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Do Persian and English Dissertation Acknowledgments Accommodate Hyland's Model: a Cross-Linguistic Study

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Abstract

In recent decades, genre analysis has attracted many researchers' attention. The present study was to observe the differences in generic structure of doctoral dissertation acknowledgements texts written by native speakers of Persian (NSP) and native speakers of English (NSE). To this end, 80 Persian acknowledgement texts and the same number of English dissertations acknowledgement texts were selected. The model relied on in the current study was Hyland's (2004) model. After analyzing each text the main moves and their steps were extracted and the frequencies of each one were calculated and compared. Also, chi-square test was applied to check the meaningfulness of the differences. The result revealed a high degree of match between the two groups in exploiting most moves and steps. Also, the two groups employed the reflective move and accepting responsibility step in a statistically meaningful manner. In addition, a new step called ''thanking God'' step was discovered throughout this study which the difference in using this step between NSP and NSE was statistically significant.

Key words: *dissertation, acknowledgement, move analysis, NSP, NSE*

1. Introduction

The value of academic writing should not be underestimated because academic writing can be considered as the fulcrum on which many other aspects of scholarship depend. Writing essays, articles, and dissertations can be a major concern for any student studying at colleges and universities. In essence, all courses contain a large amount of written assessment and it is essential to ensure that your writing skills are in line with the necessary standards. In other words, most university and college students are assessed through the production of written assignments and they need to be clear about the basic components of written texts.

Academic writing is indeed vital for growth and enhancement of important skills to be able to lead a successful life after the completion of studies. Academic writing plays a major role in the field of higher education and is the primary form of communication within individual subject disciplines. It is used to express acquired knowledge in a specific subject area. Such writing tends to be serious in nature and often demonstrates particular theories or arguments in relation to a specified discourse. Academic writing is mainly undertaken for learning development or course assessment purposes and the same principles apply to dissertations and theses. In summary, academic writing is a substantial issue that needs attention and support from the academic community.

From three decades ago or so there has seen growing scholastic interest in the analysis of different academic texts. While the main directions springs from studies of language exploited in the disciplines of anthropology (Clifford & Marcus, 1986) and economics (Dudley-Evans & Henderson, 1990), various academic genres including research theses (Thompson, 2001; Bunton, 2002), research articles (Swales, 1990; Posteguillo, 1999), textbooks (Hyland, 2000), book reviews (Nicolaisen, 2002), conference papers (Rowley-Jolivet, 2002), grant proposals (Halleck & Connor, 2006) have come under analysis. Different approaches have been employed to uncover the overall features of academic discourse along with the characteristics of particular genres.

Based on the purpose of investigation, these studies fall into two broad areas. The first area of study zooms in the stylistic and grammatical aspects of particular genres such as tenses and aspects (Burrough-Boenisch, 2003), modalities (Vassileva, 2001), adjectives (Soler, 2002), nouns (Flowerdew, 2003), reporting verbs (Thompson & Ye, 1991), and etc. The second realm of research focuses on the macro-organization of academic texts including abstracts (Hyland, 2000; Samraj, 2005; Martin, 2003; Lores, 2004), introductions (Swales, 1981, 1990; Dudley-Evans & Henderson, 1990; Holmes, 1995), results (Brett, 1994; Williams, 1999), discussions (Hopkins & Dudley-Evans, 1988; Holmes, 1997), conclusions (Yang & Allison, 2003; Bunton, 2002), research paper titles (Haggan, 2004), and so on. The latter studies gain their insights chiefly relying on Swales' (1990) CARS (creating a research space) model, which "has played a vital role in genre analysis in ESP and on the teaching of academic writing, both to international or L1 students, or to professional authors wishing their works to be published in international journals" (Dudley-Evans, 2000, p. 6).

As mentioned earlier, there has been a growing interest in the rhetorical features of academic writing, expanding the focus of study and interest beyond the primary genres (e.g. research articles, journal abstracts, books, dissertations, etc.) to the institutional or occluded genres (Swales 2004, p. 18) such as research grant proposals, evaluation promotion letters, referees' review of books or articles, and editorial correspondence. A dissertation acknowledgment, defined as a ''Cinderella'' genre (Hyland 2003, p. 243) which is ''neither strictly academic nor entirely personal'' seems to belong to the institutional group, however, constituting a peculiar genre of its own. The writers of these genres have attempted to produce texts that plausibly reflect interaction with different audiences in terms of exchange of materials, information, support, and advice. Taking genre analysis as the study of how language is used in a particular socio-cultural context, the attention of text analysts has therefore turned to examining the textual and generic organization components as well as the socio-cultural interactive features that writers draw on to engage their audience to establish and maintain a successful writer-reader relationship.

