

A CORPUS-BASED ANALYSIS OF STANCE MARKERS IN PAKISTANI ENGLISH NEWS DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

Stance markers play a central part in how news discourse addresses the expression of evaluation, authority, and objectivity by the journalists. Their research in Pakistani English is still not exhaustive even though the variety has become more relevant globally. In this research, the frequency and pattern of stance markers in writing news in Pakistani English has been examined with the aim of understanding how news writers compromise linguistically and culturally on the issue of stance. The text of 1-million words of Pakistani English newspapers was examined through AntConc 4.0 along the model of stance offered by Hyland (2005). Qualitative contextual interpretation was used to supplement the quantitative frequency data. The results indicate that the number of epistemic and attitudinal stance markers is high, as they indicate hybrid forms of journalistic norms that incorporate Western values of neutrality and culturally-focused evaluation. The profile of the standpoint of Pakistani English journalism is defined by the social-cultural background and practical preferences, which led to the perception of the World Englishes and news discourse.

Keywords: Corpus-based, stance markers, Pakistani English, News discourse.

1. Introduction

The role of language in the construction of knowledge, identity and ideology is central and stance-taking is one of the key elements in this process. Lexical and grammatical expressions, which express attitudes, evaluations or certainty levels are called stance markers, that enable writers to place themselves in the position of their propositions and their audiences (Biber & Finegan, 1989; Hyland, 2005). Stance is of particular importance in the media communication context since journalists have to walk the fine line between being objective and offering evaluative interpretation (Bednarek, 2006; White, 2003). Therefore, the use of stance markers does not only determine the tone of news discourse, but also used as the markers of

larger socio-cultural and ideological orientations.

However, in recent years, corpus linguistics has offered strong methods to investigate position in real-life texts, and this study has been made possible through both large-scale quantitative and qualitative methods (Biber, Conrad, & Reppen, 1998; McEnery & Hardie, 2012). This methodological change has enabled the possibility of studying the difference in stance between genres, registers, and even varieties of English around the globe. The emergence of World Englishes (Kachru, 1992) has also stimulated scholars to study local varieties like the Pakistani English which is a variety that reflects the global impact of English language along with the local linguistic and cultural conditions.

Although, the research on stance and evaluation in English has been increasing, the emphasis has been put on academic or Western media discourse (Hyland & Jiang, 2016; Gray & Biber, 2012). Literature on the topic of writing news in Pakistani English is relatively limited, and those that have used corpus-based methods to examine stance linguisticization have not examined this localised variety. The socio-political reality in which Pakistani journalism functions is extremely connected with the language use, as the matters of ideology, power, and morality are intertwined (Farooq & Mahmood, 2017). As a result, the analysis of the use of the stance markers by the Pakistani journalists can tell a lot about the journalistic identity of the country and communicative standards. Nevertheless, this relationship is not well-researched without systematic evidence corpus-based.

Earlier research on stance, like those by Hyland (2005), White (2003), and Bednarek (2006) all give a great idea about evaluative language in media, but it does not pay sufficient attention to the cultural and pragmatic specifics of Pakistani English. In addition, the current research on the topic of Pakistani news discourse has been mainly qualitative, without emphasizing on linguistic stance structures. The present research addresses this gap by adopting a corpus-based approach to the analysis of frequencies, occurrence and usage of stance markers in the Pakistani English news discourse. It uses a combination of quantitative corpus and qualitative functional interpretation to unravel the way stance works linguistically and culturally in Pakistani journalism.

The research study has a contribution to three overlapping disciplines, namely corpus linguistics, discourse analysis and World Englishes. To the extent of its language, it expands the descriptive study of stance by recording its application in an external form of English. Pragmatically, it enlightens us on the way journalists are negotiating the power and credibility by making expressions of stance in a socio-political complex world. It puts into focus in its cultural context the hybrid communicative identity of Pakistani journalism which is situated between global standards of journalism and the local value system (Hofstede, 2001; Wierzbicka, 2006). Also, the results have pedagogical consequences on journalism education and

English language teaching by providing information on how stance is functionally applied in professional writing.

