meaning, and additionally challenge dormant power structures. Certifying the writer's authorial stance became vital in the social view as the ability to involve *the* authorial stance in writing is emancipatory for both the individual and the social background (Freire, 1970). Serious studies of authorial stance in writing would, in general, focus on the gathering of authorial stance and audience instead of proof of declaration and reference to the individual in the text. A critical view likewise looked to render the writer, by means of authorial stance utilization, as a functioning participant in the world rather than a quiet one (Hooks, 1994; Lensmire, 1995).

A social or functionalist teaching method of authorial stance additionally focuse*s* on the authorial stances and identities which writers integrate from academic and disciplinary assets to develop their own authorial stance. This specific view sees authorial stance as a progression of authorial stance types that writers take on with the end goal of specific and explicit texts. Hyland's (2008) work, for instance, featured the intellectual and disciplinary authorial stances that writers pursued to conform themselves with, as writers like Hyland (2002) expressed, "gain credibility by projecting a stance invested with individual authority, displaying confidence in their evaluations and commitments to their ideas" (p. 1091). Weinreich and Saunderson (2003) correspondingly brought up the almost person-less, abstract pedagogic authorial stance types that writer*s* try to adjust to in their own writing.

All varieties of authorial stance, however unique, foreground the writer's authorial stance and its utilization, pressure, or disregard as emancipatory, seeking to empower "students in the study hall and residents at large" (Elbow, 2007, p. 168). Independent authorial stance theorists evaluate the academic authorial stances that students are pressured into obtaining as lacking genuineness and uneven power relationships*,* which demarcate schooling (Lensmire, 1998). The accentuation, hence, is on empowering or permitting student writers to find and write in their own authorial stances as a type of force. Social theorists, along these lines, view express guidance in the authorial stance kinds of the academic and disciplinary communities as desirable as appreciating the guidelines permits students to go with decisions to accomplish their own ends. This approach likewise assumes that explicit instruction in dominant authorial stance conventions prepares students with a critical stance towards "genres of power" (Lemke, 1988) and empowers students to get access to them disparagingly (Jeffrey, 2011; Phan & Baurain, 2011).

2.6.3   Summary

The historical and diverse points of view related to authorial stance were explored, and the broad and often conflicting nature of the theoretical assumptions which underpin stance were also highlighted, to set out the theoretical background and the related literature to the current study. The theoretical background, that is, when and how linguists became interested in the interaction functions of language, the emergence of the term 'meta discourse', and how the metadiscoursal meaning differs from the propositional meaning. 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.

2.7   Authorial identity and voice

Hyland (2010) observes that authorial identity refers to the expression of the self-engaged in writing in any context or discipline through discourse following the conventions of the disciplinary community involved. In other words, authorial identity embraces many self-images of the writer be it academic, medical, economic, or religious self-image and how the authors engage and position themselves in the chosen community which will involve the writer's persona as well as the engagement within the discipline (Olmos-López, 2015)**.** Olmos-López (2015) identifies two levels of authorial identity in academic writing: knowledge of the disciplinary conventions and knowledge of content domain and the position the writer takes on the disciplinary ideas. The first level of analysis refers to the academic discipline and institutional conventions which she refers to by pointing out the rubric criteria of the dissertation contents and writing requirements of the institution and the policy of writing a thesis.

Every piece of writing has a voice; voice refers to the way we reveal ourselves to others when we write (Richards & Miller, 2005). Voice may be thought of as 'a combination of the personality of the writer that comes through to the reader; the perspective the writer assumes, often influenced by the audience being addressed, as well as by the purpose and previous levels of knowledge, and the tone of the passage' (Mulvaney & Jolliffe, 2005, p. 18). Olmos-López (2015) states that the concept of *voice* differs from *identity* in the sense that *identity* is the umbrella concept for the expression of the *self* in a discourse community and *voice* is the way this expression is perceived by an audience. Olmos-López (2015) refers to authorial voice as the expression of the academic self or any other (e.g., economic, financial, medical self) negotiated in the disciplinary community. The emergence of the concept of 'voice' in studies of writing seems to have been recognized at different moments. Olmos-López (2015) discusses the early concepts of voice and how the concept has evolved in the context of studies of identity, specifically in writing. Prior (2001) identifies three main perspectives to approach 'voice':

- as a personal and *individualistic discourse system*,
- as a *social discourse system* and
- as a *personal social discourse system.*

The first approach to 'voice' as 'individualistic discourse system' responds to the Romantic Movement (one of the initial tendencies in the conceptualization of identity). The romantic approach to identity takes as given that human innateness and uniqueness express the self for both personal self-fulfillment and satisfaction of those around us. This notion of 'identity' implies a concept of 'voice' as coming naturally from 'the self' (Olmos-López, 2015).

Ivanić (1998 as cited in Olmos-López, 2015) relates voice to this romantic view because it appeals to the particular "ways of writing which are in some way [the writer's] own" (p. 95) and nobody else'. Ramanathan and Atkinson (1999) as cited in Olmos-López

(2015) discussing Bowden's (1995) work on 'written voice', also describe that the individualistic voice as "the expressive potential of a unique individual" (p. 50). That is, the writer's authentic voice makes it different from every other individual's writing. Olmos-López (2015) argues that this cannot be denied given the assumption of individuality as the fundamental and main characteristic of the self, since every human being is different from others. Thus, in the 'individualistic discourse system' which Prior (2001) describes, voice is considered as personal and distinctive to each individual. Olmos-López (2015) states the second approach to voice emphasizes its social character. Bakhtin (1981) and Voroshilov (1973) as cited in Olmos-López (2015) claim that language is always *situated* and *social* because human beings are social by nature, and belong to different social groups. In these social groups, status, age, gender among others factors also determine the discourse type, e.g., formal, informal, written, and spoken. These factors are cultural characteristics that are literally to be reflected in our several voices and these give voice a characteristic of social purpose mingled with the individual's unique features (Matsuda, 2001; Atkinson, 2001; Stapleton, 2002).

In the third personal-social approach to voice, voice is constructed by the individual considering their background and experiences according to the context and discourse type within the social situation where they are involved. The process of constructing voice is both individual and social. Matsuda (2001) shares this view and actually explains the way he found his voice:

> I came to understand that finding my own voice was not the process of discovering the true self that was within myself […]; it was the process of negotiating my socially and discursively constructed identity with the expectation of the reader as I perceived it. (p. 39)

Voice is therefore defined "the amalgamative effect of the use of discursive and non-discursive features that language users choose, deliberately or otherwise, from socially available yet ever-changing repertoires" (Matsuda, 2001, p. 40). In other words, voice as part of individual identity is present in the production of language, always considering the context where it takes place and the way the audience perceives it.

2.8   The role of authorial stance in ESL writing

As mentioned earlier, over the past decades, some scholars and researchers have maintained a degree of skepticism about the importance of stance in ESL writing research and instruction. The reason for such conscious negligence of stance in ESL writing can be twofold: (a) ESL learners' need for more basic writing skills than a stance in ESL composition, and (b) the discrepancy between some features of individual stance and ESL learners' native culture. In view of such complexity concerned with the undertaking of ESL writing, Stapleton (2002) has argued that ESL learners are more in need of growing simple competencies which include sentence stage proficiency, grammar, content material development, and style, than stance-associated competencies. Stapleton's concept that research of authorial stance undergoes little theoretical relevance to ESL writing coaching became later strengthened through Stapleton (2003), who designed a stance intensity rating scale for comparing stance in ESL texts in phrases of assertiveness, self-identification, a reiteration of the critical concept, and author's presence and autonomy of thought. Their consequences did now no longer display any correlation between authorial stance depth and the exceptional of ESL writings. However, opposite to Stapleton's (2003) study, Halliday (1994), having used the identical stance intensity score scale to ESL texts, found a sturdy relationship between authorial stances with excessive intensity and texts with high quality.

To further complicate matters, Matsuda and Tardy (2007) called into question Helms-Park and Stapleton's stance intensity rating scale as it links stance to "the ideology of Western

individualism" (p. 236). Later, in her attempts to measure stance strength among ESL writers, Zhao (2019) developed an analytic rubric on the basis of Hyland's (2008) interactional stance model. One part of Hyland's model includes the individualistic aspect of the notion of stance, which pertains to the way writers present themselves and their ideas and arguments by means of linguistic categories like boosters, hedges, attitude markers, and authorial Self-mention (the stance dimension).

The other part of the model relates to the interdependent aspect of stance, as characterized by the writer's use of linguistic- and discourse-level categories such as reader pronouns, personal asides, references to shared knowledge, directives, and rhetorical/audience directed questions (the engagement dimension). In her following study in 2019, Zhao adopted her own analytic rubric to measure authorial stance strength in ESL and to examine the relationship between stance strength and scores on ESL argumentative writings. Her results revealed that authorial stance was a significant predictor of argumentative essay scores, with each dimension of stance strength (i.e., ideational, affective, and presence dimensions) being strongly or moderately correlated with the quality of ESL writings.

Concerning the second reason for understating the role of stance in ESL writing, some researchers in the area of L1 writing (e.g., Elbow, 1999) have contended that authorial stance is a purely individual trait and can only be manifested in the writer's essential individuality through individual practices of expressive writing. Extending this notion of individuality, some other researchers have argued that the stance in its traditional individualistic sense may be incompatible with some ESL learners' collectivist cultures (Hirvela & Belcher, 2001; Shen, 1989). For example, Shen (1989) made reference to China's collectivist culture, where the first-person singular pronoun *I* is always subordinated to the plural pronoun *We* and associated this fact with Chinese learners' difficulty in constructing their individual stances

through composing English essays with singular pronouns. In another study, Ivanić and Camps (2001) analyzed the writings of Mexican graduate students studying in British universities to investigate the way they represent themselves in their writing. Their results showed that Mexican writers of English were generally reluctant to use the first-person singular pronoun in their writings; instead, they tended to use the agentless passive forms of the verbs in order to be left unknown while giving more weight to the content.

Be that as it may, as more students from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds entered American universities, the individualistic view of stance was gradually challenged by scholars who believed authorial stance is socially and culturally constructed and mediated. In this respect, Heller (1997) contends that "audience and stance are essentially culturally bound concepts, making them difficult to access for pupils who are not complete participants in the culture in which they are supposed to write" (p. 22). Therefore, it follows that the difficulties that ESL writers face in constructing individual stances in the American mainstream culture may be due to their lack of familiarity with the intended audience as well as their lack of shared cultural knowledge in order to meet mainstream expectations of how the stance in writing should be manifested.

In a study carried out in the Japanese English as a foreign language (EFL) context, Matsuda (2001) provides evidence of individual stances in Japanese written discourse by exploring a Japanese web diary, focusing on some of the distinct linguistic features that are not available in English. Matsuda argues that the difficulties that Japanese learners face in demonstrating their stance in English written discourse do not have much to do with its incompatibility with learners' collectively-oriented cultural values. Rather, the lack of individual stance in English writings among Japanese learners can be more associated with the different possibilities that the two languages provide for manifesting authorial stance as

41

well as ESL learners' unfamiliarity with the strategies used for constructing stance in written English.

The idea that inherent differences in cultures can lead to different styles of writing has its roots in Heller (1997) contrastive rhetoric. As Connor (2002) states, contrastive rhetoric is based on the idea that "to the degree that language and writing are cultural phenomena, different cultures have different rhetorical tendencies" (p. 494). In view of this, while English-speaking writers in the United States tend to adopt a direct and to-the-point approach, ESL writers in Ghana are more likely to follow an indirect, talking around-the-point method of organizing their writings (Heller, 1997). Moreover, other scholars like Atkinson (1997) have argued that Asian learners lack individual stances and the ability to think critically because these are features peculiar to, and the products of, the Western culture which led to good writing. These scholars believe that because Asian learners lack these abilities and are not completely familiar with the American culture, they cannot display this kind of thinking in their writings.

However, other researchers Curtis et al. (1997) have investigated the case in some Asian countries like China and Japan and have refused to accept the idea that Asian students are deficient in individual stance or critical thinking skills. For example, Stapleton (2001) investigated the case among Japanese learners and found that these learners do have the ability to think critically, provided that the topic content is familiar to them. Other researchers have also put the act of stereotyping Chinese learners as passive, rote learners into serious question (e.g., Biggs, 1991) and have further ascribed the Chinese students' difficulties in topic development, expressiveness, and, generally, composing well-developed arguments to the cultural differences between China and the West.

2.9   Conceptual framework

Taking a stance by personal style and interpersonal strategies is highlighted in a variety of disciplines, each focusing on *positioning* or adopting a point of view, exercising devices like stance and engagement features. These devices comprise different sub-factors addressed in detail in Hyland's (2005) and other significant studies that will be explained in this section. Hyland (2005) asserts that stance is the way that writers interfere to stamp their personal authority onto their arguments or step back and disguise their involvement. This relates to one's own authority, opinion, commitments, disguisable involvement, and tentativeness in the texts as expressed by stance features. Hyland subcategorizes these stance features as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions. The authorial voice can be publicized and concretized through the use of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions.

2.9.1   Hedges

Hyland (1994) asserts that "hedges allow academics to take a rhetorical stance, to downplay their statements and anticipate audience responses by the degree of certainty" (p. 478). According to him, epistemic modality is a central rhetorical means of gaining adherence to knowledge claims and to present them as an opinion than a fact. Hedges refer to possibilities while avoiding direct personal responsibility for one's statements. Salagar-Meyer (1994) also identifies hedges as understatements used to convey (purposive) lack of certainty and fuzziness, and to render statements more recognizable to the listener/reader, thus increasing their chance of ratification and reducing the risk of negation.

Hedging has been a subject of interest to linguists since Lakoff (1972) first used the term to describe "words whose job it is to make things more or less fuzzy" (p. 195). It has since been used to refer to devices which qualify the writer's expression (e.g., Prince et al., 1982; Skelton, 1988). Essentially, it represents an absence of certainty and is used here to

43

describe any linguistic item or strategy employed to indicate either a) a lack of commitment to the truth value of an accompanying proposition or b) a desire not to express that commitment categorically. The term does not therefore include other attitudinal markers or devices which convey the writer's conviction; items are only hedges in their epistemic sense and only then when they mark uncertainty.

Hedges are widely studied in literary, political, legal, scientific and technological texts, as well as business letters and news. The analysis of academic papers has aroused much attention. Hyland (1998) studied the written language of science and technology from the perspective of pragmatics and pointed out that the hedges are not only a rhetorical device for the writing of science and technology texts but also a key feature of science and technology texts, which help reduce the declarative power, including modality, expression of obedience, uncertainty and other functions. The study of hedges is also widely applied in the law, medical and political fields. In the law field, scholars find that the interpersonal meaning of hedges is mainly reflected in the author's rigorous and objective attitude, his politeness and respect for readers, his protection for himself, and his negotiation and dialogue with readers (Jianrong, 2003). Prince et al. (1982) divide hedges into two groups: approximators and shields. The first type (approximators**)** affects the truth condition of a proposition (propositional hedging), and the second type (shields**)** affects the degree and type of speaker-commitment that is inferred (speech act hedging). A diagrammatical representation is seen in Figure 2.9.1.

Figure 2.9.1. Types of hedges

2.9.1.1 Approximators

Approximators refer to the expressions which could change, rectify the original meaning of a proposition, or provide alternative meaning to the proposition. According to Xu and He (2012), these words do not affect the speaker's propositional attitude but its content. Sometimes precise terms or numbers are not relevant or not known by the speakers and they simply give approximate terms. They basically affect the truth condition of a proposition (propositional hedging). Approximators are subdivided into **a**daptors and rounders**.** Adaptors can modify the language that is very close to the truth value of the proposition. They apply to class membership and contribute to the interpretation of the utterance. Words and phrases like *sort of*, *kind of*, *somewhat*, *really***,** *almost*, and *to some extents* are in this category. Some examples of their use are illustrated in Example 1:

Example 1

1. Life's a *little bit* more complex than that.

2. *It's kind* of too late.

3. Isn't it *kind of* fine to take a watch to church?

4. It is *a bit* cold here.
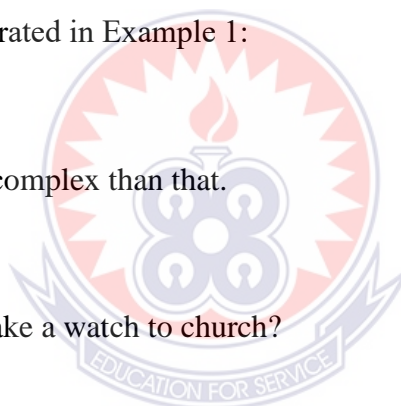
Rounders represent a class of hedges which modify the propositional content presented in figures, statistics, deictic markers of time, and measurements. They are normally used when the exact or precise information is of no importance to the speaker such as *about*, *approximately*, *something*, *around* (indicate a range, within which a notion is approximated) and are used to make a zone for adjustment in language, mostly being the modifier of numbers and figures such as *about*, *between*…and *roughly*. Examples are as follows:

Example 2

i. Dinner for two should run to *around* 30 for a starter, a pasta dish, sweet, coffee and a bottle of good wine.

ii.   It *about* time we left for the movies.

iii.   We shall meet at *approximately* 5p.m.

2.9.1.2 Shield

According to Prince et al. (1982), shields express fuzziness in the relationship between the propositional content and the speaker and which therefore deal with the problem from a pragmatic point of views. Shields protect the speaker from having to take full responsibility for the propositional content of her utterance; they cannot change the original meaning of language, but make the tone more indirect. Therefore, they affect the degree and type of speaker-commitment that is inferred. Shields are subcategorized into plausibility and attribution shields. Plausibility shields are used to express a person's thoughts and opinions that they might want to make less categorical or straightforward. That is to say, they express doubt and a lack of speaker certainty. Plausible shields are achieved with modal verbs which can soften the tone and hesitation words which can express a reserved and prudent attitude (Xu & He, 2012). Plausible shields include words and phrases like *I think*, *probably*, *as far as I can tell*, *seem*, and *I'm afraid*. This is illustrated in 3:

Example 3

i.   *I suspect* foul play in the decisions taken by the academic board members.

ii.   *I am afraid* I am not allowed to tell the truth.

iii.   *I presume* all is set and done for the long-awaited quiz.

iv.   No side effects, fine *as far as I can tell*.

Attribution shields assign responsibility to someone other than the speaker and affect the degree of the speaker's commitment. Attribute shield is manifested in expressions of the third person viewpoint, which means opinions are expressed through a third person (Xu & He, 2012). Words and phrases such as *according to*, *presumably*, *says that*, *as is well known*, *the possibility would be* are some of them. Examples are as follows:

Example 4

i.   And the conditions on the ground floor are *somewhat* different.

ii.   they're *probably* not allowed to show it, are they.

iii. I *think* before we ask any other questions, we'll ask everybody to just have a stretch.

iv.   You say you've loved your wife for twenty-six years. *Presumably*, she too was the woman you have vowed to love forever.

