

Authorial Stance in English, Arabic and EFL Applied Linguistics Research: An Appraisal Study

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Abstract

This study examines how academics from different sociocultural contexts use Attitude to project authorial stances that build convincing arguments and naturalise certain communities of shared values and interests. Specifically, the study investigates the use of the Appraisal resources, Affect, Judgment and Appreciation (Martin and White 42-69), in the introductions of Applied linguistics research papers that are written in English and Modern Standard Arabic by: (1) published English-speaking academics, (2) published Saudi academics and (3) Saudi EFL Master's degree students. Results revealed that writers preferred different Attitude options leading to varying degrees of subjectivity in the texts. Cross-cultural contrasts also pertained to the nature of the entities and ideational fields of discourse that were appraised. Results also showed that the stance construed by the EFL writers did not reflect the exclusive influence of any of the two cultures involved, but represented an inter-genre with a blend of different features coexisting in the same text. The study has implications for EFL writers and for tertiary academic institutions. Explicit instruction of discipline-specific Attitude conventions is required to achieve rhetorically-effective arguments from the perspective of the target discourse community.

Keywords

Applied linguistics, attitude, evaluation, reader positioning, academic argumentation, persuasion

Introduction

The study of how academics use evaluative resources to project a critical authorial stance in their writing has been an established research domain (Nayernia and Ashouri; Azar and Hashim; Alotaibi; Loi, Lim and Wharton; Duenas; Hood). Research has shown that the effectiveness of academic discourse does not only rely on an impartial description of reality (Hunston, "Evaluation in Experimental Research" 17) but also on "a carefully arranged and supported presentation of a viewpoint" (Irvin 9). Academics make a point in their research and also use interpersonal strategies to win their readers' approval of the expressed

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perspective. This entails knowledge of the expectations of the audience and of the effective rhetorical means to position them to accept the text's point of view.

Interpersonal resources for constructing critical stance involve the use of Attitude which means the expression of emotions, tastes and normative assessments in addition to propositional content. In the literature, the term *Attitude* has been subsumed under the umbrella term *evaluation*. Several scholars have discussed evaluation as an important discourse phenomenon. Hunston, for example, proposed that evaluation is a crucial function because it builds a writer-reader relationship ("Evaluation in Experimental Research" 10). Writers assume that certain attitudes, values and reactions are shared between them and their readers and that expressing these attitudes will establish solidarity with the communities of shared feelings and values. Similarly, Hyland pointed to the importance of evaluation in academic discourse because controlling the level of personality is central to building a convincing argument ("Stance and Engagement" 173). More recently, the study of Attitude has been taken up by the Appraisal Theory (Martin and White). Appraisal theory divides the concept of Attitude into three further subsystems: Affect, Judgment and Appreciation, with each having a distinct effect on the type of authorial stance construed in the text. Studies that applied Appraisal as an analytic model revealed a relationship between the number and types of the employed appraisal resources and the perceived quality and success of the texts under analysis (Alotaibi; Liu).

Scholars who studied evaluation discussed two important issues: the context-dependency and the complexity of discipline-specific stance construction, especially for novice and EFL writers. About the first issue, evaluation is always expressed in relation to some standard (Hyland, "Stance and Engagement" 175). Evaluative choices are not made from all the alternatives that the system of language provides but from a more restricted subset of options that derive directly from the epistemological assumptions and the permissible criteria of justification foregrounded in the discourse community. Nayernia and Ashouri surveyed the literature on the use of evaluation across different registers and concluded that: "the use of attitude markers appears to be highly affected by the discipline and the context. Also, authors in different genres employ different attitude markers" (131). Besides discipline and genre, national culture also contributes to the rhetorical conventions of the discourse community. According to Mauranen, *convincingness* varies across cultures and academic writers differ in their culturally-learned expectations about what to consider rhetorically effective and persuasive. This means that more research is needed on Appraisal in different "languages and cultures to contribute to our understanding of our communities and the ways by which we, as social subjects, legitimise and delegitimise specific value systems" (Oteiza 470).

Due to context-dependency, the effective use of evaluation is largely viewed as a stumbling setback to novice and EFL writers. Lio, Lim and Wharton

indicated the lack of stance in student writing and attributed this to three factors: lack of awareness of the value and functions of evaluation, linguistic and rhetorical differences between learners' first and second languages and inadequate instruction that is needed to prepare students to achieve a critical and persuasive stance (1-2).

In contrast to the wealth of research in the context of other cultures, little evidence is available for how Arab writers, both published and EFL students, use Attitude in their writings. The literature that studies research published in Modern Standard Arabic is limited to the description of its genre structure (e.g., Al-Qahtani; Al-Ali and Sahawneh; Sultan; Al-Huqbani). Similarly, research that has examined EFL discourse focused overwhelmingly on Asian students' writing. EFL research addressed two questions: how students' use of evaluation differs from that of professional writers (e.g., Hood), and how high-quality essays differ from low-quality essays in the use of evaluation (e.g., Wu and Allison; Liu; Swain). This research, however, has some limitations. First, the overwhelming majority of studies fell into the second category, comparing high-quality and low-quality essays. This amounted to making comparisons between the students themselves, who share the same culture and value systems. Additionally, EFL research focused almost exclusively on generic or non-genre-specific texts written by undergraduate students. The texts analysed were commonly labelled as argumentative rather than academic texts.

