

English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines: A comparative study of linguistic means

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Abstract

Using rhetorical figures in specialized languages like the language of newspaper headlines is common. The present study attempted to conduct a contrastive analysis of the English and Persian sport newspaper headlines related to the 2014 FIFA World Cup. Toward this end, a corpus consisting of 400 English and 400 Persian headlines published during 12th of June to 13th of July, 2014 was collected. The framework developed by Lapsanska (2006), including phonological, lexical and morphological, syntactic, and semantic aspects, was employed. The frequencies of the use of sub-variables were calculated and chi-square tests were administered to determine whether the differences in the use of linguistic means between the two languages were statistically significant. The results showed that English and Persian sports newspaper headlines were similar in the use of rhythm and metaphor. However, they were generally different in four aspects particularly in the use of alliteration, foreign words, idiomatic constructions, formation of new words and phrases, hyperbole, phrase, and personification. The results can have pedagogical implications for journalism students, English for specific purposes (ESP) students, teachers, and translators.

Keywords: Rhetorical figures, newspaper headlines, phonological, lexical, morphological, syntactic, semantic aspects.

Introduction

Baddock (1988) believes that “newspapers are a good basis for language study. They are sources of forms of language which you will not find in conventional language learning materials and which will help you to be familiar with and use many different communicative skills” (p. 1). The newspaper headline is a unique type of text. It has a range of functions that specifically dictate its shape, content, and structure, and it operates within a range of restrictions that limit the freedom of the writer (Reah, 1998). Rhetorical devices can serve as efficacious linguistic means to influence and attract the readers’ attention and are often applied in newspaper headlines (Shumin, 2006).

A rhetorical figure is defined as an artful deviation. More formally, a rhetorical figure occurs when an expression deviates from expectation; the expression is not rejected as nonsensical or faulty, but the deviation occurs at the level of form rather than content, and it conforms to template that is invariant across a variety of content and contexts (Corbett, 1990). The unusual aspects of language that we sometimes find in headlines can be fruitfully considered to be examples of ‘artful deviations’ (McQuarrie & Mick, 1996).

The front pages or the back pages of most sport newspapers are entirely devoted to reporting, discussing, and analyzing sport news, especially football news. We can tell how

important sport is to our culture by the amount of time and space the media devote to it. For example, most national newspapers devoted 20-30 percent of their pages to the 2014 FIFA World Cup news during June 12 to July 13, 2014.

The reason is that the FIFA World Cup competitions are interesting and engaging for people across the world, and also following the world cup news is a great deal of fun. Writing great newspaper headlines can require an informative and persuasive language including emotive words, and imagery and rhetorical features (Fogel, 2014).

Studying the literature reveals that the study of linguistic means or rhetorical figures in the sport newspaper headlines has been scarce. For this reason, the present study aimed to launch a comparative study of linguistic means between English and Persian sport newspaper headlines related to the 2014 FIFA World Cup.

Headlines are obviously one of the most striking features of modern newspapers. Therefore, it is not surprising that they have been studied quite extensively not only by journalists but also by linguists (Khodabandeh, 2007). In the following part, the most important of the few existing linguistic studies of headlines are reviewed.

Praskova (2009) attempted to identify the most frequently used grammatical features and structures that would occur in British newspaper headlines to see whether the structure of headlines would differ from that of the common core which is stylistically unmarked. The result of the study indicated no significant differences between the language of headlines and common core structures despite the fact that a few features such as abbreviated structures and the frequent use of verb forms were observed more in the newspaper headlines. He concluded that there might be a core grammar of British newspaper headlines which would be used almost equally by both types of newspapers.

Van Dijk (1988) analyzed over 400 headlines in the Dutch press which were reporting the 1985 Tamil panic, an occasion of racial tensions between the Dutch and immigrant groups. He found that the Dutch authorities dominated subject positions in the headlines with active verbs. When the disadvantaged Tamils were specified to begin with, the verb had a tendency to be passive.

