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Research Paper

Proximity in Persian Newspaper Editorials

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate proximity in Persian newspaper editorials. Following Hyland's (2010a) proximity model comprising organization, argumentative structure, stance, engagement, and credibility, we focused on a detailed analysis of proximity features in editorials. To this aim, 120 newspaper editorials from four Persian newspapers were culled in 2018. We applied a bottom-up analysis method to detect the proximity features and analyzed them both quantitatively and qualitatively. The outcomes revealed that stance and engagement markers were the most recurrent proximity elements in the corpus. To have successful reciprocal interaction, Persian authors applied proximity markers in their editorials. Moreover, they employed proximity markers to maintain both proximity of membership and commitment at the same time. It was also found that the cultural, social, and political factors influence the way that authors employ such linguistic elements. The findings of this study can have implications for students of journalism in Persian.

Keywords: *Editorials, proximity, Argumentative structure, engagement, stance*

Introduction

It is widely known that newspaper's language is not completely impartial (Fowler, 1991). Editorials can be assumed as the initial part of newspapers that are used to start communication between the writer and the reader. Notwithstanding other parts of newspaper that are presented to provide neutral reports, this section is biased and mirrors the editor's personal attitude and "perhaps more than any other type of writing reflects national styles regarding modes of

persuasion” (Connor, 1996: 143). Editors inscribe these sections to inspire their own presuppositions to the specific recipient. Moreover, they dominate reader’s thoughts for making decisions about current concerns in society. Editorial is a kind of text that contains a controversy to defend specific political policies or comment on contemporary issues (Duyile, 1990).

Authors imply their own thoughts through rhetorical features in the editorial section. It demonstrates a newspaper’s political opinion implicitly (Ivanic, 1998). The main concentration of an editorial is on establishment of relationship between the author and the addressee to circuitously impose their own policy through linguistic elements. This part is marked as a message from the editor (Vazquez Del Arbol, 2005). Editorial sections prepare circumstances for the editorial board to propose their own points of view, denounce current events, and attempt to bring readers to agreement (Reah, 1998).

Newspaper editorials are worth close scrutiny since these sections echo cross-cultural distinctions. They are regarded as impressive, argumentative texts that signify local cultural and ideological characteristics (Ansary & Babaii, 2009). Editorials are considered as leading articles. In other words, these articles are accomplished to shape and change people’s outlooks. Different rhetorical features are deployed to reflect the editor’s opinions directly and indirectly (Van Dijk, 1996). “Editorials suggest the formal policy of a newspaper on a current issue that contain newsworthy statement at the time of publication” (Le, 2004: 688). They are looked upon as a significant source of data for the purpose of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural investigation, because they are inscribed by a professional editorial board. Thus, they depict the ideological, political tendency of a newspaper, and “they are considered the most prestigious journalistic text types” (Pak & Acevedo, 2008, pp. 124-125).

Written discourse is considered as a communicative involvement. While texts are representative of authors’ beliefs, attitudes, and thoughts; authors, as well as conveying meaning, must respect how their addressees reciprocate to their texts (Gil-Salom & Soler-Monreal, 2009). Written discourse is a beneficial means of communication that is used to convey meaning; therefore, texts are interpersonal devices employed to bridge the gaps that exist in the minds of authors and readers (Hyland, 2005a). According to Hyland and Tse (2004) and Hyland (2005b), written or spoken discourse must be assumed as civic, well-informed, cooperative, and social phenomena connecting authors and readers. In agreement with Hyland (2005b), creation of an intellectual, well-informed balance between uncertainty and confirmation is considered as one of the basic elements of writing regularities. Moreover, he states that writing is an active substance that is influenced by weighty factors such as culture over the time.

