

Stance Markers in Press Release

علامات الراي الموقفي في البيانات الصحفية

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الملخص

تتقصى الدراسة الحالية العلامات اللغوية للراي الموقفي كطريقة يعبر بها عن الراي او المشاعر تجاه قضية معينة في التصريحات الصحفية. وتتمثل مشكلة البحث في انه نقص المعرفة في تلك العلامات يتسبب في غياب التفاهم او على الاقل غياب الفهم. وهنا تحاول الدراسة الاجابة عن الاسئلة التالية: ١- ماهي العلامات اللغوية للراي الموقفي في التصريحات الصحفية؟ ٢- ماهي اكثر (واقل) تلك العلامات توظيفا في التصريحات الصحفية؟ ولتحقيق اهداف الدراسة في معرفة كل ما سبق فان الدراسة وظفت انموذج تجميعي البيانات كما ونوعا وقد استنتجت ان العلامات اللغوية للراي الموقفي تشمل: التخفيف اللغوي، و المؤكدات وعلامات الموقف وعلامات العلاقات بين المتفاهمين والعلامات اللغوية الشخصية. ويضاف لذلك ان التصريحات الصحفية تفضل توظيف التلطيف الكلامي والمؤكدات على العلامات اللغوية الشخصية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: علامات الراي الموقفي، البيانات الصحفية، المؤكدات، علامات الراي، علامات العلاقات بين المتفاهمين، العلامات اللغوية الشخصية.

Abstract

The current study investigates stance markers as a way to express their viewpoints or feeling towards some issues in press releases. The problem of the study comes from the fact that without getting knowledge about such markers, there will be lack of communication or, at least, understanding. Hence, the study tries to answer the following: What are stance markers used in press releases? What are the most (and the least) stance markers used in press releases? Thus, eight press releases are analyzed using an eclectic model for stance markers. It has been concluded that stance markers are Hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers, and person markers. PR prefer implementing hedges and emphatics to personal markers.

Key Words: stance markers, press releases, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers, and person markers.

1. Introduction

Authors, whoever, with their various purposes, express their stance in versatile ways. One way to fathom their stance is by analyzing it markers. The problem of the study emerges from the fact that without getting knowledge about such stance

markers successful communication will less likely to occur. Conversely, having insights about such issue enables readers and researchers in general to get the intended message presented. Thus, the study tries to answer the following: What are stance markers used in press releases? (i. e. , What discourse structure they carry and what linguistic realization achieve them ?)What are the most (and the least) stance markers used in press releases? The study investigates and analyzes stance in 7 articles with the aim of showing stance markers used in press releases(i. e. , their discourse structure and linguistic realization, and the most (and the least) stance markers used in press releases?

2. Literature Review

Normally, people take stances (whether written or spoken)about everything they encounter in everyday situations. Generally, they form stance toward knowledge (a stance toward what is valid knowledge and who is the authority for having and validating that knowledge) and define themselves and others (as expert, novice, student, teacher, etc.).

2. 1. Stance Definition and Related terms

Normally, stance is referred to as “a textual voice”, conveying the attitudinal manner of the writer (Hyland, 2001: 176). Technically, Stance is a linguistic construct which refers to the complex relations that can be established between the literal, the figurative and the functional meanings of discourse (Precht, 2003:239). Biber and Finegan(1989: 93) use the term ‘stance’ for complexes of lexical and grammatical expressions of

attitudes, feelings, judgements, or commitment concerning the propo-sitional content of a message, and demonstrated that different ‘stances’ could be distinguished ranging from ‘emphatic expression of affect’ to a ‘faceless stance’(ibid)i. e, affective and evidential. As such, ‘in addition to communicating propositional content, speakers and writers commonly express personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments: that is, they express a "stance(Biber et al. , 1999: 966-86). Stance, is investi-gated and treated under the umbrella categories of:

- 1. Evaluation:**Thompson and Hunston (2000:5) use ‘evaluation’, as ‘the broad concept for the writers' expressing attitude or "stance" towards a perspective, or feelings about the issues or propositions that writer is talking about. They(ibid) specify evaluation stance as being related to "certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values. "
- 2. Appraisal:**Martin and White (2005: 40) refer to appraisal as involving affect "resources for modalizing, amplifying, reacting emotionally" (showing emotion like love, want, etc), judgment (judging morally like bad, good) and appreciation (evaluating aesthetically), and all these are involved in stance. As such, their approach is closely related to the concept of stance. The category of. Martin and White(ibid: 97)even directly refer to engagement as "intersubjective stance".