2.9.2 Boosters

Salager-Meyer (1997) views the term *boosters* as those lexical items by means of which the writer can show strong confidence for a claim. Hyland (2005) also considers boosters as a tool which strengthens the claim by showing the writer's certainty, conviction, and commitment, helping the writers affect interpersonal solidarity. Boosters can therefore help writers to present their work with assurance while effecting interpersonal solidarity, setting the caution and self-effacement suggested by hedges against assertion and involvement. One significant way in which the author's degree of confidence can be expressed in academic writing is through the use of hedges and boosters (Hyland, 2000). Whereas hedges such as *seem*, *suggest*, and *indicate* are expressions of doubt in relation to the propositional information provided, boosters such as *clearly* and *obviously* are expressions of the author's certainty (Hyland, 2000). Boosters include *suggest*, *show that*, *always*, *demonstrate*, *substantially*, *fact that*, *obviously show*, *clear/clearly*, *definite/definitely*, and *certain/certainly*.

There are two basic categories of boosters; solidarity and belief (Hyland, 1998; Recski, 2005; Vassileva, 2001). Solidarity boosters are the case when the author claims shared knowledge with the audience (Recski, 2005). Examples include *greater*, *better*, *more*, *desirable*, *really*, *extremely*, *always*, *will*, and *actually*. Some sentences to illustrate this are:

Example 5

    i.   We shall *really* look into that story for possible clues.

   ii.   We *desire* to believe in their innocence wholeheartedly.

  iii.   It has *always* been a fact.

  iv.   It has always been *better* late than never.

Belief boosters are used when the author states unequivocally that he/she is absolutely convinced of what he/she is saying (Recski, 2005). For example, *undoubtedly*, *definite*, *confirms*, *prove/proven*, *demonstrate*, *certainly*, *obviously*, *clearly show* (that), *the fact that*, *of course*, and *indeed* (Kuteva 2011) as seen in:

Example 6

    i.   Indeed, I put all trust in her work.

   ii.   We shall clearly be the victims if care is not taken.

  iii.   The fact has always been truly bitter.

  iv.   I shall clearly not be part of any dealings concerning her.

2.9.3 Attitude markers

Adel (2006, p. 174) defines attitude markers as markers that show "the importance of something, the interest of something, its appropriateness, and the personal emotional concomitants of linguistic material". Here, attitude markers can be underlined as that which show certain expressions that convey humans' attitudes in written and spoken language. Koutsantoni (2004) analyzed some pragmatic functions of attitude markers employed in electronic and electrical engineering research articles. The results of his study indicated that attitude markers were employed to present the significant of research area, justify the authors' work, emphasize the originality of their work, indicate gaps in the developments of the research, and evaluate previous works in a related field. Koutsantoni (2004) further adds that

attitude markers "create a research space for engineers, assert their learned authority and expertise, solicit readers' acceptance of claims, and reach consensus" (p. 174).

At the same time, Hyland (2005) opines that the authors employ attitude markers in their texts to present a position and take a stance. They use these markers to make readers agree with their points of view and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement. The current research uses Hyland's notion and it is mainly focused on analyzing and discussing the role and function of attitude markers. Thus far, previous studies have confirmed the effectiveness of metadiscoursal stance features in academic genres. They have revealed a correlation between attitude markers and enhancing evaluation and projecting the authors into their texts to communicate their evaluation and credibility with their readers. According to Biber et al. (2002), the four types of attitude markers like adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs were found to express the authors' views, judgment, evaluation, and attitude towards their propositional content and views. The attitudinal lexicon explicitly clarifies the authors' view and perspective of a particular idea. They refer to the authors' *affective attitude* towards a certain matter (Hyland, 2008). Attitude stance markers fulfill various functions expressing the views positively or negatively, indicating a niche or an issue in the review text. This is illustrated in Figure 2.9.3.
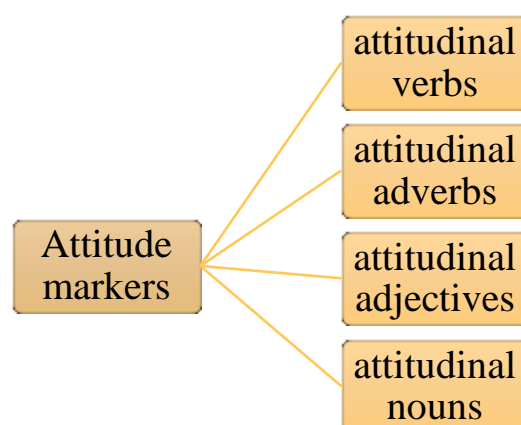
Figure 2.9.3. Attitude markers

2.9.3.1 Attitudinal verbs

Fraser (1997) explains that this type of markers is used to show polite request of the addresser. This is a desire to reduce face loss associated with the basic message of the sentence. Examples are *expected*, *prefer*, *agree*, *contribute*, *extend*, *fail*, *think*, *believe*, *ensure*, *support*, and *feel*. Some of these can be seen in Example 7:

Example 7

    i.   If you *do not mind*, I want to leave the class.

    ii.   Unless I *am hearing* you, you did not tell me the fact.

    iii.   *I know* you are intelligent, but I should examine you.

2.9.3.2 Attitude adverbs

They represent the manner in which the addresser talks about certain situations. They are used to represent addresser's politeness, stance, and his/her belief. This type of marker is used to signal the degree of confidence, positive or negative information that is conveyed by the addresser. These expressions include the adverbial forms: *assuredly*, *clearly*, *possibly*, *seemingly*, *surely*, *perhaps*, *most*, and *quiet*. These markers are also used to support and strengthen the basic message. According to Biber et al. (2002), they tell the speaker's attitude toward the proposition.

Example 8

    i.   *Astonishingly*, Tom is still alive after the explosion.

    ii.   *Quite frankly*, I will change the design of the project.

    iii.   *Seriously*, go out.

2.9.3.3 Attitude adjectives

According to Duenas (2011), attitudinal adjectives provide information about the role of the basic message as discourse activity. They also describe the type of information that will be conveyed by the addresser and show how the addresser evaluates the state of the

50

world that is presented in the propositional content of the sentence (Biber et al., 2002). Examples of these are *important*, *appropriate*, *complex*, *critical*, *better*, *significant*, *major*, *best*, *useful*, *main*, *problematic*, *remarkable*, and *difficult*.

Example 9

i. I know you are *intelligent, but I should examine you.*

ii. It was a *remarkable* experience for me in the school

iii. What an i*nteresting* journey to be in the boarding house it was.

2.9.3.4 Attitude nouns

This type of markers attributes the specific source of information from which the writer brings his/ her information. This type of markers is also used to show the role of what follows next. Nouns such as *importance*, *significance*, *lack*, *issue*, *limitation*, *need*, *support*, *problem*, *value*, *insight*, *difficulty*, and *constraint* (Duenas, 2011). Illustrations of these are found in Example 10:

Example 10

iv. The *rumors* were a way to calm her nerves.

v. The *issue* at hand began to circulate from the head of the department.

vi. *He* was the president of America.

2.9.4 Self-mention

Self-mention is described as the extent of author presence in academic discourse, and this has received much attention in academic writing in recent decades (e.g. Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2002; Ivanič, 1998; Kuo, 1999; Tang & John, 1999). It plays a vital role in accentuating the writer's contribution to the academic community and promoting the interaction between the author(s) and the readers. Also, presenting a discoursal self is central to the writing process (Ivanič, 1998). Traditionally, writing has been viewed as a type of discourse expressing depersonalized and objective information. Many scholars believe that it

should be presented as if human agency is not part of the writing process. As a result, many academic writers tend to alienate themselves from the presentation of their research findings and avoid employing personal pronouns in their research papers (Harwood, 2005). However, with the ever-increasing number of research conducted each year, it becomes harder and harder for researchers to catch attention in this academic environment.

Against this backdrop, some scholars claim that it is of necessity for writers to promote themselves and outline their novel contribution to their discipline. Meanwhile, as the rhetorical functions of Self-mention expressions gain increasing attention in the academic field, the use of these expressions has been increasingly advocated. Hyland (2002) mentions that first person pronouns are a powerful means by which writers express an identity by asserting their claim to speak as an authority. They are valuable rhetorical strategies which can help construct a credible image for academic writers. Hence, the notion of writer presence in academic writing has been a focus of interest for many researches. In research articles, authors use Self-mention expressions to make themselves visible and construct their relationship with readers and with their discourse community (Kuo, 1999). Such explicit authorial presence is realized through the use of first-person pronouns (e.g., I, we), possessive determiners (e.g., my, our) and third-person nominal phrases (e.g., the author). Among them, the most visible and powerful manifestation of authorial identity is the use of first person pronouns and their corresponding determiners (e.g. Hyland, 2001; Ivanič, 1998). These are illustrated in Figure 2.9.4.

Existing research has identified that Self-mention plays a range of rhetorical functions which strategically project the authors' positioning with respect to their research, to the potential readers, to their academic community and so on. Several taxonomies for such roles have been proposed (e.g., Hyland, 2002; Luzon, 2009; Tang & John, 1999; Walková, 2019). Among these taxonomies, the one put forward by Walková is very concise and

52

comprehensive. Walková (2019) proposes that the power of Self-mention has three dimensions, namely rhetorical functions, grammatical forms, and hedging/boosting in its co-text. It is the first dimension (rhetorical functions of self-mention) that we are concerned in the current study. Walková's (2019) taxonomy was adapted as a starting point for its clarity and focus on reader-exclusive pronouns and then proposed five rhetorical functions.
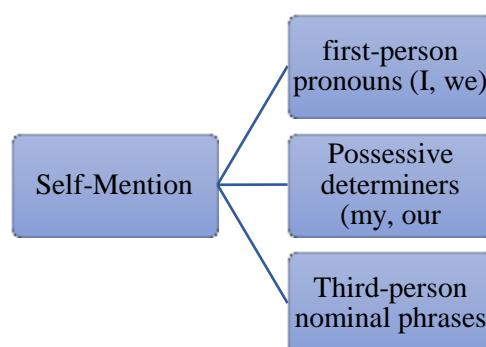
Figure 2.9.4. Self-mentions (Adapted from Hyland, 2001; Ivanić, 1998)

These five functions can be seen as reflecting a continuum from the highest to the lowest degree of authority. Since there are differences in the frequency of Self-mention across disciplines, it is hypothesized that writers in each discipline also differ in their employment of the five rhetorical functions of Self-mention. These functions are stating one's original contribution to the field by stating results and findings, elaborating an argument, presenting an opinion, or stating knowledge, and describing or explaining a research decision or procedure. Others are stating a purpose, intention or focus and acknowledging other researchers.

2.9.4.1 First-person pronouns (I, we)

Writers use the subjective pronoun ('I') to indicate the objectives or purposes, to present the structure of the review texts, and to elaborate an argument. They also use it to guide the readers through the article (Hyland, 2002). The inclusive 'we' is employed by authors to give suggestions, and to offer possible solutions. These inclusive pronouns referred to the authors and the readers. Hyland (2005) believes that using an inclusive 'we' binds the

authors to the readers. This is employed in argumentative and evaluative discourses, for example, critical evaluative review articles, to interact professionally with the immediate audience and persuade them to agree with the authors' ideas. According to Azabdaftari (2016), this type of first-person plural pronoun is called the 'royal we.' He further adds that if people avoid using 'I' and 'we,' the causes may be due to lack of confidence in their views, an inclination to offer a low profile of themselves, and a lack of expertise on the issue they are handling. Examples are found as follows:

Example 11

i. *I* argue that these barriers appear to be dropping due to the rise of new research methodologies.

ii. *We* are now entering a time that may see a new convergence between the disciplines.

iii. *we* now have several studies that can tell us much about the evolution of professional discourse.

2.9.4.2 Possessive determiners (our, us)

The possessive pronoun 'our' has been considered as a strategy to interact and negotiate with the immediate audience in academic writing (Harwood, 2005b; Hyland, 2005a). This persuasion technique can also be used in review articles to create a bond between the author and the reader, allowing authors to include their readers in their arguments and assessments. It helps the authors to establish solidarity and ensure their readers' agreement. The inclusive pronoun such as 'us' is mostly employed to explain how the results of studies can help the field. In review articles, the objective pronoun 'us' mainly is collocated with several verbs (e.g., *give us*, *help us*, *teach us*, *tell us*, *remind us*, *warn us*, and *lead us*) (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2005).

54

Example 12

  i.   To make *our* task manageable, I used the mixed method.

  ii.   The computer provides *us* with the capability of accumulating and analyzing vast

amounts of language that users have actually produced.

iii.   We no longer have to depend on *our* intuitions about the language that people use.

2.9.4.3 Third-person nominal phrases (the author/writer)

The third -person nominal phrase is used for acknowledging scholars and stressing the

contributions of other scholars to the study. It is used by writers to pass on the future research

agenda to other researchers, and to prevent harm done to other researchers (Harwood, (2005;

Hyland, 2005).

Example 13

  i.   We should like to thank the *author Dr J. A. Jackson* for helpful suggestions and ideas.

  ii.   Thus, we urge "*his future research*" to attend to indirect as well as direct effects of

parental imprisonment.

iii.   Any errors are *the writer's* responsibility.

2.9.5 Summary

According to Hyland (2005), stance is mainly marked by hedges, boosters, self-

mentions, and attitudinal markers which convey the writers' judgement, opinion and

commitment. A number of studies have explored these linguistic realizations of stance

expression in English academic research writing (Cheung, & Jiang, 2017; Lancaster, 2016).

Hedges and boosters are major elements of positioning stance (Hyland, 2005). Hyland

observes that hedges and boosters are writer-oriented features of interaction, which project

the possible accuracy or credibility of a writer's claim. Hedges is to mitigate the author's

voice so that, since they would help the authors to build up their positions strongly, it conveys

politeness, modesty, tentativeness, and openness to the readers' views. Boosters, on the

contrary intensify the illocutionary force in an utterance; they make a statement more powerful. Brown and Levinson (1997) call them "strengtheners", as Holmes argues that "boosters may intensify or boost the effect of utterances with negative as well as positive intension or 'affect'" (1995:76).

Mentioning oneself is an effective persuasive strategy. The authors use these stance features to gain immediate agreement from the readers, gain credibility, and establish their attitude. They indicate their position in the field as one of the discourse community members. A higher frequency usage of self-mentions can indicate the authors' strong position and contribution to that field. A high-frequency use of self-mentions can "point to the personal stake that writers invest in their arguments and their desire to gain credit for their claims" (Hyland, 2011, p. 11). Hyland (1998) states that attitude markers express the writer's perspective or evaluation of the propositional content. Authors use attitude markers to enhance evaluation in the different analytical sections of the texts; authors explicitly present themselves, express their attitude towards their own claims and results, and evaluate other scholar's views (Harwood, 2005b; Hyland, 2001).

2.10   Related studies

Hyland's (2005) works on authorial stance in academic writing have received considerable attention in the fields of linguistics and language teaching (Ivanić, 1998; Ivanić & Camps, 2001; Matsuda, 2015; Stapleton, 2002). In 2012, Hyland and Sancho edited a book, *Stance and voice in written academic genres*. They introduced the volume by pointing to the significance of researching stance and voice. However, they also address the problem of the ambiguity of these concepts. For this, as an introduction to contemporary views on studies in voice, Tardy (2015) presents an account of how the study of voice has been approached and presents some definitions.

From this compilation, Hyland's (2012) article is closest to my research as he approaches the study of stance and voice in thesis writing. His study involves a basic numerical analysis as a summary of the frequency of the main aspects and genre functions comparing novice and experts' writing. Ivanić's (1998) framework has been prominent in the field of the analysis of the writer's stance. Her analyses (Ivanić, 1998; Ivanić & Camps, 2001) are usually carried out on excerpts from texts and take a qualitative approach to analyze each individual's writing. Considering first-person pronouns as one of the linguistic items expressing stance in the most evident way, Tang and John (1999) analyzed their use in a corpus of ESL graduate student essays in Singapore. Their study is revealing in providing a classification of the different functions of first-person pronouns.

Linguists (e.g., Conrad & Biber, 1999; Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2002, 2005) have also developed corpus studies and techniques considering first-person pronouns and other linguistic items such as adverbs. Some researchers devote their attention to studying some of those linguistic features and analyzing instances of stance in writers' stances (e.g., Biber, 2006; Gray & Biber, 2012; Tse, 2012). Applying a corpus-based methodology, Conrad and Biber (1999) analyzed the different ways in which speakers and writers use adverbials to mark their personal stance in three major domains: epistemic, attitudinal, and style stances.

Another study of stance is Charles (2003), who also uses a corpus-based approach to analyze authorial stance in her thesis from two different disciplines (politics/international relations and sciences). Her focus is the use of nouns to construct stance. She finds out that the writers of the theses (Masters and Doctoral) show stances in their writing, which makes them competent members of their discipline, and there are disciplinary differences in the expression of such stances. For instance, the political corpus exhibits a higher frequency of certain nouns such as *argument* and *confusion*, which is probably because of the discipline's way of constructing knowledge. In a different study, Charles (2006) continues researching

theses but focuses on analyzing stance in reporting clauses with -that. She analyses how the writers hide or explicitly take responsibility for their claims. Her study contrasts two disciplines; science politics and materials science. Her findings point out differences in the disciplines, making the writer more visible in the science discipline than in the materials science. However, writers in the latter discipline have their own strategies to express their stances. She concludes that in both disciplines, the writer's stance is clear and persistent.

Research has also shown that formulaic expressions or clusters are usually present in academic writing (e.g., Chen, 2009; Chen & Baker, 2014; Hyland, 2008). Jaworska et al. (2015), for example, developed a corpus-driven study where they analyzed formulaic sequences in argumentative writing in German. They compared native and non-native writing in German. The non-native writers of German were advanced British students who seemed to use more formulaic expressions in their writing. Clusters or formulaic expressions are usually used with a function, and the functions that Jaworska et al. identified were: reference markers, discourse-structuring markers, and stance markers. It was found that non-native speakers of German used more impersonal constructions and were cautious about using stance expressions, while native speakers of German preferred to use discourse-structuring functions. The use of a corpus-driven approach follows an inductive process, that is, the data, the linguistic constructs, in this case, the formulaic expressions, emerge from the analysis of the corpus. This approach is contrary to the corpus-based approach in the sense that the corpus-based assumes some of the search terms as derived from a linguistic theory (Biber, 2009).

Again, Biber (2009) used a corpus-driven approach and analyze lexical bundles in criterial discourse features in ESL English writing by Chinese learners. Their analysis includes various levels of Chinese learners' proficiency in English, and they created three sub-corpora corresponding to the levels B1, B2, and C1 from the Common European

Framework of Reference. Similar to Jarworska et al. (2015), they analyzed the bundles in terms of structures and discourse functions. Their study comprises qualitative and quantitative analyses of the functional patterns of the use of lexical bundles. The functions they include are: referential (e.g., a great deal of, all over the world), stance (e.g., as a matter of fact, is very important too), and discourse organizer (e.g., and to be as, from my point of view). Among their main findings is that the more proficient the learners, the more impersonal their tone. Their study discloses not only in terms of the findings but also in terms of the ways corpus-driven approach with qualitative and quantitative components were used. As they affirm, an advantage of a corpus-driven approach is that it shows a more systematic and thorough examination of learner language and other aspects (Biber, 2009).

