

TITLE: A LINGUISTIC STUDY OF PERSUASION AND NEGOTIATION IN RESEARCH ARTICLES OF ISLAMIC STUDIES: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Abstract

Examining the claim-making in research articles of Islamic studies published in Pakistan by Pakistani authors, in particular, has not got the attention of the linguists yet. The objective of the current study is to explore the nature of claims by examining Boosters (authoritative and assertive claims) and Hedges (softer and negotiable claims) made by the authors of Islamic studies research articles in the context of Pakistan. To examine the linguistic nature of these claims, mix methodology was used by utilizing the list of claim markers proposed under metadiscourse theory. The study found that the ratio between Boosters and Hedges employed by the authors of Islamic Studies is around 2:1 which is not aligned with international practice i.e. 3:1. The most noticeable academic writing expressions used for making stronger claims are modal verbs including should and must which is not a conventional practice in any discipline at the international level. Similarly, the authors preferred modal verbs including would, may, could and might in order to make their claims softer which in some cases is likely to restrict the meanings to be understood by the readers. The findings recommend, as an implication, developing a research writing curriculum for the postgraduate scholars of Islamic Studies in Pakistan.

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Introduction

A considerable increase in researching academic research writing has been observed since 1990; as a discourse that embody interaction between writer and reader (Akinci, 2016). The existence of interactive relationship in the written text enables the writers to support the importance and originality of their work is now well established and has been examined in Plethora of studies (Ansarin & Aliabadi, 2011), as cited in (Akinci, 2016). It was widely believed that researcher should be unbiased and they must have objectivity while conducting a report of their studies. This prevailing convention of academic writing has been recently challenged by a number of researchers (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001; 2009), as cited in (Babai, Atal, & Mohammadi, 2015). Hyland (2005) argues that interaction of writers and readers has the same effect as the interaction occurs between speaker and audience. This view of interactional existence between writers and readers in academic writing has been perceived as a process of social engagement (Babai et al., 2015). The Holy Quran centuries ago has provided us with such communication frameworks wherever persuasion and negotiation is required. For example, the following verse may also be interpreted in support of hedging while making claims or taking standpoints on your opinion.

وَأَنْصِتْ لَهُ يَا مُتَّبِعِي ۚ وَانْخَضِي لَهُ مِن تَوَنُّبٍ ۚ وَانْخَضِي لَهُ
أَلْوَعًا ۚ إِنَّ أَصْوَاتَ لَاصِّ لَاصِّ تَوَاتُ الْخَافِ ۚ

“Hence, be modest in thy bearing, and lower thy voice: for, behold, the ugliest of all voices is the [loud] voice of asses...”
[Luqman (Luqman) 31:19]

In the above mentioned verse [Luqman (Luqman) 31:19] Allah almighty has proffered us with the most effective communication framework of persuasion and negotiation. Keeping the voice lower and saying in a moderate way can achieve communicative goals more effectively during any communicative event. More specifically, this communication behaviour is one of the most important conventional practices of research discourse. Proficiency level in this aspect can surely effect the argument of the researchers made through their discourses.

A major aspect of proficient academic writing is the proficiency to express an appropriate stance toward one’s material and reader (Charles, 2007; Hyland & Guinda, 2012) as cited in (Jiang, 2015). The Holy Quran provides us the best guidelines for making an effective stance by saying gently in a negotiable manner. For instance, Allah almighty in the Holy Quran

[Ta-Ha 20:44] advises us to speak gently even to the leaders of disbelief.

نُفِخَ فِيهِمْ مِنْ أَلْوَانٍ مُتَّعِدِينَ
 وَنُفِخَ فِيهِمْ مِنْ أَلْوَانٍ مُتَّعِدِينَ

But speak unto him in a mild manner, so that he might bethink himself or [at least] be filled with apprehension [Ta-Ha 20:44]

Speaking gently can be considered another moderate form of hedging which is undeniable communication strategy for persuasion and negotiation in research discourses. Generally, editors, reviewers, and peers are found to be very strict towards the claims made by the authors in their research articles but hedging on the part of the authors still remains pertinent and one of the major communicative requirements in achieving goals of persuasion and negotiation. This is a difficult task for second language writers to have control on (Hyland & Milton, 1997; Tang, 2012) as cited in (Jiang, 2015) discourse. As Holmes points out “nominal constructions are rather underrated epistemic strategy and learners are not well served by the range provided” (Jiang, 2015). The increasing interest in academic writing, the concept of metadiscourse, now has become the representation of relationship between readers and writers.

