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Expressing an evaluative stance in English and Malay research article conclusions: International publications versus local publications

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Abstract

This paper constitutes a multidimensional explanation of an integration of genre-based knowledge and evaluative stance in the context of academic arguments employed in the conclusion sections of English and Malay research articles. For this purpose, it draws on an analysis of the features in Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003) integrated with an analysis of communicative purposes within a genre analysis framework (Swales, 1990, 2004). Among others, the findings include the observation that evaluative and dialogic stances jointly produce rhetorical effects in both English and Malay conclusions. English conclusions contain a subtle balance of assertion and mitigation while Malay conclusions tend to contract dialogic space and thus could be interpreted as less reader-friendly. This suggests that evaluation and the meaning potential of the genre are experienced and valued differently by scholars publishing in these two different scientific communities (international and local). This variation seems to be due to linguistic, contextual, and potential social cultural influences within the two academic discourse communities. The present study has pedagogical implications in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom.

1. Introduction

It is attested in the literature that there is a lack of stance in student academic writing (Hood, 2004; Hyland & Milton, 1997) and many are unaware of the nature and function of argument as an academic genre (Groom, 2000). This could be due to the linguistic and rhetorical differences between second language (L2) learners and their native-speaker counterparts (Hyland, 2006, Silva, 1993) as well as an ineffective and inadequate English as Second Language (ESL) pedagogy approach in preparing student writers to achieve an evaluative stance in presenting their work (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011). Such a problem has called for more thoughtful pedagogical interventions to assist ESL students tackle academic writing. This paper thus constitutes a pedagogically motivated and multidimensional explanation of an integration of genre-based knowledge and evaluative stance in the context of academic argument by drawing on the genre analysis framework (Swales, 1990, 2004) and the Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003) respectively. These two aspects (genre-based knowledge and evaluative stance) are inter-related as 'social

rhetorical practices' are enacted in or through discourse (Bhatia, 1993, 1997; Hood, 2004, p. 24; Hyland, 1998; Swales 1990, 2004). As Hood (2004, p. 26) aptly put it, "in reading social practices, we are reading texts".

On a similar note, Chang and Schleppegrell (2011) noted that the rhetorical moves and steps generally propose rhetorical guidelines for academic writing and these discursive activities are closely tied to the presentation of an author's stance. In their study, they examined the introduction sections of research articles. By drawing on one of the three dimensions in the Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005), which is the Engagement network, they illustrated the different approaches to the introductions sections of research articles in connection with their rhetorical purposes. Similar to Chang and Schleppegrell's (2011) study, we look at how linguistic resources co-articulate with each other to produce the writers' rhetorical effects. Responding to their suggestions for future studies, this study complements/extends theirs in the following ways. Firstly, the focus of the present study is on the conclusion sections of research articles from two different languages (English and Malay). Secondly, the present study looks into all the three dimensions available within Appraisal theory, namely Attitude, Graduation and Engagement options. Thirdly, unlike their study, which is qualitative, the present study is both qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative data tabulates statistics for the functional moves (Swales, 1990 & 2004) and the options available within the Appraisal framework (Martin & Rose, 2003) to illustrate how stance is used in connection with their rhetorical purposes (see the methodology section for further details).

Another study which is worthy of mention here is Hood's (2004) work in examining the stance-taking by published writers and student writers using the Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003). She found that published writers used more linguistic resources relating to the Appreciation kind of Attitude to evaluate findings while student writers constructed their texts as more personal and subjective by using Affect and Judgment Attitudes. In her study, she incorporated the resources of Attitude and Graduation to reconfigure the Engagement network as one of Alignment. In her Alignment network, she demonstrated that the observer's voice role is used by writers to evaluate aspects related to domain while the researcher's voice role is used to evaluate aspects related to the writer's own research.

On a separate note, Love and Arkoudis's (2006) study constituted an explanation of stances not in the context of academic writing but professional discussion by teachers in an Australian school. Similarly, they drew on the Appraisal theory (Martin, 1995) as their analysis framework to illustrate a range of opinions, attitudes and positions that teachers adopt towards Chinese international students by situating the discussions in a single case study context. Love and Arkoudis (2006) made an interesting comment with regard to the stances adopted by some teachers. They held that such stances are the realization of the gender expectations of the teachers' culture, namely that "women are conversationally supportive while men are more conversationally performative" (Eggins, 1994) (as cited in Love & Arkoudis, 2006, p. 274).

As we can see from the studies reviewed above, to the best of our knowledge, there has not been a published work relating to stance-taking in Malay research articles. Besides filling this gap in the literature, the need for undertaking the present study has, to a certain extent, been motivated by the following reasons (in addition to the pedagogically-motivated reason stated in the earlier part of this section). Firstly, it is

related to the increasing importance of the conclusion section of a research article over time. According to Hopkins and Dudley Evans (1988, p.119), there may have been a 'marked shift away from unevaluated reporting to lengthy and explicit writer comment' in research articles. Their claim was based on the findings that since 1930 there had been a relative decline in the importance of the methods and equipment sections of research articles, when compared with the discussion and conclusion sections. Secondly, fewer studies (e.g. Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Kobayashi, 2003; Posteguillo, 1999; Weissburg & Buker, 1990) have looked at the conclusion section compared to the introduction section (e.g. Hirano, 2009; Lim, 2012; Samraj, 2002) and the Results section (e.g. Brett, 1994; Lim, 2010; Williams, 1999).

This paper explicates a range of rhetorical strategies employed by academic writers of English and Malay research articles in concluding their studies. It also demonstrates how different evaluative stances have been employed to realize these strategies by drawing on an analysis of the features in Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003) integrated with the analysis of communicative purposes within the genre analysis framework (Swales, 1990, 2004) (see the methodology section for the description of the two frameworks). From the pedagogical perspective, a functional model which has emerged from the present analysis provides insights and resources for ESL writing instructors and Malay ESL learners in the English for Academic Purposes (EAP) classroom with regard to Appraisal options that can be used to produce compelling and yet persuasive rhetorical effects in academic prose (see Table 4 in Appendix). In general, the purpose of the present study is therefore twofold: (i) to investigate the genre structure of English and Malay research article conclusions in terms of *moves* and *steps* using Swales's (1990, 2004) notion of genre analysis and (ii) to explore the evaluative stance by drawing on Martin & Rose's (2003) model of Appraisal. The major research questions addressed in the present study are:

i. What are the rhetorical strategies used in English and Malay research article conclusions in terms of rhetorical *moves* and *steps*?

ii. What are the similarities and differences between the two sets of conclusions in the use of Attitude, Graduation and Engagement options within Appraisal theory?

iii. In constructing the writers' stances, how do Attitude, Graduation and Engagement options co-articulate with each other to produce the rhetorical effects in (i)?

2. Methodology

The corpora have been selected from a single discipline as there is a possibility that any observed differences may be due to differences in the discipline of the texts (Cominos, 2011). The selected research articles are from the field of psychology. The reason for the choice of the discipline represented in this study is that the discipline is among the fields the researchers are most familiar with. Having a fair background in the field has facilitated the reading and interpretation of its research articles. A total of 40 research article conclusions (20 from each corpus) published between 2009 and 2014 were randomly chosen from the selected journals.The data was limited to empirical research articles. Articles which consisted of reviews and (re)interpretations of previous research were excluded. As there might be some differences due to the requirements of the individual journals, conformity with the standard IMRD (Introduction – Method –

Results – Discussion) was taken as the first similar feature in the selection of the two sets of empirical research articles from the selected journals. The conclusion section is defined as the last section of a research article which is found after the 'discussion' section or 'results and discussion' section. In the corpora, some articles end with the 'discussion' section instead of the 'conclusion' section. Only English and Malay articles with the last section labelled with the conventional functional heading of 'conclusion' and 'kesimpulan' (conclusion) respectively were selected.