Tang (2004) suggests the use of appraisal theory in the study of written academic stance. In her MPhil essay, she discusses how construction, negotiation, and perception of a written voice in SHS writing can be analyzed. She highlights three main aspects of a written academic voice: negotiability, authority, and writer-reader solidarity, and approaches them from the perspective of the Appraisal framework proposed by Martin (2008). The framework she suggested covers three areas: engagement, attitude, and graduation. These aspects allow the study of written voice to capture shifts in interpersonal stance and subtle differences in interpersonal positioning as she describes (Tang, 2004). However, as my interest is in the authorial stance, I am only borrowing sections of her views on authority from her framework. As already discussed, the notion of authority in academic writing refers to the knowledge of conventions and practices within the discourse community and discipline and the extent to of the writer represents him/herself as an author making meaning. Martin's (2008) framework aligns with the notion of *dialogical* of Bakhtin and points to the need of the writer to negotiate their authority with the reader. In sum, from this framework, I will add in my

analysis, the way the writers demonstrate knowledge and make meaning, and I refer to this as a characteristic of the authorial stance.

Hyland (2000), from a different perspective, approaches the study of authorial stance as discourse choices that writers make to engage and position themselves in a given discipline. He has carried out several studies in this field using a corpus methodology (Hyland, 2012). The corpus linguistics approach has proven to be useful for stance studies, especially in the case of more experienced writers and their performance (Hyland 2010), as the approach allows analysis of large bodies of texts (Baker, 2006) to observe the writer's linguistic choices to express his/her stance. From his several studies, he emphatically claims to use "a somewhat novel approach" (Hyland 2010, p. 159) to analyze authorial stance. In this article, Hyland compares the authorial stance of John Swales and Deborah Cameron, who are leading figures in Applied Linguistics, and are both highly respected writers with recognized distinctive writing styles. He defends the claim that authorial stance is "constituted through our consistent language choices" (Hyland, 2010, p. 181), and these choices can be illuminated with corpus analysis by analyzing merely texts. Similarly, to Hyland, my research interest is to analyze authorial stance solely in written discourse, specifically, SHS student essays.

2.11 Conclusion

The debate about the types of stances and their functions in argumentative essays has been very interesting. The literature reviewed so far has revealed two major arguments: Hyland (2012) argues that with regard to writing, stance can be expressed through many linguistic features such as skill, grammar and lexis. In contrast to voice, which is reader-oriented, that is, the expression of the self in consideration of the chosen community. Du Bois also (2007) notes that "stance is not all the time something you have, but something you do, something you take" (p. 171). To realize stance dialogically means to invoke a shared

60

framework for co-action with others (Du Bois, 2007). It is obviously clear from the discussion that each scholar or writer has their way of representing stance and I share the view of Hyland (2012) since in a situation where speakers do not agree directly with their interlocutors, they might wish to demonstrate that they understand that disagreement is part of the conversation and this mostly is as a result of something within you. Another observation that has been highlighted by Bailey (2015) and Meyers (2014) is that, when meaning is not presented clearly, the message will not be articulated well because basic conventions of writing need to be acquired by the learners for effective writing. However, low proficiency second language (L2) learners face challenges in completing writing tasks mainly due to lack of lexical and grammatical knowledge to put forth their thinking into words that convey a certain meaning or story.

Lastly, stance is understood as the expression of the *self*, and it includes many features for its analysis. Hence, authorial stance refers then to the expression of the academic *self* and how the writer positions him/herself in the discipline portraying an authorial image while engaging in the academic community or any other given discipline. It is understood that the writer's authorial stance embraces three components, *stance/identity, voice,* and *communicative functions.* Voice in writing is the individual usage of discursive and non-discursive elements for self-expression in respect to given social context(s), (re)shaped in line with continually expanding social repertoires. Stance, on the other hand, refers to the position the writer takes towards an argument while constructing his/her voice.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0   Introduction

This research study was qualitative, with the research design illustrating the procedures followed and how the data was collected and analyzed in order to answer the research questions. Areas covered include, participants, sampling techniques and data collection. The chapter also discusses the issue of ethics, challenges encountered in the data collection, and the present data analysis.

3.1   Research approach

The quality of any research is determined by how the data gathered are used to solve a research problem (Anderson & Miller, 1994). The research approach for this study is qualitative. The approach describes vividly any data collected in order to arrive at reliable and valid findings. In a qualitative research approach, the researcher collects data from participants and analyzes them in a form of descriptions to arrive at research findings. This approach is used because the nature of the information needed to conduct the study is purely descriptive which does not need any form of manipulations by the researcher. Selinger and Shohamy (1989) consider this type of approach as one, that avoids the researcher's cultural and intellectual biases to interfere with the data. It is also used when one simply wants to describe something or a natural phenomenon in order to understand it better. According to Selinger and Shohamy (1989), descriptive research involves a collection of techniques used to specify, delineate, or describe naturally occurring phenomena without experimental manipulation. The approach is appropriate for the current study because its interpretative nature will help the researcher investigate and reveal the various types of stance markers used in English by senior high school students, not only that, it will also help to explore the functions these stance markers perform in English language.

3.2   Research design

A research design can be a specification of operations for the testing or verification of the hypotheses under a given set of conditions and of procedures for measuring variables. It involves the selection of, persons or things to be studied (Ihenacho, 2004). The study adopted a textual analysis approach in its work. According to Olayinka et al. (2006), textual analysis involves analyzing written materials or appraisal of literary outputs. It can be used for evaluating and interpreting the writings of any type or form. This was clearly the best design that could be used since, I was dealing with students' argumentative essay scripts that needed to be interpreted and analyzed in a way that could bring out the type of stance features they use and also the functions they perform. I collected their scripts for the purpose of my study. The choice of students' texts was appropriate because it offered the researcher the opportunity to investigate the students' problems regarding writing argumentative essays using authorial stance features. The data collected were codified for easy identification of the types of stances features the students used.

3.3   Population

According to Bryman (2008), population simply refers to people, events, animals, things or objects (all the possible unit or elements) who or which are used in studies as defined by the aims and objectives of the researcher. Population refers to the total number of all possible cases from which a sample is drawn. It is a group of individuals who share certain characteristics such as students, teachers, and measurement results. This study involved three Senior High Schools; Odorgonno Senior High School, Achimota Senior High School, and St. John's Grammar in the Greater Accra Region. The participants included argumentative essays of final year students, which involved 31 classes from each school, making 93 classes.

3.4   Sample and sampling technique

This study involved purposive sampling technique to select a specific group of individuals or units for analysis. Participants are chosen on purpose, not randomly. The technique was used to select students and classes for the study. The criteria for participation are to be able to write the language and express one's self using some features of authorial stance, which are not a common feature among most senior high school students. Iin addition, the participants should have an opportunity to use the language frequently since every piece of writing has a voice. Asamoah-Gyimah and Anane (2016) have indicated that the purposive sampling technique enables the researcher to select participants on the basis of their knowledge about the issue under the study. The availability of the participants and the distance of their locations should also be considered. In this study, only argumentative essays of final year General Arts students were analyzed. Ten (10) classes were sampled in each school out of thirty -one (31) classes. The ten classes were due to the subject combinations of general arts students in these three schools. Students had subject combinations ranging from general arts one (GAI) to general arts ten (GA10) leading to the use of ten classes of general arts programme available for the research in each of the three schools. Students in these ten (10) classes were made to write the argumentative essays from which the first best 100 scripts were sampled in each school. In all 300 scripts were sampled and used in the study.

The researcher adopted this size to achieve a representative subset of the population, while enabling a more in- depth, thorough analysis and a reliable content analysis. By selecting a sample of 300 scripts, I can make inferences about the characteristics of the larger population (all 1000 scripts) with a reasonable degree of confidence. Best 100 scripts in each school were also selected on the defined criteria of essay scripts that had some usage of authorial stance features based on the concept as comprehensively explained by Hyland (2005), the highlight was on this, to allow the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the

stance features students use which is not a very common feature used by students in the senior high schools again, this criteria is adopted to help develop insight that can be applied more broadly to the advancement of knowledge in the field.

3.5 Data collection instrument

Data is a collection of facts from which a conclusion may be drawn (facts might be about people, other subjects or events). Data are numbers that have some meaning – the numbers might represent age, sex, exam marks, height, volume or indeed almost anything. Students' essays were the major sources of primary data. Usually, students are expected to put up their best performance in mock exams. Hence the argumentative essay scripts were the best to use to investigate the stance features and their functions.

3.6 Validity

Validity, according to Messick (1989), refers to the degree to which empirical evidences and theoretical rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions based on test scores. Forming the crux of this research project, not only is validity an essential issue for assessment but for measurement as a whole. In addition, the assessments can be used across countries and cultures, but if this is not the case, assessments can be seen as being biased. What is more, validity influences the way that instruction changes once the results of an assessment have been correctly interpreted (Gay & Airasian, 2003; Gregory, 2000; Linn, 1998; Mahoney, 2008; Popham, 2003). For instance, an Intelligent Quotient (IQ) test measures the intelligence of the learner (existing attribute), and not all learners will have the same intelligence (variations in the attribute). This implies that when a specific attribute needs to be investigated, the interpretations or inferences made from the test have to be valid. If research has high validity that means it produces results that correspond to real properties, characteristics and variations in the physical or social world. The text was precisely a mock exam. Second, usually, students are expected to put up their

best performance in mock exam. Hence the mock scripts were the best to present clearly students' knowledge on stance. The choice of students' essays was also an appropriate measure because it offered the researcher the opportunity to investigate the students' problems regarding writing argumentative essays using authorial stance features. That way, issues of validity were taken care of since the instrument measured exactly what the researcher was investigating based on Hyland's theoretical framework on stance. All rationales support the adequacy and appropriateness of interpretations and actions based on test scores from students' scripts.

3.7   Data analysis

Data analysis was in three stages. After the collection of the data (argumentative essays), the scripts that had stance features were numbered using the Arabic numerals such as 1, 2, or 3 for identification purposes. Each essay was then read manually to determine the number of stance features used using the codes in accordance with the protocol list (marked Table 3.7.1) and data collection sheet developed by the researcher (marked Table 3.7.2) to determine the types of stance features used. The protocol list included features of authorial stance as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and Self-mention and specific associated words. An adaptor hedge was identified with 01 code across sentences and paragraphs, a rounder was identified with the code 02; plausibility with the code 03 and attribution with 04. A belief booster was coded 05, solidarity boosters 06. The same procedure was used for attitude markers and self-mentions as showed in Table 3.7.3.

During the second phase, which is the record of diction/stance features used in the scripts, the stance items were double-checked and recorded according to participant and stance type used. To minimize ambiguity and ensure consistency in the data coding, an item was considered as a hedge if and only if it exhibited fuzziness, doubt, and caution in the language. This follows a definition of hedges proposed in Hashemi and Sayah (2014). In this

66

same way as hedges, the other stance markers (boosters, attitude markers, and Self-mention) were determined. This protocol was aimed at investigating the usage of stance in argumentative essays of senior high students.

Table 3.7.1. Coding for categories of stance markers in students' essays

Authorial Stance	Categories	Sub- Categories	Codes
Hedges	Approximators	Adaptor	01
		Rounder	02
	Shield	Plausibility	03
		Attribution	04
Boosters	Belief	-	05
	Solidarity	-	06
Attitude Markers	-	attitudinal verbs	07
	-	attitudinal adverbs	08
	-	attitudinal adjectives	09
	-	attitudinal nouns	10
		first-person pronouns (I, we)	11
		Possessive determiners (my,	12
		Third-person nominal phrases	13
Self-Mention		-the author	
		-the author's,	

Table 3.7.2. Sample of data collection sheet

Authorial Stance	Categories	Sub-categories	Tabulation
Hedges	Approximators	Adaptor	
		Rounder	
	Shield	Plausibility	
		Attribution	
Boosters	-	-	
Attitude Markers	-	attitudinal verbs	
	-	attitudinal adverbs	
	-	attitudinal adjectives	
	-	attitudinal nouns	
	-	first-person pronouns (I, we)	
Self-Mention		Possessive determiners (my, our)	
		Third-person nominal phrases	
		-the author	
		-the author's,	
		-the writer	
		-the writer's	

The following diction/words (but not limited to) were used in the analysis of the content of the argumentative essays of the students.

Table 3.7.3.1. Records of specific diction/words (stance features)

Authorial Stance	Categories	Sub- Categories	Tabulation
Hedges	Approximators	Adaptor	
		Rounder	
	Shield	Plausibility	
		Attribution	

Table 3.7.3.2. Records of specific diction/words (stance features)

Authorial Stance	Categories	Sub- Categories	Tabulation
Attitude	-	attitudinal verbs	
	-	attitudinal adverbs	
	-	attitudinal adjectives	
Markers	-	attitudinal nouns	

Table 3.7.3.3. Records of specific diction/words (Stance features)

Authorial Stance	Categories	Sub- Categories	Tabulation
	-	first-person pronouns (I. we)	
		Possessive determiners (my, our	
		Third-person nominal phrases	
Self-Mention		-the author	
		-the author's,	
		-the writer	
		-the writer's	

69

3.8   Reliability

Reliability tells how consistently a method measure something. When you apply the same method to the same sample under the same conditions, you should get the same results. If not, the method of measurement may be unreliable or bias, may have crept into the research (Klein, 2013). Inter-rater reliability measures the degree of agreement between different people observing or assessing the same thing. It is used when data are collected by researchers assigning ratings, scores or categories to one or more variables, and it can help mitigate observer bias (Beyer, 2002). To measure inter-rater reliability of the data, 2 different raters conducted the same measurement on the same sample. The correlation between their different sets of results was calculated. Since all the raters gave similar ratings, the test has high inter-rater reliability. Table 3.8 presents results of the reliability test:

Table 3.8. Results of inter-rater reliability test

Argumentative essay	Rater 1	Rater 2	Agreement
Script 1	5	5	1
Script 2	3	2	0
Script 3	6	6	1
Script 4	4	4	1
Script 5	5	5	1
Script 6	5	5	1
Script 7	5	5	1
Script 8	5	6	0
Script 9	4	4	1
Script 10	6	6	1

**Ratings (RRI) that agree score 1 and those (RRI) that disagree is 0

Total percentage agreement= 8/10 X 100 = 80%

70

1. The number of ratings in the agreement is 8

2. The total number of ratings is 10

3. Converted to a percentage, is 80%

3.9 Ethical considerations

Transparency, credibility, confidentiality, and privacy were considered in this research. These were the guidelines that each researcher must follow in order to do ethical research. There was no malice, prejudices or manipulation of factual interpretations in this study. The teachers in charge of the mock exams and students were sent a consent form and the information sheet before data collection. However, permission was taken from the heads of the languages department of the three senior high secondary schools in Greater Accra to carry out the current study. I emphasized that English teachers in charge of the mock exams and students writing the essays could withdraw at any time of the study or refuse to answer any of the argumentative essay questions without consequences. It was emphasized that the participants' (whose scripts were sampled) names would be anonymous in the research findings; participants' names were replaced with pseudonyms to maintain their confidentiality and privacy. Writers were informed that their data would be stored in a secure place where I only could assess it with care, especially during the marking of the scripts, bearing in mind the coding for categories of stance markers in students' essays. All study data would be disposed of as soon as my research is completed. Finally, the participants were asked for permission to use quotations from their scripts. My school email address was available for them to contact me if they needed help.

3.10 Conclusion

The methodology that was used in the study was discussed in this Chapter. The qualitative method approach was used which provides clear understanding on how the study was carried out especially in linking the theories to the data collected, with a textual analysis

design for the study. The population assessed, consisted of 300 final year general arts students from three senior high secondary schools. To affirm the consistency of the instruments for the study, a construct validity of content essay questions was ensured to validate the understanding of the instruments. This chapter has also discussed how the data for the research were generated and applied using students argumentative essay scripts. The data sampling technique was purposive sampling. The data collected procedure and tools were also discussed in this research chapter. An inter-rater reliability test was performed to measure the reliability for the data. Again, ethical considerations for the study were discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0   Introduction

This chapter discusses the analysis of authorial stance markers in students'
argumentative essays. The discussion focuses on the types of stance markers in the students'
argumentative essays and the discourse functions of these stance markers. According to
Hyland (2005), stance is mainly marked by hedges, boosters, self-mentions and attitudinal
markers which convey the writers' judgement, opinion, and commitment. The chapter is
divided into two sections: the first section presents the analysis of types of stance markers.
Here, hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions were found in the data, with
hedges being the most used and attitude markers being the least used. The second section
presents results of the functions of stance markers. These functions are to present information
to the audience in a more precise way, to strengthen authors' claims or statements on the
issue, to create conviction and persuasion influence, to explain a procedure, and to state an
expectation or a wish. The results are presented in the sections that follow.

4.1   Types of stance markers

The various types of markers identified in the data are hedges, boosters Self-mention
and attitude markers. This study draws from the theory of stance categories introduced by
Hyland (2005). The reason for using Hyland's interaction model is that it is the most widely
used, attested to in applied linguistics research, and has proven to be productive for more than
a decade. In addition, it has been adopted by most published papers (e.g., Candarli et al.,
2015; Lee & Deakin, 2016; Menkabu, 2017; Waller, 2015). Table 4.1 presents the stance
markers identified in the essays. From Table 4.1, we see that out of 610 features of stance
identified in the essays of the students, 305 which constitute 50% are hedges. One hundred

and fifty (150) boosters were used representing 24.5%, 89 self-mentions representing 14.5% were used, and 66 attitude markers representing 11% were used.

Table 4.1. Stance markers in students' essays

Stance feature	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Hedges	305	50
Boosters	150	24.5
Self-Mention	89	14.5
Attitude Marker	66	11
Total	**610**	**100**

It is clearly noticed that the writers used overall, more hedges compared to all other stance markers. There is a striking difference also found in the type of boosters which writers used considerably, more than that of attitude markers and Self-mention. Despite the differences in the types, there is a considerable similarity in the word items used by writers; hence, the general overview of the data analysis reveals broad differences between the stance markers of the students in two categories: hedges and attitude markers. However, there were considerable commonalities in the use of boosters and self-mentions. In the following sections, the results from individual categories; hedges, boosters self-mentions and attitude markers, are used to explore the types of each marker to answer the first research question.

