

Research paper

The Study of Discourse Markers in the Corpus of Iranian vs. American Newspaper

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Citation

Rahban, R. (2022). The study of discourse markers in the corpus of Iranian vs. American newspaper. *Journal of new advances in English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 1051-1068

 10.22034/jeltal.2022.4.2.12

Received

2022-07-26

Revised

2022-09-27

Accepted

2022-09-29

Keywords:

American newspaper,
corpus-based,
discourse markers,
function,
editorials,
Iranian newspaper

Abstract

Discourse markers, as words or phrases, play a significant role in promoting coherent segments of discourse. They facilitate text interpretation and are considered as key attributes in linking sentences and text coherent. Due to the significance of the newspapers as one of the most popular mass media it is necessary to conduct some corpus-based studies on different aspects of this media. The present research work was conducted to identify and compare the categories and functions of discourse markers (DMs) in the corpora of the American vs. Iranian newspaper. To do so, a corpus of 30 editorial articles was extracted from New York Times and 30 editorials from Iran Daily. The framework proposed by Fraser (1999) was employed to classify the detected categories of discourse markers (DMs) in three functions including contrastive, elaborative, and inferential. The obtained results from the descriptive statistics and Chi-Square test revealed that the American newspaper with total number of 168 DMs was found to be superior to Iranian newspaper with total frequency of 98 in terms of occurrence of DMs. More specifically, the findings indicated that the frequency of contrastive DM in the American newspaper was higher than the occurrence of this DM in the Iranian newspaper. Further, the frequency of both elaborative and inferential DMs in the New York Times editorials were considerably higher compared to the editorials extracted from Iran Daily newspaper. The findings might not only be beneficial to discourse understanding and generating, but also has a great influence on practice, such as second language education, translation of DMs, contrastive studies of DMs in various languages, etc.

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Introduction

Professional writing is written communication used to persuade, notify, direct, and inspire behavior in a discipline or workplace (Indarti, 2018). Connor (1996) stated that unlike academic writing, professional writing involves a variety of purposes and audiences, and is done in businesses, newspapers, government agencies, and other workplaces. According to Biber (2007), each variant or subvariant of a language or register exhibits a systematic linguistic and functional variation reflected by its particular linguistic characteristics. Usually, these features of the editorial opinion draw the reader's attention and express the ideology of the news agency. These attributes of the editorial provide an incentive to examine linguistic structure from a social, functional and cultural perspective. Mass communication, nowadays, plays a very significant role in the society. The press, in particular, as a means of mass communication and a form of discursive practice has acquired significant influence. Newspaper editorials are important media discourse and have their own distinguished linguistic features. According to Riazi and Assar (2000) every variety or sub variety of a language or a register has systematic linguistic and functional variation, which is displayed by its specific linguistic features. Typically, these features of editorial state opinion, direct readers' attention and express the ideologies of a news organization. These attributes of editorials provide a motivation to study their linguistic structure with regards to their social, functional and cultural perspectives. Iranian newspaper editorials are relatively not well-studied. However, they provide an interesting representation of the English Language (Flowerdew & Dudley-Evans, 2002).

Discourse markers “are items in spoken discourse which act as signposts of discourse coherence” (Paltridge, 2012, p. 102). DMs also establish a relationship between different discourse segments and carry a core meaning. However, their specific interpretation depends on a linguistic and conceptual context in which an item occurs. Some speakers of English may use DMs for a variety of pragmatic functions, while others may use them in a restricted way. Typically functional DMs are *and*, *but*, *OK* (Paltridge, 2012). DMs “signal relations between discourse unit play an important role in the parsing of natural language discourse and their correspondence with discourse relations can be exploited for the unsupervised learning of discourse relations” (Hutchinson, 2004, p. 684).

According to Schiffrin, DMs are a set of linguistic expressions that include varied words classes such as conjunctions (*and*, *but*, *or*) interjections (*oh*), adverbs (*now*, *then*) and lexicalized phrases such as *y'know*, *I mean*, etc. There are three different perspectives on DMs: semantic perspective, discourse perspective and pragmatic approach (Schiffrin, 2001). DMs are separate from other function words; they frequently occur at the beginning to continue the conversation. Discourse markers “All have the latter, pragmatic functions rather than the former, narrowly semantic, ones” (Zwicky, 1985, p. 304). Fraser (1999) defined DMs are lexical expressions, that relate various discourse segments. They are drawn from syntactic classes of adverbs, conjunctions and prepositional phrase. With their interpretation negotiated by both linguistic and conceptual context, DMs have a core meaning, which is procedural rather than conceptual. Fraser's classification has three types. First, contrastive markers (e.g., *but*,

contrary to this, in contrast to, nevertheless) signal that interpretation of the second sentence contrast with that of the first one. Second, elaborative markers (e.g., above all, also, besides, I mean, similarly, moreover) signal a quasi-parallel relationship between the second and the first sentence. Third, inferential markers (e.g., thus, so, as a result, of course, therefore, hence, then) signal that the second sentence should be taken a conclusion based on the first one (Fraser, 1999).

