

Pre-service EFL teachers' language awareness and ideologies about stance: A phenomenographic study

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ABSTRACT

Stance is both a key and problematic domain for effective English for Academic Purposes (EAP) reading and writing. Insufficient awareness of the stance, cultural attitudes, and poor teaching have been identified as underlying sources of stance-related difficulties. Focusing on stance may thus be a pivotal reading-to-write lens to improve English academic literacy. However, few studies have investigated pre-service teachers' language awareness and ideologies about different stance markers. The goal of this paper is to describe the stance-focused conceptions and ideologies of a group of sixteen Mexican undergraduate pre-service teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) who are also EFL learners. We used phenomenographic interviews and analysis to achieve this goal. We found three types of conceptions: stylistic, critical, and metaideological. The less sophisticated stylistic conceptions are the most prevalent. Only two participants showed metaideological conceptions. Two language ideologies were found: an ideology of linguistic objectivity that dismisses all stance markers and another that values affect markers but dismisses first-person ones. The participants were not generally able to comprehend authorial perspectives encoded by stance and tended to evaluate stance-containing texts as unacademic, notably if they contained first-person markers. These results imply that pre-service teachers should be made aware of the argumentative and epistemic functions of stance markers. They should also increase their awareness of diverse language ideologies about such markers that circulate across national and disciplinary contexts. In this way, they may deploy stance more effectively in their literacy practices and become more effective EAP teachers.

Keywords: English for Academic Purposes; language awareness; language ideology; pre-service teachers; stance.

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INTRODUCTION

Recently, there has been an increased interest in the perceptions of academic writing of students in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) (Alhojailan, 2021; Alshakhi, 2019; Nabhan, 2021). This interest has extended to a key area of academic English: stance (Chang, 2016; Zhang & Zhang, 2022), sometimes also called voice (Lancaster, 2019). Effective English for Academic Purposes (EAP) writing involves careful control of the linguistic

resources used to convey stance, or "the writer's expression of personal attitudes and assessments of the status of knowledge in a text" (Hyland & Jiang, 2016, p. 251). However, this writing area is often difficult for undergraduate and graduate EFL and ESL (English as a Second Language) writers. These difficulties have been linked to insufficient awareness of stance markers and their role in constructing knowledge argumentatively (Jou, 2019; Vega Garrido, 2019; Zhang & Zhang, 2021). Stance

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markers also play a role in helping readers identify several perspectives in texts, a task with difficulties connected to insufficient language awareness of stance markers (Barzilai & Weinstock, 2020; Tosi, 2017). These common difficulties across reading and writing and their connection to awareness suggest that focusing on stance could be a reading-to-write lens, that is, a systematic way of interacting with texts while paying attention to specific textual features and their effects (De Piero, 2019).

Scholars have thus turned attention to students' thinking about stances. Cultural perceptions, beliefs, attitudes, and ideologies preferring texts without authorial intrusion and/or with authoritative stances have been identified as underpinning some of these difficulties in writers of different language backgrounds (Chang, 2016; El-Dakhs et al., 2020; Hashemi & Hosseini, 2019; Liu & Huang, 2017; Perales-Escudero, 2021; Perales-Escudero & Sandoval, 2021; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Specifically, Moreno (2021, p. 3) states that Spanish researchers "tend to be less evaluative of their own and others' work" for cultural reasons and transfer this trend to their EFL writing. This fact is relevant to our study because our participants are native speakers of Spanish, like most Mexicans (Serrano, 2021). Such beliefs contrast that contemporary English-language publications across disciplines tend to display more personal, evaluative, and tentative stances (Hyland & Jiang, 2016). Perales-Escudero and Sandoval (2021) have suggested that critical language awareness (or lack thereof) and language ideology are important aspects of student thinking that may explain some of their difficulties with stance. These two constructs critical language awareness and language ideology are defined in the following paragraphs in that order. A key literacy domain for language teachers is critical language awareness. Pre-service teachers who are critically aware of language are "able to discern persuasive (not neutral) manifestations of worldviews expressed through vocabulary choices, as well as syntactic and other constructions" (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 2). Stance markers are among those vocabulary choices.

Language ideologies are naturalized beliefs and values about language(s) and their use shared (albeit not uniformly) by a community and used to justify or rationalize linguistic usage, attitudes, or behaviors (Silverstein, 1979, as cited in Rodríguez-Iglesias, 2021). Ideologies are sociocognitive in nature; they organize attitudes and control people's discourse (van Dijk, 2016). They are thus a higher-order concept than other constructs used to study students' thinking about stances, like perceptions, conceptions, or attitudes. Chang (2016) found stance conceptions related to subjectivity vs. objectivity but

did not theorize them from an ideological framework. Language ideologies are developed in specific sociocultural contexts, especially educational ones (Rodríguez-Iglesias, 2021). Critical, metaideological language awareness seems to be a requirement for multilingual readers and writers to develop a stance-focused reading-to-write lens.