1.1 Research Objectives:

- To identify the most commonly found stance markers across Pakistani English news discourse.
- To explore the cultural, pragmatic and linguistic functions performed by these stance markers in Pakistani journalism.

1.2 Research Questions:

1. What are the most commonly found stance markers across Pakistani English news discourse?
2. What cultural, pragmatic and linguistic functions are performed by these stance markers in Pakistani journalism?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The research of stance markers is theoretically supported by the extended discourse of discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and corpus linguistics. The language, as Halliday (1994) considers, has three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual among them, the interpersonal of which is the central one to stance. The stance markers are language elements by which speakers and writers are able to demonstrate attitudes, judgments and the extent of certainty of propositions (Biber & Finegan, 1989). They serve as means of interpersonal negotiation and enable writers to project approaches of either approval or disapproval towards the readers. The concept is further narrowed down through the metadiscourse framework by Hyland (2005) who identifies stance as hedges, boosters, attitude markers, as well as self-mentions, which represent different levels of commitment and evaluation. These theoretical frameworks form the basis of conducting an analysis of stance in the Pakistani English news speech, where journalists strategically utilize sources of linguistic expertise to create authority, objectivity, and involvement.

2.2 Stance in Discourse Studies

The linguistic traditions of studying stance have developed. Biber and Finegan (1989) came up

with the notion of stance styles, in which they emphasize the existence of lexical and grammatical constructions that represent evidentiality, affect, and modality. Later studies developed the model to cover epistemic and attitudinal stance (Conrad & Biber, 2000). Hyland (2005) noted that stance is not only grammatical but also contextual and socially motivated and it is used to place writers in discourse communities. Stance as a discursive mechanism in journalism writing is an important tool that determines how readers perceive, and also institutional identity. White (2003) contended that news talk tends to be between objectivity and evaluation, and that stance is subtle when it needs to be institutional in portraying views of the institution but still sounding objective. In addition, Bednarek (2006) investigated the use of evaluation in news writing and showed that journalists use epistemic and attitudinal stance to express credibility, empathy, or authority. These results highlight the fact that stance in news discourse is not accidental, but is systematically constructed according to genre conventions and communicative intentions.

2.3 Corpus-Based Stance Analysis

Corpus linguistics is now a mandatory resource in the study of stance markers because of its ability to uncover repeated linguistic patterns on large volumes of text (Biber et. al., 1998). The identification and qualitative explanation of the features of stance can be performed through corpus-based studies, which offers theoretical arguments with empirical support (McEnery & Hardie, 2012).

In their diachronic corpus study, Hyland and Jiang (2016) discovered that academic writers tend more to employ the stance markers to regulate the interactional relationships and attribute scholarly discourse to the development of the personalisation process. Moreover, Gray and Biber (2012) revealed the differences in the use of stance expressions concerning different registers and demonstrated that news writing is more prone to the use of epistemic rather than affective stance expressions (may, seem, appear) since the genre emphasizes the authoritative nature and careful consideration. Furthermore, corpus-based studies have also played a significant role in studying the varietal

differences in the Englishes. The literature on World Englishes including Mukherjee and Hoffmann (2006) on Indian English and Bautista (2004) on Philippine English shows that stance expression is a culturally and pragmatically constructive practice. These results help in the assumption that linguistic variation of stance is not only determined by the genre but also by the local socio-cultural norms which are especially relevant when it comes to the research of the Pakistani English news discourse.

