Evaluative Strategies in Iranian and International Research Article Introductions: Assessment of Academic Writing

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Abstract

Despite a spate of interest in the study of the Introductions of scholarly articles, the focal genre of knowledge construction, research is yet to reach conclusive answers on the nature of this genre. Thus, the present study analyzed research article Introductions, aiming to explore how the process of knowledge construction is achieved by Iranian and international writers of English research articles. The research investigated the ways by which Iranian writers apply evaluative stance as they construct an argument for their own research. To this end, the researchers, initially, analyzed 80 research article Introductions to find the instances of explicit Attitude and then to spot the Graduation resources that grade explicit Attitude. The results conspicuously revealed that the international writers, compared to the Iranian writers, tended to apply a greater proportion of explicit Attitude and Graduation resources. Lack of variety to grade explicit Attitude in the process of constructing an argument within the Introduction section of the Iranian English articles might indicate that, at least, some of these articles did not completely conform to the conventions of discourse community.

Keywords: Systemic functional linguistics; Appraisal theory; Prosodies; Attitude; Graduation; Academic writing

1. Introduction

The notion of prosody in systemic functional linguistics (SFL) theory was initially applied in phonology to refer to nonsegmental features. The application of patterns of prosody has now been broadened to encompass the levels of grammar and

discourse semantics pertaining to the way interpersonal meaning is positioned across discourse (Hood, 2006).

Hood (2006) states that nowadays there has been a rapidly growing body of literature on English for Academic Purposes (EAP) that takes various aspects of interpersonal meaning into consideration. This involves works on the generic structure of argumentative writing (e.g., Dudley-Evans, 1994; Swales, 1990), studies on evaluative meanings revealed in lexical choices (e.g., Myers, 1996; Stubbs, 1996), choices of grammar (Conard & Biber, 2000; Stubbs, 1996; Thompson & Ye, 1991), and choices at the level of discourse (e.g., Hunston, 1995; Koustantoni, 2004; Nwogu, 1997; Thompson & Zhou, 2000), authorial presence in research articles across Persian and English (Jalilifar & Hoseini Marashi, 2011), as well as a host of studies on hedging and epistemic markers of stance (e.g., Hyland, 1994, 1996a, b, c).

In respect to prosodies, certain scholars maintain that prosodies of interpersonal meaning are variously described as the spread of interpersonal meanings that accumulate, reinforce, or resonate with each other to construct an evaluative key over an extended segment of text (e.g., Halliday, 1994; Hood, 2004, 2006; Lemke, 1998; Macken-Horarik, 2003; Martin & Rose, 2003). The presence of interpersonal meaning compensates for a number of uncertainties in analytic coding. The analyst should identify cases of encoded value and justify their impact beyond the instance (Hood, 2006). Hood (2006) states that appreciations of prosodies of interpersonal meanings and understanding of how they function in academic discourse have important implications in modeling of evaluative stance in texts in the teaching of EAP, and so are usually considered as a part of any modeling or explication of interpersonal meaning in EAP. Prosodic patterning, as suggested by Hood (2006), effectively complements studies on featuring meanings in academic writing, in the recognition of genre staging (e.g., Samraj, 2002; Yang & Allison, 2003), or the evaluative role of grammatical structures (e.g., Conrad & Biber, 2000; Thompson & Ye, 1991). Besides, it broadens the textual organization of meaning in academic texts (e.g., Coffin, 2004; Coffin & Hewings, 2004; Ravelli, 2004) by concentrating on the interface of the textual and interpersonal meanings.

Whereas less experienced writers aim to depersonalize their writing, this study might suggest that subjectifying meanings would be of primary importance in evaluating other research. This study also provides explanations for the resources by which academic writers maintain solidarity with members of their discourse community while they simultaneously try to occupy space for their own research (Hood, 2004).

Applying evaluative strategies, among other strategies, in the argument structure of texts might provide an effective means by which the construction of academic argument can be made apparent to novice writers. Furthermore, an

understanding of what prosodies are more maintained across the different phases of text construction might be important in arguing for particular analyses of interpersonal meaning in texts, and for explicating the evaluative nature of academic argument for novice writers.

2. On Evaluative Strategies in Academic Writing

On a functional basis, it is postulated that evaluation deals with appreciation of both entities and propositions in most recent linguistically oriented studies of evaluation (Hunston & Thompson, 2000). Evaluation unavoidably involves a wide range of explicit linguistic and non-linguistic resources which are deployed depending on the focus and linguistic orientation of the research. According to Hunston and Thompson (2000), entities of evaluation or propositions rely differently on grammatical resources. They argue that adjectives are usually used for the evaluation of entities, while more grammatical categories such as modal verbs are employed for the evaluation of propositions. It is generally agreed in most recent research studies on evaluation that though evaluation may focus on the text, it is nevertheless encoded all through the text by the application of an extensive range of linguistic repertoire (Hood, 2004).

Martin (2000) holds that in relation to the semantics of Attitude, the appraisal theory, as a component of a broader metafunctional theory of language in SFL, identifies categorical distinctions between Attitude as Affect or the expression of feelings, Appreciation of things, and Judgments of human behavior. Linguistic resources across a range of grammatical categories can be implicated in realizing particular semantic choices. In the current study, analyses of Attitude are made with reference to the appraisal theory as configured by Martin and Rose (Martin, 1997, 2000; Martin & Rose, 2003).

Attitude involves those meanings exploited by texts or speakers to assign an intersubjective value to participants and processes with reference either to emotional responses or to value systems that are culturally determined (Martin & Rose, 2003). Attitude itself is regionalized into three subsystems (Salvi, 2010):

1. Affect: This has to do with the specification of phenomena by reference to feelings or emotions.
2. Judgment: This deals with the evaluation of human and behaviour with regard to social standards or sanctions.
3. Appreciation: This marker evaluates objects (things) and products instead of human behaviour with reference to aesthetic principles and other systems of social value.

Affect groups emotions into positive and negative aspects and four main sets, namely: (Un)happiness, (Dis)satisfaction, (In)security, and (Dis)inclination. Judgement constitutes the semantic resource for construing evaluation of behaviour in the context of institutional norms about how people should or should not behave (Martin & Rose, 2003). Five major categories have been identified, each with a positive and a negative dimension. White (2003a) argues that, under Graduation we are concerned with values which act to provide grading or scaling, either in terms of the interpersonal force which the speaker attaches to an utterance or in terms of the preciseness or sharpness of focus with which an item exemplifies a value relationship. These two dimensions are variously being labeled Force (i.e., variable scaling of intensity) and Focus[1] (i.e., sharpening or blurring of category boundaries). Force includes values, which have elsewhere been labeled intensifiers, down-toners, boosters, and emphatics. Perhaps, this category's most obvious mode of expression is through the adverbs of intensification—*slightly, a bit, somewhat, rather, really, very, completely*. Somewhat more problematically, this principle of scaling also applies to those values which act to measure quantity, extent, and proximity in time and space— *small, large; a few, many; near, far*.

