e Global
Social Sciences Review

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A Corpus-Based Comparative Stylometry of Both Sexes in Pakistani Editorials Amidst Stance Markers

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Abstract   The current comparative mixed-method study attempts to analyse two features of stance markers—attitude markers and self-mention—in the editorials of Pakistani male and female columnists to capture the similarities and differences in their writing styles called stylometry. Hyland's (2005) interaction model, comprising attitude markers and self-mention, was applied on the corpus consisting of 30 editorials, 15 of which were from each gender: male and female. Editorials from two newspapers—The Dawn and The News—were analyzed with the help of AntConc. Findings indicated that attitude markers were less significant in both genders' writings, confirming unanimity among the stylometry of both genders. Self-mentions were present with a higher proportion in male editorials than female editorials, revealing the difference.

Key Words: Attitude Markers, Self–Mention, Comparative Study, AntConc, Stylometry, Editorials

Introduction

Academic writing is an expression of identification. It defines disciplinary content and has the obligation of identifying the author. Authors seek to encourage themselves and their achievements to the discipline by exposing their identity called stylometry (Alyousef & Alotaibi, 2019). They strive to transmit the literature's values, thoughts, assertions, and views to convince audiences. In academic writing, identification in the light of stylometry is an author's place in the work (Hyland, 2002). As a result, academics need to consider the significance of language variance of a writer. Each term an author writes to the perception constructs an image of the author in the audience (Ivanič, 1994, p. 5).

The canvas of literature is an insight into society (Masood & Shafi, 2020). Language plays an essential role in forming this canvas (Fatima, Rahim, & Musaddiq, 2021). To complete the task more effectively, writers use different techniques to portray social norms through their writings, including stance markers. Stance markers are language components that aid in the communication of judgments, subjective opinions, individual perspectives, emotions, and levels of commitment towards different occurrences (Shen & Tao, 2021). Academic writing research is increasingly focusing on stance, and this is an essential part of writing instruction in the classroom as a whole. Humans express their feelings and attitudes differently in

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different ways using various phenomena, particularly stance markers ([Aull, 2019](#)).

Within discourse, there are two significant concepts called stance and engagement. Stance is how academics show their perspective or individuality and transmit their assessments, ideas, and convictions. In comparison, engagement describes how academics realize the existence of the readership and react to readers in the discourse. There are many features of stance and engagement. Features of stance are hedges, booster, attitude marker, and self-mention. In contrast, features of engagement are readers' mentions, directives, questions, and knowledge references ([Hyland, 2005](#)). In the present study, only two features of stance are analyzed: attitude markers and self-mention.

The use of computational tools has revolutionized every field of life ([Ullah, Arif, & Qaisar, 2020](#)), including domains of literature and linguistics as well ([Masood, Shafi, & Darwesh, 2020](#)). Thereupon, the researcher aims to use AntConc software for the said purpose. Only regular text documents well with file appendix. Txt is supported by AntConc. The editorials were changed to.txt documents because AntConc does not read .doc, .docx, or .pdf files. AntConc can read.txt files that have been saved as XML files. The study looked at a variety of position indicators to see what rhetorical tactics writers used. The fundamental aim of the research is to analyze gender stylometry in the employed genre.

Most of the scholarly works have been analyzed for the features of stance and engagement; however, editorials are least focused by researchers in Pakistan to explore stance markers. Therefore, the current research intends to examine elements of perspective in 30 editorials from two popular Pakistani English newspapers: The Dawn and The News. The current research aims to analyze different stance markers to investigate how the writers communicate their judgments and evaluations via their writings. This study presents the comparative stylometry of Pakistani male and female columnists to convey their emotion, evaluation, personal attitude, and purpose toward a proposition.

Research Questions and Objectives

The current study endeavours to answer two research questions: First, what are the differences in the use of stance markers by Pakistani male and female editorial writers? Second, how do male and female convey their judgment through propositions? These research questions align with the two research objectives of the present study: The first objective focuses on the investigation of the difference in the use of stance markers by male and female columnists; and the second deals with the exploration of how males and females convey their judgments through propositions in Pakistani editorials. Both objectives focus on the comparative stylometry of both genders.

Significance and Research Gap

The research conducted is either in a foreign context or in other genres. Although the current study is not new in its nature and scope, it contributes to the pool of knowledge regarding gendered role and stance features in news editorials in the Pakistani context. The tools applied are also significant, which is a contribution and a new addition as far as the methodological significance is concerned. Moreover, the study will attract researchers to this aspect of discourse analysis in the broader area of linguistics. There is much research done on the gender difference in news editorials of Pakistani writers. Still, there is no research on the feature of stance markers, particularly attitude markers and self-mention, so that this research would fill this gap.

