SHEIKHBAHAEE UNIVERSITY

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A CONTRASTIVE STUDY OF METADISCOURSE MARKERS USED IN EFL COURSE BOOKS AUTHORED BY NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULLFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN TEACHING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract

Writing is identified as a main tool for exchanging information between members of the same discourse community. A metadiscourse marker is a critical linguistic feature which embodies and reinforces the coherence and persuasiveness of texts, which has been proved to have positive effect on learners' performances. Since EFL books are most influential and available sources to which language learners are exposed, this study was planned to investigate the use of metadiscourse markers in EFL books based on the classification proposed by Hyland (2005). To this end, 9 EFL books were selected to examine the differences between native and non-native authors in the use of Interactive and Interactional markers. The result revealed that there are significant differences between the two groups of authors in the use of some metadiscourse markers. Additionally, native authors use greater number of metadiscourse markers whit a higher frequency in their texts. One of the conclusions was that authors' nativeness is considered as an effective variable on the learners' rhetorical performances.

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Abbreviations

NA   Native author

NNA   Non-native author

INA   Intermediate book authored by native author

INNA   Intermediate book authored by non-native author

UNA   Upper-intermediate book authored by native authors

UNNA   Upper-intermediate book authored by non-native authors

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Language is identified as the main tool for transferring the concepts and ideas interpersonally, by which human being exhibit who they are and what their attitudes, assumptions, feelings, and thoughts are. So acquiring the ability for transferring ideas or contents in a way that the addresser intends, owns a very vital role in constructing an efficacious and successful interaction .In this regard, linguistic discourse, written or speech has caught the linguists and scientists' special attention.

Blagojevic (2004) states that all language use is a social and communicative act in which mutual cooperation and assistance are socio–culturally determined and provided between the producer and receiver of the language to exchange information. So, language reflects different social and cultural characteristics of the community by which it is used. It contains much more than vocabulary items that convey no extra non-linguistic information. Crismore and Farnswarth (1990) have contended that scientific writing doesn't involve just scientific facts expressed through a piece of writing. They consider   academic writing as a social phenomenon, constructing dynamic interaction between writers and readers (Sultan, 2011).

In this regard, a plethora of studies have been devoted to specifying and investigating factors that play a significant role in building a holistically efficient interaction. After conducting this large body of research, in recent decades, metadiscourse has been introduced by some linguists as the secondary layer of discourse which adds no propositional meaning to discourse, but plays the primary role in making discourse more interactive and dialogic. Beauvais (1986) reports that "Harris (1959) described metadiscourse for the first time as text elements that comment about the main information of text but which themselves contain only inessential information" (P.4).

Atai and Sadr (2008) suggest that metadiscourse is a mutual interaction between the reader and writer, in addition to what occurs between reader and content in the process of reading comprehension. This cognitive interaction is identified as metadiscourse.

Accordingly, Tavakoli, Dabagh, and Khorvash (2010) state that textual metadiscourse helps reader to recreate the institutional body of the text and realize the logical connections between different steps of texts to bind the discourse together in order to reconstruct propositional material; thereby, the intended conceptual schema will be activated to receive the specified meaning in a coherent way. They add that author use interpersonal metadiscourse to establish her/his stance and express the author's pragmatic presuppositions and illocutionary force that organizing the text. Thus, metadiscourse is used to organize the discourse, involve the audience, and express authors' attitudes (Fuertes-Olivera, Velasco-Sacristan, Arribas-Bano and Samiengo-Fernández ,2001).

Linguists and researchers believe that metadiscourse elements occur variously in different language contexts, and this creates significant differences in the ways in which members of different discourse communities use them.