A focus on stance involves acknowledging the role of subjectivity and persuasion in knowledge-making, that is, the epistemic role of subjects as agents in knowledge production and communication. Hyland (2005) proposed a model of writer-reader interaction that included the concept of stance. Hyland and Jiang (2016) revised Hyland's (2005) original stance model into three dimensions: presence, affect, and evidentiality. Presence refers to the explicit authorial intrusion in a paper, most clearly expressed by the pronouns "I/we/me/us" and possessives. Affect refers to the expression of attitudes, that is, of emotional reactions ("a surprising result") and evaluations ("rigorous methods," "limited findings"). Evidentiality is the strength of authorial commitment to propositions, amplified by boosters (e.g., "very") or diminished by hedges (e.g., "could"). Contrastive discourse analysis has shown that these markers are less prevalent in Spanish-language publications than in English-language ones across disciplines due to cultural attitudes and ideologies (Moreno, 2021; Perales-Escudero, 2018).

The tendency to objectify academic English adds further complexity to the teaching and learning of stance. Within this trend, academic English is taught as a transparent, neutral vehicle for knowledge without examining the role of specific language domains, like stance, in the ideological construction of knowledge (Chun & Morgan, 2019). This objectification may lie behind the poor teaching of stance and other features identified by Ho and Li (2018) as a source of student difficulties when writing persuasive genres.

These issues are relevant for undergraduate students who will become EFL and/or English for Academic Purposes (EAP) teachers. From a critical perspective, pre-service EFL/EAP teachers should be able to reflect on language ideologies and their effects to promote change in EFL/EAP teaching and teacher training (Chun & Morgan, 2019). They should show metaideological awareness (Alim, 2010, as cited in Lindahl, 2020). Nevertheless, few studies have focused on teachers' and students' contextualised conceptions and ideologies about specific types of stance markers. Previous studies (e.g., Chang, 2016; Zhang & Zhang, 2022) have focused on stance patterns (i.e., tentative vs. assertive stances) rather than specific linguistic markers. A phenomenographic approach holds

promise to study student understandings of language features and their learning (Norberg et al., 2018) and the ideologies behind them (Pilkinton-Pihko, 2010) as situated in specific social contexts (Hajar, 2021).

Our goal is to describe the conceptions and ideologies about stance markers of a group of Spanish-L1 Mexican pre-service EFL teachers who are writing theses to graduate from a BA program in ELT and are English learners. For these students, the complexity of performing advanced literacy tasks is compounded by the differences between English and Spanish. These differences pertain to grammar or vocabulary, discursive practices, and language ideologies.

Romance languages and English differ in the discursive practices traditionally used to construct knowledge in research papers in the social sciences and the humanities; a key factor in this difference is a language ideology prescribing that scientific discourse should be devoid of any subjectivity markers so that it can be a transparent and neutral conduit of reality (Bennet, 2013). This has been called “the ideology of objectivity” or IO (Perales-Escudero & Sandoval, 2021). The IO is prevalent in prescriptions about Spanish-language scientific publications, which proscribe subjectivity and emphasize objectivity and neutrality (Giraldo-Giraldo, 2017).

A different ideology appears to have developed in the Anglophone scientific discourse during the twenty-first century. This ideology of explicit authorial stance (IEAS; Perales-Escudero & Sandoval, 2021) is exemplified by Hyland’s (2005, p. 173) assertion that “academic writing has gradually lost its traditional tag as an objective, faceless and impersonal form of discourse and come to be seen as a persuasive endeavor involving interaction between writers and readers.” It is also found in Graff and Birkenstein’s (2014, p. xvi) statement that “writing well means engaging the voices of others and letting them, in turn, engage us.”

The IEAS is indexed by the inclusion of stance markers such as author self-mentions, hedges, and attitude markers. These are relatively common in English scientific discourse across disciplines and genres, including applied linguistics (Hyland & Jiang, 2016), the field in which our participants are socialized academically. Of course, the IO and the IEAS are present in English and Spanish and vary across disciplines, but the IO appears to be more visible in Spanish-language prescriptions (Perales-Escudero & Sandoval, 2021). We do not think of these ideologies as “good” or “bad” but as functional or not across linguistic and disciplinary contexts, genres, and writing tasks.

Then, being aware of stance markers and ideologies about them is important for the critical language awareness of pre-service EFL teachers since such awareness involves the ability to access

and critique powerful discourses used to make knowledge. As Alim (2010, as cited in Lindahl, 2020) states, language teachers should be aware of language ideologies to enhance their critical abilities and professional practice.

