**ARTICLE**

# Language Features in Educational Research Article Closings: International Q1 Journals vs. Turkish Local Non-Q-Rated Journals

*Tanju Deveci* [iD]

*Department of Translation and Interpretation, Faculty of Economics, Administrative and Social Sciences, Antalya Bilim University, Antalya 07190, Turkey*

## ABSTRACT

Scientific writing involves multiple dimensions, including epistemic, methodological, theoretical, and textual. Focusing on the last of these, this study examines selected linguistic features related to stance, authorial presence, voice and agency, framing expressions, and conditional structures in the closing sections of educational research articles (RAs) in internationally indexed Q1-rated journals and locally indexed non-Q-rated Turkish journals. It seeks to identify recurrent rhetorical tendencies across these publication contexts and offer linguistically grounded insights to support authors' strategic choices when navigating different publication environments. The corpus comprised 60 empirical RAs: 30 RAs from SSCI/Scopus-indexed Q1 journals and 30 RAs from locally indexed Turkish journals. The two corpora were compared statistically using a log-likelihood test. Results indicated that international authors employed hedges, obligation modals, boosters, and subjunctive structures more frequently and with greater lexical variety, reflecting nuanced rhetorical positioning, while personal pronouns and active voice were more prevalent, signaling stronger authorial presence and agency; however, Turkish authors relied more on impersonal constructions and passive voice. Both groups used conventionalized expressions to frame recommendations, though international authors demonstrated slightly broader lexical and structural variation. These patterns highlight systematic differences in how stance and agency are realized across publication contexts. Making these patterns explicit through instruction may help authors develop greater rhetorical awareness and flexibility when engaging with the expectations of high-visibility journals, which are often shaped by recurrent editorial, review,

and publication practices rather than fixed or universal norms. This, in turn, may support more informed and strategic positioning across different publication venues.

*Keywords:* Academic Writing; Authorial Presence; Closing Section; International Journals; Voice and Agency

# 1. Introduction

Among the variety of objectives that educational research serves are understanding how students learn, improving teaching practices, informing policy decisions, and addressing challenges such as learning gaps and student retention[1]. Much educational research, therefore, is applied in nature, driven by specific real-world problems or challenges, with the overall aim of bridging theory and practice[2]. Based on a careful discussion of findings, authors are generally expected to offer guidance for practice, policymaking, and future research, typically in the closing sections of research articles. To account for variation in how these final sections are structured, I adopted a functional approach to identifying closing sections. Rather than relying solely on formal headings such as *Conclusions*, *Implications*, or *Recommendations*, I define the closing section as the part of the article in which authors, drawing on their discussion of findings, propose practical applications, outline policy implications, or suggest directions for future research. In cases where multiple headings are used (e.g., *Conclusion* and *Implications*), the entire segment was treated as a unified closing section.

Closing sections may therefore lie at the heart of educational decision-making, so much so that action-oriented policymakers, who often "bypass most of the content in academic articles to reach the [closing sections] where they are most likely to find answers and ideas," Garcia[3] tend to view this part of the article as the most important. This is likely the case for practitioners as well, since it contains useful information for teachers, including indications of conditions for optimum learning for students[4].

Researchers in different contexts have investigated the rhetorical organization of academic texts, with studies examining the move structure of various sections of research articles (RAs), including the introduction[5–7], authors' use of metadiscourse to create an authorial voice[8], and other linguistic choices[9]. However, as most of these genre-focused investigations have primarily concentrated on introductions, abstracts, and discussion sections, it is reasonable to surmise that this focus has contributed to a diminution in attention to other crucial parts of the RA, such as the closing sections. Yet, these sections arguably represent the quintessence of applied educational research, where, as highlighted above, the value of empirical work is most clearly directed toward classroom realities and broader pedagogical impact.

Some scholars have acknowledged the persuasive role of recommendation statements in the closing sections of RAs[10,11]. However, there remains a notable gap in the literature regarding how educational researchers formulate such messages linguistically, particularly in terms of modal choices, stance, and authorial voice. The extent to which these language features align with the rhetorical norms of the discipline or reflect the author's positioning affects how clear, useful, and convincing the closing sections are. Furthermore, to my knowledge, no research to date has examined whether these features vary across publication contexts, such as journals differing in indexation status or classification schemes (e.g., Q-ratings). In this sense, the underrepresentation of closing-focused analyses bespeaks a broader neglect of one of the most consequential sections of RAs. Given that this section frequently contains modal expressions, evaluative language, and both implicit and explicit stances, gaining a deeper understanding of how such elements are structured and expressed is clearly important. This, however, is not to suggest that linguistic realization is the deciding factor of scientific writing; rather, it represents only one dimension among several epistemic, methodological, and theoretical criteria that underpin scholarly work.

