



A Comparative Study of COVID-19-Related Native and Nonnative News Headlines in Terms of Rhetorical Devices

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Abstract

News headlines like other pieces of writings use rhetorical devices. They are regarded as the initial informative and persuasive part of news stories. The goal of the present study was to analyze COVID-19-related native and non-native news headlines chosen from two main online news websites in Iran and England in terms of number and degree of utilization of sub-types of rhetorical devices. To this end, the 6-week corpus including 489 headlines relevant to corona-virus news (282 headlines selected from the BBC and 207 from the Tehran Times) were analyzed. Shams (2013) and Picello (2018) taxonomies were used to analyze all news headlines. The findings showed that ten rhetorical devices were found in these headlines. Alliteration was used most frequently, following closely behind were metonymy, rhyme, rhetorical question, depersonalization, hyperbole, metaphor, pun, cliché, and euphemism. Both alliteration and metonymy were frequently used in the headlines of the news stories. However, just simile and allusion were found in the Tehran Times headlines, but not with high frequency. The findings can provide insights into the understanding of rhetoric-specific conventions in news headlines for ELT teachers and students. Also, English teachers can use news headlines as authentic teaching materials in their language classrooms.

Keywords: COVID-19, native and non-native newspapers, news headlines, rhetorical devices

Introduction

Daily life seems to be a shapeless set of events. This chaos is structured by a journalist in a way that people receive it neatly packaged into stories. Reah (2002) is of the opinion that news refers to information related to recent occurrences which are interesting to people, or which might influence the people's lives.

The news can be presented via various media including television, newspapers, online sources, and radio. Thanks to the advent of powerful source like internet, people try to follow the important global news through online websites. Online sources serve as an important medium in keeping people informed about what is happening across the world and, hence, in increasing their knowledge and extending their understanding. The criteria by which news is judged are: is it new? is it unusual; is it interesting or important? and is it about the public? For example, in November 2019, the important news which shocked the public was about a new Sarslike virus. This disease first infected the citizens of the Wuhan city in Hubei province, China. Then this strange and new illness was called the 'mystery pneumonia virus' and later 'new Chinese virus'. Finally, it was called the '2019 novel coronavirus' and the World Health Organization (WHO) named it 'COVID-19'. This virus spread almost across the world and it severely affected education, economy, employment, entertainment, and it can be said that all the aspects of people's life. It was announced that it infected 245,611,243 people across the world according to the last data formally reported on October 27th, 2021 by the World Health Organization website. Social distancing, banning mass gatherings, wearing face masks, working from home (WFH), and lockdowns are some measures taken to fight against this virus. Reporters presented the corona virus related news through different mass media including news websites especially in the headlines.

Like any text, a special structure is used for writing a news story. It consists of three sections: the headline, the lead paragraph, and the body of the story. The headline is considered as the title of the news story. It is placed above the news story, especially in bold, in order to attract people's attention. Shams (2013) argues that the headline can serve several purposes. First, it summarizes the whole story. One can get a complete picture of the news story by reading only the headline. Second, a headline advertises the

news story. Since it can grab the reader's attention to read the news story, the editors give considerable attention to write an eye-catching headline. In other words, headlines attract attention, arouse interest, and make the reader follow the news story. Third, the headline makes the newspaper page appear beautiful. Variety in typeface and size of the headline creates balance and beauty for the newspaper.

Electronic headlines along the printed ones are used to tell the reader the main topic of the story. Saxena (2004) argued that the features of the best headlines include the utilization of simple, especial, and concrete vocabulary items. He also mentioned that an online headline can arouse the motivation of the readers to read a news story or may be unable to catch their attention. Therefore, the editor by using linguistic and stylistic features in writing the headlines tries to maintain the curiosity of the news story readers and understanding of main point. Based on the researches done by Zhou (2017), Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), Farrokhi and Nazemi (2015), Lamichhane (2017), Magtira and Bernardo (2017), and Winita and Ermanto (2019), the implementation of rhetorical devices in the headlines of the news stories is one of the elements that has captured the attention of most researchers. McGuigan (2011) mentioned that the four major goals of rhetorical devices utilization are persuading, informing, expressing, and entertaining. Furthermore, he argued that the selection of the stylistic tools strongly influences headlines understanding. Moreover, Winita and Ermanto (2019) proposed that the headlines of the newspapers most of the time use rhetorical tools as an effective device to grab the attention of the readers and to influence them. Rhetorical devices are commonly used in both spoken and written form of the language. Shams (2013) also approves this idea by explaining that rhetorical devices are used by everyone in order to produce persuasive speaking or writing to make the audience to agree with an opinion, to form a belief, to make a value judgment, or to take an action. Besides, he argued since one of the three aims of news headlines writing is persuading, so a writer by utilizing rhetorical devices tries to convince and attract readers. A variety of rhetorical tools are used to gain specific goals and affect the news popularity. Rhetorical devices involve imaginative language including personification, metaphor, simile,