By reviewing the literature on the corpus-based studies on DMs, it is established that previous studies mostly focused on other genre of writing than journalistic genre (e.g., Algouzi 2015; Al-Khawaldeh, 2018; Hussein, 2008; Kurdi, 2008). Newspaper discourse is probably among the most remarkable genre since it is undeniably one of the most popular public media which has a wide range of audience (Noorian & Biria, 2010). On the contrary, the investigation of discourse markers in newspaper genre has received little attention. Hunston (2002) believes that the essence of learning corpora is mainly for comparison. He pointed out that these corpora provide information about the differences between different groups of students and between students and native speakers or expert speakers.

Researchers such as Granger (2002) believe that comparing native and non-native speakers can highlight different non-native characteristics in students' writing, including errors and other underuse and overuse of words, phrases, and structures. Leech (1998, p. 20) believes that the comparison of the corpus of learners and the corpus of native speakers can provide information about the characteristics of "interlanguage". But Granger (2002) believes that this comparison can determine the degree of disagreement between native and non-native speakers. Comparison with native language data is essential, because all foreign language teaching tends to increase student proficiency, which means bringing it closer to certain native speaker (HL) standards. Further, it seems that there is not any research work in which the Iranian and American newspaper editorials were compared in terms of the frequency of DMs. Therefore, the present study intended to explore and compare the categories and functions of the DMs within the two corpus of editorials extracted from New York Times vs. Iran Daily newspaper.

Literature Review

The Nature of Discourse Markers (DMs)

Discourse markers` refer to minor words used by a speaker to comment upon the discourse plan and goals. "They can occur as lexical equivalents or complements of more elusive gestural or international cues that subtly guide and modulate the participant`s understanding, or they can saliently signal relations between utterances or larger discourse units" (Redeker, 2005, p. 1). This category covers a variety of English lexical items, ranging from those widely accepted as discourse markers like the coordinate conjunctions and, or, but to the less accepted interjections, well, oh, verbs, look, see, and literally used phrases like to repeat, I mean, you know.

Although discourse markers have been analyzed and broadly discussed by many linguists (e.g., Schiffrin, 1987, Blakemore, 2002, Redeker, 1990, 1991, 2005, Fraser, 1993, 1996, Knott 1996, Knott & Sanders, 1998, Andersen, 2001, etc.) and a number of corpus-based studies have contributed to a better understanding of the phenomenon, it is still disputable by what title they should be named and what linguistic units are attributable to this category. Besides the term `discourse markers`, a variety of other expressions are used: discourse particles, discourse connectives, discourse operators, pragmatic markers, pragmatic particles, cue words/phrases and some other. In addition to the term, there is a set of definitions, each containing a different set of discourse markers. In general, discourse markers form a fairly heterogeneous class of words or phrases that indicate the communication intent of the written discourse. In fact, the main concept of a discourse marker is to act as a binder for the discourse part.

Discourse markers are also considered words or phrases, conjunctions such as "and, but", adverb "now, then", commentary "to be honest", interjection "oh, well" spoken with the main function of giving the reader a specific kind. Linking future utterances to a direct discourse context (Redeker, 1991). In short, a discourse marker is a word or phrase that associates a segment of discourse and indicates the relationship between the utterance and the previous discourse. Therefore, discourse markers are defined differently by different scholars. In fact, the first definition of the term discourse marker is Labov and Fanshel's definition of considering "good" as a discourse marker. They argued that it was conversely referring to a topic that was already shared knowledge among the participants. (Labov & Fanshel, 1977). A second reference to the definition of the term discourse marker in the literature stated that discourse marker is a short, often phonologically diminished, or stress-free element that occurs outside the syntactic structure, Ostman (as cited in Brinton, 1990). Levinson (1983) considered discourse markers a class worthy of study on their own merits, although he terms them "discourse deictics" not discourse marker. He suggests that there are many words and phrases in English, and no doubt most languages that indicate the relationship between an utterance and the prior discourse. Examples are utterance initial usages of "however, but, therefore, in conclusion, anyway, still, on the contrary, etc."