The English corpus was selected from *the Journal of Psychology:Interdisciplinary & Applied* published by Routledge, United Kingdom. Twenty English empirical research articles written by first-language English speakers were selected. Out of the 20 articles, three are single-authored and the remaining are multiple-authored. For multiple-authored papers, only papers written by up to three authors were selected to facilitate the process in which to find out if they are first-language English speakers. To obtain such information, the authors' background information was first searched in their institution websites and/or their own websites. When the authors' native status was not found online, an attempt via email enquiries was made. Authors of the selected papers are affiliated with higher institutions in native English-speaking countries.

In order to reach the required number of the sample, the Malay articles were selected from two journals which include psychology articles. They are (i) *Sosiohumanika:Jurnal Pendidikan Sains Sosial dan Kemanusiaan* published by Association of Indonesian Scholars of History Education (ASPENSI) and (ii) *e-Bangi* published the Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities (FSSK), Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Similar to that of the English corpus, the particular fields of interest in the selected Malay articles are educational psychology and social psychology. These Malay articles were written by academics who are attached to the department of psychology/the department of psychology and human development/health psychology unit at the higher institutions in Malaysia and Indonesia.

The two corpora vary in length as follows: English corpus (7556 words; average of 377.8 words per research article conclusion) is about 1.3 times longer than Malay corpus (5720 words; average of 286 words per research article conclusion).

2.1. Analysis framework

As noted in the introduction section, the present study analyses the linguistic and discursive strategies focusing on stance-taking used by writers to realize different argumentative purposes in concluding their research. For this purpose, the study draws on an analysis of the features in Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003) integrated with the analysis of communicative purposes within the genre analysis framework (Swales, 1990, 2004). The following explains the two analysis frameworks and the coding procedures:

Swales's (1990, 2004) Create a Research Space (CARS) model was selected as the basis for the genre analysis and the coding of *moves* and *steps* in both sets of research article conclusions. The CARS model consists of three stages termed *moves* by Swales. Swales and Feak (2000, p. 35) specify a move as ''the defined and bounded communicative act that is designed to achieve one main communicative objective''. In Swales's (1990, 2004) CARS model, these three moves are further sub-divided into their

constituent steps. A step is defined by Swales (1990) as a smaller unit of discourse that builds moves. In other words, each step supports and guarantees the validity of the move. In stage one of the analysis, the present study adopts this 'move-step' concept in the coding procedure. When a move/step emerged in the corpus, a code was developed to accommodate the new move/step. The new code was labelled as closely as possible to relate to the function of the move/step. The following shows an example of coding. Words marked in bold show the coding of the move/step for sentences that occur before the parenthesis.

[E17]

The present study investigated real-ideal best friendships and examined the correlates of friendship discrepancy **(Move 1 Step 4 - reiterating the objective/focus of the study)** Findings revealed that women and men desire to experience more-positive same-sex friendships that would allow them to enjoy more closeness and less conflict. There were also interesting gender differences reported such that the real and ideal friendships of women were higher in quality and lower in conflict compared to men. Analyses also showed that real-ideal discrepancy for friendship quality was negatively related to relationship satisfaction, happiness, and needs satisfaction similarly for men and women **(Move 1 Step 1 - presenting overall findings)**

At the end of the coding, a move structure model that contained all the moves and steps found in the conclusion sections of both English and Malay research articles was produced. Using this model as the basis, a moves analysis of English and Malay research article conclusions was carried out. The results of the move analysis were subjected to a quantitative analysis which included the frequency counts of English and Malay conclusions employing the rhetorical moves.

In stage two of the analysis, the present study adopted the analysis framework of the Appraisal theory (Martin & Rose, 2003) to identify patterns of attitudinal choices that display the writers' stances, the force of these stances and their engagement options. Figure 1 (reproduced from Martin & Rose, 2003) below illustrates the composition of these elements:

|		
	(i) Engagement →	Monogloss or
		Heterogloss
Appraisal →	(ii) Attitude →	Affect
		Appreciation
		Judgment
	(iii) Graduation→	Force
		Focus
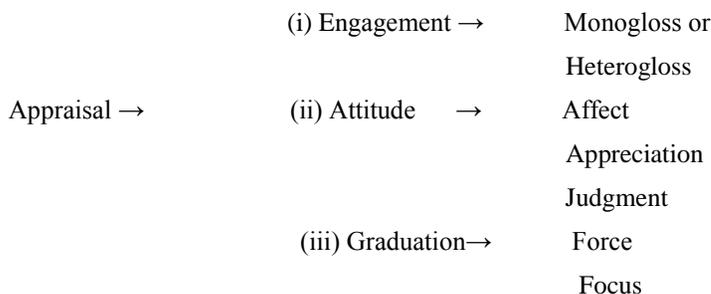
Figure 1 - Appraisal theory

Appraisal meanings are "integrated complexes of meaning" which can enable the presentation of a dynamic evaluation stance throughout the text (Hood, 2004; Martin & White, 2005 as cited in Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011, p. 142). The Appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005) originally draws on the developments in Systemic Functional theory (Halliday, 1985, 1994) at a discourse semantic level. As shown in Figure 1, each of the three dimensions, namely Attitude (expressing values), Graduation (manipulating strength of these values and Engagement (introducing and managing other voices and positions) is further subcategorized. Attitude is further subcategorized as Affect (expression of feeling), Judgment (judgment on human behaviour) and Appreciation (appreciation of things). Graduation is further divided into Force and Focus. Engagement is further classified into monogloss and heterogloss. Monogloss includes factual claims or claims presented with an assumption that the reader would share the writer's position and such claims are mainly realized by declarative/unmodalized clauses (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011). On the other hand, heterogloss identifies system network options for expanding and contracting space for other voices in texts. This term (heterogloss) originally draws on the concept of heteroglossic space by Bahktin (1981, 1986). Based on the objectives of the present study, the relevant options available within the system of Appraisal are drawn on in the analysis of this paper. They are as summarized in Figure 2:

	(i) Engagement → Heterogloss		(i) contraction	(a) proclaim
				(b) disclaim
			(ii) expansion	(a) attribute
				(b) entertain
Appraisal →	(ii) Attitude →	Appreciation	(i) valuation	
			(ii) reaction	
			(iii) composition	
	(iii) Graduation→ Force		(i) intensity	
			(ii) quantity	
			(iii) enhancement	
	Focus		(i) valeur	
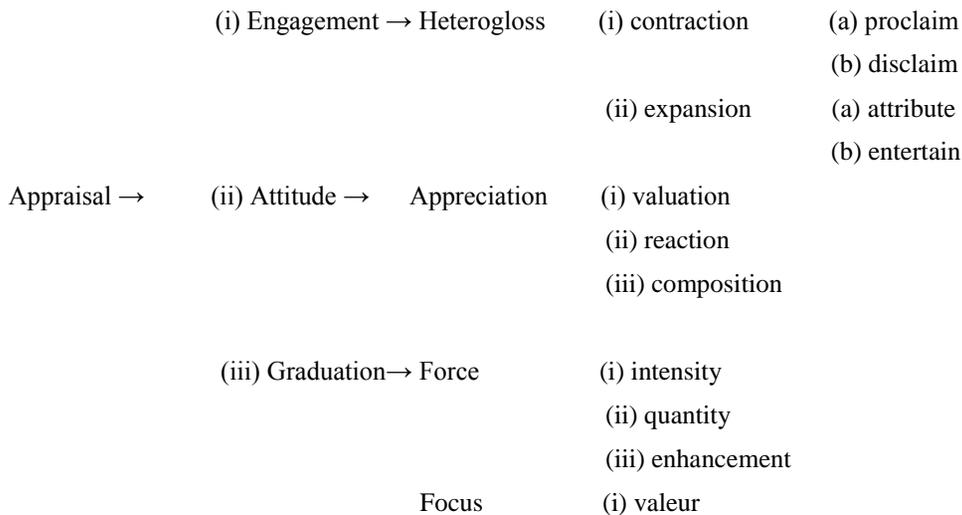
Figure 2 - A summary of the appraisal options drawn on in the present analysis