hyperbole, metonymy, etc. that convey both the meanings of each vocabulary items or phrases and their literal meanings. The substitution of idea for another is a main feature of metaphor, commonly seen in the headlines of the news stories. Besides, alliteration and rhyme are other sound-related devices that can effectively improve the communication between the writer of the headline and their readers. Van Dijk (1988) added that rhetorical devices differ in function; hence, they provide alternative ways to produce the more persuasive texts. Phonological operations can be established by rhyme or assonance syntactic operations can be displayed through parallelisms and semantic operations can be represented through comparisons or metaphors. Moreover, understatement, hyperboles (exaggerations, overstatements), climax or contrast can be used in news story. This facilitates a tighter organization of news story and likely leads to be remembered by readers (Van Dijk, 1988). The findings of the previous studies motivated the researcher to investigate the utilization of rhetorical devices in English headlines of the news stories publicized on the news sites of a non-native country of English, Iran, and a native country, England. Moreover, the news regarding the coronavirus spread across the world is a new subject to examine. This subject motivated researchers like Tan, Woods et al. (2020) who published some research articles from the linguistic point of views. Hence, examining the way rhetorical tools are utilized in the headlines of the coronavirus-related news stories is also worth more research. These parts of the news stories may reveal more interesting issues regarding how language is utilized in the newspaper. It is expected that the results to have significance to English language and journalism students. Moreover, the teachers of English language may take advantage of the headlines of the news stories as an authentic teaching material in their language classes.

The aim of the present study was to compare and contrast the frequency of the use of rhetorical devices in the English headlines of the news stories from the websites of BBC and the Tehran Times. Therefore, the major issues to be addressed in this study were:

RQ1. What are the differences between the English headlines of the news stories from the websites of BBC and the Tehran Times in terms of type, number, and degree of utilization of rhetorical devices?

RQ2. What are the similarities between the English headlines of the news stories from the websites of BBC and the Tehran Times in terms of type, number, and degree of utilization of rhetorical devices?

Method

Corpus

The corpus analysis consisted of 489 English online news headlines relevant to the coronavirus: 282 news headlines selected from the BBC and 207 from the Tehran Times. The headlines related to COVID-19 were collected from the websites of the news: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world> of the BBC, that is a main agency of news in a native country of English, England, and the website <https://www.tehrantimes.com>, which is Iran's leading online newspaper printed daily. Both of the websites of the news as the sources of the analysis were selected on the basis of the criterion that they are best-known media covering various news topics. The headlines just relevant to corona-virus were selected from both sites from May 2 to June 14, 2020. Considering the fourteen suggested rhetorical devices by Shams (2013) and Picello (2018), metonymy, allusion, hyperbole, rhyme, cliché, pun, metaphor, simile, alliteration, ellipsis, euphemism, derogation, rhetorical question, and depersonalization were considered as the major tools in analyzing both data sets. All 489 headlines were analyzed separately and the findings were written. Later, the final results were compared to see whether there were differences and similarities in utilizing rhetorical devices in reporting similar news between both online websites. Data were analyzed qualitatively.

Procedure

Picello (2018) in her book argued that verbal rhetorical tools including metonymy, alliteration, metaphor, allusion, hyperbole, cliché, pun, ellipsis, and rhyme are used with the most frequency in the headlines of the news. (Shams, 2013) in his book also suggested some more rhetorical tools which include euphemism, simile, rhetorical question, depersonalization, and derogation. All the above-mentioned fourteen rhetorical devices were selected to make the major framework of the present study. Each rhetorical

device definition along the specific samples provided by Shams and Picello are given below:

Alliteration can be defined as the repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more words. It is used to create a musical or give an emphasis.

Example: Scandal of Psycho Freed to Kill Hero Cop Nina.

Football Fan Fury

Metaphor is the most commonly used device in newspaper. It is a word that establishes a comparison between an idea or one object and the other idea or object.