The concept of proximity is developed within the realm of metadiscourse. Thus, it is worth sketching a preface about metadiscourse elements and various definitions that have been put forth by different linguists and researchers. Metadiscourse markers are groups of linguistic elements which assist the writer to predict the addressee’s need and allow him/her to write based on the readers’ attitude (Hyland, 2010b). Metadiscourse embraces rhetorical elements that imply trustworthiness and concern for addressees. It also manifests how the text is tied up with the addressee’s expectations and his/her life (Crismore & Farnsworth, 1990; Hyland, 1999). Hyland (2005a) delineates metadiscourse markers as eloquent and expressive linguistic means that are valuable in case of establishment of successful interaction between the addresser and the addressee. They can be considered as linguistic links that help people who involve in conversation to comprehend each other both in written and spoken contexts (Vande Kopple, 1985). Crismore, Markkanen, and Steffensen (1993) stated that metadiscourse devices are crucial linguistic features that are applied deliberately and purposefully to intensify the sense of unification between the author and the reader. They demonstrate the writers’ “personality,

credibility, considerateness of the reader, and relationship to the subject matter and to readers” (p. 40).

A number of scholars (e.g., Andrusenko, 2015; Ansarin & Tarlani-Ali abadi, 2011; Herriman, 2014; Junqueira & Cortes, 2014; Lee & Elliott Casal, 2014; Ozdemir & Longo, 2014) have examined metadiscourse across languages in different genres. Furthermore, many studies inspected metadiscourse in journalistic texts. In recent years, several studies have been conducted to investigate metadiscourse markers in the newspaper genre. Metadiscourse markers were explored in English and Persian editorials. The outcomes revealed that English authors tended to employ code glosses and certainty markers more than Iranians. Also, emphatic markers were used by Persian editorialists considerably. Cultural differences are the most significant factors that affect metadiscourse accomplishments in both languages (Abdollahzadeh, 2007). The comparison of textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers in Spanish and English illustrates the presence of both textual and interpersonal metadiscourse markers in both languages, with more textual markers and interpersonal markers in Spanish opinion columns than the English counterparts (Dafouz, 2008). A study on English and Japanese academic and journalistic writing in terms of stance and engagement discovered that Japanese writers are more inclined to engage readers in editorials, whereas English authors are less competent to employ engagement devices in articles than Japanese writers (Lee, 2011). The appraisal of interactional metadiscourse markers in English and Persian editorials disclosed that there is no substantial difference in interactional elements between Persian and English editorials, and that both English and Persian authors are willing to utilize these features to convince their addressees to accept their own view obliquely (Khabbazi Oskouei, 2011). In another study, Kuhi and Mojood (2012) examined metadiscourse in English and Persian editorials. The results revealed that cultural variations caused editorialists to have different preferences for employments of hedges and boosters. To deal with similarities, in both Persian and English editors, editorialists utilized interactional metadiscourse devices more than transactional ones to influence addressee’s attitude.

Further, a recent study by Sukma and Sujatna (2014) focused on metadiscourse markers in eleven opinion articles taken from a famous Indonesian newspaper, examining the corpus based on Dafouz’s (2008) metadiscourse model. The outcomes demonstrated that employment of interpersonal metadiscourse markers was prominent in the corpus.

The concept of proximity lies within the realm of metadiscourse and has emerged as a result of previous studies in this domain. Hyland (2010a) says proximity embodies the idea of interaction and occurs when authors establish mutual interaction by employment of rhetorical features. Not only do they want to make known their new views, but also they aim to bring their readers to their texts. They present materials to their addressees in a way to attest the essence of solidarity and to assure them; there is no difference between writers and readers. They make all efforts to approximate their text to the reader’s expectations and prerequisites. He believes that texts are used as a source for negotiation to uphold social relationship. Authors create a situation to demonstrate that they are in the reader’s position. Moreover, texts are composed in line with norms of community. He adds that proximity deals with two facets in establishment of mutual interaction. In other words, it is based on two chief concepts. The first one is named *proximity of membership* that is defined as demonstration of power through experts with regard to the norms of community; it states how the writer sets his/her position in society; how he/she defines his/her place with respect to others. The second concept is called *proximity of commitment*, that is considered as manifestation of the writer’s position in text; how he/she declares his/her point of view in text. In other words, how he/she publicizes his/her personal notion and thought (Hyland, 2010a). To sum up, he ascertains proximity concept as:

Proximity deals with writer's control of rhetorical features which display both authority as an expert and a personal position towards issues in an unfolding text. It is concerned with how writers represent not only themselves and their readers, but also their material, in ways which are most likely to meet their readers' expectations (Hyland, 2010a: 117). In case of proximity, very few studies have been conducted so far.