Also important to note is the fact that such linguistic realizations do not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they are shaped by the editorial and readership contexts in which articles are produced. Journals indexed in international databases such as SSCI and Scopus operate within editorial and peer-review frameworks that explicitly lay emphasis on rhetorical clarity, interpretive positioning, and contribution-oriented closing sections. Author guidelines in such venues typically require authors to articulate the significance, implications, and limitations of their findings for an international reader-

ship, thereby encouraging visible stance-taking and careful regulation of how claims are expressed. By contrast, locally indexed Turkish journals, while adhering to recognized scientific and ethical standards, tend to prioritize clarity, neutrality, and conventional research article structuring, often placing greater rhetorical restraint in authorial positioning by showing a preference for less explicit evaluative language and more standardized stance expressions. These differing editorial and readership contexts thus constitute distinct publication environments that may influence how authors realize stance, modality, and agency in RA closing sections.

In this study, I therefore explore the language features used in the closing sections of education RAs published in internationally indexed (SSCI/Scopus) journals and locally indexed Turkish journals, without presuming differences in overall research quality. Neither do I distinguish authors in internationally indexed journals according to native or non-native language background. This decision is deliberate, as successful publication in high-impact international journals typically presupposes advanced linguistic competence and sustained engagement with journal-specific rhetorical and editorial expectations, regardless of authors' first language. My particular focus is on how authors publishing in venues that differ in indexing status, readership, and editorial gatekeeping practices employ modality (e.g., must, should, need to), subjunctive forms, personal pronouns, active/passive voice, and other stance-related features such as hedging, boosters, and evaluative language.

Although prior research has shown that non-native speakers of English (NNSEs) may encounter difficulties in expressing stance and modality with precision in academic English[12–15], there remains a need to compare their linguistic strategies in local publication contexts with those observed in RAs published in internationally indexed, high-visibility journals. Such a comparison can offer insights into recurring rhetorical patterns and adaptation strategies, without implying that observed differences necessarily constitute barriers, deficiencies, or problems in academic writing.

In this regard, I use the term 'international academic norms' descriptively to refer to recurrent rhetorical expectations and stylistic preferences observable in such journals, as mediated through editorial policies, peer-review practices, and readership expectations, rather than as fixed or universal standards. At the same time, research published in locally indexed journals may reflect context-sensitive disciplinary conventions shaped by institutional, linguistic, and audience-related factors. Comparing publications across these venues can therefore illuminate how differing publication contexts shape the realization of stance and modality, without presuming differences in scientific rigor. Such insights may be informative for authors who seek to engage with a wider range of publication venues, particularly in contexts where international journal publications are given greater weight in academic evaluation and promotion systems, as is the case in the Turkish context. Against this backdrop, in this preliminary study, I seek an answer to the following question:

> "How do the language features used in the closing sections of educational RAs compare between internationally-indexed Q1-rated journals and locally indexed non-Q-rated journals in the Turkish academic context?"

## 2. Materials and Methods

### 2.1. Corpus

The corpus consisted of 60 RAs, divided equally between two groups. The first group comprised 30 empirical RAs published in Q1-rated journals indexed in international databases, i.e., SSCI and Scopus. In the current study, I use indexation as a descriptive classification criterion referring to whether a journal is included in international bibliographic databases such as SSCI or Scopus, which apply formal selection and periodic review processes based on transparency of editorial procedures, peer-review practices, publication regularity, and citation-related indicators. I used indexation status solely to categorize publication venues and was not treated as a direct indicator of research quality or scientific merit.

The total number of running words in this group was 17,988. The second group consisted of 30 RAs published by Turkish NNSE authors in non-Q-rated education journals based in Turkey, either locally indexed or not indexed at all. These articles were retrieved primarily from Dergi-Park, an open-access digital platform. The total number of running words in this group is 16,760. Given that the two subcorpora were closely matched in overall size (17,988 vs. 16,760 words), the analysis relied on raw frequency counts to identify relative distributional tendencies, with findings in-

terpreted cautiously in terms of patterns rather than absolute usage intensity.

