A Comparative Study on the Uses of Metadiscourse Markers (MMs) in Research Articles (RAs): Applied Linguistics Versus Politics

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Abstract   This study attempts to compare and analyze the use of metadiscourse markers (MMs) in research articles (RAs) from two disciplines of applied linguistics and politics written in English and Persian. It aims to find the similarities and differences in using MMs by English and Persian writers of these two disciplines. To achieve this goal, 160 RAs from international and national journals from 2006-2012 were selected. 80 English RAs: 40 applied linguistics, 40 politics and 80 Persian RAs: 40 applied linguistics, 40 politics. A recent metadiscourse classification formulated by Hyland and Tse (2004) was used as the model. After determining the frequency and percentage of each MM, we used Chi-square analysis to see if the differences between these two disciplines are significant or not. Findings reveal that English writers used MMs more than Persian writers. We found some cross-linguistics differences in English and Persian applied linguistics RAs, while English and Persian writers of politics used MMs almost in a same way. We do not find any cross-disciplinary differences in these two languages. Result of this study is useful for Persian students and teachers and all who are interested in learning more about English.

Keywords   Metadiscourse markers (MMs), Research articles (RAs), Applied linguistics, Politics, English, Persian

1. Introduction

Contrastive rhetorical investigations, aiming to compare academic written discourses among various languages have already become an established area of inquiry. In particular, several contrastive studies on the use of metadiscourse markers in research articles (RAs), comparing English versus other languages have been done such as Norwegian (Blagojevic, 2004), Arabic (Abbas, 2011), and Persian (Marandi, 2003). Cross-cultural studies have delineated the differences on academic writings of various nationalities as well as differences in "patterns of intellectual tradition, which have been attributed to cultural characteristics, the structure of communities, literacy practices, and notions of politeness" (Koutsantoni, 2005, p. 98).

As Hyland (2005) believes metadiscourse is based on a view of writing as social engagement in which writers project themselves into their discourse to signal their attitudes and commitments. Metadiscourse includes linguistic elements which do not refer to aspects of external reality but to the organization of the discourse itself and to aspects of the relationship that develops between the author and the reader (Crismore 1989; Vande Kopple 2002). There are different classifications of metadiscourse. Vande Kopple's (1985) classification of metadiscourse consists of interpersonal and textual categories, but Hyland and Tse's (2004) classification consists of interactional and interactive resources. In Vande Kopple (1985) idea of interpersonal metadiscourse "helps writers express their personalities and their attitudes toward ideational materials, and indicates how they hope readers will respond to the ideational material", but textual metadiscourse helps writers connect bits of ideational material within a text and helps the text make sense for readers.

In this study, the interactional resources of Hyland and Tse's (2004) model was used. In his classification the interactional resources includes five categories: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. Hedges are devices that determine the writer's doubt about propositions in the text and limit his/her personal commitment towards the conveyed context. Some examples of hedges found in the corpus in English RAs are: might, perhaps, relatively; and in Persian RAs are: نسبتا [nesbatan] rather, فرض کردن [farzkardan] suppose, احتمالا [ehtemalan] probably. However, boosters reveal the writer's

certaity to propositions. By means of these devices, writers emphasize the force of the propositions. They are some words like: exactly, in fact, reveal, and in Persian they are like: بی تردید [bitardid] doubtless, دقیقا [daghighan] exactly, عقیده دارد[aghidedarad] believe. Attitude markers express the writer's evaluation of prepositional information. Some examples of these devices in English RA$_s$ are: notably, important, fortunately; and in Persian RA$_s$ are: ارزنده [arzande] worthwhile, چشمگیر [cheshmgir] salient, فاجعه آمیز [fajeeamiz] catastrophic. Engagement markers address readers straightforwardly by including them in the texts with grammatical devices like imperatives, second person pronoun, and question forms, Some words like: note that, see, look at; and in Persian they are some words like: توجه کنید [tavajohkonid] pay attention, در نظر بگیریم [darnazar begirim] let's suppose, مشاهده کنید [moshahede konid] look at. Self-mentions show reference to author in the text. They include some words in English RA$_s$ like: we, my, ourselves; and in Persian RA$_s$ like: ما [ma] we, نگارنده [nega:rande] the writer, پژوهشگر [pajoheshgar] the researcher.

