A Probe into Discourse and Meta-discourse Markers Employed by Native and Iranian Writers in the Discussion Sections of Peer-reviewed Education and Teaching Journal Articles

Sanaz Houshanghi kohneshahri[1]

[1]Department of English Language and Literature, Islamic Azad University, Urmia Branch, Urmia, Iran
sanaz.houshanghi65@gmail.com

Abstract

Discourse and meta- discourse markers, act as a link between texts and disciplinary cultures which help reveal the particular reader and audiences of written texts. The present study aimed at pointing out the types and frequencies of different discourse and meta-discourse markers published in peer-reviewed journals by native and non-native writers. The design of the study is regarded as a descriptive study. According to analysis, it can be concluded that native speaker writing enjoys a higher standard of writing as far as the role of text-mediating features such as markers of discourse is concerned. While non-native writers are at times very proficient in ingredients of writing, the better overall quality of writings of the former group should be linked to other sources than grammatical and vocabulary knowledge.
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Keywords: Discourse Markers, Meta-discourse Markers, Interactive Meta-discourse Markers, Interactional Meta-discourse Markers.

1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is considered to be the most complex and important skill to master. Writing is important since it is an essential productive skill through which thoughts and ideas are generated, thus, it is regarded as one of the main concerns of second or foreign language teachers and learners where many people are involved in the process of writing for various purposes [1]. The art of writing in a foreign language is even more complicated than writing in the first or second languages due to many differences which exist between languages [2]. To write effectively, the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is not enough, that is, one should be familiar with many other courses such as linguistics which is simply the study of language. In academic writing, students have to follow specific rules and conventions which can vary across genres [3].To understand how writers organize language in academic writing, linguistic studies are used as an endeavor to discover discourse and meta-discourse markers tackled by native and non-native writers in academic articles. Although the use of discourse and meta-discourse markers by native speaker in their everyday speech is common, non-native speakers lack these markers in their spoken or written discourse due to many factors such as difference in cultures, lack of instruction in their formal classroom setting, their first language literacy, etc[4]. If non-native speakers want to sound more like the native ones, they should adopt these markers in their spoken or written discourse [5]. Investigating the use of discourse and meta-discourse markers employed by native and Iranian writers seems to be fruitful in the area of second and foreign language studies. To this end, the current study aimed at pointing out the types and frequencies of different discourse and meta-discourse markers used by native and Iranian writers in the discussion sections of educational and teaching oriented articles published in peer-reviewed journals. Also, the researcher is interested in finding the potential differences between the use of different discourse and meta-discourse markers by native and Iranian writers. The findings of the current research are thought to be of particular interest for all educational stakeholders involved in higher education studies and research.
The following research questions are considered:

1. Do articles written by native and non-native writers significantly differ in terms of types of discourse markers?