Stance can be expressed to differing extents by using value-laden word choice, grammatical devices and paralinguistic devices (Biber, 2006). The focus of the present study is on semantically-marked stance, and so the analytical methodology used to identify the appraisal options focuses on lexical choice (rather than operating at the grammatical level) (cf. Love & Arkoudis, 2006) and on the metafunctional perspective in which interpersonal meanings are realized in relation to ideational and textual choices in

the discourse (cf. Hood, 2004). In the present study, in conducting the analysis of stance, each non-embedded clause is analyzed by drawing on the above three elements and their subcategorizations. We look at the linguistic resources which show the expressions of Attitudes (only those of Appreciation is looked at as the other two subcategories, namely Affect and Judgment are not found in the present corpora) and Graduation as well as those which realize the heteroglossic element in the Engagement network. All items that carry appraisal items were coded for Attitude (inscribed and evoked), Graduation and Engagement alongside their subcategorizations (see Figure 2). The analytical attempt thus involved repeated readings by looking at the linguistic resources used in each clause and across the text in achieving particular attitudinal meanings and prosodies and then relating the two to their rhetorical effects (functional moves/steps) in concluding the study (see examples below). Each of the above options drawn on in the present analysis is outlined and exemplified below (more key examples can be found in the discussion section):

2.1.1. Attitude

The category of Appreciation (appreciation of things) as well as having positive/negative and inscribed/evoked dimension can be further sub-classified in terms of valuation, reaction and composition. Valuation codes the ideational (the content). Reaction codes the speaker/writer's interpersonal response while composition is concerned with the textual response (to the overall texture) (Eggins & Slade, 1997, p. 128, as cited in Hood, 2004, p. 74). An English example illustrating the above is presented below. Words in bold are interpreted as instantiations of inscribed Attitude.

[E11]

Considering the **devastating** [appreciation: composition$^+$] effects of the **relational** [appreciation: composition$^+$] links among these phenomena on physical, emotional, social, mental and/or spiritual fettle of health employees, it is **important** [appreciation: valuation$^+$] to raise awareness on the issue. (Move 1 Step 3 - making reference to issues related to a research topic) Moreover, it is thought that research findings provide **important** [appreciation: valuation$^+$] clues for actors, stakeholders and policy-makers of health care services (Move 3 Step 1 - providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication)

[E3]

Hopefully [appreciation: reaction$^+$], future researchers will jointly assess how people recall all the three classes of events we mentioned ... (Move 3 Step 2 - providing a suggestion for future research)

2.1.2. Graduation

In the present study, the term 'evoked' is generally used to mean that an attitudinal meaning can be interpreted although none is explicitly encoded (cf. Hood, 2004). In other words, the evoked Attitude implicitly encodes a value by employing Graduation. Graduation can be expressed in terms of high/low force or focus. In the present study,

force is further categorized into intensity (as a quality), quantity (as a thing) and enhancement (as a process) (adapted from Hood, 2004). 'Focus' is further categorized into focusing entities (valeur, the term used by Martin & Rose, 2003). Focus: valeur is interpreted in terms of authenticity and specificity (Hood, 2004). In the present study, the intensification of attitudinal attributes (e.g., very efficient) can include the grading of attributes that inscribe a positive and negative value as well as those which do not inscribe a positive and negative value (e.g., limited research, few studies) (cf. Hood, 2004). 'Limited' and 'few' for example, retain some evaluative potential although it does not occur alongside an inscribed evaluative term (cf. Hood, 2004). The following provides an example from the English corpus. Words marked in bold and italics are interpreted as instantiations of inscribed/evoked Attitude and Graduation respectively.

[E4]

As a result, it would be **useful** [inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$] to examine the issue *more* (evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: intensity) **profound** (inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$) and **far-reaching**.(inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$) ... *Additionally* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: quantity], **structural**, **legal** and **cultural** [inscribed appreciation: composition$^+$] dynamics of the issue can *also* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] be investigated *deeply* (evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: enhancement). ... (Move 3 Step 2 – providing a suggestion for future research)

[M2]

Third, the results of multiple regression analysis *only* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^-$ encoded in graduation low focus: valuer/specificity] focus on the description of the variant level of performance based on the regression equation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), but there are still many *more* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] other factors that are **important** [inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$] to be included in the analysis ... (Move 2 Step 3 - providing a counter-claim)

(Note: the original Malay excerpt can be found in the discussion section)

2.1.3 Engagement

In the Engagement network, the category of contraction can be sub-classified as 'proclaim' and 'disclaim' while the category of expansion can be further classified in terms of 'attribute' and 'entertain'. The writers can draw on certain modality (e.g., modality of necessity such as 'should' which expresses a strong suggestion), projection and concession resources (Martin & Rose, 2003, p.54) to contract the their own position and in contrast, the writers can draw on different modality, (e.g., modality of possibility such as 'may'/'could' which offers ideas as possible solution), projection and concession resources to entertain alternatives from the readers (cf. Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011; Love & Arkoudis, 2006).The following provides an example from the English corpus. Words marked in bold are interpreted as instantiations of Engagement

(contraction/expansion).

[E14]

> **We believe** [engagement: contract: proclaim] that **although** [engagement: expand: entertain] the role narcissism in sibling relations **has not** [engagement: contract: disclaim] been documented thoroughly **yet** [engagement: contract: disclaim] it is worthy of additional attention, given that **our study has found** that [engagement: contract: proclaim] high levels of narcissism hinder warmth and contribute to conflict in sibling relationships. **However** [engagement: expand: entertain] our **assumption** [engagement: expand: entertain] were not **fully confirmed** [engagement: contract: proclaim]; findings showed only that paternal unequal treatment moderates the link between narcissism and perception of sibling warmth. (Move 2 Step 3 - providing a counter-claim)

The above data was subjected to a quantitative analysis which included:

(i) Frequency counts of Attitudes (inscribed and evoked) in English and Malay research article conclusions

(ii) Frequency counts of Engagement options (contraction and expansion) in English and Malay research article conclusions

The coding conventions employed in the analysis include using bold to indicate inscribed Attitude and italics to indicate Graduation evoking Attitude. Where Engagement is found, bold is also used to indicate the instances.

3. Findings and discussion

Overall, English and Malay research article conclusions show the presence of three moves: Move 1 (summarizing the study), Move 2 (evaluating the study) and Move 3 (providing a deduction). These three moves and their respective steps (see Table 1) occur cyclically rather than linearly or in a composite manner. Although it is not the aim of the present study to examine statistical data on the cyclicity of rhetorical moves/steps in English and Malay conclusion sections, it is worth noting that in past studies (e.g., Brett, 1994; Holmes, 1997; Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Swales, 1990; Yang & Allison, 2003), rhetorical moves/steps have been shown to be highly cyclical in research articles.

