



Engagement Resources Used by Experts and Novice EFL Academic Writers

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to show how expert and novice writers take position and stance in Research Article and Master of Art theses Introductions, so Engagement resources were investigated in 30 Research Articles and 30 Master of Art theses written by non-native Iranian speakers. Through paired samples t-test analysis, we found out that the mean occurrences of heteroglossia items in both RA and Master thesis Introductions were larger than those of monoglots items, indicating the awareness of both groups of writers to ‘engage’ alternative positions in Introduction sections. The results also revealed that wide choices were preferred over contractive options in both corpora, implying both groups of writers’ respects to alternative voices cautiously by welcoming rather than closing down the possibility of different perspectives and stances. Furthermore, unlike novice academic writers who used more Attribute features than Entertainment ones in their MATs introduction sections, expert academic writers employed a balanced number of Entertainment and Attributed in their RA introduction sections. The balanced deployment of Entertain and Attribute features in RA Introductions by expert writers might be characteristics of the writers’ demonstration of politeness, which is commonly accepted as an essential feature in academic writing discourse. Finally, through qualitative analysis, it was demonstrated that MAT writers as novice academic writers suffered from lacking appropriate evaluative stance and authorial voice towards propositions

Keywords: Engagement resources in writing; Expert writer; Literacy skills; Novice writer

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INTRODUCTION

Writing in an academic context is a challenge for novice academic authors. The challenge is even enhanced when authors write in English as a foreign language because they have to appropriate themselves to the academic discourse community. Furthermore, they have to write in a language whose rhetorical function is different from that of their native language. An effective way to help students overcome the challenges and obstacles in academic writing might be to make the knowledge of writing explicitly to novice writers via published research articles analysis, and this will pave the road for novice writers to write effectively since research Hyland (2000) has proved that the actual practice of expert writers is not following writings of novice writers.

Research Article (henceforth RA) and Master of Art Thesis (henceforth MAT) Introductions are not merely a collection of facts, experts' opinions or quotations from other scholars but they are also a reflection of a vivid interpersonal relationship with the reader and thus authorial stance and position (Hyland, 2002b). Among different approaches (Modality, Hedging, Attribution and Appraisal) for investigating interpersonal communication with the reader, Appraisal which was originated from Halliday's (1994) SFL theory, is a comprehensive, thorough. Systematic framework for investigating evaluative language, and as Hyland (2005) states, it is "the most systematic analyzing tool that offers a typology of evaluative resources available in

English." (p. 174). This system explains how language is used for evaluating attitude, creating authorial identity, taking stances, and constructing interpersonal relationship (Hood, 2010; Martin & White, 2005).

The Appraisal system consists of three main subsystems: Engagement, Attitude, and Graduation, and the practical and successful authorial positioning is established by co-articulation of these three subcategories. The appropriate deployment of these sub-systems, in Hood (2004a, p. 24) terms "evaluative stance", which is defined as "the ways writers position their research concerning other knowledge and other knowers," is a great challenge for novice academic writers. Flowerdew and Peacock (2001) found out that the lack of authorial voice in novice and EFL writings was evident. Thus, this ignorance of interpersonal aspects of academic discourse may result in writing MATs which are not as interactive as RAs written by expert academic writers. Therefore, exploring how academic authors express their authorial stances in RA Introductions can provide a useful resource for novice MAT writers.

Although Appraisal System has attracted the attention of researchers in academic writings (Ansarin & Tarlani-Aliabdi, 2011; Babaii, Atai, & Saidi, 2017; Jalilifar & Moazzen, 2014), few studies have been conducted to examine how Engagement resources used by expert RA and novice MAT writers to open space for or constrain alternative positions in the Introduction sections. In this study, we have attempted to investigate this problem based on Martin and White's (2005) Engagement

framework.

A comparative study of RA Introductions written by expert and MAT Introductions written by novice academic authors within the same scientific area can help delineate the actual diversities and similarities among them. More specifically, we aim to answer the following research questions:

1. How are Engagement categories and sub-categories manifested in RA Introductions written by Iranian EFL writers?
2. How are Engagement categories and sub-categories manifested in MAT Introductions written by Iranian EFL writers?
3. Are there any similarities and differences in MAT and RA Introductions in terms of Engagement categories and sub-categories written by Iranian EFL writers?

M. Halliday (1994), in his Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory distinguishes three levels of meaning

simultaneously operating in all texts and speech. These levels of meaning include the textual, the ideational and the interpersonal. The interpersonal meaning considers managing social relations, that is, how people interact with each other is a systematic tool for exploring interpersonal meaning in text and speech. It distinguishes three fundamental subcategories: Attitude which deals with our feelings and emotional reactions, as well as our judgment of behavior and evaluation of things, Engagement which deals with play of voice and position in discourse; and Graduation, which attends to grading phenomena (Martin & White, 2005).