How academic writers are involved in their text while arguing on the credibility of their claims, many research studies were conducted in this regard (Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2002b; Dahl, 2004; Martinez, 2005; Shelden, 2009) as cited in (Akinci, 2016). Few latest works have also been produced in this regard including Abbas and Shehzad (2020), Hyland and Jiang (2017), and Zareva (2013). A simple term stance means “a particular way of thinking of someone”, therefore, this way of thinking of writers is reflected in the text while reporting their findings and research outcomes (Babai et al., 2015). There are several terms frequently used to refer to authorial stance: evaluation (e.g., Hunston & Thompson, 2000), stance (e.g., Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2004; Jaffe, 2009), voice (e.g., Hirvela & Belcher, 2001), persona (e.g., Tse & Hyland, 2008), metadiscourse (e.g., Hyland, 2005) and hedging (e.g., Hyland, 1998). The presence of author in academic text is manifested through variety of linguistic resources. Anderson et al. (2009; cited in McGrath, 2016) conducting a study found, possessive determiners, adverbial are more implicit stance; the most overt signals of writers’ intrusion into the discourse are personal subject pronouns. In various qualitative and quantitative studies (Harwood, 2005; Zareva, 2013) frequency count has been reported and metaphorical labels assigned to instances of self-mentions in learners and research genres.

Literature Review

Academic Research Writing

The construction of authorial stance in academic discourse varies according to disciplinary conventions as well as disciplinary variations (Hyland & Jiang, 2017). Discourse cultures are largely contingent upon the cultural epistemologies of the discipline. Therefore, the role of disciplinary culture is a key factor in determining the construction of stance and evaluation. It would therefore be a misconception to believe that interdisciplinary differences do not affect the construction of stance. Largely, the use of authorial stance relies on the nature of the study and the primary discipline it emerges from.

Authorial stance in academic writing is widely recognized among expert members of the field as a crucial phenomenon that plays a significant role in negotiating the acceptance of arguments, building writer's positionality in the text and persuading the reader to accept it (Hyland & Jiang, 2017). Successful writers are those who cautiously utilize rhetorical features denoting stance projection so as to establish novelty of their works, evaluate their arguments and build mutual relationship with the reader (Hyland & Jiang, 2017).

Stance construction is possible through various lexico-grammatical categories. A study was conducted by Hyland & Jiang (2017) who examined the construction of authorial stance across disciplines through the use of 'evaluative that'. They define lexico-grammatical patterns following 'that' as generally front load utterances that carry the pulse of attitudinal meanings. Through 'evaluative that', writers offer explicit evaluations of propositions. Hyland & Jiang (2017) examined the genre of academic writing and research articles in a corpus of 2.2 million words taken from four disciplines: Applied Linguistics, Biology, Engineering and Sociology. Following a diachronic study of fifty years, they found that while the popularity of 'evaluative that' had declined over 50 years in these four disciplines, the fact that it was increasing per paper suggested its continuous significance in research writing. They found that the occurrence of 'evaluative that' per paper was 53 cases but when examined in 10,000 words corpus, these structures had declined 20% across all disciplines.

This result shows the rhetorical importance of the stance construction in research writing and the enduring value it has for authors. Generally, most writers tend to use these structures to emphasize on the importance and relevance of their research and value their interpretations, for example using 'it is safe to say that...'. It also suggests writer's choice of making their claims apparent to the reader and constructing an active voice so as to engage with the text. In sum, making stance in a more persuasive and negotiable manner can be made by embedding kindness (softness) in by

college writings. In addition, the authors also found that non-discipline specific essays contained more generalizations as compared to discipline specific essays. Considering that all essays were argumentative in nature, the authors' conclusion seems valid to believe that illustrated the two accepted rhetorics for generalizations which are explicitly countering existing generalization and offering new generalizations. However, they found that the new college writing FY Corpus had more frequent generalizable stance markers as compared to others.

This finding rather indicates that unpublished or perhaps inexperienced academic writers do not possess a sense of responsibility or caution towards constructing generalizable claims. Nevertheless, this study is significant in this perspective as it postulates pedagogical implications to teaching accurate usage of stance markers denoting generalizations in new college writing.