In both corpora, only empirical studies were included, while theoretical or conceptual papers were excluded. To ensure consistency, I included only articles with a functionally identifiable *closing section*, which might appear under headings such as *Conclusions, Implications, Recommendations*, or combinations thereof. Articles that featured only a brief conclusion following the discussion section, used merely to summarize or bring the article to a close, were excluded. I made this decision to focus the analysis on closings that provided more substantive rhetorical content, such as pedagogical recommendations, implications for practice, or suggestions for future research, which are central to the applied nature of educational research.

I included both single-authored and co-authored papers in the corpus to reflect the range of authorship practices in academic publishing and to ensure that insights into language use in closing sections were not limited by authorship structure. Also, I did not take the linguistic background of the authors publishing internationally into account, as publication in high-impact journals typically presupposes successful negotiation of journal-specific linguistic and disciplinary expectations. **Table 1** presents information on the corpora.

**Table 1.** Corpora.

| SSCI/Scopus-Indexed Journals (Corpus 1) | | | | | Locally-Indexed Turkish Journals (Corpus 2) | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Journals | # of RAs | Q Rating | Index | Word Count | Journals | # of RAs | Q Rating | Index | Word Count |
| Language and Education | 10 | 1 | SSCI | 5951 | Bogazici University Journal of Education | 10 | N/A | Local | 4693 |
| Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education | 10 | 1 | Scopus | 5569 | Anadolu University Journal of Education Faculty | 7 | N/A | Local | 3284 |
| Cambridge Journal of Education | 10 | 1 | SSCI | 6468 | Educational Academic Research | 7 | N/A | Local | 3222 |
| | | | | | Kocaeli University Journal of Education | 6 | N/A | Local | 5561 |
| *Total # of RAs* | 30 | | | | | 30 | | | |
| *Total word-count* | | | | *17,988* | | | | | *16,760* |

## 2.2. Analyses

For analysis, I focused on a range of linguistic features associated with stance, authorial presence, voice, and framing in academic writing. The categories were informed by prior research in applied linguistics, particularly by Hyland and Tse[8] as well as Deveci and Nunn[15], and they were designed to capture how authors express evaluation, certainty, and prescriptive guidance in the closing sections of educational RAs. The selected categories (stance markers, authorial presence, voice and agency, expressions, and conditional structures) reflect key dimensions of authorial positioning and rhetorical strategy.

The features examined were as follows:

1.  Stance markers

    (a)  Hedges (e.g., might, possibly, appear, likely) to indicate caution or tentativeness.

    (b)  Attitudinal or evaluative adjectives (e.g., important, urgent, feasible) to express value or emphasis.

    (c)  Obligation modals (e.g., should, must, need to) to convey necessity and strengthen recommendations.

    (d)  Boosters (e.g., clearly, strongly, undoubtedly) to indicate assertiveness or force.

    (e)  Subjunctive structures (e.g., it is essential that teachers be trained) as formal, prescriptive markers.

2.  Authorial presence

    (a)  Personal pronouns (e.g., we recommend) to explore variations in authorial visibility. (Inclusive *we* used to refer collectively to the reader and writer rather than the authors alone was excluded, as it does not reflect the authors' in-

dividual presence in the text.)

(b)    Impersonal self-mentions (e.g., the study forms a rationale for, we make a case that) to capture non-personal authorial positioning.

3.    Voice and agency

Active vs. passive constructions to examine formality, agency, and textual orientation.

4.    Expressions

Lexical or phrasal devices used to frame recommendations and implications, including classic reporting verbs (e.g., suggest, propose, recommend, advocate), indirect or impersonal expressions, and evaluative phrasal expressions (e.g., lays the groundwork for, offer insights into, highlights the need for).

5.    Conditional structures

Syntactic devices expressing hypothetical or projected outcomes (e.g., if teachers adopt X, then …).

To ensure reliability, I involved a second independent researcher for data analysis. Following a norming session, we, the two researchers experienced in discourse analysis, manually and independently coded the features across the corpus. Manual analysis offered a flexible, context-sensitive, and interpretative approach, enabling us to capture subtle discourse features often missed by automated, top-down, rule-based methods[16]. We discussed any discrepancies and resolved them by consensus, excluding items on which we could not agree. The interrater reliability was established using Cohen's kappa coefficient, which yielded a score of 0.79, indicating substantial agreement between us as raters.

