

Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations (OCR) as Patterns to Instantiate Academic Conflict in Major Applied Linguistics Textbooks

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Following Giannoni's classification of the rhetorical strategies for overt (rather than covert) negative evaluation, the current study aimed to investigate lexico-grammatical structures to instantiate *Overall Conflictual Relations* and *Displacement* as two major rhetorical strategies to realize Academic Conflict in two distinct corpora of textbooks in applied linguistics specifically taught at MA and PhD levels. Adopting a Mixed-Methods Approach, the study revealed the various lexico-grammatical items that were frequently used to instantiate *Displacement* and *Overall Conflictual Relations*. Qualitatively, the emerging patterns and the functions they served were delineated. At the quantitative stage of the approach, the corresponding distributions of the emerging patterns were investigated and recorded. This corpus-based study also found that the two corpora utilized resources for expression of *Overall Conflictual Relations* with an almost similar distribution; however, there was a statistically significant difference between the MA versus PhD textbooks concerning the use of *Displacement*. The study found the important functions of the strategies as the ways to put two ideas in opposition to later take side with one at the expense of discarding the other. The study also found that the strategies were among the prominent incentives to construct knowledge in the field.

Keywords: academic conflict, overall conflictual relations, displacement, knowledge construction, appraisal theory

Evaluative language in general and academic conflict play a crucial role in academic writing; therefore, much interest has been attracted to the study of rhetorical strategies concerning its structures and functions in academic discourse (Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2011, p. 175). Hyland (2011) explicitly asserts that. 'all academic texts are designed to persuade readers of something' (p. 177); such as, 'knowledge

claims ... [as in] a research article or dissertation; of an evaluation of others' work in a book review, or of one's understanding...in an undergraduate essay', or put in a nutshell, academic texts are structured for persuasive effect. To fulfill such purposes, writers tend to 'draw on the same repertoire of linguistic resources for each genre again and again' (Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2011, p. 177) to 'anticipate and head off possible negative

reactions to their claims' (p. 174).

By the same token, academic criticism (AC) as a negative remark uttered by a writer towards an entity or towards another writer's stance (Salager-Meyer, Ariza, & Briceno, 2012, p. 233) has turned attention to identify both grammatical and functional/semantic units in academic discourse (Salager-Meyer, Ariza, & Briceno, p. 234). In academic writing, criticism is communicated through critical speech acts that signal inconsistencies or gap in earlier studies, as well as oppositions, contradictions, and denials.

Extensive research has been conducted to explore evaluation and academic criticism in spoken modes of academic discourse (Mauranen, 2002a), lectures (Mauranen, 2002b; Bamford, 2004; Swales, 2004), peer reviews (Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2004; Shaw, 2004), research articles (RA) (Hunston, 1993), discussion sections of RAs (Giannoni, 2005), book reviews (Giannoni, 2002; Babai, 2011), and conflict and argument in applied linguistics (Badger, 2004), to name just a few. Despite the frequent use of argumentation, case studies and narratives in the humanities (Hyland, 2011, p. 179) to acknowledge ideas of others (i.e., recognizing alternative voices), or to refute them and present better idea(s), little is known about the recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns or specific structures used in academic textbooks to present and argue ideas throughout the texts at the sentence level (be it a clause simplex or a clause complex). Little research has been dedicated to find out its usage and functions; that is, what linguistic elements embody academic criticism, and how these features are realized in academic textbooks.

Given the multiple functions that *Overall Conflictual Relations* (OCR hereafter) and *Displacement* can play in instantiating academic conflict in academic discourse, the present study set out to investigate the extent to which such textual characteristic were realized in applied linguistics (AL hereafter) textbooks as well as the ways to determine how such academic writing features might help shape writing in AL textbooks.

To this end, major textbooks of AL written by English native speakers and used at MA and PhD levels of AL courses in Iran were explored to identify the dominant recurrent lexico-grammatical structures to express and realize conflict in academic discourse, and to determine the functions they served.

Materials

Academic criticism (AC) as a socio-pragmatic phenomenon, is a rhetorical variable that has recently attracted the attention of sociologists of science, linguists, applied linguists, and academic discourse analysts (Hunston, 1993; Kourilova, 1996; Hyland,

2000; Salager-Meyer, 2001). Salager-Meyer, Ariza, and Briceno (2012) define academic criticism as a negative remark uttered by a writer towards the stance adopted by another writer or towards a given aspect of the entity with reference to a criterion of evaluation (p. 233).

'The textualization of agreement and disagreement [as] a key function of academic discourse' (Giannoni, 2005, p. 73) follows the principle of knowledge construction as a collaborative, cumulative process. Such collaboration, however, does not defy or exclude the agonistic dimension of science (Hunston, 1993; Badger, 2004), which is the result of 'intense competition for tenure and funding' (Giannoni, 2005, p. 71). Nor does it exclude 'confrontation between diverging or opposing knowledge claims, methodologies and theoretical frameworks' (Giannoni, 2005, p. 71). In other words, we can observe both confrontation and acknowledgement in academic discourse. The collaborative, competitive duality has been a feature of scientific discourse and academic life for centuries, at least since the Greeks, and although initially inimical, competitiveness, conflict and rivalry are forceful incentives to both individual discovery and collective criticism (Hyland, 1997, p. 27). The explicit confrontation is particularly noticeable in the wording of 'negative or positive evaluative speech acts that target competing claims or research results' (Giannoni, 2005, p. 72).

The socio-pragmatic phenomenon of academic criticism is examined by applied linguists, LSP practitioners, historians of science, philosophers, and sociologists from various perspectives. Research on AC has focused on both written prose and later on oral discourse. By the same token, conflict and negotiation in specialized texts (i.e., scientific /academic, political, legal, economic and business communication) written in the main European languages (i.e., English, French, German, Italian and Spanish) have also been scrutinized (Giannoni, 2002). The reason for so much enthusiasm in exploring the mechanism of AC in recent years is two-fold. On the one hand, it is a common tendency in a discourse community to disagree, oppose or criticize what is new. Considered from the obverse vantage point, new proposals, findings and lines of research attract opposition or criticism. On the other hand, it is in the nature of specialized discourse to negotiate and criticize propositions (Giannoni, 2002): that is, 'conflict and its negotiation are prominent features of specialized discourse' (Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2011, p. 175).

A great number of researchers have tackled the problem of attacking and criticizing others in research papers (e.g., Myers, 1989; Swales, 1990; Belcher, 1995; Swales & Feak, 1995; Schramm, 1996; Kourilova, 1994, 1996). They have also pointed out that challenging previously published research findings, as one of

the most important issues in academic discourse, abundantly uses epistemic modality and some other hedging strategies. Other researchers have recently explored academic criticism diachronically, cross-linguistically/cross-culturally or from a cross-disciplinary vantage point. For instance, Moreno & Suárez (2008) analyzed the frequency and linguistic formulation of positive and negative appraisals in English and Spanish literary book reviews. They found that the frequency of criticism is significantly higher in the English than in Spanish literary book reviews.

Academic criticism has also been studied diachronically and cross-culturally (e.g., Salager-Meyer, 2001; Salager-Meyer & Zambrano, 2001; Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2004; Salager-Meyer, Ariza, & Zambrano, 2003). For instance, the evolution of the ways to express criticism in Spanish, French and English in different periods lasting from the 19th to 20th century medical discourse was explored to find out how criticism was formulated and how its distribution compared. The findings revealed that in the 19th century, the three languages used personal and antagonistic ways to criticize other scientists' proposals. It was in the 1930s that the English researchers began shifting their direct aggressive manner and adopting impersonal, non-offensive, indirect hedgy ways to evaluate and criticize the proposals, or as Giannoni (2005) metaphorically states, to blame the sin rather than the sinner. However, during this period, both the French and Spanish clung to their traditions of personal and antagonistic fashion in AC. It was only after 1990s that Spanish, but still not French, scholars trained by English manuals adopted the more mitigated mode of the English.

In an early study of disagreement in academic discourse, Hunston (1993) examined the way in which propositions were evaluated, and how this evaluation was open to analysis. She focused on conflict in academic discourse and the linguistic strategies to persuade readers to accept the writer's claim above all opposition.

Hunston compared the conflict presentation in the academic research articles in biochemistry, sociolinguistics and history. They represented sciences, social sciences and humanities, respectively. The study examined conflict relevance, the presentation of knowledge claims, and conflict resolution in the three disciplines. She called the knowledge claim made by the writer under discussion as the Proposed Claim (PC) and that made by opposing writers as the Opposed Claim (OC). She then tried to explain why writers chose to report views which were in conflict with their own and found that the conflict provided a context within which gaps or inconsistency in existing research could be pointed out. This allowed writers to find a niche for their knowledge claims. Moreover,

the writer's linguistic choices evaluated the PC more positively than the OC. Such a strategy thus created a difference between the PC and the OC in favor of the former, as in the following: McGhee et al... *found a limiting ... and did not observe* (Opposed Claim). *Our experiments showed...* (Proposed Claim) (Hunston, 1993, p. 120).

The writer's PC was seen as relevant at the expense of the OC. Finally, she reported that knowledge is assumed as something that is mainly constructed by texts. The writer's knowledge claims stand in conflict with another researcher's knowledge claims, and the ideas of one group of researchers become accepted as part of the general knowledge.