Roohani and Esmaeili (2010) investigated linguistic— syntactic and lexical— features of the sport-section headlines in newspapers, which seem to be problematic for Iranian EFL learners. To this end, the study compared and contrasted the headlines in 2 daily newspapers: The Times (a non-Iranian English newspaper published outside Iran) and Tehran Times (an Iranian English newspaper published inside Iran). The analysis of the data showed that there are some quantitative similarities and differences between the two corpora obtained from the sports sections of The Times and Tehran Times newspapers. The headlines of the two languages were similar in several lexical and syntactic features.

In both newspapers, the preference was given to the active voice of the verbs. Also, as it was expected, the corpora from both newspapers indicated a preference for lexical content words, particularly nouns, partly because the sports headline writers would like to include much meaning in a limited space. The results also indicated that both Iranian and non-Iranian English newspapers showed a preponderance of the simple present tense in the finite clauses. Besides, both newspapers were similar in the nonoccurrence of adverbial headlines, frequent use of statement headlines, and preponderance of unmodified and premodified nominal headlines.

Khodabandeh (2007) investigated the major similarities and differences between English and Persian newspapers headlines. She used a one-week corpus of the headlines of English and Persian languages for the analysis. She analyzed the variability of syntactic and lexical features across and within the English and Persian newspapers headlines by using contrastive analysis

(CA). The result of her study indicated that the headlines of English and Persian languages were similar in using dynamic verbs, active voice, short words, declarative sentences, finite clauses, and simple sentences and difference in the use of tense forms, headlines types, modification, and omission of words.

Scollon (2000) in his investigation of five days of three editions of the same newspaper in its Chinese and English editions reasoned that the English headlines, following on general western journalistic practice, put the fundamental point right in the headline in what has additionally been known as a deductive rhetorical mode. The Chinese headline, then again, utilizes the headline to create the setting, yet don not give any additional data about the substance of the discussions. In other words, the real contrast lies in whether the headline concentrates specifically on the focal theme found inside the body of the story or the setting.

The few aforementioned studies of headlines intended to discover some linguistic features in the headlines of different languages, particularly English, or different types of newspapers to see whether similar features could be observed. However, there is still the need for further research on headlines in different types of newspapers and in different contexts. English and Persian are two languages which have diverse differences culturally and linguistically. According to Afghari and Karimnia (2007), there are certain attitudes and ideas and also culturally prescribed rules of writing styles that seem to be preferred and accepted by most English copy writers.

The problem is similar in Persian when the language and culture have their local variations. Based on what was mentioned, newspapers headlines do not seem to follow a universal pattern in English and Persian languages as far as their rhetorical features (linguistic means) are concerned. Culture and linguistic features seem to be determining factors in the rhetorical structures of headlines written in different genres like sport newspapers.

Newspapers are considered a good source of reading. Conventionally, it is believed that newspapers have more readers than any other kind of written text. For more citizens, news is perhaps the type of written discourse with which they are confronted most frequently (Van Dijk, 1986). Using rhetorical figures in specialized languages such as the language of advertisements and newspapers is so common. The reason is their own means of persuasion (Khodabandeh, 2007).

Synchronic analyses show rhetorical figures to be common features in advertisements and newspapers in the early 1990s, but, as McQuarrie and Mick (1996) said, studies of rhetorical figures have been short ones in advertisements texts and newspapers headlines. Therefore, it seems that the contrastive rhetoric studies of the sport newspaper headlines have been left in many languages, including Persian and English, and this is the gap which this study aimed to bridge.

The present study is thus an attempt to compare English and Persian sports newspaper headlines related to the 2014 Football World Cup in order to find out the similarities and differences between these two corpora in the use of linguistic means or rhetorical figures and thereby provide the basis for explicit strategies which Iranian and English students of journalism, news writers, and even news translators might use to comprehend and produce effective news stories.