As a study informed by a systemic functional theory of language, this study might provide an important alternative to interpretations of evaluative stance as represented, for example, in accounts of attitude markers or boosters within the field of pragmatics. Specifically, the study might contribute new understandings of the discourse semantics of evaluative stance from a functional perspective, including explanations of the ways in which academic writers manage the dual demands of appearing to be objective while arguing for their own research.

Applying evaluative strategies in the discourse semantics of texts might provide an effective means by which the construction of academic argument can be made apparent to novice writers. Furthermore, an understanding of what prosodies are more maintained across phases of text might be important in arguing for particular analyses of interpersonal meaning in texts and for explicating the evaluative nature of academic argument for novice writers. Thus, the study is motivated to answer the following question:

1. Are there any significant differences between research article Introductions (hereafter termed RAIs) written by Iranian and international academic writers of English from the standpoint of attitudinal expressions or Graduation (graded explicit Attitude) resources?

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[1]This subcategory of Graduation has to do with implicit meanings; hence, it will be out of the scope of this study.

3. Methodology

3.1 Materials

To select the corpus for the study, we first collected a comprehensive list of journals published in the field of applied linguistics through searching the Internet and checking library references of universities. From this list, eight journals (four international and four Iranian) were selected by consulting the experts in the field guided by such standards as the journal's relevance to the readership in ELT and reputation in the field of ELT. Following Nwogu (1997, p. 121), reputation is defined as "the esteem which members of an assumed readership hold for a particular publication or a group of publications."

The selected international journals were *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Journal of Second Language Writing (JSLW)*, *Reading in a Foreign Language Journal (RFLJ),* and *Journal of Applied Linguistics (JAL).* On the national basis, the articles were retrieved from local journals of *Iranian Journal of Applied Linguistics (IJAL), Roshd Foreign Language Teaching (RFLT), Iranian Journal of Language Studies (IJLS)*, and *Journal of Social Science and Humanities (JSCH)* of Shiraz University.

First, 250 articles published from 2003 to 2007 were culled randomly from the table of contents of the journals. This control of the intervening variable of time allowed for a more reliable analysis. Then, 40 RAIs from the well-established international journals (representing international writers) and 40 from the local journals (representing Iranian writers) in the field of applied linguistics were selected on a stratified random basis (10 research articles per journal, following reference to a table of random numbers) from the journals.

The corpus was restricted to empirical studies, so theoretical articles and articles published in special issues were excluded from the scope of the present study. The rationale behind this restriction was the observation that the overall organization (i.e., rhetorical structures) of an article may vary with its type (Crookes, 1986).

The study took into consideration the Introduction sections of research papers and the reason was two-fold. First, these sections share a set of general purposes. In their introductions, the writers situate their own research, contextualize their problem by placing it within a conglomerate of research studies, and then construct an argument for their own study. Second, the argumentative nature of introduction makes available an appropriate area for the study of evaluative strategies in academic writing (Hood, 2004).

3.2 Instrumentation

The system of Appraisal introduced by Martin and Rose (2003) in which the semantic resources are constituted for evaluating human behaviour ethically (Judgment), evaluating phenomena aesthetically (Appreciation) and construing emotions (Affect) was employed in the present study (see Tables 1, 2, & 3). According to White (1998a, p. 48), these three have been grouped together under the superordinate term "Attitude" as "a semantic space in which language characterizes phenomena in either negative or positive terms." Besides these three subcategories of Attitude, the Graduation subcategory of the appraisal theory was also utilized for grading explicit attitudinal meanings. Martin and Rose's (2003) model is assumed to be the most comprehensive and up-to-date system of Appraisal, and it has been successfully and extensively applied by recent researchers:

Table 1. *The Main Categories of Affect (Adopted From Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 61)*

Emotions	Type	Example
Happiness/Unhappiness	Emotions relating to the pursuit of goals	*ennui, displeasure, curious, absorbed*
Security/Insecurity	Emotions relating to one's well being	*anxious, fearful, confident, trusting*
Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction	Emotions relating to "affairs of the heart"	*laugh, cry, cheerful, miserable*
Inclination/Disinclination	Emotions relating to "desire"	*suggest, demand, yearn for, miss*

Table 2. *The System of Judgment (Adopted From Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 62)*

Judgments to Do With Social Admiration		
Social Esteem	Positive Examples	Negative Examples
Normality (is s/he special?)	*normal, outstanding, lucky, remarkable*	*peculiar, odd, eccentric, unlucky, abnormal*
Capacity (is s/he capable?)	*competent, powerful, witty*	*weak, incompetent, stupid, foolish*
Tenacity (is s/he dependable?)	*plucky, heroic, curious, resolute, self-reliant*	*cowardly, rash, apathetic, obstinate, vexatious, lazy, servile,*

Judgments to Do With Moral Right and Wrong		
Social Sanction	Positive Examples	Negative Examples
Veracity (is s/he honest?)	*honest, frank, real, genuine, credible*	*deceitful, fake, bogus, dishonest, deceptive*
Propriety (is s/he beyond reproach?)	*right, good, ethical, kind, generous, loyal, forgiving*	*wrong, evil, sinful, mean, cruel, greedy, arrogant, corrupt*

Table 3. *The System of Appreciation (Adopted From Martin & Rose, 2003, p. 64)*

Reaction: Impact "did it grab me?"	*arresting, captivating, engaging fascinating, exciting, moving*	*dull, boring, tedious dry, ascetic, uninviting*
Reaction: Quality "did I like it?"	*lovely, beautiful, splendid appealing, enchanting*	*plain, ugly, repulsive, revolting*
Composition: Balance "did it hang together?"	*balanced, harmonious symmetrical, proportional*	*unbalanced, discordant contorted, distorted*
Composition: Complexity "was it hard to follow?"	*simple, elegant intricate, rich, detailed*	*ornamental, extravagant monolithic, simplistic*
Valuation "was it worthwhile?"	*challenging, profound innovative, original*	*shallow, insignificant conservative, reactionary*

3.3 Procedure

The concern in this study was with the interaction of multiple features of the texts and with how language choices were used across the texts in making meaning. The orientation was towards the analysis of a number of texts (80 RAIs in this study). Hood (2004, p.16) maintains that an advantage of a detailed study of the discourse semantics of individual texts is that it enables the exploration of multiple aspects of meaning that are realized dynamically across a web of inter-related lexical and grammatical choices. Such studies contribute to an understanding of the logo genesis of the discourse, that is, of how language evolves progressively throughout a text.