In academic writing, criticism is communicated through critical speech acts (Salager-Meyer, 2001; Stotesbury, 2002) that signal faults or inconsistencies observed in earlier research in the field. AC, however, is not just confined to a gap in knowledge and is of two kinds: *targeted* and *diffuse*. In a targeted criticism, the fault is attributed to the author or a section of the scientific community, while in a diffuse criticism it is not (Giannoni, 2005, p. 78) as in the following examples:

Targeted criticism: 'These findings contradict the findings of Reid's (1987) study, which included...'

Diffuse criticism: 'It therefore casts doubt on the Aspect First Hypothesis to the extent it shows that...'
(Reid, 1987), where responsibility for the faults is not directly attributed to the members of the academic community and contrary to the targeted criticism, there are no explicit links to specific authors or publications.

Contrary to such a simple classification, there are pragmatically ambiguous cases where 'marking stance and being polemical or critical are not fundamentally very different' (Giannoni, 2005, pp. 73-74). In this connection Mauranen (2002a) contends that academic speaking seems to be 'less clear and explicit about conflictual discourse or direct disagreements than one might expect' (p. 1). Ambiguity arises from the fuzziness and context-dependency of criticism markers. Therefore, Mauranen (2002b) observes that evaluation is 'a slippery elusive notion' (p. 118),

In an attempt to investigate evaluation cross-linguistically, Giannoni (2005) analyzed the disagreement and contrasting claims in the discussion section in a corpus of English and Italian medical research articles. He focused on the structures used to express negative evaluation as the most prominent way of realizing *academic conflict* and found that overt criticism was prevalent in both languages; indirect criticism was more frequent in English than in Italian; the amount of negative evaluation was almost three times greater in English discussion sections (p. 91). He investigated, devised and tabulated the rhetorical

strategies and devices preferred for conveying disagreement and encoding criticism. The strategies made up a continuum ranging from more indirect covert to more explicit overt ones (see Appendix A).

The results of Giannoni's (2005) study demonstrated that written academic discussions deployed a considerable range of linguistic devices when expressing contrast and conflict with peers, 'from the most indirect, semantically opaque strategy to the most explicit and confrontational' (p. 92). The most frequent overt strategies were called *describing specific faults or failures* and *identifying points of conflict*, respectively.

One particular genre in which evaluation has been widely studied is that of the book review (BR), a discursive genre with three main functions based on the descriptive, informative and evaluative nature of BRs (Motta-Roth, 1998; Gea Valor, 2000; Carvalho, 2002). In this regard, Giannoni (2002) identified a number of rhetorical strategies associated with expressions of praise and criticism in English software reviews, and in the case of criticisms he found 'poignant negative evaluation [construed] by stigmatizing fault, [and] stressing incompleteness' (p. 344).

Babaii (2011) identified rhetorical strategies associated with criticism and negative comments in physics book reviews. She analyzed the negative criticism in 54 physics BRs published by three journals over a span of two years (1998-1999). Adopting the appraisal theory as her theoretical framework, she divided the BRs into Balanced (containing both positive and negative ACs) and Negative (dominantly containing negative ACs). Among many important points, she concluded that BRs in her corpus were replete with confrontational comments, which undermined the disinterested impersonal matter-of-fact mode of scientific discourse in physics (Babaii, 2011, p. 65) and that 'errors [were] the most important, non-negligible, and sometimes unpardonable, problems in books, as they denote[d] academic inadequacy and/or intellectual sloppiness' (Babaii, 2011, p. 66).

Given the lack of objective measures to identify the implicit strategies, and the inevitably fuzzy nature and overlapping behavior of the covert strategies devised by Giannoni (2005), in which the very sentence used to indicate a covert strategy can readily be interpreted as an overt strategy as well, and in order to avoid such mismatches, the present corpus-based study adopted only the overt strategies encoding criticism so as to help explore the recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns that realized conflict.

For instance, *offering interpretations* in the light of new evidence in the field (see Appendix A) is considered a strategy employed for indirect (covert) criticism. However, this is not a criticism at all and

contrary to what Giannoni (2005) claims, it is as a further contribution to ongoing research supporting a given idea.

Another reason for opting for overt rather than covert strategies is to consider the strategy called *logically implicit criticism*, which implies that there is something amiss in current knowledge and compares current and earlier results/approaches. However, this bears much resemblance to its overt counterpart called *displacing existing claim*, through which new claims as knowledge displace claims made by other scholars, as in the following examples: '*The sluggish rate of change ... is replaced by a more dynamic rate of ...*' (Giannoni, 2005, p. 84), which is considered a covert criticism, while '*Instead of the presumption of we might benefit from assuming that ...*' (p. 87), which is considered an overt one by Giannoni (2005). However, '*Instead of*' and '*is replaced by*' refer to a similar function and it is explicitly stated as an overt critical strategy which is called *displacing existing claim*, where one of the two opposing points is favored and prioritized putting the faulty, incomplete one aside.

Despite a large body of research conducted to investigate evaluative language and academic conflict for some sub-genres of academic discourse (e.g., medical RAs by Salager-Meyer, et al., 2003; book reviews by Giannoni, 2002; and discussion section of medical RAs by Giannoni, 2005), it is doubtful how academic conflict is realized in textbooks in applied linguistics. In other words, it is not clear what lexico-grammatical structures frequently realize Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations (OCR), what functions they serve, and how all this accounts for the realization of academic conflict in AL textbooks. Therefore, the lexico-grammatical elements or structures to realize academic conflict in applied linguistics textbooks are not known and are yet to be explored and researched.

Notwithstanding the textbook authors' tendency to opt either for an overt or a covert, diffuse or targeted strategy, direct or indirect AC, the current study explored the instances of academic conflict in terms of the recurrent lexico-grammatical structures that realized Displacement and OCR, and also their rhetorical functions. In other words, regardless of who or what was responsible for criticism (Salager-Meyer, et al., 2003) or who/what was criticized (Giannoni, 2005) through the ACs, the study focused on the lexico-grammatical structures that set two points in opposition and realized AC in two corpora of major applied linguistics in MA versus PhD textbooks. Therefore, Giannoni's (2005) rhetorical strategies for overt AC were principally used so as to explore lexico-grammatical structures that realized AC in the specified corpora. Therefore, this corpus-based study aimed to explore recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns of academic conflict with their corresponding

distribution, frequency and functionality in major applied linguistics textbooks.

Based on Giannoni's (2005) overt rhetorical strategies for negative evaluation, the current study meticulously analyzed the two corpora to explore the underlying lexico-grammatical structures of Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations that realized academic conflict and the functions of these structures in major AL textbooks. The selected textbooks, recommended by experts in the field, were all written by native speakers of English and were used most widely at the MA and PhD levels of AL courses in Iranian universities.

This corpus-based study, therefore, aimed to address the question of the lexico-grammatical items to indicate *displacement* and *overall conflictual relations* so as to realize Academic Conflict between (parts of) propositions in AL textbooks and the various functions served by deploying such patterns. To achieve this end, the following research questions stand out:

1. What are the recurrent lexico-grammatical structures to indicate *displacement* and *overall conflictual relations* in major applied linguistics textbooks at MA versus PhD levels of tertiary education?
2. What are the different functions served by these structures in major applied linguistics textbooks?
3. What are the corresponding distribution and frequencies of such recurrent lexico-grammatical elements, to realize conflict in the two corpora and how do they compare?

Although AC has been explored from different perspectives, Hyland (2000, p. 45) asserts that 'there is little work on how the expression of criticism may vary in particular genres and contexts. ... [and] our knowledge of how criticism is expressed is likewise very limited.' Moreover, it is necessary to examine the ways scientists verbalize their criticisms in the context of particular genres. Therefore, it is the main goal and purpose of the current corpus-based study to explore the lexico-grammatical structures that realize AC in major applied linguistics textbooks. These are the most prominent textbooks of applied linguistics written by native speakers of English, recommended by a number of informed Iranian professors, taught at the tertiary level of education, and scrutinized as the main source texts for the MA and PhD students majoring in TEFL in Iran.

Methods

This study was grounded in Giannoni's (2005) classification of rhetorical strategies for overt negative

evaluation. The research design for the current study was the Sequential Mixed-Methods approach, beginning with a qualitative analysis for exploratory purposes followed up with a quantitative analysis. Using the structure of sentence as the unit of analysis, the researchers explored the underlying lexico-grammatical structures for the instantiation of two of such rhetorical strategies called Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations in applied linguistics textbooks, their corresponding distribution and the functions potentially served by these structures. The unit of analysis in this study was a sentence, as demarcated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Eggins (2004).

A representative sample of textbooks in applied linguistics (AL) was selected. Textbook selection, in the present study, met the following criteria: A number of experts in the discipline were asked to recommend textbooks they considered as essential in AL, which had been established as major course textbooks at higher levels of tertiary education (i.e., at MA & PhD levels) in the discipline. The selection was motivated with the aim of building the materials representative of applied linguistics textbooks taught in Iranian universities at MA and PhD levels: decisions on the selection of each book were made by consulting 30 experts in the discipline.