Method

Corpus

The materials in this study consisted of a corpus of 800 sport newspaper headlines, 400 Persian and 400 English ones. To carry out the comparison between the headlines, some English

sport newspapers and some Persian sport newspapers were selected from among the available online news sources including: The Sun, The Daily Mail, The Daily Mirror, The Daily Telegraph, and The Daily Star for the English headlines, and Khabar Varzeshi, Esteghlal Javan, Navad, Gol, and Abrar Varzeshi as the Persian ones. These English and Persian online newspapers were chosen because they cover a wide range of news items, and also they have had the highest circulations from 2010 to present in England and Iran.

The headlines were selected from among the 2014 Football World Cup news, and its reason refers to the fact that the FIFA World Cup is the biggest sporting competition in the world and its impact on the society is indisputable. In order to avoid the variable of time affecting data collection, the headlines were selected from English and Persian online newspapers which were issued during June 12 to July 13, 2014. The factors of size and color were not considered in selecting the headlines.

Procedure

For the purposes of this study, we employed Lapsanska's (2006) framework in order to analyze the language of English and Persian sport newspaper headlines from different aspects. This framework includes four major variables and some sub-variables which are as follows: phonological (rhyme, rhythm, alliteration, assonance, graphic aspect of the text, transliteration, homophones), lexical and morphological (verb phrase, noun phrase, adjectives, numerals, foreign words, intersexuality, formation of new words and phrases, idiomatic constructions, collocations) syntactic (sentence types, sentence structure, schematic patterning, ellipsis, incomplete sentences), and semantic (personification, simile, hyperbole, metaphor, metonymy, antithesis, polysemy and homonymy).

Having collected 400 English and 400 Persian sport newspaper headlines published during June 12 to July 13, 2014, we first conducted a pilot study in order to guarantee the reliability of the analysis and the feasibility of working with the framework. To this end, 100 English and Persian headlines were separately analyzed by the researchers and the inter-rater reliability was calculated through Krippendorff's Alpha which was 0.85, an acceptable index.

After we ascertained the reliability of the analysis method and reached agreement over the variables and their instances, the main phase of study was carried out. The sport newspaper headlines were carefully read and analyzed to calculate the frequency of rhetorical figures in them in light of Lapsanska's (2006) framework. Finally, chi-square tests were run to determine whether the differences in the use of linguistic means between the two languages were statistically significant.

Results and Discussion

The first stage in the analysis dealt with the rhetorical figures used in the headlines of sport newspapers within the two languages from the phonological point of view. Table 1 presents the results of analysis. It should be noted that the significance level of chi-square was set at 0.05.

Table 1. The Analysis of English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines from the Phonological Point of View

Phonological aspect	English	Persian
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Rhyme	28 (10.5%)	40 (15.5%)
Rhythm	86 (32.5%)	75 (29.4%)
Alliteration	92 (34.5%)	112 (43.5%)
Assonance	24 (9%)	30 (11.6%)
Graphic aspect of the text	28 (10.5%)	0 (0%)
Transliteration	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Homophones	8 (3%)	0 (0%)
Total	266	257
Chi-square		0.0

By looking at the overall occurrence of rhetorical figures in English and Persian corpora in Table 1, it was found that rhythm, graphic aspect of the text, and homophone were frequently used in the English sport newspaper headlines, more than Persian ones. On the contrary, in the Persian sport newspaper headlines, rhyme, alliteration, and assonance were preferred. Moreover, neither English nor Persian newspapers employed transliteration.

For instance, concerning the phonological category, alliteration outnumbered the other sub-variables in the Persian corpus (112), and it was significantly more than the English corpus (92). For example

(1) Baziye bozorge Brazil (Brazil's big game) (Abrar Varzeshi, 28 June 2014).

(2) Sorry at sixes and sevens (The Daily Mail, 11 July 2014).

Repetition of the sound /b/ in example 1 and the sound /s/ in example 2 makes these three headlines alliterative. According to Khodabandeh (2007), alliteration can make advertising words rhythmic and pleasing to the ear, usually making people love the advertisement at first sight. English copy writers try to compose more rhythmic, alliterative slogans to help people to recall the advertisements and be attracted to them at first glance.