Whereas the dominant approach in this study was qualitative, there were, nonetheless, quantitative aspects to the study in terms of quantifying the frequency of Attitude and Graduation resources in the RAIs. The notion of communicative purpose was central to the analysis of the RAIs. However, there were cases where the communicative purpose of a text unit was not self-evident or where multiple functions were served in the context. The common practice in these cases, as stated by Holmes (1997), was to analyze the text according to the most salient function. This procedure, as contended by Holmes (1997) and Ruiying and Allison (2004), involves a degree of subjectivity that is perhaps unavoidable.

Because the present study was to investigate the overall (macro)structure of RAIs, other sections subsequent to the Introduction were excluded from this analysis. After the selection of the text corpus, the research articles, either retrieved manually or from the electronic versions of the pertinent journals, were scanned and converted into Rich Text Format. Then, the Introduction sections were extracted as the data for analysis. Next, word count was applied to the corpus to have a rough estimate of quantity of the data. Because some articles in the local journals could not be converted into Rich Text Format, they were counted manually. Eventually, we analyzed the data according to the appraisal theory introduced by Martin and Rose (2003) in order to identify explicit attitudinal meanings and the resources which were used for grading them.

In order to minimize the risk of arbitrariness, first a subset of 12 Introductions from the corpus was randomly selected and analyzed for validation purposes. Two nonnative raters who specialize in SLA research also analyzed them independently to determine the coder reliability and then we agreed on the method of analysis. Subsequently, to improve and ensure the interrater reliability of the analyses, the researchers analyzed the whole data independently and negotiated minor discrepancies in the analysis. Then, the frequency of explicit attitudinal meanings and Graduation resources grading explicit Attitude was calculated to detect the possible differences among them and to see whether or not the differences were significant.

Finally, the chi-square test was applied to pinpoint the similarities and differences between the two registers.

4. Results of Functional Analysis

To explore the Attitudinal expressions in the data, only the explicit instantiations of Attitude were located and analyzed. According to Appraisal researchers, these expressions can be positive or negative according to a set of institutionalized norms and they can turn the volume up or down (Hood, 2004).

Readings of evaluative meanings from the texts was theorized in terms of the model, and theoretical options for expressing Attitude and for grading meanings were interrogated in relation to the data. The process resulted in a detailed elaboration of the kinds of resources that were deployed in this discourse in the expression of explicit Attitude. In the next section, the preferences, distributions, and the meanings construed through resources of Attitude and Graduation and how they function in interaction in texts were taken into account. The coding conventions used in the analyses include **bold** to indicate explicit Attitude and *italics* to indicate Graduation. As for the abbreviated terms, Inter refers to the texts written by the international writers and Local to the texts written by the Iranian academic writers. Any variations on these or additional coding conventions will be explained at relevant points.

4.1 Preferences in the Expression of Explicit Attitude in the Texts Written by the International Writers

The analyses of the international texts revealed a very strong preference for coding Attitude as Appreciation by all the 40 writers, with fewer instances of either Affect or Judgment. Appreciation, as described by Martin (2000, p. 147), "institutionalizes feelings as propositions (about things), that is, expressions of Appreciation shift feelings or emotions from a personal to an institutional framework." In encoding Attitude as Appreciation, writers choose not to evaluate an emotional response or to make judgments of people's behavior or character. In this sense, the Appraisal avoids a personal orientation in favor of an institutional one. This is illustrated in a number of examples from the data. In the first, the writer situates the Attitude (*lonely*) in the institutional context of pedagogy as an evaluation of a phenomenon (an exercise):

> . . . writing as . . . an artificial and **lonely** [Appreciation: Reaction -] exercise . . . (Inter-22).

> This could have been expressed more personally as an evaluation of feelings, e.g., . . .

> The learners found themselves **lonely** [Affect: Security -] while they were writing their own exercises. Similarly, Appreciation in, . . .

. . . the students' **difficulties** [Appreciation: Reaction -] in writing (Inter-14)

could have been expressed as affect in,

The students were **troubled** [Affect: Security -] by the task of writing . . . (Inter-2)

and again,

. . . the **ultimate** [Appreciation: Valuation +] is . . . somewhere between these two (Inter-30)

. . . the learner feels **enchanted** [Affect: Happiness +] about a position somewhere between these two.

There has been a heated debate among Appraisal researchers over borderline of Judgment and Appreciation (White, 2003b). Following Hood (2004), in the present study, Attitude is considered to foreground the valuing of character, and Appreciation was considered to foreground the phenomenon, that is the outcome of the behavior (the performance). In the example below, then, the writer chose to foreground Appreciation in:

. . . a **comprehensive** [Appreciation: Composition +] introduction is not usually possible.

but this could have been expressed as Judgment in, . . .

. . . we **cannot** introduce it **comprehensively** [Judgment: Capacity-]

The explicit expressions of Attitude that were utilized in all the international texts by writers served an intersubjective value in the discourse. However, the preference for Appreciation added to objectivity of the evaluation to a certain degree. Encoding Attitude as Appreciation expressed the institutionalized norms and the nature of nominalization in the academic discourse (Hood, 2004).

