

**In the Name of God**



**SHEIKHBAHAE UNIVERSITY**

FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENT

**METADISCOURSE MARKERS IN THE CONCLUSION  
SECTION OF ELT AND REMOTE SENSING RESEARCH  
ARTICLES WRITTEN BY NATIVE AND NON- NATIVE  
AUTHORES**

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

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**Dedicated to**

*My Family for Their Faithful Love and Support*

## Abstract

The present study sought to examine the frequency of occurrence and category distribution of metadiscourse markers in the conclusion sections of Remote Sensing (RS) and ELT research articles and to identify the differences between English native writers and Persian writers in the use of metadiscourse across these two disciplines. To this end, the conclusion section of 120 research articles were analyzed based on the taxonomy proposed by Hyland (2005), and then the chi-square test was used to determine the significance of the differences. Results of the statistical analysis showed that the differences between ELT and RS research articles in terms of the total frequency of metadiscourse markers were not significant; however they were significantly different in terms of use of hedge. Also the differences between ELT native and Iranian writers in terms of the total frequencies of metadiscourse markers were not significant; however, they differed significantly in terms of use of engagement markers and hedge. Regarding RS research articles, it was noticed that the differences between native and Iranian writers in terms of the total frequencies of metadiscourse markers were significant. Native and Iranian writers were also different in terms of use of code glosses and evidentials.

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## **Abbreviations**

ELT	English Language Teaching
ESP	English for Specific Purpose
RS	Remote Sensing

## **Chapter one: Introduction**

## 1.1. Introduction

Writing is a social skill with which writers try to communicate with their readers to convey their messages and information. It is through writing that writers try to interact with their readers to negotiate meaning; thus the writers can convey their messages in the way they prefer by determining the social distance between them and the readers by involving closely in the discussion or choosing a more remote stance. Therefore, writing is considered as one of the most important skills. Lack of immediate feedback from readers makes writing a difficult task for writers. To produce coherent discourse, writers must use what they already know about the subject at hand and integrate it with information from other sources; they must draw on the ways that grammar and discourse function and use cohesive devices appropriately. They also need to show their presence in the text somehow to direct their readers as to how to read the text, evaluate it, and react to what has been written by the writer. This is done by using metadiscourse markers which are defined by Vande Kopple (1972, p.2) as “ discourse that people use not to expand referential material, but to help their readers connect, organize, interpret, evaluate, and develop attitudes towards that material.” Metadiscourse is thus a very important aspect of writing for academic purposes.

It is supposed that good native writers and second language writers make appropriate use of metadiscourse markers to make their text coherent, make a relationship with their readers and guide their readers in the process of reading. The use of metadiscourse markers is also different in different disciplines, as Halliday (1994) states, linguistic variation results from functional variation inherent in different disciplines. Each discipline has its own theoretical framework from which it grounds its field and its discourse rhetorical framework.

Lack of awareness of metadiscourse markers by non-native writers is the main reason for rejection of scholars' articles by reviewers when the submitted articles are globally acceptable in terms of vocabulary and syntax, but suffers from discontinuity, lack of consistency and lack of

familiarity with the discourse conventions of writing in English (Sionis, 1995, cited in Atai, 2008). In order to improve knowledge of the interactive characteristics of writers of research articles, it is a necessary to have a systematic account of using metadiscourse markers which researchers across disciplines employ to achieve their intended effects. To this end the present study attempts to investigate metadiscourse markers in research articles that belong to two academic disciplines of English Language Teaching (ELT) and Remote Sensing (RS). It further examines the use of these markers by native speakers of English and non-native writers of English in research articles of the two disciplines.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Use of metadiscourse markers is different across disciplines and languages. It is supposed that good native writers use metadiscourse markers appropriately to communicate with their readers effectively. Lack of awareness of metadiscourse marker by non-native writers is the main reason for rejection of scholars' articles by reviewers when submitted articles are globally acceptable in terms of vocabulary and syntax, but suffer from incoherence, lack of consistency and lack of familiarity with the discourse conventions of writing in English. Many studies have been done on discourse analysis and metadiscourse but little has been done related to contrastive study of the use of metadiscourse markers across disciplines and across speakers of different language background. Therefore, finding the writing norms of ELT as a representative of humanities and RS as a representative of non- humanities as well as native and non-native writers of the two different disciplines of RS and ELT in terms of use of metadiscourse markers were the motivating factors for this study.



### **1.3. Research questions**

1. What are the differences between ELT and RS research articles regarding frequency and category distribution of metadiscourse markers?
2. What are the differences between native speaking English writers and Persian writers of English in their use of metadiscourse markers in terms of frequency and category distribution in English Language Teaching (ELT) research articles?
3. What are the differences between native speaking English writers and Persian writers of English in their use of metadiscourse markers in terms of frequency and category distribution in Remote Sensing (RS) research articles?

### **1.4. Significance of the study**

Many studies have been done on discourse analysis and metadiscourse but few studies have been carried on contrastive discourse analysis of metadiscourse markers commonly used in the research articles of different disciplines and writers from different language background. Such a contrastive study is essential to guide novice writers in these fields to realize the norms of the discourse community to which they belong. Thus, a novice writer will gain insights about the rhetorical features of their community discourse and can improve their work by considering these points.

### 1.5. Definitions of key terms

- **English Language Teaching (ELT)** is the major concerned to prepare students to teach English as a second or foreign language.
- **Metadiscourse markers** are the rhetorical device that writers use in their texts to interpret, organize, connect and develop attitudes towards the material (Hyland, 2005).
- **Remote sensing (RS)** is the major concerned with acquisition of information about an object or phenomenon, without making physical contact with the object by means of propagated signals (e.g. electromagnetic radiation emitted from aircraft or satellites).

## **Chapter two: Literature review**

## 2.1. Overview

In this chapter, metadiscourse and its definitions, different classifications, and studies carried out on metadiscourse in Iranian context are reviewed.

## 2.2. Metadiscourse

Discourse analysis emerged from a need for a better understanding of the language and the thought that language is meaningful only in its context. Although the term discourse analysis covers the analysis of both spoken and written texts, they are treated differently. The situation of the written text is different because we have a structured, pre-planned, possibly revised discourse from one sole interlocutor. In addition, writing can be interpreted as more of a stand-alone medium, as compared to spoken discourse, which is more contextual or situational Millward (2007).

Accessing to instances of spoken data such as naturally occurring conversations in different contexts is difficult; however, in written discourse analysis, compared to analysis of oral discourse, more data is available in different genres. Accordingly, a great deal of research has been done on a variety of texts such as literary works, news, articles, and scientific texts. The development in written discourse has led to the creation of a new term, called metadiscourse.

As Hyland (2005) states, the term metadiscourse was coined by Zelling Harris in 1959 to show the writer's or speaker's attempts to guide the receiver interpretation of written and oral texts. After that many writers such as William (1981), Vandekopple (1985), and Crismore (1989) developed the concept of metadiscourse with different discursual features such as hedges, connectives, etc. to show how writers and speakers try to guide their receivers in the process of oral or written text comprehension. It shows that communication is more than the exchange of