This study aims at analyzing and comparing the role of interactional metadiscourse markers in two deciplines of applied linguistics and politics in English and Persian. To the best of my knowledge, no study has compared the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in English and Persian RA$_s$ of these two disciplines. In this study, we compared 160 RA$_s$ to see the possible differences in using interactional MM$_s$ between English and Persian RA$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Metadiscourse has been studied from different standpoints and perspectives. Studies have suggested the importance of metadiscourse for establishing positive politeness and addressing friendly attitude in school texts (Crismore, 1984). In academic writing metadiscourse has been seen as an important pragmatics resource for influencing readers' responses to claims in RA$_s$ (Hyland, 1998b; Mauranen, 1993). So the presence and function of metadiscourse resources have been examined in different genres consisting of newspaper discourse (Lee, 2004); textbooks (Hyland, 1999); postgraduate theses (Swales, 1990), and company annual reports (Hyland, 1998a).

The present study aims to analyze two sections of abstract and introduction of RA$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics. We chose these two sections due to their importance in problem identification and in getting started within RA$_s$. These sections have a very important role in drawing reader's attention toward the text and they can make the text appealing and interesting for readers.

Fakhri (2004) claims that in the introduction of RA$_s$ writers are faced with the difficult task of selecting the degree of directness most suitable for disclosing their findings and the type of rhetorical strategies necessary to make their introductions most effective. Their choice of strategies can show their ideas toward their readers and the

academic discourse community.

To the best of my knowledge, no study has been done to compare and contrast the role of interactional metadiscourse markers (MM$_s$) of two disciplines of applied linguistics and politics in RA$_s$ in English and Persian. Further studies seem to be needed to investigate the interactional MM$_s$ across different disciplines and different languages. Therefore, the present study was conducted in the area of contrastive rhetoric and to this aim, the following questions stand out:

1.3. Significance of the Study

For the advancement of science, scholars need to present their findings and validate their new knowledge claims and findings for members of their discourse community and society by publishing their findings in forms of articles in journals of their own discourse community. English language teachers or learners are members of a specific discourse community and deal with Persian or English applied linguistics journal frequently, so they should be aware of the rhetorical features of writing in their discipline to publish their papers in the related journals.

Many contrastive studies have been conducted in different disciplines of English and other languages, but contrastive studies of interactional MM$_s$ that analyze possible differences or similarities between the languages of Persian and English are rare. There are rare studies that focus on comparing and contrasting interactional MM$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics in English and Persian RA$_s$. Therefore, this study tries to compensate for the shortcoming of the previous researches.

When you are learning a foreign language, a large portion of the language consists of MM$_s$. So, the importance of having knowledge of MM$_s$ for English language learners and teachers cannot be ignored. As a result, comparing and contrasting the interactional MM$_s$ in Persian and English give English language learners and teachers a better understanding of MM$_s$, their categories and the way that English and Persian writers use them in their RA$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics. It shed some light on the discipline of applied linguistics. From the present study, it is possible to extract several general implications for the foreign language learning and teaching. The result could be used for the development of teaching and studying English. This study can play an important role in increasing English language learners and teachers awareness of the differences that might exist between the role of interactional MM$_s$ in different languages. The study is comparing two different languages that have different cultures, so the results of the study can have valuable implications for those who are interested in cross-cultural studies between English and Persian.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Metadiscourse Markers

As Hyland (2005) mentions the term "metadiscourse" was

coined by Zellig Harris in 1959 to represent a writer's or speaker's attempt to guide a receiver's perception of a text. This concept has been developed by writers such as Williams (1981), Vande Kopple (1985), Crismore (1989), and other researchers. Then during years, metadiscourse markers were examined in different genres and different academic writings by some researchers who were interested in this field. The range of academic genres in which metadiscourse studies have been carried out is various: they have included course books (Moreno 2003), research articles (Abdi 2002), doctoral theses (Swales 1990; Bunton 1999), undergraduate essays (Barton 1995), master's theses.

In Hartley's (2008) idea "academic writing does not take place in a social vacuum, and it is characterized as a hierarchically organized, goal-directed, and problem-solving process". According to Hyland (1998), academic writers do not simply produce texts that discuss social or natural realities, but they "use language to acknowledge, construct and negotiate social relations". As we know, research articles often have a standard structure that is known as introduction, method, result and discussion (IMRAD). As Swales (1990) mentions, research article is a powerful genre representing the key product of knowledge manufacturing industry. Nowadays RA$_s$ provide a suitable area for the study and analysis of academic texts. It is necessary for an RA writer to be familiar with the basic writing rules of academic texts and to follow them consistently.

There are some different definitions for genre, in one definition by Hyland (2005) who believes that genre is a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers use language to respond to recurring situations. His idea about genre is that: "the concept is based on the idea that members of a community usually have little difficulty in recognizing similarities in the texts they use frequently and are able to draw on their repeated experiences with such texts to read, understand and perhaps write them relatively easily".