To this aim, e-mails were sent to the university professors at different universities in Iran and they were asked to recommend the key (must-be-studied) textbooks for MA and PhD levels in the discipline. Different books were recommended by these experts, and their suggestions were compared and contrasted to arrive at a final decision on the selected materials for the analysis. Based on the most recent date of publication, the formality, the content, and the author of the books, for each level three major textbooks were selected as the material for analysis.

Accordingly, the recommended AL textbooks assigned for the MA level were represented by: *Understanding Language Teaching* (Kumaravadivelu, 2008, abbreviated as ULT); *Methodology in Language teaching: An Anthology of Current Practice* (Richards, & Renandya, 2002, coded as R & R); and *Task-based Language Learning and Teaching* (Ellis, 2004, coded as TBLLT). On the other hand, the recommended AL textbooks assigned for the PhD level were: *Input, Interaction, and Corrective Feedback* (Mackey, 2012, coded as ICF); *The Handbook of Language Teaching* (Long & Doughty, 2009, coded as L & D); and *The Study of Second Language Acquisition* (Ellis, 2008, coded as SLA). The study then developed a corpus for each level.

As the unit of analysis was *sentence* as demarcated by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) and Eggins (2004), the total number of sentences in each level of the two corpora was counted manually twice. The main

reason for a sentence as the unit of analysis was that rhetorical strategies occur both in dependent and independent clauses.

Instrumentation

The main concept of the quest for Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations (OCR), was based on Giannoni's (2005) classification of rhetorical strategies for overt negative evaluation that realized academic conflict. In this classification, *identifying points of conflict* or what we call *Overall Conflictual Relations* (OCR), is instantiated when the writer draws attention to tensions/inconsistencies between different entities/ideas/ propositions or studies and points to the *relation* between the two conflicting items as *contradiction*, *contrast*, and many other kinds. Since this clearly accounts for reporting the kind of relation between two ideas as in a conflict we call it *Overall Conflictual Relationship* abbreviated as OCR. Therefore, an overall conflictual relationship between the two items is reported and AC is thus realized by the two opposing parts, as in the following example where the structures that instantiate OCR and realize Academic Conflict in a given phase of the text are all **in bold**:

... one **criticism ... leveled against** them is they are based on an outmoded view of learning (SLA, p. 655).

The relation between the idea that criticizes and the one that is criticized is one of OCR.

Moreover, *displacing existing claims* is instantiated when an idea/proposition/entity displaces claims made by others in the light of new knowledge in the field or a better consideration of the factors involved. Academic Conflict is realized when the text presents an alternative rival idea to *eradicate* the earlier idea/proposition/entity and also to *displace* it by the newer better more advanced one, as in:

When the audiolingual method was introduced, it was hailed as scientific, systematic, and teacher friendly, and soon it **replaced** the 'discredited' grammar-translation method that held sway for a long time (ULT, p. 225).

Since a number of the sentences/propositions containing OCR or Displacement also contained negative evaluative items, part of the theoretical framework to conduct the current corpus-based study was based on 'appraisal theory' advocated by Martin and White (2005), specifically *appreciation* as a sub-category within attitudinal language. Appraisal theory, developed by Martin and White (2005) and located within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), divides evaluative resources into three broad semantic domains called attitude, graduation and engagement.

A system of meanings called attitude is a framework

for mapping feelings, values related to behaviors and non-human entities construed in texts. This system involves three semantic regions covering emotions, ethics and aesthetics. Attitude includes categories of *affect* (feelings and emotions), *judgment* (evaluation of human behavior) and *appreciation* (evaluation of things). In the following examples from the two corpora (MA vs. PhD), tokens in phrases or sentences are **in bold**:

Affect: Feelings of **uneasiness; angry; confused; bored and discouraged; dislike; frightened; dissatisfaction;**

Judgment: It is **unfair** [negative evaluation: judgment] to expect the CTP pedagogists to deliver something that ... (ULT, p. 155) Students will **not be able to** confront [incapacity, inability: judgment] learners' **inappropriate** response [negative evaluation: judgment]

Teachers **fail** to highlight [inability: judgment] **inexperienced** teachers [negative evaluation: judgment]

The **inability** to sequence tasks [incapacity: judgment] **failure** to verbalize (ICF, p. 108) [inability: judgment];

Recalcitrant participants (R & R, p. 231) [negative evaluation: judgment].

Appreciation:

As a model it is **too simplistic** [intensified negative appreciation of an entity] to

be the central planning factor for curricula today (R & R, p. 71)

The **contrived** [negative appreciation] language they contain has **little to do with** [downgraded, low quantity] reality (R & R, p. 80)

Artificial, unnatural [language of some teaching materials]

Counterproductive [negative appreciation]

The relationship between ... was **weak** [negative appreciation] and **insignificant** [low quantity].

Additionally, through *graduation*, force of utterances are raised or lowered, or the focus of their semantic categorizations are blurred or sharpened. *Engagement* is the act of positioning the speaker's/author's voice with propositions

Procedure

Adopting a Sequential Mixed-Methods approach, the current study investigated the various lexico-grammatical structures that expressed Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations, and realized Academic Conflict in the two corpora. As a response to the subjective reading problem faced by all text-based research, and in order to increase the reliability (Connor & Mauranen, 1999, p. 50) of the current study (i.e., to validate our own reading interpretation), inter-

rater and intra-rater procedures were implemented to ensure that instances of denial-correction pairings were identified with high degree of accuracy.

Additionally, given the possibility of variation in terms of the lexico-grammatical elements that expressed Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations across different sections of the textbooks, a pilot study was conducted, and the data were analyzed until the researcher could identify dominant patterns and functionality of the patterns in each and every section of the textbooks. To this end, one of the textbooks was randomly selected. To find out about the content of the book, the selected textbook was read several times.

The analysis for the pilot study was carried out until no more patterns or functions emerged and the researcher could identify no other new dominant markers, patterns or functionalities for the structures in the sample textbook. After finding the lexico-grammatical items that expressed Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations, and their functions in the sample and also delineating them in their categories, the whole process was conducted for the second time to render coding more reliable. In other words, the researcher re-analyzed the sample textbook within an interval of at least four weeks to control for intra-rater (coding) reliability.

Working independently, the second non-native rater who specializes in SLA research analyzed the textbook, double-checked the sample to determine coder reliability. This was conducted with the intention to help minimize the likelihood of endangering the reliability of the analyses and the findings, and then we agreed on the method of analysis. Therefore, to guarantee accuracy of analysis and ensure the inter-rater reliability of the analyses, the second non-native rater analyzed the selected textbook, and based on the concepts and theoretical underpinnings of Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations, extracted the patterns and recorded the corresponding frequencies. For this stage, the selection of the samples was purposeful rather than random.

After we were both through with the analyses, Pearson correlation was applied to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the analyses. The correlation coefficient obtained for the analysis of different features rendered 0.82, which is an acceptable index, assuring the reliability of the analyses. Minor discrepancies in the analyses were negotiated.

To control intra-rater reliability of analysis, the sample textbook was read several times and with an interval of four weeks the data were re-analyzed the second time and discrepancies on the method of analysis were recorded and resolved. The index of intra-rater reliability was 0.85. Therefore, after completion of the pilot study, the rest of the data was analyzed by the main researcher of the study.

Analysis of the selected textbooks began with reading the texts carefully several times to ensure the comprehension of the content. The sentences in the corpus were studied carefully, focusing on the propositional meaning, their stance in the context and content presenting ideas and constructing knowledge. All this was carried out to have a firm understanding of the text semantically and pragmatically, as well as checking the interconnection between sentences and ideas. In the quest for structures that realized OCR and Displacement, each sentence was meticulously focused on to explore the kind of lexico-grammatical structure that instantiated OCR and Displacement, the connection to the preceding and proceeding sections and sentences, as at times one element of the pairing was in a sentence, whereas the other element was in the following one. This was achieved through:

- (i) identifying the elements and structures construing Overall Conflictual Relations and Displacement;
- (ii) exploring the nature and functionality of the emerging patterns of OCR and Displacement.

In the first step, all lexico-grammatical items that instantiated Displacement and OCR were identified and extracted. In the second step, the texts were scrutinized to record the frequency of occurrence for each pattern. At this stage, both the emerging patterns and the corresponding frequencies were tabulated. In the third step, the frequency of each structure was recorded in the corresponding categories. The tables contained categories based on the structures realizing Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations and their corresponding frequencies. The data were analyzed until we reached a stage in which the patterns were fixed and data saturation was achieved: that is, no new structures emerged and no other differences could be identified in how these patterns were realized.

The number of sentences and pages analyzed in the current study are shown in Tables 1 and 2 below. The prefaces, notes, exercises, and glossaries were excluded when counting the two corpora. The MA corpus included 573 pages while the PhD corpus comprised 634 pages.

Table 1
The total number of sentences and pages (MA vs. PhD)

<i>The levels of textbooks</i>	<i>Number of sentences</i>	<i>Number of pages</i>
MA	18,367	889
PhD	28,093	1612

Moreover, the analysis of the MA corpus in the present investigation covered 12,122 sentences, whereas for the PhD corpus 11,556 were analyzed. As the sentence was the unit of analysis, they were

Table 2
The number of sentences analyzed in each corpus

<i>The levels of textbooks</i>	<i>Number of sentences</i>	<i>Number of pages</i>
MA	12,122	573
PhD	11,556	634

counted manually twice to ensure the distinctions made for sentence boundaries.