Preliminary work on proximity construction in written corpus was undertaken by Hyland (2010a). He concentrated on constructing proximity relating to readers in popular and professional science. He investigated a corpus of texts in two very different genres, research papers, and popular science articles. Hyland demonstrated the features that authors apply to manage interaction through the use of rhetorical items to achieve successful interaction across mentioned genres. The findings of this study can help us to notice to the notion of interpersonality that is established through the application of proximity elements.

Scotto Di Carlo (2014) explored proximity in online popularizations. This study aimed to apply Hyland's (2010a) proximity framework in TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design) talks to identify how presenters use linguistic rhetorical features to guarantee reciprocal understanding between the addresser and the addressee. He concluded that these talks intended to both spread knowledge and convince addressees to alter their own views by accomplishment of proximity features. Also, his results showed proximity features and linguistic devices in TED talks were used to invoke audiences' emotion. He suggests that by applying such rhetorical features, speakers increase comprehensibility of their speeches. Thus, they would be more influential and impressive.

There appears to be no research to date conducted on proximity in newspaper editorials in general, and in Persian in particular. To bridge this gap, the current study is designed to see how proximity markers are deployed in Persian editorials of newspapers published in Iran. Therefore, the motives for this study are the followings: 1) the need to gain insight into Persian editorialists' thoughts via the concept of proximity, and 2) the need to determine the most frequent types of proximity markers across the corpus.

Corpus and Method of the Study

The corpus used in this study was compiled by collecting 120 Persian newspaper editorials published from January 2018 to March 2018 to opt for recency of data as a main criterion. Initially, we collected 90 editorials randomly. We started with the most recent newspapers in March, and moved backward chronologically in order to access the newest editorials. Hereafter, in order to guarantee data saturation, 30 more were added editorials to the corpus. The editorials were compiled from Keyhan, Mardomsalari, Shargh, and Iran newspapers which represent different political ideologies in Iran. This was another consideration for data collection. Thirty editorials were selected from each newspaper. Another factor which was taken into account was the high circulation of each newspaper which was in the neighborhood of 120,000 for each. Once the editorials were collected, word count was run in order to determine the size of the corpus. The total number of tokens in the corpus was 120,598. Table 1 shows the general information of the corpus.

Table 1

General information of the corpus

No. of Texts	No. of Tokens	No. of Proximity Elements
120	120,598	7,934

The method of text analysis applied was both quantitative and qualitative. Having read each text carefully and completely, we analyzed the editorials in the light of Hyland's (2010a) proximity model. The rationale behind the selection of this framework is that Hyland's proximity model is the first and the only available proximity model. Prior to our research, nonetheless, in order to check the feasibility of the study and the reliability of the analysis, a pilot study was conducted. Ten percent of the data was randomly selected and analysis was run by each researcher separately. Having discussed the data and instantiations for proximity features, we reached acceptable agreement over the method of analysis which was further confirmed by the reliability coefficient of ($k=0.87$) obtained through Cohen's Kappa measure of agreement. After the reliability coefficient was verified, the same procedure used in the pilot study in identifying the proximity elements was applied to the whole dataset. The data were first collected in a paper-and-pencil grid that maintained their sequential occurrence and were then classified according to Hyland's (2010a) proximity model. The data was then transferred to a word file. All the proximity elements were determined and categorized. The frequency of each element was counted. After calculating the percentage of each proximity feature, its density per 1000 words was computed as well. Table 2 shows overall information about application of proximity markers in the corpus.

Table 2

Overall, frequencies, percentages, and densities of proximity markers

Hyland's(2010a) Proximity Framework	Frequency	Percentage	Density per 1000 words
Organization	394	4.95	0.30
Argumentative Structure	334	4.2	0.27
Stance	6,290	79.33	5.2
Engagement	719	9.04	0.57
Credibility	197	2.48	0.16

Results and Discussion

Diverse ways are employed to attain proximity in Persian editorials. Based on Hyland's (2010) framework, these next sections will concentrate on how Persian editorialists utilize peculiar linguistic devices to establish proximity with their readers.

