

# A Critical Discourse Analysis of Stance and Engagement Markers in English and Arabic Newspaper Opinion Articles in 2016

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## Abstract

The present study investigates the use of stance and engagement markers in English and Arabic newspaper opinion articles. This study is based on the assumption that written texts of any kind represent some kind of interaction between writers and their potential readers. Interaction between the text producers and text receivers is achieved by the employment of stance and engagement markers. These markers are considered as a main factor in constructing successful arguments for these persuasive texts (newspaper opinion articles). They are the main tools in conveying the writers' attitudes about what is being written and guiding the readers throughout the texts. The main objectives of this study are to identify stance and engagement markers in both English and Arabic opinion articles and to contrast their use both qualitatively and quantitatively. To this effect, a total of twenty opinion articles (ten English and ten Arabic) are analyzed adopting the analytical model of Hyland.

The results demonstrate that writers of both English and Arab opinion articles employ stance and engagement markers in their persuasive writing. Quantitatively speaking, the results show that the total tokens of these markers in the English datum are (210) and (211) in the Arabic datum. This indicates that these resources are used equally across the two sets of corpora. However, frequency variation is noticed in the employment of the sub-categories of stance and engagement markers across them.

**Key words:** interaction, stance, engagement, newspaper discourse, opinion articles, persuasion

## تحليل خطاب نقدي لعلامات الموقفية والتعاشق في مقالات الرأي الصحفية الإبليزية والعربية لعام 2016

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## المستخلص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في استخدام علامات الموقفية والتعاشق في مقالات الرأي في الصحف الإبلية والعربية. تعتمد هذه الدراسة على فرضية أن النصوص المكتوبة بشئى صنوفها تمثل نوعاً من التفاعل بين الكتاب والقراء، حيث يتحقق هذا التفاعل بين منتجي النص ومتلقي النص من خلال استخدام علامات الموقفية والتعاشق. تعد هذه العلامات عاملاً رئيساً في بناء الحجج الناجحة في النصوص الإقناعية (مقالات رأي). وتمثل هذه العلامات الأدوات الرئيسة في نقل مواقف الكتاب حول ما يتم كتابته وتوجيه القراء في جميع أجزاء النصوص.

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى تحديد علامات الموقفية والتعاشق في مقالات الرأي في الصحف الإبلية والعربية ومقارنة استخدامها نوعياً وكمياً. ولهذا الغرض، جرى تحليل عشرين مقالة رأي (عشرة باللغة الإبلية وعشرة باللغة العربية) باستخدام النموذج التحليلي لهيلاند (2005).

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أظهرت النتائج أن كتاب مقالات الرأي الإنجليز والعرب يستخدمون علامات الموقف والتعاشق في كتاباتهم الجدلية. من الناحية الكمية، تظهر هذه النتائج أن مجموع هذه العلامات في عينة اللغة الإنجليزية بلغ (210) و (211) في العينة العربية. وهذا يشير إلى أن هذه الموارد تستخدم بالتساوي في العينتين. ومع ذلك، فقد لوحظ تباين في توظيف الفئات الفرعية من علامات الموقفية والتعاشقية العينتين.

الكلمات الدالة: التفاعل، الموقفية، التعاشق، الخطاب الصحفي، مقالات الرأي، الإقناع

## 1. Introduction

Argumentative discourse is best known for the addressor's employment of the available resources to affect the addressee's viewpoints and actions. A great deal of research has been done to explore the ways this discourse is constructed. Texts and discourses have been classified in accordance with the discourse objectives or the linguistic resources and features associated with them. Scholars prove that genres have certain linguistic features associated with them. These features, in turn, help them realize the objectives they seek to achieve. As research shows, these linguistic features vary and differ across discourse/text types within the same language. These features may be identical across languages in the same type of discourse/text or may differ. Similarities and differences in the employment of these features and resources are due to the discourse objectives and culture [1]. Of the linguistic resources employed to fulfill the addressor's aims are stance and engagement markers. According to Hyland [2, pp. 1], controlling the level of personality is central to building a convincing argument so writers do so by offering a credible representation of themselves and their work through claiming solidarity with readers, evaluating their material and acknowledging alternative views.