Furthermore, in identifying preferences for the expression of Attitude in the data, the relevant subcategory of Appreciation had to be taken into account. At this level, a strong preference for Appreciation expressed in the texts was also recognized in addition to a preference for Appreciation. Appreciation as valuation grabbed the attention of all the international writers as compared to Appreciation as either composition or reaction (Hood, 2004). Table 4 offers an analysis of explicit Attitude for a text. This was generally representative for the set of international texts:

Table 4. *Kinds of Attitude for Text Inter-31*

the **problems** related to . . . Appreciation: Valuation-
the **difficulties** are linked to . . . Appreciation: Valuation-
what is **important** for the purpose of . . . Appreciation: Valuation+
their **inability** to . . . Judgment: Capacity-
a **suitable** repertoire of strategies for . . . Appreciation: Valuation+
a **workable** knowledge of research articles Appreciation: Valuation+
sometimes **inappropriate** mental representation . . . Appreciation: Reaction-
the **best** criteria for . . . Appreciation: Reaction+
and then **hope** for further comprehension . . . Affect: Inclination+
this is an **effective** strategy . . . Appreciation: Valuation+
more **simply**, the learners' errors are . . . Appreciation: Composition+
the common **difficulty** for language learners . . . Appreciation: Reaction-
the **advantage** of this approach . . . Appreciation: Valuation+
results were **weaker** than earlier scores . . . Appreciation: Reaction-
This **new** medium of communication has heralded . . . Appreciation:
Valuation+
some **complicated** planning . . . Appreciation: Composition-
Academic papers were **unsystematic** . . . Appreciation: Composition-
Growing **reliance** on Web sources . . . Judgment: Propriety+
Few **attempts** to construct instruments . . . Judgment: Tenacity-
A high level of **impartiality** . . . Judgment: Propriety+

To sum up, as exemplified in Table 4, Hood (2004) maintains that the published texts by international writers are characterized by the use of explicit Attitude. First, the international writers favor institutionalized expressions of Attitude as Appreciation of phenomena, but shun expressions of Affect and also ethical Judgments of people. Second, the bent is for Appreciation as valuation or for evaluating the worthiness of phenomena, whereas Appreciation as valuation expresses significance, Appreciation as reaction expresses the appraiser's reflection, and Appreciation as composition demonstrates some intrinsic quality of the phenomenon (Hood, 2004).

4.2 Grading Explicit Attitude in the Texts Written by the International Writers

Graduation was considered as the means by which Attitude can be graded up or down. Grading up can amplify the Force of a value. In the context of an argument, the encoding of amplified values makes for a more compelling claim. From this perspective, Attitude that is graded up in value compels the reader towards one interpretation and contracts space for other points of view. On the other hand, a claim can be made less compelling and thus open to negotiation in some way as we downgrade a value by mitigating the Force of a value. An analysis of writer preferences in grading explicit Attitude offers further resources by which evaluative

stance can be explored in the discourse of the introductions to research reports (Hood, 2004).

An analysis of Attitude in the texts by the international writers displayed diversity in the degree to which the attitudinal meaning is valued in each of the texts. However, most instances of the grading of explicit Attitude in the published texts turned up rather than played down the Force of the attitudinal meaning (Hood, 2004). The preference for amplification of attitudinal value is demonstrated in text Inter-17, as shown in Table 5. Here some instances of grading, whether playing up, playing down, or quantifying, have been presented. Inscribed Attitude appears in **bold** and Graduation is marked *italic*:

Table 5. *Expressions and Grading of Inscribed Attitude for Inter-17*

more **coherent l**anguage training Intensifying
a **key** finding was
produces an **excellent** handbook for developing
an **in depth** qualitative analysis
The *most* **needed** language skills Intensifying
considerable discussion in
the *most* **frequently** cited evaluative Intensifying
a **critical** awareness of
the *general* **difficulty** of evaluation Downgrading
L2 learners might **not** always be **cognizant** of
requires an **understanding** of assessment
A *more* **fine-tune** assessment Intensifying
being **crucial** for academic writing
Their scores are *far* **wider** than Intensifying
Greater **variation** in their objectivity Quantifying
individual are even *less* **familiar** to Downgrading
Including the **merits**
and *extreme* **awareness** Intensifying
Competition in **unfavorable** ways
The *lack* of **regularization** Quantifying
here are examples of **poor** argumentation
citing **credible** sources

Typical instances in which the Attitude is explicitly encoded suggest a preference for amplification and, in turn, indicate the extent that the writers exploit the Attitude argumentatively to make claims about phenomena. On the other hand, a more thorough analysis of the amplification showed interesting variations in the resources that were utilized to amplify, and the differences marked variations in evaluative strategies. A wide range of means and functions are employed to encode the amplification in two distinct ways: amplification as an evaluation of an intrinsic feature, when the value is amplified without any association with other phenomena

(Hood, 2004, p. 123). This kind of amplification which was encoded by international writers in the premodifier is shown in the examples that follow:

very **inflexible** . . . (Inter-31)

quite **successful** . . . (Inter-27)

extremely **practical** . . . (Inter-5)

However, more often than not, the amplification was comparative in texts written by international writers and was also encoded as a premodifier, as in:

more **purposeful** . . . (Inter-10)

more **effective** . . . (Inter-14),

more **tangible** . . . (Inter-11)

Despite the fact that nearly all the instances of graded explicit meaning in the international texts favored amplification or increase in Force, a few instances indicated that the value was downplayed (see Hood, 2004). Note the expressions that follow:

relatively **importan**t approaches for ESL . . . (11)

somewhat **flexible** procedures . . . (10)

to some extent **alleviated** . . . (Iter-39)

To summarize, the grading of explicit Attitude served to make more compelling the positive or negative position taken by the appraiser, constricting space for alternative positions and, also as a downtoner, it mitigated the dichotomous positive/negative distinction, leaving space for possible alternative positions (Hood, 2004).

4.3 Preferences in the Expression of Explicit Attitude in the Texts Written by the Iranian Writers

The discussion above tends to indicate the preferences in the articles by the international writers for expressing Attitude mainly by direct means and for the direct encoding of Attitude to construe Appreciation. These choices indicate a marked preference for objectified discourse. Though different in terms of the number of attitudinal meanings, the international and the Iranian texts shared an overall social purpose, that is, they served to situate the writer's own study. Therefore, an important part of our study is to make clear the evaluative strategies exploited by the Iranian and the international writers regarding the encoding of Attitude. The insights gained from this comparison shed light on the rhetorical effect of alternative evaluative strategies that Iranian local writers might exploit (Hood, 2004).