Halliday (1994) believes when people use language, they work toward satisfying three macro functions. They try to give expression to their experience, to interact with their audience, and to organize their expressions into cohesive discourse. In other words, he argues that people communicate with messages that are integrated expressions of three different kinds of meaning: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

There have developed a large amount of contrastive rhetoric studies in the field of metadiscourse; we will mention some of them in the following. Contrastive rhetoric aims to compare written academic discourses among various languages. Kaplan (1966) introduced contrastive rhetoric; he is the well-known father of contrastive rhetoric who developed the idea that language and writing are cultural phenomena and that each language has its own cultural conventions. He indicated that the linguistic and cultural traditions of EFL writers might influence the way they write. He pointed out that foreign students may have to adopt new conventions that are in agreement with the demands made upon them by the target language system. According to

Valero-Garces (1996), rhetoric refers to "the strategies a writer uses to convince readers of his/her claims and to increase the credibility of his/her research."

In this study, we want to compare the role of metadiscourse markers in research articles of two disciplines of Applied Linguistics and Politics, both in English and Persian to see if they use metadiscourse markers (MM$_s$) in a same way or not.

2.2. Definition of Metadiscourse

In discourse literature definitions of metadiscourse have varied from broad ones, such as "writing about writing" (Williams 1981) or "discourse about discourse or communication about communication" (Vande Kopple 1985), to more specific ones, such as "writing about the evolving text rather than referring to the subject matter" (Swales 2004).

Hyland (2004) and Hyland and Tse (2004) consider metadiscourse as an interpersonal means in the hands of writers to express their propositions in a coherent and convincing manner and to establish interaction with their readers. They believe that "writers try to anticipate and respond to the readers' potential negation by the aid of interactive and interactional resources".

According to Hyland (2005) metadiscourse is defined as "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assist the writer (or speaker) to express a viewpoint and engage with readers as members of a particular community". In his idea, metadiscourse is grounded in the belief that communication is social engagement and based on a view of language as a dynamic entity since: "as we speak or write, we negotiate with others, making decisions about the effects we are having on our listeners or readers". Hyland (2005) in his new model proposes that "metadiscourse is immersed in the socio-rhetorical context in which it occurs, so variety in the use of metadiscoursal features is dependent on the purposes of writers, the audience, as well as socio-cultural settings".

Crismore et al (1993) have another definition for metadiscourse, they look at metadiscourse or metatext as a part of spoken or written discourse. They believe metadiscourse is "the linguistic material in text that does not add anything to the propositional content but that is intended to help the listener or reader organize, interpret, and evaluate the information given".

By this definition, we recognize that MM$_s$ are of many types and they can adopt different forms. They can range from a single word "may" to a full sentence ("the next section in this paper deals with the topic of education"), several sentences or even a whole paragraph.

2.3. Classification of Metadiscourse

The models of metadiscourse have also varied: earlier models have grouped metadiscourse categories into "interpersonal" and "textual" (Crismore et al 1993), whereas Hyland and Tse's (2004) model of metadiscourse consists of interactional and interactive resources. Vande Kopple's

(1997) classification is based on Hallidayan's (1985) macro-function of language including textual and interpersonal categories. Vande Kopple's (1997) classification is as follows:

Textual Metadiscourse:

1. Connectives: used to show how parts of a text are connected to one another; they include sequencers (first), reminders, and topicalizers (with regard to).

2. Code Glosses: used to help readers to grasp the writer's intended meaning. By means of these devices writers can reword, explain, define or clarify their meanings, sometimes putting the reformulation in parentheses or making it as an example.

Interpersonal Metadiscourse:

1. Illocution Markers: used to make explicit the discourse act the writer is performing at certain points (to sum up, we predict).

2. Validity Markers: used to express the writer's commitment to the probability or truth of a statement. They include:

a. Hedges (e.g., may);
b. Emphatics (e.g., of course);
c. Attributors (e.g., according to Swales).

3. Narrators: they let the readers know who said what (e.g., Mr Tailor said).

4. Attitude Markers: used to show the attitudes of the writers toward propositional content (e.g., surprisingly).

5. Commentaries: used to address readers directly, drawing them into an implicit dialogue by commenting on the reader's probable mood or possible reaction to the text (you will certainly agree that).

But Vande Kopple's (1985) classification system for metadiscourse is a little different with his previous model. In Vande Koppple's (1985) classification textual metadiscourse includes: text connectives, code glosses, validity markers, and narrators, but interpersonal metadiscourse consists of illocution markers, attitude markers, and commentaries.