The interaction between the addressor and the addressee is not limited to the direct mode of language use (speaking-listening) but also to the indirect mode (writing-reading). Written discourse of any type from any genre or register represent some interaction between writers as providers of information and their potential readers as recipients of information. Writing is now generally viewed as "a social act, centered around authorial presence, writer's persona and voice in the text, and on interaction between the writer and the reader" [3, pp. 84]. Hyland [2, pp. IX] points out that the writers should create and sustain a relationship with their readers in order to render their texts convincing. Seeing a written text as "a record of a dialogue between writer and reader", Thompson [4] holds that proficient writers bear the responsibility for maintaining interactions with their potential readers and progress their texts responding to what they anticipate from their readers. They endeavor to predict the kind of information that readers await for in the unfolding text, and ensue by foreseeing their question about, or reaction to what is written.

To write effectively, writers should develop an awareness of the audience and their possible needs, comprehension abilities, and reactions to the text [5, pp. 253-4]. This means that understanding the audience makes the task of writing uncomplicated. When writers focus on audience, they develop a clearer sense of which concepts are familiar and which must be given clarification and be supported. This, in turn, enables them to have a greater insight in deciding on the appropriate voice to take on and the ways of introducing their theses and establishing their credibility. To sum up, understanding the audience enables writers to communicate their stance and be engaged with their readers in the most effective ways.

## 2. Writer-reader interaction

The fact that written texts embody interactions between writers and readers has now been established by a great deal of research under various terminologies. Crismore [6], for instance, has used the term metadiscourse to refer to the communicative function of language and the value of writer-reader interaction in written texts. Social constructivists used term "voice as self-representation" [7]. A range of linguistic features have been identified as contributing to the writer's projection of a stance to the material referenced by the text and the strategies employed to take as fact the active role of the reader [2]. The case with written argumentative texts is even more straightforward. Writers in argumentation often refer to the state of the argument and to the reader's understanding of it. They also direct them and give them guidance in the text and carry on "implicit Socratic dialogues with them about intentions, purposes, meanings and attitudes" [8].

The way writers interact with their readers reflects their competence in constructing the suitable voice and creating effective communication. Good writers are keen on considering their reader's background knowledge, personal traits, processing constraints, recognition of face needs of readers and their social, cultural backgrounds which are thought to be effective in communication [3]. It is well-known that developing awareness of the audience is a key factor in improving effective writing skills. Reflecting and exploiting this awareness in producing the text is crucial among other things [9], [10], and [11].

Text meanings have been dealt with differently by many theories. In formalist theories, text meanings have their sources in the text itself whereas in reader response theories text meanings are in the readers' cognition or in the authors' intentions as cognitive theories of writing hold [9]. On the other perspective, dialogic discourse locates the source of text meaning in the interaction or unfolding dialogue between writers and readers [12]. This dialogic perspective is based on the appraisal theory which holds that "all verbal communication, whether it is spoken or written, can be seen as dialogic, because principally every statement is made to refer to what has been stated and, at the same time, to elicit responses from its readers or listeners" [13, pp. 92]. Over the past years, researchers have used different names in investigating the ways writers communicate their personal judgments and evaluations to their readers via their writing. Researchers have studied these meanings in a number of ways. Hunston and Thompson [14] use the term 'evaluation' to refer to the writer's judgements, feelings, or viewpoint about something, and others have described these varied linguistic resources as 'attitude' [15], 'epistemic modality' [16], 'appraisal' [17] and [18], 'stance' [19] and [20], and 'metadiscourse' [6] and [21], 'intensity' [22], 'affect' [23], 'evidentiality' [24], 'hedging' [25].

## 3. Hyland's (2005) Model

Recently, Hyland [1] conducted a study to find an overall typology of the resources writers employ to express their positions and connect with readers by analyzing 240 published research articles from eight disciplines and insider informants interviews. He has presented a comprehensive model to examine the means by which interaction is achieved between writers and readers. According to this model, interaction is managed by writers in two ways: stance and engagement [1, pp. 176]. Further discussion and explanation will be given in the coming sections.