Another similar interesting study was carried by McCambridge (2019) who conducted an ethnographically-oriented study to examine the writings of four students in the field of Humanities and Cultural Studies on International Masters program in Finland. The researcher sought out to examine what defines a good writing considering the diverse range of student body. Both teachers and students argued that highlighting ones point of view was important in academic writing. Teachers particularly were more interested in student writing that utilized metadiscourse markers such as attitudinal markers, self-mention or hedging. Taking a mixed method approach, the author first quantitatively examined the number of metadiscourse markers that contributed to the construction of stance and ones point of view. Second, the author also qualitatively analysed the types of voice construction and how they were perceived. The researcher found that metadiscourse marker's usage varied from one text to another and striking differences of voice construction were also highlighted. Based on interviews, the author also found out that teachers preferred less explicit stance use. Nevertheless, they juxtaposed this belief with the disciplinary and cultural norms in interpreting their practices. When their grades were evaluated, the researcher found out that the student who had used fewest stance markers had scored highest grade. Teachers rather preferred the voice of the student to be that of a culturally detached analyst rather than a cautious critical writer.

This study rather shows the use of stance markers from a practical worldview where educational institutions reflect discourse conventions and how stance construction is manipulated by teachers' roles in shaping the discourse of academic writing.

Linguistic Expressions of Strong/Assertive Claims i.e. Boosters

The ways writers develop argument in their piece/s of writing/s are related to how they choose their stance expression. In academic writing, therefore, stance is one of the major areas for attention. The concept of stance has been studied by different researchers under various definitions. Stance is defined as “a textual voice”, conveying the attitudinal manner of the writer (Hyland, 2001, p. 176); “the ways in which an author or speaker overtly expresses attitudes, feelings, judgments, or commitment concerning the message” (Biber, 1988, p. 204); a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects, and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimensions of the sociocultural field (DuBois, 2007, p. 220); expression-words for “representing the self” (Snow & Uccelli, 2009, p. 122) as an expert member of a knowledge community. In view of the significance of stance, Hyland (2005) proposes a set of concepts such as hedges and boosters in the process of investigating stance-taking. Stance is typically used to strengthen the truth-value/significance of writer’s claim or proposition (Hinkel, 2003).

Cakir (2016) explores the use of stance in the abstracts of research articles by Turkish and native writers in English. It is a comparative study of lexico-grammatical features with the focus mainly on stance adverbs such as ‘clearly, probably and apparently’. The author classifies adverbs that reflect stance as proposed by Biber (2006). Biber (2006) distinguishes the following four main types of stance adverbs:

- a. Epistemic adverbs (including certainty adverbs and likelihood adverbs)
- b. Likelihood adverbs
- c. Attitude adverbs
- d. Style adverbs

In addition, the author also uses ‘domain adverbs’ such as ‘biologically, chemically, theoretically’ used for projecting evaluation. Moreover, the author also investigates cultural and genre-based influences on the employment of stance adverbs published in journals of linguistics, sociology, psychology, physics, chemistry and biology.

The research article is considered to be an important pillar of the academic discourse. In the past it was taken as objective and discursive in nature and style and aimed at diminishing the visibility and stance of the researcher. The modern academic discourse has been widened and has outgrown the previous notions of objectivity. Now the positionality of the writer, his voice and stance contribute not only to the understanding but also to the interactive communication between the reader and the writer.

Disciplinary variations of stance in research articles hold supreme significance. Stance in academic discourse not only determines the relationship between the writer and the reader but also acts as a textual

voice, giving strength to the writer's claims. Academic discourse is a powerful domain where the positioning of the writer helps in establishing the centrality of the claims.

Shirzadi, Akhgar, Rooholamin and Shafiee (2017) had tried to highlight the interplay between writer and reader. They illustrated how the writer's stance, voice and relationship are communicated within this approach. The judicious use of such strategies is in concordance with being a good academic writer. Taking on a position and convincing the reader of the claims are central. The research brings to light that how the Iranian and American M.A. EFL writers are different in their use of stance strategies like boosters, hedges, self-mentions and attitude markers in introduction and discussion parts of academic papers. The corpora of study were forty articles (20 articles for Iranian non- native writers and 20 for American native) selected from diverse journals as English Language Teaching, System, ELT, TESOL Quarterly and Journal of Research Studies in Education. The writer used SPSS to measure the frequency and significance of items. Different statistical tools like chi-Square, percentage and frequency were used to scrutinize the assorted data. The findings revealed that there was no huge difference between native and non- native writers in employing the strategies of stance. The only difference was that native writers were inclined to use attitude markers, hedges and self- mentions more frequently than non-native writers. On the other hand, non-native writers were more prone to use boosters.