Literature Review

These written discourses trace society ([Siddiq et al., 2021](#)). Their theme is the occurring within those societies where that literature is written ([Hussain, Arif & Saleem, 2021](#)). Emotions play a central role in any writing ([Shafi, 2019](#)) and the stance markers portray these emotions. In the

research proposal, the researcher has provided and explained the review of literature related to gender in the Pakistani news-editorial writers. This part is further divided into conceptual literature and research literature (Masood et al., 2020). The former deals with the basic concepts of writing, while the latter deals with the literature investigated in light of these concepts.

Conceptual Literature

First, stylometry is a form of text analysis that compares editorials or textual objects (Oxford Language, 2020). Statistically probable and unlikely sentences for a certain author, kind of text, or specific grammatical structures may be found by using this statistical method (Roohi, Masood, & Mushtaq, 2021). Second, corpus linguistics is an approach that combines machine-based scientific evaluations of language usage by utilizing large, digitally accessible datasets of naturally produced spoken and written texts. These texts are known as corpora which deal with the quantitative and qualitative study of these texts. It is more genuine and trustworthy to have a corpus of impulsive facts than than a collection of structured addresses and well-composed writings that have experienced several edits (Masood et al., 2021).

Third, AntConc is a multipurpose computational software used in corpus linguistics to analyze the text in the discourse. It is a freeware toolkit for classrooms (Anthony, 2002). Fourth, discourse analysis is a problem-oriented interdisciplinary study that deals with various approaches, each with a different theoretical model, research agent, and agenda (Hassan, Shafi, & Masood, 2021). It aims to analyze other issues such as dominance, discrimination, power, and control in the language (Ahmed, Shafi, & Masood, 2021). Lastly, attitude and self-mention are the features of stance markers employed in a discourse. These stance markers are essential in producing the stylometry of a person in the discourse (Hyland, 2005).

Research Literature

Gut and Unuabonah (2019) investigated stance markers in Nigerian English and Ghanaian English, two different dialects of West African English. They were contrasted to British English by the experts. Four semantic groupings of posture indicators were studied by the researchers for their frequency, and stylistic variation in the study Al-Rikabi (2020) also identified stance markers in English and Arabic newspapers as the main instruments of transmitting the authors' opinions about what they are writing, directing readers throughout the articles. The researcher collected data from twenty pieces of public dialogue equally from English and Arabic and adopted an analytical model of Hyland. These both were comparative studies of two different dialects and languages, respectively.

Blagojević (2009) explained the expression of cultural discourse in English and Serbian writings. The research focused on the use of stance markers in academic research articles. The researcher compared the reports for the linguistic forms. The study analyzed the frequency of these markers in scholarly articles of humanities. After analyzing academic papers from three academic disciplines (sociology, social psychology, and philosophy), the findings indicated that linguistics features were more or less to express authors' attitudes in both languages. However, the Serbian writer's frequency was more evident in the articles. These authors willingly said their attitudes than their English colleagues.

Students' writing study has considered stance at differing stages, levels of literacy, and academic disciplines, but genre-specific stance features have received little attention, according to the results of a corpus linguistics assessment of premature bachelor and initial master's degree composing in the Michigan Corpus of upper-class student writing. The study's viewpoint is divided between compelling academic language and analytical, interpretive writing. Since students' writers are shown to differ by their usage of particular stance markers, the above

paper investigated how well these markers are used across different types of writing. Significant steps for the layout of guidance and assignments, as well as continued studies, have been identified as a result of these observations (Aull, 2019).

Following Hyland's paradigm of stance, Shen and Tao (2021) studied the distribution of stance markers in two distinct genres: clinical research papers and journalism opinion articles. The corpus developed for the inquiry contained 52 clinical journal articles and 175 Newspaper editorial items published in English. The research suggested that the issue material appears to have a substantial effect in defining the style of how authors create their perspectives. The absence of knowledge or proof on the issue might limit authors from expressing significant commitment to specific assertions, encouraging them to take a more hesitant position to clarify their comments.

De Bruyn (2012) innovatively introduced the term stance markers stating that the language users clarify their feelings and emotions about the proposition of an utterance. Further, The researcher showed attitude markers as signals that express human emotions. The primary function of these markers was to be classified as discourse markers. It developed a new way to understand the male and female discourse. On the contrary, Biber and Finegan (2009) elaborated grammatical stance markers, including adverbials and clauses, to indicate that the stance and the judgemental words are different from grammatical tools. The study included just a single proposition, so the statement shows the writer's attitude and feelings.