2.4 Cultures and Pragmatic Aspects of Stance

Language is closely related to culture and stance-taking is a reflection of the underlying systems of cultural values and communicative norms (Wierzbicka, 2006). The cultural dimensions theory developed by Hofstede (2001) offers an informative perspective on the way collectivist and hierarchical cultures, as is the case with Pakistan, can develop unique patterns of stance with a focus on politeness, indirectness, and respect towards authority. The pragmatic and cultural aspects in news discourse determine the encoding of evaluation and commitment by journalists. To explain the way in which writers convey affect, judgment, and intensity, Martin and White (2005) have put forward the Appraisal Framework that defines three interconnected systems, namely, attitude, engagement, and graduation. The discourse of Pakistani English news will have its own stance strategies, which can be in accordance with the communicative norms of the local community, and the tone and perspective of the journalism are defined by religion, politics, and social values.

Further, Farooq and Mahmood (2017) also revealed that Pakistani editorial articles use evaluative and modal constructions to frame ideological identity and persuasive power. Their results confirm that stance markers cannot be classified as strictly linguistic, rather they have pragmatic purposes, connected with ideology and social positioning. Stance, which is a aspect of an individual identity and community values, as Hyland (2019) notes, is a critical aspect of cross-cultural discourse studies.

Although, a lot has been done on stance in both academic and conversational as well as English, corpus-based analysis of stance markers in journalism in Pakistani English is scarce. Earlier

research including works by Hyland (2005) and Gray and Biber (2012) paid much attention to western or academic corpora, and there is no knowledge gap about stance in the South Asian news discourse. Although, Mukherjee (2021) has underscored the necessity of filling the missing corpus-based research on the learner and world Englishes, the little empirical research on the stance of Pakistani media English is lacking. The present study aims at addressing this gap by analyzing the use of stance markers in Pakistani English newspapers and exploring the patterns of markers usage along with cultural and pragmatical functions interpretation with the help of corpus tools. Placing the analysis of stance in the sociolinguistic context of Pakistan, the study suggests not only corpus-based analysis of discourse but also the interpretation of the World Englishes and gives the insights into the linguistic construction of the national journalistic identities.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

A mixed-methods research design based on the utilization of corpus is a study that uses both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to examine the phenomenon of stance markers in Pakistani English news discourse. The corpus linguistics allows the systematic, empirical research of linguistic patterns in a large body of text (Biber et al., 1998). The quantitative dimension determines the frequency and distribution of stance markers whereas the qualitative dimension determines the contextual, pragmatic and cultural roles. This type of integrative design enables the study to strike a middle ground between descriptive accuracy and interpretive knowledge in accordance with the technique as suggested by McEnery and Hardie (2012), who claim that corpus-based research is most successful when the frequency of the language is supplemented with discourse interpretation.

3.2 Corpus Description

The corpus that has been used in this study is comprised of news articles that have been obtained in three major Pakistani English newscast- Dawn, The News International, and Express Tribune. These sources have been chosen because they have a national readership,

language authority and frequently publish online. The corpus is five-year-long (2020-2024), which guarantees the contemporary representation of linguistics. Approximately 800,000 words were gathered in the variety of sections, such as politics, economy, editorials, and culture, to balance genera and topics. Representativeness is the key concept of corpus validity as Sinclair (1991) sees it, which is why both hard news reports and opinion articles are present in the corpus and represent the stylistic scope of Pakistani journalistic language. Documents were turned into plain-text (.txt) documents to make them compatible with the corpus analysis programs like AntConc (Anthony, 2022).

3.3 Data Preprocessing and Collection

Data were collected by searching through formal published articles in online archives. Using automated scripts and manual selection was used to guarantee that all content was authentic and was editorially published. There was the exclusion of non-linguistic materials like advertisements, images and hyperlinks to achieve pure textual data. Preprocessing was done based on the standard corpus-cleaning methods suggested by Baker (2006), such as punctuations, case, and space normalization. A metadata (source, date, section) was added to each file so that it could be properly referenced and compared. This process guaranteed the dataset and quantitative reliability as well as qualitative traceability necessary in research based on corpus.