It is an Engagement subcategory (Figure 1), employed for analyzing RA and MAT Introductions in this study since it is particularly relevant for probing how MATs as novice writers and RAs as expert writers position themselves and attribute dialogism in scientific discourse.

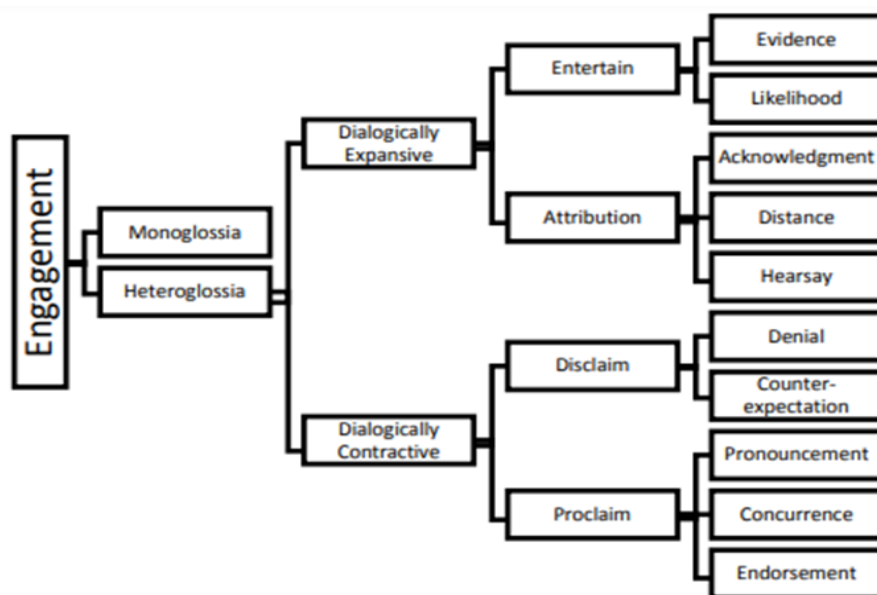


Figure 1. The Engagement framework adopted from Martin and White (2005, p. 134)

The Engagement system consists of monoglossic and heteroglossic resources. Monoglossic Engagements are undialogized bare assertions in which there are not any other references to alternative positions in text. Heteroglossic Engagements are statements in which other voices are realized (Martin & Rose, 2007). Thus, through the Engagement resources the academic authors can show their interests to admit the negotiability of their propositions in text. Heteroglossic Engagement is divided into two sub-categories: Contract and Expand. Resources Contracting dialogic space include Disclaim which in turn, consists of Deny and Counter, and Proclaim consists of Concur, Pronounce and Endorse.

Expansive resources are features that provide great dialogical space for alternative positions. It is performed by presenting modal verbs and rhetorical questions in Entertain or by Attribution that admits alternative positions via explicitly referencing to external sources. Attribution consists of two subsystems including Acknowledge and Distance.

Studies on interpersonal language in academic discourse have been the focuses of many researchers and scholars. Hyland (2005) analyzed 240 published articles from eight disciplines. He recognizes two resources of stance and Engagement for accomplishing “dialogic purpose” (p. 176) in academic writing. The results show a varying number of Attitude markers that demonstrate the different implementations of evaluation resources in different disciplines.

In addition, Hewings (2007) examined evaluation in some 230 online reviews

submitted to the journal of ESP analyzing entities evaluated and also evaluative lexis. The research demonstrated how writers draw on different evaluative adjectives to discourage publication of poor articles, and also to encourage authors for the betterment of their future works.

Pérez-Llantada (2008) compared RA Introductions in two disciplines in the soft sciences (Applied Linguistics, and Information Science), and found a relative similarity in semantic and syntactic features of both disciplines. In a study by Xie (2016), literature reviews sections of applied linguistics MAT written by Chinese were analyzed. He found out that Chinese students prefer to express evaluation more in an explicit than an implicit way.

Xinghua and Thompson (2009) in a study found that Judgment and Appreciation resources were preferred to Affect one by one L1 Chinese undergraduate student in one English and one Chinese argumentative essay of the same topic. The fewer use of Affect resources in both English and Chinese essays made results in less subjective and personal texts (Xinghua & Thompson, 2009). This is in contrast with Hood’s (2004b) finding about undergraduate dissertations by Hong Kong students.