Table 1

Move-structure model of the conclusion section of a research article

Move 1 Summarizing the study
(i) Step 1 Presenting overall findings
and/or
(ii) Step 2 Making reference to past studies
and/or
(iii) Step 3 Making reference to issues related to a research topic
and/or
(iv) Step 4 Reiterating the objective/focus of the study

Move 2 Evaluating the study
(i) Step 1 Indicating significance
and/or
(ii) Step 2 Indicating a limitation
and/or
(iii) Step 3 Providing a counter-claim
and/or
(iv) Step 4 Giving a justification
and/or
(v) Step 5 Providing an explanation

Move 3 Providing a deduction
(i) Step 1 Providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication
and/or
(ii) Step 2 Providing a suggestion for future research

Note: 'and/or' shows that the arrangement of moves and steps does not indicate any prescribed order, because of the cyclic nature of the moves and steps

A higher number of step options employed in Move 2 (evaluating the study) compared to Move 1 (summarizing the study) and Move 3 (providing a deduction) of both conclusions, strongly indicates that the communicative focus (in terms of a wide range of rhetorical strategies) in both conclusions is primarily in the *evaluation move* (Move 2).There is however an apparent difference between the two sets of conclusions in the use of Move 2 (evaluating the study). That is, English conclusions employed Move 2 (evaluating the study) proportionately more than Malay conclusions, that is, about 1.4 times higher (100% vs. 70.6%). Within the individual corpus, English conclusions are more inclined to employ Move 2 (evaluating the study) (100%) compared to Move 1 (summarizing the study) (90%) and Move 3 (providing a deduction) (75%).

On the other hand, Malay conclusions are more inclined to use Move 1 (summarizing the study) (85%) compared to the other two moves, namely Move 2 (evaluating the study) (70.6%) and Move 3 (providing a deduction) (55%). On the whole, the percentage of English conclusions that employs each of the three moves is higher than that of Malay conclusions. The following Figure 3 illustrates the results:
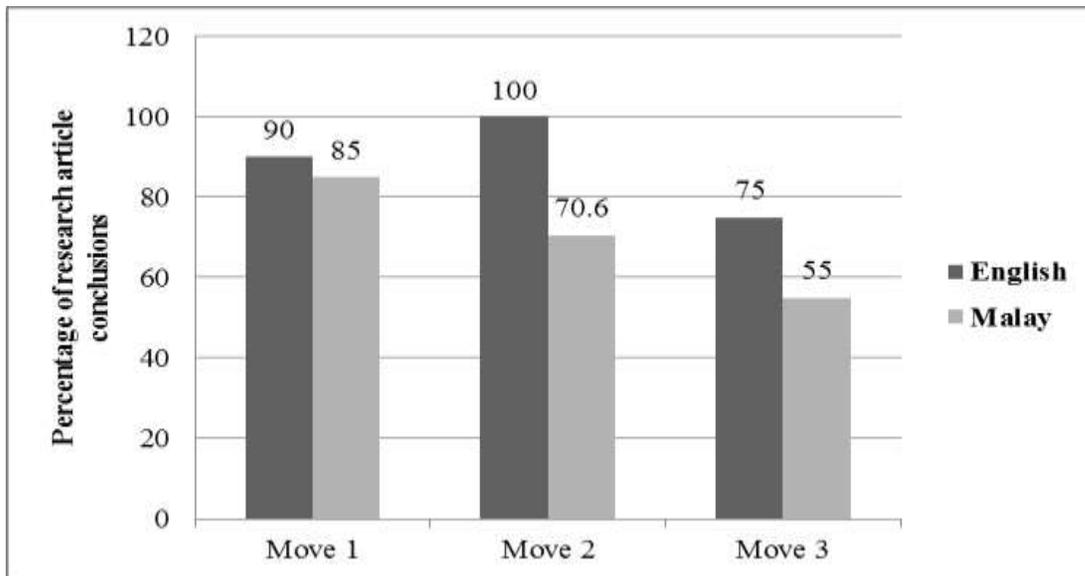
Figure 3 Percentage of English and Malay research article conclusions employing the moves

Writers of English and Malay research article conclusions use Attitude strategically in arguing/evaluating for their own and past research in Move 1 (summarizing the study), Move 2 (evaluating the study) and Move 3 (providing a deduction). The realizations of the Attitudes in these three functional moves are presented in Table 4 (Appendix). A closer examination shows some similarities and variations in the expressions of Attitudes between the two sets of conclusions. Table 2 presents the occurrences of explicit and graduation evoking Attitudes in the two sets of data:

Table 2

Frequency counts of Attitudes (inscribed and evoked) in English and Malay research article conclusions

Frequency	Language	Inscribed Attitudes	Graduation Evoking Attitudes		Total
			High Force	Low Force	
Frequency per conclusion	English	67.5	78.4	5.1	151
	Malay	49.2	34.3	1.7	85.2
Frequency in all 20 conclusions	English	1350	1568	102	3020
	Malay	983	686	34	1703

The two sets of conclusions differ in the following aspects. Firstly, English conclusions contain almost 1.8 times as many Attitudes (both inscribed and evoked) in total as Malay conclusions (151 per English conclusion vs. 85.2 per Malay conclusion).

Referring to the length of the individual corpus (see methodology), in average, about 40% (151/377.8) of the number of words per English conclusion comprise Attitudes, while about 30% (85.2/ 286) of the number of words per Malay conclusion consist of Attitudes. This shows that on the whole, English conclusions display a more extensive use of stance.

Secondly, English conclusions contain a higher number of low force Graduation compared to Malay conclusions. That is, about three times more the number of occurrences in Malay conclusions (5.1 per conclusion vs 1.7 per conclusion). The low force Graduation in both data is mainly used to evoke a negative Appreciation in the context of the limitation of the study for example, to highlight that an aspect of the research approach is further limited by a constraint [e.g., 'the lie detection capacity of our approach is limited *further ...*'(E7)].

The low force Graduation is also often found in instances of counter-claiming such as, to evoke the small amount of past research carried out on a particular research area (e.g., '*few* studies have actually examined' (see E4 below); '*small* amount of literature'(see E5 below) or to evoke a limitation of past or present studies by accentuating a point [e.g., '*hanya* menfokuskan/*only* focus on' (M2); 'used *only* 100 participants' (E13)].

The low force Graduation is also used to evoke a negative valuation of a phenomenon relating to variables examined in the present study [e.g., 'we found *only few* differences' (E7)].

The lower occurrences of low force Graduation to realize the above rhetorical effects in Malay conclusions compared to English conclusions are congruent with the lower number of Malay conclusions employing the evaluative Move 2 (evaluating the study), that is, a functional move which contains these two rhetorical steps -'indicating a limitation' and 'providing a counter-claim' (see Table 1). The following exemplifies the above phenomenon:

[E13]

> We used *only* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low force: quantity] 100 participants to test the hypotheses of the study. (Move 2 Step 2 – indicating a limitation)

[M2]

> Ketiga, keputusan analisis regresi berganda *hanya* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low focus: valuer/specificity] menfokuskan kepada penerangan tentang varian tahap pretasi berdasarkan persamaan regresi (Tabachnick & Fidell 2001), tetapi masih banyak lagi faktor-faktor lain yang penting perlu dimasukkan dalam analisis ... (Move 2 Step 3 - providing a counter-claim)
>
> {Third, the results of multiple regression analysis *only* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low focus: valuer/specificity] focus on the description of the variant level of performance based on the regression equation (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2001), but there are still many more other factors that are important to be included in the analysis ... (Move 2 Step 3 - providing a counter-claim)}

[E7]

> The lie detection capacity of our approach is limited *further* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation high force: intensity] by the fact that we found *only* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low focus: specificity] *few* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low force: quantity] differences analyzing the content of the mental images reported on. (Move 1 Step 1 - presenting overall findings)

As mentioned above, low force graduations are more abundant in English conclusions than in Malay ones, which is in principle expectable because English is a remarkably hedging culture (Hyland, 1996). The tendency for Malay writers to hedge less than English writers could be related to the socio-cultural perspective. Due to the prominent face-saving phenomenon in the local scientific communities (see Ahmad, 1997; Duszak, 1994; Jogthong, 2001; Shim, 2005; Taylor & Chen, 1991), the members are aware that less likely their fellow colleagues or readers from the local context will opt for 'face-threatening' acts in their writing because such acts are more likely to become controversial in a small and closer-knit scholarship communities where ' 'too much' can be said without causing offense therefore, Malay writers may not have seen a great need to hedge their claims to protect themselves from possible readers' refutation.