Example: Put a price tag. (the action in this title is metaphorical that refers to the calculation of economic loss caused by violence in Brazil)

Metonymy is present if a part of something is utilized to show that thing as a whole. It can be used as a reference to a whole country, institution, or organization, and is employed to refer to a person who really decides or performs the action.

Example: CIA rejects the tract.

Iran receives the Asian Cup.

Cliché is the utilization of mostly used metaphors, ideas, allusion, and phrases, etc. in order to create recognition. It appears to be uninteresting because it is employed so much.

Example: Trump sees 'light at end of tunnel' in virus fight

Rhyme is a clearly poetic rhetorical tool which refers to the use of similar final accented vowel and all of the sounds occurring in two words. Rhyme can generate a musical impact or a good sound.

Example: Owl on the prowl

Hyperbole is another rhetorical tool employed as a description of an action or event through strongly extravagant and exaggerated vocabularies to emphasize and express emotions, and etc. This tool is frequently used in the headlines of the news stories, especially in order to give an emphasis on the negative actions and features of others. It refers to figure of speech or exaggeration that cannot be connected to the reality.

Example: 'Undocumented virus explosion' sweeps Brazil

Ellipsis refers to the data omission, usually the omission of those things that we regard to be obvious. Ellipsis is most of the time written in the form of the row of three points.

Allusion is used to refer directly or indirectly to other ideas, people, places, or texts. It can generate an impact of the recognition pleasure.

Example: A man without a mask (allusion to the name of Dumas's well-known novel *A man in iron mask*)

Simile is used to refer to comparing dissimilar ideas or objects defined as an idea, but the utilization of specific words such as 'as' or 'like' clearly establishes the relationship between the objects and ideas.

Example: Immigrants are like an invading army.

Pun refers to a play on those vocabulary items that their sounds are alike or almost alike but their meanings differ.

Example: Baa-rilliant news. (instead of 'brilliant news')

Depersonalization is employed in newspapers to affect the readers and to direct the understandings and impacts of occurrences in a specific way. The agents of events especially human ones don't appear in this rhetorical device use.

Example: France attack 5 sites (Soldiers can be the agent)

Derogation refers to derogatory terms that are negatively charged vocabulary items employed to cause damage to the fame and credit of the people.

Euphemism is used in the newspapers as the alternative idea expression regarded as inappropriate or taboo instead of which more politely or socially acceptable expressions are employed.

Example: Vague on details, Trump is betting on 'special bond' with Kim to deliver deal.

Rhetorical question refers to the utilization of a question that is asked to cause the readers to think in an especial way, in other words, this device is not used to receive a reply.

Example: What influence does Covid-19 have on the conflict?

Data analysis

Having collected the data, they were analyzed in order to test the research questions. Rhetorical devices of rhyme, metonymy, allusion, alliteration,

rhetorical question, pun, depersonalization, metaphor, hyperbole, cliché, euphemism, simile, ellipsis and derogation were analyzed in the English online corona-virus related headlines of news stories from the news websites of the BBC and the Tehran Times. They were compared in terms of type, number, and degree of utilization of rhetorical devices. The findings revealed that ten rhetorical devices were found in these headlines.

The results of the analysis of rhetorical tools in the English headlines of the news website of the BBC and the Tehran Times are given through Table 1.

Table 1
Frequencies of Rhetorical Devices in English Online Headlines from the BBC and the Tehran Times News Websites

No.	Rhetorical Devices	Frequency	%
1	Alliteration	187	38.24
2	Metonymy	158	32.31
3	Rhyme	40	8.17
4	Rhetorical Question	22	4.49
5	Depersonalization	21	4.29
6	Hyperbole	15	3.06
7	Metaphor	11	2.24
8	Pun	10	2.04
9	Cliché	3	0.61
10	Euphemism	3	0.61
11	Allusion	2	0.41
12	Simile	2	0.41
13	Ellipsis	0	0
14	Derogation	0	0
Total		475	100

As Table 1 shows, alliteration (38.24%) is used with higher frequency than the other rhetorical tools in the English headlines relevant to COVID-19 from the BBC and the Tehran Times websites. The second-ranked rhetorical device is metonymy (32.31%). Following closely behind are rhyme (8.17%), rhetorical question (4.49%), depersonalization (4.29%) hyperbole (3.06%), metaphor (2.24%), pun (2.04%), cliché (0.61%), euphemism (0.61%), allusion (0.41), and simile (0.41) respectively. None of two sets of headlines used derogation and ellipsis.