Schiffrin (1987) defines discourse markers as sequentially dependant elements which bracket units of talk. She states that discourse markers serve the role of informing the boundary between talk units and divide text into smaller units and show how each unit relates. According to Fraser (1990) discourse markers are expressions such as "so, now, well, however, and then" which signal a sequential relationship between the current basic message and the previous discourse. Stenstrom (1994) stated that discourse markers are used to organize and hold the turn and to mark boundaries in the discourse i.e. they help the speaker organize the discourse, they serve to introduce and mark the end of a topic, they serve to start a conversation, they serve to introduce a digression and mark the resumption of the old topic, and they signal the end of a conversation. According to Chalker and Weiner (1998) a discourse maker is a word or phrase that helps to signal the direction in which language, particularly in a conversation, is going. For Takahara (1998a) discourse markers are those devices which signal a sequential

discourse relationship showing the boundaries within discourse and the degree of cohesion, and decide the flow of information.

Properties of Discourse Markers

As mentioned earlier, the titles, definitions, and functional qualifications of the discourse marker categories vary widely by researcher and theoretical framework. Similarly, authors differ in what they consider to be a feature of discourse markers. However, it is possible for the majority of authors to identify many features attributed to discourse markers, albeit with different emphasis. According to Schourup (1999), connectivity and the assumption that they are syntactically and semantically optional are the characteristics of the most strongly expressed discourse markers in the literature. Connectivity is a characteristic of discourse markers and is most commonly considered necessary and appears in most definitions.

For example, the Shrifin and Fraser definitions, and most other definitions, specify that discourse markers are associated with two text units, thus contributing to consistency between utterances. Other authors, such as Blakemore, use discourse markers to identify the relationship between the content of the proposition expressed by the current utterance and the assumptions that were or may not have been conveyed by the previous utterance. In other words, within the discourse coherent approach, connectivity is considered a defined property of the discourse marker, but within the relevance theory approach it is considered a derivative.

The discourse marker options have two different meanings. These are almost universally considered syntactically optional in the sense that removing the discourse markers does not change the grammar of the host statement. In addition, discourse markers are generally claimed to be semantically optional. Therefore, omitting the discourse marker does not break the relationship it represents. If not explicitly marked, it remains accessible. Despite such observations, they are never claimed to be useless or unnecessary. Their usefulness lies in the generally accepted observation that they indicate the speaker's intended interpretation. These two characteristics of the discourse marker taken together are often considered the required attributes of the discourse marker. The less central features of discourse markers that are frequently mentioned in the literature are:

Non-truth-conditionality is a generally mentioned characteristic of discourse markers. However in several recent studies it is no longer seen as a defining feature of the category as certain markers had been shown to contribute to truth-conditions of an utterance. However, this characteristic is still applicable to a major part of discourse markers and in majority of cases allows distinguishing between marker and non-markers uses. Weak clause association – discourse markers are usually thought to occur “either outside the syntactic structure or loosely attached to it” (Brinton, as cited in Schourup 1998, p. 232). This characteristic is frequently correlated with phonological independence. Indeed, many discourse markers constitute independent tone units or are set off from the main clause by ‘comma intonation’. However, this is true not for all discourse markers and cannot be a defining characteristic of the category.

Initiality – although this characteristic is rarely considered defining, most items considered as discourse markers are at least possible in initial position, and many occur there predominantly.

Orality – most forms claimed to be discourse markers occur primarily in speech (e.g. by the way, well, after all, etc.). However, no reasonable grounds exist on which to deny discourse marker status to similar items that are largely found in written discourse (e.g. moreover, consequently, etc.). Association of a particular discourse marker with the written or spoken channel is rarely strict and is often tied to the relative distinction between formality and informality. However, most discourse marker studies so far are concentrated on spoken rather than written discourse.

Multi-categoriality – discourse markers are often said to constitute a functional category that is heterogeneous in terms of syntactic class. On this view discourse markers are independent of syntactic categorization and may include adverbs (now, actually, etc.), coordinating and subordinating conjunctions (and, but, because, etc.), interjections (oh, gosh, etc.), verbs (say, look, see, etc.) and clauses (I mean, you know, you see, etc.); besides, some authors would shorten or lengthen this list. Multi-categoriality is seen diachronically and discourse markers are taken to arise from other categories through historical processes.

In the recent years, some corpus-based studies have been conducted in which two different newspapers were compared in terms of discursal elements. Alsager, Afzal, and Al-Dawood (2020) explored the use of discourse markers (DMs) in newspaper articles. By applying Fraser's framework, this study aims at investigating the functions and positions of DM but (English) and its equivalent *lakin* (Arabic) in newspaper articles written by native and nonnative speakers of English and Saudi and Egyptian speakers of Arabic. It also highlights the similarities and differences in the functions and positions of DMs but and *lakin*. Findings demonstrate, first, that DM but is used frequently as a confirmation or addition marker by both native and non-native speakers. However, second, *lakin* functions as the primary correction DM in standard Arabic. Moreover, third, the native Arabic speakers mostly share the same functions of using *lakin* despite different dialects they have.