Organization: It can be seen as one of the writing means that authors employ to attain closeness with their own readers. Scotto Di Carlo (2014) classified *organization* markers as "contextualizing the talk, establishing a common ground with the audience, sharing a personal story, using humor, contextualizing the topic historically, or containing meta-reference related to TED talks" (p. 594). Therefore, the researcher created her own *organization* category related to Persian editorial genre. Accordingly, this strategy can be implied through *introduction (general statement and quotation), establishing a common ground with the audience, contextualizing the topic historically, and using proverbs*. These linguistic features help readers to decode the text more precisely (Crismore, 1989). Therefore, the main reason for the application of this linguistic element is intensifying readiness in the addressee's mind for initiation of a peculiar issue. Table 3 depicts the figures for *organization*.

Table 3
Organizational markers in the corpus

Organization		Frequency	Percentage	Density
Introduction	General Statement	112	1.41	0.09%
	Quotation	8	0.1	0.006%
Contextualizing	Establishing Common Ground	66	0.83	0.05%
	Topic Historically	178	2.24	0.14%
Proverbs		30	0.37	0.02%

Contextualizing topic historically was the most frequent organizational marker with 2.24 percent. In respect of *introduction* markers, calculated percentages were different, 1.41 percent of Persian editorials initiated by *general statement*. In this regard, the rest of the organizational markers including *establishing common ground*, *proverb*, and *quotation* were utilized less frequently than the other subcategories. Instances are provided below to clarify the *general statement*, *quotation*, *contextualizing topic historically*, and *proverbs* from the *organization* concept. It should be mentioned that all the excerpts were originally written in Persian and were then translated into English.

General statement:

(1)“The dispute over the promotion of the musical art is not a new debate. 36-years old history of the Islamic Republic has remembered a lot of events from political and ideological confrontation of some political wings with music while as it is mentioned in Minister of Culture’s speech in Rouhani state, "Motivation" and "origin" of objections to the art field hadn’t been the same ...”. (Iran, March 4, 2018)

(2)“Russia, as a great power at the international level, follows numerous goals and issues at different levels. Accordingly, Russia pursues its own peculiar priorities in some sections. Also, it applies changes in its priorities in other sections...”. (Shargh, January 21, 2018)

General statement is illustrated by an overall preface at the beginning of the text to motivate readers to follow the text enthusiastically. When addresses know a foreword about the issue, they will be more ready to think about the topic and make a decision to reject or accept it. The results demonstrate that editorialists are aware of this linguistic device and employ it. Therefore, Persian editorialists make use of this linguistic element to boost the opportunity for understanding the message that is embedded in the text.

Quotation:

(3)“From the perspective of some contemporary analysts and historians, Mohammed Mossadegh’s biggest political mistake was when he dissolved the Assembly and stood on a stool before the people in the street and shouted: "The nation is where the parliament is". (Shargh, January 31, 2018)

(4)“Yesterday, after meeting with John Kerry, on the sidelines of the Munich conference, Secretary of Foreign Affairs said "not only there is just one solution, but also several solutions exist to the nuclear issue; only a strong political will is required to achieve results."(Keyhan, February 7, 2018)

(5)“Imam Ali says “Losing someone’s need is better than demanding it from a mean person”...” (Iran, March 11, 2018)

In this part, the author made an effort to commence the text by a quotation of famous religious or political people or even verses of the Quran about the main idea of the text. Since Muslims deeply respect spiritual people, authors tend to employ this proximity marker through quotes of the Quran and Hadith (Arabic for narrations of religious characters like holy prophets and messengers). Muslims believe that prophets are sent by God to guide mankind and their messages have to be obeyed. Thus, narrations of holy people are notable ways to attract readers’ attention.