Differences in the frequency of linguistic elements between the two corpora were assessed using the log-likelihood (LL) test, which is suitable for corpora of different sizes and robust for low-frequency items[17]. For each feature, the LL statistic was calculated, with $LL > 3.84$ considered statistically significant. Additionally, percentage difference (%DIFF) was reported as a descriptive measure of effect size, representing the normalized difference in frequency between the corpora.

# 3. Results

In this study, I examined the language features used in the closing sections of educational RAs authored by scholars publishing in internationally indexed Q1-rated journals and by Turkish NNSE authors publishing in locally indexed non-Q-rated journals. **Table 2** presents a quantitative overview of the results.

**Table 2.** Linguistic elements.

| Linguistic Elements | | Corpus 1 (International) | Corpus 2 (Local) | LL | %DIFF |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | f | f | | |
| Stance markers | hedges | 347 | 274 | 4.22 | 18 |
| | obligation modals | 111 | 77 | 4.01 | 34.31 |
| | attitudinal adjectives | 106 | 80 | 2.04 | 23.45 |
| | boosters | 63 | 37 | 5.12 | 58.65 |
| | subjunctive structures | 15 | 5 | 4.55 | 179.52 |
| Authorial presence | personal pronouns | 185 | 44 | 83.67 | 291.75 |
| | impersonal self-mentions | 88 | 145 | 18.41 | 43.45 |
| Voice and agency | active voice | 1163 | 863 | 25.91 | 25.56 |
| | passive voice | 229 | 442 | 84.70 | 51.73 |
| Expressions | | 166 | 177 | 1.56 | 12.62 |
| Conditional structures (if) | | 13 | 12 | 0.00 | 0.94 |
| | *Corpora sizes* | *17,988* | *16,760* | | |

As shown in **Table 2**, hedging emerged as the most frequently employed stance marker overall, occurring 347 times in internationally indexed Q1 journals (Corpus 1) and 274 times in locally indexed non-Q-rated Turkish journals (Corpus 2), yielding an LL value of 4.22 and a %DIFF of 18 that indicates a statistically significant difference between the two corpora. Across both corpora, modal verbs dominated. Considering the actual counts, *can* was by far the most frequent hedge, but Turkish authors used it almost 1.5 times more often than the authors of Corpus 1 (128 vs. 87). *Could* also appeared more frequently in the Turkish corpus (48 vs. 35). By contrast, however, international authors used

*may* nearly twice as often (64 vs. 37) and *would* more than four times as often (34 vs. 8). Considering hedges other than modals, international authors displayed greater use of lexical hedges such as *some* (28 vs. 10), *likely* (9 vs. 1), and *possible* (9 vs. 1), and they employed a wider spread of lower-frequency items (*imply, perhaps, relatively*). Turkish authors, on the other hand, still favoured *potential* (5 vs. 7 previously, now 5 vs. 7) and *indicate* (7 vs. 9), but their repertoire of hedging devices was less varied.

The second most frequent stance marker was obligation models, which appeared 111 times in Corpus 1 and 77 times in Corpus 2, with an LL of 4.01 and a %DIFF of 34.31, reflecting another significant difference between the corpora. Among these modals, *should* was the most frequently employed modal in both corpora, appearing 86 times in Corpus 1 and 57 times in Corpus 2. The modals *must* and *need* were less frequent but followed the same pattern, with 9 vs. 6 and 14 vs. 10 occurrences in Corpus 1 and Corpus 2, respectively. *Have to* appeared only twice in Corpus 1 and was absent in Corpus 2, whereas *ought to* was used exclusively in Corpus 2, with 4 occurrences.

Attitudinal adjectives were the third most frequently utilized marker, with 106 occurrences in Corpus 1 and 80 occurrences in Corpus 2. Despite the apparent difference in frequencies (with a %DIFF of 23.45), the LL value of 2.04 did not reach statistical significance, making this the only stance marker whose difference between the two corpora was not statistically significant. In both corpora, certain adjectives were notably frequent, with *important* by far the most common, appearing 19 times in Corpus 2 and 16 times in Corpus 1. *Essential* and *effective* were also recurrent in the Turkish corpus (5 and 4 occurrences, respectively), whereas *key* (8 occurrences), *critical* (4 occurrences), and *essential* (4 occurrences) were prominent in Corpus 1. Corpus 1 displayed greater variety, albeit without a statistically significant difference, using adjectives such as *authentic, central, conclusive, intricate, pivotal,* and *paramount,* which were absent from the Turkish corpus. Turkish authors, by contrast, relied more heavily on a smaller set of adjectives, favouring repetition of *important, essential, effective,* and *helpful.*