4.1.1 Hedges

Linguists have paid attention to the term 'hedges' in the last 40 years. They first focused on how various lexicon-grammatical structures that could be employed to denote different degrees of certainty so that writers/speakers could better express perceptions of reality. Accordingly, Hyland (2005) argues 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 those items that lessen the intensity or force of something unpleasant or attenuation of the possible unfortunate effects on the recipient. It is seen that out of 305 hedges, the study found 105 approximators representing 42% and 195 shields representing 58%. From this, one can conclude that the students used more shields than approximators. These are presented in Table 4.1.1 as follows:

Table 4.1.1. Categories of hedges in students' essays

Type of Hedge	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Shield	195	58
Approximator	105	42
Total	**305**	**100**

4.1.1.1 Shield hedges

Shield hedges pertain to the degree of uncertainty about the propositional content that the speaker expresses and may reflect the extent of their involvement. As the term *shield* suggests, they protect the speaker from having to take full responsibility for the propositional content of an utterance. These hedges fall into two groups: plausibility hedges; expressing doubt and a lack of speaker certainty, and attribution shields which attribute the belief in question to someone other than the speaker. These are illustrated in Table 4.1.1.1.

Table 4.1.1.1. Categories of Shield hedges in students' essays

Type of Shield	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Plausibility	105	54
Attribution	90	46
Total	**195**	**100**

From Table 4.1.1.1, it is seen that there are 105 plausibility hedges representing 54% as against 90 attribution hedges representing 46% of the total number.

4.1.1.1.1 Plausibility hedges

Plausibility hedges express doubt and a lack of speaker certainty; they protect the speaker from having to take full responsibility for the propositional content of their utterance. Examples are *I think*, *I am afraid*, *as far as I can tell*, *probably*, *I guess*, *I suspect* (Qin & Uccelli, 2019). These are illustrated as follows:

1. *Writer 1:* **_If I may say so_**, *this is a noticeable position and draws unnecessary attention unless it* **_appears_** *to you that the school environment development is a good idea*.

2. *Writer 2: However, most of the theories about teachers having intervention after school,* **_could_** *theoretically be used. Well first of all irrelevant. it's beside the point… it doesn't further an argument, but again…the context is... it depends on the context.*

3. *Writer 3*: *First ask yourself how it helps the discussion to refer to yourself.* **_I suppose_** *it might be true by all standards,* **_I guess_**.

4. *Writer 4*: *We* **_possibly_** *would have performed better in the boarding house if the students were to abide by the norms of the school* **_given that_** *they were set or agreed upon by the community to which we belong.*

5. *Writer 5: I was in the camp of the parents for a long time, but after my US experience I started to feel and* **_assume_** *by all standards that day students enjoy better facilities.*

We notice that the student uses *appear*, a lexical verb, as a hesitation word. Again, the expression *If I may say so* is a conditional clause used to denote permission. In Sentence 2*, could*, a modal verb, is used to show possibility and also as and indirect speech act. In Sentence 3, the student used *suppose*d to convey the semantic (or lexical) meaning of the sentence, while they he/she uses *I guess* as a parenthetic construction or an aside. These are

used to modify the component of the illocutionary force and affect the felicity or the truth communicate or to communicate emotion or action. We also realize in Sentence 4 that the student uses *possibly* as a probability noun to express the extent to which obedience to school rules was likely to change their fortunes in the boarding house and uses *given that*, a conditional subordinator, to describe conditions under which the something may or may not happen. Lastly, in Sentence 5, the student uses the verb a*ssume* to suggest the likelihood of day students enjoying better facilities. This means that words from different classes can be used to hedge claims in writing.

4.1.1.1.2 Attribution hedges

Attribution hedges assign responsibility to someone other than the speaker and affect the degree of the speaker's commitment. Such phrases as according to one's estimates, presumably, at least to one's knowledge, are devices used to avoid personal self-ascription and disclaim responsibility, for example by assigning it to a different speaker. Words in this category include *that indicates*, *whereas*, *presumably*, and *suggests that* (Caffi, 2007; Malyuga & McCarthy, 2018). These are illustrated as follows:

6. *Writer 6***:** *Results of some study I made also **indicate** that parents do a lot of work in shaping their wards **whereas** some students haven't really developed their understanding of their use as secondary school material.*

7. *Writer 7***:** *students **presumably** end up on the way somewhere and get accustomed to some good drinks and forget all about school on that day.*

8. *Writer 8: the argument itself **suggests** that the good students may feel more relaxed. confident. disinhibited… those aspects can never be conveyed by the passive student*

9. *Writer 9***:** *They **seem** quite confident about their status since my opponents may dissolve ambiguities but we can just imagine you administer a test to your students who are in school and day students fail because they are always absent.*

77

10. *Writer 10*: S*eemingly being a boarder* **_might_** *be perceived as best, so much also I don't like that it makes my skin crawls just to think of coming to live in the school community, though I* **_must_** *try.*

In Sentence 6, *whereas* is a concessive conjunction that introduce the clause that expresses a contrast, is used. The lexical verb *indicate* is also used to point to an assertion made from the study of a study. The word *presumably* in Sentence 7 is a probability adverb that tells us about the likelihood of students engaging in other activities while forgetting about school. The word *suggests* is a lexical verb that is used in Sentence 8 to express the state of good students. The word *seem* is also a lexical verb which has been used to show the state of a group of students in Sentence 9. The modal *might* have been used in S as an indirect speech act and the likelihood of boarders being perceived as better than day students, while *must*, also a modal, has been used as a performative suggesting a cautious approach to the claim made.

4.1.1.2 Approximator hedges

Approximator hedges affect the propositional content and not the speaker. Approximators are subdivided into adaptors that relate to class membership and rounders; words that are normally used when the exact or precise information is of no importance to the speaker. In the data, there were 49 occurrences of adaptors constituting 36.5% as against rounders occurring 56 times with a percentage of 63.5% as seen in Table 4.1.1.2.

Table 4.1.1.2. Categories of approximators in students' essays

Type of Approximator	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Rounders	56	63.5
Adaptors	49	36.5
Total	**105**	**100**

4.1.1.2.1 Adaptor hedges

Adaptors can modify the language that is very close to truth value of the proposition. They apply to class membership and contribute to the interpretation of the utterance. Words and phrases like *sort of*, *kind of*, *one*, *somewhat*, *really*, *almost*, and *to some extents* are in this category (Dontcheva-Navratilova, 2017; Kranich, 2015). These are illustrated as follows:

11. *Writer 11: I just prefer to keep away from using vague terms such as my opponent because <u>**you see, I think**</u> that teachers are doing a great service to humanity and they shouldn't be blamed much for student's truancy, that is <u>**if true**</u>.*

12. *Writer 12<u>**: They feel that,**</u> even old-fashioned teachers who belong to the senior generation of counselors are now accepting that it is <u>**likely**</u> a great opportunity to be part of the school community as a boarding student.*

13. *Writer 13: <u>**One**</u> can speculate that the teachers are expecting change the following year<u>**, though**</u> the students are not sure of their data.*

14. *Writer 14**:** We just prefer to keep away from using vague terms such as our opponents, cos boarding school is sometimes <u>**sort of**</u> a bother because of too much work<u>**, isn't it?**</u>*

15. *Writer 15: We are now strongly encouraging our fellow students to refer to themselves, and it is also <u>**often**</u> okay to side by teachers against parents in my own opinion when dealing with good parenting.*

The student uses *you see* and *I think* in Sentence 11 to indicate what he/she is thinking about what to say next in their essay. There is also the use of an if clause, *if true*, to communicate a condition that an assertion is based on. The introductory phrase, *they feel that* in Sentence 12 is used to clarifying a statement about the main sentence, while *likely*, a modal adjective, is used to express the possibility of having the opportunity to be a boarder. In Sentence 13, *though*, a concessive conjunction, is used to describe the state of mind of the

students being talked about, while *one*, an impersonal pronoun, is used to show that although no specific person or part of the sentence is being referred to, it still refers to anyone who cares to speculate. Sentence 14 shows the use of *sort of* being used to make their thoughts of boarding school feel less awkward while *isn't it*, a reversal tag, a way of soliciting agreement with the reader on the student's view regarding boarding school. Lastly, *often*, a probability adverb, is used in Sentence 15 to provide information about the student's degree of certainty or uncertainty about his assertion.

4.1.1.2.2 Rounder hedges

According to Takimoto (2015), rounders represent a class of hedges which are normally used when the exact or precise information is of no importance to the speaker. They modify the propositional content presented in figures, statistics, deictic markers of time, and measurements. Words and phrases like *about*, *between*, *occasionally* and *roughly* are in this category.

16. *Writer 16***:** *Would it not be humbler and more realistic to say that **occasionally**, parents could assist their wards with assignments.*

17. *Writer 17***:** *I will want to tell my opponents most of their figures were approximated, besides **often** conceited because it takes for granted that the writer has reached the status of a full-fledged researcher.*

18. *Writer 18***:** *It's **about** time students deal with their issues maturely, my view is that it oozes a fake distant tone which sounds unnatural, something similar to the notion that I, at my age should be a day student because I can't take care of myself.*

19. *Writer 19*: *The argument that teachers are better parents of students **roughly** wouldn't be a bad idea but it also depends on personal preferences of and perhaps even jury members.*

20. *Writer 20: I tell them that there is no one right way of living life in school but that they need to find a style which works for them though we want to argue that Life's **<u>a little bit</u>** more complex in the boarding house than that.*

The student uses *occasionally,* a probability adverb, in Sentence 16 to indicate his certainty or not that parent would help their wards with their assignment. The adverb of frequency, *often*, has been used in Sentence 17 to describe frequency with which their opponents would come up with their figures. The use of *about*, a probability adverb in Sentence 18, is to show his certainty regarding when students should deal with issues. The probability adverb, *roughly*, has been used in Sentence 19 to make estimation about the role of teachers in the school. The adverb, *a little bit*, has been used in Sentence 20 to indicate the degree of complexity in the boarding house compared to home. From the analysis, it is apparent from the analysis that the writers employed remarkably all of the four categories of the hedges and this combined constitute 50% of the total types of stance markers used in the data. Largely, the writers used a significantly more restricted language looking at the range of tentative lexical devices employed.

4.1.2   Boosters

Pinker (2014) affirms that boosters can be considered as rhetoric devices with a purpose of strengthening authors' claims or statements on the issue, thus it creates a heftier conviction and persuasion influence on the stockholder. Along similar lines, boosters seek to increase the claims or statements, hence to prove the author's commitment and engagement to her/his statements (Hyland, 1998). Undoubtedly boosters are less commonly used by academic writers. Although it is not a very common sight, it indicates the writers' confidence and certainty in generating and compiling their ideas and claims that they made. Vassileva (2001) argues that boosters allow writers to express their beliefs and solidarity with the audience. Kuteva (2011) categorized boosters into two main categories; belief and solidarity.

It can be seen that boosters were used one-hundred and fifty times in totality from which the writers used more of the belief boosters with 79 occurrences (53%) whereas writers used 71 solidarity boosters representing (47%).Therefore students used more belief boosters than solidarity boosters, in contrast to the numerous use of hedges this finding is in line with the study of Crosthwaite et al. (2017), which reported that writers are more likely to convey uncertainty by hedging their arguments as against them feeling a strong need to forcefully claim plausibility and trustworthiness for what they say in their arguments or discussion. A lot more belief boosters were used because once a writer achieves a good stance diction, perhaps a less urgent appeal is needed to blow up the confidence in his/her claims. These are presented in Table 4.1.2 as follows:

Table 4.1.2. Categories of boosters in students' essays

Booster	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Belief	79	53
Solidarity	71	47
Total	**150**	**100**

4.1.2.1 Belief boosters

According to Kuteva (2011), a belief booster is used when the author states unequivocally that he/she is absolutely convinced of what he/she is saying. For example, *undoubtedly, definite, confirms*, *prove/proven*, *demonstrate*, *certainly*, *obviously*, *clearly*, *show (that)*, *the fact that*, *of course*, and *indeed*. Boosters may occur at different parts of the sentences which could also set the tone of an article that the writers would like to highlight. Recski (2005) had used tone ranks introduced by Halliday (1970) in his study to identify the ranks in boosters i) at clause rank - through mood and modality, ii) at group rank, (in the verbal group - through a person, in the nominal group - through attitude, in the adverbial

group - through a comment), and at word rank - through lexical register. Examples of the use of belief boosters are as follows:

21. *Writer 21: The arguments on day school and boarding school are **<u>undoubtedly</u>** conclusive by now and **<u>all</u>** these studies put forward the remarkable influence of both teachers and parents.*

22. *Writer 22: The equality of regression slopes also **<u>must</u>** be tested among both day and boarding students which can be **<u>clearly</u>** interpreted as a school management imposition.*

23. *Writer 23: When analyzing **<u>the fact</u>** of the results, once more, prove that being a day student prevents unnecessary working pressure and it became **<u>clear</u>** that some students are against that decision.*

24. *Writer 24: It is also **<u>apparent</u>** that the rules of the school must be strictly adhered to, so it can **<u>definitely</u>** be argued again and further that we need to obey the rules.*

25. *Writer 25: whatever the context is, it **<u>always</u>** presupposes certain knowledge of the fact that teachers help a great deal of students, and so the mandate lies in the hands of the teachers who will always **<u>confirm</u>** this assumption.*

The adverb *undoubtedly* has been in Sentence 21 by the student to indicate that it is without any doubt that he believes that the issues surrounding the preference for boarding or day school have been concluded while *all* is used to suggest the number of studies that reveal the role of teachers and parents in raising children. The modal verb *must* have been used in Sentence 22 to show that it is necessary for a certain test to be conducted to ascertain claims regarding boarding and day students while *clearly* is used to strengthen the importance of the test to be conducted. In Sentence 23, the use of *the fact*, a noun booster, suggests that information regarding being a day student helps to understand their situation while *clear* shows that the student knows exactly what they are talking about. The adjective *apparent*

used in Sentence 24 suggests that the student is very certain about the need to adhere to school rules and *definitely* is used to emphasize or strengthen the arguments regarding obeying rules. The adverb *always* is used in Sentence 25 to strengthen the fact that teachers help students while *confirm* is used to indicate teachers are expected to take a course of action regarding a certain assumption.

4.1.2.2 Solidarity boosters

Solidarity boosters are used when the author claims shared knowledge with the audience – for example: *greater*, *better*, *more*, *desirable*, *really*, *extremely*, *always*, *will*, and *actually*. These are illustrated as follows:

26. *Writer 26***:** *Parent's responsibility in truant behaviors **certainly** achieves its preferred goal as their core mandate it is also **quite** necessary for the students themselves to put in great effort.*

27. *Writer 27*: *It is a **better** idea; I think to be in the boarding house when students all around the nation have their parents running halter swelter for boarding facilities.*

28. *Writer 28: I **will** always argue in favor of the boarding school because it has shaped a lot of people into great adulthood* and *there are **better** opportunities always lie in the school* compound.

29. Writer 29: Won't it be a **greater** opportunity for parents to assist in the nurturing of children since without motivation, student achievement **cannot** be ensured.

30. *Writer 30:* **Actually,** *most students do not read at homes and so their bad vocabulary leads* them to use an **icebreaker** for faulty pronunciation which makes me think that it is a good idea.

In Sentence 26, the student uses *certainly*, an adverb, to communicate his certainty about his belief in the result of behavior of parents while he uses *quiet*, a quantifier, to describe the extent of importance of students' involvement in their training. The word *better*,

an adjective, is used by the student in Sentence 27 to show the extent to which she prefers being in the boarding school. In Sentence 28, *will* and *better* have been used to express the possibility of the student to continue advocating for students to be in the boarding school in order for them to enjoy the quality of opportunities that come their way. In Sentence 29, the student employs the use of *greater* to express the magnitude of opportunity that comes their way in the boarding school and *cannot* to show the impossibility of achieving anything if students are not motivated. The adverb *actually* in Sentence 30 is used to signal the writer's certainty about his knowledge of students' reading behavior while *icebreaker* helps with their pronunciation.

4.1.3 Attitude markers

Hyland (2005b, p. 180) states that "authors employ attitude markers in their texts to present a position and take a stance". They use these markers to make readers agree with their points of view and pull the readers into a conspiracy of agreement. As the term "attitude" markers itself suggest, attitude markers may best be defined as a set of expressions in language which the speaker applies to clarify his or her feelings, emotions or views contained in the utterance being made. Attitude markers "amplify" the speaker's intended meaning. Poggi (2007) says that attitude markers convey addresser's commitment, his/her intention, attitude, or mood. Grammatically, attitude markers can be verb (insist) adverb (fortunately), noun (president), or adjective (remarkable). They also can be idioms such as please and ok which serve to represent addresser's intention and attitudes in certain situation. Similarly, Fraser (1990) thinks that attitude markers are linguistic items that are similar in their grammatical categories, because they can be nouns, verbs, adverbs, adjective, and interjection. The frequency of attitude markers in the four different analytical sections and their occurrences per 66 words in the data are presented in Table 4.1.3 as follows:

85

Table 4.1.3. Categories of attitude markers

Attitude marker	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
Attitude Verbs	10	15
Attitude nouns	15	23
Attitude Adjectives	21	32
Attitude Adverbs	20	30
Total	**66**	**100**

It is revealed in the table that most of the attitude markers, students used in their essays is the attitude adjectives. It was used 21 times representing 32%. This was followed by attitude adverbs used 20 times representing 30%. Attitude nouns occurred 15 times representing 23% and attitude verbs had 10 occurrences representing 15%. It is interesting to note that the findings revealed that adjectives occurred more frequently than any other attitudinal lexicon. In contrast, markers such as adverbs, verbs, and nouns were scarce because the authors attempted to employ adjectives as evaluative markers to express their thoughts and feelings. The results strategically indicate that the writers' voice was clearly visible in their essays. These attitude markers were found to express the writers' judgment and attitude towards the proposition they discussed or argued.

In consensus with other researchers' findings regarding the analysis of attitude markers in academic discourses (Duenas, 2010; Hyland, 2005b; Koutsantoni, 2004; Swales & Burke, 2001, Yang, 2016), explicit adjectives were found to be more frequent than any other attitudinal lexicon such as adverbs, nouns, and verbs in the research. In the data attitude markers was least used because students were very cautious about conveying personal attitudes towards their propositions or evaluating others' statements. This also indicates some

student writers do not tend to use personal emotions to reflect their attitudes toward the proposition. These are discussed as follows:

4.1.3.1 Attitude verbs

Attitude verbs such as think, want, and know, describe internal mental states that leave few cues as to their meanings in the physical world (Koutsantoni, 2004). These are illustrated as follows:

31. *Writer* 31: *We **totally agree** that the school environment nurtures students better than anywhere else; we are greatly elated to be part of this huge success.*

32. *Writer 32: **I am hearing** him for the first time; he left that gap that our opponents forgot to refute to our amazement.*

33. *Writer 33*: ***I insist** that you should do what I want at home with my parents which cannot ever be the same feeling in the school community.*

34. *Writer 34*: ***Mark my words,** the teacher kicked the student out in such a way that was a huge embarrassment and an eyesore at that.*

35. *Writer 35: Wow* **I tell you***; it was a great opportunity for me to be accepted into the boarding fraternity.*

The student uses t*otally agree* in Sentence 31 to show that the writer completely supports the role of the school in nurturing students. The use of *I am hearing*, the *present progressive, in Sentence 32* describes the attitude of the writer that he has never heard of him until *today*. The expression *I insist* is used in Sentence 33 to suggest a command from the writer to compel the hearer to perform an action. The expression *marks my words* is used in Sentence 34 to show an imperative, urging the listener to heed the speaker's words carefully. The expression *I tell you* in Sentence 35 is used to convey a sense of certainty on the part of the writer.