In the fourth step, to identify textbook writers' preferences for encoding resources of Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations, the distribution and the total frequency of each structure were compared to detect the possible differences among the two corpora (i.e., MA versus PhD) and to see whether or not the differences were significant. At this stage, Chi squares were administered to detect the possible differences in the use or frequency of the patterns in MA versus PhD textbooks.

In order to find out the similarities and differences in the two corpora in terms of the frequency of occurrence for the patterns, one-way *Chi-square* (X^2) was computed for each pattern. As a one-way X^2 with only one degree of freedom was involved in the analysis, an adjustment known as *Yates correction for continuity* was employed. Therefore, the estimate for the recurrent patterns was corrected by applying *Yates correction factor* so that they could fit the X^2 distribution (Hatch & Farhady, 2007, p. 171).

Owing to the fact that the number of pages and also the number of sentences comprising each of the corpora was totally different, it was evident that the number of occurrences for the patterns in each corpus had to be different. Therefore, to compare the distribution of the occurrences of structures that instantiated Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations in the two corpora, it was statistically necessary to have equal numbers of sentences for each of the two corpora (MA vs. PhD). To this end, the frequencies were normalized for 5000 sentences.

Results And Discussion

The current study was conducted to explore the various patterns of denial-correction pairing in major applied linguistics textbooks written by native speakers of English and studied by students of TEFL at MA and PhD levels in Iran. The patterns emerging from the corpus are shown in Table 3 after normalizing the data. In order to find the similarities and differences in the two corpora in terms of the frequency of the patterns, one-way *Chi-square* was computed for each pattern.

The results of the analyses are presented, described and discussed in detail in the following section. The

first section of the results and discussion is dedicated to Overall Conflictual Relations. This is followed by the second section which accounts for the findings related to Displacement. At the qualitative phase, the two corpora were analyzed and the following lexico-grammatical items that instantiated OCR and Displacement were found.

Identifying Points of Conflict (OCR)

We draw attention to tensions/inconsistencies between different entities/ideas/ propositions or studies and point to the *relation* between the two conflicting items as *contradiction*, *contrast*, and many other kinds. Therefore, an overall conflictual relationship between the two items is reported and AC is thus realized by the two opposing parts:

... one **criticism** ... leveled **against** them is they are based on an outmoded view of learning (SLA, p. 655).

The relation between the idea that criticizes and the one that is criticized is one of OCR. The OCR finds fault with it and declares that it is based on a shaky basis; therefore, it is so unreliable that researchers try to think of better alternatives. Here, the OCR is based on a negative appreciation instantiated by *outmoded*.

In the example, '[r]ejects the rigidities associated with the concept of method ... (ULT, p. 193)', the OCR shows the conflicting relation between *the concept of method* and the entity/proposition/scholar that *rejects* it. In the example from the PhD corpora below, there are at least three lexico-grammatical structures at work to indicate the conflict between the earlier and later stages in coming to understand speaking as a specific language skill. The OCR establishes the contrast between the earlier and the last period. The pairing rejects viewing it as a *target* and provides the correction to it in viewing it as a *medium*. This stands in contrast, as seen in the example that follows, to the improvement in the *last period* as development-based conflict, which focuses on *the nature of the construct*:

In all these various 'communicative' developments, speech tends to be viewed as **medium rather than as target** skill to be fostered. **In contrast, this last period** has begun to see the testing of speaking concentrate more precisely on the **nature** of the construct, and on operationalizing its assessment (L & D, p. 412).

In the following example from the MA corpora, there are two instances of OCR, one of which rejects the other: One is the earlier *criticism against the strategy*, and the other concerns the *dismissal* of the criticism: '[d]ismiss the **criticisms leveled against** the analytic strategy' (ULT, p. 190).

The results of the quantitative analysis of the distribution of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicate OCR and the related discussion are presented below.

Table 3

The comparison of the two corpora in their use of the structures indicating overall conflictual relations (Normalized for 5000 sentences)

Textbook Level	O	E	(Fo-Fe-0.5) Yates Correction	(Fo-Fe-0.5) ²	(Fo-Fe-0.5) ² / E	Chi-square observed
MA	397	414	-17.5	306	0.74	1.40
PhD	431	414	16.5	272	0.66	

Note. $P < .05$, $d.f.=1$; O = observed; E = Expected; Chi-square critical value = 3.84; $\chi^2 = \sum (Fo-Fe-0.5)^2 / E$ = Chi-square observed.

Overall Conflictual Relations

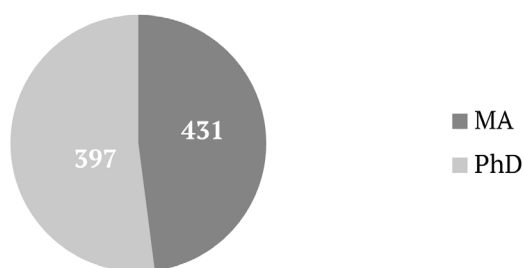


Figure 1. The diagrammatic comparison of the frequency of the use of the OCR in the two corpora.

As shown in Table 3, the lexico-grammatical structures that the present study defines as the Overall Conflictual Relation form a pattern frequently used in the two corpora. This can indicate the importance of the pattern to express different kinds of conflict inherent in the field. The structures can express differences, contrasts, criticisms, disagreements, discrepancies, rejections and many other resources of conflict extracted from the corpus some of which are presented in the following sections.

Although the observed frequency of the use of the pattern in the PhD corpus was apparently

more than that of the MA corpus, the Chi-square obtained (1.40) was not higher than the critical value (3.84). In other words, the comparison of the two corpora yielded a Chi-Square that was far less than the critical value with one degree of freedom ($df = 1$, $p < 0.05$), and the difference between the two corpora was not statistically significant. Therefore, there was no significant difference between the MA and the PhD textbooks in terms of the frequency of the use of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicated OCR and thereby realized AC. In other words, the two corpora frequently made use of the OCR structures to establish a conflictual relation between entities, (parts of) ideas, schools of thoughts, methodologies, scholars and their propositions, and thereby to realize AC in the discipline.

As revealed by the current study, OCR can usually be a nominal, an adjective, an adjunct, an adverb of manner, or a process (verb) that conveys the relation between A and B as a conflict. There is a tension or disagreement between (the features of) A as opposed to (those of) B. The OCR can be instantiated and conveyed by words such as *barrier*, *critical*, *conversely*, and *to challenge*, to name just a few.

In the following examples from the MA corpus, the structures that instantiate OCR and realize Academic Conflict in a given phase of the text are all in bold:

He **comes down heavily on** teacher educators (ULT, p. 220).

The AC is realized here between the scholar who severely criticizes (*comes down heavily on*) the teacher educators.

Bialystok's model is **substantially different** from Krashen's (e.g., 1981) Monitor Model (ULT, p. 191):

Here, the graduation (*substantially*) upgrades the adjective (*different*) and the intensified difference stands for the conflictual relation between the two models. In the following examples, the items that express OCR and realize conflict are in bold:

[T]he ideological and pedagogical barriers **cause impediments** for progress in post-method pedagogy. (ULT, p. 220) ... assume 'a **critical stance towards** 'mainstream' TESOL activity (ULT, p. 222) ... the **conflict** between central control and local initiative (ULT, p. 223);

[S]urvey, with a **critical** eye (ULT, p. 224) ... to develop **serious doubts** about its efficacy; **resistance** to change (ULT, p. 225) ... the ideological **barrier** with which any Post-method pedagogy has to **wrestle** (ULT, p. 218) current practices of teacher education **pose** a serious pedagogic **barrier** to any type of post-method pedagogy. (ULT, p. 217);

[C]hallenges facing the construction and implementation of post-method Pedagogy (ULT, p. 216);

The negative appreciation expressed by *barrier* is intensified and the phrase (i.e., powerful **barriers**); *standing as a harmful hurdle* that *blocks* the way are at the service of construing OCR between the earlier

features of the concept of method and the post-method pedagogy;

The pedagogical **barrier** relates to the content and character of L2 teacher education. It **stands** as a **harmful hurdle blocking** the effective construction and implementation of any post-method pedagogy by practicing teachers. (ULT, p. 216).

However, AC has its own unique usefulness, a blueprint of change for the better: We have barriers, we should think of the way(s) to remove them, we propose favorable alternative solutions, and if we are fortunate enough, we can devise a balanced approach to overcome the predicaments. Of course, at times we are not equipped with the best solution or the conclusive idea, and further exploration is certainly needed to 'explore alternatives to method' (ULT, p. 214). Getting more and more disillusioned or dissatisfied with the constraining concepts, the conflicting findings highlight the need for more research and the identification of conflicts can act as an incentive to the development of more useful models, 'to transcend the limitations of the concept of method' (ULT, p. 213).

Moreover, to know what the major flaw, weakness, or problem is in itself a movement towards improvement, as this casts light on what to avoid and what to focus on: A balanced approach would

also seek to establish a dialogue, 'between the barriers that inhibit change and the factors that help overcome those barriers' (ULT, p. 215).