### 3.1. Stance

According to Hyland [26], stance refers to the "writer's textual voice or community recognized personality". In this sense, it fulfills a writer-oriented function

and is related to the ways writers present themselves and convey their judgments, opinions and commitments. This category involves four subcategories.

- a. **Hedges** are means of providing room for non-imposing propositions to the audience by indicating that evidence is not enough or is vague to be delivered in an assertive mode such as *may*, *possibly* or *perhaps*. They are sometimes used to present the guesses of the addressor. Although their use is fundamental, they can be inappropriately used when evidence is sufficient [27, pp. 1672].
- b. **Boosters**, on the other hand, are linguistic means of ruling out and suppressing alternative positions by presenting the propositions as "highly warrantable, compelling, valid, plausible, well-founded, generally agreed, and reliable" [13, pp. 98]. Boosters like *definitely* or *by no means* differ from hedges in that they demonstrate total commitment by the writer to the truth-value of the proposition.
- c. **Attitude Markers** convey the writer's attitude and evaluation of the propositional content expressing surprise, agreement, importance and so on by expressions such as *unfortunately* or *surprisingly*, etc. [28, pp. 69].
- d. **Self-Mentions** are the linguistic forms used by the writer to project themselves into their writing in a powerful manner by using personal pronouns (e.g. first-person pronouns and possessive adjectives [29, pp. 77].

### 3.2. Engagement

Engagement markers, on the other hand, refer to the strategies of reader presence recognition in the text and actively involving them in the argument as discourse participants as well as directing their interpretations [26]. These markers include:

- a. **Reader pronouns** are linguistic means of bringing the reader into the text explicitly. Writers can acknowledge the presence of their readers by directly addressing them via *You* and *your*. However, because these imply lack of involvement between participants, authors of academic discourse prefer the use of inclusive *we* to emphasize binding themselves together with their readers. In doing so, they signal membership in a clearer way by textually referring to similar understanding and goals between them and their readers [1, pp. 182].
- b. **Personal asides** are seen as a central reader-oriented strategy that expresses the writer's personality and willingness to explicitly intervene to offer their views and address readers directly to offer a comment on what is being written. By these means, a largely interpersonal dialogue is initiated when the reader is assigned an active role that acknowledged and responded to by the writer [1].
- c. **Shared Knowledge** writers and readers are positioned within "naturalized boundaries of disciplinary understandings" [1, pp. 182] by appealing to what is familiar or accepted smuggle contested ideas into their argument. Obviously, this 'sharedness' is built upon implicit contract concerning what can be accepted, and explicit calls asking readers to identify with particular views.
- d. **Directives** these directly address the reader and involve them in the text to create a clear relationship with him. Examples of these forms are imperative constructions such as *imagine*, *consider*, *note that* [28, pp. 71].
- e. **Questions** are the purest form of dialogic involvement engaging the addressees and bringing them into an arena where they can be steered towards the writer's point of view. Writers encourage their readers to explore an unsettled concern with them on equal basis as conversational partners with the purpose of sharing their curiosity and going after where the argument takes them [30, pp. 533].

#### 4. Opinion articles

A newspaper usually has different genres, such as editorials, opinion articles, news stories, advertising, book reviews, sport news, etc. All these different genres go under the umbrella term journalistic prose, yet each one has its own distinctive features. Newspaper opinion articles, as the genre under study, stands distinct among other newspaper genres by its defining linguistic resources as well as style and structure.

Opinion articles are of different lengths and usually appear in a fixed place in the newspaper. These texts are written by professional writers who hold a position at the newspaper or write for several newspapers. These writers articulate their views or opinions on contemporary events or concerns relatable to their local community and the world within the community they share the same social and cultural background [31, pp. 392]. Although these articles reflect the writer's opinions, they are still inclined with the ideologies and the political receptiveness of the newspaper in which they are published.