Swain (2010) analyzed high- and low-score discussion essays by L2 English undergraduates in terms of Attitude and Engagement, suggesting that Attitude resources is not differentiating factor between successful and less successful essays. The high-score essays employed a higher use and wider range

of Engagement options, but an equal amount of expansive and contractive resources Swain (2010) therefore suggested “the need to familiarize novice writers with the full range of engagement options which are available to them” (p. 311), which also makes the rationale for the particular attention on Engagement in the current study.

Appraisal options have also been the focus of some research studies in Iranian EFL context. Babaii et al. (2017) examined English science articles using Engagement within Appraisal system. In their study, they demonstrated that heteroglossic Engagements were preferred over monoglossic Engagements in English popular science articles. In addition, Ansarin and Tarlani-Aliabdi (2011) found significant differences in native Persian and English writers’ engaging of the readers. Furthermore, they found significant differences in categorical distribution of reader engagement markers. In another study, Jalilifar, Bardideh, and Shooshtari (2018) examined academic articles and journalistic reports. Their findings showed that academic texts are attitudinally charged with Appreciation rather than other categories of attitude.

Finally, Sharifi, Behnam, and Ahangari (2020) attempted to show how NS and Iranian EFL writers take positions in RA Introductions based on Martin and White (2005). They showed that the mean occurrences of heteroglossic items in both corpora was larger than those of monoglossic items. They also found that Iranian EFL writers used more Expansive options than Contract ones, but they did not find any significant differences in

Contractive and Expansive Engagements in NS corpus.

To the best of our knowledge, however, very few studies have investigated comparatively the Engagement resources in Introduction sections of RAs by expert writers and MATs by novice writers in Iranian EFL setting. To fill this gap, this study based on Martin and White (2005) aims to explore how the Engagement resources are used in the construction of interpersonal meaning in Introduction sections of RAs and MATs written by Iranian NNS.

METHODS

Materials

This study compares the Engagement resources in Introduction sections of RA and MAT written by Iranian NNS. The main function of Introduction section in both sets of data is to provide a context and justification for the writer’s own study, and the focus is on the lexico-grammatical means used in the construction of an evaluative position at discourse semantics level, finding the similarities and differences in the Engagement resources used by expert RA and MAT writers based on Martin and White (2005). In this study, the opening section in both MATs and RAs before the Review of Literature section were identified as the Introduction. The reason to choose the selected articles was to represent expert writing based on Bolton, Nelson, and Hung (2003), who suggested that published International articles should be the norm of student academic writing. The reason to choose

MAT is to represent novice academic writing, as they are the most basic but still the most essential genre in graduate writing.

The first data sets included thirty articles written by Iranian novice NNS writers published within a 10-year range from 2009 to 2019 in Applied linguistics journals, namely *International Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *Language Learning Journal* and *System* (10 articles from each journal). This section of the articles varied in length from approximately 212 to 920 words. The Introduction section in each article was taken to be the initial section of the longer text that follows any abstract and precedes Review of Literature section. These journals were selected because they have an independent introduction section. Furthermore, these journals often publish articles from both natives and non-native academic writers. Thus, to have the representative sample for analysis, we had to select RA from the above-mentioned journals.

The other set of data was composed of thirty Introductions of MAT in applied linguistics field /TEFL from 2009 to 2019 written by Iranian EFL learners. MATs were downloaded from IRANDOC (Iranian Research Institute for Scientific Information and Documentation) which is the biggest Iranian scientific and technical databases in Iran with more than one million records including PhD dissertations and MATs from different universities. From about 120 MATs, only thirty MATs were selected randomly from different state and non-state universities. From the selected theses, only introduction sections of MATs were chosen for

analysis. It should be mentioned that in order to make sure of the quality of the MA theses, and to check the content of theses in terms of plagiarized, content of the theses was checked online to be certain that there is not any plagiarized content in the theses.

The selected RAs and MATs were empirical studies, so RAs and MATs presenting theoretical studies, review articles and book reviews were not within the parameters of this study. Regarding multiple-authored articles, only articles written by up to three authors were selected.

A discourse analysis method was used in this study. The collected data were in the form of sentence, phrases, clauses, words, and they were classified into the categories of monoglossic or heteroglossic and its sub-classes. They were analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to find probable similarities and differences in RAs and MATs written by novice and expert writers based on the Engagement resources based on Martin and White (2005). The focus of this study was therefore on the linguistic analysis of academic texts to explore how the process of knowledge construction is managed by novice and expert academic writers.