4.1.3.2 Attitude noun

Examples of Attitudes nouns are agreeable, aloof, ambitious, amenable, animated, apathetic, approachable assertive. The expressions that were used in Sentences 36-38 functioned as compliments to the nouns while the noun in 39 signifies an artifact with the adjective in 40 shows the quality of the celebration. These are illustrated as follows:

36. *Writer 36*: *It is **a promise** that the situation that some parents are to blame for students' truancy since they do their best to nurture their wards would be solved going forward.*

37. *Writer 37:* **He is the president** *of the boy's scout in the school though he pretends not to be because of his inability to speak well.*

38. *Writer 38:* **He is a boy** *nevertheless; he can't argue otherwise from any side.*

39. *Writer 39: He loves **animated**, that issue has been a problem since time immemorial, my opponents believe the opposite of my views.*

40. *Writer 40: It was **a joyous** experience to be part of the school community after a long time of being a day student.*

4.1.3.3 Attitude adjectives

Adjectives of attitude are *words that describe how a person feels or thinks about something*. According to De Bryum (1998), attitude markers are linguistic items that are similar in their grammatical categories. As we see from the sentences, all the markers used are adjectives and can be either positive or negative. Examples are remarkable, interesting, unfortunate, hard, amazing, and disinterested. These adjectives were used to describe the quality of the nouns described in the sentences. These are illustrated as follows:

41. *Writer 41*: *It was a **remarkable** experience for me in the school especially when I was voted to become the house prefect to house four.*

88

42. *Writer 42: What an **<u>interesting</u>** journey to be in the boarding house it was and enjoy some meals prepared by another woman either than your mom.*

43. *Writer 43*: *It is an **<u>unfortunate</u>** situation that some parents are to blame for students' truancy when it is actually teachers who are to enforce that student follow the rules*

44. *Writer 44: Well, the **<u>hard</u>** truth is I prefer to come from home to attend school instead of the other way round.*

45. *Writer 45: An **<u>amazing</u>** student he really is, it was a great opportunity he was accepted in the school as a boarder, this is a really great opportunity.*

4.1.3.4 Attitude adverbs

Attitude adverbs express the writer's attitude toward the state or action described in the sentence. Attitude adverbs typically are placed before the subject of the sentence. Some common attitude adverbs are fortunately, luckily, obviously, unfortunately, and unluckily. These are illustrated as follows:

46. *Writer 46: It is a **<u>significantly</u>** great deal to be a teacher when all students think otherwise.*

47. *Writer 47: **<u>Frankly</u>** I do not agree with the third speaker on the other side, why should they always blame teachers?*

48. *Writer 48: Some students just **<u>madly</u>** refuse to work in school though they do at home because they are lazy.*

49. *Writer 49: **<u>Astonishly</u>** people say teachers' rewards are really in heaven is a fallacy because a lot of teachers are still doing well with their families.*

50. *Writer 50: **<u>Seriously</u>** parents are doing a good job nevertheless. All praises to them.*

4.1.4   Self-mention

Self-mention is described as the extent of author presence in academic discourse in which the writer does not only convey disciplinary content but also carries a representation of

the writer, as an act of identity (Hyland (2002). Such explicit authorial presence is realized through the use of first-person pronouns (e.g., I, we), possessive determiners (e.g., my, our) and third-person nominal phrases (e.g., the author). Among them, the most visible and powerful manifestation of authorial identity is the use of first person pronouns and their corresponding determiners (e.g. Hyland, 2001; Ivanič, 1998). Yang (2015), affirms that self-mention plays an important role in the achievement of authorial self and success of academic writing. The study found out that the most elements of Self-mention used by students in their essays is the first-person pronoun. These are illustrated in Table 4.1.4

Table 4.1.4. Categories of self-mention in students' essays

Self-Mention	Frequency of occurrence	Percentage (%)
First person pronoun	48	54
Possessive pronoun	36	40
Third person pronoun	5	6
Total	**89**	**100**

First person pronoun was used 48 times representing 54%. This was followed by Possessive pronoun, 36 times representing 40%, while third person pronoun was found five times representing 6% and no nominal phrase was used. In this study, self-mentions are the least frequently used in terms of their category of distribution. Many other scholars who are in favor of the use of first-person pronouns in writing have gradually proved that they establish a claim for recognition for academic priority (Hyland, 2001; Martinez, 2005). The present study has confirmed results from some earlier research, in that there is an overall increase in the average frequency of first-person Self-mention markers. It can be argued that consequently, the high usage of the first-person pronoun by students stems from the fact that, they are raising awareness of the importance of writer-reader interaction. 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. 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.

4.1.4.1 First person pronoun

First-person pronouns are words such as "I" and "us" that refer either to the person who said or wrote them (singular), or to a group including the speaker or writer (plural). 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, 2005). Using first person could be negatively related to subjectivity and informality. These are illustrated as follows:

51. *Writer* 51*:* It *is my strong conviction that **she** as a boarder is exposed to more dangers without her parent.*

52. *Writer 52: with **us,** our understanding is that the focus is on the truant behaviors of student's main concern there is nothing personal here.*

53. *Writer* 53**:** **We** *are interested in your opinion if it happens to be true so it is nothing about what you agree more with the fact that teachers are better care takers of students than parents.*

54. *Writer* 54**:** **I** *assume it is a great opportunity to be in the boarding house though I am a strong alliance of the day school.*

55. *Writer 55: With **me** it is not clear enough as to what are the responsibilities of teachers in the school.*

4.1.4.2 Possessive pronouns

A possessive pronoun is a pronoun used to indicate ownership (Luzon 2009). The English possessive pronouns are mine, ours, yours, his, hers, theirs, examples of possessive pronouns in data are illustrated as follows:

56. *Writer 56: **Our** opponents are not being realistic*

57. *Writer 57: **Those** viewpoints are sorely ours.so **I** object to anyone using them without permission.*

58. *Writer 58: **Their** parents are the pioneers of the boarding house and so I agree that as stake holders they must be treated well.*

59. *Writer 59: The points raised by the third speaker were **mine.***

60. *Writer 60: We would not be the first to reject **their** points.*

4.1.4.3 Third person pronoun

Third person pronouns are words such as "she," "it," and "they" that are used to refer to other people and things that are not being directly addressed, without naming them specifically with a noun (Luzon, 2009). 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. These are illustrated as follows:

*61 Writer 61: **It** has vowed to debate all its life presumably that is what it vowed to do.*

*62 Writer 62: **They** seem to have the best of results all the time notwithstanding the fact that their language laboratory is in a dilapidated state.*

*63 Writer 63: Wouldn't **he** be good at debating too, considering the fact that his sister was the one who received the championship award organized for the debtors a year ago?*

*64 Writer 64: It is as if **they** never paid attention to listen to the arguments that were put forward concerning the stake of parents in nurturing their wards at home.*

*65 Writer 65: The other group of debtors are of the view that truancy is a disciplinary attitude that cannot be curbed in any way possible and **it** requires drastic measures even if can.*

4.1.5   Summary

Hedges were the most used stance devices by writers in the research with 50% of the total stance markers in the data. In addition, all the four hedging types were used by the writers with modal verbs being the most items used by the students to hedge. Attitude markers are the fewest frequent devices with 11% of the total stance markers. Boosters are the second category after hedges; they constituted about 24.4% while Self-mention had 14.5%. The analysis showed that writers are aware of the importance of hedges in writing. In general, writers use hedges to suggest an idea based on plausible reasoning rather than on certain knowledge. The finding that the two major classes, hedges and boosters exhibited closer frequencies may be attributed to the fact that some students have developed the skill to mimic experts' writers' use of boosters, thereby enhancing their authorial voice and mitigating their novice status as writers. This awareness enables them to adopt a more confident and authoritative tone in their writing.

The analysis also showed that slightly less than half of the writers referred to themselves when writing, while most of the writers preferred to refer to themselves implicitly by using the third person pronoun because they do not like to reveal their identity, and will rather do so using the third person pronoun. Writers' attitude markers, referred to their affective attitude as they conveyed interest, surprise, agreement, and importance, rather than commitment. It is useful to categorize the items into grammatical classes for comparison as suggested by Hyland and Milton (1997). The writers tended to use lexical verbs and modals

which constitute around one third of all the stance markers to express their stance. Adverbs came second as the most used devices in the data comparatively to nouns and adjectives that had the lowest numbers and this may be attributed to the fact that writers wanted to indicate a desire to assert their authority and take a clear position on a topic, and the underutilization of nouns, especially suggests that students may not be fully exploiting the potential of a wide range of linguistic features to convey complexity in their writing to effectively convey their ideas and arguments in their texts.

4.2   Functions of stance markers

The functions of stance are a rather elusive concept as shown by the fact that the functions assigned to this term in the literature differ greatly among researchers. Some of earliest linguistic studies on authorial stance highlighted the semantic function of stance markers phenomena. Hyland (2004) for example, regards hedges as a typical trait of academic discourse. In fact, as it is generally accepted that members of academia cannot make categorical statements about their own hypotheses or findings. Quite on the contrary, they are expected to use hedges in order to "express tentativeness and possibility" (Hyland 1996: 433). According to Hyland, thanks to these tentative expressions authors project an image of honesty and humility when reporting their own research results.

Boosters may be seen as strategies whose core function is complementary to that of hedges, i.e., qualifying the commitment to the truth of the proposition uttered by the writer. It must be acknowledged that, besides expressing commitment to the truth of a proposition, sometimes boosters can be used to engage with the readers and to strategically present information as shared and consensually given (Hyland 1998a). It is common in academic writing that writers express their shared attitudes by using attitude markers (Hyland, 2005b). Actually, the role of this markers is to signal writers' shared values and attitudes that both express "a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be

94

difficult to dispute these judgments" (p. 180). Self-mention on the other hand, according to Walková (2019), plays a range of rhetorical functions which strategically project the authors' positioning with respect to their research, to the potential readers, and to their academic community.

4.2.1   Hedges

Essentially hedges in academic writing signal a writer's anticipation of the possibility of opposition to his or her statements. While they exhibit indeterminacy of meaning, and there is inevitably some overlap between these categories, hedges serve three main functions in gaining reader acceptance of claims. Firstly, hedges allow writers to express uncertainty about their claims. Hedging here is an important means of accurately stating uncertain scientific claims with appropriate caution. Scientific writing is a balance of fact and evaluation, as the writer tries to present information as fully, accurately and objectively as possible, to express politeness and hesitation in propositions. Hedging features function to conform to an established writing style in English. In general, the students used hedges to suggest an idea based on plausible reasoning rather than on certain knowledge. The functions performed by hedges are discussed in the section that follows:

4.2.1.1 To show lack of certainty

A writer's desire to anticipate possible negative consequences of being proven wrong, and to gain academic credibility by stating the strongest claims they can for their evidence, but also to cover themselves against overstating their case, they use hedges. These are words such as *seem*, *might*, *may*, *can* and *possibly* that allow them to express their uncertainty in what they say since they cannot provide clear and strong evidence to support their claims. Hedges help writers avoid personal responsibility for statements in order to protect their reputation and limit the damage which may result from categorical commitments, associating

95

hedges with *fuzziness*. Thus, hedges are used to blur the relationship between a writer and a proposition when referring to speculative possibilities. This is illustrated in Extracts 1 to 5:

Extract 1

*Writer 4: The argument itself <u>**suggests**</u> that day students will have great success in small scale enterprises because they know the community members better than we do, but this really depends on the development of the relevant ideas that they bring on board. I don't expect this to affect us because we spend our entire three years in the school environment.*

The speaker did not want to be fully committed to his words and expresses caution as 1much as possible. Holmes (1982) points out that hedges are lexical items that "reduce or soften the illocutionary force of utterance" and it is a way to express "the speakers' views tentatively or unconfidently". This finding agrees with Hyland (1996) and Salager-Meyer (1994, p. 151), that using a hedge may in fact be a way of presenting "the strongest claim a careful researcher can make". Another example is seen in Extract 2:

Extract 2

*Writer 31: I quoted scientific research to be precise and the findings <u>s**uggest**</u> that boarders are able to read at preps better than day students since they distracted with the burden of home chores and duties.*

Basically, the writer uses *suggest*, indicating that he cannot be certain; consequently, he is implicitly alerting the readers to his own personal opinion or belief without sounding subjective. This may be an example of effective academic writing (Hyland, 1994). Other examples are seen in Extracts 3 and 4:

Extract 3

*Writer 7: I will oppose to that because **I think** that teachers are doing a great service to humanity and they shouldn't be blamed much for student's truancy even if some teachers sit on the fence.*

Extract 4

*Writer 56: The results of some study I made also **indicate that**, apart from the distance which is of concern, day students are not affected so much because there are other various channels of learning which they can undertake to succeed in their academic pursuit.*

Here, the speaker is trying to emphasize his view and highlight his subjectivity as well. But then the second statement seems to be the more objective statement of the two and perhaps more likely found in professional academic writing, yet they seem to be expressing roughly the same message. However, whereas speaker one sounds more subjective due to the direct reference to the author, speaker two could be interpreted as if the results speak for themselves, they are therefore using plausibility and attribution shield hedge, respectively to seem more cautious and these findings agree with Literature by (Prince et al., 1982, p. 85) as cited in Vlasyan (2019). Extract 5 also illustrates this function:

Extract 5

*Writer 39: It **appears** to be a good idea from the inside since they **seem** quite confident about their status and part of this issue simply derives from the massive amount of new information that is now available on the internet to make the teachers advocate for good morals.*

In our daily communicating and writing, it is assumed that the utterances we make or the output of writing should be very clear and precise. In the above statements, the hedge **seem** is used to essentially indicate that, the speakers lack confidence in the authenticity of their

97

utterance and also lack assurance thereby giving it a soft and positive tone. It could be seen again that not only do the speakers lack assurance but they indirectly express their attitude by quoting the opinion of the third party. We see the shield hedge *appear* functions as a means of conveying a cautious approach to the statements being made which could also be a strategy used by students to gain acceptance for their works as mentioned by (Hyland, 2000), and it also supports my research findings.

4.2.1.2 To show politeness/humility

Hedges contribute to the development of the writer-reader relationship, addressing the need for deference and cooperation in gaining reader ratification of claims. Mitigating the illocutionary force of speech acts is common in conversation where it has been linked to the expression of deference or strategic politeness. Quite simply, categorical assertions leave no room for dialogue and are inherently face-threatening to others. They indicate that the arguments need no feedback and relegate the reader to a passive and humble role. An example is seen in Extracts 6 to 9:

Extract 6

*Writer 99: It **appears** that the school environment development is a good idea with everyone speaking English on campus and we could use this opportunity as students to help teachers in the nurturing process, however, most of the theories about teachers having intervention after school **could** be true.*

*Writer 2: The assertion that 'charity begins at home' **might** indicate that the students going to school early was a mandate of parents not teachers.*

The hedges in the statements indicate that students in this study prefer to use these modal verbs to express relatively humility and low commitment to the statements. In academic writing, modal verbs play a large role in expressing humility. For instance, *could*

can help writers to express their suggestions or advice in a humble way, this finding is in line with Swales (1990, p. 175), thanks to these tentative expressions' authors project an image of honesty and humility. The use of *could* and *might* seeks to save the speaker from any future responsibility and reduce the declarative power (Hyland, 1998). Again, *might* is used to state a claim, to convey some politeness (Swales, 1990, p. 175). These writers are consequently projecting an image of honesty and humility. Another example is seen in Extract 7:

Extract 7

*Writer 10: Seemingly being a boarder **might** be perceived as best decision ever however, I   have tried to highlight the fact that there is not enough work being done, particularly in keeping the environment clean.*

*Writer 207: The future **may** hold a great promise for him, which may provide a more solid basis for partnership with him.*

It is also observed in these statements, that the epistemic uses of modality are used to express possibility, allowing a chance for a statement not to be true. Although every modal verb expresses different degrees of certainty, even the epistemic modal verb with the strongest certainty among others has a chance for its proposition to turn out to be false, and project humility. This is illustrated in Extract 8 as follows:

Extract 8

*Writer 100: They **do** believe in their teachers though they sometimes misbehave. However, most of the theories about teachers having intervention after school **could** theoretically be used against them someday.*

Writer 16:   I provided an overview of some of the current themes and research directions from the Ghana Education Service, that I find

*particularly forward-looking, and that makes me argue that the initial campus-living inspiration **could** have died off years ago.*

*Writer 185: This **migh**t indicate that the students going to school early was a mandate of parents which we believe is false especially when the biological growth of children is way beyond the capacity of parents.*

*Writer 3: I don't agree when stakeholders of education take certain decisions without contacting, we students first since it **migh**t prove to be tragic in the future.*

*Writer 43: In the follow up debates I **may** show how a field that increasingly informs psychology can also inform students' brain mechanisms that are involved in good debating skills.*

*Writer 94: Well said, some people believe that he is in 'cloud nine" because he is an intelligent day student and so the future **may** hold a great promise for him if he proves to be prudent.*

Although the purpose for the use *of do* in writing is clearly to give strength to the writer's argument, ***do*** has a chance for its proposition to be false and explicitly indicate that the student is hedging (Biber, 2010). When it comes to evaluating its statement with the neutral counterpart, there is always a chance for the reader to bring in their subjective or pragmatic interpretation that is overwhelmingly stronger. We see a lot of modal verbs in the extract, suggesting that the writers are polite and proven for discussion or even open to being proven wrong at the very least. It reduces the personal responsibility involved in making a statement and expresses humility. Another example is seen in Extract 9:

Extract 9

Writer 11: wouldn't we have performed __possibly__ better in the boarding house if available resources were put in place and better teaching and learning interventions were introduced.

Writer 201: It seems to me that this assumption of dependency is mistaken. I want to argue that it is __possible__ to say" truancy is a core mandate of both parents and teachers together.

The modals ***possible***/***possibly*** are plausible shield hedges and they show the writers' commitment to the truth of the propositional content. This means that the statements and ideas are less categorical and intends to help the speaker to disclaim responsibility for the general truth of the information conveyed in his utterance.

4.2.1.3 To avoid readers' potential attack/tentativeness

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 by being tentative. This is illustrated in Extract 10 and 11:

Extract 10

Writer 282: __well, I believe__ as a student, it is usually better to be accommodated in the school environment where teachers will monitor your educational progress and give you constructive criticisms as well.

Writer 13: __well, perhaps__ entertainment in schools is one reason why students would love to be boarders wouldn't they?

In this case we find the first writer using the proposition well ***I believe*** to make the discourse more subtle to avoid readers' potential attack and to show that it is plausible whereas in ***well perhaps,*** it is being attributed to something or someone. Here again, the writer expresses

himself using attribution shield to voice his opinion about something indirectly and not as if he is imposing. They normally introduce a third party and they exclude themselves and save face to express their tentativeness to the maximum extent.