In what follows a number of lexical items from the two corpora that instantiated OCR and realized AC between two conflictual parts are presented. The list is by no means exhaustive; rather it tries to exemplify and illuminate the concept conveyed by OCR:

a) *run against; run counter to; call into question; to question; be repeatedly questioned; doubt; go/move/act/look beyond; tension; conflict; critique of; criticize; criticism; contradict(ion); wrestle with; contra argument; counter-evidence; severe/fundamental criticism; negative reaction to; objections to; move away from; by negation of; disagreement; contentious; downplay; raise a negative view; arguments against; counter-argue; be at odds with; vary; alter; alternative(ly); contentious; disagreements; differ from; counter; militate/mitigate against; dispel; differences; differentiate; distinction; discrepancies; problematic; difficulty; controversy; controversial; opposing view; as opposed to; argue against; conversely; constraints; compare; by contrast; contrast; have contrastive value; debate; challenges; hamper; hinder; stand in the way of; withhold; push; force; pose; induce; prevent from; prohibit; avoid sth (un) favorable; filter out; reject; revise; refine; Conversely (as an adjunct);*

b) *re+process: restructure; redefine; reshape; redirect;; rewrite; reinterpret; reformulate; reconsideration;*

reframe; reconceptualize; reconstruct;

The lexico-grammatical patterns that indicate an OCR and realize AC, are also used in the following example:

... the **barriers** that **inhibit change** and the factors that help **overcome** those barriers (ULT, p. 215).

Here, there is an OCR between *barriers* and *factors* instantiated in *overcome*, and the relative clauses describing the characteristic features of *barriers* and *factors*.

The items that indicate OCR can be nouns, adjuncts, epithets, attributes, processes, or circumstances of manner as in these examples from the two corpora: define it *differently* (circumstance of manner), *criticism* (nominalized), *Conversely* (adjunct), a *conflicting* result (epithet), *disagree* (process) and the results are *contradictory* (attribute). Moreover, the lexico-grammatical items that realize OCR can also be graduated (e.g., intensified) or even infused with intensification whenever needed in the specific context, as in *fundamental differences between*, where attitudinal meaning is also intensified as being the most important instantiated by *fundamental*. Other examples include:

- **taking a critical** pedagogic **stance** and moving toward **transforming** the educational system (ULT, p. 197);
- **rejects** the rigidities associated with the concept of method (ULT, p. 193);
- as **opposite** ends of a continuum (ULT, p. 192) ... **contrastive** terms (ULT, p. 191).

The items that follow indicate OCR can be as different phrases and expressions that convey a conflict between two parts. Again, the list is by no means conclusive. Rather, it attempts to exemplify and illuminate the concept conveyed by OCR:

make a clear and consequential break with; deconstruct the existing concept of method; the anti-method sentiments; contrary to common misconception; competing pulls and pressures; to question the status quo that keeps them subjugated; offered resistance to; rejects the very idea method-based pedagogies are founded upon; compels us to fundamentally restructure our view of; inhibit the development of a valuable ...; a clear repudiation of established methods; competing, and mutually incompatible, theories of language learning; fundamentally different from...; teachers are at variance with the conceptual considerations; meaning-based input modifications to the exclusion of explicit form-based; take a critical look at; dismissed the L1 pragmatic knowledge; fundamental differences between; expressed surprise at; differed from each other in terms of; the bone of contention; two competing hypotheses; prioritize the cognitive over the social; resulting in conflicting findings; poses a severe challenge to; uphold a persistent

argument by; took exception to these views; consistently rejected the dichotomy between; other formulations of language competence have been proposed; cross the borders of the classroom to investigate broader social, cultural, political, and historical structures; oppositional practices; negative observation effects; take a critical perspective on; raise questions about; debates about; controversy; rejection of; dismissal of; disagreement; here the results are somewhat conflicting; the polar opposites of; make the opposite prediction; raise a serious problem; reverse the sequence; everlasting controversy; This is in contrast to another study; reject the former in favor of the latter; provide evidence against; make a convincing case against;

The example of, 'The Death of Method' (ULT, p. 168), as a separate title introduces what is stated against method in the coming text; to liken the method to a living organism which is declared as dead, which is entombed and at its funeral. Phrases such as 'lay to rest' and to write a 'requiem' ... for 'recently interred methods' (ULT, p. 168) all give a negative evaluation to the concept of method. This is undoubtedly a clear instance of OCR in action. This is the point from which the concept of POST-method germinates. Therefore, Academic Conflict is (at least) one of the major influencing forces that compels and enables the academic discourse community to go beyond weaknesses and think of better alternatives.

Another example of OCR is realized in, '[a] widespread **dissatisfaction** with a version of language-centered pedagogy' (ULT, p. 135), based on the negative affect conveyed in the lexical item. In '[o]ne **criticism** ... leveled **against** them is they are based on an outmoded view of learning' (SLA, p. 655), the relation between the idea that criticizes and the one that is criticized is one of OCR. The OCR finds fault with it and declares that it is based on a shaky foundation; therefore, it is so unreliable that researchers try to think of better alternatives. As the text moves along, it reveals this fact as, 'there have, in fact, been a number of attempts to develop alternative language aptitude test' (SLA, p. 655). The dissatisfaction, the negative evaluation, the criticism, and generally the OCR together culminate in pushing the academic community to think of better ways that, on the one hand, do not have the previous shortcomings and, on the other hand, provide the field with better solutions to the problems. The same pattern holds true in the following example: '[t]hey found that Reid's questions did not show a good fit with the constructs ... and therefore explored an alternative learning style model ...' (SLA, pp. 668-669), where support for the idea proposed by Reid is denied and it is declared as no longer reliable or useful; therefore, the other phase of the text (to use Hood's terminology, 2010) that follows this contains AC in the

form of OCR realized by *contradiction*, which makes Reid's proposal even more unreliable: '[t]he findings of this study, therefore, contradict the findings of Reid's study' (SLA, p. 669).

It should be noted that what follows a negative evaluation to introduce an alternative view with an OCR is not necessarily the best solution to the existing problem. That is, as the text moves forward we come to realize that Reid's idea had been wrong and there had been a host of research conducted to present a solution; nevertheless, 'no useful generalizations can be based on the research undertaken to date' (SLA, p. 669), which in turn indicates a gap yet to be explored. In the following example, graduation instantiated by *less* has a contextually negative evaluation for the amount of the support, which gives a negative coloring to the given hypothesis. Therefore, the AC is realized for an idea that has no new supporters: 'The second hypothesis has received **less** support' (SLA, p. 675). In [o], the act of *attacking* is a clear instance of OCR conducted by the members of the discourse community. Or consider the following example from the PhD corpus:

A **high** level of motivation **does** stimulate learning, and perceived success in achieving L2 goals can help to maintain existing motivation and **even** create new types. **Conversely**, a **vicious** circle of **low** motivation – **low** achievement – **lower** motivation can develop especially if learners attribute their **failure** to factors they feel **powerless** to alter (SLA, p. 686).

In this example, there are two propositions that stand in opposition to each other. The first one is explicitly asserted with emphasis (*does stimulate*), and the favorable state can be even beyond what is normally expected (can *even create new types*). The conjunct acts as an item to instantiate the conflictual relation between the two propositions, where the negative appreciation expressed by *a vicious circle* gives a negative value to the second proposition, which is now conceived of as an unfavorable state for the motivation-learning cycle. The conflicting amount of graduation expressed in *high* vs. *low* amount of motivation saturates the OCR between the two propositions. This is intensified when the negative outcome is presented as inability with negative judgment instantiated by *failure* and being *powerless to alter* the factors that impede learning. Here, the OCR specifically expressed by the word *conversely* sets the two propositions in opposition to each other and the negative evaluation as appreciation, judgment and low amount as graduation give a prosodically negative coloring to the second proposition. Therefore, the second idea is considered an unfavorable state relative to a better alternative expressed in the first one.

If two groups of scholars working on the same

subject have an instance where the relationship between their propositions is one of conflict, it does not necessarily imply that the Overall Conflictual Relation indicates a total disagreement; rather, the two ideas can have agreement on one feature but differ or even disagree on another feature of the same subject. In the following example from the PhD corpus, the two groups share the same idea concerning one aspect of the subject but disagree on another and the OCR focuses on the disagreement: '[C]sizer and Dornyei (2005) located integrativeness as the core variable influencing effort and language choice. 'Integrativeness subsumed attitudes towards L2 speakers', **but, contrary to** Gardner's claims (1985), it was also found to subsume instrumentality' (SLA, p. 689).

'Integrativeness subsumed attitudes towards L2 speakers' is the finding that is shared by the two groups, yet the additional finding is the part on which the disagreement resides.

In the following example from the PhD corpus, two instances of Direct AC are presented where the scholars who have opposing ideas are reported to metaphorically attack each other, though such direct ACs are scarce and not frequent enough to be statistically significant:

Sparks, Ganschow, and Javorsky **dismissed** the research carried out by Horwitz and her associates as 'misguided'. ... Horwitz has **reacted** strongly this dismissal of her work, ...' (SLA, p. 695).

Here, it is the scholars rather than entities that express the disagreement, where one *dismisses* and the other *strongly reacts to the dismissal*. Moreover, a negative appreciation is attributed to the idea as (*misguided*); the other process (*has reacted*) conveys the OCR and is reinforced by a circumstance of manner (*strongly*) and thereby AC is realized. Additionally, in the following example, two groups of people are reported to have opposing ideas and AC is thus realized by the OCR and the dichotomy with conflicting agnates (ends) (i.e., *hinder* vs. *facilitate*): [r]esearchers like Newport argue that ..., **hindering** the learning. Ludden and Gupta propose the **opposite**; ... **facilitate** second language learning' (ICF, p. 94).