Through dissertation acknowledgments, writers explicitly negotiate interpersonal relationships and reflect socio-cultural interactions that have received little attention in the research literature, particularly those written in Persian. The principal reason for this neglect, as argued by Genette (1997, cited in Giannoni, 2002) can be the perception that this section, unlike any of the main component sections of the dissertation, does not form an instrumental construction to the dissertation's rhetorical epistemology and stands outside the research record of establishing academic issues due to the assumption that acknowledgments along with prefaces, illustrations and dedications belong to the 'paratext' category.

The importance of acknowledgments stems from their high frequency of occurrence in scholarly texts in general and PhD dissertations in particular. They reflect a combination of interpersonal, academic, institutional, technical, financial, and moral support to the person(s) or institutions for their multifarious contributions. In this line, Al-Ali (2004, p. 36) argues, as PhD students are prospective members of the academic community, they are expected to demonstrate awareness not only of reciprocal gift giving rules that they should apply in areas of civilized life but also of central values and rules as well as the community-oriented ethos that should apply in this regulated activity of academic practice.

The acknowledgment sections are, thus, short but important pieces of text. They orient the reader to what the student has done as well as where the student is placed in various scholarly and social networks. These seemingly simple texts need as much attention as other parts of student's text. Like the table of contents, the acknowledgment sections are often the last thing a student writes, but among the first things an examiner reads (Paltridge & Starfield, 2007). As Finn (2005, p. 118) argues, "first impressions last" in the examination process. Clear and well-written acknowledgment sections can help make that first impression a good one.

Acknowledgment as a genre is widely used in academic discourse to express gratitude toward help from and contribution of an individual or an institution, thus establishing a favorable academic and social reputation. Acknowledgments have been of some interest to genre analysts such as Giannoni (2002), Hyland (2003, 2004), and Hyland and Tse (2004). We can classify the studies on acknowledgments into three areas. The first area zooms in the acknowledgments written by the natives of English including Ben-Ari (1987), Cronin (1991), Davis and Cronin (1993), and McCain (1991). The second area focuses on acknowledgments written by non-natives of English such as Al-Ali (2004), and Al-Ali (2010), Hyland (2003, 2004), Hyland and Tse (2004), and Mingwei and Yajun (2010). And the third area centers around the cross-cultural studies on acknowledgments like Giannoni (2002) and Golpour Lasaki, F. (2011).

In order to shed more light on the studies on acknowledgments, the current study aims to cross-culturally compare and contrast the acknowledgment sections of the Ph.D. dissertations written in English by NSE in soft sciences and Ph.D. dissertations written in Persian by NSP in the same area to see if these acknowledgments follow the same generic patterns and to what extent their structure is affected by cross-cultural considerations.

1.1. Theoretical framework

Genre analysis, as a type of discourse analysis, has become an important approach to text analysis. Several scholars have defined the term genre, but it appears that the definition given by Swales (1990) is the most comprehensive one. According to Swales (1990, p. 58):

> A genre comprises a class of communicative events, the members of which share some set of communicative purposes. These purposes are recognized by the expert members of the parent discourse community, and thereby constitute the rationale for the genre. This rationale shapes the schematic structure of the discourse and influences and constrains choice of content and style. Communicative purpose is both a privileged criterion and one that operates to keep the scope of a genre as here conceived narrowly focused on comparable rhetorical action. In addition to purpose, exemplars of a genre exhibit various patterns of similarity in terms of structure, style, content and intended audience.

It is inferred from the above definition that a genre is a means of achieving a communicative goal that has evolved in response to particular rhetorical needs, and it changes in response to changes in those needs. Therefore, as put by Dudley-Evans (1994), "the focus should be on the means by which a text realizes its communicative purpose rather than on establishing a system for the classifying of genres" (p. 219).

Since the publication of Swales' *Genre Analysis* (1990), there have been many studies conducted in the realm of genre analysis to analyze the rhetorical structure of various types of texts (Bunton, 2002; Posteguillo, 1999; Hyland, 2000; Nicolaisen, 2002; Rowley-Jolivet, 2002; Halleck & Connor, 2006).