Establishing common ground:

(6)“...Let us not forget that we are on the verge of the biggest historical story of our country...”. (Shargh, January 31, 2018)

(7)“Unfortunately, some times in our Islamic country, under different titles of protest from concert licenses to physical confrontation with political activists, such fierce activities occurred by violent hardliners so there was no wonder for witnesses....”. (Mardom salari, March 12, 2018)

Approximately one percent of editorials are initiated via *establishing common ground*. To this aim, authors inscribe common concerns to impress their readers. In other words, they demonstrate that they have sympathy with their readers by focusing on the society’s complications and daily issues. Persian editorialists create the sense of unity in their texts by the use of phrases such as *our country*, *our people*, *our society*, etc. They invoke the concept of solidarity in their readers and assure them that they belong to the same society.

Contextualizing topic historically:

(8) “...America's embassy in Sana'a was attacked on February 11-the anniversary of the Iranian Islamic Revolution- in Tehran, and America’s embassy adventure on November 4, 1979 was repeated! ...”. (Keyhan, February 15, 2018)

(9) “Jewish have looked at the history of Iran and Iranians with respect and gratitude. In the later Jewish prophets’ books have mentioned Cyrus as the Messiah. In addition to the story of Cyrus and the liberation of the Jewish from domination and oppression, in Babylon, during World War II Iranians had contributed significantly to the Jews in Europe...”. (Iran, March, 7, 2018)

Persian editorialists resort to historical events to create a connection between events which happened in the past and those happening in the present. Thus, by making references to historical events at the beginning of the text, they provide readers with specific signs about the main idea of the text. Scotto Di Carlo (2014) stated that this “creates a bond with the community as they are all part of the same experience” (p. 595).

Proverb:

(10)“...Be careful what you wish for, you might just get it (Literal meaning: Death is good but just for neighbors)...”. (Mardom Salari, February 26, 2018)

(11)“... Decision-making officials in this Ministry believe that you Don't mend what isn't broken (Literal meaning: Do not cover a head that does not ache) ...”. (Shargh, January 26, 2018)
“*Proverbs* are multifunctional and flexible instruments of everyday reasoning although they may maintain solidified attitudes or traditional modes of thought of a certain culture” (Lauhakangas, 2007: 5). It should be noted that the last *organization* sub-category, i.e. *proverb*, was the proximity marker that was employed in the Persian editorials, 0.37 percent. Editorialists use

proverbs to clarify the debated issues and strengthen the ideas that root in the same cultural background. Further, deployment of *proverbs* boosts the neutrality of the text as it is narrated from a third person's viewpoint. Hence, it can be more impressive for people who live in the same society, belong to the same culture, and are familiar with similar *proverbs*.

Argument structure: These features are utilized to persuade readers to think in the same way that they desire. In other words, they attempt to promote critical thoughts by the application of technical terminology, acronyms, reference to other investigation and specialized forms of equipment. Moreover, explanatory technique and paraphrasing, linguistic devices are used to clarify ambiguities. These linguistic devices can be '*that means*', or '*in other ways*' (Hyland, 2010a). According to Table 4, argumentative structures with 4.2 percent are the fourth common proximity element in the corpus.

Table 4

Argumentative structures in the corpus

Argumentative Structures	Frequency	Percentage	Density
	334	4.2	0.27

(12) "In other words, more surveillance of regulatory systems on the chairman, gives him more authority...". (Kehyan, March 2, 2018)

(13) "In the current circumstances, I mean the period of negotiations, we can see examples of this fact. Both sides of the negotiating table suffer from the same problem. In other words, as the hardliners oppose every positive move in our country, other parties also face the same problem...". (Iran, February 2, 2018)

As seen in the examples, Persian editorialists employ *argumentative structure* to support their statements. Bernstein (1999) claims that via exemplification, authors render difficult concepts to a comprehensible form for ordinary people. Results demonstrated that the Persian editorialists made a considerable effort to convince their readers through the employment of this linguistic device. This linguistic feature helps authors to validate and defend their own claims about a phenomenon. In addition, via this linguistic device, they clarify vague concepts for their addressees.