Compared to the published Iranian texts, the resources of Appreciation used in the published international papers were interestingly much greater. Additionally, whereas the Iranian writers opted for evaluations as reaction and valuation as ethical concerns (Judgment), the international writers tended to utilize the encoding of explicit Attitude as valuation. The following extracts represent instances of Attitude as Appreciation (reaction and valuation) and Attitude as Judgment:

> Local-30

> Pearson and Fielding (1991: 847) defined strategies as "**conscious, strategies are assigned a value** [Appreciation: Valuation] and **flexible** [Appreciation: Composition+] plans that readers apply to particular texts and tasks." Based on the idea that learning and reading a language are **skills** [Judgment: Capacity] and therefore "**teachable**" [Appreciation: Reaction+] through training and "scaffolding" (Vygotsky, 1962), a **growing** [Appreciation: Valuation+] body of empirical research has supported the **explicit** [Appreciation: Composition+] teaching of **specific** [Judgment: Capacity-] strategies for **improving students' reading comprehension** [Judgment: Capacity+]. Certain studies in L1 and L2 contexts showed that *potentially* **useful** [Appreciation: Reaction+] strategies for **effective** [Appreciation: Reaction+] reading were attributed to the level of the metacognitive **awareness** [Appreciation: Reaction+] of the students (among others, Carrell et al. 1989; Jiménez et al. 1996). Carrell (1996, 1998) argued that **successful** [Appreciation: Reaction+] reading strategy use is **dependent** [Appreciation: Reaction+] on whether a strategy is employed **metacognitively** [Appreciation: Reaction+]. This partly accounted for the fact that **poor** [Judgment: Capacity-] readers often did not lack cognitive strategies but **failed** [Judgment: Capacity-] to access them **metacognitively** [Judgment: Capacity-]. Carrell et al. (1989) also suggested that **successful** [Appreciation: Valuation+] use of reading strategies was, largely, **dependent** [Appreciation: Valuation+] on "awareness" of, and **flexibility** [Appreciation: Reaction+] in, the use of these strategies according to the purpose of the task or the **problem** [Appreciation: Valuation-] to be solved:

Like the international texts, Appreciation was still identified as the principal strategy employed in the Iranian texts. The writers of the international texts commonly encoded Appreciation as valuation construing significant or useful meanings (see Hood, 2004). According to Martin (2000), Valuation draws on the social importance of the text/process. In the Iranian texts, however, Appreciation was mostly encoded as valuation and reaction respectively. In the extract from Local-14 below, the writer

is evaluating writing program for improving students' ability to avoid committing errors, and it was more like the international texts concerning the very dominant encoding of Appreciation, but the encoding of Appreciation here is not only as valuation but also as reaction:

Local-14

There is no **convincing** [Appreciation: Reaction-] research evidence that error correction ever **helps** [Judgment: Propriety+] student writers **improve** [Judgment: Capacity+] the accuracy of their writing. For two **major** [Appreciation: valuation+] reasons, he explained that this finding should not be **surprising** [Appreciation: Reaction-]. On the one hand, he argued that error correction, as it is typically practiced, **overlooks** [Judgment: Tenacity-] SLA insights about the gradual and **complex** [Appreciation: Composition-] process of acquiring the forms and structures of a second language. On the other hand, he outlined a range of practical **problems** [Appreciation: Valuation-] related to the **ability** [Judgment: Capacity+] and **willingness** [Judgment: Tenacity+] of teachers to give and students to receive error correction. Moreover, he claimed that error correction is **harmful** [Appreciation: Valuation-] because it **diverts** [Appreciation: Reaction-] time and energy away from the more **productive** [Appreciation: valuation+] aspects of a writing program. **Not surprisingly** [Appreciation: Reaction-], these claims have since generated a **considerable** [Appreciation: valuation+] amount of **vigorous** [Appreciation: Reaction-] **debate** at international conferences and in published articles.

In respect to grammatical resources for highlighting explicit attitudinal meanings, some similarities and differences between international and Iranian texts were manifested. The international writers like the Iranian writers employed three grammatical resources, namely, an attribute in a relational clause, an epithet in a nominal group, and a nominalized quality as head noun in a nominal group to construe explicit Attitude; nevertheless, they used another grammatical resource which was absent in the texts written by Iranian writers. The international writers presented explicit Attitude through a process with attitudinal meaning as well. Therefore, for example, they expressed Attitude as Affect within an affective mental process, as in:

at times, some poor learners may feel **isolated** [Affect: Happiness-] and **depressed** [Affect: Happiness-] . . . (Inter-15)

Students might find themselves under direct **pressure** [Affect: Happiness-] . . . (Inter-19)

Peer reviews can *boost* **confidence** [Affect: Happiness] . . . (Inter-26)

Besides, they encoded Attitude as Appreciation or Judgment through a material process, as in the methodology showed that results were **not distorted** [Appreciation: Composition+] . . . (Inter-2). Or, Huckin and Anderson **ignored** the role of peer-feedback . . . (Inter-3).

4.4 Grading Explicit Attitude in the Texts Written by the Iranian Writers

A closer investigation into the expressions of explicit Attitude in the Iranian texts also draws attention to both similarities and differences with the international texts. Like the international texts, Attitude in the Iranian texts was amplified, but the number of amplification resources was much less than the international texts (see Hood, 2004). Parallel with international writers, for example, the Iranian writers relied on instances of noncomparative amplification of Attitude through premodified expressions, as in:

an *extremely* **advantageous** tool of evaluation . . . (Local-1)

a *very* **elaborate** process for getting feedback . . . (Local-24)

a *fairly* **efficient** representation of communicative competence . . . (Local-5)

Within the Iranian texts as with the international texts, grading of Attitudinal meanings more often represented a comparative meaning, encoded as premodification, as in:

. . . a *more* **thorough** picture . . . (Local-1)

. . . students are *more* **susceptible** . . . (Local-9)

more **laborious** pencil-and-paper approaches . . . (Local-17)

Like the international writers, the Iranian writers quantified Attitude through nominalized attributes. Note the following examples:

great **comprehensibility** . . . (Local-23)

relatively little **efficacy** . . . (Local-30)

more realistic **expectations** . . . (Local-13)

The Iranian writers were more inclined to quantify attitudinal meanings as Affect within nominalized attributes rather than Judgment or Appreciation as with international writers. This can be exemplified in the expressions below:

great **satisfaction** . . . (Local-14)

much more **confidence** . . . (Local-11)

far more **enjoyment** . . . (Local-22)

Analysis of the corpora manifested that the international writers showed more tendency to quantify attitudinal attributes of Appreciation and Judgment, as nominalized entities dramatically more than the Iranian writers within their texts, as manifested in the examples below:

> *much* **explicitness** . . . (Inter-5)

> *minimal* **appropriacy** . . . (Inter-8)

> *some* **ignorance** . . . (Inter-32)

However, the international writers, in addition to employing the similar resources of amplification of inscribed Attitude within their texts to mirror Graduation (amplifying attitudinal meanings), exercised other ways for amplifying attitudinal meanings, which were absent within the Iranian texts. For instance, they used instances of noncomparative amplification as infused in the attitudinal terms. The following examples provide multiple instances, indicated in the association of an *italicized* term (Graduation) with one in **bold** (Explicit Attitude), where the two resources have been conflated:

> The ***basic*** structure . . . is that . . . (Inter-5)

> his ***chief*** concern regarding peer feedback . . . (Inter-6)

> this method is . . . ***primarily*** a testing device . . . (Inter-29)

> this strategy has a ***central*** role for adopting . . . (Inter-17)

The international writers also used noncomparative amplification as infused in nominalized qualities for expressing Appreciation, such as:

> Several ***benefits*** related to extensive reading . . . (Inter-16)

> The ***ideal*** is . . . somewhere near relevant strategies . . . (Inter-26)

> The abovementioned ***advantages*** . . . (Inter-7)

Furthermore, the international writers employed the comparative meaning encoded within an attitudinal term, as in:

> . . . ***deeper*** studies . . . (Inter-15)

> solved the problems ***as best*** they could . . . (Inter-36)

> the teaching methods ***best suited*** to ESL . . . (Inter-31)

The international and Iranian writers both utilized Force, as the subcategory of Graduation, as grading by intensification of Attitude construed as a quality and grading by quantification of Attitude construed as an entity. Nonetheless, the international writers, contrary to the Iranian writers, employed a further dimension of

Force for grading a process of meaning. They used a semantic option in grading which was related to the manner in which the process is undertaken. The means by which Attitude as manner was graded by international writers within their texts was through infusion into the lexical verb. Martin (1997, 2000) refers to this infusion as *enrichment*. The international writers included instances where an attitudinal meaning was graded through the addition of a circumstance of manner. Stillar (1998) explains that it is circumstances of manner, rather than other circumstantial meanings that tend to do interpersonal work in that there is no inherent way in which the process may be conducted, and the "speaker's selection of certain manner adverbs will be a trace of their own positional attitudes and evaluations" (p. 36). To avoid using Martin's term enrichment, which is intended for the infusion of meaning into the process, Hood (2004) introduced the general category of enhancement to include both the infusion of graded Attitude as enrichment as well as enhancement through an attitudinally loaded circumstance of manner. She added that the circumstantial element encodes a meaning of depth or intensity of doing, feeling, thinking, or saying (encoding degrees of effort, strength, diligence, and so on). Therefore, after analysis of both data, it was revealed that the international writers, in addition to other resources for grading attitudinal meaning, graded explicit Attitude by enhancing. As with other resources of Graduation, the values were not categorically positive or negative but represented degrees or clines of value, as in the following examples:

> The students wrote their compositions **carefully** . . . (Inter-10)
>
> For the sake of describing it *more* **simply** . . . (Inter-3)
>
> . . . **precisely** assessing the . . . improvement . . . (Inter-32)
>
> This procedure of testing is employed **profoundly** . . . (Inter-31)

The grading of Attitude as enhancement in the examples above was encoded into the circumstantial element. In such examples, there can be an additional layer of amplification of the Attitude, as in:

> The learners can identify their errors *more* **easily** . . . (Inter-4).
>
> For the sake of describing it *more* **simply** . . . (Inter-3)

In the example below, the intensified attitudinal meaning has been infused in the process, in that *improve* can be unpacked as "make + better":

> . . . students give each other feedback to **improve** their writing … (Inter-23)

In the processes below, Attitude is infused in mental process of cognition, and the intensification is encoded within the circumstance (underlined):

. . . **appreciated** <u>over</u> the skilled . . . (Inter-21),

Whereas in the following examples, the process encodes the intensification of Attitude (underlined) that is expressed as an attribute or a nominalized attribute:

. . . *stimulate* their **desires** . . . (Inter-12)

. . . *reinforce* . . . **confidence** and **pleasure** . . . (Inter-24)

. . . can *boost* **motivation** . . . (Inter-2)

There were also instances in several of the international texts of amplification through repetition of associated meanings, for example:

. . . was *clear*, *comprehensive*, and *effective* . . . (Inter-4)

. . . encompassed . . . *solidarity*, *flexibility*, *interest*, and *concern* . . . (Inter-21)

The international writers also intensified a quality through repetition functioning to reinforce a particular value. They strung together inscribed attitudinal resources that shared a related value. This kind of repetition was evident in a number of instances in the international texts. These include values encoded as attributes, as in:

teachers should assign a **thorough**, **clear-cut** and **enjoyable** activity . . . (Inter-21)

an **experienced**, **knowledgeable**, and **patient** instructor . . . (Inter-7)

students should not feel **lonely**, **frustrated**, and **unmotivated** when they are . . . (Inter-17)

This strategy of explicitly evaluative terms appearing in succession was not identified in any of the Iranian texts. Whereas the international writers opted for diverse strategies of amplification to express their meanings, this was hardly considered as characteristic of Iranian texts.

4. Results of Quantitative Analysis

The two groups of research articles investigated in this study were analyzed for the occurrence of explicit Attitude as well as Graduation resources. The primary consideration in the analysis of Attitude and Graduation resources in texts was the unit of analysis in which Attitudinal meanings and Graduation resources are identified. In the current study, the number of words was taken as the unit of analysis. The number of words and attitudinal expressions in the articles written by the international and Iranian writers was calculated, as displayed in Table 6.

The international writers utilized a greater number of attitudinal expressions than the Iranian writers: 4376 cases (7.19%) versus 3578 cases (6.25%), respectively. The analysis of the statistics was done using chi-square to compare frequencies. Because the value of the chi-square obtained for the attitudinal expressions ($X2=$ 80.06) was far more than the critical value (3.84) with one degree of freedom ($df = 1$, $p < 0.05$), the difference between the two text types was meaningful. In other words, there was a significant difference between the attitudinal expressions used in the texts written by the Iranian and international writers of English in terms of the frequency of explicit Attitude. Therefore, the answer to the first question of the study was positive.

Further scrutiny into the international and Iranian texts marked preference for coding Attitude as Appreciation by all the writers, whereas Affect and Judgment were kept in low profile. The data presented in Table 6 show the total frequency and percentage of different types of Attitude in the articles written by the international and Iranian writers:

Table 6. *Types of Attitude in the International and Iranian Texts*

	International	Iranian
	F (%)	F (%)
Affect	196 (4.47)	146 (4.08)
Judgment	1434 (32.76)	924 (25.82)
Appreciation	2746 (62.75)	2508 (70.09)
Total Attitude	4376 (7.19)	3578 (6.25)
Total Words	60786	57216

The analyses of the texts also manifested that the international and Iranian writers, similarly, tended to have a very strong preference for coding Attitude as Appreciation, rather than Affect or Judgment. In other words, Appreciation was a dominant subcategory of Attitude which was seen in both groups of data conspicuously greater than the other two. In encoding Attitude as Appreciation, the writers preferred not to evaluate as an emotional response nor did they make Judgments of people's behavior or character. By virtue of the Appreciation sense, the Appraisal avoids a personal orientation in favor of an institutional one; hence, it was revealed that the international and Iranian writers both were more inclined to highlight this institutionalization of feelings within their texts.