In so doing, identifying existing differences can be recognized as a great help to the foreign language learners. It make them aware of the expected norms and rules in the target linguistic discourse, so they will acquire essential knowledge necessary for making them able to present the accepted discourse in each specific context. On the other hand, knowledge of metadiscourse assists reader to grasp the author's line of reasoning in an effective way (Camiciottoli, 2003). So, as Crismore (1982) claims readers should take advantage of metadiscourse in order to identify the communicative context essential for interpreting the intended meanings underlying the text no matter it

is presented in L1 or L2.The above documented reasons demonstrate that metadiscourse as a linguistic device plays a very significant role in understanding the discourse through   providing more guidance for the reader to comprehend the purpose of the text. Therefore, as Crismore (1982) adds, readers are to get under control the rules of metadiscourse to conduct an effective discourse processing for the purpose of a successful comprehension.

Metadiscourse has been investigated intra-linguistically and inter-linguistically and each body of research has revealed significant results that can be accounted as precious assistance to linguistic discoveries. For example, there has been a great interest in the area of teaching metadiscourse markers and strategies to learners in order to investigate its effect on the quality of their reading comprehension. The results suggest that knowledge of metadiscourse markers and strategies play a positive role in the facilitating of reading comprehension. Jalilifar and Shooshtari (2011) declare that "metadiscourse is an important persuasive resource used to influence readers' reactions to text content according to the values and established conventions of a given discourse community; it is particularly useful in helping non-native speakers of English with the difficult task of grasping the writer's persuasive stance when reading challenging texts"(P.54). Thus, foreign language learners can take advantage of the presence of metadiscourse elements in the texts available for them. Therefore, it gains a very high importance to identify how this rhetorical device is used in available text books, particularly EFL books that their main aim is to teach language skills as authentic as possible.

Unfortunately, little work has been conducted in the realm of contrasting EFL books, authored by native and non-native authors, in order to identify tentative

differences in the use of this important rhetorical tool. The above mentioned issue is examined in the present study.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Writing is one of the main productive skills through which learners can transfer their findings and ideas to the other members of their discourse community. In order to make their writings coherent, non-native writers should be able to use different elements of writing in a way that makes their texts reasonable and comprehensible. Metadiscourse is an interactive and rhetorical characteristic of academic writing that has been shown to be a prominent feature of various types of writings. Hyland (2004) states that metadiscourse assists authors to interact with their audiences in order to have a successful communication (cited in Hashemi & Golparvar, 2012). And each discourse community entails its own rules and norms in utilizing metadiscourse markers, so each language user acquire necessary knowledge of using these elements in its efficient way. This ability is usually acquired by native users of a language during natural process of language learning. But non-native writers usually have problems with using English metadiscourse markers and this may be due to their insufficient mastery of the language.

So, foreign language learners should acquire enough knowledge related to the use of metadiscourse markers through exposure and instruction in this realm. Direct teaching of these rules is considered as a way of familiarizing learners with these rules and this kind of instruction has been investigated by many researchers. The textbooks also play a very significant role in this regard, because they can be used as indirect tools to expose learners with accepted way of employing metadiscourse markers by other members of large community of English language users. Therefore , EFL material

designers should be meticulous and try to develop their materials in a way that represent samples of texts in which metadiscourse markers has been used efficiently and effectively based on the predetermined paradigms of the target language.

Some textbooks provided for EL learners are authored by native authors (NA) and some are authored by non-native authors (NNA), between which there are some differences recognized by researchers. I found it important to identify whether these differences can be related to the use of metadiscourse markers in terms of their category distribution and the frequency of occurrence. So, contrasting two sets of EFL books assist us to present a documented account of the situation which will be of help to EFL practitioners and critics.

1.3 .Purpose of the study

This study aimed at investigating EFL books authored by NA and NNA in order to find out whether there are any significant differences in terms of using metadiscourse markers. The pattern of using metadiscourse markers were examined in the texts from EFL books authored by both NA and NNA. It is worth mentioning that provided texts were selected from Intermediate and Upper-intermediate EFL books. Interactive and interactional metadiscourse markers used in these books were assessed to specify their category distribution and frequency of occurrence in the four corpora of EFL books.

1.4. Research questions

This study tries to address the following questions:

I.   What is the category distribution of metadiscourse markers in EFL books by
     language backgrounds of the authors?