Noteworthy is the point that OCR alone is not necessarily indicative of the sole resource of realizing AC. That is, the two corpora are replete with propositions where OCR is combined with counter-expectation, graduation (as intensification, quantity or amount), overall objection or indications of flaws and weaknesses. In this connection, the following example expresses that contrary to what is expected, there is no conclusive answer to the subject in question and there are still scholars who have opposing views as well: **However, arguments** continue as to how to define

learning strategies. Macaro (2006) ... defined learning strategies as **cognitive** and **rejected** the view that they can be considered in terms of **overt behavior** (SLA, p. 705).

The dichotomy contains two opposing concepts; that is, the externally observable *overt behavior* and the internally non-observable *cognitive* processes and since Macaro establishes the definition on cognitive processes, it is inevitably in conflict with externally observable overt behavior; therefore, AC is realized and the other proposition contrary to this is *rejected*. And this is also the case in the following example where it is indicated that there is still no proper solution: 'Looking at all of these **differing** opinions and hypotheses, therefore, it is obvious that the question of age in relation to SLA is far from resolved' (ICF, p. 81). This way, the proposition that is saturated with negative evaluation stands in opposition to another proposition which is taken as the criterion against which evaluation is carried out. This finding is in consonance with Hunston (1993). For instance: **Problems** [flaw] exist regarding the **construct validity** [general objection] of these taxonomies; ... Robson and Midorikawa **challenged** [OCR] the **reliability** [general objection] of the SILL in a study that showed ... ; ... quantifying the use of different strategies **runs contrary to** [OCR] learning strategy theory.... There are **a number of** [graduation: quantity] other **problems** [flaw] (SLA, p. 706).

Course design is concerned with ... the what of teaching. As such, it **contrasts with methodology**, which addresses the how of teaching ...' (TBLLT, p. 205):

Here, the dichotomy between *course design* and *methodology* is based on their contrastive features that define each of them. That is, the two terms are defined based on the conflicting features and what is true of design is not applicable to methodology and vice versa. It is the contrast that enables the writer to even define one entity based on the opposite of the other entity. Of crucial importance is the fact that, the relation is not necessarily an antonymy, rather it is the discipline that determines what stands in conflict, contrast or opposition to a given entity or idea in the text.

The two corpora are replete with such dichotomies the two parts of which are in a contrastive, conflictual relation with each other. For instance, the other agnate of a dichotomy that involves language-centered pedagogy is not a non-linguistic pedagogy, rather its counterpart is learning-centered pedagogy. Or as yet another example, the counterpart of a *linguistic* syllabus is not a non-linguistic; rather it is a *functional* or a *task-based* one:

Such a system of classifying tasks has the obvious advantage of **However**, such a classification **runs**

against the primary rationale for tasks, namely that they provide opportunities for **holistic** and experiential learning. ... the **danger** is that the tasks will **lose** their taskness, i.e., will become more like **exercises** focusing on **discrete** aspects of language (TBLLT, p. 211).

Although it has its advantage, it suffers from being contrary to the essence of a task. A dichotomy is created, each member of which has its own specific characteristic; that is, a task is *holistic* but an exercise is *discrete*; a task is favorable but an exercise is not, as an exercise is not the objective of the activity and also it is not favored at this phase of the text; therefore, it is taken as the final objective to be achieved and a criterion against which the other counterpart is weighed and thus evaluated. Thus, implementing a task this way is negatively evaluated in the word *danger* as an extremely negative appreciation of the entity which is additionally a threat to our security. The result is also a negative affect, that will lead into a flaw that is not supposed to happen but it will (*lose*) if it is implemented. To sum up, in this part of the text the writer utilized the following strategies and structures to realize AC and reject an entity and its accompanying idea and, on the other hand, to give credit to an opposite counter-part and to take side with it: counter expectation; OCR; conflict based on a dichotomy; negative appreciation; negative affect; and an assumption of flaw. Under such a specific condition, who is to take side with an idea that is considered a *danger*, one that leads into fundamental flaws, or one that downgrades the activity to the level of an *exercise*, which is contextually unfavorable?

Additionally, the OCR can at times be contractive rather than expansive as in: '[t]he power of internal processing factors ... make it **impossible** to determine externally what learners should acquire' (TBLLT, p. 231), where the negative modulation is so strong that it logically leaves no room for alternative points of view, thus making the proposition dialogistically contractive. This goes parallel with the Bakhtinian vantage point (1981) and Halliday's conception of Modulation (2004) and also engagement as a system within the appraisal (Martin & White, 2005).

OCR as a lexico-grammatical pattern that was recurrently used in the two corpora and realized AC is an incentive for members of the academic discourse and writers to move beyond what is considered contrary to establish standards and to think of better propositions. This is also evident in the history of development in one field within the discipline as follows:

The **move away from grammatically** based syllabuses in the 1960s led to a variety of syllabus proposals, ... all of which claim to be examples of a **communicative** syllabus (R & R, p. 65).

Here, there is a *development-based conflict* (Majidzadeh, 2017) built on the unfavorable earlier grammatical syllabuses and the relatively recent favorable communicative one; an OCR between *grammatical* where the academic discourse community has tried to move away, detach and take a safe distance, and the *communicative*, to which the community has tried to achieve and reduce the distance; and the repudiation of *grammatical* as opposed to the praise of *communicative* as the final objective. All this is only part of the strategies used by the writer to win the reader over and to persuade the audience to take side with the communicative syllabuses, as well as constructing pieces of knowledge in the field.

In, 'This is **contrary to** claims made by Foster and also arguments made by Nicholas, Lightbown, and Spada' (ICF, p. 43), a proposition has a conflictual relation with what some other scholars have stated and it is instantiated by *is contrary to* (in bold). Therefore, AC is realized between the ideas expressed by them. A note in passing is that it is the specific context that determines which party has expressed the correct proposition (if there is a conclusive remark).

Additionally, OCR can be at the service of expressing the relation between the two parts of a **dichotomy** (Majidzadeh, 2017). In the following example, two parts of the dichotomy are contrasted and opposite to each other as the OCR is instantiated by *as opposed to*: 'during the unfamiliar **as opposed to** familiar tasks' (ICF, p. 45).

In a series of criticisms leveled against what is claimed in the previous phase of the text, the following items refer to the OCR and keep on arguing against the previous claim and thus AC is again realized: 'Another **point of contention** concerns ...' (ICF, p. 48); 'another **argument** in the literature **against** the generalizability of laboratory studies to the classroom concerns learners' ...' (ICF, p. 51) or it can even be up/down-graded by quantification of the amount of OCR as in '**considerable** controversy' (ICF, p. 79) or 'the **little** discrepancy'.

Additionally, OCR functions as a separating strategy that sets the two points in conflict and makes a disparity between them, as in:

TBLT [as a new entity] can be **distinguished** [item realizing OCR] from ... more traditional forms [all others prior to TBLT] of instruction, in that ... (ICF, p. 57).

In response to Krashen's claim ... Gass proposed the concept of *apperception*, which **differs from** perception ... and [she] **distinguished between** [Krashen's] *comprehensible input* and [her own] *comprehended input* (ICF, p. 131, italics in the original).

Here, Gass's response to Krashen's claim is in conflict rather than consonance. The relation between *perception* and *apperception* is one of difference rather

than similarity. And finally, what Gass proposes as *comprehensible input* is distinct and thereby different from Krashen's *comprehended input*. *All this is realized by employing* lexico-grammatical items such as, 'in response to', 'differs from', and 'distinguished between', that clearly disclose the relation between (parts of) ideas uttered in this phase of the text.

Here, there are three cases of OCR, one between the scholars, and two between the different parts of the dichotomy which is established between *apperception vs. perception*, and *comprehensible vs. comprehended*. Nowhere else except in the specific field in the discipline of applied linguistics can such a dichotomy exist. That is, if we semantically think of the opposite of *comprehensible* in an antonymy relation, we would mistakenly offer *incomprehensible* as the other end for the dichotomy. However, this is not the case, as the agnates or the two ending parts of the dichotomy are just devised or coined by specialists in the field and the specific context of use. Therefore, the inherent conflict in the dichotomy comes from the specific context and what the members of the academic discourse community share and agree upon to be as established knowledge. Here, the counterpart is *comprehended* as opposed to *comprehensible*, rather than any other lexical item that may come to mind as an antonym.

As an important finding in the study, OCR is in consonance with one of Gianoni's (2005) overt strategies that identified points of conflict and negatively evaluated the ideas. However, the lexico-grammatical structures that instantiated OCR and realized AC were found to be both frequent and varied.