3. **Evidentiality** related to certainty, doubt, actuality, source of know-ledge, imprecision, viewpoint, and limitation.
4. **Metadiscourse** for Hyland (2005:16), the term "stance" overlaps with metadiscourse i. e. , "discourse about discourse" which is the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community” (Hyland, 2005:37).

2. 2. Stance and Texts

Written texts have two main types of interaction(Thompson, 2001: 59):

1. Interactive:such type attends to the management of information.
2. Interactional :which attends to the readers’ involvement in the ethos of the argumentation. In the latter strategies, writers interact with readers "by appearing in the text to comment on and evaluate the content through the use of modality and evaluation and by assigning speech roles to themselves and to the readers"(Thompson, 2001: 63-64).

Thompson(2001:60)pinpoints that reader-in-the-text strategies cause difficulties for both native and non-native novice writers. By this, he(ibid) means the constructions such as ‘It might be thought that. . . ’, 'Most people believe that. . . ' or ‘This is now well-understood’. That is, the writer constructs a reader-in-the text with sets of shared attitudes and knowledge so that it does not appear that the writer is presupposing ideas which might be unacceptable for the real reader constructing a balanced discourse(Quirk et al. 1985: 1436)"so that the text seems to anticipate objections and crosscurrents raised in the mind of the reader/hearer. "

Engaged in an argument, many believe that their stance is more legitimate and viable than others(Sakita, 2002:89).

For Aijmer et. al. (2006: 109), diverging stances are found in linguistic interaction and require communicative treatment and problem-solving. These stances are:First, Stance pertinent to the relation between interactants, in Thompson's(200159)terms "interactional", where pragmatic markers are ways of resolving the problem of open conflict. They thus serve as an acknowledgement of the speaker’s awareness of their position or possible position and hence may function as politeness markers (Aijmer et. al. , 2006: 109). Second, Stances showing the speaker’s own subjective reaction to either an event or another proposition whereby pragmatic markers depict the speaker’s interpretation.

Clark (2009:104) argues that words which are presented as those of someone different from the speaker are said to be ‘attributed with the speaker constructing a stance with varying degrees of ‘detachment’ from the source. This stance can be changed according to the attributing or reporting verb used, despite the speaker's responsibility for the utterance. The utterance becomes a bond in the continuing and reciprocal interaction between interactants since the speaker can thus signal how the proposition should be considered within the context and wider meanings of the text as a whole (ibid).

2. 3. Stance Markers: Discourse Structures and Linguistic Realization

Stance markers may appear in the loss of literal meaning(I mean; I think) and may be categorized as markers of pragmatic commentary rather than discourse markers per se (Schiffrin, 2006:316). Following Hyland (1999: 103) analysis, authors' stance is achieved by using five markers(They form the discourse structure of stance and thus, are going to be as a major part of the model with their linguistic realizations):

1-Hedges: i. e. , "devices ... that indicate the writer's decision to withhold complete commitment to a proposition, allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than accredited fact"(Hyland, Ken, 2005:178). For Fagan and Martin (2004: 129)hedges involve the modal expressions such as may, perhaps ; epistemic modality verbs (suggest, speculate, can, may, might, could, be able to, must, should, need to,); semi-auxiliaries(seem, appear), and approximators of quantity, frequency, degree and time (most, frequently generally, approximately ...etc.). Pho (2013:76)clarifies that these devices which withhold complete commit-ment to proposition e. g. This is to a large extent the case, possibly, may, could, believe ...etc. Passot (2007:124) shows that a modal shift is one

that betrays the symbolic stance taken by the speaker on the matter under discussion and the speaker's anticipation of the addressee's own posture. Linguistically, they are realized by modal auxiliaries, reporting verbs, or intensive adverbs among others(ibid). Hodge & Kress (1988: 22) explain that modality, a linguistic system which carries interpersonal meaning, "describes the stance of participants in the semiotic process toward the state and status of the system of classification". Rocci (2009:19)contends that most treatments of "stance" in discourse analysis does not connect it with the referential function of discourse, rather, it is pertinent to interpersonal meaning where hedging is used to avoid commitment.