Stance not only helps in establishing the credibility of the writer but also in the construction of the meaning making process. Kiesling (2015) has tried to approach stance theoretically by showing the implications of stance in sociolinguistics. He talks about how to see the stance in conversation seems realistic but the analysts use the stance strategies in discourse to see its implications in action. He is of the opinion that when the patterns of stance are connected to the broader patterns of social and cultural milieu, an interactive model of sociolinguistic stance taking and patterning can be developed. The writer has emphasized upon the importance of stance in academics as he says when language users employ language in specific genres and speech events in a certain way, the forms of language which create particular stance get associated with some particular aspects of the speaker's behavior and identity. He goes on to say that it leads to a process of indexical and ideological phantasmagorias. He further explicates that stance is a kind of interaction between the writer and reader where the writer negotiates an intersubjectivity and shared kind of intentionality that bequeaths a sense of understanding to the reader and establishes a strong interaction between the writer and the reader. Conversation analysis is of peculiar importance in connection with the significance of stance in academic discourse. The article focuses on stance as a kind of meaning that the writer creates.

In another study Khamkhien (2014) has emphasized on the use of various expressions of marked evaluation in academic domain. He has focused on communicative strategies to highlight the significance of stance. He has relied on the previous researches of Hyland (1998; 2004) which bring to focus the importance of effectively and appropriately using linguistic features as an essential component in communicating writer's stance by giving way to evaluation of the point of view as well as through the process of negotiation. The corpora for this study were research articles from the field of applied linguistics and language teaching. These were selected from top ten journals to be analyzed. The finding revealed that expert academic writers employ stance markers like communication verbs, epistemic modality and personal pronouns more effectively and are able to pronounce their stance vividly which imparts a better understanding to the readers. The article has facilitated the practical use of language pedagogically and has paved the way for the novice writers in academic discourse.

Adams and Quintana-Toledo (2013) in *Adverbial Stance Marking in the Introduction and Conclusion Sections of Legal Research Articles* have discussed the significance of authorial stance as depicted by adverbial markers in legal research papers' introduction and conclusion section. They have examined the frequencies of repeated adverbial stance marker. These markers also serve as the attitude, epistemicity and style markers. Furthermore, they explored that how does the use of adverbial markers depend on the nature of the communicative purposes.

They focused on stance as a linguistic construct that tries to establish the connection between the figurative, the literal and the functional implications of discourse. But the concept here remains somewhat ambiguous and elusive as multiple linguistic resources as well as paralinguistic resources such as grammar, prosody and lexis have been employed which act as stance indicators. The writers have talked about metadiscourse, evaluation and stance as linkage which enhances the interactive aspect of the language and emphasizes the importance of stance in research articles. They are of the opinion that stances of attitude adverbs and epistemic adverbs both reflect on the nature of the statement and proposition. The adverbs clearly, obviously and certainly indicate the writers certainty of stance towards a certain proposition. The adverbials act as unmodalised illustration of the stance of the writer. On the other side, the adverbs like probably and perhaps depict weak level of authorial stance and commitment. The findings indicated that the conclusion part of legal articles is rich in adverbial stance markers as compared with the introduction part. Furthermore, in conclusion section their function is to indicate the implications of the study and the various outcomes of different situations. In introduction, they are employed to explore the contribution to the specific field of research.

Bahrami, Dowlatbadi, Yazdani and Amerian (2018) explained the role of stance and author's viewpoint in the production of powerful, interactive and persuasive discourse. They treated interaction as important feature that establishes a strong bond between the writer and the reader. It forms the basis of the rhetorical pattern of the research article. Major approaches about the role of stance have been presented and the significance of the authorial stance has been highlighted.

Hence, this study focuses on examining claims through linguistic resource of Boosters and Hedges in research articles published research journals of Islamic studies recognized by Higher Education Commission, Pakistan.

Research Methodology

The study used mixed method approach by employing the latest corpus techniques for data collection and data analysis. Details are given below under 3.1 and 3.2.