Linguistically, sport journalists often use the rhetorical device of alliteration to make potentially unmemorable headlines or phrases more interesting purely in their pronunciation. They also choose alliterative headlines to attract the attention of soccer fans to the story. By doing this, they can promote readers to buy and read sport newspapers.

To give another example concerning the phonological category, the use of *rhythm* appeared to be as much a characteristic of the English sport newspapers headlines as it was of the Persian ones. However, there were rhythmical headlines in the English corpus (86), slightly higher than the Persian corpus (78). For example:

(3) In Arzhantin mordani bordani ast (This dying Argentina is easy to win) (Gol, 21 June 2014).

(4) Job done..... Now for the hun (The Daily Star , 28 June 2014).

According to Lapsanska (2006), for the text to be memorable and linguistically arranged, copywriters often use language with rhythmical arrangement. The reason is that it has a great emotional and recalling effect. Nowadays people need things to help them to recall at the right time and rhythm has such an effect. That is why English and Persian copywriters of sport newspapers may employ more rhythmic headlines for the people to recall the headlines of hot sport news easier.

A rhythmic headline not only attracts the readers but also assists comprehending that headline. In fact, both native and nonnative readers enjoy reading rhythmic headlines, and if the number of such headlines is smaller in the Persian newspaper, it might be because of the context of journalists in Iran. Probably, under the impact of instability of socio-political context of the country, news writers are less concerned with the aesthetic aspects of writing and more with the news itself.

The frequency of rhetorical figures from the lexical and morphological point of view within English and Persian languages is given in Table 2 below.

Table 2. The Analysis of English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines from the Lexical and Morphological Point of View

Lexical and morphological aspect	English				Persian			
	S p	I	P v	P	S p	I	P v	P
Verb phrase	27	19	12	4	16	6	8	0
	62 (14.5%)				30 (5.4%)			
Noun phrase	96 (22.5%)				136 (24.9%)			
Adjectives	40 (9.3%)				84 (15.3%)			
Numerals	40 (9.3%)				32 (5.9%)			
Foreign words	0 (0%)				36 (6.6%)			
Intersexuality	12 (2.8%)				4 (0.8%)			
F w p	160 (37.2%)				96 (17.5%)			

Idiomatic constructions	3 (0.7%)	88 (16.1%)
Collocations	16 (3.7%)	40 (7.5%)
Total	429	546
Chi-square	0.0	

Abbreviations: Fwp= Formation of new words and phrases- Sp= Simple present- I= Imperatives- Pv= Phrasal verb- P= Passive.

As shown in Table 2, the rhetorical figures of verb phrase, numerals, intertextuality, and formation of new words and phrases occurred more in English sport newspaper headlines, while noun phrase, adjectives, foreign words, idiomatic constructions, and collocations transpired significantly in the Persian corpus. For example, the rhetorical device of foreign words showed a remarkable difference between English and Persian. The frequency of foreign words in the Persian corpus was 36, while the occurrence of this rhetorical device in the English headlines was extremely rare. For instance:

(5) Mesi *merci* amma heif! (Messi merci, but a pity) (Navad 26 June 2014).

(6) Avalin *hattricke* yek jam baraye Moeller (The first hattrick of a cup for Moeller) (Abrar Varzeshi, 17 June 2014).

Merci and *hattrick* are the foreign words that are utilized in the above examples. One possible reason for the great occurrence of foreign words in Persian may arise from the fact that there are many professional and specialized expressions in football which are common and well-known among all soccer fans. As it was obvious from the above examples, Persian copywriters left some special words of football in their original form since sport readers come across these headlines in other media, and it will be easier for them to recall the headlines if it is always presented in one language rather than in different languages.

