

## Book Review

*Stance devices in tourism-related research articles: A corpus-based study*. Series: Linguistic Insights, Volume 292.

Francisco J. Álvarez-Gil

Peter Lang, 2022. 170 pages.

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Authored by Francisco J. Álvarez-Gil, *Stance devices in tourism-related research articles: A corpus-based study* (Peter Lang, 2022) is a recently published corpus-based work that sets out to assess the occurrence and purpose of stance markers in research articles focused on the field of tourism. In academic writing, the concept of 'stance' is typically concerned with the author's perspective or viewpoint on a particular topic. This includes the author's ideas, attitudes, and reasoning concerning the information given, as well as the supporting evidence and arguments put forth to back up any claims made. Establishing a clear and well-defined perspective is crucial when writing research articles, as it helps to establish the author's credibility, adopted stance, opposing viewpoints and arguments, and contributes to promoting further academic discussion and debate. The focus on stance is clearly grounded in the view of language as a functional system, emphasizing the purposes for which language is used.



The exploration of stance devices goes beyond the realms of language pragmatics and research papers as a genre, as it also has practical implications for tourism professionals (Álvarez-Gil & Domínguez-Morales, 2021, 2018). Understanding how stance is established can aid professionals in adjusting their language to align with their organization's values and commitment to specific issues, such as responsible tourism, which includes sustainability and cultural sensitivity. By utilizing stance markers in their communication, tourism professionals can effectively communicate their stance and demonstrate their dedication to these issues. Additionally, understanding the needs of their customers and stakeholders is crucial, and the use of stance markers can assist in establishing a connection with these groups. Therefore, the study of stance devices can provide valuable insights to tourism professionals in the development of effective communication strategies that are aligned with their organization's values and priorities.

Álvarez-Gil provides a comprehensive analysis of the use of stance devices in tourism research articles in a volume which is divided into seven chapters, each of which explores different aspects of stance devices and their use in academic writing, including the introduction and the conclusion. The author draws on corpus linguistics to conduct his analysis, using a large dataset of tourism research articles to provide a detailed and evidence-based account of how stance devices are used in this field. Chapter 1 provides an introduction to the concept of stance and the importance of its study in academic writing. Álvarez-Gil argues that stance is a crucial component of academic writing because it reflects the author's position and attitude towards their research topic. The chapter also outlines the research questions and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 presents a review of the literature on stance and academic writing. The author examines previous research on stance and identifies gaps in the literature that his study aims to address. In this chapter, the author provides a comprehensive overview of the various definitions of 'stance' put forth by scholars such as Biber et al. (1999), Hyland (2005), Johnstone (2009), and Dzung Pho (2013), among others. Despite

the extensive body of literature on the topic, there remains no unified definition of 'stance' in academic discourse. This lack of consensus stems from the multifaceted nature of stance, which can include the author's beliefs, attitudes, values, and evaluation of a given topic, as well as the linguistic devices used to convey these elements. Therefore, the varying definitions of 'stance' presented in the chapter demonstrate the complex and multifaceted nature of the concept and highlight the need for further research to establish a more cohesive understanding of stance in academic discourse.

In Chapter 3, the author details the methodology used in his study and outlines the corpus linguistics approach utilized in analyzing the data, thus providing an overview of the process of creating the corpus of tourism research articles. Additionally, Álvarez-Gil explains the annotation scheme employed to identify and analyze stance devices in the corpus. The chapter also delves into the similarities and differences between the three schools of genres, namely New Rhetoric, English for Specific Purposes, and Systemic Functional Linguistics. The author then focuses on the methods used to explore the rhetorical macrostructure of the corpus, which comprised 74 research articles published in journals between 2015 and 2018. Drawing on the works of Biber (1988), Swales (1990), Halliday, and Martin (1993), Gotti (2012), among others, he demonstrates how writers in the field of tourism use stance devices to convey their perspectives and persuade their readers.

The analysis reveals that despite the wide variety of styles and purposes in tourism research articles, linguistic cues repeat and follow a consistent textual structure comprising of six stages. While this finding may not come as a surprise, it is noteworthy for language and tourism researchers due to the absence of previous studies on tourism research articles and the high degree of variability in tourism texts. Another significant finding presented in this chapter is the correlation between authorial involvement in some stages of the research article and the length of the text.

Overall, Chapter 3 offers a comprehensive overview of the methodology used in the study and highlights the significance of the findings for both language and tourism

researchers. By showcasing the consistent textual structure of stance devices in tourism research articles, Álvarez-Gil's work provides a valuable contribution to the field of tourism research and lays the groundwork for future studies on the topic.

Furthermore, Álvarez-Gil identifies a significant difference in the frequency of stance devices between the introduction and discussion sections of the research articles. He notes that in the introduction section, the use of hedging devices is more prevalent, while the use of boosters and epistemic modality is more frequent in the discussion section. The author suggests that this difference may be due to the diverse purposes of the two sections. The introduction section typically aims to present the background and objectives of the research and to establish a context for the study, while the discussion section is focused on the interpretation and discussion of the results.

In addition, the study reveals that the use of stance devices varies depending on the sub-discipline within the field of tourism. For example, the use of evidentiality is more prevalent in articles on heritage tourism, while the use of boosters is more frequent in articles on tourism marketing. These findings suggest that the use of stance devices is not only influenced by the rhetorical purpose of the text but also by the specific content and sub-discipline of the research.

Another important finding of the study is the relationship between the author's institutional affiliation and the use of stance devices. Álvarez-Gil notes that the authors affiliated with universities in Anglophone countries tend to use more boosters and epistemic modality, while authors those affiliated with universities in non-Anglophone countries tend to use more hedging devices. The author suggests that this difference may be due to the cultural norms and expectations of academic writing in different countries and language communities.

This being said, the book makes a significant contribution to the field of applied linguistics and corpus linguistics by providing a comprehensive analysis of stance devices in a specific genre. The methodology and coding scheme used in the study could serve as a useful framework for future studies of stance devices in other genres

and disciplines. In addition, the book highlights the importance of considering the cultural and institutional context in the analysis of language use, as these factors can have a significant impact on the communicative strategies employed by writers.

In conclusion, *Stance devices in tourism-related research articles* is a well-researched and informative book that offers valuable insights into the use of stance devices in tourism research articles. The findings of the study have important implications for both researchers and practitioners in the field of tourism, and the methodology used in the study could serve as a useful framework for future research in applied linguistics and corpus linguistics. Overall, this book is a valuable contribution to the study of language use in academic writing and an essential reading for anyone interested in the language of tourism research articles.

Another strength of the book is its clear and accessible writing style. Despite its technical subject matter, the book is well-written and easy to follow. One potential weakness of the book is its narrow focus on tourism research articles. While this focus allows Álvarez-Gil to provide a detailed analysis of the use of stance devices in this field, it also limits the generalizability of the findings. It would be interesting to see how the findings of this study compare to other fields of academic.

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