Hyland (2004) examined a set of sample acknowledgements composed by Hong Kong student writers (hereafter Hong Kong acknowledgements or HKAs) in six disciplines—electronic engineering, computer science, business studies, biology, applied linguistics, and public administration. While his analysis shows that PhD students, particularly those in the "soft" sciences, tend to construct generically more complex acknowledgements with a greater variety of patterns, the results of the genre patterns reveal a three-move structure sub-divided into a number of steps, as is shown below.

1. Reflecting Move: introspective comment on the writer's research experience
2. Thanking Move: mapping credit to individuals and institutions
2.1. Presenting participants: introducing those to be thanked
2.2. Thanking for academic assistance: thanks for intellectual support, ideas, analyses, feedback, etc.
2.3. Thanking for resources: thanks for data access and clerical, technical or financial support
2.4. Thanking for moral support: thanks for encouragement, friendship, sympathy, patience, etc.
3. Announcing Move: statements delineating responsibility and inspiration
3.1. Accepting responsibility: an assertion of authorial responsibility for flaws or errors
3.2. Dedicating the thesis: a formal dedication of the thesis to an individual(s)

According to Hyland (2004), the Thanking Move in his sample acknowledgements is found to be central and obligatory, while the reflecting and announcing moves are optional. Only 12 of his 240 samples comprise all three moves, most omitting an Announcing Move. Hyland also points out that moves and steps generally followed the above sequence, although there might be considerable recursion of steps, particularly of those acknowledging academic and moral support.

2. Methodology
2.1. Acknowledgments

To conduct this study, two sets of data were collected for the study of dissertation acknowledgments. The first set includes 80 dissertation acknowledgments written by the NSE and the second set comprises 80 acknowledgments written by the NSP.

2.2. Procedures

English data were gathered from the database of the Princeton University of America in New Jersey (including doctoral dissertations from different universities of America) as the representative sample of acknowledgments in dissertations written from 2005 to 2010.

Selection of these texts was on the basis of their availability to the researcher, in the way that they were chosen and sent by a graduate from Princeton University who was informed of the purpose of the study and given adequate information about how to collect the data. For the Persian data, a series of trips was made to the universities of Ahvaz, Isfahan, Tabriz, Shiraz, Yasuj, Shahre-kord, and Mazandaran and samples of acknowledgments in dissertations written within the same time frame were picked from the relevant departments in the above mentioned universities once permission was made from the universities. The disciplines were then coded as Lit representing literature, Tra representing translation studies, Apl representing applied linguistics, His representing history, Soc representing sociology, Lib representing library sciences, Theo representing theology, and Phil representing philosophy and ten dissertation acknowledgments for each were studied across English and Persian. Also, in the current study, P stands for Persian, E stands for English, and ACK stands for acknowledgments.

2.3.   Data analysis

The principal procedure for analyzing the data in this study was comparative. The generic structure of the acknowledgment texts written in both languages was compared to see if they follow the same pattern. Frequency of each move was calculated and Cramer test was run to see whether possible differences were statistically significant. In the next stage, qualitative and quantitative analyses provided richer and deeper insight into the nature and function of each move.

3. Results and discussions

The move structure of the acknowledgments is one other aspect of the acknowledgments that has been disputed frequently in the literature (Giannoni, 2002; Hyland & Tse, 2004; Hyland, 2004; Al-Ali, 2004; Al-Ali 2010). Under this heading, the researchers discuss in what systematic patterns the authors of the acknowledgments build up their writings.

The present study, thus, tries to reveal the move structure of the acknowledgment texts written by NSP and NSE as a part of their PhD dissertations. The structure of the acknowledgments is examined within the framework of the move structure offered by Hyland (2004) by referring to the frequency of the inclusion of each move. An analysis of the sample acknowledgments displayed that Hyland's move structure accommodates well with the current data and no new move is revealed.

According to Hyland, reflective move is the part where the authors comment on their experiences while writing their MA and PhD dissertations. In fact, in this move, the author by sharing her personal experience and showing the relationship between this private experience and the research process creates a more personal text, which in turn allows her both to raise the value of the received help from the acknowledgees and the value of her own expressions of thanking. Table 1 illustrates the frequency of each move or step exploited by the two groups.