Data Collection/Corpus Building

We selected 30 research papers published in different journals of Islamic studies recognized by Higher Education Commission, Pakistan. To have synchronic view of data analysis, the research papers were collected randomly from electronic versions and published after 2015. Online availability of the research journal was main criterion of journal selection. The general format of the research papers were abstract, introduction, literature review, analysis, discussion and conclusion. The cleaned corpus of the selected research papers comprise of 144037 words with average of around 4800 words each research article. For the standardization, the whole corpus was cleaned by removing tables, figures, footnotes, endnotes, bibliographies/references, acknowledgements and appendices.

Data Analysis/Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The list of claim making markers including Boosters and Hedges compiled by Hyland (2005) under metadiscourse theory was used as theoretical framework. These markers are part of default setting of a corpus tool named MetaPak (Abbas, Shehzad & Ghalib, 2017). This tool retrieves concordances of the all the claim makers found in its default setting under categories of Boosters and Hedges. Moreover, the tool provides statistical results in norm values and frequency. We have used per 10,000 norm value for interpretation of the results. Another tool named Worditout was also used to generate word clouds of the most used claim markers by the authors.

Quantitative and qualitative approach were followed for data analysis. The former approach was used to find out norm values of the claim markers and the later was used to conduct textual analysis of the claim making expressions employed by the authors of research articles of Islamic Studies.

Results and Discussion

This section explicates linguistic expressions of claims i.e. Boosters and Hedges employed in research articles of Islamic Studies published in Pakistani research journals. The first sub section (4.1) compares Boosters and Hedges quantitatively; the second sub section (4.2) discusses employment of Boosters for making assertive claims quantitatively and qualitatively; and the last sub section (4.3) provides results and discussion on use of Hedges i.e careful claim making linguistic expressions in both quantitative and qualitative ways.

Claims in Research Articles of Islamic Studies

Figure 1 provides a comparative analysis of employment of Boosters and Hedges in research articles of Islamic Studies. It is little surprising to find that the researchers of this discipline are quite assertive in making claims by using more Boosters (74.06 per 10000) as compare to Hedges i.e. 57.6 per 10000 while producing research discourse. The ratio between Boosters and Hedges employed by the authors of Islamic Studies is around 2:1. This ratio from the perspective of academic research writing based on international conventional practices is quite serious issue we identified in research articles of Islamic Studies. Generally, Hedges are used more than Boosters in discourses of all the disciplines of social sciences, arts, humanities, engineering, medicine and engineering as found by several studies (Bahrami et al., 2018; Jiang, 2017). The conventional ratio between Boosters and Hedges found is 1:3 showing that only one Booster is used after every three Hedges implying careful stance of the authors. However, the current study found that the Pakistani authors of research articles of Islamic studies appear to be more assertive by making very strong claims. This assertive behavior expressed through relatively stronger claims may posit serious questions in the mind of the readers who might find themselves in difficult communicative situation of negotiation with the writers.

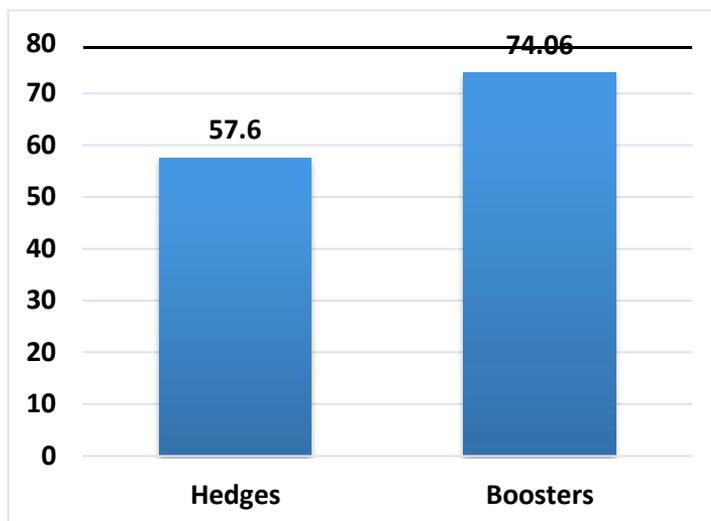


Figure-1: Comparison of Boosters and Hedges in Islamic Studies' Research Articles