Hedges are instrumental in projecting an image of tentativeness (Swales, 1990, p. 433). This also conveys vagueness and makes sentences more acceptable to the reader (Salager-Meyer, 1994). As a result, they help writers to secure their place in academic writing and also, since writers are aware of their audience potential disagreement with their statements, therefore they used these hedges to acknowledge their readers' opinions and accommodate their expectations. Hedges play a role here to allow readers to be engaged in the argument to avoid their attack. This is seen again in Extract 11:

Extract 11

*Writer 67: As far as I can see, almost all of the many new journal's findings **suggested** that there is a need for nurse educators to model critical thinking in all aspects of nursing education because we are facing a real loss in professional registers in many national cultures with long scholarly traditions*.

The writers revealed that that they were aware of their audience potential disagreement with their statements; therefore, they used the hedge ***suggested*** 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. The analysis 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

4.2.1.4 To show hesitation/doubt

Explicit reference to the writer seems to mark doubtful evidence, uncertain predictions, and imperfect measuring techniques. These are achieved with Subjectivity hedges like *presumably*, *I think*, *I guess*, and *probably*, which are speaker-oriented and emphasize the subjective attitude of the writer towards the message. Students mostly use these markers to sound more hesitant as these markers are not understood as something universally true or definite. Their main function is to avoid absoluteness and any possible disagreement from the hearer, to minimize face-threatening acts and sound more hesitant. This is illustrated in extract 12 to 14 as follows:

> **Extract 12**
>
> *Writer 199: It was rumored yesterday that some Students **<u>probably</u>** ended up on the way somewhere and got accustomed to some good drinks and forget all about coming to school, which is exactly what we mean if we argue that the best place to keep secondary school students is in the compound.*
>
> *Writer 200: I think parents have a role to play in **<u>kind of</u>** nurturing their wards at home, this will give teachers some space. I would even argue that the label 'ESP teacher' no longer seems appropriate for anyone involved in the field because of some issues teachers had to deal with caring for students outside the compound.*

The writer used ***kind of*** to hedge. The expression ***kind of*** is a very common hedge that students used widely to indicate hesitation. Obviously, it could be seen from the sentence that the writer is hesitant and is using fillers such as ***kind of*** which allowed the writer to find the right word in case, they felt doubtful or had to search for words, or even had not come up with ideas as to what to say yet. It is also established from the analysis that the writers

approximated using ***probably*** in their statements because of absence of facts or statistics showing casualness on their part. When writers approximate, it shows hesitation, very similar to what politicians do (Demirel, 2019). Another example is seen in Extract 13:

Extract 13

Writer 7: *From my side of view,* ***I guess*** *we will conclude by naming teachers as responsible for the truancy of students because they sometimes sit on the fence concerning issues regarding discipline in the school. All they care is to finish teaching and leave for home.*

Writer 12: That assertion that teachers reward is in heaven ***presumably*** *is a fallacy though it could help them feel better sometimes, concerning their meagre salaries.*

*Writer 19****: I think*** *it might be true by all standards if we accurately analyze the facts on the grounds and desist from speculations which are mostly deadly. I also suppose you're very experienced at that kind of thing. It's your job.*

Writer 205: ***I think, I think err****…we should accept. Or agree with the theory that claims boarding school provides a better learning environment for students than those day students to be precise.*

In these writings, the students were hesitant because in the case of writer 205, he said ***I think*** twice at the beginning of the statement because the student did not have a clear and specific idea of what he or she was going to say. So, he said it twice to give himself time to think. Besides, most of what the student said were short sentences, he used two expressions of "I think" to lengthen the sentence and make the short sentence sound less abrupt and fuzzier this is the same idea being demonstrated in the other expressions where by the other writers use ***presumably*** and ***I guess*** to show fuzziness in their propositions (Brown &

104

Levinson, 2014). Another instance of expressing hesitation/doubt is found in Extract 14 as follows:

Extract 14

Writer 19: **<u>Well, I believe</u>** *as a student it is usually better than being out of school knowing how bleak the future holds for you and those around you if you don't pursue good education, becoming a better person will be the happiest thing of my life.*

Writer 24: We argue that, **<u>well, perhap</u>***s entertainment in schools is one reason why Students would love to be boarders and I agree with them totally because the school community should not only be about academics, education should be holistic.*

Writer 82: I think parents have a role to play in **<u>kind of</u>** *nurturing, wards at home and giving them the kind of discipline that will go a long way to disprove all kinds of corruptions and wrongdoings in their adult lives.*

These students can be perceived to be vague, out of focus and lacking definition in their stance (Vlasyan, 2019). The expressions demonstrated in that of writer 19, 24 and 82 are imprecise and, affirms that the writers are less than fully committed to the certainty of referential information (Hyland, 2014). ***Well, I believe*** is a (speaker act hedge) while ***well perhaps*** is a (proposition act hedge). They are all basically trying to protect themselves from any future commitment that will be inferred (Demirel, 2019). These hedges used by the students are quite similar, though in the second statement, the hedge used, protects the speakers proposition as against the first hedge that protects the speaker himself. Their expressions therefore sound fuzzier and hesitant, and this affects the degree of their commitment, which is in line with Vlasyan (2019).

105

4.2.1.5 To be more precise in reporting results

Hedging is an important means of accurately stating uncertain scientific claims with appropriate caution. Scientific writing is a balance of fact and evaluation as the writer tries to present information as fully, accurately and objectively as possible. (Demirel, 2019). In this case it presents the true state of the writers' understanding precisely to give an accurate representation of the state of the knowledge under discussion. Writers may avoid presenting stronger statements because their statements might not be supported by evidence from the data. Therefore, they try to be more precise in reporting results to reflect their stance. This is illustrated in Extract 15 as follows:

> **Extract 15**
>
> *Writer 81: The teachers argued that 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 that our teachers put up possibly favors boys over girls.*
>
> *Writer 19: This **possibly** shows that as students adjust to the learner centered approach, they start to participate in it and enjoy their experience.*
>
> *Writer 20: The findings I made in the library **may** be limited and that makes it difficult to compare with others that have posited that truancy behaviors of students are not included in any schools' manuals.*

These writers are expressing a more precise and realistic claim better, by using ***indicate, possibly*** and ***may*** than reflecting the actual results of their research findings since they do not have any supported evidence from data. They are therefore being cautious in interpreting their findings although they have to be accurate when doing this. Again, because they are comparing with other writers that have quite different results from theirs, they are not definite

106

but rather trying to seem debatable as they use a more careful language. Writer 20 specifically confirmed the idea that his findings in the library is limited and because hedging is an important means of accurately stating uncertain scientific claims with appropriate caution, as projected by (Hyland, 2000), these writers require a tentative language that reflect the reality of this situation as seen in the expressions they used.

4.2.2   Boosters

According to Hyland (2005, p. 183), boosters are used to "strengthen claims by elucidating the writer's stance of certainty and stressing the statement that they are making". Yeung (2007) also mentions that boosters are used in business reports, specifically to make them sound logical. They are also generally used to add emphasis on adverbs or adjectives to strengthen any claim made (Kuteva, 2011). Boosters in the essays were used to strengthen claim, express conviction/confidence, and to express solidarity.

4.2.2.1 Strengthening claims

Boosters increase the speakers' commitment to their propositional material and, as a result, project an image of aptitude and confidence which often helps to highlight the significance of the findings presented. The incidence of boosters in the research was ostensibly lower than that of hedges which supports the notion that an appropriate degree of humility is necessary to obtain the community's consensus in the ratification of knowledge. Accordingly, boosters must be used very cautiously if writers do not want to sound too imposing on the reader. An example of such is illustrated in Extract 16:

> **Extract 16**
>
> *Writer 44: I say that because well, that, which can **clearly** be interpreted*
>
> *as a school management imposition is fair if all the evidence and*
>
> *conclusions that have been drawn were what the stakeholders agreed on.*

*Writer12: Parent's responsibility in truant behaviors **<u>certainly</u>** achieves its preferred goal as their core mandate because the questionnaire sent out last year proved that parents are better care givers to their children before the various schools' do their part.*

*Writer 7: Truancy is most **<u>certainly</u>** widespread and popular with certain groups of lazy individuals especially those students from broken homes who don't seem to have any care and discipline.*

*Writer 90: It was argued that for **<u>obvious</u>** reasons it cannot be better said truancy is a core mandate for both parents and definitely the whole school community members.*

These boosters found in the argumentative essays were used to express a high degree of confidence in the indications provided. Salager-Meyer (1997) as cited in (Hashemi & Sayah, 2014) sees boosters as those lexical items by means of which the writer can show strong confidence for a claim. Hyland (2005) also sees boosters as a tool which strengthens the claim by showing the writer's certainty, conviction, and commitment, helping the writers affect interpersonal solidarity. These views affirm what was realized in the data: expressions that contain boosters such as ***always*** and ***fact that*** are also used to express the personal opinion in a distinct way and create an impression of assurance, conviction and certainty. The same idea has been illustrated in Extract 17:

Extract 17

*Writer 248: What if that can **<u>clearly</u>** be interpreted as a school management imposition but the others can't, we need to be looking at this issue holistically than being one sided as it has been made us to believe.*

Writer 5: I will take into consideration everything that has been said however, the study emphasizes the __fact that__ more research is necessary for us to arrive at a prudent decision.

Writer 101: Students mostly misbehave and this could be seen as a result of the __fact that__ the stress factor as a boarder in school is more prevalent as compared to the day students who are allowed by their parents to just take a shower and continue to read.

Writer 253: As I had already reiterated this point will __certainly__ not hold in my opinion as far as there hasn't been any scientific research disputing it.

Writer 120: From previous respondents it is __certain__ and true that these results show a great deal of truancy is encouraged by parents as they leave early for work not knowing the time their wards even get up from their beds to school.

The evaluation is that *clearly* has been used largely by students in their argumentative essays as a generally accepted idea or fact and to show an undisguised feeling of his credence. Firstly, it serves to emphasize the strength of the writer's commitment to his proposition and thereby seeks to convince the reader by their belief in the logical force of the argument. *S*tudents may feel a strong need to forcefully claim plausibility, strengthen claim and trustworthiness for what they write and would therefore want to use boosters like, *the fact is tha*t or *it is a fact* and once it is achieved their confidence is blown up and they achieve some sort of conviction feeling (Hyland, 2020)

The second way that writers employed this booster in their argumentative essays was to comment impersonally on the validity of their propositions. Boosters were "either used to stress the strength of warrants, suggesting the efficacy of the relationship between data and claims" (Hyland, 1998, pp. 21-22). Hyland argues that boosters are generally used to

convince other people about the claim that a writer makes and also to give emphasis on the statement made. The words *certain and certainly* are very strong confidence markers used by these writes in their argumentative essays to prove an accepted fact or idea. This confirms the argument of Salager-Meyer (1997) who views the term boosters as those lexical items by means of which the writer can show strong confidence for a claim. This confidence can come in the form of showing the writer's certainty, conviction, and commitment, as well as helping the writers to affect interpersonal solidarity.

4.2.2.2 Expressing conviction/confidence

The functions of boosters are to elucidate claims, state findings, and also to show the writers' level of confidence and clarity on certain issues including statements that they have made. Hyon (2008) also notes that boosters are generally used to strengthen claims and stress the statement that they are making strong confidence for a claim. An example is seen in Extract 18 as follows:

Extract 18

*Writer 1: I will always **firmly** oppose the idea of day school and believe in the good things the boarding house has to offer students like us. I can't imagine otherwise.*

*Writer 19: I **vehemently** believe and think, it is a good idea for students to be kept in school where teaching and learning can be monitored by people who are trained to do so and not parents.*

*Writer 52: However, it has been **proven**, beyond all reasonable doubt that without the help of teachers there might be no educative future leaders.*

*Writer 37: I will **Obviously** say, most teachers are kind considering the fac that most parents don't even seem appreciative of the great work they are doing but rather accuse them at the little wrong they do.*

The word ***firmly*** is also a strong confidence marker that has been used widely by students to show their undisguised feeling of his credence (Hyland, 2020). The booster ***vehemently*** has been used to express the personal feeling of conviction or opinion about something which is intense or have great manner of feeling and again the writers used it in their argumentative essay, to express their beliefs and solidarity with the readers. Boosters are less commonly used by academic writers. Although it is not a very common sight, it indicates the writers' confidence and certainty in generating and compiling their ideas and claims that they made. The findings of the present study confirm Hyland's (1998, 2005) claim that boosters help the writers affect interpersonal solidarity and this is clearly in line with this research.

The expression ***it is proven*** as used in the statement is used by the speaker to convey or interpret as self-evident or as a generally accepted idea and prove conviction for his statements. Also, ***obviously*** is one of the strongest confidence markers used by students to show conviction and self-evident and that, they are ready to boost strongly to a certain degree. This finding is in line with the way in which the author's degree of confidence can be expressed in academic writing is through the use of hedges and boosters (Hyland, 1994, 2000).

4.2.2.3 Expressing Solidarity

These markers express solidarity and it is typically seen when students boost to show their unity in consensus to agreements of their facts (Hyland, 2020). Examples of such are illustrated in Extract 19:

Extract 19

*Writer 89: Being a day student is **undoubtedly** by far a better option in my view even if these people contend to that idea and throw caution to the wind.*

> *Writer 64: The **<u>proof</u>** is conclusive that day school is by far better and a*
>
> *safer place by all standards to train young adolescents and teenagers*
>
> *notwithstanding all people say and do.*
>
> *Writer 268: Yet, it can **<u>definitely</u>** be argued again and further that people*
>
> *conceive different ideas because of their background and the environment*
>
> *they grow in and this makes it difficult to shape their lives with other*
>
> *concepts.*

With the use of ***undoubtedly***, this student is showing an undisguised feeling and solidarity towards his proposition (Hyland, 2020). The writer is stressing the strength warrant with the use of proof, suggesting the efficacy of the relationship between data and claims (Takimato, 2015). Lastly, the writer uses ***definitely*** to forcefully claim plausibility and trustworthiness for what he writes. He convinces people, blowing up their belief and proves an accepted idea or fact. This finding is in line with (Hyland, 2020) that most students who are confident in their facts show solidarity in their writing.

4.2.3   Self-mention

Self-mention functions as strategically projecting the authors' positioning with respect to their research, to the potential readers, and to their academic community. Several taxonomies for such roles have been proposed (e.g., Hyland, 2009; Walková, 2019). Among these taxonomies, the one put forward by Walková is very concise and comprehensive. More importantly, it is the most suitable for the current study, where the functions identified in the data are presenting an opinion or stating claims, describing/explaining a procedure, and stating purpose and intention.

4.2.3.1 Elaborating an argument/presenting an opinion/stating knowledge

The mental process of the authors is involved in this function. It conveys high degree of authorial visibility this one is relatively more subjective because it contains more authors'

personal opinions. This function often appears in discussion and conclusion sections. Verbs such as *assume*, *argue*, *consider*, and *conjecture* frequently co-occur with personal pronouns when the authors intend to present their own argument and opinions. It is also the most face-threatening and it reflects author's strong confidence. When speakers' expectations of a proposition are not exhibited, they tend to give their judgment or evaluation of the happenings and how they feel. Therefore, speakers use markers of evaluation to explain what they were expecting that turns out to happen differently. Examples are found in Extract 20 as follows:

Extract 20

*Writer 41: **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 at this age how them can they convince us of what they claim to have researched on.*

*Writer 279: **I** can't agree more with the fact that teachers are better care takers of students than parents since all what parents do is to dump their wards in the various schools and literally 'abscond' so to say for lack of better word*

Both writers in this case have taken on the role of instructors arguing and evaluating by stating claims and elaborating on arguments. According to Ivanič and Camps (2001), using personal pronouns is perhaps the simplest approach to indicate that someone is about to take a position and would immediately indicate that they are about to contribute to the conversation. By using the personal pronoun, **I** *writer 41* employed this marker to blatantly portray his own interpretation of a phenomena. This finding agrees with the results of other works, example is (Harwood, 2005) Both writers in this case feel that all they require was to demonstrate that they had understood taught concepts by reproducing scholarly arguments. Other examples are illustrated in Extract 21:

Extract 21

Writer 6: __Our__ results provide support that the various intervention programs which can accelerate our comprehension success is critical thinking and learner centered Strategies.

Writer 104: __Our__ understanding provide support for the hypothesis that wards who are taken good care of and are helped to read early in life at home do well in vocabulary and have positive results in listening comprehension in their later years in school.

The analysis of the first-person plural pronoun *our* have been used as an inclusive pronoun and mainly collocated with nouns such as 'our understanding' and 'our knowledge and used strategically to refer to the writers themselves, the discourse community, or a group of researchers who contributed and helped the research process as seen with Writers 6 and 104. They have become more active in promoting themselves and expressing their personal opinions of the issues at hand over the period. Both writers show that they are self-evident in the proposition they make as they use the pronoun *our* collocated with the nouns *results* and *understanding*. According to Kou (1999), authors use Self-mention to make themselves visible and meanwhile construct their relationship with readers and with their discourse.

4.2.3.2 Stating a purpose/intention

As is noted by Walková (2019), this function includes both intertextual organization and intertextual references. In stating a purpose or an intention, 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. Examples of such are found in Extract 22:

114

Extract 22

*Writer 300: In our previous write up **we** had introduced a lot of concepts that people have on the attitudes of both parents and teachers equipped with range-limited, responsibilities for both sides and have agreed to omit the obsolete ones in the years to come.*

*Writer 59: **We** should recognize and plan to explore this issue in more detail by examining how accent and intelligibility are related to other essays, such as processing time and subjective listener reactions to our English pronunciation.*

*Writer10: Thus, vocabulary work and reading comprehension are the best cognitive processes that can be used to deal with language **we** argue that it is there, to serve a role in some form of language proficiency and our argumentative essays.*

Authorial voice is clearly visible in these expressions, particularly because students used, *we* more explicitly in their essays. Here, whiles Writer 300 states his intention to engage readers and evaluate the theme, Writer 59 negotiates with his immediate audience and tries to build a relationship with his readers. This is one of the rhetorical strategies to persuade readers to accept the writer's view (i.e., 'persuasive strategy'). Hyland (2005) believes that the inclusive *we* bind the authors to the readers in stating an intention or purpose. These rhetorical strategies are employed in argumentative and evaluative discourses, for example, articles, to interact professionally with the immediate audience and persuade them to agree with the authors' ideas. A similar same idea is illustrated in Extract 23:

Extract 23

Writer10: Thus, vocabulary work and reading comprehension are the best cognitive processes that can be used to deal with language as against we

115

*employing cohesion that did not work. **We** say that vocabulary work will serve a role in some form of language proficiency and our argumentative essays.*

Writer 10 has engaged the readers in his argument to clearly define his intention. In the example, the writer explained the structure of his statement. Besides, he referred to the limitation to avoid criticism. The writer explicitly used *we* to strengthen his position and support the claims he makes. Here, the writer's role in the essay can be presented by the significant presence of *we*. According to Azabdaftari (2016), writers may also support their claims or counterclaims and strengthen them in texts. These rhetorical strategies are commonly used to present the writers' intention/purpose, judgment, and argument.