Stance: It is defined as linguistic devices that authors apply to inspire readers' feelings and judgements. Distinctive emotions and beliefs about specific issues can be represented through linguistic elements including: *Hedges*, *Boosters*, *Attitude Markers*, and *Self-mention*. Authors voice doubt through the use of *hedges* and demonstrate a sense of solidarity and certainty through accomplishment of *boosters*. They also try to accompany their addressees with themselves by *self-mention* pronouns. *Attitude markers* are applied to demonstrate attitudes and feelings of writers (Hyland, 2005b). As observed in Table 2, *stance* is the first and most frequent proximity item with 79.33 percent.

Table 5

Stance makers in the corpus

		Freque nc y	Percentag e	Density
Stance	Hedges	1970	24.86	1.63
	Boosters	2532	31.91	2.09
	Attitude Markers	1014	12.81	0.84
	Self-mentions	774	9.75	0.64

Hedges:

(14) “It seems that the common position will be the key to a new understanding of the way the parties employ in the negotiations to achieve an agreement in the near future... ”. (Shargh, January 14, 2018)

(15) “Maybe it was better that Mr Zarif delayed his trip in this current circumstances and opened negotiations with the France government in any other way...”.(Mardom Salari, January 26, 2018)

An overall look at the density column in Table 5 demonstrates that the second highest density of *stance* markers belongs to *hedges* with 24.86 percent. Hyland (1999) asserts that the addresser can express his/her personal view through a degree of prudence by using *hedges*. Existence of *hedges* diminishes the sense of author’s bigotry. Thus, addressees feel that they are not under the pressure of the author’s attitudes to accept or cast off specific issues that are discussed in the text. To this end, Persian editors apply *hedges* to give their readers freedom to decide about the accuracy and validity of debates.

Boosters:

(16) “In fact, there are many reasons to make us believe that what intensified Israel’ fears was not the new revelations about the role of Iran in involvement in terrorist acts...”. (Shargh, March 12, 2018)

(17) “...However, the sensitivity of the referendum did not prevent Rouhani from talking about his purpose frankly...”. (Iran, January 7, 2018)

Regarding stance subcategories, *boosters* were the most recurrent, 31.91 percent. In line with Kuhi and Mojood (2012), Persian editorials contain more *boosters* than *hedges*. Alternatively, *attitude markers* and *self-mentions* are in the third and fourth places. Iranian authors are inclined to assure readers about the truthfulness of issues by the great use of *boosters*. They also utilize these linguistic devices to indicate that they are assertive about their texts. Moreover, they employ *boosters* to highlight significance of a specific concept and highlight it to attract the readers’ attention.

Attitude markers:

(18) “...but in domestic policy, at the beginning of eleventh state along with some powers, optimistic assumption was shaped that caused the writer at the same time to warn...”. (Mardom Salari, March 1, 2018)

(19) “Such attitude roots in the events of the past eight years, the period in which politicization was unfortunately penetrated into all areas of art and culture...”.(Iran, March 4, 2018)

The above examples manifest that Persian editorialists tend to express feelings and beliefs unequivocally. They also prefer to avoid skepticism and uncertainty in their texts. Furthermore, by employing these linguistic devices, they impress their readers and supply their own opinions implicitly.

Self-mentions:

(20) “At first we need to know...”. (Mardom Salari, January 22, 2018)

(21) “...Don’t our children experience this type of punishment in their schools?..” (Shargh, January 26, 2018)

“The presence or absence of explicit author reference is generally a conscious choice by writers to adopt a particular stance and disciplinary-situated authorial identity” (Hyland, 2005b). *Self-mention* was the least frequent *stance* marker as it was noted in Yazdani, Sharifi, and Elyassi (2014) who disclosed that Persian journalists were not in favor of *self-mention* employment in their news article. In other words, they avoid showing their presence directly in their editorials.