By the same token, with regard to the lexico-grammatical items used to draw attention to tensions/inconsistencies that realized OCR, the current study found that no statistically significant difference could be shown between the two corpora in terms of the frequency of the use of these resources although the apparent frequency of the use of the items to instantiate OCR in the PhD corpus was slightly higher than the MA corpus. As a result, the two corpora took up the recurrent items that instantiated OCR with almost similar distribution. To oppose (parts of) propositions/ideas in the discipline, the writers used the lexico-grammatical elements that would readily bring forth the opposing and the opposed idea. They would indicate the relation between the two and also express the type of stance they adopted concerning the idea opposed: that is, the writers would deploy specific lexico-grammatical elements to express the two opposing ideas and simultaneously settle the overall relation between the opposing idea and the one opposed. In his way they realized Academic Conflict between two ideas/propositions in a given field in the discipline.

Displacing Existing Claims

In the light of new knowledge in the field or a better consideration of the factors involved, an idea/proposition/entity displaces claims made by others. Academic Conflict is realized when the text presents an alternative rival idea to *eradicate* the earlier idea/proposition/entity and also to *displace* it by the newer, better, more advanced one. This strategy uses lexico-grammatical items such as *replace* and *instead of* to instantiate the displacement of an idea by the one that is in conflict with it. The degree of improvement and the truth of the idea absolutely depend on the specific context and the field in the discipline. That is, the replacement is a discipline-specific and an evidence-based principled proposition, and not a word-play:

When the audiolingual method was introduced, it was hailed as scientific, systematic, and teacher friendly, and soon it **replaced** the 'discredited' grammar-translation method that held sway for a long time (ULT, p. 225).

The replacement is supported by a negative appreciation as *discredited*. That is, when an idea is *discredited* it has to be *replaced* someday in the history of knowledge construction.

In the following example, the two viewpoints are contrasted and the *internal* nature of language is replaced by its *social* functioning. The dichotomous counter-relation between *internal/individual* and *social* gives a conflictual coloring to the ideas proposed by the two great figures in the field, and AC is thus realized: **Instead of** viewing language as something exclusively internal to the learner, as Chomsky does, Halliday views it as a means of functioning in society (ULT, p. 8).

In what follows, the results of the quantitative analysis for the distribution of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicate *displacing existing claims* and the related discussion are presented.

As evinced by Table 4, the observed frequency of the use of the structures for indicating *displacing existing claims* in the MA corpus was more than that of the PhD counterpart and the Chi-square obtained (4.93) was more than the critical value (3.84) with one degree of freedom ($df = 1, p < 0.05$); therefore, there was a statistically significant difference between the two corpora in terms of the frequency of the use of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicated displacing existing claims in different areas in the discipline. In other words, MA textbooks tended to use displacing existing claims more frequently than those in the PhD, to show that there are stronger or better propositions that can replace the existing claims.

Earlier and current results or approaches are compared more antagonistically, bringing competition to an extreme degree. Therefore, new knowledge

Table 2

The comparison of the two corpora in their use of the structures indicating displacing existing claims (Normalized for 5000 Sentences)

Textbook Level	O	E	(Fo-Fe-0.5) Yates Correction	(Fo-Fe-0.5) ²	(Fo-Fe-0.5) ² / E	Chi-square observed
MA	55	45	9.5	90.25	2.00	4.93
PhD	34	45	-11.5	132.25	2.93	

Note. P< .05 d.f.=1; O = observed; E = Expected; Chi-square critical value =3.84; $\chi^2 = \sum (Fo-Fe-0.5)^2 / E$ = Chi-square observed.

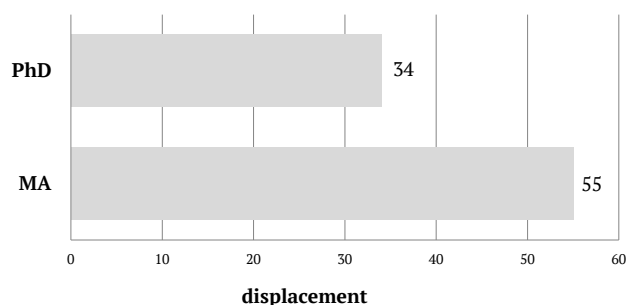


Figure 2. The diagrammatic comparison of the frequency of the use of the structures indicating displacing existing claims in the two corpora (Normalized for 5000 sentences).

displaces claims made by others. Alternative claims are often hedged and signaled by items encoding positive evaluation: *we might benefit from* / or by adversative adverbials such as *Instead*:

Tanaka (2004), in a longitudinal study of Japanese students learning English in New Zealand ... showed that learners **change** their beliefs markedly over time (SLA, p. 701).

The change from an earlier state to another yet contrastive one is even intensified (*markedly*) and the two stand in a conflictual relation to each other. However, it is the context that determines such a *change* is favorable or detrimental (in this case, it shows success as opposed to the earlier failure).

The replacement can be actually taking place in reality or, at times, it can be hypothetical (not yet actualized) to contrast two different states for the same phenomenon and eventually take sides with one rather than the other. The replacement motivated by rejection in the following example expressed by the adversative adverbial (*instead*), and the OCR expressed by *rejection* is an instance of what really happened and was actualized. Here, the traditional grammarians with mentalistic approaches are in conflict with Structural linguists with their empiricist approach:

Structural linguists rejected the views of **traditional grammarians**, who depended on philosophical and **mentalistic** approaches to the study of language. **Instead**, structuralists claimed to derive their view of language through a positivist and

empiricist approach (ULT, p. 99).

In the example below, the context revealed that Swain was in favor of production and it was production rather than comprehension that was favorable. The conflict between the hypothetical characteristics of the two opposing points (i.e., comprehension Vs. production) was hypothesized as to account for the replacement of an earlier state by a later one (*move from ... to*) in the process of output production.

Swain (1995, p. 128) also notes that the production of output may stimulate learners to **move from** the semantic open-ended ... in comprehension, **to** the complete grammatical processing needed for accurate production (ICF, p. 17).

Yet another example from the corpus is: **‘[i]nstead of** privileging the teacher as the sole cultural informant, we need to treat the learner as a cultural informant’ (ULT, p. 208).

The necessity of such a replacement (which is not actualized) is also intensified by the modality of *need*, whereby the *learner* is to replace the *teacher* as the source of the issue at stake.

Both corpora used the pattern to present an alternative that replaced another proposition and AC was thus realized between the two ideas. The following lexico-grammatical items present the stylistic variation for the recurrent use of **replacement** in the two corpora:

instead (of); replace; is replaced by/with; transform; rephrase; change; correct (the errors); make changes; substitute; shift; switch; take a turn; alternative; alter; alternate; deconstruct; choice of ... over ...; overcome challenges/ barriers/ limitations; dethrone; eliminate; choose not to follow;

The replacement is motivated by the negative evaluation attached to the other idea, so that it loses favour and disapproved. The negative evaluation can be related to dissatisfaction, flaws, lower amounts when higher amount is favorable, failure, limitations, erroneous misconceptions, outright denials, lack of a necessary feature, or excess in a feature that makes the idea or part of it unreliable, unfavorable, out of fashion or in contrast to a better alternative idea. In other words, the replacing idea contains the opposite traits compared to the replaced one, as in the following example from the corpora:

Then, in the 1990s, attention **switched** to a more cognitive-situated view of motivation where the significance of situation-specific factors such as the classroom learning situation was examined... (SLA, p. 677).

In this example, the previous trend prior to this proposition (i.e., 'social psychological construct of integrative motivation') is no longer practiced, since it is replaced by a *more cognitive-situated view of motivation*; therefore, the conflict between the previous trend and the one in the 1990s is established, in such a way that the former is no longer effectual but the latter is the norm according to which various factors are examined.

The widespread dissatisfaction with the language-centered pedagogy coupled with the new developments in the fields of psychology and linguistics ultimately motivated the search for a better method. The result is the advent of what is called communicative language teaching, which is normally treated as a prototypical example of a learner-centered pedagogy. To what extent the new pedagogy addressed the drawbacks of the one it sought to **replace** and to what degree it achieved its stated objectives are the focus of.... (ULT, p. 113).

Dissatisfaction as a negative affect gives a negative evaluation to *language-centered pedagogy*. This becomes a strong incentive to think of better alternative views as expressed by *ultimately motivated the search for a better method*. The newer better proposition in the form of CLT runs against the *drawbacks* as the negative appreciation for the earlier faulty views. Therefore, the new idea tries to *replace* the former idea which is by now negatively evaluated.

In the following examples, grammar-translation is replaced by the audiolingual, which is in turn replaced by the communicative language teaching. Or from the obverse point, CLT replaces ALM, which in turn has replaced GTM; GTM is negatively appreciated in *discredited*; the amount of the unfavorable feature in CLT is excessive as expressed by the negatively intensified unfavorable feature in being *too much* demanding:

When the audio-lingual method was introduced, it was hailed as scientific, systematic, and teacher friendly, and soon it **replaced** the 'discredited' grammar-translation method that held sway for a long time. ... Again, when the communicative language teaching came along, there was a hue and cry about how it demands too much from practicing teachers, how ill-prepared they are to embrace it, and how it is bound to fail, and so forth. Within a decade, almost everybody was swearing by it, and it has easily **dethroned** the 'discredited' audiolingual method (ULT, p. 225).

And finally, the main feature of CLT as communicative is itself replaced by another alternative

called *tasks*:

The word, 'communicative,' which was ubiquitously present in the titles of scholarly books and student textbooks published during the 1980s is being **replaced** by yet another word, 'task' (ULT, p. 95).