Alipour and Jahanbin (2020) examined and compared proximity elements in Iranian and American newspaper editorials. Following Hyland's (2010a) proximity model which comprises five major elements, organization, argumentative structure, stance, engagement, and credibility, we focused on a detailed analysis of proximity features in two corpora, Iranian newspaper editorials and American newspaper editorials. To this aim, 240 newspaper editorials, including 120 editorials from each category, were collected. The outcomes revealed that there were significant differences in the use of proximity elements in the mentioned corpora. It was demonstrated that stance markers were considerably more recurrent in the American data than their Iranian counterpart. Unlike the American editorials, the Iranian ones contained a larger number of engagement markers.

Babapour and Kuhi (2018) analyzed English and Farsi newspaper opinion columns in terms of the frequency of different types of stance markers. 60 newspaper opinion columns (30 written in English and 30 written in Farsi) from 10 wide spread newspapers published in the United States and Iran in 2015 were analyzed. Hyland's (2005) model of stance markers (hedges, boosters, attitude markers, and self-mention) was used as the framework of analysis. The findings revealed that hedges and self-mentions used by English columnists were considerably more frequent than those employed by the Farsi columnists. In contrast, Farsi columnists used large number of boosters and attitude markers. Although, attitude markers were in the last position of sub-categories of stance markers in both corpora.

Deliry Moghadam (2017) explored the frequency of occurrence of metadiscourse devices, and the role they play in the construction of persuasion in opinion articles written by English native speakers and Iranian EFL (English as a Foreign Language) writers. A corpus of 60 opinion articles, 30 by American writers and 30 by Iranian EFL authors, was collected and examined using Hyland's (2005) model of metadiscours. The non-parametrical Mann-Whitney U test was used to see if the frequency counts in the two corpora differ statistically. Findings suggested that metadiscourse devices were present in the both groups; however, there were variations as to the number of code glosses, hedges, selfmentions and engagement markers.

In a similar vein, Tavanpour, Goudarzi, and Farnia (2016) investigated the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in sport news in newspapers written in English by American English native speakers and Iranian non-native speakers of English. The sport news articles were selected from 5 elite newspapers published in Iran (e.g. Iran Daily, Tehran Times, Kayhan International) and in the United States (e.g. The New York Times and The Washington Post). Results revealed that interactional metadiscourse markers were present in the two corpora; however, there were different in the number of metadiscourse markers distributed in the two corpora. Also, results of statistical analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference in the use of hedge in the two dataset.

For example, Homayounzadeh and Mehrpour (2013) investigated the effect of culture on the journalistic style and the strategies used to report news in the American and Persian newspaper editorials. To this end, articles were selected from the New York Times, the Washington Post, Kayhan and Ettelaat, taking Iran's nuclear dispute as the tertium comparationis for the selection of the articles. They found no statistically significant difference was found between the editorials of the two British newspapers, namely Liverpool Echo and Chronicle Live, from July 2015 to June 2016, were randomly selected and analyzed based on Dafouz-Milne's (2008) taxonomy of interpersonal metadiscourse markers. The overall findings disclose that interpersonal metadiscourse is present in the two corpora; however, there are variations in the distribution and frequency of interpersonal markers.

In spite of all the previously conducted research works concerning the corpus-based study of DMs, it seems that there is an apparent lack of investigations in which these linguistic elements were explored in the newspaper genre. More specifically, to the best knowledge of

the researcher, there is not any study in which a comparison was drawn between Iranian and American newspaper in terms of the employed DMs. Based on the objectives of the study, the following research questions were posed to be answered with the related statistical analyses.

RQ1. What are the functions and categories of discourse markers (DMs) used in editorial articles extracted from American and Iranian newspaper?

RQ2. Are there any significance differences between the functions and frequencies of DMs used in editorials published in American vs. Iranian newspaper?

Methodology

Corpus of the Study

The corpus of the present study was 60 editorial articles and news texts about the sanctions against Iran. This corpus was extracted from the politics sections of the two newspapers: An international English newspaper published in the United States (USA) i.e., New York Times and a local English newspaper published in Iran i.e., Iran Daily. From each of the intended newspapers 30 editorial articles and news text were extracted. The selected articles were published from July 2018 to July 2021. It should also be noted that the researchers conducted the electronic search only for those news articles whose headlines included the phrase or term Iran Sanctions, Sanctions, and Embargo. The main rationale behind selection of these two newspapers (i.e., New York Times and Iran Daily) to extract corpus of this study can be attributed to the availability and accessibility of their contents especially the editorials and news texts without any constraints and subscription requirements for the readers on the websites of the newspapers.