3.4 Analytical Procedure

The analytical procedure involved two major steps, namely quantitative frequency analysis and qualitative functional interpretation.

a. Quantitative Analysis:

With the help of AntConc 4.0 software, stance markers were recognized and counted according to the predefined list of markers on the basis of the stance model by Hyland (2005) which classifies the markers into epistemic, attitudinal, and evaluative ones. Each marker was frequency per million words (pmw), which permitted cross-sectional comparison of opposed sections and newspapers. Microsoft Excel was used to

perform statistic visualization in order to show the patterns of distribution.

b. Qualitative Analysis:

In accordance with the functional approach of Biber and Finegan (1989), the research has analyzed the concordance lines to explain the pragmatic and cultural roles of stance markers. This interpretation phase found the way the journalists applied stance markers to show certainty, judgment, emotion, or engagement. The focus was made on the contextual meaning and interpersonal effect which follow the linguistic patterns with subjectivity of the sociocultural influence on Pakistani journalistic discourse.

3.5 Reliability and Validity

In order to attain reliability, the study utilized the concept of double-coding of stance markers. Two coders individually verified 15 per cent of the data, and their inter-rater agreement score was found to be over 0.85, which is deemed as high by corpus annotation (Krippendorff, 2013). Triangulation, that is, the combination of quantitative frequency data and qualitative interpretation of functions enhanced the validity of the study. According to Tognini-Bonelli (2001), this type of methodological triangulation guarantees that corpus results are statistically significant, as well as linguistically significant. In addition, external validity and generalizability were guaranteed by representative sampling of the key newspapers in the Pakistani English news discourse.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

No human subjects were involved directly as all data were collected on publicly available and published news articles. Therefore, no ethical clearance was needed. Nevertheless, it was conducted according to the ethical requirements of research by citing all the sources that were used, keeping the data confidential and ensuring that the linguistic work of the authors was not misrepresented. The linguistic corpus methodology is consistent with the ethical principles of Biber et al. (1998) on the research of linguistic corpus.

3.7 Limitations

Though the corpus is broad and balanced, it includes only the news media in print and online outlets, but not broadcast journalism, as well as social media. Thus, the results are a particular record of Pakistani English and not the whole language environment. Subsequent studies may adopt this by using multimodal corpora to study the stance of spoken and digital discourse which would provide a more detailed picture of the stance-taking behaviour.

4. Data Analysis

4.1 Quantitative Analysis

4.1.1 Frequency of Stance Markers

To perform the quantitative analysis, the concordance tool AntConc (Version 3.5.9) was used that made it possible to extract and compute the frequency of the stance markers systematically across the corpus. The frequencies were normalized to a million words to make a comparison. It was found that the most common type of epistemic stance markers, that is ones that indicate the levels of certainty or probability, were the most common. May, might, could, suggest and likely are the most frequent items in both cases. The marker can have appeared about 310 times per million word, mostly in the political news story, and is frequently in the context of what the government could do or what could happen. On the same note, might and could were used 275 and 260 times respectively per million words, typically preceded by either possibility or a hypothetical scenario. The suggest verb was used 220 times per million words, usually in economic and analytical news whereby the journalists generalized trends or commentary of experts. It was the adverb that was most probably used 140 times per ten million words particularly in reporting social and national matters, indicating projection and cautious forecast.

Besides the epistemic marker, affective stance markers like unfortunate, surprising, disturbing, and alarming were also present with a mean frequency of 125 per million words. These indicators were more common in opinion-based and editorials where the evaluative or emotional stance of the author was clearly stated. The comparatively large number of affective stance markers point to the fact that despite the factuality of the Pakistani news domain, there is

also space to subtly engage the subject matter, especially when it comes to commentary genres.

4.1.2 Distribution in News Sections

The distributional observation of the stance markers in various sections of the news showed that there are distinct stylistic and functional preference. In political coverage, epistemic markers like may, might, could were prevailing in the language, an indication of intentional choice to deploy hedging strategies to remain neutral and objectively fulfill their journalistic role. Predictive markers (expected, forecasted, predicted, and projected) were also more commonly used in economic news, which shows a forward-looking analysis based on expert commentary. In the social and cultural coverage, the use of affective and evaluative words, including surprising, alarming, encouraging, and significant, was pronounced and it was more subjective and engaged readers. Those trends indicate that Pakistani English journalism strategically employs stance markers to fit into section-specific communicative functions objectivism in politics, analytic reasoning in economics and evaluation frameworking in the discussion of social issues.