For example, as you see in example 6, *hattrick* is an English word. It is easy to translate this word in Persian, yet the copywriter leaves it in its original form to make it more persuasive and memorable. Furthermore, when sport copywriters use foreign words in the headlines, they add more signs of prestige and modernization to these headlines and can positively affect soccer fans' attitudes toward the sport events and their intentions to buy the newspaper. Piller (2001) contends that the primary aim of the use of English in headlines is to attract a reader's attention. Consequently, another likely reason for using foreign words in Persian sport headlines could be the attention-grabbing function of headlines.

The rhetorical device of *formation of new words and phrases* is another category which made differences between English and Persian sport newspaper headlines. This rhetoric device occurred more in the English corpus (160) than the Persian one (96). For example:

(7) Germany *selfies* galore as champions return home (The Daily Mail, 13 July 2014).

(8) Bitter tweets in *twitter* history (The Daily Mirror, 12 July 2014).

(9) Hamleye yoozhaye sefid be oghabhaye *sabz poosh* (The attack of cheetahs in white to eagles in green) (Navad, 16 June 2014).

Selfies and *twitter* are some examples of generating new words and phrases in English as well as *sabz poosh* in Persian. Due to the specialty of football and the news relating to many complicated names of teams, organizations, football players, and nations, sport copywriters use

the new words, abbreviations, and acronyms of the words which are one of the most important ways to express the maximum volume of information in the smallest space. For example, *selfie* and *twitter* are the new words in English language, and when sport journalists utilize them in the headlines, they may be known and attractive for the soccer fans. Some new words are ephemeral, tied to cultural or technical concepts which fade in significance. Others stay the course, usually because they represent concepts which have become permanent features of society (Maxwell,2006). For instance, *selfie* is a good example of how popular culture can raise the profile of a trendy or slang word and normalize it. In addition, due to the progress of technology and social media day by day, new words and phrases such as *tweet* or *twitter* have been formed. Actually, modernity and globalization have brought technology into the everyday life of people around the world.

By this fact, English sport journalists utilize new words and phrases in the headlines to attract the readers' attention. Persian language is not an exception from this reality. There are numerous new words and phrases in Persian language that sport journalists employ in the headlines to motivate and engage the readers for reading the sport events in newspapers. Kafi (1984) explained that the Persian language contains a fantastic capability, which can rarely be found in any other languages, namely, combinational potentiality. Combinational is an active potentiality in the present Persian language. Most of the new words have been made based on this potentiality, like *sabz poosh* (*wearing green*) which is compounding in the above example.

Tables 3 and 4 BELOW present the results of the analysis of English and Persian sport newspaper headlines from the syntactic point of view. This aspect was investigated from two points of view: Sentence type and sentence structure.

Table 3. The Analysis of English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines from the Syntactic Point of View, Sentence Types

Syntactic aspect(1)	Sentence types					Total	Chi-square
	Declaratives	Interrogatives	Imperatives	Exclamatives	Phrase		
English	172 (51.8%)	4 (1.2%)	28 (8.5%)	20 (6%)	108 (32.5%)	332	0.0
Persian	202 (66.2%)	8 (2.6%)	4 (1.5%)	17 (5.5%)	74 (24.2%)	305	

The analysis of headlines showed significant differences in syntactic features of English and Persian 2014 Football World Cup newspaper headlines. However, in some of the syntactic features in Table 3, such as the use of interrogative, imperative, and exclamative sentences, English and Persian sport headlines are relatively similar.

Table 4. The Analysis of English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines from the Syntactic Point of View, Sentence Structure.

Syntactic	Sentence structure
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c aspect(2)	Schematic patterning				Ellipsis	Incomplete sentences	Total	Chi-square
	Parallelism	Anaphora	Epiphora	Antimetabole				
English	16 (11.5%)	0	0	0	36 (25.7%)	88 (62.8%)	140	0.0
Persian	76 (30.7%)	0	0	0	17 (7%)	154 (62.3%)	247	

And also in Table 4, Persian sport newspaper headlines used incomplete sentences (154) more than the English corpus (88). Parallelism was the next category. The use of parallelism in English corpus (11.5%) was lower than Persian ones (30.7%). The third figure of rhetoric to be considered is ellipsis. English sport newspaper headlines employed ellipsis (36) more than Persian ones. Further, according to this table, some schematic patterning like anaphora, epiphora, and antimetabole were hardly ever used in the English and Persian corpora. To give an example, syntactically, the English corpus had a higher frequency of *phrase* in the headlines (108) than the Persian ones (74). For instance:

(10) Last tango for Messi (The sun, 23 June 2014).