Research Design

Employing an exploratory quantitative design through corpus-based analysis, this study was conducted to study the DMs implemented in the editorials and news texts of an American newspaper vs. Iranian newspaper. This paper uses a corpus-based approach as its tool in data collection. In the field of linguistics, corpus/corpora mean the body of language. McEnery and Wilson (1996) discussed the corpus analysis and agreed that corpora are a new approach/method(ology) in studying and investigating linguistic phenomena.

Data Collection Procedure

In the first phase of this study, according to the intended objectives, an American newspaper (New York Times) and an Iranian Newspaper (Iran Daily) were selected based on the accessibility and availability criteria. From the politics sections of each selected newspaper in the related websites, 30 editorial articles or news texts were extracted. As the main function of an editorial is “the expression and persuasive communication of opinions” (Van Dijk, 1996, p. 13), editorials represent a relevant body of text for the examination of the dominant ideological assumptions of a newspaper. The researchers tried to objectify the selection process of newspaper text by randomly selecting texts.

In order to make sure that the present study can meet the need for intended objectives, 10 editorials from the corpus were randomly selected and reviewed to recognize that the purpose

of the study was accessible. After ensuring the feasibility and practicality of the research work, the main phase of study was started.

In the main phase of this study, the selected corpus was carefully reviewed. They were analyzed and the categories and functions of the DMs were identified. In order to ensure that the identified DMs were reliable and valid, the researcher asked another rater working in the realm of TEFL to randomly review 10 editorial articles of the selected corpus once again and determine the employed CMs. Then, an inter-rater reliability analysis was conducted to make sure that the three sets of obtained data are satisfactorily similar and turned out to be 0.87. Therefore, it can be said that there was 87 percent of agreement between the raters' judgments.

In order to identify the categories and functions of the DMs in this study, Fraser's (1999) framework was adopted. Fraser's classification has three types. First, contrastive markers (e.g., but, contrary to this, in contrast to, nevertheless). Second, elaborative markers (e.g., above all, also, besides, I mean, similarly, moreover). Third, inferential markers (e.g., thus, so, as a result, of course, therefore, hence, then) (Fraser, 1999). Then, the descriptive statistics including frequency and percentages were utilized to indicate the categories of DMs employed in each of the two selected corpus. Furthermore, a Chi-square test was conducted to ensure that the obtained difference between the frequencies of DMs in the two corpus, i.e. Iranian vs. American newspapers were statistically significant.

Findings

The findings of the qualitative and descriptive analyses of the study to answer the intended research questions are presented in the following section.

The Frequency of DMs in the American Newspaper Editorials

The function and frequency of the discourse markers (DMs) occurred in the text of New York Times editorials are presented in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table1

Frequency and Percentages of the DMs Functions in the New York Times Editorials

Discourse Markers (DMs)	Frequency	Percentage %
Contrastive	89	52.9
Elaborative	47	28.1
Inferential	32	19
Total	168	100%

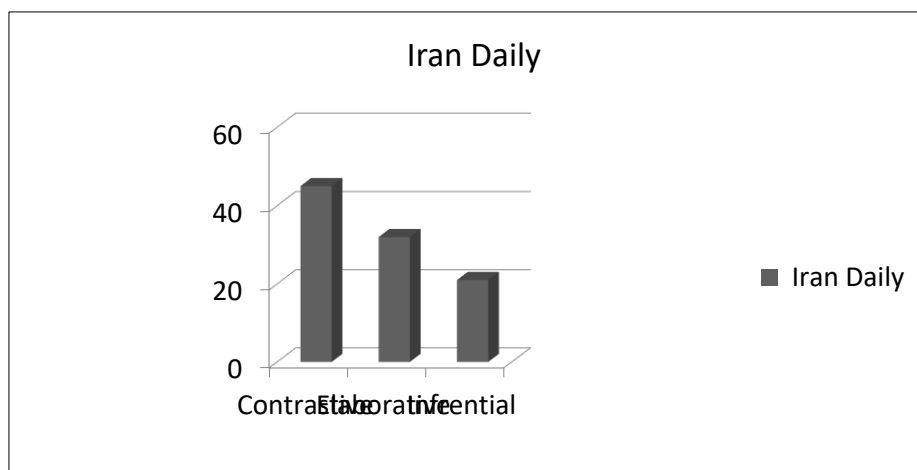


Figure 1. The Bar Chart of the Categories of DMs in New York Times

As it is illustrated in the above Table 1 and figure 1, there are totally 168 cases of DMs in the selected editorials of New York Times as an American Newspaper. The detected DMs were found to be in three different functions in the text of editorials including contrastive, elaborative, and inferential. Among these functions the contrastive function with the frequency of 89 accounted for 52.9 percent of all the identified categories of DMs in the corpus of American newspaper. The second frequent category of DMs was found to be elaborative with 47 times of occurrence which accounted for 28.1 percent of the detected DMs. The least frequent category of DMs in the corpus was inferential ones with the frequency of 19 which accounted for only 19 percent of all the DMs in the corpus. In order to demonstrate the use of DMs in the text of the selected corpus, some excerpts from the New York Times editorials are presented in the following section.