The present study devises a cross-cultural contrastive-rhetoric approach to uncover the effect of the sociocultural context on the use of Attitude. It also sets out to describe the Master's degree discipline/genre-specific discourse which is qualitatively different from undergraduate discourse in terms of the target audience, communicative purpose and repercussion on writers' academic career and standing, and hence on the urgency of the need to use evaluation to produce an effective argument. The aim is to use the Attitude model of Appraisal theory to study how attitudes are employed by academics to persuade readers to receive their stance. This analytical model is devised because it is regarded as "the most theory-grounded study of the functions and forms of evaluative meaning in English" (Hunston, "Corpus Approaches to Evaluation" 3). The study compares the texts produced by three groups of writers: English-speaking published writers, Arabic-speaking published writers writing in Modern Standard Arabic and Saudi EFL Master's student writers. The genre analysed is the introduction section to Applied linguistics research papers and Master's theses. The study poses the following questions:

1. What are the attitudinal resources that are preferred by the three groups of writers?
2. What exact entities and broad categories of information are appraised through Attitude in the three types of texts?

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

The present study employs the Attitude model within the Appraisal Theory. Appraisal studies the interpersonal dimension of language at the discourse semantic level (Martin and White; White). It consists of three main systems: *Attitude*, *Engagement* and *Graduation*. Attitude involves the expression of emotions, tastes and normative assessments concerning the entities and issues that are discussed in the text. Engagement involves resources for adjusting writers' commitment to the expressed values and for accepting or fending-off alternative value positions. Graduation involves resources for toning-up or toning-down the intensity of the Attitudes that are conveyed.

The system of Attitude is further subcategorised into three sub-systems: Affect, Judgment and Appreciation (exemplified in table 1). Affect involves the expression of authorial and non-authorial positive and negative emotions and feelings (e.g., *happy*, *disappointed*). Four kinds of feelings are differentiated: un/happiness, dis/satisfaction, in/security and dis/inclination.

Judgment expresses the writers' normative assessments of people and their behaviours, that is "their character (how they measure up)" (Martin and White 52). Judgment is divided into two types: Social Esteem and Social Sanction. Social Esteem involves personal assessments of admiration or criticism of people's Normality, how unusual they are (e.g., *weird*); Capacity, how competent they are (e.g., *professional*); and Tenacity, how determined they are (e.g., *determined*). Social Sanction, on the other hand, involves moral assessments of praise or condemnation of behaviours that have to do with people's Veracity, how truthful they are (e.g., *deceitful*); and Propriety, how ethical they are (e.g., *corrupt*).

Appreciation is concerned with "things" rather than "people" and their behaviours. It encompasses positive and negative assessments of the form, appearance, composition or significance of objects, processes or states of affairs by reference to aesthetics (White). Appreciation is considered an institutionalisation of Affect because in Appreciation, one refers to socially recognised systems of value. In this way, "values of Appreciation [are] less directly personalising, at least relative to values of Affect" (White). Appreciation involves three types: Reaction, Composition and Valuation. Reaction includes evaluation of the emotional responses that the appraised entity arouses in the evaluator (e.g., *pleasant*). Composition concerns the evaluation of the structure or form of the appraised entity (e.g., *complicated*). Valuation involves assessments of the social significance of the entity; whether it is worthwhile or not (e.g., *significant*).

Table 1 provides examples of the sub-categories of Attitude taken from the present data. However, reference is made to examples offered by Martin and White in the cases in which a given category is not found in the present data.

Table 1
The Attitude System

ATTITUDE	Affect	Un/Happiness		<i>enjoyment, frustration</i>	
		Dis/Satisfaction		<i>lack of interest, curiosity</i>	
		In/Security		<i>shy, worry</i>	
		Dis/Inclination		<i>hope, need</i>	
	Judgment	Social Esteem	Normality		<i>predictable, peculiar (Martin and White 53)</i>
				Capacity	<i>unable, active</i>
		Social Sanction	Veracity		<i>honest, deceptive (Martin and White 53)</i>
				Propriety	<i>overlook, negligence</i>
		Appreciation	Reaction		<i>engaging, pleasurable</i>
				Composition	<i>clear, advanced, complex, vague</i>
	Valuation			<i>benefits, good, important, problematic</i>	

In the analysis of evaluation, it is not only important to investigate what lexis is used to express Attitude but also what entities are appraised in the texts. The analysis of the appraised entities takes two orientations in the present study: a micro-analysis and a macro-analysis. The micro-analysis looks at every single entity or phenomenon that is appraised by the writer. Thus, in the nominal group *precise criteria*, the entity that is evaluated with the positive [Composition+] epithet *precise* is *criteria*. A micro-analysis of the appraised entities will help in making a distinction between integral and isolated evaluations.

The macro-analysis, in contrast, takes a holistic perspective of examining the broad categories of information in which the writer incorporates his evaluation. It involves the breaking down of the texts into their component ideational fields.

Similar to other studies (e.g., Hood; Thetala), two fields are analysed in the present study: topic-oriented field and research-oriented field. Topic-oriented field refers to the segments of the text that provide information about the subject matter or the topic that the researcher is dealing with. It concerns the real-world activities that constitute the domain of study. Research-oriented field, in contrast, comprises aspects of the research process proper (Thetala), realised in entities and mental and behavioural processes such as *findings, results, evidence, argue, report, classify, etc.* Table 2 provides examples for the use of Attitude in the two ideational fields.

Table 2
Ideational Fields in the Texts

Topic-oriented Field	... the benefits [Valuation+] of extensive reading is needed. Reading fluency refers to the ability to read and process text rapidly and accurately [Composition+] and with good [Valuation+] expression and prosody.
Research-Oriented Field	... when L2 researchers use L1 literature... the probable difference between L1 and L2 research is often overlooked [Propriety-]

Methodology

The data in this study consists of 21 texts divided as follows: 6 texts written in English by published Anglo-American writers; 7 texts written in Modern Standard Arabic by Saudi published writers and 8 texts written in EFL by Saudi Master's degree students. The number of texts and word counts in the data are provided in table 3.