This is relevant because many Mexican pre-service teachers go on to teach EAP. However, Perales-Escudero and Sandoval (2021) found that large numbers of Mexican pre-service EFL teachers were unaware of stance ideologies and held IO-grounded negative attitudes toward stance in research papers. This result may stem from the fact that many participants were first-year students with little academic socialization.

Senior-year pre-service teachers may be more aware of stances and ideologies about it due to greater academic socialization. In Mexico, they typically write a thesis in English to obtain their degree (Méndez, 2019), which involves identifying and comparing different viewpoints across sources and taking stances about them. They also receive explicit academic writing instruction in both English and Spanish. Thus, their academic socialization is at a more advanced stage. At such stages, students’ and supervisors’ “ideologies collude and compete, shaping their identities and positioning them in different ways” (Darvin & Norton, 2019, p. 181). Thus, it makes senior year an interesting moment to investigate pre-service teachers’ ideologies about academic language.

These senior-year pre-service EFL teachers may hold different conceptions and ideologies about different types of stance markers, such as first-person (“I/we”) vs. affect (e.g., “a surprising result”), that are common in published papers. This possibility has not been explored by previous studies and may have implications for how pre-service teachers evaluate the sources they read in terms of their prestige and credibility. These are important aspects of source evaluation (Barzilai & Weinstock, 2020), a key literate activity in academic reading-to-write tasks. Therefore, this paper addresses the following questions:

- (1) When reading texts with similar content but different stance makers, which texts do a group of senior-year Mexican pre-service EFL teachers choose as published and credible?
- (2) What conceptions and ideologies about stance markers are found in their justifications for their choices?
- (3) How aware are the participants of ideologies about stance markers?

Addressing these questions is relevant to both local and global audiences considering recurrent findings showing stance-related difficulties across ESL/EFL student populations of several nationalities and L1 backgrounds (Chang, 2016; El-Dakhs et al., 2020; Hashemi & Hosseini, 2019; Jou,

2019; Liu & Huang, 2017; Perales-Escudero, 2021; Perales-Escudero & Sandoval, 2021; Zhang & Zhang, 2022). Therefore, the findings of this study may be usefully extrapolated by teachers and scholars working with diverse groups of students in international contexts. Further, a focus on pre-service teachers affords opportunities to enhance their training and future performance as EAP teachers.

METHOD

This is a qualitative, phenomenographic study. We use simple counts of conceptions and participants as a mechanism of qualitative validity (Yin, 2016) that has been followed by previous studies (Chang, 2016). To study critical language awareness and language ideology, we chose the phenomenographic construct of conceptions. Conceptions are the unit of analysis of phenomenography, a theoretical and methodological tradition that is focused on describing the range of variation in context-embedded ways of understanding different aspects of learning and teaching (Hajar, 2021). Conceptions are the minimal units of conscious experience of a phenomenon, verbalized in discourse. Phenomenography assumes that some conceptions are more complex than others because they include more aspects of a phenomenon (called themes or dimensions) and/or represent those themes with greater clarity and depth (Marton & Pong, 2005).

Phenomenography takes a second-order perspective: one that is interested in ideas about things (stance in our study) rather than in the things themselves (actual ways in which stance markers are used in scientific and academic writing) (Hajar, 2021). It is useful to investigate learners' understanding of the target language (Norberg et al., 2018). Pilkinton-Pihko (2010) shows that conceptions can be examined to reveal the presence of ideologies in ELT. The goal of any phenomenographic study is to produce an outcome space, that is, a hierarchically arranged set of categories (groups of conceptions) describing how the participants experience different themes related to the same phenomenon in a continuum from less to more complex ways.

Phenomenography distinguishes between two aspects of experience: the referential aspect and the structural aspect. Phenomenographers differ in their definition of these concepts. We follow González-Ugalde (2014) in defining the former as conceptions of the object of learning and the latter as how learning is approached and why. This study focuses on the referential aspect.

We elicited the conceptions about the stances of 16 Mexican senior-year students (4 men and 12 women) of a BA in English Language Teaching at a Mexican public university. Their age range was 20-22. These conceptions were extracted from an equal

number of semi-structured phenomenographic interview transcripts. The longest interview lasted 42:22 minutes; the shortest, 15:01 minutes. The average length of the interviews was 22:02 minutes. The sample meets the minimum size of 15 participants recommended by Trigwell (2000) for phenomenographic studies. Word of mouth was used to find the participants. Sampling was purposive (Hajar, 2021): the participants needed to be seniors writing a thesis. The participants were contacted and asked for informed consent through Microsoft Teams ©.