Thirdly, English conclusions have a higher ratio of evoked Attitudes compared to the inscribed ones (1.2 : 1 or 83.5 evoked Attitudes per conclusion : 67.5 inscribed Attitudes per conclusion). In contrast, Malay conclusions have a lower ratio of evoked Attitudes compared to the inscribed ones (1: 1.4 or 36 evoked Attitudes per conclusion: 49.2 inscribed Attitudes per conclusion). This suggests that writers of English conclusions are more inclined to encode Attitudes implicitly rather than explicitly while it is otherwise for Malay conclusions. The implicitness in encoding Attitudes contributes to "the view of academic discourse as objective in nature" (Hood, 2004, p. 125). This objectivity entails that writers sometimes choose to adopt an evoked attitudinal stance and refrain from an explicit and amplified attitudinal stance when commenting on research activity while they often choose to adopt an explicit and amplified attitudinal stance when making comments about a research domain (cf. Hood, 2004).

E11 shows that an inscribed/explicit Attitude (e.g., 'it is **important** to raise the awareness on the issue'; 'the **devastating** effects ...') is used while taking a stance on issues related to the field as domain, while E8 shows that an evoked (implicit) Attitude is employed when taking a stance on research activities such as the outcome of the study (e.g., 'well-being outcomes could be *fully* explained ...'; '*more* research be conducted to ...').

Similarly, in the Malay corpus, M3, shows that evoked instead of inscribed Attitudes are used when taking a stance in relation to the findings of the study (e.g., '*kebanyakan* remaja hamil luar nikah mempunyai ...'/ '*most* teenagers who are pregnant out of wedlock have ...') while M5 shows that an overt and amplified attitudinal stance instead of an implicit one is used when commenting on an aspect related to the field as a domain. That is, when the writer comments about the global issue of sexual abuse (e.g., 'penderaan seksual ... dan **tidak mustahil** berlaku ...'/'sexual abuse ... and it is **not impossible** to happen ...'). These examples are presented below:

[E11]

Considering the **devastating** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{-}] effects of the relational links among these phenomena on physical, emotional, social, mental and/or spiritual fettle of health employees, it is **important** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{+}] to raise awareness on the issue. (Move 1 Step 3-making reference to issues related to a research topic)

[E8]

Path analysis revealed that the **significant** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{+}] effect of valued [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{+}] activities (processes) on well-being outcomes could be *fully* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{+} encoded in graduation high force: enhancement] explained by trait EI ... (Move 1 Step 1 - presenting overall findings). Considering ... , we propose that *more* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{+} encoded in graduation high force: quantity] research be conducted to cross-validate the SSO model of **emotional** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] dissonance in **different** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] occupations and/or **cultural** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] contexts. (Move 3 Step 2 - providing a suggestion for future research)

[M3]

Dapatan kajian memperlihatkan bahawa *kebanyakan* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{+} encoded in graduation high force: quantity^{+}] remaja hamil luar nikah mempunyai latar belakang keluarga yang *kurang* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{-} encoded in graduation low force: intensity] **sempurna** [inscribed appreciation valuation^{+}] ... (Move 1 Step 1- presenting overall findings]
{The findings show that *most* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{+} encoded in graduation high force: quantity] teenagers who are pregnant out of wedlock have *less* [evoked appreciation: valuation^{-} encoded in graduation low force: intensity] **ideal** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{-}] family background ... (Move 1 Step 1- presenting overall findings)}

[M5]

Penderaan **seksual** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] merupakan isu **sejagat** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}]. Mangsanya adalah kanak-kanak, remaja, individu dewasa, dan **tidak mustahil** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{+}] berlaku juga kepada warga **tua** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}]. (Move 1 Step 1- presenting overall findings)
{**Sexual** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] abuse is a **global** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] issue. The victims include children, adolescents, individual adults, and it is **not impossible** [inscribed appreciation: valuation^{+}] to happen to the **elderly** [inscribed appreciation: composition^{+}] people as well. (Move 1 Step 1- presenting overall findings)}

The two sets of conclusions, however, share the following similarities. Within each of the individual corpus, the occurrences of high force Graduation highly exceed those of low force one. That is, about 93.9% of the total number of evoked Attitudes in English data comprise high force Graduation (78.4 high force Graduation per conclusion/83.5

evoked Attitudes per conclusion) while about 95.3% of the total number of evoked Attitudes in Malay conclusions consist of high force Graduation (34.3 high force Graduation per conclusion /36 evoked Attitudes per conclusion). This suggests that both English and Malay writers have a tendency to express Appraisal with more force and where this occurs, it contributes to the construal of a more compelling argument (e.g., 'further' as in 'limited further' (see E7 above) and 'kebanyakan' (most) as in 'kebanyakan remaja'/'most teenagers' (see M3 above). However, this characteristic is not exclusive to English and Malay research article writers but generalized in scientific dissemination.

The use of high force Graduation in the English corpus is mainly about the significance of the study. For example, stating that the study is valued over others because it is the *first* study to examine the research area (see E5 below) or the *first* study to provide a specific contribution (see E4). An implication of positive worth of the current study is also implied or evoked through an expansion for past studies by examining a wider scope of a phenomenon ('add *further* to the small amount of literature …') (see E5):

[E5]
>   The results add *further* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] to the small amount of literature available for Colombia regarding the prevalence of depression and *uniquely* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force, enhancement] it is the *first* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: intensity] to examine the prevalence of depression in students in Bogot´ (Move 2 Step 1 - indicating significance)

[E4]
>   *Few* studies have actually examined when or even WHY intrinsic motivation should predict performance in the first place. Despite the number of studies linking intrinsic motivation to performance and outcomes, the current study is among the *first* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: intensity] to provide *strong* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: intensity] explanatory links using longitudinal data in a naturalistic environment. (Move 2 Step 1- indicating significance)

As for the Malay corpus, where Graduation is used to evoke Attitudes, the grading of Attitudes contributes to the construal of a more compelling argument through values layering upon each other in two different contexts such as the context involving the limitation of the study (Move 2 Step 2) and suggestions for future study (Move 3 Step 2). This phenomenon is exemplified in M14 which shows that an implication of limitation of the study is first implied through a narrower scope (low force Graduation) of the sampling through the use of 'hanya'/'only' as in 'hanya menggunakan seorang responden kajian'/'only use one research respondent'. The limitation is then positively supported by an attitudinal meaning which is graded with more force (extent) as in 'lebih besar'/'larger' and 'lebih meluas'/'broader', in order to assert the point that future studies should use a bigger sampling instead in order to have a wider description on the variable

examined:

[M14]

Kajian ini *hanya* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low force: intensity] menggunakan seorang responden kajian. Justeru, penemuan kajian seharusnya tidak digunakan untuk mengeneralisasikan keseluruhan populasi berkaitan. (Move 2 Step 2 - indicating a limitation). Kajian yang menggunakan saiz responden yang *lebih besar* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁺ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] adalah terbaik bagi memberikan huraian yang *lebih meluas* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁺ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] berkaitan inses di Malaysia. (Move 3 Step 2 - providing a suggestion for future research)

{This study *only* [evoked appreciation: valuation⁻ encoded in graduation low force: quantity] uses a research respondent. Thus, the findings should not be used to generalize the entire related population (Move 2 Step 2 - indicating a limitation). Studies which use a larger [evoked appreciation: valuation⁺ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] size of respondents is best to give a broader [evoked appreciation: valuation⁺ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] description on incest cases in Malaysia. (Move 3 Step 2 - providing a suggestion for future research)}

The Engagement system accompanies that of Attitude and Graduation in the present study investigates how writers of English and Malay conclusions use language to manage their interpersonal positions as they make their evaluations in the context of the academic writing. Martin and Rose (2003) held that this tactic implies *heteroglossia* in that it opens up or closes down potential alternative voices/negotiations. The present analysis displays some similarities and differences between the two sets of data in the use of Engagement resources (contraction and expansion) to achieve these aims. Table 3 below shows the degree of the application of Engagement options in the two sets of conclusions.