But Hyland and Tse's (2004) model have distinguished between "interactional" and "interactive" in another way. This model entails two sub-divisions: interactive resource and interactional resource. The interactional resources consist of five categories: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. Interactive resources consist of the five subcategories: transition markers, frame markers, endophorics markers, evidentials, and code glosses. We use the interactional resources of this model for this study. Let's define these terms briefly.

Lakoff (1972) associates hedges with unclarity or fuzziness, he believes they are "devices whose jobs are to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy". However, Bruce (2010) associates hedging with all means leading lack of full commitment:

"Hedging is a rhetorical strategy. By including a particular term, choosing a particular structure, or imposing a specific prosodic form on the utterance, the speaker signals a lack of a full commitment either to the full category membership of a term or expression in the utterance (content mitigation), or to the intended illocutionary force of the utterance (force mitigation)".

Hedging may also stem from the inner conflict between intention and desire: "being indirect is a mechanism for dealing with conflicting intentions and desires. The general form of the conflict is that the speaker wants to convey X for some reason and he does not want to convey X for other reasons. By being indirect, he can convey X in one sense but not in another.

Hyland (2005) defines the terms clearly; we use his explanations for defining other terms. In his idea hedges are opposite to boosters. Boosters show the writer's certainty or full commitment to propositions; by using them, writers emphasize the force of the propositions and certainty. Hyland (1999) points out "boosters suggest that the writer recognizes potentially diverse positions but has chosen to narrow this diversity rather than enlarge it, confronting alternatives with a single, confident voice". They include some expressions like: in fact, doubtless; it is clear that; of course.

Attitude markers (as its name conveys) express writers' attitude and evaluation of prepositional information. They convey surprise, obligation, agreement, importance, and so on. According to Hyland (2005) they are signaled by attitude verbs (e.g., prefer), sentence adverbs (hopefully), and adjectives (remarkable). Some examples of attitude markers are: notably, unfortunately, I agree.

Self-mention shows reference to author in terms of first person pronouns and possessives adjectives. According to Hyland (2001) "the presence or absence of explicit author reference is generally a conscious choice by writers to adopt a particular stance and a contextually situated authorial identity". However, Hyland (1994) believes that "they alert readers to the academic's perspective towards both the propositional information and the readers themselves, therefore contributing to the writer-reader relationship". They include some words like my, our, to my knowledge, ourselves.

Engagement markers build relationship with readers. Hyland (2005) defines them as "devices that explicitly address readers, either to focus their attention or include them as discourse participants". Writers usually do this by including readers in the texts with grammatical devices like second person pronoun, imperatives, and question forms. They are some words as: consider, look at, you can see that, pay attention.

Dahl (2004) proposes a taxonomy consisting of two categories of metatextual elements. The first, called Locational Metatext, comprises linguistic elements which refer to the text itself or to parts of it. Dahl's (2004) second category has been termed Rhetorical Metatext. It includes meta-elements which assist the reader in the processing of the text by making explicit the rhetorical acts performed by the writer in the argumentation process.

This study attempts to touch upon the following questions: What is the most frequent interactional MM$_s$ in English and

in Persian RA$_s$ in the two disciplines of applied linguistics and politics?

3. Methodology

3.1. Corpus

This study aims to compare and analyze metadiscourse markers (MM$_s$) across two different languages of English and Persian. We want to compare 4o English applied linguistics research articles (RA$_s$) with 40 correspondent Persian ones; also, we examined the differences and similarities between English and Persian political RA$_s$ and wanted to see if MM$_s$ were used differently across different languages and different disciplines. Based on the previous studies, we expect to find some differences both across different languages and disciplines.

All the RA$_s$ were read carefully, and then they were searched for the interactional MM$_s$. In the following parts, we will explain the data and the criteria we chose our articles based on it, and the model of MM$_s$ we used; also the procedure we took in this study and the way we analyzed the data will be illustrated.

3.2. Materials

The data for this study comprise a total of 160 RA$_s$ from the two disciplines, 80 articles belonging to applied linguistics, and 80 articles belonging to politics. Among 80 articles in each discipline, 40 articles belonged to native writers of English and 40 articles belonged to native writers of Persian. Just articles whose authors are speakers of English and Persian were selected for the analysis. The RA$_s$ were selected randomly, and the period of their publication ranged from 2006 to 2012.

The choice of RA$_s$ in each discipline was based on a number of criteria: the first criterion was having abstract, introduction, (method), result and discussion sections. Since this study was focusing on two rhetorical sections of abstract and introduction, it was important to have them among the rhetorical sections of RA$_s$. These sections were chosen because of their more challenging nature. They have the determining role in motivating the study and in persuading its readers. For the purpose of this study, only these two parts of each article have been included in the search. This means that no footnotes, bibliographies, and figures which appeared in the research are included the data. The second criterion was the date of RA$_s$. The articles were all limited to those published during 2006 to 2012 with the assumption that time influences the style of the writers and with this time limit this factor has been taken into account. Another criterion was the length of the articles. We try to select the articles with almost the same length to get to a reliable result, so we ignored the articles that are too short or too long.