Because the communicative intent of this journalistic genre is persuasive, its style is usually perceived as evaluative and involved [32, pp. 92]. Khalil [33, pp. 22] points out that opinion article writers employ linguistic resources that reflect their attitudes towards the content as well as establish interactional relationships with their readers. These stylistic features are identified on the lexical level and the syntactical level.

Since the goal of these texts is to influence readers' perceptions of facts and events, they usually employ argumentative text-type in their structure, and their style is characterized as being evaluative and involved. According to Biber [34], opinion articles are opinionated genres intended to persuade the reader. They cover different social, economical and political topics and are published in international quality broadsheets as well as well-known tabloids. Although some interesting studies on the lexico-grammatical and discoursal characterization of these text types are being carried out, this genre is still considered as neglected by many scholars when compared with the abundant existing work on the other newspaper text types such as news stories [35]. Opinion articles, like newspaper editorials, are contemplated as genuine examples of written argumentation since "perhaps more than any other type of writing, reflect national styles regarding modes of persuasion" [36, pp. 143].

The argumentative and evaluative nature of opinion articles require frequent use of stance and engagement markers in order to construct arguments and express the writers' points of view. Because of the highlighted role of stance and engagement markers in this genre, opinion articles provide important data for investigating the function of these linguistic devices. The writers of opinion articles intend to persuade their readers with their opinions and, to this end, they should argue for them employing the argumentative text-type. Arguments, el-Shiyab [37, pp. 148] points out, "are shaped by the culture and social conventions of a particular community". This is why different languages use different strategies to present their arguments. Like any other argumentative text, opinion articles are persuasive messages that are the product of a specific cultural environment. Thus, they employ linguistic and structural strategies that are associated with this type of text in their specific culture and language.

#### 5. Research Questions

The impetus for the current study stems from the discussion above. Assuming that writers should develop an awareness of their readers' needs and expectations must

also necessitate that culture plays a significant role in constructing this awareness. And this same assumption also necessitates that language conventions also play a significant role in how this awareness is realized by means of linguistic resources. Because each language has its own linguistic and cultural conventions, this study aims at finding answers to the following questions:

1. How do Arab and English writers of opinion articles use stance and engagement markers in establishing interaction with their readers?
2. What are there any similarities/differences in the use of stance and engagement markers between Arab and English writers?

## 6. Corpus

The corpus of this study is composed of a total of twenty opinion articles (ten Arabic articles and ten English articles). These opinion articles have been taken from the electronic editions of wide-read well-spread newspapers. The Arabic newspapers are *AlSharq ALAwsat* and *Al-Haiyat* and the English newspapers are *Washington Times* and *New York Times*. Five opinion articles have been taken from each newspaper.

In order to find a reasonable tertium comparationis that ensures a maximum level of similarity constraints, a number of steps have been taken. Firstly, to ensure that the two sets of data match each other in terms of contextual factors, a time span is set and only opinion articles published during 2016 are taken. Secondly, all the selected articles cover the same topic (ISIS and terrorism in the Middle East) are taken to find a common ground for topic similarity constraint.

## 7. Procedure

In order to analyze the cross-linguistic corpus, a number of steps are followed. the first step is listing the potential stance and engagement markers in English relying heavily on the previous research into interactive features (e.g. [19], [20], [1],[26], and [38]). As for the Arabic corpus, listing the potential stance and engagement markers is done with the consultancy of Arab linguists<sup>1</sup>. Firstly, all the potential markers were listed and discussed with those Arab linguists because this may be the first study that investigates these linguistic resources in Arabic data to the best of the researcher's knowledge.

In order to facilitate the statistical account of the results, the identified stance and engagement markers are normalized to occurrences per a hundred word. Then, chi-square analysis tests are carried out to put side by side the use of these markers and their subcategories across the two sets of data to find out whether there are significant differences and similarities or not.

## 8. Model of analysis

The concept of interaction in written texts implies an interactive relationship between the writer and the reader. To account for this relationship, Hyland [1] has put forward a model of interaction involving two perspectives (the writer and the reader) and is realized by the means of stance and engagement markers. This model is presented in figure (1) below.