2• Emphatics:Pho(2013:5) calls them boosters which indicate author, s writer's certainty in relation to his/her claims, and involvement with topic e. g. certainly, of course, without doubt, definitely, ...etc.

3• Attitude markers which show the writer's affective rather than epistemic attitude e. g. Unfortunately, appropriately, we prefer, interesting ...etc. Biber et al. (1999: 130–132) see stance adverbial as to those that typically express the attitude of the writer towards the form or content of the message. Stance adverbials are multifunctional as they can convey epistemic, attitudinal, style meanings, and so on. Attitude markers are a set of expressions, which "serve as a means by which the user of the language makes obvious what his feelings, emotions or views are about the propositional content of the utterance being made"(De Bryun 1998: 127). For Lewis(2006:58)it is difficult to distinguish between a reference to the epistemic stance and a reference to the illocution itself, i. e. , whether it is the belief or the statement of the belief that is being justified as it may be to both. Attitude markers are (Blagojević, 2009:65):

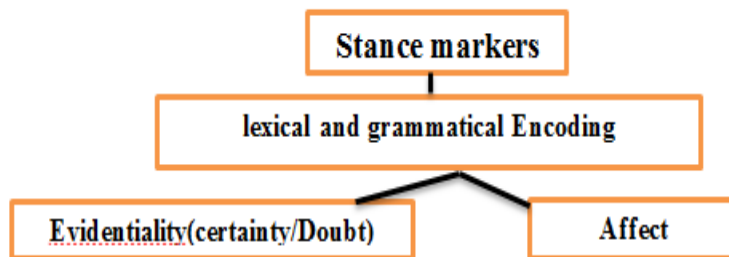
1. Adverbs and adverbial phrases functioning as disjuncts.

2. Verbs modifying adverbs functioning as subjuncts – intensifiers.
3. Adjectives functioning as subjective complement for expletive 'it'.
4. Adjectives occurring as pronominal modifiers.
5. Modal verbs showing obligation.
6. Nouns carrying specific semantic content (ibid).
- 4• **Relational markers**, those that clearly address readers and attempt to invoke reader participation. e.g. Let us, now consider, note that ..., you, . etc.
- 5• **Person markers**: personal pronouns and possessive adjectives used to present information e. g. I, we.

Using grammatical, lexical and paralinguistic devices, writers express "a stance towards the value positions being referenced by the text and with respect to those they address"(Martin and White 2005: 92), whether that stance be in the objective or the subjective voice all of these approaches to evaluation, attribution of stance to the writer or to some third person can be overt or covert. Haviland (1989: 59)states the symbiotic relationship between epistemic and affective modes contending (or hedging) the truth may be inherently argumentative and thus, it is affective'. So, there are mixtures of expressions, wherein knowledge produced and orientations to knowledge are expressed by affective, emotional stances. Biber et al. (1999: 966–86)classify stance markers into:

1. **Epistemic**(related to the status of the information in a proposition – its source, certainty or doubt); Epistemic stance adverbials (like attitude stance adverbials) comment on the content of a proposition. Epistemic markers are those which express the speaker's judgment about the certainty, reliability, and limitations of the proposition; they can also comment on the source of the information. (Biber et al. 1999:854).
 2. **Attitudinal** (relating to personal attitudes or feelings). They convey the speaker's attitude or value judgment about the proposition's content.
 - 3-**Style Adverbials** describe the manner and style of speaking (presenting comments on the communication itself) (Biber et al. 1999:854).
- 10. Linguistic Realization of Stance.**

Biber and Finegan(1988:90)adopt a classification of stance wherein stance in general can be realized by lexical and grammatical Encoding which, in turn, can be divided into either expression of Evidentiality (certainty / Doubt) or Affect (whether Positive/negative) see Figure 1.



Figure(1)Realization of Stance in Biber and Finegan(1988:90).