Sample Examples of DMs Extracted from American Newspaper Editorials

In the following section some examples of the sentences which encompass the DMs and extracted from New York Times editorials are presented in the Table 2.

In the first and the second example presented in Table 2, “but” and “however” function as the contrastive DMs which concerns the explicit interpretation of second sentence contrasts with an interpretation of the first sentence. In the example 3 and 4, the DMs “also” and “I mean” play the elaborative role in which they connect two sentences, elaborate on the first sentences, or present additional explanations using the subsequent one. Finally, in the examples 5 and 6, the discourse markers “therefore” and “then” act as the inferential words which indicates that second sentence is taken as a conclusion based on the first sentence. In other words, these two DMs have been used to draw a conclusion for the latter sentence from the latter.

Table 2.*Examples of DMs in the Text of Editorials of New York Times*

N.	Excerpt from Newspaper	DMs	Category of DMs
1.	I think there's been a lot of progress made, but out of my own experience, until the last detail is nailed down (17 March, 2018)	But	Contrastive
2.	The election outcome is unlikely to have much effect on the nuclear talks; however, Iran's leadership <u>restricted the field of candidates</u> to all (4 February, 2015)	However	Contrastive
3.	The United States also imposed new sanctions on other Iranians (10 June, 2021)	Also	Elaborative
4.	I think there's been a lot of progress made, but out of my own experience, until the last detail is nailed down — and I mean nailed down (23 December, 2020)	I mean	Elaborative
5.	The world's response should therefore remain the same — the continued isolation of Iran and comprehensive sanctions.” (27 October, 2019)	Therefore	Inferential
6.	Mr. Wallace and his aides said, the system had exposed possible sanctions violations that the group had then publicized, forcing the Iranians or their partners to change plans (21 May, 2019)	then	Inferential

The Functions and Frequency of DMs in Iranian Newspaper

The function and frequency of the discourse markers (DMs) in the editorials of Iranian newspaper i.e., Iran Daily are illustrated in Table 3 and Figure 2..

According to the Table 3 and Figure 2, it was found that a total of 98 DMs had been used in the selected editorials of Iran Daily Newspaper. They were revealed to fulfill three functions including contrastive, elaborative, and inferential. The contrastive function with total occurrence of 45 accounted for 46 percent of all the detected DMs was found to be the most frequently used category and function of DMs. Elaborative function was shown to be the second frequently used category of DMs with the frequency of 32 accounted for 32.2 percent of all DMs category.

Table 3*The Functions and Frequencies of the DMs in Editorials of Iran Daily*

Discourse Markers (DMs)	Frequency	Percentage
Contrastive	45	46

Elaborative	32	32.6
Inferential	21	21.4
Total	98	100%

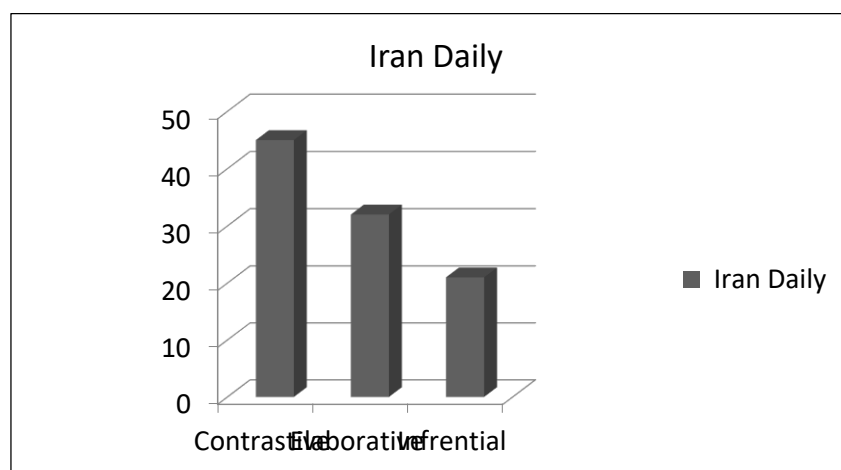


Figure 2. The Bar Chart of the Categories of DMs in Iran Daily

The least frequent category of DMs in the corpus was inferential ones with the frequency of 21 which accounted for only 21.4 percent of all the DMs in the corpus. For the purpose of demonstrating the use of DMs in the text of the selected corpus, some excerpts from the Iran Daily editorials are illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4.