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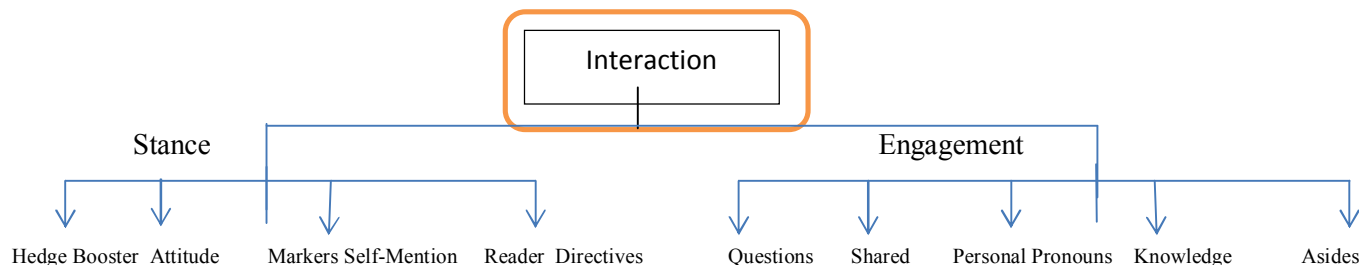
<sup>1</sup>(1) Naeem Hamid, PhD, Arabic Linguistics, University of Babylon

(2) Haidar Rhaief, MA, Arabic Linguistics, University of Wasit

(3) Aziz Musa, MA. Arabic Linguistics, University of Babylon

It can be seen that the model is basically composed of two main categories: stance and engagement. Each of these main categories is composed of a number of subcategories.

**Figure (1): Hyland's (2005) model of stance and engagement markers**



## 9. Results and discussion

Table (1) shows the fundamental function of stance and engagement markers in constructing argumentative texts in both sets of data. The analysis shows that in both sets of data the amount of stance markers is almost three times the amount of engagement markers, though it is slightly lower in the Arabic sub-corpora. This finding is consistent with previous studies investigating the use of these resources in academic discourse [1] and it, consequently, indicates similarity in the rhetorical construction of academic discourse and media discourse.

**Table (1): Stance and engagement markers use in the English and Arabic sub-corpora**

Arabic sub-corpus	English sub-corpus	
3263	3345	<b>Number of words</b>
211	210	<b>Number of stance and engagement markers</b>
6.46	6.27	<b>Percentage of stance and engagement markers per 100 words</b>
149	158	<b>Total number of stance markers</b>
4.56	4.72	<b>Percentage of stance markers per 100 words</b>
62	52	<b>Total number of engagement markers</b>
1.90	1.55	<b>Percentage of engagement markers per 100 words</b>

### 9.1. Stance markers

The result of analysis of the two sub-corpora shows that both groups of writers almost make equal use of stance markers in their writing. Table (2) below illustrates that self-mention is obviously the most commonly used marker in both sub-corpora. They constitute more than one third of stance markers in the Arabic corpora (39.59%) and about half of stance markers in the English corpora (47.46%). The high frequency of these linguistic resources confirm the subjectivity of this type of texts and clearly shows the writers' straightforward involvement of their selves in the texts. More interestingly is what comes next in terms of frequency. In the English sub-corpora, hedges are the second most frequent stance marker after self-mention (27.21%) while boosters are the second most frequent markers in the Arabic sub-corpora (32.88%). This finding could be assigned to cultural preferences. Previous studies suggest that the use of hedges and boosters is closely related to politeness. Where Arabic culture keeps a positive face politeness, English culture keeps a negative face politeness.

**Table (2): Stance markers use in the English and Arabic sub-corpora**

English Data		Arabic Data		Subcategory
Per.	Freq.	Per.	Freq.	
27.21%	43	4.02%	6	Hedges
7.59%	12	32.88%	49	Boosters
17.72%	28	32.48%	35	Attitude markers
47.46%	75	39.59%	59	Self-mention
<b>100%</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>Total</b>

The sub-categories of stance and engagement markers are dealt with in detail in the following sub-sections with examples taken from the two sub-corpora.