Authorial Stance can be realized by various linguistic structures. Pho (2013:10) presents linguistic realization of authorial stance as follows:

1. First person pronoun and self- Reference words(I, we, the researcher).
2. Modal auxiliaries and semi modal(obligation/necessity should /must. .)
3. Verb tense and aspect(present simple, past simple, etc.).
4. Voice:agentless passive/by passive/ active).
5. Adj. , Adv. , N/attitudinal(interestingly)or epistemic word (possible).
6. That–complement clauses controlled by verbs(it should be noted that).
7. That –complement clauses controlled by nouns(the conclusion that)
8. Controlling word types(he said that, pointed out that, argued that).

3. Data Analysis

The procedures of the study involves: presenting theoretical analysis of stance, analyzing 7 press releases to uncover the stance markers (discourse structure and linguistic realizations) in press releases, and finally, discussing the results and presenting conclusions. An eclectic model based upon Hyland's (1999: 103)stance markers and Blagojević's (2009:65) taxonomy of attitude markers, has been employed to analyze the press release articles (see figure 2below).

Figure (2)The eclectic model of the study depending on Hyland's (1999: 103) and Blagojević's (2009:65)categorization.

3. 1. Qualitative Analysis

This part is related to analyze data qualitatively. Initially, the extracts are presented written in italics for highlighting. Then, analysis is presented just below.

1-Hedges:Extract 1, Press Release(henceforth PR)7, page(henceforth P)1: Children seem to be the victims most affected by this violence.

In this text, "seem", and "most" are used as hedging devices showing a stance that most affected among human being categories in that conflicts are children. Such stance is clearly affective. Thus, tentative language is to avoid any certainty or to mitigate the statements and withhold complete commitment to this idea allows information to be introduced as an opinion rather than accredited fact.

Extract 2, PR 1p2: If people are being persecuted based on their identity and killed, tortured, raped and forcibly transferred in a widespread or systematic manner, this could amount to crimes against humanity.

The extract above employs an epistemic modality verb "could" as a hedged device. It is a stance marker of to be out of complete commitment being an evidential one. Hence, persecution under identity may lead to an increase of crimes. Thus, this is shown as a standpoint rather than viable fact.

2-Emphatics: Extract 3:PR 4, p1: The extent of the atrocities, destruction and suffering inflicted on the civilian population by militias belonging to the Kamwina Nsapu movement, the national security forces and so-called self-defence groups, whose activities are ethnically motivated or aimed at settling scores, is quite frankly sickening.

The extract above points to the destruction emphasizing it throughout employing the expression "the extent of ". In addition, there is another emphatic device using the intensifier "quite". Such expressions mark the stance that this PR tries to show the destruction and suffering. Such stance is obviously affective.

3-Attitude Markers: Extract 4:PR4, p1: I was told that entire villages, as well as public buildings, had been burnt down by members of Kamwina Nsapu militias but that, regrettably, in certain areas, the security forces and other militias had been responsible for twice as much destruction.

Actually, the PR presenter expresses his regret concerning the destruction of the village using the attitudinal stance marker "regrettably". Thus, such stance is clearly affective. In fact, security forces, according to this PR, are responsible for double destruction.

Extract 5, PR4, p1: Unfortunately, my visit to the Kasai region confirmed my concerns.

The PR employs attitudinal stance marker "unfortunately" to show his feelings regarding what he saw during his visit that confirms his concerns. Such stance is clearly affective.

Extract 5, PR4, p1: Combating impunity is essential in order to effectively prevent new atrocities.

This extract involves the stance that it is necessary to defeat impunity showing that the rationale behind that is to "effectively prevent" disasters. In fact, the stance marker "effectively prevent" is attitudinal marker with the linguistic realization of an adverb modifying the main verb to show evidential stance. This involves concerns regarding the prevention to be conducted effectively.

Extract 6. PR8, p10: It was essential to uphold the equal rights of women by ensuring their full participation in governing institutions and the judicial system, thereby establishing a legislative framework that secured their full access to justice.

This PR obviously shows the necessity of equalizing women with men in terms of institutional participation throughout law issuance that ensures justice. The stance marker-the adjective "essential" as a subjective complement for expletive it -is implemented here to introduce the significant standpoint. Such stance is clearly affective.