A textual judgment task (Chang, 2016) and a semi-structured phenomenographic interview were used. Participants were asked to read four short, made-up texts with different stance markers and say a) which text was an excerpt from the introduction of a published research paper and why, and b) which text was a more reliable source and why. Interviews were prepared and conducted online using Microsoft Teams © and Hajar's (2021) guidelines. The instrument with the texts was emailed to the participants a few minutes before the interview. During the interview, the participants were encouraged to refer to the specific text segments that were the focus of their answers and to use the cursor to show them. This is consistent with the goal of phenomenographic interviews, namely, to bring the phenomena in focus to the participants' awareness (Hajar, 2021).

The first author wrote the four texts (found in Appendix A) with the goal of making their stance markers and overall patterns different. The texts differed along presence ("I," "my"), affect (attitude markers such as "essence," "critical," and "outdated"), and evidentiality (the booster "very"). The affect differences textualized two different perspectives on the centrality of learner autonomy. Version A included both types of markers. B excluded presence markers and had fewer and less intense attitude markers (e.g., "change" instead of "transform," with the latter showing a boosted positive attitude) and a booster ("very"). C included presence markers and, like B, was less attitudinal. D excluded presence markers but did not affect ones. The differences in the stance markers across the four versions were validated by a native speaker expert with several stance-focused publications. He found version D to be the most authoritative and show greater authorial distance, with A also being authoritative but more interactional. He found A and C to be interactional but less authoritative (Lancaster, personal communication). Table 1 summarizes version differences.

Table 1
Stance Differences Across Versions

Version	Presence	Affect	Evidentiality
A	+	+	+
B	-	-	-
C	+	-	-

D - + +

Two versions of the instrument were prepared, each containing the four text versions in a different order. Half of the participants read one of these, and the other half read the other. The participants were familiar with the topic because they were taking a course on distance learning at the time of data collection. The participants were interviewed in their native language (Spanish; the examples below are our translations) using Microsoft Teams ©. Interviews had three parts. First, the students were asked general questions about their names, ages, and topic knowledge. Then, they were asked to open the instrument, share their screen, and read the four texts critically and comparatively to determine which version corresponded to a published paper (an indication of prestige) and which version they found more credible.

They were also instructed to think about the reasons for their choices. They were asked to take as long as needed and tell the interviewers once they were ready. Then, they were asked questions about their choices and the reasons for them, encouraging them to say which specific textual segments gave them the impression that a version was published and/or more credible than the others. Impromptu why questions were asked as needed to raise their awareness of their thinking, a key point in phenomenographic interviews (González-Ugalde, 2014).

Our coding followed a discovery, team-based, iterative approach (Åkerlind, 2005). The first two authors generated an initial set of codes from reading half of the interviews and jointly comparing for similarities and differences. Ideologies were identified through words expressing feelings and attitudes (Pilkinton-Pihko, 2010), references to the context and the ingroup (e.g., “what we have learned now while writing our theses”), and modals of obligation (e.g., “you have to remove yourself from the text, so you won’t make any judgments”) (Despaigne & Sánchez, 2021; VanDijk, 2016). We bracketed our conceptions as much as possible but were mindful of their influence on our interpretations.

These initial codes were then applied to the other eight interviews. New codes emerged, and existing ones were refined. Each code reflected a conception and/or ideology. The first and second authors grouped the conceptions into categories by discussing their similarities and differences. The third author audited the coding by applying the stable set of codes to eight randomly chosen interviews. He found the same codes in the same segments. This dialogic reliability check is important for phenomenography validity and reliability (Hajar, 2021). The analysis was done manually, labelling and grouping relevant interview segments using Microsoft Word © and Microsoft Excel ©, and constantly making and comparing

notes, relabelling and regrouping the segments as needed. The participants were then assigned to their main and achieved categories (Hsieh & Tsai, 2017). A participant’s main category is the one s/he expressed the most conceptions about, and an achieved category is the hierarchically most advanced category for which a participant expressed at least one conception. In some cases, the main and achieved categories overlap.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following sections present and discuss our findings. First, an overview of the ideologies and conceptions that were found is presented. Then, each experiential category, or group of conceptions, is discussed separately, along with related ideologies.

Overview of Ideologies and Conceptions

Table 2 shows the participants’ preferred versions and ideologies. To answer question 1, B and D (both -presence) were preferred as published and credible versions. B was chosen as published by 8 participants and as the most credible version by 7. D was chosen as also published by 8 participants and as the most credible version by 9. The versions with presence (A and C) were not chosen as published, and only one participant (P16) chose them as credible, but he also chose B as equally credible.

These data hint at a strong presence of the IO as shown in the rightmost column and in examples 1 and 2 below.

- (1) What I have learned recently while writing my thesis is the formal quality, you have to be very careful and remove yourself from your writing so you won’t make any value judgments or bias your work. Then I think 4 [B] is the published one. [P1]
- (2) Text 3 (B) is the published one, we’ve been told that we cannot use expressions like “I believe” or “for me,” right? Instead, we must write impersonally. [P6].