4.2 Qualitative Analysis

4.2.1 Epistemic Stance

Epistemic stance markers are also used to convey the commitment of a journalist in a proposition, and the measure of the level of certainty or evidence behind information reported (Hyland, 2005; Biber et al., 1998). The concordance analysis showed that markers that include may, might, and could were always employed to make tentative claims. As an example of political coverage, one can read:

Senior officials said the government could bring new economic reforms in the next fiscal year.

In this instance, may is used as a hedging tool, which implies likelihood, not objective certainty. This cautious approach to journalism is represented by the frequent use of such markers, which limits the possible prejudice or distortion. This trend conforms to epistemic rule of objectivity in news coverage in which journalists tend not to make definite statements unless such statements can be proved by evidence.

4.2.2 Affective and Evaluative Position

Markers of affective stance convey the attitudinal stance of the writer to the events or propositions, and usually affective approval, disapproval or degree of emotion. Sentences in the corpus are such as:

Those times when food insecurity is at an unprecedented height is cause for alarm.

In this case, the adjective alarming is used to express emotional appraisal and so lead the reader to the meaning of moral or social apprehension. These indicators are particularly widespread in commentary and editorializing where journalists actually appeal to the affective facet of the reader. The reason behind this type of evaluation is the fact that there is a cultural aspect behind the Pakistani system of journalism; where moral judgment and social compassion are usually present in an informational story (Hofstede, 2001). Practically speaking, the affective stance indicators are the instruments of framing, which can lead readers to understand the importance of certain occurrences, which in its turn ensures the strengthening of ideological and moral positions in the discourse.

4.2.3 Linguistic and Pragmatic Functions

Stance markers, linguistically, are social structures that relate writers to readers and put news discourse in a continuum between certainty and subjectivity (Biber et al., 1998). As implied in the qualitative results, the stance markers in Pakistani English news serve three main purposes:

- **Hedging:** The most common role, achieved with modal verbs (may, might, could) and epistemic adverbs (possibly, apparently), helps writers to dilute their claims and to be neutral.
- **Boosting:** Words like clearly, undoubtedly, and certainly are used in strengthening of claims especially in opinion writing where the writer lays stress on his or her authority.
- **Evaluative Framing:** Such adjectives as significant, critical, alarming assess the events and place readers on the same side with the writer interpretation.

Pragmatically, these markers play a role in negotiating stance, between reporting facts and commenting on them. The combination

between hedging and amplification points to a struggle between holding on to journalistic credibility and entertaining the audience with interpretation depth.

4.2.4 Stance as an Aspect of Culture.

Another issue that is identified in the analysis is that cultural dimensions affect the use of position markers in the Pakistani English news discourse. The sociocultural environment where the Pakistani journalism works is that of power distance and indirect communication standards (Hofstede, 2001). Thus, hedging is shown as a culturally entrenched technique to go through political sensitivity and social stratification. Journalists tend to use epistemic markers to create distance between possibly controversial utterances to ensure the institutional neutrality. Meanwhile, the extensive adoption of the affective stance markers highlights a collectivist orientation, as journalists are showing sympathy to social problems and ethical issues. This is indicative of general cultural discourse of duty, where the media not only explains but shapes the perception of the general population. Therefore, stance markers in Pakistani journalism are not only linguistic values but discursive signs of cultural forms of communication that mix conservative news coverage with judgmentalism.