Table 3

Frequency counts of Engagement options (contraction and expansion) in English and Malay research article conclusions

Frequency	Language	Contraction			Expansion		
		Proclaim	Disclaim	Total	Entertain	Attribute	Total
Frequency per conclusion	English	6.3	2.3	8.3	2	2.95	4.95
	Malay	5	2.35	7.35	1.6	1.15	2.75
Frequency in all 20 conclusions	English	126	44	170	40	59	99
	Malay	100	47	147	32	23	55

Table 3 shows that English conclusions contain almost 1.3 times as many

Engagement devices as Malay conclusions (13.25 per English conclusion vs. 10.1 per Malay conclusion). This shows that on the whole, English conclusions are slightly more engaging and appealing than Malay conclusions.

A closer examination reveals further substantial/apparent similarities and differences in the use of contracting and expanding devices within the individual corpus. A similarity shared is that assertion/contraction exceeds mitigation/expansion within the two sets of data. That is, 8.3 contracting devices per conclusion versus 4.95 expanding devices per conclusion in the English data (the ratio of 1.7 : 1) and 7.35 contracting devices per conclusion versus 2.75 expanding devices per conclusion in the Malay data (ratio of 2.7 : 1). This perhaps entails that deploying a higher degree of assertive contracting resources gives the reader the impression that the author is an expert in the field (Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011).

However, there is a substantial difference in the use of the two features within the same corpus. That is, contracting devices are only 1.7 times more than expanding devices in English conclusions while the former is 2.7 times more than the latter in Malay conclusions. The quantitative data show that assertion highly exceeds mitigation within Malay conclusions (M1 below exemplifies the phenomenon) while there is a relative balance of assertion and mitigation within English conclusions (also see E10 below).

As shown in the following English example (E10), the writer graduates the force (high) of his assertion 'further' as in 'further extended the line of research' and then softens the claim or opens up a more dialogic stance using an expansion device such as conjunction that concedes (e.g., however). This voice entertains or considers other possibilities because it implies expectancy or another position on the matter. In this case, the writer is seen to entertain a reason why more research is still necessary. Presenting this possibility paves the way for the key argument to be developed later that is, the writer uses a contractive device such as modality of ability to signal the writer's high degree of epistemic commitment/full certainty to his claim (e.g., 'can' as in 'the results of this study can provide additional evidence'). By so doing, he is contracting the dialogic space to assert the merit of the study:

[E10]

> This study *further* [evoked appreciation: valuation$^+$ encoded in graduation high force: quantity] extended the line of research by determining the negative relations between emotional dissonance and OCB. **However** [engagement: expand: entertain], drawing a conclusion on the cross-cultural similarity and effect of emotional dissonance is premature, and more research is still needed. The results of this study **can** [engagement: contract: proclaim] provide **additional** [inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$] evidence to confirm different effects in the Chinese context.

An interplay of assertion and mitigation in English conclusions is also seen in the following example. E9 shows that after taking a positive evaluative stance ('congruent' as in 'Such an explanation is congruent with the results of previous studies ...'), the writer shifts the topic by taking a negative evaluative stance concerning a limitation of the two past studies he cited. He first opens up for the negotiation through his choice of expansion

resources ['unfortunately' (a comment disjunct) as in '…which unfortunately…'] and then contracts the dialogic space by disclaiming his own position using a negation ('never' as in 'never tested ...'). Here, we can see that the writer is being diplomatic by using a modality resource that is based on an 'individual subjecthood and thereby contingent' (White, 2003, p. 268) before shutting down dialogic space by directly rejecting another perspective.

[E9]

> In this study, we have stated that the loving concept acts as a prime that leads to the activation of further concepts associated with compassion, support, or solidarity that, in turn, lead participants to offer blood donations more readily. Such an explanation is congruent [inscribed appreciation: valuation$^+$) with the results of previous studies on priming (**Bargh et al., 1996; Zemack-Rugar et al., 2007**) [engagement: expand: attribute] which, **unfortunately** [engagement: expand: entertain], never tested the word love, or words related to love, as primes. (Move 1 Step 2 - making reference to past studies)

On the other hand, as shown in the following Malay example (M1), the writer contracts the dialogic space by using the modality of necessity (e.g., 'harus'/'should') throughout the excerpt to assert his perspective or to stress his line of argument that it is essential to follow the given suggestions for the various important reasons:

[M1]

> Masalah penjagaan informal di Malaysia **harus** [engagement: contract: proclaim] diberi perhatian serius oleh ahli politik dan membincang isu ini di peringkat parlimen yang membolehkan satu penggubalan dasar kepada penjaga informal dapat direalisasikan. Kesedaran **harus** [engagement: contract: proclaim] diberikan kepada semua lapisan masyarakat dan **tidak** [engagement: contract: disclaim] tertumpu kepada keluarga yang mempunyai masalah penjagaan sahaja. Justeru itu, model terapi secara menyeluruh **harus** [engagement: contract: proclaim] diwujudkan dalam bentuk acuan tempatan bagi **memastikan** [engagement: contract: proclaim] semua faktor- faktor tekanan seperti masalah emosi, kesan psikologikal dan stigma sosial dapat dikawal dalam usaha **memastikan** [engagement: contract: proclaim] tahap kesejahteraan hidup penjaga dan orang yang dijaga meningkat. (Move 3 Step 1 - providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication)
> {The problem involving informal caregivers in Malaysia **should** [engagement: contract: proclaim] be given serious attention by politicians and discussed in the parliament whereby a policy of informal caregivers can be realized. Awareness **should** [engagement: contract: proclaim] be given to communities from all walks of life and rather than **just** [engagement: contract: disclaim] focusing on families with problems of caregivers. Therefore, in **ensuring** [engagement: contract: proclaim] an increase in the level of wellbeing among caregivers and those who receive care, a comprehensive model of therapy **should** [engagement: contract:

proclaim] be established in the local context to **ensure** [engagement: contract: proclaim] that all stress factors such as emotional problems, psychological effects and social stigma can be controlled. (Move 3 Step 1 - providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication)}

The above shows that a tendency to close down rather than to open up a more dialogic stance seems to characterize a compelling argument in Malay conclusions. In this sense, writers of the Malay corpus therefore construe "less reader-friendly" (We borrow Hyland's 1996 term) research article conclusions which give fewer alternatives to readers. On the whole, we have found that both English and Malay conclusions do engage their colleagues by displaying respect and due regard for their views and reputations while asserting their position and perspective, but English conclusions seem to construct a more equilibrium/balance interplay between "the researcher's authority as an expert knower and his or her humility as a disciplinary servant" (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 13-14).

Another means of evoking Attitudes in the Malay corpus is the use of metaphorical encoding of stance. The following four instances from the corpus exemplify this phenomenon (with emphasis added). The evaluative implications of the metaphorical expressions are most apparent where there are some inferred/ "infused" attitudinal meanings (see Hood, 2004, p. 88) as shown in the italicized terms below:

In M11, 'buka mata' (meaning open one's eyes) may connote the meaning of 'making someone fully *aware*'.