Boosters in Research Articles of Islamic Studies

Figure 2 below provides results of the academic writing expressions of stronger claims per 10000 used by the Pakistani authors of research articles of Islamic Studies. As it can be seen from the figure that the most noticeable academic writing expressions used for making stronger claims are modal verbs including *should* (14.02 per 10000) and *must* (5.50 per 10000). Though these two results are similar to the findings of other studies (Abbas, 2019) conducted on research articles of social sciences written by Pakistani authors published in Pakistani research journals, however, use of these two expressions in research discourses is not a conventional practice in any discipline at international level. The excessive use of *should* and *must* in academic discourse is perhaps not an effective strategy of displaying confidence in your argument as these two modal verbs do not provide any space for negotiation with the readers and the readers too might feel showing of less solidarity by the writers. The verbs *find* and *show* including their past forms (i.e. found, showed and shown) occurred with the norm value of almost 7 per 10000. These two verbs show obviousness in propositional content made through statements clearly indicating perhaps an overconfident behavior towards arguments made by the authors themselves. Another verb conveying an assertive writing behavior is *establish/established* which is found to be used with norm value of almost 5 per 10000. In academic research discourse, as we all know that, the claims we make are less likely to be generalized. And the verbs like *establish/established* suggest extremely

firm behavior on your ownership with your argument which might be considered by the readers lacking adaptability. These findings indicate that the authors of research articles of Islamic studies in Pakistan express their firm stance on the position they take on issue they address in their research. This behavior in our point view may cause failure of achieving communicative goal (Swales, 1990; Swales & Feak, 2012) of the authors.

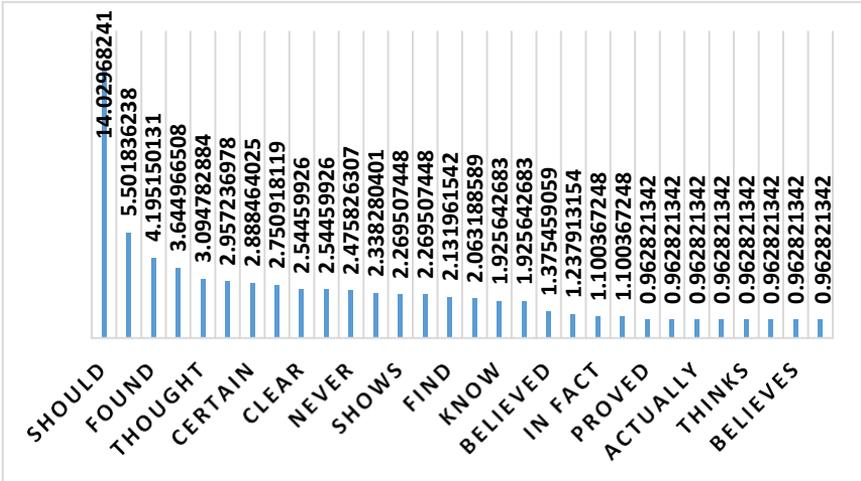


Figure-2: Use of Boosters in Research Articles of Islamic Studies Per 10000

Figure 3 below provides a visual impression of the most prototypical linguistic expressions of assertive claims employed by the Pakistani authors of research articles of Islamic Studies. As we can see from the figure that the modal verbs i.e. *should* and *must* are the most prototypical academic writing expressions of making claims with assertion. There were mostly two discourse functions of *should* were noticed in the data of the current study. The first function of *should* was conveying obligation (see example 1-2) and the second function of *should* was more like an assertion of opinion as we can witness in examples 3-4.

1. All rules laid down by Islam are based upon a fundamental principle that human beings **should** behave and act in consonance with natural laws.
2. Pinioning for striking whips is prohibited and the whip used for flogging **should** not be very hard or very soft but of medium strength.
3. The political, Judicial and military leadership **should** make efforts to minimize the said crisis instead of maximizing it through their unwise moves and policies.
4. They interpreted this verse to mean that all methods of birth control and abortion **should** be banned in Islam.

Similarly, the modal verb *must* found to be used performing functions of moral and social obligations as can be seen in examples 5-6 below. However, in example 7-8 use of *must* does not seem appropriate as the authors perhaps intend to convey proposition on rules related to religious litigation in which *should* can be replaced with *must*.