P1 refers clearly to contextual mandates when he explains that, while writing his thesis, he has learned about the need to exclude self-mentions and avoid expressing affect. Similarly, P6 makes explicit references to being taught to avoid first-person forms when explaining her choice of version B as published. These statements reveal the IO. A pedagogical implication of this finding is the need to make teacher trainers more aware of the valued functions of stance markers in English-language applied linguistics discourse. This awareness should extend to the register and genre appropriateness and frequencies of different stance markers. Further examples of the IO and the IEAS are shown together with our discussion of the outcome space in Table 3

Table 2
Participants' Preferred Versions and Ideologies

Participant	Published version	Most credible version	Ideologies
P1	B	B	IO/IEAS
P2	D	B	IO/IEAS
P3	D	D	IO
P4	D	D	IO/IEAS
P5	B	D	IO/IEAS
P6	B	D	IO/IEAS
P7	B	D	IO/IEAS
P8	D	B	IO/IEAS
P9	B	D	IO
P10	D	D	IO/IEAS
P11	D	D	IO/IEAS
P12	B	D	IO
P13	D	D	IO/IEAS
P14	D	B	IO/IEAS
P15	B	B	IO
P16	B	A, B and C	IO

Table 3
The Outcome Space

Category	Affect	Presence	Participants
Stylistic (120 / 74.5%)	Advanced/formal/expert vocabulary and sentence structure	Inappropriate authorial intrusion	P1*, P2, P3***, P4, P5, P6, P7, P8, P9*, P10*, P11, P12***, P13***, P14***, P15***, P16
Critical (39 / 24.2%)	Appropriate or inappropriate authorial intrusion Appropriate or inappropriate persuasion Different authorial positions	Inappropriate authorial intrusion	P1, P2***, P4***, P5***, P6***, P7***, P8*, P9**, P10**, P11***, P16***
Metaideological (2 / 1.2%)	Resistance to prescription	Differences across languages	P1**, P8**

*Main category

**Achieved category

***Both main and achieved category

Table 3 and the discussion of specific examples address questions 2 and 3. We found 161 conceptions that we grouped into three experiential categories: stylistic conceptions, critical conceptions, and metaideological conceptions. These are hierarchical, with the metaideological category being the most complex one and inclusive of the others. The second most complex category is the critical one; it includes the least complex stylistic category. The themes were affect and presence, with variations in how they were conceived. The IO and the IEAS were found in combination with the different experiential categories. Some participants expressed both ideologies. The examples below illustrate these findings.

Stylistic Conceptions

These category groups conceptions focused on affect markers as advanced, formal, academic, or expert vocabulary that contributes to good sentence

structure and to the published status and credibility of a text. The latter aspect is similar to the conception of stance as showing professionalism found by Chang (2016). It also includes conceptions that identified presence markers (but not affect or evidentiality markers) as revealing authorial intrusion, and this intrusion through presence was thought of as informal and subjective.

These stylistic conceptions underpinned the dismissal of A and C as not published and not credible; their language was deemed too informal and conveyed “just someone’s opinions” rather than sound reasons or facts. This was taken as evidence of the IO and is similar to Chang’s (2016) conception of stance as indexing a study’s (in)accuracy. All participants held stylistic conceptions and for five of them (P3, P12, P13, P14, P15), this was both their main and achieved category. Below we discuss examples 3-5.

(3) The first two texts [A and C] have a language that is not so scientific and in 3

and 4 [B and D] the writing is more formal and the concepts are more formal and scientific. Text 2 [C] is more easily understood because its level is for any learner to be able to understand it. [P12]

- (4) I like the diction of texts 1 and 4 [A and D]. The words “transform” and “essence” are less common for me, and then they change the style and I like it. [P8]
- (5) I think all of them convey the same idea, but I noticed that in the first and second text, the person who wrote it refers to herself a lot as if it were her very personal experience, and in texts 3 and 4 [B and D] it is more general, it sounds more formal because of the vocabulary, it sounds less subjective because it doesn’t use words like “I,” “in my opinion,” “I have,” it sounds more objective and with more expertise. [P15]

P12 (example 3) refers to the vocabulary in the versions with presence (C) and presence and affect (A) as less scientific than that of the versions without the presence (B and D) or affect (B), which for her are more formal. Then she says C is written with words corresponding to a lower proficiency level (“any learner can understand”). This resonates with P8’s assessment of affect markers such as “essence” and “transform” as lower frequency lexis (example 4). P15 (example 5) illustrates the conception of noticing the authorial intrusion behind presence markers and thinking that this is subjective, whereas its exclusion shows objectivity. She thus chose B as the published and most credible text, which is evidence of the IO. The conception of stance markers merely in terms of being lower-frequency, more advanced words is evidence of the objectification of language in ELT (Chun & Morgan, 2019). A clear pedagogical implication for students with these conceptions is that teaching should encourage them to reflect on the argumentative and epistemic functions of stance. These include signalling authorial position and persuasive intent and how different stance markers expand or contract dialogic space while attempting to steer readers toward authorial perspectives.