Table 3
The Corpora

Sub-corpus	No. of Texts	Word Count
English	6	3945
Arabic	7	3858
EFL	8	3760
Total	21	11,563

Following Gotti, native-speaker status was established through the author's name and affiliation, with English-speaking writers working in American universities

and Arabic-speaking writers working in Saudi universities. The student writers came from different Saudi universities. Master's degree students in foreign language departments in Saudi universities study several content courses before they start writing their thesis in the final year of study. This gives them exposure to the discourse of their discipline through extensive reading of theoretical and empirical works in the field. However, these students are not normally taught EAP courses in preparation for the writing of their MA dissertations.

All the texts belonged to the field of Applied linguistics. The English texts were randomly selected from the following international peer-reviewed journals: *Language Teaching Research*, *Reading in a Foreign Language*, *Applied Linguistics*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, *Reading Research Quarterly* and *Language Learning*. The Arabic texts were taken from academic journals published by Saudi universities. The issue of typicality of the texts is not taken to be of relevance as each text is "considered to be legitimate discourse within its intellectual field, given its publication in a reputable journal" (Hood 62). The genre selected for analysis was the introduction section of the research papers and theses.

To ensure reliability of the coding process, the corpora were analysed twice with a two-month interval between the two analyses. This is a method for establishing intra-rater reliability of analysis that has been adopted in the literature (e.g., Sultan).

Results

The analysis revealed important differences in the use of Attitude. The following sections provide the results on each Attitude category. Qualitative analysis will be supported by examples from the three corpora. The Arabic examples are translated into English and are italicised.

1. Frequency of Attitude in the Data

Table 4

Frequency and Average of Attitude in the Data

	No.	Mean
English	123	20.5
EFL	186	23.6
Arabic	231	33.2

Table 4 provides the total number of Attitude terms in the three sub-corpora. In the English corpus, there were 123 tokens with a mean score of 20.5. This indicates the importance of explicit Attitude in the construction of critical stance and the fact that English-speaking writers do not refrain from expressing their subjective assessments in demonstrating the worthiness of their research. However, their use of Attitude is relatively more constrained than it is in the other

groups. The EFL writers used 186 attitudinal terms with a mean score of 23.2, while the Arabic texts showed the highest frequency of Attitude with a total of 231, much more than the number of Attitude terms used by the English-speaking writers.

2. Types of Attitudes Used in the Data

Table 5

Types of Attitudes in the Data

	Affect		Judgment		Appreciation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
English	11	8.9	4	3.2	108	87.8
EFL	12	6.4	35	18.8	139	74.7
Arabic	26	11.2	24	10.3	181	78.3
Total	49		63		428	

Table 5 provides the frequency and percentage of each of the three sub-categories of Attitude. Clearly, Appreciation is the most dominant category encoded in the three groups of texts, with a total of 428 instances, compared to only 63 instances of Judgmental and only 49 instances of Affectual assessment. This pattern of use in which Appreciation dominates is said to be a feature of the argumentative genre (Lee).

The results also show that the degree of the dominance of Appreciation is not equal among the three groups, as Appreciation was the most important category in the English discourse. Conversely, Arabs, both EFL and experts, relied on Affect and Judgment. Both groups of Arab writers used Judgment often, 18.8% by EFL and 10.3% by Arab writers. This contrasts with only 3.2% in the case of the native English-speaking writers. Likewise, Arab writers encoded more than twice as many Affectual values compared to the native English writers, 26 and 11, respectively. The EFL writers, however, limit their use of this resource to only 6.4%, the lowest among the three groups.

3. Analysis of Affect

Table 6

Types of Affect in the Data

	Authorial		Non-authorial	
	No.	%	No.	%
English	3	18.1	8	81.8
EFL	2	16.6	10	83.3
Arabic	2	7.6	24	92.3
Total	7		42	

As table 6 exhibits, all three groups of writers preferred to encode non-authorial (N=42), rather than authorial (N=7), Affect. However, when writers encoded their own emotional responses, they tended to do so to achieve several purposes. First, writers used Affect to represent their hopes and aspirations concerning the expected outcomes of their research as in the two English and EFL examples in (1).

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| (1) | English | The current investigation was undertaken with the hope [Affect: Inclination +] of strengthening the claim ... |
| | EFL | It is hoped [Affect: Inclination +] that the present study would ... |

Also, writers used Affect to express the motivation that had led them to conduct the study under consideration as illustrated by the Arabic example in (2).

- (2) *This is what **encouraged** [Affect: Security +] the researcher to conduct the current study.*

Affectual values aid writers to position the readers attitudinally to view their work positively and to invite them to share the positive feelings that are expressed. By the use of the desiderative verb *hope*, for example, the writer conveys the idea that the expected outcomes of the study are desirable and that they are so substantial that there is a possibility for them not to be attained, hence the writer's hopes and aspirations.

Further, writers used authorial Affect to express their reactions concerning certain realities in the real world, part of what has been called in the previous discussion the topic-oriented field of discourse. Examples are given in (3) for each group of writers (the Arabic example here and throughout the paper are in translation):

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| (3) | English | It is unfortunate [Affect: Happiness -] that in so many EFL settings ... |
| | EFL | Fortunately [Affect: Happiness +], the Saudi government has realised ... |
| | Arabic | <i>we find – unfortunately [Affect: Happiness -], that the Arabic language programs ...</i> |

The two groups of expert writers in (3) used the emotionally negative expressions *unfortunate* and *unfortunately* to express their disappointment towards certain

problematic situations in the real world. By doing so, they indicated that their research is capable of alleviating the adversity of the described situations.