Table1. Frequencies of moves and steps

Move or step	Persian (%)	English (%)
1. Reflecting move	10 (12.5)	40 (50)
2. Thanking move		
Step 2.1	10 (10)	12 (15)
Step 2.2	80 (100)	80 (100)
Step 2.3	40 (50)	43(53)
Step 2.4	72 (90)	75 (93.7)
3. Announcing move		
Step 3.1	17 (21.2)	2 (2.5)
Step 3.2	23 (28.7)	21 (26.2)

Having examined the frequency of the moves appearing in the acknowledgments, the results in Table.1 are obtained. Regarding the presence of the reflective Move in the dissertation acknowledgments, it is found that while NSP employ the Reflective Move in only 10 % of their dissertation acknowledgments, NSE employ the move in 50 %, of their acknowledgments. The following examples illustrate this move in Persian and English texts.

1) Âknun ke in resale ba tâmame sâkhtihayash be payan resise âst (P. ACK. Lib. No.5)
(Now that this dissertation has been completed with all its difficulties…)
2) Looking back, if I would have known the amount of hours, strength, and pure – and sometimes blind – determination that was required to complete this project, I do not believe I would have been so eager to pursue it. (E. ACK. His. No. 8)

When the chi-square test was calculated, it shows that the examined groups do employ the Reflective Move in statistically significantly different frequencies. It can be well interpreted referring to the styles of communication suggested by Ting-Toomey. He divides the styles of communication into two parts of self-effacement and self-enhancement (1999, pp. 107- 8). The self-enhancement verbal style emphasizes the importance of boasting about one's accomplishments and abilities. The self-effacement verbal style, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of humbling oneself via verbal restrains, hesitations, modest talk, and the use of self- deprecation concerning one's effort or performance (Ibid). Thus, it might be claimed at this point that NSP are culturally more apt to use a language of self-effacement, while NSE are a language of self-enhancement. Thus, NSE display their authorship of the theses with their research experiences, while NST hide themselves and give the whole priority to their thanking expressions. This is in full agreement with what was concluded by Karakaş in his study targeting the acknowledgment texts written by the native speakers of Turkish and native speakers of English0n 2010.

When the employment of the thanking move is examined, as expected, it is found that both groups of NSP and NSE have this move in all their acknowledgments since this move acts as the head of the acknowledgment sections. It involves four steps, which allows writers to

introduce and thank people and institutions for their support. The differences between the two groups in exploiting these steps were not statistically significant.

1. Presenting participants

The main purpose of this step is to thank those who helped in all, those who helped morally, academically and so on. This step usually happens at initial position which functions as a foundation. This step occurred in 10 % of NSP and 15 % of NSE's texts. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

3) Dâr ebteda lazem midanâm âz ostadane ârjmândâm jenab-e aghay-e doktor Mâhmood Ketabi vâ jenab-e aghay-e doktor Fereidun Vâhida ke dâr tamam-e marahel-e tâhghigh râhnâma vâ gerehgoshay-e elmi vâ ejrai-e mân budând, sâmimaneh tâshâkkor vâ sepasgozari nemayâm. (P. ACK. Phil. No. 2)

(At first, I see it a necessity to sincerely thank and appreciate my dear instructors Dr. Mahmood Ketabi and Dr. Fereidun Vahida who were directors and solvers of my scientific and executive problems in all steps of the study.)

4) This dissertation would not have been possible without the support of my teachers, friends and family.(E. ACK. Lit. 4)

2. Thanking for academic assistance

Hyland (2003) indicates that this is the core step which can be observed in acknowledgement texts. It is within this step that the writer thanks those who helped him/her academically and gave him/her critical comments. Indeed, it refers to those who taught him or played an advisory role, such as teachers, examiners, committee members or even those that had a marginal role. Hyland (2003) discovered that in this corpus 96 percent of students used this step. The present study discovered that all the students both NSP and NSE used this step in their acknowledgment texts, in other words 100 % of students used this step. Thus, there is no statistical difference in employing this step by the two groups. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

5) Hâmchenin âz ostade mohtârâm jenabe aghaye doktor Iman dâr bâkhsh-e jame shenasi-e daneshgah-e Shiraz ke ba rahnâmaeihay-e khish dâr bâkhsh-e keifi-e tâhghigh vâ teorie bonyadi mâra yari nemudând tâshâkkor vâ sepasgozari minemayâm. (P. ACK. Soc. No.5)

(I also thank dear instructor Dr. Iman from the sociology faculty of Shiraz University who helped me with his directions in the qualitative and basic theoretical parts.)