5. *Thus, we see the subsidiary legislative power invested to the Mufti is executable by the law and **must** be recognized as binding unless stated otherwise*
6. *One **must** understand what constitutes the caliber of a Mufti what his status is.*
7. *Women **must** cover herself from strangers (Na Mehrum) because Islam does not permit any Muslim women to come in front of*
8. *It is clear from all the above mentioned hadiths that Shari'a tries its best to save people from the punishment of cutting of hands but if a person commits such a detestable sin then his hand **must** be cut to make him a sign of admonition for the masses.*

Other expressions of confident claims such as *found* and *established* were also noticed in significantly in research articles of Islamic studies (see examples 9-10 below).

9. *The current study **found** that these madaris not only reproduces specific class, normative patterns but also reproduce the same curriculum and teaching styles.*
10. *It is **established** both theoretically and empirically that greater parental harmony has vital impact on the religious socialization of the child.*



Figure-3: Prototypical Boosters Used in Research Articles of Islamic Studies

Hedges in Research Articles of Islamic Studies

Figure 4 below provides detailed analysis of linguistic expressions used to make careful claims by the authors of research articles of Islamic Studies in Pakistan. As it can be seen clearly from the figure that similar to use of Boosters the authors preferred modal verbs including *would*, *may*, *could* and *might* in order to make their claims softer. These findings are almost similar to the results found by some of the other studies conducted in Pakistani and other contexts of non-native English speaking countries (Aull, Bandarage, & Miller, 2017; Hardjanto, 2016; Çandarlı, Bayyurt, & Martı, 2015; Aull & Lancaster, 2014; Hinkel, 2009;). Modal verbs in some cases may restrict the meanings to be understood by the readers. However, use of quasi modals appropriately such as *seems* and *appears* with other adverbial hedges including *possibly*, *probably* and *likely* can most likely be instrumental in achieving communicative goal. The use of these hedging expressions also did not seem to be used in substantial amount by the authors of research articles of Islamic Studies. Similarly, the most prototypical hedging verbs such as *suggest*, *indicate* and *argue* along with their past forms are used significantly less than the conventional use in academic research discourse.

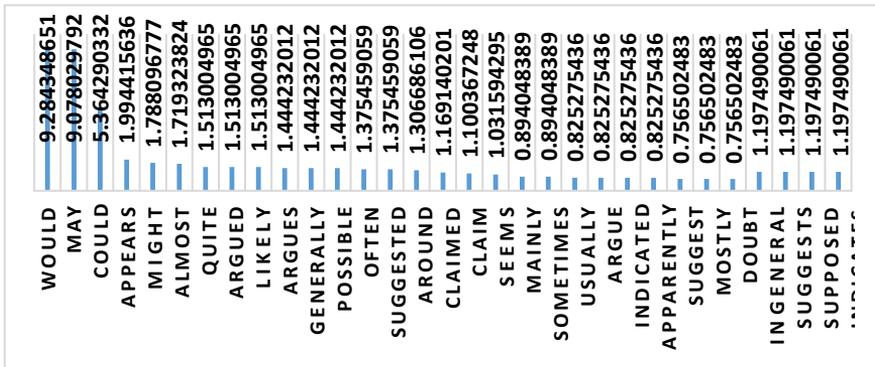


Figure-4: Use of Hedges in Research Articles of Islamic Studies Per 10000

Figure 5 below gives a visual impression of the most prototypical linguistic expressions of soft claims employed by the Pakistani authors of research articles of Islamic Studies. As we can see clearly that three modal verbs including *would*, *may* and *could* are the most preferred Hedges used by the authors of research articles of Islamic Studies. The example 11 taken from research articles of Islamic studies analyzed by us shows use of *would* as an expression of uncertainty reflecting a soft claim. However, in rest of three instances i.e. 12-13 *would* does not appear to be used appropriately discursively. In example 12 and 13 *would* may be omitted in order to convey communicative goal effectively. And the example 14 indicates quite fuzzy

use of *would* preceded by present verb i.e. *states*. By looking into the propositional content of the statement we suggest use of *shall* seems more appropriate than *would* in order to convey a proposition having certain litigation from religious perspective.