The English applied linguistics articles were taken from journals like: *Language Teaching Research* (LTR), *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* (IJAL),

Language and Speech (LS), *Child Language Teaching & Therapy*) (CLTT), *Electronic Journal of Foreign Language Teaching*) (EJFLT), *International Journal of Bilingualism*) (IJB). The Persian applied linguistics articles were selected from some journals like: پژوهش زبانهای خارجی (Research on Foreign Languages) (RFL), فصلنامه پژوهشهای زبان و ادبیات تطبیقی (Comparative Literature and Language Studies Quarterly) (CLLSQ), مجله علمی- پژوهشی زبان پژوهشی دانشگاه الزهرا (Science & Research journal in Language , Quarterly, Alzahra) (SRJLQA), نشریه علمی- پژوهشی فناوری آموزش (Science & Research Journal in Education Technology) (SRJET), فصلنامه نوآوری های آموزشی (Education Innovations Quarterly) (EIQ), پژوهشنامه علوم انسانی (Journal of Human Science) (JHS).

The English politics articles were taken from journals like *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* (BJPIR), *Political Research Quarterly* (PRQ), *Comparative Political Studies* (CPS), *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* (JITP), *American Journal of Political Science* (AJPS), Journal of Political Marketing (JPM). The Persian politics articles were taken from some journals like: پژوهشنامه علوم سیاسی (Journal of Political Science) (JPS), دانش سیاس (Politics knowledge) (PK), فصلنامه سیاست (Politics Quarterly) (PQ), فصلنامه مطالعات خاورمیانه (Middle east Studies Quarterly) (MSQ), فصلنامه راهبرد (Rahbord Quarterly) (RQ), سیاسی علوم (Political science) (PS).

The following Table summarizes the number of articles selected from the international and national journals.

Table 1.   Number of Articles in English and Persian from each Journal

	English Journals	Numbers	Persian Journals	Numbers
Applied Linguistics	LTS	5	RFL	14
	IJAL	4	CLLSQ	13
	LS	4	SRJLQA	2
	CLTT	4	SRJET	3
	EJFLT	19	EIQ	2
	IJB	4	JHS	6
Politics Journals	BJPIR	9	JPS	18
	PRQ	7	PQ	6
	CPS	5	PK	10
	JITP	10	MSQ	2
	AJPS	6	RQ	3
	JPM	3	PS	1

3.3. Instrumentation

Several metadiscourse models have been introduced since the inception of the concept. All of the models are recognitions of a belief that the use of language for communication is not just an attempt to transfer information and knowledge; rather it is also normally accompanied by cooperative effort like organization, evaluations, feelings, engagement, etc. for the purpose of this study, a recent metadiscourse classification formulated by Hyland and Tse

(2004) was taken as the model. The taxonomy was chosen since it offers a more comprehensive categorization of MM$_s$ suitable in examining the present study.

As we mentioned before, Hyland and Tse's (2004) model entails two sub-divisions: interactive resources and interactional resources. The interactive resources consist of these five subcategories: transition markers, frame markers, endophorics markers, evidentials, and code glosses. But interactional resources of this model consist of these categories: hedges, boosters, attitude markers, self-mentions, and engagement markers. In this study we focus only on the five categories of interactional resources in RA$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics.

To illustrate better, we provide one example for each of the five subcategories of interactional resources:

Hedge:

مشارکت سیاسی **احتمالا** یکی از مهمترین شاخصهای توسعه سیاسی هر ملت در نظر گرفته می شود.

Mos^a:rekate sia;si ehtemalan yeki az mohemtarin s^a:khesha:ye tose?e sia?:si har melat dar nazar gerefte mis^vad.

It *seems* many parties have lost their political power in society.

Booster:

فشارهای دولتی **بی شک** یکی از عوامل شکل گیری انقلابها می باشد.

Fes^a:rhaye doolati bi s^ak yeki az ava;mele s^eklgiriye engela:bha mi ba;s^ad.

Of course, we should try to find a solution for this problem.

Attitude marker:

متاسفانه این نظریه از سوی کارشناسان علوم سیاسی رد شد.

mote?sefane in nazariye az sooye kars^enasane ?uloome sia:sir ad s^od.

Fortunately, international relations of these two countries are improved.