Boosters, the fourth most common stance marker, appeared 63 times in Corpus 1 and 37 times in Corpus 2, with an LL of 5.12 and a %DIFF of 58.65, indicating a differ-ence at a statistically significant level. Among individual boosters, *will* was the most frequently used in both corpora, appearing 14 times in Corpus 1 and 15 times in Corpus 2. *Particularly* and *even* were also common, with 11 and 10 occurrences in Corpus 1, and 8 and 3 occurrences in the Turkish corpus, respectively. Other boosters appeared much less frequently, often only once or twice per corpus, such as *importantly, highly, profoundly,* and *specifically.* Overall, Corpus 1 appeared to demonstrate slightly greater lexical variety, incorporating items like *fundamentally, overwhelmingly,* and *only possible,* which did not occur in the Turkish corpus.

The last category of stance marker was subjunctive structures, which were observed 15 times in Corpus 1 and 5 times in Corpus 2; the LL value was 4.55 and the %DIFF was 179.52, showing a significant difference between the two sets. Adjectival subjunctives appeared 4 times in Corpus 1, including *key* (*"it is key that authors clearly describe what they mean by QC…"*) and *important* (*"it is important that we rethink what assessments we choose…"*), compared with a single instance in Corpus 2 (*imperative*: *"it is imperative that the efficacy of the 10th grade robotics coding curriculum be determined…"*). Verb-based subjunctives were also more frequent in Corpus 1, with *suggest* (*"we suggest that universities should establish comprehensive language advisory services…"*) and *recommend* (*"we recommend MoNE restructure the policies focusing primarily on job-embedded activities…"*), while Corpus 2 included only a few instances across *argue* and *recommend.* Corpus 1 not only exhibited higher frequency but also a wider range of lexical items and constructions, including both bare subjunctives and periphrastic forms (*should + base form*), whereas Corpus 2 relied on a more restricted set of bare subjunctives.

Regarding authorial presence, personal pronouns and impersonal self-mentions occurred 185 and 88 times in Corpus 1 and 44 and 145 times in Corpus 2, respectively, with LL values of 83.67 and 18.41 and %DIFF values of 291.75 and 43.45, indicating statistically significant differences between the two corpora. Authors of Corpus 1 frequently used first-person pronouns (both singular and plural forms along with impersonal self-mentions) to signal their presence and perspective as in *"It is clear from the evidence **I** have presented in **this article** that **my** assessment design had its strengths…"*, *"In **this** paper, **we** conclude that Southern African countries*

*employ English for teaching school history despite the acknowledgement of many indigenous languages present in the countries.* ***We** make a case that language policies in these countries are cosmetic…"*, and *"**Our** findings also underscore the need to study music education with bilingual students…"*. In contrast, authors of Corpus 2 relied more heavily on impersonal constructions and generally avoided explicit personal reference, despite some use of plural forms, but not a single use of the singular pronoun *I,* even in single-authored papers. For example: *"In **this** study, **we** explored the relationship between relational aggression and forgiveness"*, *"…**this** study provides insights into game development, **it** does not directly measure environmental attitude change"*, and *"**Our** findings emphasized the necessity of Focus on Form in collocation learning"*.

When it comes to voice and agency, the active voice was used 1163 times by authors publishing in Q1 journals and 863 times by Turkish authors, with a %DIFF of 25.56. The LL value of 25.91 indicates a statistically significant difference between the two corpora. In contrast, the passive voice appeared more frequently in Corpus 2 than in Corpus 1 (442 vs. 229), with a %DIFF of 51.73 and an LL of 84.70, indicating another statistically significant difference between the two sets.