Sample Examples of DMs Extracted from Iranian Newspaper Editorials

N.	Excerpt from Newspaper	DMs	Category of DMs
1.	Some of his critics, however, are more optimistic, speculating that he might hold back on imposing restrictions to avoid provoking unrest.	However	Contrastive
2.	Nevertheless, the government holds out hope of reclaiming the funds.	Nevertheless	Contrastive
3.	Does that mean the United States should tighten sanctions further in the hope that the “maximum pressure” strategy will compel Tehran to toe Washington’s line?	Further	Elaborative
4.	The United States could also offer to send experts to help with technical assistance, a measure that would have the added benefit of providing American medical officials with experience	Also	Elaborative
5.	That may not mean sending medical supplies like respirators, which are in short supply everywhere,	Mean	Inferential

but at the least it should mean clearing the way for the I.M.F. loan.

- | | | | |
|----|--|------|-------------|
| 6. | His successor — most likely the current judiciary chief, Ebrahim Raisi — would then reap the economic benefits after an end to U.S. sanctions. | Then | Inferential |
|----|--|------|-------------|

According to Table 2, in the first and second example the DMs “however” and “nevertheless” are employed to fulfill the contrastive function in the given sentences. In the next two excerpts, “also, and “further” play the role of elaborative DMs which act as an element to elaborate on the subsequent sentence. In the excerpt number 5 and 6, the two DMs “mean” and “then” have the inferential function that is they are employed to draw conclusions and make inferences based on the information given in the first sentence to the subsequent one.

The Comparison of the Two Corpora

In the following table, the frequencies and functions of the DMs occurred in the text of the two newspaper editorials i.e., New York Times and Iran Daily are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5

The Comparison of the Frequencies and Percentage of DMs in the Two Corpora

Newspapers	New York Times		Iran Daily	
	F	P%	F	P%
Discourse Markers (DMs)				
Contrastive	89	52.9	45	46
Elaborative	47	28.1	32	32.6
Inferential	32	19	21	21.4
Total	168		98	

As the above Table suggest, the frequency of the DMs in the New York Times editorials with total occurrence of 168 is considerably higher than the frequency of these items in the Iran Daily with total occurrence of 98.

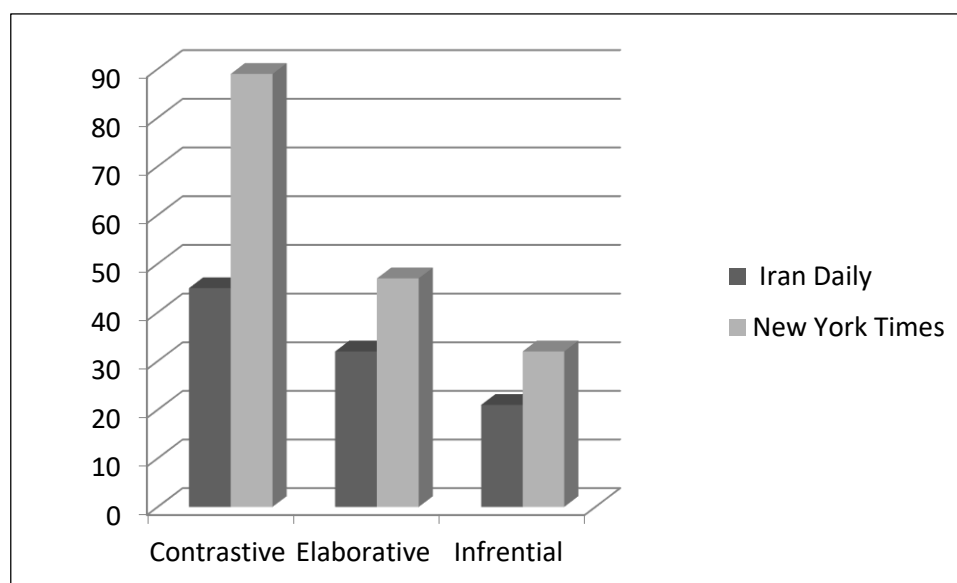


Figure 2. Comparison of the DMs Categories in the Two Corpora

In both of the corpora i.e., American vs. Iranian newspaper, the most frequently used function of DMs was contrastive and the least frequently adopted one was inferential. More specifically, the obtained results showed that the frequency of contrastive DM in the American newspaper was higher than the occurrence of this DM in the Iranian newspaper. Further, the frequency of both elaborative and inferential DMs in the New York Times editorials were considerably higher compared to the editorials extracted from Iran Daily newspaper.

In order to ensure the significance of these differences between the two corpora in terms of the frequency of DMs categories and functions, a Chi-Square test was conducted and the summary of results were presented in the following table.