4. *Engagement*: *Engagement* markers are rhetorical devices which are used to involve readers in the text. They comprise *reader pronouns*, *personal asides*, *appeals to shared knowledge*, *directives*, and *questions* (Hyland, 2005b). They can be assumed as linguistic markers that are applied to manifest author’s place/position with regard to other’s position in a specific context (Marthin & White, 2005). According to Bakhtin (1981) and Voloshinov (1995), from a social dimension, writers must be able to project the addressee’s reaction to their text and be familiar with the reader’s social needs. Then, they can involve readers in their texts efficaciously. The second position of proximity markers was occupied by *engagement* elements. *Question* markers account for the most frequent *engagement* subcategory. A closer look at Table 6 reveals that *Personal aside*, *shared knowledge*, and *directive markers* consecutively were utilized as the least frequent engagement markers in the editorials.

Table 6

Engagement markers in the corpus

		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Density</i>
Engagement	Reader Pronoun	149	1.87	0.12
	Personal Aside	138	1.73	0.11
	Shared Knowledge	66	0.83	0.05
	Directive	20	0.25	0.01
	Question	346	4.36	0.28

Reader pronouns:

(22) “...If you ask anybody, they will say that Iran...”. (Iran, February 4, 2018)

(23) “...If you go to the market and different stores at Eve’s night, you will suspect to the accuracy of these statistics! So how can we accept these rates?..”. (Keyhan, February 24, 2018)

Reader pronoun is the first *engagement* element that is used through the employment of second person pronouns like *you* and *your* to address readers. It is the most direct way to engage readers in text. It also invokes the sense of solidarity in reader’s mind (Hyland, 2005b). The Persian authors attempt to bring their readers to their editorials and boost the readers’ attendance in their texts. Employment of *reader pronouns* is a hidden way to involve readers and bring them

into the text. This linguistic feature, with the density of 1.87 percent, is the second recurrent *engagement marker*. Therefore, it displays that Persian authors are in favor of indirect involvement of *reader pronouns*.

Personal aside:

(24) "...they live in economic welfare (of profiteering) but none of them are in economic development ...". (Mardom Salari, January 22, 2018)

(25) "... According to the foreign instructions, the old Front hypocrisy has long been achieved to formula of using "human shields" and applying techniques of jujitsu (using the opposite side)....". (Keyhan, March 7, 2018)

Personal aside is another subcategory of *engagement* markers. Authors express their own interpretation or personal opinions through achievement of this linguistic element. Mostly, it is placed in parentheses to clarify the meaning for addressees (Hyland, 2005b). Through personal aside, "writers offer their views while acknowledging the previous studies importance directly. The writers in fact try to initiate their interpersonal opinions in each argument with an indirect writer- reader interaction" (Hyland, 2008). Persian editorialists apply this linguistic marker for the purpose of elucidation to provide a clear interpretation for readers. They feel they are responsible to define vague statements by adding their own definition in the parentheses.

Shared knowledge:

(26) "If we interpret nuclear negotiations of our country in a new era to a chess game...". (Keyhan, March 7, 2018)

(27) "...Our people have the right to watch their pure culture on their own media. They want to hear the scholar's analysis and fair criticism. When the situation is different and is not going well, favorable reflection isn't expected...". (Mardom Salary, February 22, 2018)

Shared knowledge is another *engagement* sub-group that is used to stimulate the sense of unity between reader and writer (Hyland, 2005b). Persian authors utilized this linguistic feature to increase the sense of solidarity in readers. Moreover, they want to sympathize with their readers through mentioning the common issues. In other words, they mention routine issues that are significant for ordinary people to prove that they are not separated from other members of society.

Directives:

(28) "...But the reality of today's business climate and non-planning state in the economy is such that aroused even of many individuals and media close to the government. Notice these examples...". (Keyhan, January 4, 2018)

(29) "Other countries do not define any kind of cooperation with Iran and the available choices will be limited. It should be noted that Russia is a big country even if they don't encounter the right choices in the face, they can make them. So according to new variables the look and relations with the countries from the Kremlin's side, can be changed...". (Shargh, January 21, 2018)

The use of directives is not favored by Persian authors because it enhances the sense of writer's imposition in the text. Addressers use this linguistic device to ask addressees to do or not to do an action. In other words, authors engage readers by asking. It can be done through the use of imperative words like *look*, *notice*, etc. or modals such as *it is significant to know*, *it should be noted*, etc. (Hyland, 2002).