In addition to the expression of desires, hopes and intentions, and the evaluation of topic-oriented issues, even the research-oriented field was evaluated with Affect that expressed the writer's reaction towards previous research practices. However, this type of evaluation occurred only in the English data, reproduced here as example (4):

- (4) **Unfortunately** [Affect: Happiness +] ... the probable difference between L1 and L2 research is often overlooked.

The expression "unfortunately" in 4 is used in the context of establishing a gap in the literature by the negative evaluation or criticism of previous research. In this case, the writer criticised researchers who tended to overlook the difference between L1 and L2 contexts.

A stronger tendency in the data, however, was the use of non-authorial Affect. In this domain, Affective responses were attributed to other participants in the Applied linguistics community, e.g., students, teachers, administrators and even inanimate and semiotic things such as teaching methodologies and research topics. Examples of non-authorial Affect in the English and EFL data include the following in (5):

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|--|
| (5) | English | ... administrators and teachers are uncomfortable [Affect: Security +]
... fluency development and enjoyment [Affect: Happiness +] and confidence |
| | EFL | ... to overcome frustration [Affect: Happiness -] in their writing
Most students do not like [Affect: Happiness -] reading |

The Arab writers were the most Affectual writers. The emotions encoded in Arabic were predominantly those of students' happiness, security, desires and satisfaction, as example 6 illustrates.

- | | | |
|-----|---|------------------|
| (6) | <i>it's role in achieving meaningful</i> entertainment and fun | [Satisfaction +] |
| | <i>Using the dictionary kindles...</i> self-confidence | [Security +] |
| | <i>Reading satisfies students'</i> love for curiosity | [Happiness +] |
| | <i>The texts that they</i> like to read | [Happiness +] |

In all instances in (6) above, students' positive emotions contributed to the writer's general argumentative plan: they served to present the teaching

methodologies under consideration, and consequently, the writers' studies that were testing these methodologies, in a positive light to the reader.

4. Analysis of Judgment

The present data show that academic discourse does not utilise all of the sub-categories of Judgment. Only three subcategories were employed by the Arab writers, student and expert, and two by the Anglo writers, and not to the same degree cross-linguistically. The data also shows a predominance of Social Esteem over Social Sanction values for all three groups, a finding that is consistent with previous research (Wu and Allison; Lee; Liu). Social Esteem is more relevant than Social Sanction in the context of academic discourse because academic writers are concerned with participants' intellectual capacities rather than their morals or truthfulness.

Table 7
Judgment Resources in the Data

	Social Esteem				Social Sanction		Total
	Capacity		Tenacity		Propriety		
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
English	3	75	-	-	1	25	4
EFL	29	82.8	4	11.4	2	5.7	35
Arabic	16	66.6	3	12.5	5	20.8	24

As seen in Table 7, only four Judgmental terms were used by the English texts, which accounts for only 3.2% of the total number of Attitudinal terms used by these writers. This means that explicit judgments of behaviours were largely avoided by native English-speaking writers. When these writers used Judgment, however, they tended to perform two functions. First, they used Judgment to assess students' Capacity, as shown in example (7):

- (7) Learners... **failed** [Judgment: Capacity-] to achieve native-like proficiency...

Second, they used Judgment to assess the correctness or Propriety of previous researchers' practices. In example 8, the writer used [Propriety -] **overlook** to criticise previous researchers' behaviours.

- (8) The difference between L1 and L2 research is often **overlooked** [Judgment : Propriety-].

The English pattern of use of Judgment is similar to the one observed in the literature in which Anglo-American writers and advanced EFL student writers, use only Capacity and Propriety and avoid other values such as Veracity, Normality and Tenacity (Wu and Allison; Lee).

EFL writers were the most frequent users of Judgment. They, too, focused, but to a much greater degree than the English-speaking writers, on the participants' intellectual capacities such that certain phenomena were considered worthwhile because they allowed students to *communicate effectively*, to be *active in class* and to *behave autonomously* [Judgment: Capacity +]. Alternatively, other phenomena were negatively viewed because they led students to be *poor writers*, to have *linguistic flaws* or to *fail to express themselves clearly* [Judgment: Capacity -]. However, EFL writers did not limit themselves to the evaluation of the participants' intellectual capacities but also evaluated their personality traits and psychological dispositions by including values of Tenacity. Thus, the reader was invited to admire a given teaching methodology and, consequently, the writer's research that was applying it, because this methodology encouraged the students *to do their best*, to *cross personal boundaries* and to be *more social and extrovert* [Judgment: Tenacity +].

Similar to EFL writers, the Arab writers also employed explicit Judgment as a persuasive strategy. Further, they expanded the scope of their Judgment to include not only students' Capacity and Tenacity, but also teachers' behaviours and intellectual capacities, as shown in table 8.

Table 8
Judgment in Arabic Discourse

Students' behaviours	<i>a skillful student</i>	[Capacity +]
	<i>creative students</i>	[Capacity +]
	<i>he faces all difficulties with all determination</i>	[Tenacity +]
Teachers' behaviours	<i>a teacher with high educational and linguistic competences and exalted professional capabilities</i>	[Capacity +]
	<i>... which makes him a role model for the students</i>	[Propriety +]

5. Analysis of Appreciation

The English texts are more Appreciative than the other two types of texts. Examples from the data demonstrates that English-speaking writers preferred to encode Attitude as Appreciation where it was possible to encode it either as Affect or Judgment. For example, in criticising traditional reading methodologies

and praising other alternatives investigated by the writers, the propositions in table 9 were produced in the three sub-corpora.