Extract7, PR, P1. :Roethlisberger said that compared with Africa's exports to other parts of the world, intra-African trade is much more centered around manufactured goods, with higher levels of product complexity. This tends to contribute to higher incomes and faster economic growth over the long-run.

As one of attitudinal stance markers, adjectives occurring as pronominal modifiers normally precede the initiated stance. In the text above, the pronominal modifier "this" is presented prior to the intended stance. As such, " tends to contribute to higher incomes ..." depicts such required stance. Such stance is clearly evidential. Hence, "intra-African trade" that is pertinent to "manufactured goods", with complexity help in gaining "higher incomes and faster economic growth".

Extract 8, PR8, p1:Both Eastern Ghouta and Idlib are designated de-escalation areas under the Astana process and should therefore be places where civilians should expect a minimum level of safety.

Clearly, the text involves the stance that there should be places for civilians to have some sort of safety. The stance is expressed via implementing a modal verb showing obligation. Such stance is made evidential to its necessity.

Extract 9, PR1, p 1: Attacks that are indiscriminate or directly target civilians or civilian objects are a violation of fundamental principles of international humanitarian law.

One of stance attitudinal markers is the employment of nouns that carry specific semantic content. The extract above points to the attacks showing that they are "indiscriminate", and describing them as "a violation" for the humanitarian law. The stance here, is affective showing feeling against attacks on people. As such, these two expressions show the reader the stance concerning attacks.

4- Relational Markers: Extract 1, PR3, P11:

We call on you to make these priorities non-negotiable.

Initially in the same PR, it shown that the Executive Director of UN-Women institution is urging for making women's participations in govern mental processes essential. Additionally, here, she calls for making this a non-negotiable priority. Such stance is affective showing feelings towards women. Starting with the pronoun "we" and addressing the UN with the pronoun "you" she employs interpersonal stance markers to present her standpoint.

5- Person Markers:Extract, 1:PR4, P1:I decided to come to the Democratic Republic of the Congo this week in response to alarming reports of an unprecedented deterioration in the security and human rights situation in the three Kasai provinces and increased intercommunal tensions in the east of the country, in particular in North Kivu province.

Starting with "I", the writer presents his stance denoting that it was his decision to come to the Congo.

3. 2. Quantitative Analysis

The following table shows the frequencies and percentages of stance markers in PR

Stance Markers	Frequencies	percentages
Hedges	53	47%
Emphatics	26	23%
Attitudinal markers	13	11%
Interpersonal markers	11	10%
Personal markers	10	9%
toat	113	

Table (1) the frequencies and percentages of stance markers in PR

It appears that the most employed strategies are hedges (53) with the percentage of 47%. Next to hedges, emphatics have the frequency of 23%. Then, attitudinal markers and interpersonal markers which approximately have the same percentages 11%, and 10 % respectively. Finally, the least employed stance markers are the personal markers with their frequency of 10 and a percentage of 9%.

4. Findings

Obviously, it has been found that all the stance markers denoted in the eclectic model are employed in PR. Thus, Hedges, Emphatics,

Attitude markers, Relational markers, and Person markers are all found in PR as stance markers by which stance can be allocated and identified. Furthermore, their linguistic realizations are also confirmed. They involve First person pronoun and self-Reference words, Modal auxiliaries Adjectives, Adverbs, Nouns, attitudinal or epistemic word, etc. This achieves the first aims of discovering stance markers and their linguistic realizations. Statistically analyzed, PR shows preference for employing hedges and emphatics, while the least implemented of stance markers are the personal markers. As such, the second aim of the study is fulfilled.

5. Conclusions

Stance is a linguistic structure by which speakers and writers usually express personal feelings, attitudes, value judgments, or assessments. Stance, which is related to the way the writers express their viewpoints, is related to evaluation, appraisal, positioning, evidentiality, metadiscourse. Being a hybrid term, writer's stance can be realized by various structures which are classified in various ways. Thus, Hedges, emphatics, attitude markers, relational markers, and person markers are all found in Press Release as stance markers by which stance can be allocated and identified. Hedges and attitude markers, for example, as sub group of linguistic realization of stance are divided into various categories with different linguistic realizations. PR prefer implementing hedges and emphatics to personal markers.

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