# The textual colligation of stance phraseology in cross-disciplinary academic discourses: the timing of authors' self-projection

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Lexical items, according to Hoey (2005, p.13) "are primed to occur in or avoid, certain positions within the discourse". An analysis of textual colligation, the term Hoey (2005) uses to denote such priming, explores the textual position of linguistic markers in relation to textual structures. Recent studies have examined the textual colligation of particular words or phrases (e.g., Hoey & O'Donnell, 2008; Mahlberg, 2009; O'Donnell et al., 2012). Textual colligation explores the textual position of linguistic markers in relation to textual structures and the interaction between the textual position and discourse functions (Hoey, 2005). Previous studies have enriched our understanding of textual colligation of particular linguistic features such as keywords or key phrases in a text. This study investigates the textual colligation of a type of linguistic marker typical for one particular semantic group, namely, stance. Informed by previous approaches to stance (e.g., Biber et al., 1999; Hunston, 2011; Hyland, 2005; Martin &White, 2005), the study employs a classification framework which distinguishes between four types of stance phrases: attitude, reference, hedges, and cognitive (or epistemic).

This quantitative study investigates the textual colligation of stance phrases in academic discourse in the disciplines of agriculture and economics. The study employs a purpose-built corpus of 655 published research articles totalling around 3 million tokens. We use Wordskew software (Barlow, 2016) to investigate the position (or colligation) of stance phrases at the level of sentence, paragraph and text, and examine the existence of disciplinary variation with respect to the textual colligation of these phrases.

Disciplinary variation was found in the association between the stance phrases and the particular text positions (sentence, paragraph and text), which may be a reflection of disciplinary practice. For instance, the agriculture corpus contained significantly more cognitive, attitude and hedge stance phrases in the sentence-initial and medial positions. In contrast, the economics corpus contained significantly more reference stance phrases in the sentence-initial and medial position, reflecting perhaps the disciplinary practice in economics to depart from making reference to a text (e.g., to the author's own study, an external resource, shared knowledge or a different part of the same text), when presenting a proposition.

Nevertheless, the proportion of stance phrases in each of the three textual positions is notably similar in the two disciplines. It may be inferred that the textual position of particular stance phrases may be a result of the type of routinized discourse or communicative function these serve (Hoey, 2005).

Reference phrases have a tendency to occur in the sentence-initial positions, possibly due to the fact that the sentence-initial positions allow writers to treat these phrases as the point of departure for new information in the sentence. Cognitive, hedges, and attitude phrases were found to have a preference for the sentence-medial positions. The association suggests that the researchers in the two disciplines

tend to express their projection in a less notable way by expressing stance in sentential non-salient positions. In contrast, a smaller proportion of stance phrases occurred in sentence-final positions. At the level of paragraph and text, both disciplines tend to use a high percentage of stance phrases in the medial position. Hedge phrases, however, occurred more frequently at the paragraph- and text- final than the initial position.

The use of Wordskew has contributed to revealing the text positions at the sentence, paragraph, and text level. It provides an efficient way to quantify the textual position of particular linguistic features, and contributes to visualising the distribution of particular linguistic features in the organization of a text.

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