Table 9
Appreciation in the Data

English	Students learn language by doing relevant [Appreciation: Valuation +], engaging [Appreciation: Reaction +] and hands-on [Appreciation: Valuation +] pedagogic tasks. Students'... discovery that they can read in the second language and that is rewarding [Appreciation: Reaction +] and pleasurable [Appreciation: Reaction +]
EFL	Students do not like [Affect: Happiness -] reading classes nor have an interest [Affect: Satisfaction -] in reading a selected passage.
Arabic	<i>The students choose texts that they like [Affect: Happiness +] ... in accordance with their interests [Affect: Happiness +], preferences [Affect: Satisfaction +] and needs [Affect: Inclination +]</i>

Instead of encoding Affect, which is the most subjective category in Attitude (White and Martin), the English-speaking writers in table 9 preferred to background emotions and present the evaluation as an intrinsic, objective quality of the thing being appraised, namely the “tasks” that are used in class and the students’ “discovery” that they can read. In this way, the emotions *like*, *do not like*, *preferences*, *interest* and *needs* are reworked as institutionalised sets of qualities which are *relevant*, *engaging*, *rewarding* and *pleasurable*.

Similarly, English-speaking writers preferred to encode Appreciative values instead of Judgmental ones when the meaning concerned the students’ linguistic development or lack of development in language classes. Thus, the English examples in 9 speak of the nature of students’ skills or knowledge:

- (9) ... the development of **strong** reading skills [Appreciation: Valuation +]
Extensive reading... a good method for L2 learners to **improve vocabulary** [Appreciation: Valuation +]

EFL writers, on the other hand, write about the development of the *learners* themselves, rather than their skills or knowledge, resulting in the expression of Judgmental instead of Appreciative values, as shown in example (10):

- (10) Students can **evolve as readers** [Judgment: Capacity +]

The writing workshop method helps students **develop as writers** [Judgment: Capacity +]
 They join their colleges as **poor** writers [Judgment: Capacity -]
Students with linguistic flaws can be **improved** [Judgment: Capacity +]

Similarly, classroom interaction according to the English-speaking texts develops L2 competence, which is a semiotic thing, hence, Appreciation, as in example (11).

(11) Interaction may facilitate **L2 development** [Appreciation: Valuation +]

By contrast, in the EFL texts, interaction was praised because it developed the students themselves, hence, Judgment, as in example (12).

(12) The opportunities of discussion make **students communication-orientated** [Judgment: Capacity +]
 The role plays students assume... are likely to make **them effective** in social communication [Judgment: Capacity +].

Additionally, within the sub-system of Appreciation itself, there can also be different meaning options leading to different degrees of objectivity. This is elucidated by table 10:

Table 10
 Sub-types of Appreciation in the Data

	Reaction		Composition		Valuation	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
English	6	5.5	24	22.2	78	72.2
EFL	10	7.1	23	16.5	106	76.2
Arabic	10	5.5	38	20.9	133	73.4
Total	26		132		317	

Firstly, table 10 shows that all three groups tended to use higher proportions of Valuation (total N= 317) than Reaction (total N=26). Only the English-speaking writers, however, used Valuation to comment on (1) significance of issues, (2) usefulness of issues and (3) the truthfulness of claims and validity of practices in the literature. The Arab and EFL writers, on the other hand, used Valuation to evaluate usefulness and significance of issues only. The difference is exemplified in table 11.

Table 11
Use of Valuation in the Data

Valuated Aspects	English	EFL	Arabic
Significance	two key issues; important language skill	The major goals of teaching; learning English has become a necessity	<i>Primarily for cultural reasons</i>
Usefulness	Extensive reading is a practical way; Certain types are more effective	It is also helpful to examine; Based on the benefits of the writing workshop	<i>The inappropriateness of these tests</i>
Validity and truthfulness of claims and practices	this may not be true for EFL learners; empirical support is relatively robust ; making comparisons between these two bodies of research questionable ; comparisons may not have been valid	-	-

EFL writers were the most frequent users of Reaction, with Reaction values achieving 7.1% of the frequency of Attitude in the EFL discourse as compared to 5.5% in both groups of expert writers. This is in line with previous research which found that ESL student writers in general (Hood) and poor ESL writers (Lee), particularly, employ more Reaction constructions than expert Anglo-American writers and successful ESL writers. As Lee pointed out, the choice to appraise entities with Reaction by student writers contributes to the construction

of a more subjective voice and spoken mode in their texts than is attested in published discourse (278).

6. Polarity and Robustness of Attitude

Polarity of evaluation refers to whether the attitudinal terms that are used in texts are positive or negative in nature. Table 12 gives the frequency of each.

Table 12
Polarity of Attitude in the Data

	Affect		Judgment		Appreciation	
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
	No %	No %	No %	No %	No %	No %
English	7 63.6	4 36.3	-	4 100	83 76.6	25 23.1
EFL	4 33.3	8 66.6	15 42.8	20 57.1	89 64	50 35.9
Arabic	24 92.3	2 7.6	21 87.5	3 12.5	130 72	50 27.6

As shown in Table 12, differences occur between the expert writers, English and Arabs, on the one hand, and the EFL writers, on the other hand. Among expert writers, positive values dominated. The English-speaking writers encoded a majority of positive values of Affect, 63.6%, and Appreciation, 76.8%. It is true that the negativity of the Judgmental items expressed by the English-speaking writers achieved the frequency of 100%, but the total number of Judgmental items in this group (only 4) was highly scarce and, therefore, did not affect the overall positive orientation of the authorial stance. Similarly, the Arab writers encoded a majority of positive Affectual (92.3%), Judgmental (87.5%) and Appreciative values (71.8%). The finding that positive evaluation dominates in expert discourse has been attested in the literature. Hood, for example, maintains that “corpora studies of polarity confirm a likely intuitive appreciation that negative polarity is the marked choice, with discourse in general being overwhelmingly constructed in the positive” (77).