Table 2 shows the results of calculating the percentage of rhetorical devices in two sample data separately.

Table 2
Comparison of Rhetorical Devices in the BBC and the Tehran Times

Rhetorical Devices	Frequency	in %	Frequency	in %
	BBC		Tehran Times	
Alliteration	100	35.46	87	42.02
Metonymy	98	34.75	60	28.98
Rhyme	22	7.80	18	8.69
Rhetorical question	13	4.60	9	4.34
Depersonalization	10	3.54	11	5.79
Hyperbole	9	3.19	6	2.89
Metaphor	8	2.83	3	1.44
Pun	3	1.06	7	3.38
Cliché	2	0.70	1	0.48
Euphemism	1	0.35	2	0.96
Allusion	0	0	2	0.96
Simile	0	0	2	0.96
Ellipsis	0	0	0	0
Derogation	0	0	0	0
Total	266	100	208	100

As illustrated in Table 2, alliteration, metonymy, and rhyme were the top three rhetorical devices of the English headlines of the news stories of the two news websites. However, the two headlines websites significantly differ in the utilization of metonymy in number. Metonymy is used with higher frequency in the BBC in comparison to the Tehran Times (34.75% & 28.98% respectively). Moreover, the Tehran Times only used allusion and simile, but at very low frequency (0.96%). None of the websites used derogation and ellipsis.

Discussion

The findings of the study are provided and are compared with literature in this part. The present study was mainly concentrated on the analysis of the English online headlines of news stories related to COVID-19 from the news websites of the BBC and the Tehran Times. They were compared in terms of type, number, and degree of utilization of rhetorical devices. As the

results indicated alliteration occurred at the highest frequency in the headlines of both websites. So, the findings of Lamichhane (2017) support the findings of the present study. However, Bonyadi and Samuel (2013), Magtira and Bernardo (2017), Monsefi and Mahadi (2016), Zhou (2017), and Maretha and Kongthai (2017) found that the most frequently used tool was metonymy. (Lamichhane, 2017) did a study to investigate the headlines of the news stories in terms of stylistic features including rhetorical, lexical, and syntactic characteristics. The analysis of twenty selected English headlines from The Himalayan Times and twenty headlines selected from The Kathmandu Post revealed that the most frequently used rhetorical tool was alliteration while the second-ranked tool was metaphor. Nevertheless, metonymy was the most noticeable device in news headlines writing. Regarding the results of Laongpol (2021), the news headlines selected from two main websites of online news in England and Thailand revealed that the number of rhetorical tools found in these sets of data was twelve. Alliteration was the most frequently used rhetorical device followed by metonymy, rhyme, depersonalization, rhetorical question, metaphor, hyperbole, pun and euphemism, cliché, allusion, and simile respectively. Both alliteration and metonymy were commonly used in the headlines of the news. On the other hand, only the headlines of the Bangkok Post used allusion and simile, but at very low frequencies. Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) investigated the forty electronic headlines of the Tehran Times, the first English daily newspaper of Islamic Republic of Iran, and the New York Times, the United States of America's English online newspaper. Their results revealed that twelve rhetorical features were used. It was found that the most frequently utilized rhetorical tool in both data sets was metonymy. Neologism, rhetorical question, parallelism, antithesis, metonymy, quoting out of context, allusion, irony, consonance, testimonial, alliteration, and pun were found too. Both news websites also used rhetorical question, metonymy, parallelism, alliteration, and consonance. However, only the online news website of Iran employed pun, quoting out of context, and testimonial but just the American website of news utilized neologism, antithesis, irony, and allusion. Magtira and Bernardo (2017) by using the analysis framework of Bonyadi and Samuel (2013) argued that fourteen rhetorical devices were found in newspaper headlines of The Philippine