[M11]
    ... serta **membuka mata** setiap pihak agar masalah penderaan fizikal kanak-kanak ini dapat dibanteras ...
    {... and **open the eyes** of each party so that the problem of child physical abuse can be eradicated ...}

In M3, 'terumbang-ambing' (meaning in a feeble or unsteady movement) may connote the meaning of 'in a highly *volatile* environment'.

[M3]
    ... sebagai suatu alternatif penyelesaian masalah keadaan psiko-budaya umat Islam yang sedang tengah **terombang ambing** di tengah badai globalisasi kebudayaan dalam cara berfikir yang cenderung ke arah budaya hedonis-materilalistik ...
    {... as an alternative solution to the Muslims' psycho-cultural problem which stood   **tottering** in a storm of cultural globalization in their ways of thinking that are inclined towards a hedonistic-materialistic culture ...}

In M7, 'pendinding' (meaning a shield) may connote the meaning of a *protective* factor which inhibits negative values.

[M7]

ii. Menerapkan pendidikan agama kepada remaja supaya menjadi **pendinding** yang mampu membantu remaja dalam melakukan pertimbangan terhadap perbuatan yang benar dan salah.
{ii. Implementing religious education to teenagers in order to act as a **shield** that can help them make judgments about right and wrong conduct.}

In M6, 'dalam bentuk acuan tempatan' (meaning cast in the local mold) may connote the meaning of 'bearing a very *close* resemblance to the local values/qualities'.

[M6]

Justeru itu, model terapi secara menyeluruh harus diwujudkan **dalam bentuk acuan tempatan** bagi memastikan semua faktor- faktor tekanan seperti masalah emosi, kesan psikologikal dan stigma sosial dapat dikawal...
{Thus, the overall therapeutic model should be **cast in the local mold** to ensure that all stress factors such as emotional problem, psychological effect and social stigma can be controlled…}

The evaluative implication is also apparent where the inferred attitudinal meaning is intensified through the use of 'boosters' (Hylands, 2000, p. 179) such as 'fully' (M11), 'highly' (M3) and 'very' (M6):

[M11]

... making someone *fully* aware

[M3]

... in a *highly* volatile environment

[M6]

… bearing a *very* close resemblance to the local values/qualities …

However, these are the very few instances of metaphors in the data. Far more frequent as a resource for evoking Attitude is the grading of non-attitudinal meanings of which the evaluative implication is most apparent when there is some added meaning of relativity [e.g., 'kebanyakan'/'most' (M3); 'banyak lagi'/'many more' (M2); 'hanya'/'only' (M2); 'lebih meluas'/'broader' (M14)].

Past studies show that the use of metaphorical expressions in research articles might be culture and discipline bound. Yu (2005) found that hyperbolic, metaphoric, parallel and humble expressions were used in a small number of Chinese introductions to establish the research territory while this feature was not found in English introductions. Yu (2005) claimed that the differences found in the two sets of introductions are culture-specific.

In a separate study by Ahmed (2004), repetition at different linguistic levels is prevalent while flowery language (i.e., hyperbolic and metaphorical expressions) is common (although not as frequent as repetition) in Arabic research article introductions. Ahmed (2004) proposes that using repetition and flowery language can be a way of

conveying the seriousness or weight of a topic; or that these features are facilitated by data from the fields of humanities and social science. In general, repetition and high-flown ornamented language have more marked (and less frequent) use in hard sciences articles.

The above differences in the use of Attitudes, Graduation and Engagement devices generally point to a difference in stance used by writers of both research article conclusions. In relation to the variations between the two sets of data, it is important to note differences in the functioning of the longer English compared to Malay research article conclusions. The fact that the longer English conclusions (about 1.3 times longer) may have encouraged a more varied rhetorical strategies and discursive activities in contextualizing the writer's own study, including more use of linguistic resources to present evaluations in the conclusion sections.

However, there is a possibility such findings illustrate that evaluation and the meaning potential of the genre are experienced and valued differently by scholars publishing in the two different scientific communities (international and local) (cf. Hyland, 1996; Martin, 2003). It is conceivable that similar to writers of other non-native English languages, due to lack of competition for research space in local publishing context, writers of Malay articles are less inclined than their English language counterparts to make their work more prominent and appealing. This is most apparent when writers of Malay articles tend not to (i) employ extensive critical stance (cf. Ahmad, 1997; Amnuai & Wannaruk, 2013; Holmes, 1997; Jogthong, 2001; Loi, 2010; Loi & Sweetnam Evans, 2010; Peacock, 2002; Taylor & Chen, 1991) and (ii) negotiate their stance by opening up the probability that the writer's own position is one of many.

4. Conclusion

Generally, it is seen that in both corpora, the discursive activities rest heavily on the writers' manipulation of three linguistic resources (Attitudes, Graduation and Engagement) to create a convincing stance as perceived by members of the two discourse communities. In the conclusions, writers navigate the reader by aligning their works with the meta-evaluation thus signalling that their study is warranted or worthwhile. This is reflected in the employment of Move 2 Step 1 (indicating significance) and Move 3 Step 1 (providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication).

Compared to Malay conclusions, English conclusions display a greater tendency to use both inscribed Attitude and Graduation evoked Attitude to assert the writer's position and perspective (151 per English conclusion vs. 85.2 per Malay conclusion). This suggests that English conclusions display a higher degree of critical stance. Within the individual corpus, English writers construct a subtle equilibrium between contraction and expansion to produce a reader-friendly and at the same time, an assertive prose displaying the writers' "authority as an expert knower" (Martin & White, 2005, pp. 13-14).

Malay conclusions on the other hand, employ proportionally more contracting devices compared to expanding devices. This might suggest that Malay conclusions are less reader-friendly. This tendency is perhaps due to Malay (non-English) being a more reader-responsible prose which does not require the writer to explicitly invite readers' participation in the dialogue (Hinds, 1987; Loi & Sweetnam Evans, 2010). In this case,

the absence of expansion devices would be seen as an implicit recognition of the reader's autonomy and ability to participate in dialogue whether invited or not (Hyland, 1996, p. 446). On the other hand, from the perspective of writer's responsibility for effective communication in English writing, English writers may feel obliged to engage in this explicit dynamic process of shifting alignments (contraction and expansion) in relation to more than one potential proposition.

The above findings show how rhetorical meanings are achieved and reinforced by writers of both corpora as a result of co-articulation of the linguistic resources employed (cf. Chang & Schleppegrell, 2011). In other words, evaluative stance (Attitudes), force of the stance (Graduation) and dialogic stance (Engagement resources) jointly produce the rhetorical effects in both conclusions.

Following up Ahmed's (2004) claim that it is essential for writers to acquire suitable discoursal expertise and adhere to the guidelines of their discourse communities regarding preferred communicative styles if they want to be successful participants in those communities (Ahmed, 2004), we believe the knowledge resulting from the present study has applied value and is able to contribute to this 'discoursal expertise'. That is, knowledge relating to both the interplay of linguistic and discursive strategies to serve different argumentative purposes in concluding the writer's research. Such strategies are outlined in Table 4 in Appendix and Malay ESL learners can exploit these guidelines to achieve a subtle balance of assertion and mitigation for a compelling and yet persuasive arguments or stance-taking in their academic prose.

In addition, with knowledge of the distinctive rhetorical features in each of the two languages (English and Malay), Malay students will be aware that the expectations of native English-speaking readers are different from those of Malay-speaking readers. This could perhaps make the rhetorical aspects of English academic writing more visible and attainable for these students. EAP writing instructors should be aware that Malay ESL students might base their EAP writing on a set of rhetorical forms that differ from that of English. This should allow writing instructors to make informed pedagogical decisions that are grounded in the understanding of the possible socio-cultural heritage and preferred rhetorical strategies in both languages, to guide Malay ESL students in producing acceptable and comprehensible English academic writings.