Procedure

First, RA Introduction representing the expert corpus and MAT Introduction representing the novice corpus were converted from PDF document format to word format. Then, we manually annotated each corpus for

monoglossic and heteroglossic features based on the Engagement (Fig.1) subcategory included in the Martin and White (2005) Appraisal theory. Words and phrases with an evaluative overtone were identified and numbers of their appearances in the text were counted. We explored the lexico-grammatical elements that may realize Engagement values; the sub-category of each category was investigated throughout the corpus manually. As a bottom-up approach, the sentences were units of analysis for monoglossic statements while lexical and grammatical expressions were taken into account for heteroglossic Engagements. Since Engagement analysis is a functional one and evaluative meanings of the words and phrases are context dependent, before being confirmed, we checked these by examining the co-text to avoid inappropriate annotations. After obtaining the raw frequencies of Engagement categories and subcategories, these frequencies were normalized per 1000 words.

The inter-rater reliability was computed by comparing 30 percent of analyzed corpora by two other specialists who were familiar with the Appraisal system. Each rater independently analyzed the RA and MAT Introductions for the Engagement resources, and the raters' results were compared with those of us using Cronbach's alpha (0.761 & 0.882 for RAs and 0.745 & 0.745 for MATs). The mean occurrences of paired variables (monoglossic vs heteroglossic, Contract vs Expand, Disclaim vs Proclaim, Entertain vs Attribute, Deny vs Counter, and Acknowledge Vs Distance) were compared by a series of paired samples t-test.

For Proclaim subcategory (Concur, Pronounce and Endorse) the repeated measure ANOVA test was employed to compare the mean differences among these subcategories in both corpora written by expert and novice academic writers.

RESULTS

Since the differences in writer roles of RAs and MATs within their respective discourse communities and differences in the intended readership have been acknowledged in the literature (Hood, 2004b), an analysis of Engagement resources by which expert writers argue for their own research in the context of RA is juxtaposed with an analysis of the Engagement resources used by MAT writers as novice writers introducing their research in theses. This allows for comparisons and contrasts within and across the RA and MA theses introduction sections. Therefore, Engagement resources in MAT and RA Introductions used by Iranian NNS were compared to find any probable similarities and differences between these academic sub-genres. Moreover, through a qualitative analysis of excerpts from the corpora, the successful and unsuccessful engagement categories in RA and MAT Introductions were demonstrated.

The Results of Engagement Resources in expert writers' RA Introductions

To answer the first research question of the study, the results from the analysis of



Engagement resources in expert RA Introductions are provided here. Table 1 and 2 display the mean occurrences of monoglossic and heteroglossic Engagement categories and

sub-categories in per 1000 words in Introduction sections of RAs written by expert academic writers.

Table 1
The result of Paired Samples t-test for comparison of Paired variables in RA Corpus

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p-value
Pair 1	Monoglossic	30	13.07	6.92	-7.673	29	.000
	Heteroglossic	30	31.48	8.00			
Pair 2	Contract	30	12.91	6.07	-3.278	29	.003
	Expand	30	19.40	7.47			
Pair 3	Disclaim	30	11.23	5.50	9.830	29	.000
	Proclaim	30	1.56	1.51			
Pair 4	Deny	30	4.29	3.71	-3.818	29	.001
	Counter	30	7.47	3.60			
Pair 5	Entertain	30	10.65	5.36	1.218	29	.233
	Attribute	30	8.54	6.74			
Pair 6	Acknowledge	30	8.42	6.65	6.894	29	.000
	Distance	30	0.05	0.25			

Table 2 displays that RA writers used more heteroglossic Engagements (M=31.48, SD= 8.00) than monoglossic Engagements (M=13.07, SD= 6.92), implying a statistically significant difference between the two options ((t (29) = -7.673, p=0.001), as manifested below:

1 (NNS): *Listening and reading skills werehave long been considered passive skills (monoglossic*

2 (NNS): *It might be due to the fact that (heteroglossic) that*

With respect to heteroglossic sub-systems, RA writers tended to use more Expand options (M=1.56, SD= 7.47) than Contract ones (M=12.91, SD= 6.07). This tendency was statistically significant, (t (29) = -3.278, (p=0.003). An example for Expand and Contract resources from RA Introductions are

provided below:

3 (RA): *so, there are only (Contract) a few words*

4 (RA): *our main purpose ... whether (Expand) such software....*

The Table 1 also shows that, within Contractive Engagements, the mean occurrences of Disclaim (M=11.23, SD= 5.50) was larger than those of Proclaim (M=1.56, SD= 1.51), suggesting a statistically unbalanced use between the two options (t (29) = 9.830, (p>0.05)). Finally, note the examples of Disclaim and Proclaim identified in RA's corpus:

5 (RA): *The subject of technologically ... pedagogy, generally (Proclaim), is a subject which...*

6 (RA) *Researchers have studied for years, but (Disclaim) students ...*

Within Expansive Engagement, there appeared to be a balanced deployment between Entertain (M=10.65, SD= 5.36) and Attribute (M=8.54, SD= 6.74), as there is no statistically significant preference between them ($t(29) = 1.218, (p>0.05)$). An example for Entertain and Attribute is given below:

7 (RA) *Such technology can (Entertain) also be effectively.....*

8 (RA) *Students may by their FL teacher (Phillips, 1991) (Acknowledge).*

In addition, there are also significantly more Counter resources (M=7.47, SD= 3.60) than Deny ones (M=4.29, SD= 3.71), ($t(29) = -3.818, p=0.001$) as the sub-systems of Disclaim Engagements in Introduction sections of RA written by expert writers. For example:

9 (RA) *Although (Counter) accent may not (Deny) hinder ...*

Moreover, a conspicuous difference was found between the mean occurrences Acknowledge and Distance as subcategories of

Attribute. As the Table 1 demonstrates, there was a statistically significant difference between Acknowledge (M= 8.42, SD= 6.65) and Distance (M= 0.05, SD= 0.25), ($t(29) = 6.894, p=0.001$). Here are examples for Acknowledge and Distance as subcategories of Entertain from the corpus.

10 (RA) *Hincks (2005) argues (Acknowledge) that....*

11 (RA) *Krashen (1984) claimed (Distance) that immersion...*

For the sub-system of Proclaim options (Concur, Pronounce and Endorse), the repeated measure ANOVA test was applied to compare the mean differences of these three subcategories in expert RA corpus. Table 2 reveals that there was not a significant difference in the use of the Concur (M=0.31, SD=0.76), Pronounce (M=0.97, SD=1.29) and Endorse ((M=0.47, SD=0.85), $p>0.05$) by expert RA writers.

Table 2
The result of repeated measure ANOVA for comparison of Concur, Pronounce and Endorse in RA Corpus

Source	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pillai's Trace	F	p-value
Concur	0.31	0.76	.156	2.581	.094
Pronounce	0.97	1.29			
Endorse	0.47	0.85			

An example is given for Concur, Pronounce, and Endorse as the subcategories of Proclaim from RA corpus below:

12 (RA) *In fact (Pronounce), there seems ..*

13 (RA) *The second approachis illustrated by (Endorse)....*

14 (RA) *After all, (Concur), one person's 'natural' conversation ...*

The Results of Engagement Resources in Novice MATs Introductions

To answer the second research question of the study, the results from the analysis of Engagement resources in novice MATs Introductions are provided here. Table 3 and 4 display the mean occurrences of monoglossic and heteroglossic Engagement categories and sub-categories in per 1000 words in introduction sections of MATs written by novice academic writers.

The Table 3 shows that, as in RA corpus by expert academic writers, heteroglossic Engagements (M=38.15, SD=11.71) were preferred to monoglossic Engagements (M=11.49, SD=6.92) in MATs Introductions, suggesting a conspicuous significance between the two options ($t(29) = -8.842$, $p > 0.05$). Here an example is provided for monoglossic and heteroglossic Engagements from MATs Introductions written by novice academic writers:

1 (MAT) Native (L1) and non-native (L2) speakers' associative connections have been of interest to researchers from different areas of study for several decades now (Monoglossic).

2 (MAT) Yet (Heteroglossic), there are still ...

Within the heteroglossic Engagements, Table 3 displays that the mean occurrences of Expand options (M=26.47, SD=8.78) were much higher than Contract options (M=11.46, SD=6.58) which was statistically significant ($t(29) = -7.967$, $p = 0.001$). An example for Expand and Contract can be seen below:

3 (MAT) there are still aspectsthat have not (Contract) been explored

4 (MAT) linguistic and non-linguistic

factors that may (Expand) influence ...

Furthermore, within Contract sub-systems, Table 3 demonstrates that Disclaim (M=7.83, SD=4.73) was preferred to Proclaim (M=3.53, SD=2.91), implying a statistically significant difference between the resources ($t(29) = 5.137$, $p = 0.001$). An example was given below for Proclaim and Disclaim:

5 (MAT) In other words, (Proclaim), many researchers ...

6 (MAT) it is only (Disclaim) logical to assume that....

Moving into more delicate level, within Disclaim sub-categories, there was an unbalanced amount between Counter and Deny, as the former had the mean occurrences of (M=5.32, SD=2.77) whereas the latter had (M=2.90, SD=3.24), suggesting a statistically significant difference between them ($t(29) = -3.654$, $p = 0.001$). Instances of Counter and deny are manifested by the following examples:

7 (MAT) it is the stimulus word, rather than (Counter) participant variables, ...