Expressions framing recommendations and implications were observed 166 times in Corpus 1 and 177 times in Corpus 2, with an LL of 1.56 and a %DIFF of 12.62, indicating no statistically significant difference between the two corpora. There was a heavy reliance in both corpora on conventionalised frames linking findings to implications. Expressions such as "findings showed/indicated…," "the results of this study reveal…," and "based on these findings, the following recommendations…" appeared repeatedly. There was also a strong emphasis on signaling contribution and significance, with formulae like "this study contributes to…" and "provides insights into…" used to highlight both academic and practical relevance. Limitations were frequently woven into these implication statements rather than treated separately. It is important to note that, while most of the language was formulaic, occasional vivid phrases such as "shines a spotlight on…" or "represents a promising step toward…" punctuated the otherwise neutral style, hinting at a subtle tendency toward more promotional or attention-grabbing expression.

Despite the similarities noted above, some differences emerged in the authors' use of framing expressions between the two corpora. The authors of both corpora relied heavily on conventional frames for presenting recommendations, with expressions such as *"findings showed/indicated…"* and *"it is recommended that…"* appearing frequently. The authors of Corpus 1, however, exhibited slightly greater lexical and structural variety. In addition to standard verbs like *recommend* and *suggest*, they employed a wider range of verbs and expressions, such as *reinforces, underscores,* and *guides.* Phrasal and multi-word expressions, including *"these activities serve as key influencers"* and *"the steps described above have encouraged…"*, were also more frequent among these authors. The authors of Corpus 2, by contrast, remained more conservative and slightly narrower in scope, relying more heavily on just *recommend, suggest,* and *emphasize*, without many alternative verbs or collocations within the standard framing templates.

Conditional structures appeared 13 times in Q1 journals and 12 times in Turkish journals, with an LL of 0.00 and a %DIFF of 0.94, showing that there was also no significant difference between the two sets.

## 4. Discussion

The findings of this study shed light on how authors publishing in internationally indexed Q1-rated journals and those publishing in locally indexed non-Q-rated Turkish journals compare in their use of a certain set of linguistic features in the closing sections of educational RAs. Both corpora exhibited similarities in the overall categories; however, there were still important differences in terms of frequency, lexical variety, and authorial presence.

Hedging emerged as the most frequently employed stance marker overall in both corpora, consistent with prior research that underscores its central role in academic writing[8]. Nevertheless, hedges occurred more frequently in the writing of international authors than in that of Turkish authors. Similar results emerged in other studies comparing authors from distinct linguistic backgrounds such as English, Russian[18] and Persian[19]. The higher frequency of hedges in Q1 journals suggests that international authors may adopt a more cautious rhetorical style when formulating recommendations, thereby enhancing the credibility of their claims

while allowing space for alternative interpretations. Turkish authors' heavy reliance on hedges is also noteworthy; however, their dependence on a limited set of modals, particularly *can* and *could*, points to a narrower and less flexible repertoire. This restricted pattern may also stem from conventions of Turkish academic writing, promoting caution through a relatively limited and highly conventionalized set of modal verbs. In this sense, Turkish authors' reliance on these modals likely reflects a culturally reinforced preference for minimizing interpretive risk rather than a lack of awareness of alternative hedging devices. By contrast, international authors' broader use of lexical hedges indicates a more nuanced distribution of epistemic caution across a wider range of linguistic resources. This expanded repertoire not only enables more precise positioning of claims but may also signal closer alignment with the rhetorical expectations of high-impact journals.

The second most common stance marker was obligation modals, which were used significantly more frequently by international authors. The prominence of *should* in both corpora underscores its established role in academic writing, pointing to Warchal's observation that the use of should "reflect[s] the need to conform to the accepted rules of writing for scholarly audiences"[20]. However, the slightly wider distribution of modals in Corpus 1 may indicate greater flexibility and confidence in expressing degrees of obligation, helping authors strengthen their case for the recognition and acceptance of their claims[20] and recommended action.

Similar to obligation modals, boosters appeared more frequently in Corpus 1 journals, suggesting that international authors strategically reinforced the certainty and importance of their claims while simultaneously hedging where appropriate. This pattern aligns with the view of academic discourse as a balance between caution and conviction[8]. Moreover, the greater lexical variety of boosters in Corpus 1 reflects a more flexible use of intensification strategies compared to Turkish authors, who relied on a narrower set of conventional boosters.

Although relatively few in number, the significantly higher use of subjunctive structures in Corpus 1 highlights another dimension of rhetorical sophistication among international authors. Their occurrence reflects not only adherence to formal conventions of academic recommendation writing but also the authors' ability to convey implications and recommendations convincingly. While relatively infrequent in RA writing, subjunctives are acknowledged as an important stylistic resource, allowing authors to express authority, precision, and evaluative nuance[21]. Nonetheless, the Turkish corpus displayed a narrower and less varied use of subjunctives, indicating limited engagement with this valuable rhetorical feature despite its recognized significance.