Daily Inquirer and New York Times. The American and the Filipino newspapers used metonymy as the main linguistic device. Rhetorical devices of parallelism, alliteration, and idiom were found in some headlines. The New York Times used metonymy, Rhetorical question, oxymoron, and pun, but simile, hyperbole, sarcasm, irony, consonance, onomatopoeia, and epithet were employed in the Philippine Daily Inquirer. Monsefi and Mahadi (2016) investigated rhetorical tools utilization in a hundred headlines of English online news stories taken from the Euronews website. They found that metonymy was most often employed followed by ellipsis and personification, respectively. Then they examined the rhetorical devices in the headlines of Persian news collected from the same news stories website. The results showed that the highest frequency belongs to metonymy, then to personification, and ellipsis. Zhou (2017) examined fifty English headlines of daily news stories from The Nation and the Bangkok Post in Thailand. She found that metonymy, metaphor, alliteration, oxymoron, personification, and quotation were the top six types of rhetorical devices. She discussed that consonance, alliteration, onomatopoeia, and assonance showed sound impacts. Metaphor, metonymy, and personification aroused the imagination of the readers, and paradox, oxymoron, irony, pun, and rhetorical question may likely stimulate the interest and curiosity of the readers. Maretha and Kongthai (2017) analyzed 139 relevant online news headlines from fourteen online news websites which reported an issue related to Gerwani, Indonesia's New Order regime's organization for debarred. The data were taken from The International People's Tribunal (IPT) 1965, the Jakarta Globe, Jakarta Post, NYR Daily, the Diplomat, Pacific Media Center, the Guardian, The Conversation, Aljazeera, Foreign Policy, News Mandala, Green Left Weekly, Inside Indonesia, and Tempo published from 1999-2016. It was found that the most frequently used rhetorical tool was metonymy followed by alliteration, antithesis, rhetorical question, testimonial, and parallelism respectively, but irony and quotation out of context were used with the lowest frequency.

The reason that alliteration was used with the highest frequency in the present study may be because of its special features. As Laongpol (2021) argues, since the initial letters are the same in alliteration, it creates a

musical impact on the readers' feelings and the perception. The utilization of this phonetic tool in writing a headline of the news grabs the attention of the readers. Bowden (2013) argues that alliteration is frequently employed in the headlines of the news in order to create a consistent pattern which grabs the imagination, or mind's eye, and concentrates the readers' attention. Bowden (2013) mentioned that the utilization of alliteration has advantages in writing the headlines of the news stories, particularly the news related to the corona virus spread. It may be employed in order to emphasize the main message and stick it in people's mind. Alliteration aids details of the present condition of the disease to be remembered by the audiences. Besides, Harris (2017) mentioned that it adds a music to the text that you write and at the same time emphasizes the ideas which aid a major concept to be recalled better by your reader better. As a result, alliteration can assist the audience not only to get the main idea of the news stories but also to enjoy the beauty of the writing. Moreover, it is also used in the news headlines to help the promotion of the news stories. Bowden (2013) is of the opinion that this phonological tool is sometimes utilized in the names of business and advertising to cause them to be more memorable, as shown by the two impressive brands: Coca-Cola and Krispy Kreme. Alliteration as the powerful sound device is used in the News headlines to make them interesting and to grab the attention of the readers. As Saidova (2021) defines this tool, it is employed to point the persons, events, artistic works, or places, without any explanation to be given by the writers, but it may refer to a thing that both readers and writers are supposed to have knowledge. Van Besien (2005) argued that this literary tool is elusive, especially in newspapers; there is intentionality of its use by the author and the readers' perception of this intention depends on their interests, reading background, and experience. That is, it is better for the readers should have some relevant world knowledge about the indirect message provided by the author to understand the main message. However, this is not always easy for the readers. Regarding to the infrequent utilization of metaphor in this study, it can be said that the reason is due to the specific classification of the topic. As Shams (2013) noted, metaphors are frequently employed in the news related to economic and politics. He also mentioned that metaphor is a device for producing particular impacts, to slant the news against a group of

people or one side, and to distort the reality. Olimat (2020) supported this fact by arguing that metaphor is one of the most persuasive and powerful tools utilized by politicians in their discourse and it is also a major feature of political discourse. He further mentioned that the figurative language utilization by politicians help the people's intended views to be established the and influence their ideas. However, politicians' manner of addressing speeches is different from the news events presenting. On the basis of the results, both alliteration and metonymy were the two top rhetorical tools. Sometimes they were jointly found in the news headlines. The combination of these meaning-based and sound devices is a common technique in writing the headlines of the news to influence the intended meanings and arrange vocabularies in order to emphasize sound effects simultaneously. Furthermore, alliteration and rhyme were also employed together in news headlines. Shams (2013) argued that the frequent phonological based techniques like alliteration and rhyme are employed in the news headlines to grab the readers' attention and make them to be involved in the news stories. Moreover, Picello (2018) mentioned that alliteration and rhyme are used in advertising too in order to make a product to be memorable. In order to increase the memory of the readers, special intended vocabularies are arranged and made through the utilization of phonological devices. As supported by Shams (2013), headlines are used not only to summarize the whole news story and beautify the newspaper page, they are also used to advertise news reports. So, the best headlines are the best advertisements for the news stories. The frequent use of metonymy in the BBC reflects distinctive preference in presenting the news. The use of this rhetorical tool might show the preferred style of news websites in writing the headlines of the related news stories. The names of most countries were metonymically used in the news headlines of both websites. To mention the government or people, the names of their countries were used. The findings of the present study reveal that the BBC preferred to present news relevant to coronavirus in a wider point of view. In other words, the BBC newspapers presented the information about the coronavirus spread across the world. The names of relevant countries, including Turkey, France, America, Italy, Canada, Brazil, Australia, Japan, India, Spain were found in the headlines. While the

