Tarbiat Moallem University

Comparative Analysis of the use of Hedges &Emphatics in English and Persian Academic Research Articles Of Sociology &Psychology

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We hereby recommend that this thesis by Hamid Hashemi entitled a comparative analysis the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in English vs. Persian academic research article "be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of arts (M.A) in teaching English as a foreign Language (TEFL).

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Dedicated to:

Any one who can be the best

best

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Abstract

The present study was conducted to investigate the difference in the use of emphatics and hedges in discussion section of Persian and English articles of sociology and psychology. To this end, a uniform classification model for metadiscourasl elements was applied to the selected corpus which was chosen from the well-known journals that were published between the years 1997 and 2002 in a random way. The corpus consisted of a total of 418 English and Persian research articles in the fields of sociology and psychology. The model proposed by Hyland (2003), and Salager-Mayer (1994) for the linguistic realization of hedge types and Vassileva (2001) for that of emphatics was used for analysis of metadiscourse.

Overall, there were 3 variables in the study: language, (with two levels of English and Persian), discipline (with two levels of sociology and psychology) and the frequency of hedges and emphatics. Since the research had no control over the writing process of the Research Articles writers, an ex-facto design was adopted in this study.

The findings of the study show that:

1- There is no significant difference in the frequency of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English RAs of sociology.

2- - There is a significant difference in the frequency of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English RAs of sociology.

3- There is no significant difference in the frequency of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English RAs of psychology.

4- There is no significant difference in the frequency of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English RAs of psychology.

The findings of this research are considered as an important source for academic researchers, language teachers and text analyzers, since it revealed the effect of language and cultural background on the use of metadiscourse in academic research articles.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

Language is no doubt considered as the most important means for communication purpose. Language, according to Halliday (1978, 1985) has three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal and textual. Cheng and Stephenson (1996) maintain that options in ideational systems concern the content of text and are referential and representational while options in interpersonal system enable language users to establish interpersonal relation and interact with audience.

According to Stephenson (1996) language in the former function allows users to express personal feelings about the ideational content of their texts while options in textual system are used to add emphasis. Abdi (2001) maintains that Halliday's classification lays the theoretical foundation for the concept metadiscourse. According to Vandekopple (1985) primary discourse fulfils the ideational function and metadiscourse serves the interpersonal and textual functions of language.

Metadiscourse according to Avong (1984, p. 66) is "the rhetorical act of discoursing about spoken or written discourse". Crissmore et al. (1993, p.85) define metadiscourse as "part of written or spoken discourse that doesn't add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader, organize , interpret and evaluate the information given". Due to the subjectivity of the term metadiscourse different scholars have different definitions for it. For instance, Hyland (1998, cited in

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Fuertes et al., 2001) indicates that metadiscourse is that aspect of texts which includes both organization of discourse and the writers stance toward either its content or the reader, engaging the audience, and showing the writers' attitude.

Along the same lines Crissmore (1984, p. 28) claims that metadiscourse contributes to text organization in that it allows readers to reconstruct the authors' writing plan and helps them to set up expectations, confirm them and integrate the text.

As metadiscourse is a broad concept, a variety of metadiscourse taxonomies have been offered by researchers as (Beauvais, 1989; Crissmore, 1989; Mauranen, 1993; Nash, 1992). Vandekopple (1985) divides metadiscourse into two main types, textual metadiscourse and interpersonal metadiscourse. He defines textual metadiscourse as devises which help in making a convincing and coherent text by relating the individual propositions to each other. Vandekopple (1985) introduced interpersonal metadiscourse as a device alerting the reader to the author's perspectives toward both the propositional information and the readers themselves which is effective in establishing relationship between the reader and the writer. According to Crissmore et al. (1989) textual metadiscourse is composed of some subcategories.

"Logical connectives, sequencers, reminders, topicalizers, and interpersonal metadiscourse, comprising hedges (epistemic certainty

markers) emphatics (linguistic devices emphasizing force of propositions) attributors, attitude markers, commentary" Crissmore et al (1993, p.71)

With the help of these taxonomies, it is possible for the researchers to classify varieties of metadiscoursal devices used in different genres for different purposes. As Hyland (1998, 2001) argues, analyzing the use of metadiscourse across cultures and disciplines in different types is of prime importance, writers' identity and their commitment to the propositional information and their ability in evolving a text can be found.

As Hyland states: "We have to see genres not simply as forms of language, but as forms of social action designed to accomplish socially recognized purpose, and the writer's success in this depends on the projection of shared context" (Hyland, 1996, p. 142).Thus, the emphasis on the metadiscourse can act as an incentive for those scholars hoping to gain a better picture of social relation between the writer and the reader. At the light of these findings, the study of metadiscourse in different types of texts across cultures and disciplines can contribute to the more effective pedagogical applications in writing context. Following the same line, this study takes up this 'across culture/across discipline' study the use of metadiscourse in different types of texts across cultures and disciplines mostly for pedagogical and linguistic purposes.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