8 (MAT) students who have never (Deny) previously ...

There was also an unbalanced amount between the two resources within Expand sub-categories, in which the mean occurrences of Attribute and Entertain were (M=16.59, SD=6.80), and (M=9.91, SD=5.69), respectively. This preference was found to be statistically significant ($t(29) = 12.378$, $p = 0.001$). Note the examples of Attribute and Entertain identified in MAT corpus: 9 (MAT) This study investigated may (Entertain) be related to ...

10 (MAT) ...allowing students to explore ... functions (Abrams, 2001, 2014) (Attribute).....

Moreover, there were also significantly more Acknowledge options (M=16.04, SD=6.71) than

Distance ones (M=0.49, SD=1.10). For

instances:

11 (MAT) Krashen (1984) claimed (Distance) that ...

12 (MAT) Inspired by the work of Donato and McCormick (1994, p. 462) (Acknowledge)....

Table 3

The result of Paired Samples t-test for comparison of Paired variables in MAT Corpus

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	p-value
Pair 1	Monoglossic	30	11.49	6.92	-8.842	29	.000
	Heteroglossic	30	38.15	11.71			
Pair 2	Contract	30	11.46	6.58	-7.967	29	.000
	Expand	30	26.47	8.78			
Pair 3	Disclaim	30	7.83	4.73	5.137	29	.000
	Proclaim	30	3.53	2.91			
Pair 4	Deny	30	2.90	3.24	-3.654	29	.001
	Counter	30	5.32	2.77			
Pair 5	Entertain	30	9.91	5.69	-4.094	29	.000
	Attribute	30	16.59	6.80			
Pair 6	Acknowledge	30	16.04	6.71	12.378	29	.000
	Distance	30	0.49	1.10			

Similar to expert corpus, since there are three sub-categories in Proclaim option, the repeated measure ANOVA test was performed to compare the mean differences of Proclaim subcategories in MATs written by novice academic writers. Table 4 shows that there was a significant difference in the deployment of the Concur (M=0.46, SD=0.89), Pronounce (M=2.55, SD=2.25) and Endorse (M=0.48, SD=1.05), $p=0.001$) by MAT writers. An

example is given for Concur, Pronounce, and Endorse as the subcategories of Proclaim from MAT corpus below:

13 (MAT) Teachingis a dramatic statement and of course (Concur),

14 (MAT) Indeed (Pronounce), almost 30 years ago ...

15 (MAT) Existing empirical studies.... have shown inconsistent results, ... (Endorse) that ...

Table 4

The result of repeated measure ANOVA for comparison of Concur, Pronounce and Endorse in MAT Corpus

Source	Mean	Std. Deviation	Pillai's Trace	F	p-value
Concur	0.46	0.89	.490	13.446	.001
Pronounce	2.55	2.25			
Endorse	0.48	1.05			

Furthermore, to find where among these subcategories the differences exist, the means of pairs of Concur and Pronounce, Concur and Endorse, and Endorse and Pronounce were compared based on post hoc LSD tests as

depicted in Table 5.

As can be seen from Post hoc tests, pronounce options were used significantly more than Endorse and Concur in novice's corpus.

Table 5

The result of LSD test for Pairwise Comparisons in MAT Corpus

(I) factor1	(J) factor1	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value
Concur	Pronounce	-2.093*	.397	.000
	Endorse	-.026	.240	.915
Pronounce	Endorse	2.067*	.454	.000

A Qualitative Analysis

In addition to the quantitative differences found between the use of Engagement categories and sub-categories in RA Introductions written by expert and MATs Introductions written by novice academic writers, a qualitative difference may illuminate the RA and MAT writers' varying levels of success in using Engagement options to construct their stance, as clarified in examples 1 and 2 below.