Self-mention:

مـا مـی خواهیم مکتب های مختلف زبانشناسی را بررسی کنیم.

Ma: mikahim maktabhaye mokhtalefe zaban s^enasi ra Barresi konim.

I refer to the English corpus by the abbreviation Eng L$_1$.

Engagement marker:

شما چند نوع سکوت می شناسید؟

S^oma c^and no? sokoot mi s^enasid?

Note the following examples.

3.4. Procedure

After reading all the RA$_s$ carefully, we search the articles for interactional MM$_s$. The words, which had those devices, were marked and put in their proper categories regarding their meaning and context which embedded them. Then the frequencies of these devices were counted in all of the RA$_s$ manually for two times with a one-week interval to get the reliability of the analysis. Since the type and appearance of MM$_s$ are varied and many metadiscourse categories are multifunction, a context-sensetive analysis of each marker had to be carried out before it was finally classified. So each

marker should be classified according to its context.

According to Adel (2006) "metadiscourse is inherently a fuzzy and a functional category and that the matadiscursive expressions can be multifunctional and context dependent". Therefore, particular attention was paied to the context in which interactional markers were used. We counted the frequency of items manually, then we classified them into their categories, finally their percentages were computed.

3.5. Data Analysis

After reading the articles carefully and counting the number of times MMs appear in the articles, their frequencies, and then we will determine the percentage for each item. We will carry out these functions for each discipline separately. Then chi-square will be used to see if the differences between these two disciplines are statistically significant or not.

4. Results

4.1. Result of Quantitative Analysis

4.1.1. Word Count Analysis

The first step taken in the analysis of interactional MM$_s$ in English and Persian RA$_s$ of applied linguistics and politics was to run word count to determine the length of the corpus. 8963 interactional MM$_s$ were identified in 120,634 words of which 2703 were used in English applied linguistics (35402 words), 2806 were used in English politics RA$_s$ (33945 words), 1658 were identified in Persian applied linguistics RA$_s$ (25571 words), and 1796 in Persian politics RA$_s$ (25716 words). The raw frequencies and percentages of interactional MM$_s$ in RA$_s$ are presented in the following part.

4.1.2. Interactional MM$_s$ in English and Persian RA$_s$ of Applied Linguistics

After determining the length of the corpus, we calculated the frequencies and percentages of each items of MM$_s$ to find the possible differences between them in two languages of English and Persian.

Table 2. Raw Frequency and Percentage of MM$_s$ in Applied Linguistics

	English	Persian
MM$_s$	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Hedges	1053(38.95)	611(36.85)
Boosters	912(33.74)	647(39.02)
Attitude Markers	516(19.08)	260(15.68)
Engagement Markers	71(2.62)	58(3.49)
Self-mentions	109(4.03)	40(2.41)
Total words of corpus	35402	25571
Total Markers	2703	1658
Mean	13.09	15.42

As it was specified in Table 2, the frequency of hedges in English applied linguistics articles outnumbered other

markers and the frequency of boosters exceeded other markers in Persian applied linguistics articles. Engagement markers were used very limited in English applied linguistics RA_s, but Persian writers showed a lower degree of using self-mention. The result of the present study complies with result of Abdi's (2009) work. In his study he compared the role of MMs in English and Persian RA_s in six disciplines, and he found that English writers used hedges a lot, but self-mention is the least frequent used markers in Persian RA_s.

4.1.3. Interactional MM_s in English and Persian RA_s of Politics

After calculating the frequencies and percentages of each item of MM_s in RA_s of politics in two languages of English and Persian, we found some similarities and differences. Consider the following table.

Table 3. Raw Frequencies and Percentage of MM_s in Politics

	English	Persian
MM_s	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)
Hedges	1034(36.84)	773(43.04)
Boosters	837(29.82)	582(32.40)
Attitude Markers	658(23.44)	278(15.47)
Engagement Markers	54(1.92)	99(5.51)
Self-mentions	222(7.91)	64(3.56)
Total words of corpus	33945	25716
Total Markers	2806	1796
Mean	12.09	14.31

In Table 3, figures strongly indicate that in English samples, authors in politics tended to use hedges more than other markers, but they used limited numbers of engagement markers. The frequencies of these two markers are very similar with English RA_s in applied linguistics. The overall frequency of MM_s was similar to the earlier study of Hyland's (1998b) analysis of textbooks and RA_s; his data showed that hedges were the most frequent metadiscourse feature in RA_s.