6) Thank you committee members, especially my chairperson Sabrina Zirkel and my committee members Drs. Dave Donahue, Shawn Ginwright, and Molefi Asante

3. Thanking for resources

This step attempts to acknowledge those that provided some material supports. As Hyland (2003) mentions this step tries to thank those that helped the writer in providing data even by their participation and also thank participants and experts that helped in conducting the research. The results showed that difference was not statistically significant. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

7) Âz khanum-e Nârges Yâzdekhasti ke dâr jâm avâri-e dadehay-e mored-e niaz-e tâhghigh dâr ostanhay-e tehran, azârbaijan-e shârghi vâ khorasan yavâr injaneb budeh tâshâkkor-e faravan mikonâm. (P. ACK. Tra. No. 7)

(I am so thankful to Mrs. Narges Yazdekhasti who was in charge of data gathering in Tehran, East Azerbaijan and Khorasan provinces.)

8) Special thanks for all my colleagues who helped to Kamili Ville possible. I would be remised if I did not say special thank you to after school coordinator 'H' and my fellow Assistant Principals whose names are concealed to protect students' identity. I appreciate all of your assistance and love (E. ACK. Apl. No. 5)

4. Thanking for moral support

The last step in thanking move offers gratitude for friendship, sympathy, patience and care. Hyland (2003) found that 70 percent of all papers in his study included this step. Mostly in this step writers intend to thank their own family and also close friends, especially for their patience during writing the dissertation. The difference between NSP and NSE in applying this move was not statistically significant. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

9) Dâr nâhayât bayâd sepas-e bikâran-e khodâm ra be hâmsar-e mehrâban vâ ba gozâshtâm tâghdim konâm ke dâr tey-e hâsht sal tâhsilat-e mân dâr mâghate-e karshenasi-e ârshâd vâ doktora, sâkhtihay-e fâravani ra ba bordbari tâhâmmol nemud. (P. ACK. Lib. No. 6)

(Finally, I must dedicate my endless thanks to my generous wife who tolerated eight years of difficulty with patience during my MA and PhD education.)

10) To my wonderful father, Paul Johnson, from the very beginning, you instilled a deep belief that education is my path to freedom. I know this would not have been possible without you and Mommy. (E. ACK. Phil. No. 1)

The last move, i.e. announcing move, includes two steps; the first step refers to accepting responsibility for any errors and flaws that occur during writing thesis. The second one is dedicating the thesis to someone. Hyland (2003) discovered that this move occurred in 11 percent of the corpus of his study.

1. Accepting responsibility

In this step the writer of the thesis attempts to accept responsibility for any shortcoming, in data, results and the idea of dissertation. As Hyland (2003) states the writer tries to indicate the ownership of the product and exempt his/her advisor's any flaws. This step occurred in more than 21 percent of NSPs' texts but 2.5 percent of the NSE employed this step. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

11) Dâr payan hâr guneh nâghs vâ kasti dâr neveshtar-e hazer ra be natâvaniha vâ mâhdudiâthay-e elmi vâ ejrai-e khodâm mârbut midanâm vâ omidvarâm khanândegan-e gerami vâ ândishmând ba enekas-e anha be injaneb mâra dâr behbud-e keifiy-e resale yari resanând. (P. ACK. Soc. No.7)

(At the end, it should be mentioned that the deficiencies and errors of the present study are due to my knowledge debilities and limitations. I hope that the opulent and intellectual readers assist me in qualitative improvement of the dissertation by recalling me of these deficiencies.)

12) Finally, I should confess that I am the only responsible for the weaknesses of this thesis. (E. ACK. Phil. No. 9)

The chi-square results revealed that the two groups exploit this step in statistically meaningful manner in the way that NSP used this step in more acknowledgment texts than NSE. It can be attributed to the "*Shekasteh- nafsi*" (i.e., modesty in English) in Iranian culture by which a person downgrades him/herself and raises the position of the relational partner. This self-lowering and the other-raising pattern, for instance "*my knowledge debilities and limitations*" in the above example, is the commonest strategy in Persian (Kariminia & Afghari, 2011, p. 33) to the extent that "*Shekasteh-nafsi*" is considered as a sign of politeness in Iran. This is in strong agreement with the work of Sharifian (2005) who introduced cultural schema of *"Shekaste-nafsi"* in his article on compliment speech act as a sign of politeness in Persian culture. He compared compliment responses in Anglo-Australian and Persian and concluded that Persian speakers largely practice the schema of *"Shekaste-nafsi"* (modesty) in their responses while Anglo-Australian speakers do not use a similar schema.