The findings of this part of the current corpus-based study are in consonance with Giannoni's (2005) study of the rhetorical strategies encoding overt negative evaluation and academic criticism. By replacement, an earlier proposition/entity is *eradicated* and *displaced* by a newer alternative; moreover, the alternative proposition replaces a previous idea/claim in a way that it is no longer reliable.

Conclusion

Owing to the fact that 'conflict and its negotiation are prominent features of specialized discourse' (Salager-Meyer & Ariza, 2011, p. 175), it is imperative to find out the patterns that enable writers to present ideas both convincingly and conventionally. Therefore, in order to fulfill the requirements for such an essential activity, the present study set out to investigate the recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns used as to construct Academic Criticism.

The current corpus-based study aimed to explore the instances of academic conflict in terms of the recurrent lexico-grammatical structures that realized Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations, their corresponding distribution, frequency and functionality in major applied linguistics textbooks. Based on Giannoni's (2005) overt rhetorical strategies for negative evaluation, the current study meticulously analyzed the two corpora to explore the underlying lexico-grammatical structures of OCR that realized academic conflict.

The selected textbooks comprising the two distinct corpora (one corpus for each level as MA versus PhD) were all recommended by expert informants in the field. The textbooks were all written by native speakers of English and were most widely used at MA and PhD levels of AL courses in Iranian universities.

The quest for the lexico-grammatical items that instantiated Displacement and Overall Conflictual Relations and realized Academic Conflict in the discipline (i.e., Applied Linguistics) revealed the recurrent use of a plethora of such items that were frequently used in the two corpora.

With regard to the OCR it was found that when using the lexico-grammatical items that instantiated led to them, textbook writers would draw attention to tensions/ inconsistencies between different entities/ ideas/ propositions or studies. They would also point to the *relation* between the two conflicting processes

(verbs) such as *contrast*; *criticism*; *question*; *doubt*; *object*; *move away from*; *disagree*; *argue against*; *differ*; *militate against*; *differentiate*; *oppose*; *challenge*; *hinder*; *prevent*; *reject*; *reshape*; *reframe* (to name just a few out of many).

The current study also found that the items that indicated OCR could be nouns, adjuncts, epithets, attributes, processes, or circumstances of manner, as in these examples from the two corpora: define it *differently* (circumstance of manner), *criticism* (nominalized), *conversely* (adjunct), a *conflicting* result (epithet), *disagree* (process) and the results are *contradictory* (attribute). Moreover, the lexico-grammatical items that realized OCR could also be graduated (e.g., intensified) or even infused with intensification whenever needed in the specific context, as in *fundamental differences between*, where attitudinal meaning is also intensified as being the most important instantiated by *fundamental*.

The quantitative stage of the analysis for the quest for the lexico-grammatical items that instantiated OCR revealed that it was a pattern frequently used in the two corpora. This can indicate the importance of the pattern to express different kinds of conflict inherent in the field. The structures can express differences, contrasts, criticisms, disagreements, discrepancies, rejections and many other resources of conflict evidenced and extracted from the two corpora.

Although the observed frequency of the use of OCR in the PhD corpus was slightly higher than that of the MA corpus, the comparison of the two corpora yielded a Chi-Square that was far less than the critical value. Therefore, there was no statistically significant difference between the MA and the PhD corpora in terms of the frequency of the use of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicated OCR. As a result, the two corpora took up the recurrent items that instantiated OCR with almost similar distribution. This can mean that the two corpora frequently made use of the OCR structures to establish a conflictual relation between entities, (parts of) ideas, schools of thoughts, methodologies, scholars and their propositions, and thereby to realize AC in the discipline.

It was found that OCR at times can be contractive rather than expansive as no room was left for alternative points of view. It can also function as a separating strategy that sets the two points in conflict and makes a disparity between them. Moreover, it can be at the service of expressing the relation between the two parts of a dichotomy when the two parts of the dichotomy are contrasted and are set in opposition to each other by the OCR as in: 'during the unfamiliar **as opposed to** familiar tasks' (ICF, p. 45), where OCR is instantiated by 'as opposed to'.

As an important finding in the study, OCR is

consonant with one of Gianoni's (2005) overt strategies that identified points of conflict and negatively evaluated the ideas. However, the lexico-grammatical structures that instantiated OCR and realized AC were found to be both frequent and varied. Therefore, the results of the current study with its numerous items can be considered as an expansion to Gianoni's findings with its limited items.

With regard to *displacement*, the current study found that *displacing existing claims* was instantiated when an idea, proposition, or an entity displaced / replaced claims made by others in the light of new knowledge in the field or a better consideration of the factors involved. Academic Conflict was realized when the text presented an alternative rival idea to *eradicate* the earlier idea/proposition/entity and also to *displace* it by the newer, better, or more advanced one.

By displacement, earlier and current results or approaches were compared more antagonistically, with bringing competition to an extreme degree. Therefore, new knowledge displaced claims made by others. It was found that the replacement could be *actually* taking place in reality or, at times, *hypothetical* (not yet actualized), which would contrast two different states for the same phenomenon and eventually take sides with one rather than the other.

Quantitatively, the quest for the lexico-grammatical items that instantiated *displacement* revealed that the observed frequency of the use of the structures to indicate *displacement* in the MA corpus was more than that of the PhD counterpart, and the Chi-square obtained was more than the critical value. Therefore, there was a statistically significant difference between the two corpora in terms of the frequency of the use of the lexico-grammatical structures that indicated *displacement* in different areas in the discipline. This can mean that the MA textbooks tended to use such items more frequently than the PhD ones, to show that there are stronger or better propositions that can replace the existing claims.

The current study found that the two corpora used the pattern to present an alternative proposition that replaced another proposition and AC was thus realized between the two ideas. **Replacement** in the two corpora could be expressed by lexico-grammatical items such as *instead (of)*; *replace*; *transform*; *rephrase*; *change*; *substitute*; *alternative*; *deconstruct*; *dethrone*; and *eliminate* (to name just a few).

To oppose (parts of) propositions/ideas in the discipline, the writers used the lexico-grammatical elements that would readily bring forth the opposing and the opposed ideas. They would indicate the relation between the two and also express the type of stance they adopted concerning the idea opposed. That is, the writers would deploy specific lexico-

grammatical elements to express the two opposing ideas and simultaneously settle the overall relation between the opposing idea and the one opposed. This way, they realized Academic Conflict between two ideas/propositions in a given field in the discipline.

The study can assist the academic discourse community to know the recurrent lexico-grammatical patterns used to oppose others; contradict and contrast ideas; reject, deny and refute propositions; criticize entities or propositions and thereby accomplish presenting various ideas in different parts of the textbooks.

Academic Conflict casts light onto the ways to explore how to assess and reject the whole idea or part of it in a textbook. By the lexico-grammatical elements that express OCR, the relation reported is one of conflict rather than praise or confirmation. This is an introduction for the alternative view to convey from the onset that there are at least two ideas that are *in conflict with* each other, in a way that the text can later point to the faults, or weaknesses of one; pave the way to eradicate the existing claim which is erroneous; and finally *replace* it with another alternative idea which is supported by convincing evidence in a given area in the specific field under scrutiny.

In other words, by using the recurring lexico-grammatical patterns of academic conflict, it would be possible for the members of the academic community to set various points in opposition; to consider both sides of an idea; to see a topic from various angles; to acknowledge other (opposing or different) opinions and then to evaluate them; to counter-argue; to refute some; to rebut others; and finally to take sides in favor of the best, the most improved, the most developed idea relative to any recent point in time. As Eggins (2004) puts it, the meaning of each sign in language 'comes largely from what it is not' (p. 189). In other words, as Eggins (2004) illustrates, 'part of knowing what [something] is involves knowing what [it] is not' (p. 190). More technically, we can say that 'part of the meaning of a linguistic sign is in the oppositions it enters into' (Eggins, 2004, p. 190). Therefore, in order to better understand the entities and phenomena in the discipline, writers employ rhetorical strategies such as displacement or OCR among others to instantiate such oppositions.

Finally, acknowledging the point that OCR and displacement are just two of several strategies/patterns identified for Academic Conflict (Majidzadeh, 2017), the results of the current study are consonant with Hyland's (1997) statement that conflict and rivalry are forceful incentives to both individual discovery and collective criticism. This means that the lexico-grammatical items that instantiate OCR and Displacement act as an impetus for evaluating existing

ideas. This in turn acts as an incentive to think of alternative ideas that can well be supported by ideas and evidence in specific fields and thereby construct knowledge in the discipline.

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OVERALL CONFLICTUAL RELATIONS (OCR) AS PATTERNS TO INSTANTIATE ACADEMIC CONFLICT

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Appendix A

Rhetorical Strategies Encoding Academic Criticism

Rhetorical Strategies Encoding Academic Criticism	
covert, indirect strategies	overt, direct strategies
1. Having Hypothetical criticism	6. Signaling or filling a gap
2. Taking a skeptical stance	7. Displacing existing claims
3. Offering interpretations	8. Using comparative evaluation
4. Using Logically implicit criticism	9. Identifying points of conflict
5. Making recommendations	10. Describing specific faults or failures
	11. Stating general objections

Note. Adapted from “Negative evaluation in academic discourse: A comparison of English and Italian research articles,” by D. S. Giannoni, 2005, *Linguistica e Filologia*, 20, 80-81.