Table 6

Chi-square Test for the Frequency of DMs Categories in the Two Corpora

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	596.57 ^a	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	234.12	6	0.241
Linear-by-Linear Association	32.13	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

As the Table 6 reveals, the association was found to be statistically significant ($\chi^2(6) = 596.57$, $p = 0.000$). It means that all the differences and similarities found in the frequency and percentages of DMs categories and functions in the American vs. Iranian newspaper were statistically significant and meaningful. Therefore, it can be inferred that the editorials of New York Times encompassed considerably much higher numbers of DMs compared to Iran Daily.

Discussion

This corpus-based study was conducted to identify and compare the categories and functions of DMs in the editorials of American and Iranian newspaper i.e., New York Times and Iran Daily.

The first major finding of the study showed that the American newspaper editorials encompassed 168 examples of the DMs in three different functions including contrastive, elaborative, and inferential among which the contrastive one was the most frequent function and the inferential was found to be the least frequent function of DMs used in the New York Times. With regard to the Iranian newspaper, the findings suggested that the selected editorials from Iran Daily encompassed 98 cases of DMs in which the most frequently occurred one was contrastive DMs and the least frequently used one was inferential.

More specifically, as Hinkel (2004) pointed out, non-native writers of English (NNWs) unintelligibly avoid including meta-discourse devices and figurative language in their writings and inadequate use of these devices may undesirably spawn ineffectual piece of writing, which is undoubtedly an unwelcome ramification on behalf of both the writer and the reader (as cited in Ma & Ping, 2012). In other words, the fact that non-native writers such as Iranian journalists avoid being assertive in their writings leads to invisibility of authorial stance over their claims. On the contrary, the native writers possessing the required and necessary proficiencies in different realms of language, compared to the non-natives, can easily and conveniently convey their opinions, ideas, ideologies, and messages in a variety of ways and with effective and impressive phrases and idioms (Tadayyon & Vasheghani Farahani, 2017).

The second major finding of this study concerned with the comparison of the editorials extracted from American vs. Iranian newspapers in terms of the frequency of DMs categories and functions. It was revealed that American newspaper editorials had much more cases of DMs compared to Iranian newspaper. More precisely, it was showed that the editorials of New York Times possessed significantly much more categories of contrastive, elaborative, and inferential DMs compared to the editorials of Iran Daily.

One possible explanation for the differences between the two newspaper editorials in terms of DMs categories and functions might be the effect of nativeness. In fact, the native writers produced the RAs which are lexically diverse and use a wide range of vocabulary, avoid repetition, use precise language and tend to use synonyms to express ideas. Native writers have a secret cohesive means (semantic co-interference) within the constraints of the limited syntactic and lexical range of accessible linguistic means and can rely heavily on attempts to build a unified flow of ideas. The result is Carrell's (1982) view that text cohesion is not necessarily a characteristic of the text represented by grammatical or lexical ties, but rather cohesion is the result of consistency when the reader of the text can. It can be said that they match.

The results in this section might be partially in line with Homayounzadeh and Mehrpour (2013) who investigated the effect of culture on the journalistic style and the strategies used to report news in the American and Persian newspaper editorials and found that the two newspapers were different in terms of writing style. The findings seem to be consistent with those of Tavanpour et al. (2016) who examined the use of interactional metadiscourse markers in sport news of Iranian vs. American newspapers and reported a significant difference between the two corpora in this respect. Further, the obtained results in this part are in line with the findings of Alipour and Jahanbin's (2020) study in which they demonstrated that stance markers were considerably more recurrent in the American data than their Iranian counterpart. Unlike the American editorials, the Iranian ones contained a larger number of engagement markers.

The success of academic literacy depends on multiple factors such as gender, style, subject knowledge, writing and language experience, and language is only one of them. To be successful in any genre of writing in general, and journalistic writing in particular, both non-native and native English speakers must understand the standard rhetorical organizations used in the scientific field of interest to the author (Kanoksilapatham, 2005; Loi & Evans, 2010).

Conclusion

The findings revealed that the authors of the American newspaper editorials had used a larger and more extensive use of DMs in the texts of these journalistic writing compared to the authors of Iranian newspaper editorials. It was found that in both the Iranian and American newspaper the most dominant function for DMs is contrastive which followed by elaborative and inferential ones. Finally, the study of the DMs in two corpora i.e., American vs. Iranian editorials is not only beneficial to discourse understanding and generating, but also has a great influence on practice, such as second language education, translation of DMs, contrastive studies of DMs in various languages, etc. By looking at the result which shows that the lowest frequency of DMs belong to inferential ones, the students and language learners specially non-natives are suggested to increase their understanding about it and how to use it more frequently and correctly. They should use them regularly in order to get a good quality of writing. The future researchers and readers are expected to do further research about factors affecting students' problem in using discourse markers. In the future research work the categories and frequency of DMs can be explored in the qualitative vs. quantitative research articles (RAs).

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