#### a. Hedges

A sharp contrast can be seen in the employment of hedges across the two sub-corpora. When only (6) tokens of hedges are found in the Arabic sub-corpora, (43) tokens are found in the English. This is about seven times double.

[1] There may be some truth to that, but not much. (En. O.A. 1)

[2] وفي تصرف غير مسبوق، كشف العضو المتشدد في مجلس الشورى الإيراني كريم قدوسي، عن فحوى حديث جرى بين المرشد السيد علي خامنئي ورئيس الجمهورية الشيخ حسن روحاني، الذي اتهم الأخير بأنه قدم تقريراً تهويلياً عن الوضع الاقتصادي الإيراني للمرشد، ربما يدفعه للقبول بالعرض الغربي المقدم لإيران، من أجل إنقاذ النظام من أزمة اقتصادية خانقة، يكون لها انعكاس سلبي كبير على الشارع الإيراني. (Ar. O.A. 3)

[In an unprecedented behavior, the hardline member of the Iranian Shura Council, Karim Qaddousi, revealed the content of a conversation that took place between the Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and the President of the Republic, Sheikh Hassan Rouhani, who accused the latter of providing an intimidating report on the Iranian economic situation of the guide, which might push him to accept the Western offer to Iran. In order to save the regime from a stifling economic crisis, it will have a significant negative impact on the Iranian street.]

#### b. Boosters

Again, huge gap can be noticed in the use of boosters across the two sub-corpora. They are predominantly used in the Arabic corpus but rarely used in the English one. In the Arabic corpus, they are about five times their number in the English corpus.

[3] We certainly love it in our popular entertainment. (O.A. 3)

[4] الأكد أن تغييراً جدياً طرأ على أداء كيري - ظريف وعلى علاقتهما، وطالما أن لدى كل منهما هامشاً ضيقاً أو معدوماً للتنازل في الشأن النووي، فإن المجال متاح أمامهما للتراضي هو الملفات الإقليمية، وعلى حساب العرب. (O.A. 10)

[Certainly, a serious change occurred in the performance of Kerry-Zarif and their relationship, and as long as they both have little or no margin to concede on the nuclear issue, the area open to them for mutual consent is the regional files, and at the expense of the Arabs.]

#### c. Attitude Markers

What is significant about the use of attitude markers in the two sub-corpora is that they are relatively equally used. There are (28) tokens of them in the English corpus and (35) tokens in the Arabic corpus.

[5] Good to know before we consider electing the president. (O.A. 6)

[6] أولها وأفدحها، غياب الرؤية السياسية لكيفية التعامل مع نظام الأسد ومع «داعش» في أن. (O.A. 6)

[The first and most sickening is the absence of a political vision of how to deal with the Assad regime and ISIS at the same time.]

#### d. Self-mention

The analysis reveals that the sub-category of self-mention is the most predominant one in the English and Arabic sub-corpora. They count (75) in the English sub-corpus and (59) in the Arabic sub-corpus. Also, in terms of percentages, they count as (47.47%) in the English opinion articles and (39.59%) in the Arabic opinion articles which is the highest percentages among all stance markers and engagement markers as well.

[7] The participants – I among them – were given roles to play . (O.A. 10)

[8] ولا أحسبهم قادرين على ذلك، فسيغزوننا من الداخل، فتنة من هم بيننا من المنجذبين إلى أفكارهم،

فانطوا تحت جناحهم. (O.A. 5)

[I do not think that they are able to do that. They will invade us from within. There are those among us who are attracted to their ideas, so they fold under their wing.]

### 9.2. Engagement Markers

Engagement markers are found to be far lesser than stance markers in both sub-corpora. Table (3) shows that their total number in the English sub-corpus is (52) and (62) in the Arabic. The most outstanding frequently used sub-categories in the Arabic sub-corpus are personal asides and question while in the English sub-corpus only the subcategory of questions stands prominent in terms of frequency. These subcategories are elaborated on below and are presented in numbers in table (3).