4.2.3.3 Acknowledging other writers

There is no doubt that the acknowledgements section is a prime site for this function. Other than acknowledging other scholars and stressing the contributions of other scholars to the study, it also contains the functions of passing on future research agenda to other researchers and preventing harm done to others. However, it should be noted that this function is also the least that appears in writing. This is illustrated in Extract 24 as follows:

Extract 24

*Writer 12: **We** are grateful to sir Michael and should like to thank Miss Sandra as well for their helpful suggestions and ideas we put forward in the essay.*

*Writer 16: Any errors are **my** responsibility. **We** urge future debaters to attend to indirect as well as direct effects of misconceptions people have about the boarding school.*

As seen in the extract, the students used the pronoun **we** to function as acknowledging others and it is the least frequent used of all the functions in Self-mention as mentioned

116

earlier (Walková, 2019). Its infrequency can be accounted for by the fact that this function mainly appears in the acknowledgements section and it can be argued that the inclusive pronouns *we* used by Writer 12 not only as a politeness strategy, but to appreciate readers and keep the writers' claims balanced. Also, Writer 16 used *my* and *we* together to seek readers' agreement in their essays. It may suggest that the students tend not to convey high author visibility while interacting with other scholars in the academic community. The same idea is illustrated in Extract 25 as follows:

Extract 25

*Writer 71: A final pressing problem for those engaged by the school authorities in the boarding house is that the standards in the dormitories is now okay, therefore It is imperative to be grateful for those of **us** who worked within those areas as a duty to keep the place clean.*

As illustrated in Extract 25, the first-person plural pronoun **us** was used to refer to a group who were involved in the project and for which acknowledgement is rendered for the collective effort. As pointed out in the writer's expression, using inclusive pronoun ***us*** is considered as a strategy to interact, negotiate, and acknowledge with the immediate audience in academic writing (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2005). From this, the writer acknowledges others and stresses their contributions. This persuasion technique can also be used to create a bond between the writer and the reader, allowing writers to include their readers in their arguments and assessments.

4.2.4 Attitude markers

Attitude is the way of thinking or the feeling of a person about something or a proposition. Attitude adverbials, according to Biber et al. (2002), tell the speaker's attitude toward the proposition. Typically, they convey an evaluation, or assessment of expectation. They indicate the writer's affective, rather than epistemic, attitude to propositions, conveying

surprise, agreement, importance, frustration, and so on, rather than commitment (Hyland, 2005). Compared to epistemic stance adverbials, attitude markers cannot be so easily categorized into major areas of meaning; however, Biber et al. (2012) have identified at least three main areas, namely, according to expectation, evaluation and judgment of importance. Attitude markers are not simply aimed at qualifying the information presented from the speaker's point of view but most importantly, they aim to create affective appeal or appeal to the other interlocutor's emotions and invite them to accept their utterance. Attitudinal stance markers in the essays were used to convey the speaker's emotions or feelings, and to express causation/effect.

4.2.4.1 Expressing emotions and an issue/gap

The attitudinal lexicon explicitly clarifies the authors' view and perspective of a particular idea. They refer to the authors' affective attitude towards a certain matter (Hyland, 2008). Attitude items fulfill various functions expressing the views positively or negatively, indicating a niche or an issue in the text. Their functions can be presented in various types are significance, emotion (negative/positive), and assessment as indicated in Extract 26:

Extract 26

*Writer164: Because of the grades we had last semester **I trust** parents are doing their best understandably in terms of enforcing discipline to curb truancy.*

*Writer 9: It wouldn't be **clear in my own view** if truancy is left only to teachers after all the meetings we had and the people who claim to be the stakeholders in education.*

Writer 286: I always arrive to school very early on resuming days and even detest the idea of staying home for long periods after the introduction

118

*of the free education because **quite frankly**, I love the day school as*

compared to the boarding house.

*Writer 34: **I am afraid** it is okay by me and the whole of my house*

members if the government adds bread to the cereals, we take at breakfast

in the school dinning.

The writer uses *I trust* to connect his idea and express how he feels about his statement. The use of *quite frankly* implies that "the writer is less than fully committed to the certainty of the referential information given" (Hyland, 1994, p. 240). The expression *I am afraid* suggests that writer is cautious in choosing his words to avoid total commitment. This is another way of hedging. In the opinion of Hyland (1994, p. 240), "hedges allow academics to take a rhetorical stance". The use of *I trust* is a way by which the writers' beliefs is expressed. The expression *clear in my own view* is an example of a perlocutionary marker (Fraser, 1997). This allows writers to express their beliefs and solidarity with the audience. Although it is not a very common sight, it indicates the writers' confidence and certainty in generating and compiling their ideas and claims that they make. Also, *quite frankly* represents the writer's politeness, stance, while he is being emotional, trying to save his face, while *I am afraid* is used to show shyness stance in the student's communication. All the statements are indicative of the different emotional styles expressed by the students. Other examples are illustrated in Extract 27 as follows:

Extract 27

*Writer 200: **If you do not mind**, I can help you in your pronunciation*

lessons that may lead to a better performance in your academics.

*Writer 76: **I must admit** parents should be the one and only ones to be*

blamed for the bad attitudes of their wards because they believe only

119

teachers should discipline children rather than they also staking their

claim.

*Writer 3: Though being a boarder is a good idea **I am afraid** I will*

prefer to be a day student considering all the ordeal students have to go

through to make it in the boarding house.

*Writer 299: I will arrive later **to tell you the truth** I prefer to come from*

home for the lessons and run back home to take a good nap and prepare

for the next morning school.

*Writer 61: **I must say** it is a great opportunity to be accepted in any*

school as a boarder notwithstanding the fact that you have to work to

make your stay a success.

The attitude marker used by *writer 200*, indicates a polite request of the writer. This writer is hedging because he is less than fully committed to the certainty of the information and tries to negotiate his feelings (Harwood, 2005). The expression ***I must admit*** shows a reinvigorating attitude on the part of that of *writer 76*. This is also a type of commentary marker used to signal the degree of confidence, positive, or negative information that is conveyed by the writer (Hyland, 2008). The use of ***to tell you the truth*** by *writer 299* is to project the writer's textual voice or community recognized personality (Hyland, 2008). Here, we see that the writer is certain and shows confidence in his facts. Lastly, ***I must say*** has been used to show polite request of the writer and expresses the desire to reduce face loss associated with his basic message (Fraser, 1997).

4.2.4.2 Expressing causation/effort

These markers, according to Xu and Long (2008, p. 13), "show the results and consequences caused by something or some actions". The writers also explain that these

markers represent the efforts or the activities that need to take place in order to get the required results according to the speaker's belief. This is illustrated in Extract 28 as follows:

Extract 28

Writer 44: ***If you ask me****, day is a better option since the boarding house is burdened with so much issues ranging from bullying to theft.*

*Writer 10: Though being a boarder is a good idea **I am afraid** I will prefer to be a day student because there have been more peer pressure issues prevalent in the school environment and the consequences have been fatal.*

Writer 199: ***I must say*** *it is a great opportunity to be accepted in any school as a boarder when some parents have to run all around to pay huge sums of money before their wards are accepted.*

*Writer 197: It was a **remarkable** experience, **truly** as I got into the boarding house and met the best friend of my big brother who was patiently ready to protect me from the 'claws' of other mean senior students.*

The writer used the attitude marker ***If you ask me*** to achieve essentially their presence, feeling and style, and interpersonal information to the propositional content (Hyland, 2001). In this context the writer's attitude could be interpreted as saving face and trying to show politeness. Also, ***I am afraid*** has been used to show shyness. Again, ***I must say*** is used to show polite request on the addresser. In the last statement, the student uses both ***remarkable and truly*** to connect his ideas and express how he feels about his statement. These markers are also known as commentary markers and are the distinct of them all (Jiang & Hyland, 2015). A similar idea is seen in Extract 29:

Extract 29

Writer 64: **<u>Quite frankly</u>**, *it seems to me, I will change the design of the school if I had my own way because it doesn't depict that of a boarding status.*

Writer 131: **<u>Seriously</u>**, *go out that' was what she said giving the fact that it was my first day in school and she didn't have any idea what I was going through that made me come late to school.*

Writer 77: **<u>Honestly</u>**, *what do you know about psychology? I strongly believe those points raised have nothing to do with the contemporary issues been discussed in the school at the moment.*

The attitude markers used by these students represent the activities that need to take place and their consequences on the writers' feelings. As can be clearly seen from these writers' attitude, their stance signals human surprise, like, love, and hatred. Writer 64 uses ***quite frankly*** as a declarative sentence to orient the reader, and to communicate in a polite manner. This definitely represents writers' politeness, stance, and belief. Writer 131 conveys a message of frustration and surprise at the same time as used in the expression ***seriously go out***. This is in contrast to Writer 77 who shows a degree of confidence by using ***honestly*** in his essay. This also represents the writers' attitudes directly toward the propositional content of the sentence. Watson (2001) intimates that attitude markers are used to represent speakers' attitudes, and displeasure, and the solidarity between writer and reader. Using words like *honestly* and *frankly* explains how a writer shows his/her evaluation towards a consequence and stance on the message.

4.2.5   Summary

Hedging is a culturally accepted and expected persuasive technique in academic writing, and it is a characteristic of many rhetorical functions. Writers used hedges frequently

to decrease their responsibility for their truth-value and to project politeness, hesitation and uncertainty. In general, as maintained by Swales (1990) and confirmed in this study, hedges are considered to be necessary with the general purpose of projecting honesty, modesty, and proper caution. Three main functions of boosters were revealed as 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. The students used Self-mention to show their authorial presence, exploring a few functions in their writing. These functions include expressing or holding an opinion, explaining a procedure, and stating an expectation or a wish. The writers utilized three main functions of attitude markers as indicating a value judgement, identifying information as worthy of particular attention, and providing an assessment of expectation.

4.3   Conclusion

In this chapter, the types of authorial stance markers used by S.H.S students in their argumentative essays were investigated. The findings allow us to argue that the authorial stance markers have been realized through hedges, boosters, attitude, markers, and Self-mention. Here, we realize that students used hedges, which are words used to make expressions seem fuzzier, predominantly in the data; hence, its evidence in the work. This finding is consistent with Hyland (2005) who examined the extent of the use authorial stance features in Turkish students' L1 and L2 texts. His results showed that hedges were massively used compared to all other stance markers. This suggests that ESL students understand the importance of a tentative approach within their argumentative writing. Boosters reveal the amount of the author's commitment with what is being stated in his/her propositions and act as persuasion devices for the discourse and these were next in use after hedges.

Self-mention is described as the extent of author presence in academic discourse. These were also present in the essays; however, the frequency of their occurrence is much

123

lower compared to hedges. Attitude markers, refer to certain expressions that are used in a text to reflect writers' position toward both the content in the text and the reader. There were few actual instances of them that are aimed at describing personal attitudes and opinions. The discussion so far proves that ESL senior high school students use and express themselves in all the four types of authorial stance features in their argumentative essays. The results showed that students made excessive repetition of boosters and avoided using the first-person pronoun to refer to themselves in their writing. Azabdaftari (2016) claims that if people avoid using *I*, the causes may be due to a lack of confidence in their views, or a lack of expertise on the issue they are handling. This may have contributed to the low use of *I* in the essays. This chapter also showed that stance markers were expressed by epistemic verbs, introductory phrases and expressions, tag-questions, conditional sentences, modal verbs, and adverbs. It is seen from the data that the students used modal verbs by far the most to consolidate important points, to make suggestions and finally to state limitations of their arguments respectively. Lexical verbs and adverbs were also used appreciably in this study.

Finally, the study also explored the functions of stance markers in the research. It is noted that the markers performed various functions according to the meaning they carry. They expressed functions of certainty, doubt, source of knowledge, imprecision and limitation, avoiding conflicts, and mitigating the imposition. Others were used to express expectation, evaluation/judgment and to state opinions. Some stance markers simply expressed the way and manner writers express their opinion. Others were also used to express the ethical or moral obligations of a writer such as humility, caution, politeness, causation/effort, and potential attack from readers. To conclude, it has been demonstrated from the study that there were greater frequencies of stance words but the number of types was few. This demonstrates that ESL students use the same markers more repeatedly and more frequently than needed in their argumentative essays. Greater frequencies yet fewer

124

types, overall, may imply that students lack vocabulary in their writing when using authorial stance features as echoed in Kang's (2017) finding that non-native speakers' lack of vocabulary causes them to use the limited types of devices repeatedly, which makes their writings less dynamic and less effective.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.0   Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusion and recommendations of the study with a summary of the major findings of the thesis. This is followed by the final concluding remarks. The overall aim of this study was to investigate the stance markers used in ESL students' argumentative essays in terms of the different types of stance markers used as well as their functions. The first part presents the summary of findings which illustrate how the two research questions were answered. A qualitative textual analysis was employed with the main tools being students' essays. This study contributes to the field by identifying the four categories of stance taking features used and the various functions they employ. In many cases, the findings have further validated that there are different categories of stance taking used by ESL students in S.H.S. The chapter further provides a discussion of the implications of these results and ends with suggestions for future research.

5.1   Summary of findings

This section presents a summary of the major findings of the work which include categories of authorial stance markers used by students. The results established the base-on Hyland's (2005) framework of stance; the study analyzed the distribution of hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mentions in students' argumentative essays. The results show that the students used hedges and boosters most frequently, while self-mentions were used the least frequently.

5.1.1   Types of stance markers

The first research question examined what types of stance markers the students in S.H.S use in their argumentative essays. The findings projected the idea strongly that students make use of expressions of stance by using hedges, boosters, attitude markers and Self-

mention markers. The results further showed that hedges were the most frequently used, followed by boosters and Self-mention stance markers, with attitude markers being the least stance marker used. From the data, hedges appeal to readers as intelligent features, capable of being used to decide about the issues, and indicate that statements are provisional, pending acceptance by one's peers. This interpersonal role is backed up by reinforced obligations concerning the need to defer to and engage in debate with the linguistic community. This research also revealed that the most frequent type of hedges in everyday conversation is plausibility shields. One of the most common hedging strategies used by the writers was the use of modal verbs (could, may, might, should, and would). This finding is in line with Hyland (1994), who assert that cautiously through the frequent use of modal verbs, writers represent and explain their opinions. The second most frequently used type is adaptors, followed by rounders and attribution shields.

In contrast to hedging devices, the most frequent form of boosters were lexical verbs, which increase the assertiveness on the facticity of research findings. Adjectives, nouns and adverbs were also commonly used to convey the writers' judgment with full commitments on propositional information. Interestingly, the top two most frequent phrases of boosters were *found that* and *show that* in the data, and this agrees with Hyland's (2005) argument that writers normally rely on scientific facts to speak for themselves rather than building knowledge on their personal interpretations. This suggests that the writers "validate their knowledge claims by signaling that they are factual statements rather than interpretations" (Hu & Cao, 2011, p. 2803). This might have accounted for why boosters were ostensibly lower than hedges, and also supports the notion that an appropriate degree of humility is necessary to obtain the community's consensus in the ratification of knowledge. As such, boosters must be used cautiously if writers do not want to sound too imposing on the reader.

The analysis also revealed that the writers used explicit adjectives which were found to be more frequent than any other attitudinal lexicon such as adverbs, nouns, and verbs in the usage of attitude markers. It was also found that attitudinal adverbs (e.g., only, necessarily, significantly, completely', essentially, appropriately, and unfortunately) were used more frequently than verbs, closely followed by nouns. Attitude verbs were the least frequent used in this study. Self-mention witnessed a considerable increase in the frequency of personal pronouns and possessive pronouns in this trend. This means that making a clear individual contribution is increasingly been encouraged by students and thus they have become more positive in conveying their personal involvement in argumentative writing process. The common use of Self-mention markers and the use of first-person pronouns demonstrate that stance-taking reflects writers' strong confidence. In the current study, expressions which states one's original contribution often contained verbs such as demonstrate, *show*, *discover*, and *provide*.

5.1.2 Functions of stance markers

The focus of the second research question was on a functional description of the use of stance markers in students' argumentative essays. The analysis also revealed that in English the use of hedges stance markers express certainty, doubt, caution tentativeness politeness, humility, source of vagueness, hesitation, imprecision, consequently avoiding, readers' potential attack. This finding is in line with other studies (e.g., Wu, 2010) that argue that language witnessed people's increasing awareness of the important role of social context in composing processes which are less precise in reporting results and mitigating the writer's claim for the purpose of politeness. Hedges were found to be the most occurring category of stance that performs the function of caution and doubt.

In the instance of boosters, writers may feel a strong need to forcefully claim plausibility and trustworthiness for what they find in results and discussion and perhaps, to

blow up the confidence in their claims, boosters were the stance markers used to achieve this. Writers were inclined to invest their statements to achieve the functions of certainty/belief, a high degree of confidence, solidarity, conveying their interpretation as a generally accepted idea or fact. They also used them to convey the writer's personal opinion in a distinct way. Confirming Hyland's (2010) findings, learners tended to use first-person subject pronoun before hedges frequently, to construct an authorial stance and to emphasize their contribution to the discussion. The common use of Self-mention markers and the use of first-person pronouns suggest that writers have become increasingly confident in overtly showing their contributions and making clear their novel ideas and originality (Cheung & Jiang, 2017). Similarly, writers heavily used the authorial plural *we*. Speculatively, the overuse of **we** were perhaps caused by the possibility that students misused it, instead of *I*, to refer to themselves.

The research revealed that attitude markers were primarily employed by the students to express their attitude towards their claims and results. At the same time, it can be contended that attitude markers create the room for writers to interact with their readers. The writers try to communicate with their readers to take a stance and emphasize their evaluation of the developments of a research and raise an issue or indicate a gap, argue ideas, and give suggestions and offer possible solutions. The given functions for this type of stance often clarify that evaluation is one of the essential roles of attitude markers. All in all, attitudinal markers such as adjectives, adverbs, nouns, and verbs were considered as evaluative items expressing value, significance and importance, a need or a lack of sources, expressing evaluation, showing emotion, and indicating weaknesses and shortcomings.

5.2   Importance of stance markers in students' writing

The study undoubtedly has unraveled the importance of having knowledge about the types and functions of stance markers in English students' argumentative essays. One of such importance is the introduction of reinforcement or summary of a previous statement where

writers normally care who says what and monitor it accordingly (Du Bois, 2007). This explains that when interlocutors interact and a person takes stance, the other interlocutor also has opportunity to evaluate and take stance. It was imperative that in a situation where the second speaker agrees with the first interlocutor, they can use a marker that presupposes that they are taking the same stance: "in addition to communicating propositional content, writers commonly express personal feelings attitudes, value judgments, or assessments; that is, they express stance" (Biber et al, 1999, p. 966). This gives clear indication that our choice of words in communication in terms of stance taking also depicts our feelings and emotions as well.