II. What are the significant differences between EFL books authored by native authors and non-native authors in the use of metadiscourse?

Based on the above proposed research questions, the required data were collected and then were submitted to SPSS software for the data analysis process. In the subsequent sections, these steps are presented in detail.

1.5. Significance of the study

Metadiscourse is a highly significant area to be explored in academic writings, because, as Dafouz-Miline (2088) suggests, it indicates how authors manage to interact with their readers. Metadiscourse is considered as a linguistic device which can make the developed texts more persuasive and interactive. Hyland (2004) introduces metadiscourse as an essential and inseparable part of meaning. He believes that rewriting, paraphrasing, and summarizing may lead to the change of meaning in a text while the content or subject matter remains the same and this can be attributed to the significant role of metadiscourse in building the meaning. He identifies meaning as a "complete package" which embraces metadiscourse as well as propositional material.

According to Belagojevic (2004) English academic discourse relies on writer's responsibility for an effective communication. So, book's writers play a very constructive role in developing of the well-organized texts regarding the use of different elements of discourse, particularly rhetorical devices such as metadiscourse. So, English writers, especially non-native writers, should know how to use this device in order to develop a good text.

On the other hand, many studies such as Assadi and Vafaee (2012) and Vahid & Shirzad, (2012) have confirmed the positive effect of metadiscourse awareness on the learners' performance.

Among different sources of material, auditory or written, textbooks take a more significant role as they approach language teaching and learning in a systematic way (Alemi & Isavi, 20120).On the other hand, EFL books available to language learners can be accounted as the most available and influential source to which they are exposed. So evaluating the above mentioned textbooks in the use of metadiscourse can be considered as a paramount work. By contrasting EFL books authored by native and non-native authors, we will be able to identify to what extent these books are different in this regard, and this provides a useful framework, for non-native book authors, which they should consider when developing books for ELT discourse community. Therefore, it is of great significance to explore the rhetorical choices that characterize the books authored by English and Persian scientific communities. In this regard, the present study has investigated how different the texts of native and non-native authors are in the use of metadiscourse markers.

1.6. Outline of the study

In chapter one, at first, a brief introduction on metadiscourse concept and its significance is presented. The subsequent sections of this chapter are devoted to topics such as: the statement of problem, purpose of the study, research questions and significance of the study. Chapter two elaborates all the subcategories related to the methodology of the study. In the third chapter, the relevant literature is reviewed. Chapter four presents the analysis of the collected data. Finally, chapter five presents discussion, conclusions, confronted limitations and recommendation for further studies.

1.7. Definition of the key terms

1.7.1. Metadiscourse

Numerous definitions have been proposed for Metadiscourse by different linguists. Hyland (1998) identifies metadiscourse as a vital factor in developing cohesive and persuasive discourse which could influence the way readers understand the propositional meanings present in the texts. .He defines it as non-propositional discourse elements that assist readers to interpret and respond to information in the texts. So Metadiscourse is a constructive linguistic device which plays a critical role in organizing the texts. Metadiscourse using is known as a genre, social and cultural-situated phenomenon. Therefore, authors' nativeness can be considered as a variable which influence their using.

1.7.2. Nativeness

In this study, it is interpreted as being the native user of English language, that is, the quality of naturally being speaker of English language. According to this definition authors of EFL books are divided to two groups: authors that are native users of English Language and those who are non-native users of English Language.

1.7.3. EFL Course Books

EFL books consist of those books which are exclusively designed for the purpose of teaching English Language as a foreign language. All the books selected for the purpose of the present study are taught in the Iranian institutions or universities.

1.7.4. Contrastive Study

Contrastive study, in this study, is the systematic study of Intermediate and Upper-intermediate EFL books authored by native and non-native authors with the purpose of

specifying their differences and similarities in the use of Interactive and Interactional

metadiscourse markers proposed by Hyland (2005). Contrastive studies in this realm

are divided to two groups: intralingual and cross-linguistic studies and present study is

representative of a cross-linguistic type.