Another striking finding concerns authorial presence. International authors made frequent use of both personal pronouns and impersonal self-mentions, thereby presenting themselves as active participants in knowledge construction. The use of *I* signals an assertive stance that personalizes interpretation and underscores the author's ownership of claims. Turkish authors, by contrast, avoided singular self-mentions altogether (although they at times used first-person plural in single-authored papers, a phenomenon observed in our earlier research as well[15] and displayed a preference for impersonal constructions. In the Turkish academic context, overt self-mention, particularly the use of the singular *I*, has traditionally been associated with subjectivity and 'inappropriate' self-promotion[22]. Academic training in Türkiye has long emphasized impersonality, modesty, and respect for disciplinary authority, encouraging authors to emphasize findings rather than the researcher. As a result, language features such as impersonal constructions and both first-person singular and plural pronouns have often been discouraged in order to maintain scholarly humility when making claims. In contrast, international publication venues increasingly value explicit authorial presence as a sign of responsibility, interpretive authority, and rhetorical clarity. This difference in expectations may place Turkish NNSE authors at a disadvantage in international discourse communities, where strategic self-promotion is not only acceptable but often expected.

Differences in authors' attitudes toward agency were evident in their use of active and passive voice. International authors tended to favor the active voice, signaling greater responsibility and control over their claims and recommendations. However, Turkish authors relied more heavily on passive constructions, a pattern that reflects not only a preference for objectivity and impersonality through writer–text distancing[23], but also a culturally grounded rhetorical norm; in Turkish academic writing, impersonality is commonly associated with seriousness, neutrality, and institutional legitimacy, and the suppression of explicit agency functions as

a means of aligning the text with these expectations. While such practices remain acceptable, and even valued, in local publishing contexts, they may conflict with international journal conventions that increasingly associate clarity and accountability with active constructions. At the same time, the passive voice has been criticized for obscuring agency and producing stylistic monotony[24]. As Millar, Budgell, and Fuller[25] note, journal style guidelines strongly shape authors' choices regarding voice, though they caution that prescriptive calls to "use the active voice whenever possible" oversimplify disciplinary variation, rhetorical intent, and section-specific norms.

It appears that the patterns discussed above are not unique to the Turkish context but can also be interpreted in relation to broader research on NNSE academic writing. Although this study focuses specifically on Turkish NNSE authors, some of the observed patterns are consistent with findings from studies conducted in other NNSE contexts. Research on academic writing by NNSEs from various linguistic backgrounds, including Chinese, Czech, and Finnish scholars[26–28], has similarly reported limited lexical variety in stance expressions, reduced authorial presence, and a preference for impersonal or passive constructions when compared with Anglophone norms. These similarities suggest that some of the features identified in my study may reflect more general challenges faced by NNSE authors in expressing stance in English academic discourse.

The authors of both corpora employed similar expressions to frame recommendations and implications, with no statistically significant difference in overall frequency. Both groups relied heavily on conventionalized frames (e.g., "findings indicate…"; "based on these results, we recommend…"), reflecting common patterns in closing sections. Prior research has also shown that in RAs across disciplines, including health, physical, and social sciences, certain expressions (particularly those involving verbs) recur frequently, indicating the presence of conventional framing expressions in the genre[29]. Nevertheless, international authors in the current study displayed slightly greater lexical variety, incorporating verbs such as *underscore* and *reinforce* alongside standard *recommend*/*suggest* forms. This subtle variation may enhance the rhetorical persuasiveness of their texts. In comparison to native speakers of English, Turkish authors' more limited use of collocations in English RAs, which can

be considered part of conventional expressions, was also observed in prior research[30], with a notable exception in the noun + verb category. Similar results were found in other contexts as well[31,32]. This pattern is argued to suggest that native speakers have a more intuitive grasp of collocational patterns, contributing to the fluency and naturalness of their academic writing.

# 5. Implications and Recommendations

Drawing on the findings discussed above, several pedagogical implications emerge. It is essential that instruction in academic writing incorporate targeted strategies that explicitly address stance, authorial presence, voice, and framing expressions in the closing sections of RAs, as well as in other sections where relevant. Students, particularly NNSEs, will benefit from structured exercises focusing on these linguistic features. For example, instructors should design tasks requiring students to analyze and compare hedges and boosters, reflecting on how cautious versus assertive formulations affect the persuasiveness of recommendations.