With regard to the conflicting views toward the use of hedges and emphatics as subcategories of interpersonal metadiscourse across cultures and disciplines (Kruez and Harres, 1997; Vassilva, 1997; Hyland, 1998) and the significance of interpersonal metadiscourse in writing research articles, the present study is to reveal the extent of the use of emphatics and hedges in discussion section of Persian and English articles of sociology and psychology

1.3 Significance of the study

Recent studies in scientific discourse by scientists, discourse analysts, and educationalists show a growing interest in an area largely concerned with literary discourse (Hyland, 2002; Camiciottoli, 2003). However as , Valera-Garces(1996) points out, this interest, has been mainly centered on the texts written in English, on the assumption that English is the native language of the writers and that they are under the influence of Anglo-American culture. There has also been numerous studies of academic discourse which show that academic writing norms may vary from one discourse community to another and that rhetoric preferences exist in different writing cultures (Camiciottoli, 2003)

Hylnd (2001) argues on how disciplinary variation and native culture affect the use of metadiscoursal devices in MA and PhD dissertations.

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Identification of these differences is of great use for EAP and ESP courses. Despite this importance, very few studies have been done to investigate the use of interpersonal metadiscourse in Persian research articles for EAP and ESP purposes.

1.4 Research Questions & Null Hypotheses

1 Is there any significant difference in the frequencies of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English sociology research articles?

2 Is there any significant difference in the frequencies of types of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English sociology research articles?

3 Is there any significant difference in the frequencies of types of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English psychology research articles?

4 Is there any significant difference in the frequencies of types of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English psychology research articles?

To explore the above research questions, the following null hypothesis were formulated.

1- There is no significant difference in the frequencies of types of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English sociology

research articles?

2- There is no significant difference in the frequencies of types of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English sociology research articles?

3- There is no significant difference in the frequencies types of hedges used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English psychology research articles?

4- There is no significant difference in the frequencies of types of emphatics used in the discussion section of Persian vs. English psychology research articles?

1.5 Delimitation of the Study

In conducting the present research, we encountered limitations which can be summarized as follows:

1 Since our analysis is corpus based, we were supposed to use as big corpora as possible for the study, but time constraint and the problems for analyzing these corpus were limitations for this case

2 We couldn't study the effect of different variables such as gender and more disciplines in this study.

3 It was impossible to refer to many authors of the articles to ask for their attitude toward using hedges and emphatics, consequently the results are only based on analysis of texts.

1.6 Definitions of Key Terms

Hedges: "a category offering the largest number of correlated attributes such as weakens the force of statements, contains modal expressions, expresses difference, signals uncertainty and so on. (Hyland, 1998a, p.160).

Emphatics: "Emphatic is a category of interpersonal metadiscourse. This term refers to linguistic devices which allow writers to signal their perspectives towards both the propositional information and target readers. The use of such devices thus helps establish a writer-reader relationship, and may decrease the reader's subjective negotiability of the writer's claims."?(Hyland, 2004, p. 13).

Metadiscourse: "refers to the level of personality or tenor of discourse and influences such matters as the authors' intimacy and remoteness, expressions of attitude, commitment to propositions and degree of readers' involvement" (Hyland, 1999, p. 8)

Research Articles: a written text that is usually limited to a few thousand words that reports on some investigation carried out by its author .in addition the research article will usually relate the findings within it to those of others, and may also examine issues of theory or methodology. It is to appear or has appeared in a research journal or, less typically in an edited book-length collection of papers (Swales, 1990:93).

Discipline: According to Becher (1989), a discipline is the branch of

education or instruction that contains a core body of knowledge, a set of distinctive methodologies and also a variety of approaches and concepts.

Discussion section: Swales (1990) defines discussion as the major body of research paper and proposes the following moves for the discussion section: 1) background information 2) statement of results 3) explanaion6) exemplification7) deduction of hypotheses 8) suggestions for further research.

Descriptive research: descriptive research is conducted to collect data without rigid experimental controls so reactions and characteristics of of a group can be explored. Sometimes descriptive research includes opinion polls, case studies, surveys and normative studies (Markides & Richman, 1980) in descriptive studies data are collected through interviews, questionnaires, diaries and rating scales.

Chapter 2

Review of Literature

Review of Related Literature

2.1. Overview

Metadiscourse according to Hyland (1998) is a relatively new concept but one which is increasingly important to research in composition, reading and text structure. Based on Hyland(1998, p.82) "in writing as a social and communicative engagement between writer and reader, metadiscourse focuses on our attention on the ways writers project themselves into their work to signal their communicative intentions".

Along the same lines, Vande Koppel (1985) makes it clear that primary discourse fulfils the ideational function and metadiscourse serves the interpersonal and textual functions of language.

In this chapter, the general concept of metadiscourse will be presented then, the interaction between writer and readers will be discussed. Then different definitions and descriptions of metadiscourse devices will be given. After that some taxonomies of metadiscourse features will be discussed. Final sections will focus on empirical research and instructional applications of metadiscourse features in EFL writing classes.

2.2. General Concept of Metadiscourse

Academic discourse is the object of an increasing number of studies. A great many of these are pedagogically oriented, focusing on student needs and competences. Undoubtedly, writing, a media of academic discourse, is