Critical Conceptions

We labelled this category as “critical” because it includes conceptions that “discern persuasive (not neutral) manifestations of worldviews expressed through vocabulary choices [affect and evidentiality markers in our texts]” (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 2). A key difference with the previous category is that participants holding these conceptions read authorial intrusion (stance) in affect and evidentiality, which are less obvious manifestations of this intrusion than presence markers. In other words, participants with critical conceptions show some awareness of the

argumentative and epistemic functions of stance markers. These conceptions go beyond thinking of stance as vocabulary. Example 6 illustrates this.

- (1) In text 4 [D], we see that an opinion is given but not stated, it’s formal and indirect, and it’s the same opinion but not from the author’s viewpoint. Text 4 [D] is more credible because it’s not like someone’s viewpoint. Instead, it is a well-grounded opinion because of the way it is written [hovers the cursor over affect words]. I also think 4 is the published text because, unlike in 1 [A], the first person is not used, I feel it’s written in passive voice and that makes the style more formal. [P11]

P11 identified the authorial intrusion behind affect markers (“an opinion is given”). For him, the omission of presence markers combined with the inclusion of affect markers makes this opinion acceptable and credible because it is no longer personal. His statement that “it is a well-grounded opinion” suggests that he perceives and values the inclusion of affect markers as institutional mediators of the authorial voice, which no longer speaks from a merely individual perspective but projects that perspective through the shared professional values of the discipline (Hyland, 2012). These conceptions are consistent with the fact that applied linguistics uses affect markers to a greater extent than other fields and with the decrease in the use of self-mention in this field over time (Hyland & Jiang, 2016). It is evidence of affect-focused IEAS, i.e. valuing affect markers as associated with publications and lending credibility to texts. However, these participants may need teacher-guided reflections on the appropriateness of authorial self-references (i.e., first-person pronouns and possessives) in some genres and registers of applied linguistics and their specific rhetorical functions.

Participants also perceived the fact that affect and evidentiality encode authorial positions and seek to align readers with those positions. P16 (example 7) had very interesting conceptions about this. He chose B as published. He then chose all the versions but D as equally credible. His thinking was that the lack of presence markers in version D was tantamount to a dishonest attempt to disguise authorial persuasive intentions. These intentions were clearly signaled by presence markers in A and C, which to him meant that they were not trying to persuade him covertly. We see strong evidence of the IO in his conceptions:

- (2) In text 4, “there are several very critical opinions”, “very critical” is very subjective, and “outdated concepts” is equally subjective. It is subjective but they make it seem objective, disguising their

opinion as objective. I could say that in the first text, the writer acknowledges themselves and their viewpoint when writing about the essence, and the sentence is more understandable. That makes me think they are being sincere and again by saying “my preference” they’re acknowledging it’s theirs, they’re not trying to sell me something. Number three was the published one, the one accepted by the journal because it doesn’t make any judgments, it is formal and impersonal. [P16]

P16’s and other participants’ conceptions rejecting affect markers as inappropriate for publication signal a lack of awareness of the fact that these markers are frequently used in their field (Hyland & Jiang, 2016). They are also not aware that persuasion is an intrinsic and valued discursive feature of English academic writing. Then, these participants should be taught explicitly about the persuasive nature of academic writing, its acceptability, and the role of affect markers in textualizing such a nature. This is important so that they will not evaluate publications including affect markers negatively based on such inclusion only.

Examples 6, 7, and 8 show the existence of two groups of students in the critical category. On the one hand, there were those who, like P16 and P6, extended the scope of the IO to affect and evidentiality markers and dismissed versions with those markers as unpublished drafts or as lacking credibility. On the other, there were those who, like P11, appraised the inclusion of affect markers as appropriately conveying an authorial stance through the shared values of the field while still rejecting presence markers. This is evidence of the IEAS since affect and evidentiality are explicit expressions of authorial intrusion in the text, but also of the IO in the uniform rejection of presence. What these participants would need is opportunities to reflect on the non-dichotomous nature of these types of stance markers. They would need to be taught that both affect and presence markers can be used together, but such a writerly decision depends on the genre and register constraints and also on the specific communicative goals of concrete textual segments.