The Persian writers of Politics used hedges most frequently, but they used self-mentions very limited. The result of this study is in line with that of Fatemi and Mirshojaee (2012). They compared the frequency of the interactional MM_s in the introduction and discussion sections of linguistics and sociological RA_s. They concluded that writing conventions and norms are different in these two languages. In his data, hedges were the most frequent markers in Persian RA_s, but self-mention was the least used marker.

4.1.4. Cross-linguistics Variation of MM_s in RA_s

As the two previous tables reveal, there are some differences in the frequency of MM_s used by English and Persian writers of two disciplines of applied linguistics and politics. Consider the following table to find the details.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
English applied linguistics	5	532.2000	449.31804	71.00	1053.00
English politics	5	561.0000	412.69965	54.00	1034.00
Persian applied linguistics	5	323.2000	292.49051	40.00	647.00
Persian politics	5	359.2000	309.15643	64.00	773.00

Table 4 calculated Mean and Std.Deviation to find more details. N is the number of items we considered through our study. However, we need to find Chi-Square to see if the differences are significant or not.

Table 5. English Applied Linguistics vs. Persian Applied Linguistics

	Value	df	Sig.
X^2	20.34	8	.001

The difference between English applied linguistics and Persian applied linguistics was found to be significant at ($p<0.05$) since the Observed X^2 (20.349) is greater than the Critical X^2 (15.507) with df=8.

Table 6. English Politics vs. Persian Politics

	Value	df	Sig.
X^2	6.54	8	.591

The difference between English Politics and Persian Politics was found not to be significant at ($p<0.05$) since the Observed X^2 (6.542) is less than the Critical X^2 (15.507) with df=8.

4.1.5. Cross-disciplinary Variation of MM_s in RA_s

The next part of this study is to find if there are any differences in using MM_s across different disciplines of the same language.

Table 7. English Politics vs. English Applied Linguistics

	Value	df	Sig.
X^2	10.61	8	.124

The difference between English Politics and English Applied Linguistics was found not to be significant at ($p<0.05$) since the Observed X^2 (10.613) is less than the Critical X^2 (15.507) with df=8.

Table 8. Persian Politics vs. Persian Applied Linguistics

	Value	df	Sig.
X^2	7.49	8	.367

The difference between Persian Politics vs. Persian Applied Linguistics was found not to be significant at ($p<0.05$) since the Observed X^2 (7.49) is less than the Critical X^2 (15.507) with df=8.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

5.1. Discussion

The analysis showed that there are some meaningful differences between English and Persian RA$_s$ of applied linguistics. The most frequent items of MM$_s$ used by English writers of applied linguistics were hedges, and the least used items were engagement markers. However, Persian writers of applied linguistics used boosters more than hedges, and the least used items by them was self-mentions. Generally, English writers of applied linguistics used more hedges and fewer boosters than Persian writers. The result of this study is consistent with Marandi's (2003) work. He compared 30 MA theses in English and Persian, and his findings showed that native speakers of Persian used significantly fewer hedges than native speakers of English. A number of cultural, social, political and psychological factors might help justify such differences. These differences may show the specific nature and writing style of English and Persian writers.

Banks (1994) argues that one function of hedges is not avoiding face-threatening acts, but just conform an established writing style. One reason for English writer's tendency toward using more hedges and fewer boosters comparing to Persian writers could be that they might want to be more objective in their writings. They use more hedges in order to protect themselves against being criticized. As Liantade (2008) mentions applied linguistics is more interested in theoretical studies and is more concerned with theories, so the discipline of applied linguistics exercises more caution.

The English writers are addressing a larger discourse community and are published in international journals, but the Persian writers are addressing a local discourse community and are published in national journals. When a writer is addressing a large number of people, he has to be more cautious of what he writes, so he uses more hedges than boosters. Addressing a local discourse community, writer is faced with less number of readers and has more freedom for writing about his own or other researchers' ideas, works or suggestions and can use more boosters and fewer hedges. Bavarsad (2008) mentioned that:

"Local writers address their smaller local discourse community whereas writers for international journals address a much larger discourse community with greater expectations. In addressing a larger discourse community writers need to be more cautious of the claims that they make". (p. 68). Consider these examples:

It *seems* that students *often* find it hard to express their emotions in their target foreign language. (Hayes, 2011).

دانش آموزان باید برای پاسخ به سوالات جملاتی از خود بسازند و زمان زیادی باید در این مرحله صرف شود. (نجاتی و نبی لو. 1390)

Da:nesh a:moozan ba:yad bara:ye pa:sokh be soa;la:t jomala:ti az khod besa:zand, and zama:n zia:di ba:yad dar in marhale sarf shaved.