In respect to the subcategories of Appreciation in both datasets, valuation was used to a greater extent than composition and reaction, and again the international writers used more instances of valuation in their texts. This result is similar to Hood's (2004) findings. She concluded that writers of published articles use more resources of Appreciation than Affect or Judgment. The second subcategory of Appreciation,

which was utilized frequently after valuation, was reaction that was obviously found in a greater number than the other subcategories.

5. Graduation Resources in the International and Iranian Articles

The analysis of Attitude in both groups of data revealed variation in the grading of the attitudinal meaning. What was immediately apparent from a review of the data was that instances of graded Attitude in the texts written by the international writers outnumbered those of graded inscribed Attitude in the texts written by the Iranian writers. The international writers made use of 499 cases (0.82%) of Graduation resources, whereas the Iranian writers applied 354 cases (0.61) of Graduation resources for grading explicit Attitude. This overall preference for explicitness in encoding Attitude no doubt contributes to the view of academic discourse as objective in nature. The direct encoding of Attitude through grading explicit attitudinal meanings did in fact represent a subjectification of the objective by giving it value. In other words, the grading of attitudinal meanings enabled attitudinal work to be done while retaining an underlying objectivity.

The results of the analysis for Graduation resources for grading explicit Attitude in terms of frequency and percentage of occurrence are illustrated in the Table 7. The chi-square revealed a difference in terms of the frequency of Graduation resources in the two groups ($X2= 24.64$, $df = 1$, $p < 0.05$, critical value $= 3.84$). Therefore, the answer to the second question was also positive:

Table 7. *Total Words and Graduation Resources in Both Data*

	International	Iranian
	F (%)	*F* (%)
Graduation Resources	196 (4.47)	146 (4.08)
Total Words	60786	57216

The analysis of the grading of expressions of Attitude graded by subcategories of Graduation in the international texts also revealed differences with the Iranian texts concerning frequency and percentage of occurrence. In almost all instances, the grading of explicit Attitude in both groups of articles amplified rather than downplayed the Force of the attitudinal meaning. The international writers made use of considerably different amplification resources to express their attitudinal choices. Therefore, it can be deduced that the less amount of grading as intensification or quantification by the Iranian writers could have an impact on the force of the argument constructed by them, so we argued that the Iranian writers might have less compelling force when they construct an argument.

5. Discussion

Following the observation of a large number of explicit Attitude and the verisimilitude of amplifying explicit Attitude in RAIs by international writers,

Hunston (1994) and Thetela (1997) highlight the interactive function of evaluation. Besides, linguistic competence is viewed as a prerequisite for mastery of pragmatic competence; however, linguistic competence does not per se ensure an equal level of pragmatic competence (Atai & Falah, 2005). In a similar vein, Takahashi and Beebe (1987) claim that linguistic proficiency may aid certain types of pragmatic transfer from L1 to L2. The findings of this study supported the abovementioned claims in that even if Iranian writers of English research articles are proficient in general English skills, this proficiency does not guarantee their mastery in pragmatic competence. That is, it is possible that the Iranian writers have concentrated on grammar and syntax of their writing, and communicative aspects, which are as important as syntax, have been ignored. Accordingly, this ignorance of interpersonal aspects of academic writing might make their research articles less interactive compared to the articles by the international writers.

Differences were observed among the lexis concerning Attitude and Graduation resources employed within the RAIs written by the international and Iranian writers. Lack of variety to grade explicit Attitude in the process of constructing an argument within the Introduction section of the Iranian English articles might indicate that, at least, some of these articles did not completely conform to the conventions of discourse community, so explicit teaching of such markers might seem like to be essential.

Major differences between the international and Iranian writers' texts might stem from the fact that the international writers meet the expectation of the readers in structure and language features. Writing an argument is, at the very least, a negotiation between the writer and the reader. The texts by the Iranian writers were seen less reader-oriented both in presenting and in negotiating information than the international texts. The writer-reader interaction achieved through appropriate use of metadiscourse markers, including attitudinal markers, is substantially shaped within the context which allows to assess the various cultural expectations, and this implies "a cultural sense of audience . . . to the development of effective writing strategies" (Hyland, 2002, p. 41). This involves some changes in teaching and learning academic writing, for instance a change which involves highlighting the importance of teaching the interpersonal metafunction more explicitly. The findings indicate that the major differentiating factor between the international and Iranian writers is the degree to which they use interpersonal Force, or arguability, in a formal tone.

In addition, the international writers adopted a more explicit approach in their argumentation such as by using more resources of explicit Attitude and Graduation than did the Iranian writers. Linguistically, this may relate to the international writers' more sophisticated linguistic repertoire that enables them to express themselves and to construct an argument in their articles. Contextually, this finding might accord with

the claim of previous studies that Asian writers' (here, the Iranian writers) argument is characterized as being implicit (Tirkkonen-Condit, 1996). This matter might be attributed to the cultural tendencies of the Iranian writers towards communication-reticence, context-dependence, reader responsibility, and the value they place on consensus rather than argumentation. Within the culture of the Iranian writers, it seems like, there is no need to highlight and explicitly argue for the arguable. Such cultural characteristics restrain the Iranian writers from expressing themselves explicitly, automatically reducing the amount of argumentation.

Another factor which is worthy of consideration involves giving more emphasis to audience awareness concerning the argumentative writing which was seen more noticeable in the data written by the international writers. The international writers seem to accord with the claims made by scholars supporting genre-based approaches, that the writers are able to present a strong voice in their academic writing only when they have a clear sense of audience. Nevertheless, it seems like in the context of the Iranian writers, teaching of academic writing has not devoted much time to focusing on the audience factor. Therefore, a necessity might be felt that, courses in research writing should highlight the notion that written text is also a medium of dialogue between the writer and the reader: Knowledge of whom they are writing to and how to communicate with the audience is more likely to engender a clearer sense of audience in writers, at the same time enabling them to develop strong voices.