There was a third group of 7 participants with critical conceptions who hesitated when choosing between B or D as published and/or credible because of ideological dissonance between the IO and the IEAS. Some chose one of the versions as published and the other as credible. Others chose D first but then switched to B when realizing that affect and/or evidentiality encoded authorial intrusion and perspectives, as in example 8:

- (3) I would say 1 [D] is more credible, not text 2 [A] because 2 uses “very critical” and

that would be like a personal opinion, seeing it from his perspective, from the author’s perspective. I would say that’s why I choose 1. Well, 1 uses it, too though, so I don’t know anymore. [P6]

These data are evidence of the collusion and competition of ideologies posited by Darvin and Norton (2019). They also resonate with the two perceived dimensions of stance found by Zhang and Zhang (2022). The general dismissal of presence markers and the partial dismissal of affect ones may match what they call a preference for an authoritative, dialogically contractive stance. Participants should thus be made aware of the value placed in Anglophone applied linguistics discourse on dialogically expansive stances as well as combinations of dialogic contraction and expansion (Xu & Nesi, 2019). They should also be made aware of differences with Spanish-language applied linguistics in this regard, where authoritative, non-dialogic stances are preferred (Valerdi Zárata, 2021, 2022). In this way, they are more likely to negotiate the demands of academic literacies in both languages successfully.

Another conception in the critical category concerned the identification of changes in authorial position encoded by stance markers. Only 3 participants verbalized this kind of conception and took their own position about the topic.

- (4) They are different because 1 and 2 say that autonomy is the most important factor, and 3 and 4 that it is one aspect, one factor among others. I think 3 is more credible because it says it is an aspect, that is, autonomy is one factor in the teaching or learning of English and I agree with that and I don’t think it is the essence of it, I think it’s just one factor. [P2]

This small number is consistent with attested difficulties in identifying different perspectives when reading scientific texts (Barzilay & Weinstock, 2020; Tosi, 2017). This finding speaks to the need for teacher trainers to work on preservice teachers’ comprehension of multiple perspectives through the identification of stance markers and their functions.

Metaideological Conceptions

Only two participants (P1 and P8) held metaideological conceptions, that is, an awareness of language ideologies.

- (5) There is a difference between what is formal in Spanish and English. Being formal is different in English because in Spanish, we put everything in a passive voice to distance ourselves from the content, but in English, the passive voice is avoided even in formal writing, it is not as commonly used. [P1]

P1 shows awareness of differences related to the presence (active vs. passive voice in his words) across English and Spanish. Nevertheless, when reading the English-language texts in this study, he chose those without the presence or affect as published and credible. He attributed these choices to his learning to distance himself from his prose while writing his thesis, which is a process that happens in the context of a class and is done in English. Thus, it looks like IO-infused teaching trumped his awareness of the more personal stances found in English-language published papers.

Similar to P1, P8 also alluded to teaching as a vehicle for the IO in terms of avoiding affect and evidentiality and appears to resist the IO while manifesting the IEAS.

- (6) I remember we were once taught that we shouldn't use adjectives because a text must be straightforward, right? Without using so many adjectives. Seeing the word "critical" with "very," I don't know, I think sometimes adjectives are necessary. Even though we've been taught we shouldn't use them, I think they are necessary sometimes if you want to emphasize a point in a sentence. [P8]

The small number of participants in this category clearly suggests a need for interventions to raise pre-service teachers' metaideological awareness. Interestingly, when these and other participants manifested the IEAS they never connected it to explicit teaching. Like P8, they seem to have learned about it and internalized it (to varying degrees) on their own, perhaps through noticing the presence of stance markers while reading published applied linguistics articles. These references to the explicit teaching of the IO and the discovery of practices associated with the IEAS also relate to Darvin and Norton's (2019) assertion that supervisors and students are confronted with ideological tensions and dissonances in the process of academic socialization. It seems, then, that faculty members need to increase their own awareness of stance, its functions, and the ideologies about them in Spanish and English to better guide their students' academic writing processes.

Then, for question 2, participants displayed mostly stylistic conceptions, followed by critical ones. Metaideological conceptions were the scarcest. About question 3, most participants showed no metaideological awareness, as only P1 and P8 verbalized metaideological conceptions. This resonates with the total absence of metaideological awareness found by Perales-Escudero and Sandoval (2021). However, the fact that at least two participants in this study showed metaideological awareness suggests that senior status and being involved in thesis writing could lead to greater

metaideological awareness in pre-service EFL teachers and, perhaps, other EFL writers.

As for the ideological focus of question 2, we found evidence of both the IO and the IEAS in 11 participants, with the IO extending its scope to both presence and affect markers in 5 participants. The conception of texts with presence as being just opinions and the preference for the more authoritative-sounding versions resonate with Chang's (2016) findings that Taiwanese EFL learners prefer texts with authoritative stances and generally lack awareness of the epistemic and dialogic dimensions of stance. Thus, the IO, especially when it extends to affect, might explain Moreno's (2021) observation that Spanish authors tend not to use evaluation when writing in English.