In the former example, the English writer wrote the article in an international journal for readers who have different attitudes and expectations. So the writer used more hedges to avoid being criticized for what he wrote in his article. In the latter example, the Persian writer wrote an article in a national journal whose readers were Persian and their numbers, attitudes and expectations were not as many as readers of the former writer, and he used boosters for expressing his own ideas.

English writers used more hedges that might indicate that English writers were conservative in expressing their own ideas or other researchers' work and studies. Another reason for the greater use of hedges by English writers might be that the editors may use a hedges structure to "be sensitive to other's feelings. The English writers tried to show that they were sensitive to readers' possible doubts and uncertainty about their own ideas or other researchers 'works and findings that he is introducing in his articles. Persian writers used boosters more perhaps, according to Persian culture, it is necessary for writers to mention their ideas with a high degree of certainty. It seems that it is a good characteristic for writers who express their self-assurance and certainty about the subject matter they discuss in their articles. This might be a "stylistic feature" (Khodabandeh, 2007) of Persian writers who show more certainty. The result of Zarei and Mansoori's (2011) conformed to the findings of the current study. They found out that Persian writers used boosters more than English ones, while English writers used hedges more.

The next difference in English and Persian writers of applied linguistics is that engagement markers are the least frequent used markers in English RA$_s$, but in Persian RA$_s$ self-mention is used quite limited. One reason for the reluctance of Persian writers to use self-mention seems to be that Iranian writers attempt to hide themselves in their work to reduce their authenticity. Hyland (2002) argues that this reluctance to display an authoritative persona among Asian writers may be "the culturally and socially constructed view of self, which makes assertion difficult" (p.1111).

Hyland (2002) mentioned that Persian writers followed the positivist's advice to keep their prose dry and impersonal. Positivists view the academic research as purely empirical and objective as if human agency is not part of the process and the research can speak directly to the readers in an unmediated way.

The analysis showed that there were substantial disciplinary differences in the use of MM$_s$ in English and Persian RA$_s$. A number of cultural, social and psychological factors might help justify such differences. In English applied linguistics and politics RA$_s$ the most frequent MM$_s$ are hedges and the lowest frequent items are engagement markers. Boosters and attitude markers and self-mentions occur in the second, third, and forth position respectively. There is not any significant difference in using MM$_s$ in these disciplines in English. Perhaps it is the writers' style to write in this way, and they follow the writing patterns and rhetorical conventions of their culture.

Persian writers of applied linguistics used boosters more than they used writers of politics. Perhaps writers of applied linguistics are more self-confident. We can relate it to the fact that in Iran learning a foreign language is a somewhat

prestigious, so these prestigious more than hedges in their RA$_s$. Perhaps Persian writers of politics are more familiar with academic style of English as a Lingua Franka. English writers use hedges more than other items (Hyland 2008; Martin 2003). Skelton (1998) believes that academic writing is extensively hedges, and at least one hedge can be found in every two or three sentences.

5.2. Conclusions

Result of this study indicated that English and Persian writers of applied linguistics RA$_s$ used MM$_s$ in a different way. Although we found few similarities in using some items like attitude markers in RA$_s$ in two languages, but generally these two languages used MM$_s$ in a different way. The analysis showed that writers of politics RA$_s$ used MM$_s$ almost in a same way. In addition, the results revealed that English writers as well as Persian writers of applied linguistics and politics used MM$_s$ in a same way. Therefore, we did not find any significant cross-disciplinary differences in using MM$_s$ in these two languages. We can relate this finding to the fact that these two languages belong to soft science, so they have the same writing patterns and rhetorical conventions.

Hyland (2002) believes that the way the writers report their research and express their ideas obviously result from a variety of social and psychological factors. Most crucially, however, "rhetorical identity is influenced by the writer's background" (p.1111).

5.3. Pedagogical Implications

This study calls attention to the use of MM$_s$ in two disciplines of applied linguistics and politics in English and Persian RA$_s$. In this study we have tried to answer questions about similarities and differences in using MM$_s$ in English and Persian. If Persian students who are learning English as a foreign language become aware of the differences and similarities of the MM$_s$ in their first language (Persian) and target language (English), they can learn the items better and use them more effectively. English and Persian are two different languages and their differences in using MM$_s$ can lead students to making some mistakes.

Having a better understanding of MM$_s$ and their similarities and differences, Persian students who are learning English as a foreign language can get a good knowledge of MM$_s$ in English and in their mother tongue. As Martin (2003) puts it forth, contrastive studies of this type can be specifically helpful to novice academics who wish to publish their works in international and national journals and, therefore, need to know the rhetorical conventions, which are favored by the English-speaking discourse community. To achieve their goals they are required to be aware of disciplinary and cultural conventions of their discourse community.

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