headlines of the Tehran Times presented the news of events of neighboring countries, or countries of especial significance to Iran including Turkey, Malaysia, Afghanistan, Hong Kong, Pakistan, Iraq, America, Armenia, Japan, Indonesia, and South Korea. This shows the subjective ideologies of the two newspapers, that can be directly influenced by their various target readers. It can be argued that the Tehran Times newspaper primarily focuses on the target readers of Iran and other neighboring countries while the target audiences of the BBC newspapers are across worldwide. Along this fact, we should pay attention to the concept of 'newsworthiness'. According to Stephenson (1998), the news common features are to be dramatic, to have a human interest aspect, and to influence the public. Therefore, the news that cannot influence the lives of the audiences cannot be regarded 'newsworthy' and cannot be successful in achieving the aims of reporting the news. Moreover, as Laongpol (2021) argued, metonymy appears to be a major rhetorical tool in writing news headlines. It is can be considered as special and unique to write countries names and organizations in order to refer to something with which they are associated. Both linguistic and background knowledge are hence some significant aspects that enable the reader to understand the exact point of the news stories. Some lexical aspects are also revealed by the utilization of some rhetorical tools in the present study. The lexical items selected to be included in the English headlines related to the corona virus, especially in the BBC website, seemed dramatic, striking, and catchy. This fact arouses emotionally the audiences to understand and experience the impacts of the widespread disease pandemic at the same time. The present study showed that the authors of the headlines of news used negatively charged words, including worldwide death, hit, die, fight, combat, health danger, life danger, job danger, crisis, disease, and virus. These lexical items can effectively grab the people's attention to the strange contexts created by the virus. Besides, the rhetorical device of metaphor, allusion, and hyperbole used in the headlines of the news can strongly convey the negative impacts of the corona virus. Shostak and Gillespie (2014) maintain that words and phrases are the best device to provide information, hence the writers of headline employ them as an effective means of communication, making headlines memorable and striking. They choose those words which carry emotional meanings and are employed to

cause a headline grab the attention of the readers. Therefore, choosing the right vocabularies in writing the headlines of the news is very critical since headlines can summarize the news story and help the audiences perceive the news story writers' special intention.

Conclusion

The present paper investigated rhetorical devices use in 489 corona virus related headlines from the websites of one native and one non-native English-speaking country. The findings showed that ten rhetorical tools were employed. The two online websites presented similar dominant rhetorical devices in writing news headlines. They were alliteration, metonym, and rhyme. There were no uses of ellipsis or derogation in the headlines of the two newspapers. Simile and allusion were found in the Tehran Times headlines, but not with high frequency. The findings also revealed that the combination of more than one rhetorical device in a single headline was a technique the headline writers of both websites often used. Since the headlines have a key function in promoting the news stories, word choices are very important in writing news headlines. Headline writers deliberately select certain powerful words to affect the audience's perceptions and feelings. So, striking and catchy words were selected creating the news headlines that could affect the readers' perception about the negative impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. The rhetorical devices which are both meaning-based devices and sound devices were used to make the short messages of news more interesting. Also, the frequent metonymic use, especially in the headlines from the websites of the native English-speaking country, revealed the different ideologies of presenting news between the two online websites. English language teachers can use headlines from newspapers to help EFL students develop their understanding of semantics and figurative language by analyzing the functions of news headlines, the features of news headline language, persuasion appeals of news headline, rhetorical devices of news headline, and expanding the English cultural knowledge. Further research might focus on the textual analysis of other genres of news stories. Furthermore, other forms of writing and speaking, such as campaign slogans for advertising,

famous speeches, and presidential debates would offer insight into other discourse conventions which could enhance the understanding of language use.

Declaration of interest: none

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Biodata

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