In contrast to the expert discourse, the EFL writers preferred negative polarity. In Affect and Judgment, the negative values, 66.6% and 57.1%, respectively, clearly outnumber positive ones. In Appreciation, the positive values (64%) are more than the negative ones (35.9%), but still the negativity encoded by the EFL writers (N=50) is greater than that of their English-speaking counterparts (N=25). The predominance of negative values in EFL discourse gives a sense of what Samraj calls a “crisis” strategy (47). In this strategy, writers tend to “portray the dire state of affairs” and “highlight a problem” in a “highly negative” way to enhance the importance of their research and justify it. Table 13 gives examples of this strategy from the student data (Attitude is in bold while intensifiers, or boosters, are underlined):

Table 13
Crisis Strategy in EFL Discourse

A	B
<p>The English propositional system is a problem area for learners of English.... With reference to the Saudi context this argument wins a <u>widespread</u> agreement as a result of research that investigated those areas which represent problems to Saudi learners of English... those areas which are assumed to create problems for such students are ranked. As a result of the <u>high frequency</u> of proposition errors, prepositions are usually believed to be difficult to learn by the participants. ... Meziani (1984)... concluded that “Prepositions are a <u>serious</u> problem to foreign language learners of English.” Jimenez (1996)... pointed out that “English prepositions must be considered as a difficult area because of the <u>high frequency</u> of preposition errors.”</p>	<p>Since the use of discourse markers is problematic for <u>many</u> EFL learners, this study focused on the use of DMs... to investigate problems that were related to the overuse-underuse in their writings. EFL learners’ knowledge of the semantic functions of discourse markers and their stylistic inappropriateness were among the problematic areas that required more attention.</p>

Column A in table 13 gives part of the first two paragraphs from an EFL text and column B provides the last paragraph from another EFL text in the data. In these two short extracts alone, different forms of the words *problem*, *difficult* and *inappropriate* appeared ten times, while each of these words occurred only once in the entire English corpus. EFL writers also tend to overstress the adversity of the problems they describe through the amplification of the negativity with boosters such as *serious*, *high frequency*, *many* and *widespread*.

In referring back to Table 12 above, the polarity in the discourse of both groups of expert writers is dominantly positive. However, there are marked differences between the Arabic and English texts in terms of the extent to which they encode these positive Attitudes, or, in other words, the extent to which the positiveness is dense, repetitive or frequent. The Arab writers sometimes tended to overstress the “positiveness” of their opinions through the use of repetition. Examples of repetition of Attitudes in the Arabic texts are given in table 14.

Table 14
 Repetition of Attitudes in Arabic discourse

A
<p>... the importance [Appreciation: Valuation +] of <i>autonomy</i> has increased greatly in education.... It has become among the wide-spread and important [Appreciation: Valuation +] issues, and among the hot [Appreciation: Valuation+] questions that preoccupied [Appreciation: Reaction +] theorists for more than three decades of time. It had a big role in the restructuring of the educational views.... <i>Autonomy</i> now is a sonorous [Appreciation: Reaction +] word that has great resonance [Appreciation: Reaction +] in the field. This study aims to clarify the concept of learner autonomy and its importance [Appreciation: Valuation +]</p>
B
<p>From here the importance [Appreciation: Valuation +] of reading stems as it helps to keep pace with global developments.... Reading is... the most important [Appreciation: Valuation +] means of communication.... It also provides them with the best [Appreciation: Valuation +] forms of human experiences.... Reading is among the most important [Appreciation: Valuation +] factors leading to cultural convergence.... Free reading is one of the important [Appreciation: Valuation +] literacy activities to which educators have started to pay attention recently because of its great importance [Appreciation: Valuation +] in filling leisure time in a beneficial [Appreciation: Valuation +] way.... Free reading is also one of the important [Appreciation: Valuation +] linguistic skills in foreign language learning and teaching</p>

In these two extracts alone, the word *importance* and its different forms, appeared nine times to evaluate the same two entities (i.e., free reading and learner autonomy), while the English equivalents *important* and *importance* appeared only four times in the entire English corpus. The amplification of the degree of evaluation by the use of boosters in these two extracts is also immediately recognisable. This points to the strong inclination of Arab writers towards repeating the same evaluation of the same entity several times with almost every instance being amplified in force. A somewhat comparable case in the English discourse is present in example (13) below:

- (13) a. TBLT has **enjoyed** [Affect: Happiness +] considerable **interest** [Appreciation: Reaction +] from researchers.... Yet, as noted by Long (2007)... there are still **challenges** [Appreciation: Valuation -] and areas in need of further research...

- b. Reading is perhaps the most **important** [Appreciation: Valuation +] language skill... Given its **importance** [Appreciation: Valuation +], it is **unfortunate** [Affect: Happiness -] that... teachers and administrators remain so heavily invested...

The two extracts above, 13 (a) and (b), represent the same generic move as that exhibited in the two Arabic extracts in Table 14. This generic move is called *Establishing a Territory* (Swales) and it is the move in which writers establish the centrality of the issue they are investigating. But in contrast to the density of the positive evaluation of the issues in the Arabic texts, the English texts in 13 (a) and (b) kept the positive evaluation to a minimum (only two positive Attitudinal items in each case) before moving to encode negative values to criticise limitations in the literature or limitations in the practical domain.

7. Analysis of Appraised Entities

There are two means to analyse the entities that are appraised in discourse: a micro-analysis of every phenomenon associated with an appraising term and a macro-analysis of the ideational fields that contain evaluation. The first type of analysis, micro-analysis, is covered in section 7.1 below, while the macro-analysis is taken up in 7.2.