**Table (3): Engagement markers use in the English and Arabic sub-corpora**

English Data		Arabic Data		Subcategory
Per.	No.	Per.	No.	
13.46%	7	12.90%	8	Reader Pronouns
25.03%	13	37.09%	23	Personal Asides
5.76%	3	8.06%	5	Shared Knowledge
21.15%	11	4.83%	3	Directives
34.61%	18	37.09%	23	Questions
100%	52	100%	62	Total

#### a. Reader pronouns

The number of tokens of reader pronouns is (7) in the Arabic sub-corpus and (8) in the English sub-corpus. They are the second least used subcategory among other engagement markers.

[9] You can't chalk that up to religious favor alone. (O.A. 4)

[10] وهل تصدق أن قطر ستحترم هذا الاتفاق؟ (O.A. 2)

[Do you believe that Qatar will honor this agreement?]

#### b. Personal asides

A notable variation can be touched upon in the employment of personal asides across the two sub-corpora. They are the most frequent subcategory in the Arabic sub-corpus and the second most frequent subcategory in the English sub-corpus. However, counting the number of token from each side, one can note that they are in the Arabic sub-corpus two times their number in the English one.

[11] Al-Qaida and ISIS – unrestrained by any laws or rules of engagement – continue to sever heads and kill those who won't submit to their tyranny. (O.A. 6)

[12] وبهذا يتم إغلاق الباب «بشكل عملي وحقيقي» على المظلومية التاريخية التي عرفت بها الشيعة (O.A. 3)

[With this, the door will be closed "practically and really" on the historical injustice known to the Shiites.]

**c. Shared knowledge**

Both English and Arab opinion article writers rarely appeal to shared knowledge. This subcategory is used (5) times in the Arabic opinion articles and (3) times in the English opinion articles.

[13] The job of the Congress, of course, is to write laws. (O.A. 8)

[14] ولأن مصر كانت منغمسة هي الأخرى في أهوال الإسلام السياسي والجهادي، فقد ضعفت الجامعة العربية بضعف مصر، وما وجد الخليجيون في عدة حالات (مثل حالة ليبيا على سبيل المثال) من يتضامن ويتابع من العرب الآخرين. (O.A. 1)

[Because Egypt was also immersed in the horrors of political and jihadist Islam, the Arab League was weakened by the weakness of Egypt, and the Gulfs did not find in many cases (such as in the case of Libya for example) who support and follow from other Arabs.]

**d. Directives**

Directives constitute the least frequently used subcategory among all other stance and engagement markers in the Arabic sub-corpus but their percentage is fairly high compared to the other subcategories in the English sub-corpus. The number of their tokens is (3) in the Arabic sub-corpus and (11) in the English sub-corpus.

[15] Suppose you are a senior government official, a diplomat, a business executive, a journalist – even a terrorist. (O.A. 9)

[16] فتأملوا: السنة الذين قاتلوا الأميركيين وحدهم في العراق على مدى 10 سنوات، لا يرون اليوم أن أحدا يمكن أن يساعدهم في وجه «داعش» غير الأميركيين! (O.A. 1)

[So imagine: The Sunnis who fought the Americans alone in Iraq for 10 years see that no one can help them in the face of "ISIS" other than the Americans today!]

**e. Questions**

Questions are the most frequently used subcategory among all other engagement markers in both sub-corpora. They existed (23) times in the Arabic sub-corpus and (18) times in the English sub-corpus. As is shown in table 3, they have the highest percentage in the English sub-corpus.

[17] Why is Israel the only country in the world that is supposed to sue for peace when it is victorious and give up lands to the vanquished? (O.A. 4)

[18] هل يمكن التعايش مع ما يسمى تنظيم «الدولة الإسلامية»، والتعامل معها وتبادل مبعوثين وتطوير علاقات طبيعية معها؟ (O.A. 5)

[Is it possible to coexist with the so-called "Islamic State", deal with it, exchange envoys, and develop normal relations with it?]