Questions:

(30) “What is the task of the responsible institutions?” (Iran, February 18, 2018)

(31) “...What would be the foreign policy of Saudi during the past decade within the lack of King Abdullah and the kingdom of Salman king? Asking this question Saudi Arabia to cross different areas of foreign policy and security interests of regional security, especially in the current situation is of great importance...”. (Iran, January 24, 2018)

Regarding engagement markers, the findings displayed that *question* device was the most recurrent proximity feature in this category. Persian editorials use question markers with the percentage of 4.36 since they believe that *questions* are the best linguistic devices that are used to increase the addressee’s involvement in the written discourse. When readers encounter *questions*, they believe that their responses are important for authors; therefore, *questions* create a situation that bridges the distance between readers and writers.

Credibility: It deals with reliability of the proposition. The sources of propositions must be provided by authors to ensure the addressee that the text is credible. To achieve the aim, writers mention the name of scientists who are renowned and accepted by people (Hyland, 2010a). It is achieved through contribution of new events with well-known facts that occurred in the past. To achieve the aim, writers mention the names of scientists who are eminent and known to people. On the other hand, they imply their ideas through scientific reports to enhance the reliability of their statement (Hyland, 2010a).

Table 7*Credibility in the corpus*

	Frequency	Percentage	Density
Credibility	197	2.48	0.16

(32)“Freud believes that crime is instinctive. But ISIL acts of cruelty are beyond crime and are more adversity”. (Iran, February 21, 2018)

(33)“The Quran warns believers “don’t be like the foolish man who knitted the wool tightly until noon. Then, opened up whole woven strands in the afternoon! Which slogan and service is more honorable than "construction" and "justice" and "reform" to the nation?..”. (Keyhan, January 25, 2018).

The occurrence of the *credibility* item in the corpus was very low. It made up the lowest density and percentage (2.48%) in comparison to other proximity features (see Table 7). As scientists and scholars have a sublime position in the Iranian society, they give credibility to their texts by incorporating famous people’s quotations. Religious concepts are also significant to Iranian people. Thus, they give reference to verses of the Quran to authenticate their texts. In other words, Iranian editorialists tend to validate their statements via employing quotations of famous people or verses of the Quran.

Conclusion

The outcomes of the study illustrated the significance of proximity features in newspaper editorials. The distinctive distribution of proximity features in Persian editorials is inevitable. These variations in proximity employment can derive from cultural, social, and political issues that encompass all languages. As far as the frequency of proximity items is concerned, *stance*, *engagement*, and *organization* are successively the most frequent proximity elements in these texts. Moreover, detailed analysis demonstrates that *boosters* from the *stance* group and *questions*

from the *engagement* category are the prominent proximity elements in the mentioned texts. Concerning the reasons behind the differences in the distribution of proximity markers in the corpus, cultural distinctions can be at play. Languages are devices which are used to reflect cultures. In other words, advancement of languages are affected explicitly by cultural norms (Gleason, 1961). Put simply, customs and rituals are coded by linguistic elements. Kou and Lai (2006: 5) asserted that “language should be conceptualized and integrated as part of a society and its culture”. Social background can also lead to such differences. Therefore, language is a social phenomenon that is formed by society (Armour-Thomas & Gopaul-McNicol, 1998). In fact, language is an inseparable structure of community that is fed by society, and it is dependent on culture. Language cannot survive in isolation. It is meaningless without connection to culture and society (Fairclough, 1989). Thus, social factor is one of the most important issues that associate with the rhetorical features that authors employ to create proximity with their readers.

Another justification for this distinction refers to political aspects. Unquestionably, in all communities language is strongly linked to political considerations. Chilton (2004) asserts that “language serves the needs of politicians” (p. 6). It means that language is at the service of politics. Political variations lead authors to employ different linguistic elements to attain proximity with their addressees. The most striking point is that Persian editors simultaneously focus on both aspects of proximity (proximity of commitment and membership). In other words, they show their position toward the issues indirectly and also bring readers to their editorials successfully.

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