4.2.5 Summary of Findings

Data analysis indicates that there are a number of important findings about the use of the stance markers in the discourse of Pakistani English news. To begin with, epistemic stance markers represent the most prevalent category, as the journalists tend to choose cautious and evidence-based reporting. Secondly, the indicators of affective and evaluative stance are most noticeable in editorials and socially-based reporting, which portrays the interrelation between factuality and subjectivity. Third, stance markers in Pakistani news achieve complex linguistic and pragmatic roles and purposes, including hedging and boosting as well as evaluative framing. Last but not least, the patterns which have been observed can be easily associated with cultural communication norms of Pakistan which are focused on respect, neutrality, and moral engagement. Altogether, this evidence indicates that the stance indicators are very crucial in the construction of

journalistic voice, objectivity mediation, and capture a socio-cultural ethos of Pakistani media discourse.

5. Findings and Discussion

The markers of stance that were identified through the corpus-based analysis are a ubiquitous linguistic phenomenon in the news discourse of Pakistani English, which serves epistemic as well as affective functions. The most common epistemic markers were may, might, could, likely, and suggest and were mostly employed to show a possibility and moderate commitment. These indicators were the most noticeable in political and economic coverage, in which journalists frequently speculated on situations or explained inconclusive developments. Conversely, affective position signifiers, including alarming, disturbing, and encouraging, were more frequent in the social and editorial materials conveying evaluation and emotional orientation to social problems. The results suggest a premeditated neutrality of facts and interpretative reach in the form of the journalistic efforts to preserve credibility and engagement of readers.

The excessive use of epistemic indicators reflects the hedging nature of Pakistani journalists who tend to use cautiousness in their words in order to not overstate and be objective. Hedging is one of the resources that Hyland (2005) suggests that writers should have to express uncertainty and still maintain interpersonal rapport. Such moderation in the Pakistani journalism seems to be culturally inspired as journalists operate in delicate political and institutional environments. Therefore, such pragmatic tools as modal verbs may and might are used to express informed conjecture as opposed to a statement.

On the other hand, the prevalence of affective stance markers is in accordance with an evaluation engagement inclination, specifically, in genre-based opinion. Such indicators enable journalists to create a moral perspective, which implies an alliance with the audience and concordance of speech with common cultural ideas. Since Hofstede (2001) suggests, collectivist societies tend to promote empathetic communication patterns, which is the characteristic of the emotional expressiveness of Pakistani news writing. Therefore, the stance

markers are the reflection of the grammatical meaning as well as the cultural and ethical orientation of Pakistani journalism. The findings are in line with other corpus-based studies of stance in the English media. Biber et al. (1999) established that the epistemic stance indicators prevail in all the formal registers especially in informational writing. Likewise, Hyland and Jiang (2016) discovered that written discourse stance is not only a reflection of a complicated bargain between factuality and subjectivity. Nevertheless, in comparison to the Western media research, the current results indicate peculiar cultural and practical tastes. Although, American or British news is likely to downplay emotional position (Conrad & Biber, 2000), Pakistani news is explicit in incorporating evaluative and moral coloring, which indicates a hybrid communicative identity, which is both objective and empathetic.

This hybridity of culture is reflected in the same attitudes of Kachru (1992) towards the so-called World Englishes in which local forms vary according to social-cultural realities. Therefore, the practices that stand in Pakistani English are demonstrative of a discursive nativization process wherein conventions of journalistic practice are in co-existence with culturally fixed modalities of expression.

The results have a tremendous implication on the study of linguistic theory and media discourse. Linguistically, the findings support the statements that stance markers can be crucial signs of writer identity and epistemic positioning in Pakistani English. They show the relationship between grammar, discourse, and culture and influencing a text meaning. In terms of discourse, the reflection of the interpersonal role of language in journalism, stance, is utilized to strike a balance in terms of information dissemination and affective engagement. On the pedagogical side, the findings can be applied in teaching English as a Journalism and Discourse Analysis, which pays special attention to cross-cultural awareness in professional writing. The knowledge of stance use should enable novice journalists to embrace stylistic practices that can be both global and local.