It is also important that authors be encouraged to experiment with attitudinal adjectives (and obligation modals) to articulate both evaluative and prescriptive claims. And subjunctive structures could be introduced as formalized devices for expressing recommendations, and students might be guided to construct parallel sentences in active and passive voice to explore the interplay between agency and formality. In addition to the use of the active voice where applicable, I further recommend that instructors incorporate activities that highlight authorial presence through the use of personal pronoun. For instance, students could practice rewriting recommendation statements using personal pronouns versus impersonal self-mentions, reflecting on how each choice shapes authorial visibility and rhetorical stance. Such exercises will help students gain confidence in making their contributions explicit.

As well, explicit instruction on lexical and phrasal expressions for framing recommendations and implications is needed. Students and authors will definitely benefit from creating an organized list of reporting verbs and evaluative expressions with opportunities to employ them in contextually appropriate exercises.

Finally, reflective and iterative pedagogical tasks, such as peer review workshops and guided revisions, should be embedded in writing instruction. By asking students to justify their use of stance markers, voice, and framing expressions, instructors may cultivate metalinguistic awareness and strategic control over language, thereby enabling learners to produce text that are not only linguistically accurate but rhetorically persuasive. Over time, such interventions could help NNSEs and emerging native speaking authors approximate the nuanced rhetorical practices observed in internationally published research.

Equally important are the limitations of the current study, which point to directions for future research. First, the corpus was relatively small, comprising only 60 articles from a limited number of journals and publication venues, which constrains the representativeness of the sample and limits the generalizability of the findings. Future studies could include a larger and more diverse set of journals to verify whether the observed patterns appear across the broader field. Second, only empirical studies with clearly identifiable closing sections were included, excluding theoretical or conceptual papers and articles with brief conclusions. Future research could examine rhetorical practices in these excluded genres to provide a more comprehensive view. Third, the study is intentionally delimited to a comparison between *Turkish* NNSE authors and authors publishing in international Q1 journals. Therefore, the findings should not be interpreted as representative of NNSE academic writing more broadly but rather as a context-specific account of Turkish academic discourse. Future research incorporating multiple NNSE groups would help clarify which patterns are widely shared across NNSE contexts and which are more strongly shaped by local academic traditions. Fourth, the linguistic background of international authors was not controlled. That is, this group may include both native English speakers and highly proficient non-native speakers. This choice was intentional, as successful publication in high-impact journals was treated as an indicator of effective engagement with journal-specific linguistic and rhetorical expectations rather than as a proxy for nativeness. Future research could focus on authors' L1 backgrounds to investigate their influence on rhetorical choices. Finally, authors may have strategic reasons for publishing in local journals[33] despite an existing international presence;

for example, in the Turkish context, scholars often need to publish in locally indexed journals to qualify for promotion. Examining such strategic publishing behaviors in different national contexts could provide valuable insights into how institutional requirements impact academic writing practices.

# 6. Conclusions

In this study, I examined how authors publishing in educational journals with differing indexation statuses realize stance, modality, and authorial presence in the closing sections of RAs. Findings showed that while authors across both internationally indexed Q1 journals and locally indexed Turkish journals utilize similar rhetorical categories to frame recommendations and implications, they differ in the range and explicitness of their linguistic realizations; authors in Q1 journals employed a broader repertoire of hedging devices, obligation modals, boosters, and subjunctive constructions, together with greater authorial presence and more frequent use of active voice, reflecting a rhetorical balance between caution and interpretive authority. In contrast, authors in locally indexed journals displayed more restrained stance-taking, favoring conventionalized modal choices, limited self-mention, and impersonal or passive constructions, patterns that appear to reflect context-sensitive academic conventions, not necessarily differences in linguistic competence or research quality. Overall, the findings point to the socially situated nature of academic writing and highlight the value of raising authors' awareness of context-dependent rhetorical options, particularly for those seeking to publish across diverse academic discourse communities.

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Not applicable.

# Informed Consent Statement

Not applicable.

## Data Availability Statement

The study is based on published research articles. Due to copyright considerations, the full corpus cannot be made publicly available. However, descriptive information about the dataset and analytical procedures can be provided by the author upon reasonable request.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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