It can be seen in the example 1 below how an expert RA writer has employed Expansive Engagement accompanying with Contractive Engagement options. The RA writer, using

Expansive Engagement (Acknowledge) firstly cites researcher's (*Hacker*) statement without any overt side with him. S/he employed this external source voice to introduce the argument which s/he presents in the following lines. The writer successfully presented his/her voice in an affirmative tone through other Engagement options of Contract (Pronounce), Expand (Entertain), and (Expand) Endorse. Using Engagement resource of Contract (Pronounce) "*In other words*", RA writer explicitly displays his voice on the external statement. Both Contractive and Expansive Engagement resources were employed by expert RA to align the readers to his/her voice. That is, through the Contractive Engagement of 'Endorse ("*an*

emerging body of theoretical and empirical research has shown”), the RA writer strengthens the writer’s authorial voice through the expression “*shown*” that endorses the proposition. Meanwhile, through the Expansive Engagements of ‘Entertain’, i.e., “*corrective feedback in a way that can (Entertain) raise noticing and “foreign language learners may (Entertain) perhaps...”*” the RA writer implies another probable way of looking at the topic considering the viewpoint being developed in the first two sentences of the text, indicating other ways in seeing the topic. Through this effective use of Expansive Engagement, the RA writer constructs a kind of dialogue with the readers, making the proposition developed non-imposing, but, simultaneously, through the Contractive Engagements a clear authorial voice was established. Employing these two Engagement options in a RA introduction, the expert RA writer establish a successful authorial stance.

1: (RA) “*For most learners, as Hacker (2008) notes (Expansion: Acknowledge), foreign language exposure is limited to the classroom.’ In other words, (Pronounce), lack of communication opportunities may (Entertain) hinder success in foreign language learning because an emerging body of theoretical and empirical research has shown (Endorse) that taking part in communicative activities provides learners corrective feedback in a way that can (Entertain) raise noticing correct forms and awareness of differences between the language learners output and correct language forms which is vital for learning specific grammatical structure. Furthermore, foreign*

language learners may (Expansion; Entertain) presumably benefit from receiving additional modified input”.

While expert RA writer consistently employed Expand in a harmonious collaboration with Contract options to construct a successful authorial voice, there were some instances of Engagement resources which were not employed successfully by MAT writers. Example 2 clarifies this, which was taken from a MAT Introduction sections.

2: (MAT) “*Faucette (2001) mentioned that (Expand: Acknowledge) communication strategies would serve as an excellent means for less proficient learners (Acknowledge). Larsen-Freeman and Long (1991) put (Expand: Acknowledge) it: “... a NNS’s ability to keep a conversation going is a very valuable skill because by maintaining the conversation, the NNS can presumably benefit from receiving additional modified input....” Finally, as Hatch (1978) once wrote (Expand: Acknowledge) “... the learner should be taught not to give up.”*

The Engagement resources used by novice MAT writer in the example above did not construct a strong authorial stance because of the lack of elaboration in each Engagement option employed. The MAT writer presented his statements merely from external sources without displaying any side towards them through a heavy use of Acknowledge, via reported verbs of “mentioned”, “put” and “wrote”. Furthermore, the lack of a clear signal and therefore, lack of logical relation among propositions makes it difficult for the reader to identify the writer’s positioning towards the cited source, and it may cause problems for the

reader in recognizing the author's purpose for citing the sources in texts. This results in the reported problem of lacking evaluative stance and authorial voice towards propositions being cited in MAT novice writers' academic writing.

DISCUSSIONS

Comparing the Engagement resources between Introduction sections of MAT written by novice academic writers and RA Introductions written by expert academic writers, we found that within Engagement options, heteroglossic resources were more deployed than the monoglossic resources in both corpora. This indicates that both RA and MAT Introduction writers appeared to be aware of engaging with alternative positions in Introduction sections.

The higher frequency of heteroglossic features is in line with the nature of Introduction section, in which academic writers are predicted to form authorial voices by referring to previous scholarship, and demonstrating the author's stance about the topic in relation to their own work (Bruce, 2014; Kwan, Chan, & Lam, 2012; Monreal & Salom, 2011). This heavier use of heteroglossic Engagement is in consistent with the results of Du's (2010) study of RA Introductions in various fields, and in RA Introductions in international journals, respectively. Therefore, it is safe to infer that Introduction sections in both RAs and MATs are heteroglossic whether written by novice or expert academic writers.

Regarding Heteroglossic features, the mean occurrence of expansive choices was more than that of contractive options in both RA and MAT

Introduction sections as demonstrated in Tables 1 and 3. This is in accordance with the findings of more Expansive options than Contractive resources in Fryer's (2013) corpus of medical RAs and in Swain's (2010) corpus of undergraduate discussion essays. Thus, it can be concluded that the data in this study from TEFL/Applied Linguistics, belonging to a soft-applied discipline according to Becher's (1994) classification, reveals more deployment of Expansive than Contractive options. The higher deployment of dialogic expansive resources might indicate that both expert and novice academic writers in their Introduction sections of MAT and RA position themselves with respect to alternative voices cautiously by welcoming rather than closing down the possibility of different perspectives and stances. The result of more dialogic expansive resources is in agreement with Xie's (2016) study in Chinese English-major MA theses, and this may be attributed to the nature of TEFL or English Language Teaching as a soft discipline, in which knowledge is "qualitative and reiterative" (Becher, 1990, p. 335), inclining to openly accept alternative positions and stances.