**10. Conclusions**

The results showed that while the two sets of opinion articles demonstrated evident homogeneity in the frequency of stance and engagement use, they showed remarkable divergence in the distribution of these markers. This similarity in terms of frequency suggests that these interactive resources are an integral part of persuasive writing, yet the deviance in the distribution of these resources submits to the cross-linguistics and cross-cultural peculiarities.

The cross-linguistic quantitative examination of stance markers show that they are preferable in both sub-corpora although they are slightly more frequently used in the English sub-corpus. Self-mentions top the rest of all the other sub-categories in term of frequency in both sub-corpora. Most noticeable in this regard is the adoption of inclusive we and نحن (*nahnu*, we) and the avoidance of exclusive I and أنا (*ana*, I). This explains the writers' tendency to involve themselves and their readers as equal

associates into their writing. The second most employed sub-category of stance markers in the English corpus is hedges while boosters are the second most frequently employed in the Arabic corpus. This divergence in the use of hedges and boosters is directly influenced by the cultural concept of politeness. The Arabic culture keeps a positive face and so adopting an assertive tone is the norm. conversely, the English culture keeps a negative face and so providing non-imposing room is the expected canon. The final sub-category of stance markers, attitude markers, is roughly used by the same token in the English corpus as well as the Arabic. This designates that English and Arabic opinion articles writers tend to be more expressive of their attitudes to their potential audiences.

Engagement markers, on the other hand, are least prevalent in both sub-corpora although they are more frequently used in the Arabic corpus. Among the common points of similarity is that personal asides and questions scored the highest percentage of use in both sub-corpora. This shows the writers tendency regardless of the culture they write from to explicitly intervene and address their readers and purely involve them in a dialogic manner in their writing. As for the rest of the other engagement sub-categories, sharp scarcity appeared, and their use rates are somewhat equal in the two sub-corpora. This shows that these markers are less desirable in constructing persuasive texts by both Arab and English opinion article writers. Directives, however, are more used in the English corpus than in the Arabic corpus.

In conclusive summery, while both English and Arabic opinion articles seem more open to their readers regarding the attitudinal aspects of their writers, they show considerable divergence in approaching their readers' faces. English opinion articles assume a cautious and non-assertive tone while Arabic opinion articles assume less cautious and more assertive tone. However, they both demonstrate a feeble inclination to engage readers via overt markers and preference is given to a less directive reading.

## CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

**There are no conflicts of interest**

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## Appendix

### English Opinion Articles

#### a. New York Times

1. The Obama Opposition (9/11/2016)
2. Obama in Winter (17/11/2016)
3. Republicans Meet Science (18/11/2016)
4. Two Ideas of Israel-Palestine (20/11/2016)
5. Flying Blind in Syria and Iraq (21/11/2016)

#### b. Washington Times

1. Why release a report on the CIA in wartime? (10/11/2016)
2. The White House keeps spinning (14/11/2016)
3. With Democrats liberated, Congress can finally work (27/11/2016)
4. Why fighting extremists can't be politically correct (2/12/2016)
5. How do we protect the White House now? (12/12/2016)

### Arabic Opinion Articles

#### a. الشرق الاوسط

1. التضامن من اجل بقاء المجتمعات والدول! (2016/11/2)
2. جماعة "وهل تصدق؟" (2016/11/7)
3. فيينا - طهران.. تمديد الاستنزاف (2016/11/18)
4. فشل من الطرفين! (2016/11/23)
5. داعش \_ بيكو (2016/11/26)

#### b. الحياة

1. دائرة الهلاك... اما داعش واما الاستبداد! (2016/11/9)
2. تونس بين السبسي والمرزوقي... (2016/11/12)
3. عيون واذان (الحزن على سوريا لا يكفي) (2016/11/14)
4. الرقة: يوميات القتل العادي (2016/11/28)
5. صفقة امريكية - ايرانية انجحت اللافل في مفاوضات فيينا (2016/12/3)