The significance of this schema could lie in its frequent employment in conversations, especially in compliment responses, as a sign of politeness to evade the compliment which is given in terms of a praise of the addressee's characteristics, possession, appearance or skills.

2. Dedicating the thesis

This step seeks to thank those who helped the writer beyond the research context (Hyland, 2003). This step occurred in 28.7 % of NSPs' acknowledgement texts and 26.2 % of NSE. The chi-square test, also, revealed no statistically meaningful difference between the two groups in exploiting this move. The following examples illustrate this step in Persian and English texts.

13) Âz pedâr vâ madâr-e âzizâm, bâradâr-e bozorgvarâm vâ hâmsâr vâ fârzândan-e mehrâbanâm ke hâmvareh ba mân budând tâshâkkor mikonâm vâ in payan nameh ra be anan tâghdim mikonâm. (P. ACK. Lit. No. 9)

(I thank my dear parents, my opulent brother and my generous wife and children who were always with me. I dedicate this dissertation to them.)

14) *I would dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Alexander W. Beckham, but after six years of struggling through graduate school with me. (E. ACK. Lib. No. 10)*

It is worth mentioning that the only difference in this panel was that majority of thanks in this step were given to parents in Persian acknowledgments. This high frequency, on the one hand, can be explained with reference to religious affiliations as the first thing that Allah (God) enjoins upon man is to show gratitude to Him and to one's parents as he says:

Show gratitude to Me and to thy parents: to Me is (thy final) goal. (Quran 31:14)

On the other hand, this can be justified referring to the concept of *"Ehteram"* in Persian culture which, as argued by Azarmi and Behnam (2012), is the most pivotal aspect in human relations among Iranians (p. 81). In fact, it is most readily replaced with other concepts suggesting politeness. Any polite behavior can be regarded as the cause for *"Ehteram"*. Since, in Persian culture a great emphasis is placed on Ehteram for *"bozorgtar"* (i.e. elderly), parents are so respected by their children. In Iran the elderly, most notably parents, are treated very respectfully and they are privileged by a high position among the family members. Table 4.3

illustrates the Cramer-test results of the generic structure of acknowledgment texts written by NSP and NSE.

By investigating both Persian and English acknowledgement texts, in terms of Hyland (2003) scheme a new step was detected. This step does not exist in Hyland (2003) scheme. This is called a step not a move, since this step is a part of thanking move. Here the writer acknowledges God, his creator. In all papers, it occurred in the initial position in thanking move. This step occurred in 80 % of Persian texts and 4 % of English texts. The more application of this new step by NSP can be referred to the fact that Islamic religion influences the Iranians' socio-cultural practices in one of the basic features. In such a deeply-rooted religious context which is believed religion to have the upper hand, gratitude, most notably expressed towards God, is given much importance and emphasis, and so it is a habit among most Muslims to thank God for his blessings and bounties. Since in the Islamic culture everyone is usually assumed to start work by the name of God and finish it by thanking God, so it is quite natural if such a step is to be found even in dissertation acknowledgements.

4. Conclusion

The aim of the current study, With reference to Hyland's pioneering study on English dissertation acknowledgements, was to make a tentative linguistic analysis including similarities and differences in the generic features or component moves of acknowledgment texts written by NSP and NSE. Generally, Persian and English students follow the Hyland's (2003) scheme and the differences in most cases were not statistically significant. This can be attributed to the fact that most students when writing this genre take note from graduate students' dissertations or even imitate their instances of this genre.

Despite the high degree of similarities, there were statistically meaningful difference between the two groups in employing the reflecting move and accepting responsibility step. These differences can be attributed to the socio-cultural as well as religious norms of the Iranian students as Muslim. For example, since in the Iranian culture everyone usually starts his/her work by the name of God and finishes it by thanking to God, so it is natural if such a step is to be found even in dissertation acknowledgements. Also, comparing Persian and English acknowledgment texts, it was observed that NSP lack reflecting move (move one) in most cases. It implies that Iranian students do not consider this move very important. It is because of assuming the writing of dissertations as their own duty. Also, ignoring the step one of move three (the accepting responsibility for any error or flaws) by the NSE can be attributed to the cultural issues of westerns countries in which accountability for what one does is not given great importance (Golpour Lasaky, 2011, p. 191).

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