Weakening of the force of explicit Attitude and Graduation resources in articles by the Iranian researchers might spring from other reasons. One reason is that the Iranian writers might be unfamiliar or less familiar with attitudinal as well as Graduation resources than the international writers, and this factor would stem from the fact that the Iranian writers do not usually receive any feedback or explicit instruction with regard to applying these expressions in their RAIs when they construct an argument. Needless to say, any academic writing has its own intricacies, and applying different types of attitudinal and Graduation resources to construct an argument requires commitment on the part of the writer.

The lower frequency of employing attitudinal expressions and graduation resources might also be the result of this factor that the Iranian writers write mostly for Iranian readers by possessing different attitudes and expectations. They may be easily persuaded or they may not receive any critical feedback from their readers' side. Therefore, they may not go at any length regarding applying different types of Attitude and Graduation in the process of constructing an argument. Furthermore, the Iranian writers may not have the same proficiency as the international writers in regard to applying Attitude and Graduation instances because the knowledge of the Iranian writers might be confined to the Persian context. In addition, the articles written by

the Iranian writers, which are published in the Persian setting, are hardly ever criticized by reviewers on the effectiveness of metadiscourse markers, and so the authors rarely receive any feedback or comment concerning their choice of appropriate expressions of modality in order to catch the readers' attention considerably and communicate solidarity. A writer's exploitation of Appraisal has a significant impact on the quality of constructed argument. The writer's use of Appraisal resources relates more to expanding solidarity with the reader. Acceptable academic writing can be achieved through the ultimate convergence of the reader to the writer's intention.

Another overriding distinction between the international and Iranian writers refers to the dimension of the community that they address. The Iranian local writers address a much smaller discourse community on account of the fact that most of the local journals still do not have electronic sites, nor are they distributed internationally; almost all the issues raised in these journals address the immediate concerns of the local discourse community, and little stimulus is provided for international readers to learn why a particular study was motivated, whereas writers for international journals address a far more diverse discourse community with greater expectations. In addressing a discourse community, writers need to be more cautious of their claims and statements that they make; they also ought to take greater care not to make uncorroborated claims and launch effective arguments to get readers' attention in introductory sections of their articles. The local (Iranian) discourse community sets much lower expectation concerning the outcome of the study (e.g., its generalizability) and, therefore, this factor might decrease the pressure on the writer to make more sophisticated claims and statements.

The results confirmed that an academic argument is no longer autonomous, decontextualised, objective, and value-free. It is very situated, contextualised, intertextual, and dialogic. It is also very ideological, expressive, and value-laden. In other words, good academic writing demonstrates a clear interaction with an audience. Writing is nothing but negotiation, interaction, and dialogic relations with the reader. For academic writing in an EAP course, at least, the audience is not imagined but is real. In order to be successful, academic writers must know characteristics of academic audiences and their multiple readerships, such as real reader and general academic audience. The reader expects the writers to display implicitness in content, but explicitness when knowledge is not shared: Implying information is possible when the writer shares knowledge with the (real) reader; it is necessary to be explicit when the writer is aware only of the general audience's knowledge. Therefore, textuality and written rhetoric cannot be explained without recourse to the social relationship of writer and reader, and complete persuasion through solidarity with the reader could be achieved if the writer is able to reconcile the conflicting nature of situational

constraints. This all reflects the tenor relationship that operates between an academic writer's intention to influence an audience and the distanced nature of the academic audience. The use of explicit Attitude can be maximized in terms of impact on the discourse through prosodic extension. Prosodies of value can be construed across the texts. It is evident that resources of Graduation play an important role in maintaining prosodies of value, although further research is needed in this area. Managing prosodies of value requires an understanding of the importance of strategically encoding a number of instances of explicit Attitude as well as an understanding of the kinds of resources that can be employed in the dissemination of prosody.

A difference in the approach taken in this study was that comparisons were made in relation to a theoretical model of discourse semantic options. There is no expectation that the two kinds of writers equipped with different cultures should mirror each other. Rather, the model provided a theoretical point of reference for explaining the ways in which the writers construct an evaluative stance within their texts. The analyses of the international and Iranian texts revealed similarities and differences in the semantic options taken by the individual writers in relation to, for example, systems of choice of resources in expressing Attitude or Graduation which, in turn, revealed the way the study is contextualized and the kind of knowledge that is constructed. The study made contributions to the ways in which international texts (i.e., RAIs) might function as models for the introductions in academic writing courses to applied linguistics authors of English.

6.   Pedagogical Implications
The study of evaluative stance suggests a principle of progression that could inform a sequence of modules or courses that focus on the writing of RAIs or Literature Reviews. Exploring the academic argument from an interpersonal perspective has still a long way to go. To explore the development of writing ability more fully, teachers need to stress that in order to persuade and convince an audience, a writer's ability to deploy interpersonal resources is just as important as being coherent. From an interactive writing point of view, cohesion and cohesive devices can be perceived from the interpersonal perspective under the heading of prediction and signaling devices (Lee, 2006). The associations made in this study between attitudinal expressions and graduation resources and knowledge structures might inform evaluative studies of changing pedagogic practices in educational contexts, where shifting pedagogic practices are intended to make them more inclusive and responsive to different student groups. There is a need, as Maton (2000) argues, to account for the implications of changing pedagogic discourses, rather than seeing pedagogic discourse as merely a conduct for meanings derived elsewhere.

Educationally, there are implications from this study in a direct sense in the development of teaching resources that model the discourse semantics of the construal

of evaluative stance, in ways that make writer strategies at this level more accessible to novice writers. Another significant factor refers to explicit teaching of interpersonally-oriented genre analysis. That is, teaching genre and formality should move beyond conventions and norms to the reflection of the tenor relationships. Genre is easily perceived by its regularity, norms, and conventions in relation to structure.

The language of Appraisal plays an important role in the construction and maintenance of solidarity and intimacy in interpersonal relationships (Eggins & Slade, 1997). This study illustrated aspects of and potential solutions to the deficits associated with the Iranian writers' lack of claim and stance in their argument compared to international writers. The implications of this study highlight the need to enable the Iranian writers to understand the importance of Appraisal resources and to practice the expression of Appraisal. Thus, mastery of the Appraisal system is fundamental to being fully literate in a second/foreign language/culture. The results of this study might help academic writing teachers to move beyond mere trial-and-error guessing as to what is best to teach in argumentative writing and will take them a step closer to knowing what to focus on.

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