Crosthwaite, Cheung, and Jiang (2017) analyzed the rhetorical strategies utilized by the students to present their academic stances. With the help of corpus, researchers implemented a constructive comparative approach on professional research reports. The students used stance markers in their writings to make their papers more professional. Stance markers have a pedagogical implication in the English language

classes for promoting professionalism. The distribution of the stance features depends on the indigenous culture, society's behaviour, and the author's academic discipline. The authors enter the writing without any invitation to present their authorial voice to the content and readers; however, this identity is limited and subject to the variability of culture and discipline.

The studies conducted by Hassani and Farahani (2014), Haufiku and Kangira (2017), Martin (2001), and Newman et al. (2008) adopted the corpus-based course, which they claimed proved fruitful. The method they used consisted of both quantitative and qualitative tools of analysis. These researches relied on speech corpus; however, none went for written corpus, particularly editorials. This study also covered the gap of gender stylometry, editorial investigation, and use of AntConc. Hence, the current study selected editorials to explore gender differences in language. Hyland's (2005) Interactive Model of Stance and Engagement was used in the study with only two features of stance, called as self mention and attitude markers.

Research Methodology

Prior to undertaking corpus research, three factors should be taken into account. First, it appears as if there is a significant amount of data. There are a number of factors to keep in mind while determining the results. Third, academics need to use unconventional methodologies in conducting research. Male and female Pakistani bloggers compose 15 of the 30 editorials in the present study's corpus (Newman et al., 2008). Only one editorial for each writer was included for the investigation to minimize individual differences. The computational tool, AntConc, extracted statistical data from 30 editorials. Researchers selected editorials based on quota sampling (Thompson, 2012). The quota was divided equally for both genders, male and female.

The findings on the current studies are carried under the theoretical framework of Hyland's (2005) Interaction Model of Stance and

Engagement for data analysis. The model consists of two parts: stance and engagement. Present research deals with the two elements of stance—attitude markers and self-mention—was investigated in the editorials. Hyland's (2005) Interaction Model is "a framework for analyzing the linguistic resources of intersubjective positioning." It was founded on academic discourse engagement; however, the present research focused on using these two features of stance markers in the editorials. Researchers studied the general features of male and female columnists in the corpus for the reliability of the language.

The primary source of data gathering for the current study was 30 news editorials. *The Dawn* and *The News*, two Pakistani English newspapers, contributed equally to the corpus. Researchers built a news editorials corpus after converting the contents of editorials into plain text, that is, .txt. AntConc analyzed the text for the extraction of stance markers. Two features of stance markers—attitude markers and self mention—were separated from the data in tables. The data provided statistical information about the use of stance markers by both genders. This data provided information about the comparison in stylometry of male and female columnists.

In writing, stance markers refer to how an author positions and communicates his or her thoughts, beliefs, and intentions to the audience. This category involves four sub-categories; however, only two of them are the focus of the current study. First, attitude makers convey the writer's attitude, content evaluation, expression of surprise, agreement, importance, and emotional terms. Second, self mention is the linguistic form used by the writer to project themselves into their writing in a robust manner by using first personal pronouns and possessive adjectives. The current study is mixed-method research because researchers extracted the quantitative statistical data of attitude markers and self mention from AntConc. Afterwards, the qualitative research dealt with comparative stylometry.

Data Presentation and Analysis

The data for attitude markers and self-mention is present in this section. This section deals with the quantitative data presented in tables and is broken down into three parts. This is the first part that shows the table of word tokens and word types. These aspects deal with the comparative stylometry of columnists. The second section manifests the use of attitude markers, while the third section reveals self mention. These two sections disclose the use of these two features of stance markers in the editorials. AntConc extracted the statistical findings, analyzed the corpus and provided the data. The data provided in this section is discussed qualitatively at the end of each table.

Quantitative Findings

Using a corpus of 30 editorials, equally divided between male and female editorials, Table No. 1 compares the stylometry of the two sexes in terms of word tokens and word types.

TABLE 1. Comparative Stylometry

Category	Male	Female
Word Token	8469	12083
Word Types	2458	3141

Researchers selected 30 editorials to provide satisfactory answers to the research questions. Males used 8469-word tokens, while female columnists used 12083-word Tokens in their editorials. It shows that female columnists write longer editorials as compared to male columnists. Male editorials made their writings concise, while the females elaborated their papers to clear their point. Similarly, the vocabulary use of male columnists is also more comprehensive

than the female columnists, which is apparent from the word types. Male columnists used 2458 word types, while female columnists used 3141-word types.