7.1. Micro-Analysis of Appraised Entities

One distinction that has been perceived to occur in the present data, and that has not been made elsewhere in the literature, holds between isolated versus integral appraised entities. This distinction obtains between entities that are directly related to the main theme of the text (integral entities) and ones that are not directly related (isolated entities). The analysis revealed that the EFL writers may allot parts of their texts to evaluate entities that are isolated and almost unrelated to the main themes of their research papers. An example is the text given in table 15. It is taken from a thesis that starts with the title *Vocabulary Range and Frequency in First Intermediate Girl's English Textbook in Saudi Arabia: Learners' Achievement and Strategies*. Conventionally, the noun or verb nominalisation that appears at the beginning of the title of a research paper indicates this paper's main theme (Yakhontova, "Cultural and Disciplinary Variation"). Therefore, the student's title above sets the reader's expectation that the thesis will start by discussing the significance of vocabulary acquisition, the significance of including specific kinds of words at this pedagogical level, or the significance of the process of textbook assessment. None of these potential areas, however, was tackled by the writer who chose, instead, to engage with a much broader and self-evident topic such as the status of English in Saudi Arabia. The writer encoded 12 isolated evaluations that did not serve any of her research goals.

Table 15
Isolated Evaluation in Students' Data

	Appraising item	Affect	Judge ment	Appreciation	Appraised items
1.	A crucial role			valuation+	English language in Saudi Arabia
2.	Its utility is most evident			valuation+	//
3.	is most evident			composition +	//
4.	plays an undoubtful role			valuation+	//
5.	important means of communication			valuation+	//
6.	Fortunately,	happiness +			Authorial affect
7.	The status of English as the lingua franca			valuation+	English language
8.	Saudi government... persistent		tenacity +		Saudi Government
9.	The best example			valuation+	Saudi government's concern with the language
10.	The Ministry of Education has modernised			valuation+	Curriculum developed by the Ministry of education
11.	One of the major goals of teaching English			valuation+	Goals

In the case of the Arab expert writers, this tendency seems to be also acceptable, for there is explicit evidence in the data that demonstrates that isolated evaluation is tolerated in the Arabic Applied linguistics community. This comes from the text in example 14 in which a substantial portion of the introduction (691 words),

with 47 instances of evaluation, is allotted to discuss the importance and benefits of *free electronic reading* only to conclude with the following assertion:

- (14) *the present study does not aim to demonstrate the benefits of free reading... as the previous literature has covered this area. Rather, this study aims to investigate the students' attitudes...*

By contending that the purpose of the study is not to demonstrate the benefits of free reading, the writer admits that the discussion of these benefits has been digressive rather than integral to the main purposes of the study.

7.2 Macro-Analysis of Appraised Entities

Table 17

Distribution of Attitude According to Field

	Research-oriented Field		Topic-oriented Field	
	No.	%	No.	%
English	29	24.1	91	75.8
EFL	14	7.9	162	92
Arabic	33	14.8	189	85.1

Table 17 presents data of Attitudes in the research-oriented field and topic-oriented field in the three groups. The data shows that the English-speaking writers expressed the highest frequency of Attitude in the research-oriented field (24.1%) whereas the same type of Attitude was less dominant in the Arabic discourse (14.8%) and least so in that of the EFL writers (7.9%). This indicates that one of the important purposes of evaluation in English academic discourse is to express the writer's opinions concerning his/her and others' empirical contributions to the field.

Another systematic pattern concerns the functions of Attitude in the research-oriented field. In the English research-oriented field, Attitude had two functions: (1) the positive evaluations of one's research, the issue being investigated or the kind of evidence available in the literature, and (2) the negative evaluation of deficiencies in the literature. However, in the case of EFL discourse, no single instance of negative Attitude was encoded to criticise aspects in the research-oriented field. All Attitudes in the EFL research-oriented field evaluated the writer's research and the significance of the issue being investigated. Additionally, not all EFL writers encoded such positive Attitudes in their research-oriented fields. Specifically, while all six English-speaking writers expressed Attitudes towards aspects of research, only four, out of eight, EFL writers managed to do so. As for the Arab writers, there was also a strong tendency to extensively utilise Attitude to praise the writer's research and the issue

under consideration. Conversely, very few instances, only 5, were employed by the Arab writers to criticise the research-oriented field and these came from only two writers in the corpus. Examples of the functions of research-oriented Attitude are presented in table 18.

Table 18: Functions of Research-oriented Attitude

	Positive evaluation of			Negative evaluation of the literature
	the reported research	the issue investigated	evidence from literature	
English	-The present study was designed to advance... -To remedy that situation, further research to clarify and provide empirical evidence is needed -It is imperative that the effect be clarified	-TBLT has enjoyed considerable interest from researchers of second language acquisition	-Empirical support for the developmental stages is relatively robust	-this definition... may not be true for EFL learners -making comparisons between these two bodies of research questionable -Previous comparisons ... may not have been valid
EFL	-With the development of the new English curriculum, it is important to see whether... -It is also helpful to examine the	The linguistic and nonlinguistic treatments introduced by reading conference make it valuable for study and investigation		

	learner's side of the problem			
Arabic	<i>Hopefully, the present study... gives bright glimpses about the most prominent aspects</i>	<i>the most important issue that attracted the researcher's attention</i>		<i>Pers (1994) has reservations about the appropriateness of the GPA</i>

As with regards to the use of Attitude in the topic-oriented field, Table 17 shows that exactly the opposite pattern obtains, namely, the EFL writers were the most common users of Attitude in the topic-oriented field (92%), followed by the Arab writers (85.1%) and finally the English-speaking writers (75.8%). The English-speaking writers did indicate the importance of the topic but seemed to simultaneously be judicious concerning the amount of Attitude that appeared. The EFL writers, by contrast, seemed to equate writer authority and persuasiveness with the preponderance of explicit Attitude about the topic: the more Attitude is encoded, the more persuasive the text would end up to be.