The study has limitations, even though it is based on a strong methodology of corpus. It used three national newspapers as its corpus and this might not be a perfect reflection of regional or

other media voices. Also, although the analysis has found the stance markers as quantitative and functional, the further analysis of the readership might help understand the reactions of the audience to the stance diversification in news texts. Further studies could broaden the sample size to broadcast or online news and utilize comparative models to other South Asian Englishes in order to increase the level of generalizability. To sum up, the role of stance markers in Pakistani English news discourse is to serve as the linguistic and cultural tool, both in epistemically cautious and affectively engaging formats. The two imperatives of accuracy and social responsibility enable journalists to balance between fact and opinion. These results can be applied to wider insights into stance in World Englishes since they show that linguistic decisions in journalism are deeply informed by contextual and cultural realities and no longer determined by simply adhering to stylistic norms.

6. Conclusion

The current research aimed at exploring the application and roles of stance markers in news discourse in Pakistani English using a corpus based analytical frame. Based on the purpose of determining the most commonly used stance markers and investigating their cultural, pragmatic, and linguistic roles, the study was to unearth how Pakistani journalists build epistemic authority and evaluative positioning in their coverage. The study provided a detailed insight into how the stance markers are used to convey a greater communicative and cultural disposition within the Pakistani media writing by producing a comprehensive result of quantitative frequency analysis and qualitative functional translation.

It was found that stance markers are a ubiquitous and versatile phenomenon of Pakistani English journalism. In the hard news genres, epistemic markers, which include may, might, could and suggest, prevailed, indicating cautious assertion and journalistic neutrality. Conversely, the markers of affective stance such as disturbing, notably, and remarkable were more common in the editorials and social columns that indicated evaluative involvements and moralizing. Such language decisions show that the Pakistani journalists are balancing on

the thin line between informative objectivity and interpretive subjectivity and are adjusting their discourse to both professional and cultural standards. According to the findings, stance marking in Pakistani news speech serves as a strategic linguistic tool of remaining credible and establishing a closer connection with the audience. Hyland (2005) argues that the stance markers play crucial roles in the identity of the author and persuasion of the rhetoric process because writers can use them to indicate the epistemic commitment and interpersonal alignment. This balance is culturally based in the Pakistani context. According to cultural dimensions proposed by Hofstede (2001), collectivist cultures are civilized and emphasis is on harmony and social responsibility, and these factors can be traced in the empathic tone and evaluative language of Pakistani journalism. Therefore, the role of stance markers extends beyond the grammatical and pragmatic functions of this linguistic tool to the cultural markers showing the way the national values influence the journalistic style.

The research study is valuable to corpus linguistics and media discourse analysis because it provides empirical evidence of the use of stance in a localized form of English. It helps Biber et al. (1999) prove the fact that stance is a stable aspect of variation among written registers, but adds another dimension to the discussion by placing stance in the context of World Englishes (Kachru, 1992). To the teachers of language and to the language teachers of journalism, these results imply the pedagogical significance of creating awareness regarding expression of stance as a way of acquiring both linguistic and socio-cultural adequacy. In addition, the findings highlight the dynamic nature of Pakistani English where it combines international and nationalized journalism norms and approaches with domestic communicative forms.

Although the current study has done justice to the description of stance markers in print journalism, a new research can be conducted in the future by incorporating digital and broadcast media in the corpus because conversation style and immediacy may have a different effect on the utilization of stance in these media. A comparison with other South Asian versions of the English language, i.e. Indian or Bangladeshi

media discourse, would also shed more light on the regional differences in expressing stance. Secondly, the reception analysis of the readers may show the way audiences perceive and react to markers of stance providing information on the role they play in forming opinion and trust in the media stories.

To conclude, stance markers in the Pakistani news language are much more than merely stylistic devices; it is a linguistic indication of national identity, the morality of journalism, and cultural communication patterns. Using a corpus approach, this study strengthens the argument that language in media is not unique but rooted deep in social, political and cultural structures. As illustrated by the practices of the stance, Pakistani journalism represents a characteristic combination of the global professionalism and local expressivity: a feature of the dynamic and plural character of the English in the contemporary world.

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