Both RA and MAT writers employed more Disclaim than Proclaim as one more similarity between novice and expert academic writers in Iranian EFL context. This result is in consistent with that of Lancaster's (2014) study that Disclaim rather than Proclaim is used more often as a Contractive choice in academic discourse. Moreover, this preference of Disclaim over Proclaim options in both corpora may indicate that both groups of writers seem

to directly repudiate alternative voices rather than merely try to restrict the breadth of such different viewpoints in academic discourse.

The preference of Counter over Deny features as sub-categories of Disclaim contractive options in both MAT and RA Introductions reflects the novice and expert's rhetorical strategy to respond and react to alternative positions by creating a challenging stance to justify the writers' knowledge claims and to restrict alternative positions. This preference of Counter over Deny is in alignment with Xie's (2016) and Geng and Wharton's (2016) findings. It could be inferred from this alignment that in RA sections where the authors are required to position themselves in the context of other scholars' studies, as in introduction sections, Counter is employed to engage and persuade the readers towards the authors' justification of argument.

Unlike novice academic writers who used more Attribute features than Entertainment ones in their MAT Introduction sections, expert academic writers employed a balanced number of Entertainment and Attribute in their RA Introduction sections, indicating that their claims were more assertive at large. This finding is in compliance with Coffin and Hewings' (2004) study that novice writers tend to use a limited range of interpersonal features such as strongly affirmed opinions.

The balanced use of Entertain and Attribute in RA Introductions by expert writers can be characteristics of the writers' demonstration of politeness, which is commonly accepted as an essential feature in academic writing discourse (Martín, 2008) and used to form a proper

interpersonal relationship between the authors and the readers (Yang, Zheng, & Ge, 2015).

There was also an unbalanced use between Distance and Acknowledged as the sub-categories of Attribute in both corpora. Swain (2010) and Carrolin Coffin (2009) also found the few instances of Distance in their academic discourse studies. Furthermore, Distance option even was not found in Fryer's (2013) corpus. This fewer use of Distance in this study might the academic writers' reluctance in overtly criticizing the other researchers' findings because of the potential risk of being challenged or refuted by the reader. In addition, this preference of Acknowledge over Distance features in both MAT and RA Introduction section is more or less expected, because as Hyland (1999) states: "citation is central to the social context of persuasion" (p.342) and it is regarded as one of the most typical features in engaging with alternative voices in academic context (Hyland, 2000).

Finally, as Tables 3, 4 and 5 show that the novice academic writers employed more Pronounce than Concur and Endorse in their Introduction sections of MAT while expert academic writers employed a balanced use of these three features in their Introduction sections of RA. The novice academic authors' higher use of Pronounce might indicate that compared with expert academic writers, they might be more inclined to directly intervene in the argument by presenting themselves as responsible for the proposition which results in a less strong authorial positioning. This finding was similar to that of Mei (2007) in the lower-rated geography undergraduates' preference to

Pronounce over Endorse and Concur features in their arguments.

CONCLUSION

Academic genres such as the RA and MAT have proven to be particularly rich in expressions of speaker/writer interpersonal meaning. Therefore, we aimed to investigate Engagement resources in RA Introductions written by expert academic writers and MAT Introductions written by novice ones. This study has confirmed the findings of previous studies (Liu, 2013) that texts with a strong authorial voice are not those that use exclusively heteroglossic Engagement options, but rather those that show an interplay between the two patterns of monoglossic and heteroglossic Engagements. Through a quantitative analysis, we found some similarities and differences between the two corpora. However, a qualitative analysis of the data revealed that RA writers as expert writers consistently employ Expansive Engagements in a harmonious collaboration with Contractive

Engagements to construct a successful authorial voice while MAT writers as novice academic writers suffered from lacking appropriate evaluative stance and authorial voice towards propositions being cited. It was found out that successful Introduction writers are those who are able to skillfully draw on a range of Engagement resources.

To sum up, the findings might indicate that RA writers compared MAT writers do better at the production of Engagement expressions and are, therefore, better at establishing an interpersonal positioning with readers. This study may create awareness among Iranian EFL learners about Engagement resources in their writing for academic purposes to come close to the standards and norms among the members of the academic discourse community. Next, novice academic writers need to be informed about the importance of Engagement in their writing for constructing a text with a strong sense of authorship. Furthermore, features and functions of Engagement resources (Figure 1) can be explicitly taught in English for academic purposes.

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