Importantly, stance markers are also used for enthusiastic emphasis. That is to say that having an approval from the interlocutor of being certain about the stance objects can enable a writer rely on their stance. This goes to confirm what Du Bois opines that, the stance taker evaluates an object position a subject (usually the self) and aligns with other subjects (Du Bois, 2007). Stance markers also help to shorten arguments. Once a speaker takes a stance and you support their evaluation, you can choose to align or drift if you do not agree, there is an opportunity to also take a stance. In addition, stance markers can be used to soften suggestions. When a stance marker is used to express doubt, it does not make a final decision. This means there is opportunity to make an evaluation, giving an opportunity for one to take another stance that may suit the situation.

5.3   Pedagogical implications

As maintained by Hyland (2002), effective academic writing is based on proper linguistic choices that maintain successful interaction between the writer and the reader. Given the findings presented above, the study provides pedagogical implications for the teaching of argumentative essay writing in S.H.S: First, students' awareness of intercultural rhetorical differences in conveying stance and constructing authorial identity should be raised

through courses and materials on English academic writing. It is advisable to foster students' authorial awareness and their ability to express personal feelings has long-term benefits because they will be able to make informed choices about whether or when to conform to the expectations of the target audience for conveying their thoughts and meaning successfully (Mauranen, 1993). Writing instructors need to help students understand that academic writing is a form of social interaction. It is also essential for training appropriate stance expression and authorial stance to ESL writers (e.g., Hyland, 2001; Lee & Casal, 2014). Writing instructors can help students construct a small group of their own written outputs to equip writers with appropriate rhetorical strategies and explore disciplinary norms in the use of stance expressions. That is to say, if students gain better mastery and understanding of their rhetorical resources, they are likely to feel more empowered to assert their authority as writers. This will then enable them to create arguments that are more effective and critical.

There is a need for explicit and systematic teaching of interactional meta discourse markers in English writing classes. In this study, it was disclosed that the students had only a limited understanding of the role played by stance in the development of their arguments. More explicit instruction is needed to improve understanding of argumentation in essay writing. In writing classes, the writing tasks that students are assigned could be used in discussions to provide authentic examples of authorial stance in writing texts. Writing instructors can help students construct a small group of their own written outputs and that of written research articles for comparison to equip novice writers with appropriate rhetorical strategies and explore disciplinary norms in the use of stance expressions. Correspondingly, students will gradually develop an awareness of conveying personal stance in scientific English research writing.

The possibility that English language instructors discuss with students one-to-one the writing expectations required from them at this level and in accord with their discipline's

writing norms is also viable. Students should spend more time with their teachers, discussing their writing expectations and what is acceptable with relevant resources that help them produce appropriate academic writing. Instructors should use their position and privilege to empower students and challenge them to have a position and defend it. They should support and encourage students in a way they feel qualified enough to have their individual opinions, so they have the confidence to adopt a critical stance with respect to others' arguments.

Sociocultural factors affecting linguistic choices can be explored through comparative corpus analysis. Correspondingly, student writers will gradually develop an awareness of conveying personal stance in English research writing. Stance-taking is a critical feature of argumentative writing which can affect whether an argument is presented professionally and effectively or not. More supports and scaffolds need to be developed to optimize the learning experience of L2 writers, and these need to recognize that writing is a process of making sense via judicious deployment of assertive and tentative claims. Identifying authorial stance in texts - that is, repetitions, the use of these features from the same field - is also a useful way of learning the role that they play in binding an argument together. Students are therefore advised to practice identifying authorial stance features in texts that they read, and transfer the knowledge acquired into other essay writing such as articles.

Teachers of English should employ the appropriate methodology. Focusing on active learner-strategies will ensure students' active participation in the learning process which will, in turn, enable learners master the academic skill of writing argumentative essays. It is necessary for instructors to teach their students the significance of authorial presence and the way to appropriately show themselves in argumentative essay writing. Additionally, the analysis of rhetorical functions indicates that writers in different disciplines tend to present themselves in differing ways. Hence, instructors are supposed to grasp the features of their disciplines and teach students corresponding writing strategies in an appropriate way.

5.4   Suggestions for future research

Based on the critical issues considered in the findings and limitations of this study, several recommendations could be made for future research, calling attention to the importance of more studies to focus on authorial stance markers in the S.H.S level in English which may greatly benefit the understanding of how students intrude to negotiate their stance in their argumentative essays. The students' essays showed that their lexical choices and attitudes towards writing would have been different if they had the opportunity to be thought different ranges of authorial stance features and their importance in stance taken in early stages of their education. Thus, more research is required to examine L2 English language students' argumentative essays to understand to what extent their stance and writing styles could be developed.

While the data are admittedly small, future research is recommended to compare and contrast stance markers written by students to examine to what extent their use of authorial stance markers may affect positioning in their text. Since not much research has been carried out on boosters and their usage in different contexts, it somehow gives some ideas to other researchers, to examine the use of boosters, especially for academic writing purposes. Another promising direction for future research could be the exploration of differences in the use of the authorial stance functions. By doing this, we can have a better understanding of how students exploit these functions and then offer useful suggestions for teaching argumentative writing. One proposal for future research concerns the sample size. Future research could consider increasing the sample size. For instance, participants could be drawn from different municipalities rather than only one metropolitan, and this could reveal significant results. In order to better understand the different uses of authorial stance, future research is recommended to compare and contrast the use of stance between students from well-endowed schools to those schools that are not equipped. Due to the

limited number of Ghanaian S.H.S students studying within the humanities, the research can be extended to the other programs for a comparative study to have a better understanding of how students exploit stance and their functions in argumentative essays.

Future research also needs to examine additional ways of using stance markers to investigate the developmental trajectory of stance markers in students' argumentative essays.

5.5   Conclusion

The present study investigated the use of authorial stance markers in English essays written by senior high school students, examining their types and the functions they perform. The study revealed that the students' essays maintained substantially a good number of authorial stance markers, and this suggests that their writing instruction might have taught them some of the rhetorical conventions of stance in argumentative essays. This further indicates that students could be acquiring academic writing competence in some way. However, even though the analysis showed that all of the four authorial stance markers were found in their essays, it must be noted that they vary greatly in terms of frequency mainly because attitude markers and self-mentions were not used as much as that of hedges and boosters. Likewise, students' use of first personal singular pronoun was also limited in the finding, which might be attributed to their shared cultural backgrounds, including previous writing instruction discouraging the use of the pronoun *I* in writing. Thus, it can be argued that L2 students' writing in English is influenced by both cultural tendencies and by English language conventions. Such interdiscursive hybridity has been identified and discussed in the literature (Mauranen et al., 2010). Conclusively, this study suggests that authorial stance markers are valuable means through which different functions can be accomplished. As such, these markers were used based on the variety of functions they were used to construct with the stance marker as being certain or expressing doubt, stating a purpose and acknowledging other researchers.

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APPENDICES

Students' texts on Hedges

Extract 1

Writer 4: The argument itself __suggests__ that day students will have great success in small scale enterprises because they know the community members better than we do, but this really depends on the development of the relevant ideas that they bring on board. I don't expect this to affect us because we spend our entire three years in the school environment.

Extract 2

Writer 31: I quoted scientific research to be precise and the findings __suggest__ that boarders are able to read at preps better than day students since they distracted with the burden of home chores and duties.

Extract 3

Writer 7: I will oppose to that because __I think__ that teachers are doing a great service to humanity and they shouldn't be blamed much for student's truancy even if some teachers sit on the fence.

Extract 4

Writer 56: The results of some study I made also __indicate that__, apart from the distance which is of concern, day students are not affected so much because there are other various channels of learning which they can undertake to succeed in their academic pursuit.

Extract 5

Writer 39: It __appears__ to be a good idea from the inside since they __seem__ quite confident about their status and part of this issue simply derives from

the massive amount of new information that is now available on the internet to

Extract 6

*Writer 99: It **appears** that the school environment development is a good idea with everyone speaking English on campus and we could use this opportunity as students to help teachers in the nurturing process, however, most of the theories about teachers having intervention after school **could** be true.*

*Writer 2: The assertion that 'charity begins at home' **might** indicate that the students going to school early was a mandate of parents not teachers.*

Extract 7

*Writer 10: Seemingly being a boarder **might** be perceived as best decision ever however, I have tried to highlight the fact that there is not enough work being done, particularly in keeping the environment clean.*

*Writer 207: The future **may** hold a great promise for him, which may provide a more solid basis for partnership with him.*

Extract 8

*Writer 100: They **do** believe in their teachers though they sometimes misbehave. However, most of the theories about teachers having intervention after school **could** theoretically be used against them someday.*

*Writer 16: I provided an overview of some of the current themes and research directions from the Ghana Education Service, that I find particularly forward-looking, and that makes me argue that the initial campus-living inspiration **could** have died off years ago.*

150

*Writer 185: This **migh**t indicate that the students going to school early was a mandate of parents which we believe is false especially when the biological growth of children is way beyond the capacity of parents.*

*Writer 3: I don't agree when stakeholders of education take certain decisions without contacting, we students first since it **migh**t prove to be tragic in the future.*

*Writer 43: In the follow up debates I **may** show how a field that increasingly informs psychology can also inform students' brain mechanisms that are involved in good debating skills.*

*Writer 94: Well said, some people believe that he is in 'cloud nine" because he is an intelligent day student and so the future **may** hold a great promise for him if he proves to be prudent.*

Extract 9

*Writer 11: wouldn't we have performed **possibly** better in the boarding house if available resources were put in place and better teaching and learning interventions were introduced.*

*Writer 201: It seems to me that this assumption of dependency is mistaken. I want to argue that it is **possible** to say" truancy is a core mandate of both parents and teachers together.*

Extract 10

*Writer 282: **well, I believe** as a student, it is usually better to be accommodated in the school environment where teachers will monitor your educational progress and give you constructive criticisms as well.*

*Writer 13: **well, perhaps** entertainment in schools is one reason why students would love to be boarders wouldn't they?*

151

Extract 11

*Writer 67: As far as I can see, almost all of the many new journal's findings **suggested** that there is a need for nurse educators to model critical thinking in all aspects of nursing education because we are facing a real loss in professional registers in many national cultures with long scholarly traditions.*

Extract 12

*Writer 199: It was rumored yesterday that some Students **probably** ended up on the way somewhere and got accustomed to some good drinks and forget all about coming to school, which is exactly what we mean if we argue that the best place to keep secondary school students is in the compound.*

*Writer 200: I think parents have a role to play in **kind of** nurturing their wards at home, this will give teachers some space. I would even argue that the label 'ESP teacher' no longer seems appropriate for anyone involved in the field because of some issues teachers had to deal with caring for students outside the compound.*

Extract 13

Writer 7: *From my side of view, **I guess** we will conclude by naming teachers as responsible for the truancy of students because they sometimes sit on the fence concerning issues regarding discipline in the school. All they care is to finish teaching and leave for home.*

*Writer 12: That assertion that teachers reward is in heaven **presumably** is a fallacy though it could help them feel better sometimes, concerning their meagre salaries.*

*Writer 19**: I think** it might be true by all standards if we accurately analyze the facts on the grounds and desist from speculations which are mostly deadly. I also suppose you're very experienced at that kind of thing. It's your job.*

*Writer 205:** I think, I think err**...we should accept. Or agree with the theory that claims boarding school provides a better learning environment for students than those day students to be precise.*

Extract 14

*Writer 19**: Well, I believe** as a student it is usually better than being out of school knowing how bleak the future holds for you and those around you if you don't pursue good education, becoming a better person will be the happiest thing of my life.*

*Writer 24: We argue that,** well, perhaps** entertainment in schools is one reason why Students would love to be boarders and I agree with them totally because the school community should not only be about academics, education should be holistic.*

*Writer 82: I think parents have a role to play in** kind of** nurturing, wards at home and giving them the kind of discipline that will go a long way to disprove all kinds of corruptions and wrongdoings in their adult lives.*

Extract 15.

*Writer 81: The teachers argued that 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 that our teachers put up possibly favors boys over girls.*

*Writer 19: This **possibly** shows that as students adjust to the learner centered approach, they start to participate in it and enjoy their experience.*

*Writer 20: The findings I made in the library **may** be limited and that makes it difficult to compare with others that have posited that truancy behaviors of students are not included in any schools' manuals.*

Students' texts on Boosters

Extract 16

*Writer 44: I say that because well, that, which can **clearly** be interpreted as a school management imposition is fair if all the evidence and conclusions that have been drawn were what the stakeholders agreed on.*

*Writer12: Parent's responsibility in truant behaviors **certainly** achieves its preferred goal as their core mandate because the questionnaire sent out last year proved that parents are better care givers to their children before the various schools' do their part.*

*Writer 7: Truancy is most **certainly** widespread and popular with certain groups of lazy individuals especially those students from broken homes who don't seem to have any care and discipline.*

*Writer 90: It was argued that for **obvious** reasons it cannot be better said truancy is a core mandate for both parents and definitely the whole school community members.*

Extract 17

154

*Writer 248: What if that can **clearly** be interpreted as a school management imposition but the others can't, we need to be looking at this issue holistically than being one sided as it has been made us to believe.*

*Writer 5: I will take into consideration everything that has been said however, the study emphasizes the **fact that** more research is necessary for us to arrive at a prudent decision.*

*Writer 101: Students mostly misbehave and this could be seen as a result of the **fact that** the stress factor as a boarder in school is more prevalent as compared to the day students who are allowed by their parents to just take a shower and continue to read.*

*Writer 253: As I had already reiterated this point will **certainly** not hold in my opinion as far as there hasn't been any scientific research disputing it.*

*Writer 120: From previous respondents it is **certain** and true that these results show a great deal of truancy is encouraged by parents as they leave early for work not knowing the time their wards even get up from their beds to school.*

Extract 18

*Writer 1: I will always **firmly** oppose the idea of day school and believe in the good things the boarding house has to offer students like us. I can't imagine otherwise.*

*Writer 19: I **vehemently** believe and think, it is a good idea for students to be kept in school where teaching and learning can be monitored by people who are trained to do so and not parents.*

*Writer 52: However, it has been **proven**, beyond all reasonable doubt that without the help of teachers there might be no educative future leaders.*

*Writer 37: I will **Obviously** say, most teachers are kind considering the fac that most parents don't even seem appreciative of the great work they are doing but rather accuse them at the little wrong they do.*

Extract 19

*Writer 89: Being a day student is **undoubtedly** by far a better option in my view even if these people contend to that idea and throw caution to the wind.*

*Writer 64: The **proof** is conclusive that day school is by far better and a safer place by all standards to train young adolescents and teenagers notwithstanding all people say and do.*

*Writer 268: Yet, it can **definitely** be argued again and further that people conceive different ideas because of their background and the environment they grow in and this makes it difficult to shape their lives with other concepts.*

Students' texts on Self-Mention

Extract 20

*Writer 41: **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 at this age how them can they convince us of what they claim to have researched on.*

*Writer 279: **I** can't agree more with the fact that teachers are better care takers of students than parents since all what parents do is to dump their wards in the various schools and literally 'abscond' so to say for lack of better word*

Extract 21

*Writer 6: **Our** results provide support that the various intervention programs which can accelerate our comprehension success is critical thinking and learner centered Strategies.*

*Writer 104: **Our** understanding provide support for the hypothesis that wards who are taken good care of and are helped to read early in life at home do well in vocabulary and have positive results in listening comprehension in their later years in school.*

Extract 22

*Writer 300: In our previous write up **we** had introduced a lot of concepts that people have on the attitudes of both parents and teachers equipped with range-limited, responsibilities for both sides and have agreed to omit the obsolete ones in the years to come.*

*Writer 59: **We** should recognize and plan to explore this issue in more detail by examining how accent and intelligibility are related to other essays, such as processing time and subjective listener reactions to our English pronunciation.*

*Writer10: Thus, vocabulary work and reading comprehension are the best cognitive processes that can be used to deal with language **we** argue that it is there, to serve a role in some form of language proficiency and our argumentative essays.*

Extract 23

*Writer10: Thus, vocabulary work and reading comprehension are the best cognitive processes that can be used to deal with language as against we employing cohesion that did not work. **We** say that vocabulary work will serve a role in some form of language proficiency and our argumentative essays.*

Extract 24

*Writer 12: **We** are grateful to sir Michael and should like to thank Miss Sandra as well for their helpful suggestions and ideas we put forward in the essay.*

*Writer 16: Any errors are **my** responsibility. **We** urge future debaters to attend to indirect as well as direct effects of misconceptions people have about the boarding school.*

Extract 25

*Writer 71: A final pressing problem for those engaged by the school authorities in the boarding house is that the standards in the dormitories is now okay, therefore It is imperative to be grateful for those of **us** who worked within those areas as a duty to keep the place clean.*

Students' texts on Attitude markers

Extract 26

*Writer164: Because of the grades we had last semester **I trust** parents are doing their best understandably in terms of enforcing discipline to curb truancy.*

*Writer 9: It wouldn't be **clear in my own view** if truancy is left only to teachers after all the meetings we had and the people who claim to be the stakeholders in education.*

*Writer 286: I always arrive to school very early on resuming days and even detest the idea of staying home for long periods after the introduction of the free education because **quite frankly**, I love the day school as compared to the boarding house.*

*Writer 34: **I am afraid** it is okay by me and the whole of my house members if the government adds bread to the cereals, we take at breakfast in the school dinning.*

Extract 27

*Writer 200: **If you do not mind**, I can help you in your pronunciation lessons that may lead to a better performance in your academics.*

*Writer 76: **I must admit** parents should be the one and only ones to be blamed for the bad attitudes of their wards because they believe only teachers should discipline children rather than they also staking their claim.*

*Writer 3: Though being a boarder is a good idea **I am afraid** I will prefer to be a day student considering all the ordeal students have to go through to make it in the boarding house.*

*Writer 299: I will arrive later **to tell you the truth** I prefer to come from home for the lessons and run back home to take a good nap and prepare for the next morning school.*

Writer 61: **_I must say _**it is a great opportunity to be accepted in any school as a boarder notwithstanding the fact that you have to work to make your stay a success.

Extract 28

Writer 44: **_If you ask me_**, day is a better option since the boarding house is burdened with so much issues ranging from bullying to theft.

Writer 10: Though being a boarder is a good idea **_I am afraid_** I will prefer to be a day student because there have been more peer pressure issues prevalent in the school environment and the consequences have been fatal.

Writer 199: **_I must say _**it is a great opportunity to be accepted in any school as a boarder when some parents have to run all around to pay huge sums of money before their wards are accepted.

Writer 197: It was a **_remarkable_** experience, **_truly _**as I got into the boarding house and met the best friend of my big brother who was patiently ready to protect me from the 'claws' of other mean senior students.

Extract 29

Writer 64: **_Quite frankly_**, it seems to me, I will change the design of the school if I had my own way because it doesn't depict that of a boarding status.

Writer 131: **_Seriously_**, go out that' was what she said giving the fact that it was my first day in school and she didn't have any idea what I was going through that made me come late to school.

*Writer 77: **<u>Honestly</u>**, what do you know about psychology? I strongly believe those points raised have nothing to do with the contemporary issues been discussed in the school at the moment*