Discussion

The analysis has revealed significant cross-cultural differences in both *how* Attitude is used and in *what* it is used to appraise. First, the two groups of Arab writers, one writing in English and the other in Arabic, made more frequent use of Attitude in general and also utilised the strategy of repeating the same Attitude to make their opinions more salient and compelling. Conversely, the use of Attitude in the English discourse was more constrained and subtle. This finding is consistent with Sultan who maintained that “Arab writers are more inclined towards using attitude markers in their writings in comparison to their English colleagues” (37). Consistently, Hyland notes that “the choice of attitude expressions for [English-speaking] academics is constrained and shaped by disciplinary practice” (“Undergraduate Understandings” 147).

With regards to the types of Attitude, specific patterns were shown by the three groups of writers, with the English-speaking writers being the most Appreciative, the Arabic writers being the most Affectual and the EFL writers being the most Judgmental. In relation to expert discourse, this indicates the cultural emphasis of different social values even within the same academic discipline. This seems to provide an insight in response to Oteiza’s call for investigating how different communities legitimise and delegitimise specific value systems: English-speaking writers construct a readership that is engaged in an

appreciative, conceptual analysis of *things*, while the readers of Arabic discourse are construed as being interested to a larger degree in *people* and *their emotions*. On the other hand, the pattern of EFL preference indicates that the EFL stance was not exclusively affected by either of the two cultures involved.

The English-speaking writers emphasised both topic-oriented and research-oriented issues. The macro rhetorical strategy in this community appeared to be *positioning one's research in relation to research by others*. Previous corpus-based and quantitative studies suggest that writers of English academic discourse are more directed towards placing their work within a disciplinary context through a careful reference to and critical review of previous research than writers of academic discourse in other languages such as Russian (Khoutyz), French (Flottum), Russian and Ukrainian (Yakhontova), and Persian (Taki and Jafarpour). The present study lends support to this finding by indicating that this is also the case when English academic discourse is compared to that in Arabic.

In contrast, the two groups of Arab writers evaluated the topic-oriented field to a stronger extent. The dominance of the topic as an ideational field seems to be motivated by the aim to justify the research. Parallel to the English-speaking writers' strategy of extending knowledge by criticising the literature, the Arab writers attempted to justify their research by emphasising how important the topic is.

Further differences occurred concerning the robustness of evaluation. Attitude was more robust in the discourse produced by the Arab writers as a result of the repetition of the same Attitudinal terms. A case in point concerned, particularly, the repetition of the term "importance" and its different lexical forms. In fact, the Arab writers' emphasis of this particular word in their academic discourse has also been attested by Al-Ali and Sahawneh who observed the repeated use of the noun "importance" in the Arabic PhD abstracts. Al-Qahtani also noted the repetitiveness of the Arabs' claims of importance and the fact that these claims were used instead of the generic move where the Anglo-American writers would indicate a gap in the literature.

The present analysis also revealed that the EFL discourse is characterised by certain regularities that could not be attributed to culture-specific influences. These idiosyncrasies included the use of isolated evaluation and the evaluative *crisis* strategy.

Isolated evaluation indicates that students tend to discuss redundant and irrelevant information. When the information that is evaluated is primarily redundant and irrelevant, the evaluation turns to be "wasted" (Swain) or "abused" (Guinda). In this case, the writers give the impression of argumentativeness as a result of constructing an Attitudinal stance towards certain entities and issues discussed in the text, but in reality, they are not engaged in any authentic argumentation because the entities that they appraise do not serve any of their

research objectives and, accordingly, are not related to any of the ongoing academic debates in their fields of study.

Finally, EFL writers tend to use the evaluative crisis strategy more than their expert counterparts. The EFL writers highlighted a problem in the real-world to the extent of imbuing negativity to the entire text or significant portions of it. This strategy might arguably result from the Arabs' tendency towards repeating meanings for emphatic and persuasive purposes. Alternatively, this tendency may have resulted from the students' underlying awareness of the requirement to address a certain problem in their research. But instead of problematising the research-oriented field to establish a niche in it, they problematised the topic-oriented field or the real-world context.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study provides evidence that the construction of authorial stance through the expression of Attitude is a socio-culturally situated process. This corroborates the finding that cultural differences “permeate the world of science” (Mauranen 157) and that the “rhetorical strategies that authors adopt to persuade the community are culturally differentiated” (Koutsantoni 102).

The present study also shows that the Saudi EFL students' use of Attitude diverges from the way this system is conventionally used in the target discourse community. More importantly, however, is the finding that the EFL use of Attitude does not fully mirror the use exhibited by the Arabic-speaking writers (despite some important similarities between the two). Therefore, the EFL evaluative stance seems to instantiate what Yakhontova calls “intergenres” (“‘Selling’ or ‘Telling’” 231), as an analogy of the well-known concept “interlanguage” (Selinker 209-32). Intergenres are “indefinite and transitional texts that are different from the other two groups” and they involve an “eclectic and even eccentric blend of different features coexisting in one text” (Yakhontova, “‘Selling’ or ‘Telling’” 231). These features seem to originate from the influence of the two cultures involved and also from the student writers' lack of familiarity with the rhetorical conventions utilised in the target discourse community.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations might be offered to novice EFL academics as well as EAP instructors in tertiary academic institutions. Novice writers must be made aware of target audience expectations and the target rules and conventions of attitudinal stance construction. This can be achieved through explicit instruction of the L1-L2 rhetorical contrasts with a focus on sustained exposure to target models of the genre in question. Exposure also needs to be accompanied with textual analysis of the models provided so as to sensitise students to how native writers employ the lexicogrammatical resources of the language to argue for their research and to position readers attitudinally.

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