11. *Most of the users **would** be fully aware about the reasons of YouTube ban in Pakistan.*
12. *Other scholars argue for a broader view of rights which **would** encompass moral rights as well.*
13. *This **would** seem to require that rights be individuated in order to distinguish them from what one might call 'collective rights.'*
14. *Abu Hanifa states that nikah **would** not become fasiq and man **would** be given a chance until he becomes the maintainer.*

Similarly, use of *may* in examples 15-16 is clear instance of confidently uncertain claim through employing strategy of hedging. However, examples 7-8 use of *may* does not seem appropriate discursively. In example 17, *may* can be replaced with *can* in order to convey real proposition of the statement, and in example 18 omitting *may* would be more effective communicatively.

15. *The insensitive reporting of reactive issues **may** results in havoc between the minority and majority population.*
16. *If constitution is followed strictly, complete change **may** be brought in society.*
17. *Approach of Muslim States towards Qawwam One **may** find number of families in Muslim societies where wife is having an edge due to her financial contributions.*
18. *Getting knowledge of Islam is very necessary so that their brains **may** also become Muslim like their hearts.*

In contrast with use of *would* and *may*, the modal *could* as an expression of soft claim was noticeably found appropriate in research articles of Islamic studies (See examples 19-22 below).

19. *This **could** be because of his political disposition.*
20. *The study concludes that the interpretation of Enlightened Moderation by the ulama and religious scholars prevented the execution of such madrassa reform plans which **could** have been productive for the madrassa students.*
21. *the MMA's government passed Hasba Bill which showed that they wanted to enforce such sort of Shariah which **could** promote Talibanization in the province*
22. *neither of these targets **could** possibly be achieved and the crisis of Identity becomes more and more difficult to be coped with*

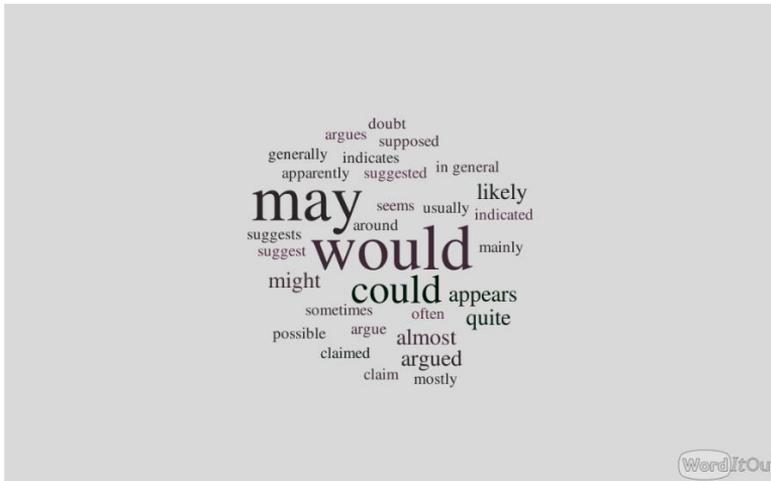


Figure-5: Prototypical Hedges Used in Research Articles of Islamic Studies

Recommendations

- i. Considering the results of the current study we recommend developing academic writing course for the post-graduate scholars of Islamic Studies with special focus on English for Academic and Research Purposes.
- ii. Task based teaching through modern techniques of teaching academic writing can also be effective in achieving objectives and outcomes of the course.
- iii. Already built corpora such British National Corpus may be used by the teachers and the scholars while practicing academic research writing.
- iv. Language may be taught at discourse level with special focus on genre approach.

Conclusion

We have noticed in introductory part of the current study that Islam offers a framework of effective communication which can be utilized in achieving communicative goals of persuasion and negotiation through research discourses especially. Also, we know that in academic research discourse these are not only the results that make the research persuading but the novelty in discourse too is crucial in order to achieve goals of persuasion and negotiation successfully. To achieve these goals, the general convention of the researchers worldwide is to display themselves as negotiators and persuaders through a balanced discourse embedded with appropriate ratio of hedges and boosters. This persona of the researcher can be achieved through

making negotiable and persuasive claims by the appropriate use of linguistic expressions of claims called Boosters and Hedges. The general principal in order to achieve this goal is the authors neither should be over confident/assertive/imposing not they should be uncertain. The middle way in this regard is that the authors can be confidently uncertain by using more Hedges than Boosters. However, on contrary to this principle, the authors of research articles of Islamic studies were found to be very assertive/imposing which may cause failure of their goal of persuading and negotiating their readers effectively. The present study contributes to the ontology of research discourse of religious value from the metadiscourse perspective. However, the epistemological tools may further be developed in order to design a robust communicative framework for religious scholars.

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