Use of Attitude Markers

Instead of epistemological approach toward propositions, attitude indicators show a writer's efficacy. The usage of attitude indicators by male and female columnists is shown in Table No. 2 below:

Table 2. Attitude Markers

Attitude Markers	Male	Female
Unfortunately	2	1
Agree	0	0
Prefer	0	0
Hopefully	0	0
Appropriately	0	0
Logical	0	0
Remarkable	1	0
Total	3	1

The usage of attitude markers by male and f emale columnists is shown in Table No. 2 above. The overall proposition of attitude markers is minor in the corpus. 4 attitude markers were used in the editorials of Pakistani columnists. Male colonialists have used more attitude markers than female columnists, three against 1. Attitude markers portray the theme of editorial and emotions represented by the writer. It shows that both sexes are equally ambivalent about the subject and content of the editorials, which is encouraging. Nevertheless, male columnists portrayed more emotions and conclusions than their female counterparts. The overall low usage of attitude markers by both the genders also exhibits that editorials represented situations instead of the facts.

Use of Self-mention

The use of single and plural first-person pronouns is a telltale sign that discovers the writer's self-mention in their writing. Using Table No. 3, one can see the columnist's self-mentions, both by male and female.

Table 3. Self-mention

Self-Mention	Male	Female
Singular		
I	96	3
Me	39	0
My	86	1
Mine	1	0
Total	222	4
Plural		
We	13	1
Us	9	1
Our/ Ours	15	7

Self-Mention	Male	Female
Total	37	9
GrandTotal	259	13

The findings shown in Table No. 3 indicate the linguistic behaviour of the writers concerned. The self mention suggests using the voice of oneself in the discourse. The normal association for gender-based linguistics features is implied by the comparison of male and female editorials regarding the perceived benefits of highlighting one's own language attributes. Researchers investigated individual components for inserting the results in the above given table. Singular and plural self-mentions were used to distinguish the sub-categories of self-mention. The former has four items: I, me, my, and mine, while the latter has three words: we, our, and us.

Male columnists used the pronoun "I" more than the female columnists. Male columnists were more likely to employ "I" compared to female columnists, which is 96 against 3. So the first person pronoun was utilized more by male columnists that indicated several interpretations. First, according to Schiffrin et al. (2008), it shows an assertive attitude toward male writers. Some female columnists used first-person pronouns less frequently. However, according to Newman et al. (2008), it is expected behaviour. As far as male columnists are concerned, they have constructed their identity that is almost situational based instead of than gender-based.. Male writers have frequently incorporated their voices in the discourse.

The use of "Me" and "My" as instances was also more in number by male editorial writers (me=39 against 0 and my=86 against 1). Due to its casual character, the usage of "mine" is lower across both male and female texts (1 against 0). It was surprising to find that the columnists in this research, both men and women, avoided using slang or ordinary language. Male authors have utilized "I, Me, and My" more often and in greater numbers than women authors when it comes to first-person singular pronouns. In the corpus, male authors used first-person pronouns 222 times more often than women authors, who utilized it for 4 times. Thereupon, male writers have used more singular self mentions than female writers.

"We" operate in editorials of male writers 13 times against a single time by female columnists. Similarly, the word "Us" was utilized less by male writers as compared to female writers. "Us" was utilized 9 times by male writers, and female writers adopted the pronoun "Us" for a single time. Moreover, the use of "Our/ours" was also higher in the writings of male columnists than female columnists, which were 15 times against the 7 times. Male authors employ first-person plural pronouns (we, us, our/ours) more often than female writers. The number of total of first-person plural pronouns used throughout the Pakistani English newspaper editorials corpus is 37 times by male authors and 9 times by female writers.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, in a recent study, the stance markers used by male and female newspaper columnists was compared and contrasted. These editorials were combined into a corpus taking two aspects of stance markers for the anticipated comparison of stylometry of both genders. These two categories of stance markers were self-mention and attitude markers. A clear-cut difference was present in the language use of both genders. Female columnists write longer editorials than male columnists. Similarly, male vocabulary use is more comprehensive than female columnists, which is apparent from the word tokens and word types. This phenomenon indicates that these authors write in the very same in-group mood or interaction manner.

The study could not find any significant attitude markers in the corpus. Male columnists used attitude markers 3 times, whereas female

columnists used them for a single time. On the contrary, this study found self-mentioning pronouns with a higher proportion by male columnists against female columnists, who made significantly lesser use of self-mention. Self-mentions were divided into first person singular and first-person plural pronouns. Male columnists used 259 (Singular=222 and Plural=37) self-mentions, while female writers used self-mentions 13 times (Singular=4 and Plural=9). The research on the canvas of literature is necessary (Fatima, Ahmed, & Shafi, 2021), therefore futuristic vision of the current study may extend to other categories of stance and engagement.

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