The findings can also be used to advocate academic writing strategies for Malay research writers who intend to publish their research in international English language journals. With the recognition of English as the international language of research and scholarship, it becomes necessary for Malay researchers to adapt to the expectations of native English speakers.

Finally, this is a preliminary study which has limited its scope to a single research article section and a single discipline by exploring the stances of writers in English and Malay conclusions within the field of psychology. Because relatively small corpora are used (20 conclusions from each corpus – 40 in total), the present study does not aim to generalize the findings to an entire discipline of psychology. The strength of the present study is that the results are credible enough to generate suggestions for the teaching of English academic writing to Malay ESL learners. However, a more wide-ranging examination of stance-taking in English and Malay research articles in their entirety across a variety of disciplines is deserving of future research.

Acknowledgements

Appendix

Table 4

Appraisal/Engagement options and linguistic realization used to achieve rhetorical moves and discursive effects in research article conclusions

Move/Step	Discursive Stance	Appraisal/Engagement Options	Linguistic Realizations
Move 1 Summarizing the study			
Step 1 Presenting overall findings and/or Step 4 Reiterating the objective/focus of the study	To assert the writer's points of arguments or to state the certainty of the writer's knowledge in presenting overall findings in terms of intensity and quantity of a phenomenon as well as enhancement of a process	Graduation (i) to graduate high or low force in evoking appreciation in terms of	
		(a) Intensity	-Modifiers [e.g., **very** different (E2); limited **further** (E7); **more** research (E8); **kurang** sempurna/ **less** complete (M3)]
		(b) Quantity	-Quantifiers that enable comparison [e.g., **several** risk factors; **few** differences (E7)]
		(c) Enhancement	-Adverbs [e.g., **fully** explained (E8)]
		Contraction (i) to proclaim (presenting convincing findings)	-Adverbs showing high force [e.g., our results **strongly** support (E15)/ can be seen **clearly** (M1)**]** -Noun phrases which signal an implication of a phenomenon [e.g., the fact that … (E7)]
		(ii) to disclaim (to negate the correlation between variables/to negate a phenomenon)	-Negations (i) Verbal [e.g., **does not** or **cannot** access to ... (E5)] (ii) Nominal [e,g,. there is **no** significant ... (E3)]

		Expansive (i) to entertain (present alternative perspectives in findings without fully commitment to statements made)	-Modality of possibility [e.g., could (E8), mungkin (may) (M14)]
Step 2 Making reference to past studies and/or	To support the writer's arguments by acknowledging similar findings in past research	Expansion Attribute (arriving at an evaluation through a comparison of the writer's own study with that in the literature)	-Non-integral citations [e.g., such an explanation is congruent with the results of previous studies on ... (Bargh et al., 1996; Zemack-Rugar et al., 2007) (E18)]
Step 3 Making reference to issues related to a research topic	To distance other perspectives on an issue	Attribute (referring to different perspectives given by past researchers on issues related to research topic)	Integral citations (e.g., Wall, Jackson, Mullarkey, and Parker (1996) argued that...)
	To contract a perspective with assertion by referring to existing knowledge related to research topic	Contraction (i) proclaim (present a perspective on an issue without negotiation with a support from existing knowledge on research topic)	-First person pronoun followed by a reporting verb [e.g., we believe (E14)]
Move 2 Evaluating the study			
Step 1 Indicating significance and/or	To inscribe a positive appreciation with regard to the merits of the present study	In terms of valuation	-Adjectives [e.g., important, tidak mustahil/not impossible; it is **worthy** of **additional** attention (E14)]
		In terms of reaction	-Comment/sentence disjuncts [e.g., unfortunately (E19); hopefully (E3); uniquely (E5)]
	To evoke a positive appreciation in relation to the contribution of the present study (e.g., filling in the past gap)	Graduation (i) to graduate with high force on the values of the study	-Adjectives that signal relative value/positioning [e.g., the current study is among the **first** to provide (E4)]; the **first** to examine (E5)] -Modifier [e.g., provide **strong** explanatory links (E4)]
Step 2 Indicating a limitation and/or	To mitigate a valuation	Expansion (i) to entertain (mitigate claims that the findings are significant/the findings are able to provide contribution for future study)	-Modality of possibility [e.g., mungkin/may (M14), perhaps (E12)]
	To inscribe a negative appreciation in terms of the constraints of the present study	To explicitly describe the limitation of the study	-Adjectives that signal limitation/constraint [e.g., the lie detection capacity of our approach is **limited** (E7)]

	To evoke a negative appreciation with regard to a lower number of subjects used in the sampling	To graduate low force on the limitation of the study	-Adverbs showing limited quantity [e.g., **hanya** menggunakan seorang responden (**only** used one respondent) (M14)]
Step 3 Providing a counter-claim and/or	To contract a limitation of the study and then to entertain a value existing within the findings	Contraction and Expansion (i) to disclaim (to provide a counter-claim to the limitation of the study) and then entertain a value existing within the findings	-Conjunctions that concede and evidential [e.g., **although** the present sample cannot be assumed ... it **appears** to be a fair proxy ... (E19)]
	To inscribe a negative appreciation on previously conducted research	To inscribe the gap in past research using adjectives suggesting limitation	-Adjectives [e.g., **small** amount of literature available ... (E5)]
	To evoke a negative appreciation on previously conducted research	To evoke the gap in past studies/a weakness of a phenomenon related to the research topic using low force Graduation	-Quantifiers that enable comparison [e.g., **few** studies have actually examined (E4)] -Adverbs showing limited focus of a phenomenon [e.g., **hanya** memfokuskan kepada penerangan tentang /**only** focused on explanation about (M2)]
Step 4 Giving a justification and/or Step 5 Providing an explanation		Contraction (ii) to disclaim the writer's position by accentuating a point	-Adverbs that accentuate a point [e.g., few studies have **actually** examined (E4)]
Move 3 Providing a deduction			
Step 1 Providing a pedagogical/theoretical implication and/or	To assert a claim on the implications of the present study	Contraction (i) to proclaim (to emphasize the theoretical implication of the study)	-Modality of necessity [e.g., **should** be considered (E6)] -Abstract nouns which signal an evaluative implication [e.g., **emphasis** should be given to the three main aspects of this study ... (M10)] -Verbs that signal an evaluative implication [e.g., from an applied perspective, these results **emphasize** the importance of ... (E20)] -First person pronoun with a reporting verb [e.g., **we** believe that ... (E14)]
Step 2 Providing a suggestion for future research	To mitigate a valuation	Expansion (i) to entertain (mitigate claims	-Modality of possibility [e.g., mungkin/may (M14), perhaps (E12), could (E8)]

	To evoke a positive appreciation in relation to suggestions for future research	To graduate high force for suggestions given/justifications made on future studies	-Comparative and superlative adjectives [e.g., ... **best** to give a **broader** description ... (M14)] -Modality of necessity [e.g., .. .the findings **should** not be used to generalize ... (M14)]
	To entertain suggestions for future study To entertain arguments/justifications	Expansive (i) entertain Entertain (providing alternative perspectives concerning suggestions for future studies)	-Modality of possibility [e.g., **might** produce robust results (E15); **mungkin** berbeza/**may** differ (M4)]
	To entertain speculative possibilities/alternatives to explanations in order to limit the writer's commitment to his/her statements (see Hyland, 1996)		-Conditionals that specify the limit within which a claim holds (e.g., **considering** ... , we propose that … (E8); emphasis was placed on optimal activities at work, **on the conditions** favouring ... (E1)]

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