CONCLUSIONS

A large number of stylistic conceptions and the fact that it was the main and achieved category of several participants point to a shallow approach to the teaching-learning of stance in the target context. This approach seems to be characterized by insufficient exploration of the argumentative-epistemic functions of stance in university writing and ideological differences in academic discourse across languages. It objectifies affect markers as advanced vocabulary (Chun & Morgan, 2019) instead of exploring their discursive and ideological dimensions. References to the explicit teaching of the IO and its presence across conceptions buttress our claim that a focus on language ideology as a sociocognitive construct may hold more explanatory power than other constructs, such as perceptions used in previous studies (e.g., Zhang & Zhang, 2022)

The similarities between our participants' conceptions and those of Asian students (Chang, 2016; Zhang & Zhang, 2021, 2022) indicate that this shallow approach may place large groups of college EFL readers and writers at a disadvantage when negotiating the different demands of academic literacy tasks in multilingual environments. A deeper approach would be needed to remedy this situation, addressing the epistemic, argumentative, and ideological dimensions of stance in research papers while exploring the students' own conceptions and ideologies. This would enable a focus on stance to become a reading-to-write lens (De Piero, 2019) that may improve both EAP reading and writing.

Alternative forms of inquiry such as autoethnography are increasingly common in the fields of applied linguistics and teacher education (Sardabi et al., 2020). These alternative forms of knowledge-making often resist the dichotomy between the object and subject of study and thus also resist the proscription of stance markers, most prominently of present ones. In parallel, all types of

stance markers continue to be common in applied linguistics despite their decreasing frequency (Hyland & Jiang, 2016). Nonetheless, our findings suggest that large groups of Spanish-L1 pre-service EFL/EAP teachers are likely to dismiss texts showing clear links between knowledge and the subjectivity of those who produce it as having little credibility or lacking the prestige associated with publication. This appears to be due to the IO, particularly in those cases where it extends to affect and evidentiality markers. While this ideology may be effective in reading and writing academic texts in more positivist traditions, it may also preclude access to alternative forms of knowledge and praxis for those pre-service teachers who hold it. It may also prevent them from teaching English-language academic reading and writing effectively in their future careers.

The results also indicate that teacher educators reproduce the IO, whereas the IAES appears to be internalized through self-discovery and applied only to affect and evidentiality markers. These practices relate to structural aspects of experience that were not our focus, so further research on them is needed. Awareness of both ideologies is very limited. Then, our results have clear implications for the training of EFL/EAP teachers and teacher educators. Training, particularly EAP training, should include opportunities to bring academic language ideologies and the epistemic and argumentative functions of stance to conscious awareness and to reflect on them critically. As discussed in the previous section, this should be done according to the needs of students in different experiential categories. The scant detection of authorial perspective shifts as signalled by stance markers is also a site for pedagogical interventions aimed at increasing perspective comprehension. In terms of source evaluation, students need to learn that the inclusion of affect and presence markers is not grounds to dismiss a source as untrustworthy or unacademic.

A limitation of our study is that we did not interview supervisors or writing teachers. Future studies should explore faculty conceptions and ideologies about stance and teaching-learning. We also did not examine ideologies about hedges, which are central to textualizing tentative stances. In addition, we did not probe students' conceptions of stance in their own academic writing, including their theses. These dimensions of stance should be addressed. Doing so would contribute to critical reflection about stance, the literacy practices around it, and their role in shaping pre-service teachers' academic identities.

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Appendix 1

The Four Texts

A

For me, the essence of English language learning in universities is the autonomy of the learner. This is reflected in my preference for the term independent study for distance education at this level. I am very critical of contemporary patterns of EFL teaching because I believe that outdated concepts of learning and teaching are being used and that they fail to take advantage of modern technologies in ways that can transform the institution.

B

For the field of ELT, an aspect of English language learning in universities is the autonomy of the learner. This is reflected in the choice of the term independent study for distance education at this level. There are several opinions about contemporary patterns of EFL teaching because sometimes some concepts of learning and teaching are used without taking advantage of modern technologies in ways that can change the institution.

C

For me, an aspect of English language learning in universities is the autonomy of the learner. This is reflected in my choice of the term independent study for distance education at this level. I have several opinions about contemporary patterns of EFL teaching because I believe that sometimes some concepts of learning and teaching are used without taking advantage of modern technologies in ways that can change the institution.

D

For the field of ELT, the essence of English language learning in universities is the autonomy of the learner. This is reflected in the preference for the term independent study for distance education at this level. There are several very critical opinions about contemporary patterns of EFL teaching because some outdated concepts of learning and teaching are being used but fail to take advantage of modern technologies in ways that can transform the institution.