(11) Dovomin shegeftiye jam (The second surprise of cup) (Navad, 17 June 2014).

This feature of English sport newspaper headlines can be also assigned to individual and social changes. When people are busy with themselves, they do not have enough time to deal with time-consuming matters like reading, memorizing, and recalling long, wordy sentences of advertisements. If they find a newspaper headline, full of hard-to-interpret verbs, they will pass it unnoticed.

Thus, it may be that, day by day, English copywriters have tried more to make their headlines as much shorter as possible, employing small and catchy phrases. They know what motivates the soccer fans to read the newspaper is a newspaper headline which is as much brief, concise, and informative as possible. This corresponds to the findings by Tahririan (1995) mentioning the great occurrence of phrase in Persian and English advertising slogans and newspaper headlines which was related to the importance of brevity in these genres.

Newspaper headlines should be brief and impactful. Phrases are quickly read and fit into a small space on a newspaper. For instance, in the headline "*last tango for Messi*", the sport copywriter employed the rhetorical device of phrase to attract the readers' attention and make it more memorable and persuasive; being short helps being memorable.

The results of the analysis of English and Persian sport newspaper headlines from the semantic point of view are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5. The Analysis of English and Persian Sport Newspaper Headlines from the Semantic Point of View

Semantic aspect	English	Persian
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Personification	8 (5.7%)	32 (20%)
Simile	0 (0%)	4 (2.5%)
Hyperbole	28 (19.85%)	4 (2.5%)
Metaphor	24 (17.05%)	34 (21.5%)
Metonymy	50 (35.4%)	72 (45%)
Antithesis	6 (4.2%)	8 (5%)
Polysemy	17 (12.1%)	6 (3.5%)
Homonymy	8 (5.7%)	0 (0%)
Total	141	160
Chi-square		0.0

Based on analyzing the data semantically and the findings, it was revealed that there are differences and similarities between English and Persian 2014 Football World Cup newspapers headlines. For instance, as it was shown in table 5, metaphor occurred in the Persian corpus more frequently (34) than the English corpus (24) although the difference was not significant. The two corpora were almost similar in the use of the rhetorical device of metaphor. What follows are English and Persian examples in this regard:

(12) Iran aatashe zire khakestar ast (Iran is fire beneath the ash) (Abrar Varzeshi, 15 June 2014).

(13) Messi the perfect ten (The Daily Mirror, 18 June 2014).

With more metaphors, the headlines would be more attractive to the readers, fulfilling the quality of sensation even before the texts are read (Lakoff, 1993). Sports, especially football, receive high attention among all the people across the world. Based on this fact, it is plausible to conclude that sport copywriters use some strategies like metaphor in the headlines to attract the readers' attention. Seyed-Gohrab (2012) states metaphors are the heart of Persian language and they are used for a wide range of purposes in different genres like sport.

One possible reason for the use of metaphor in Persian newspaper headlines may arise from the fact that the growing rhetorical virtuosity such as metaphor in news can be related to a stylistic development in Persian writing (Seyed-Gohrab, 2012). Therefore, sport copywriters have tried to make their headlines more appealing to the readers by making more metaphorical headlines. The English language also uses a range of metaphors in newspaper headlines. Aitchison (1987) noted that it commonly occurs that in newspaper articles and headlines about English football games, the names of the teams may select particular metaphors for defeat and victory. It is important to mention that the metaphor cognition is universal across cultures such as

in English and Persian, but at the same time, it has some differences in their applications because of their different social and cultural backgrounds (Kovecses,2006).

Different lifestyles and environments spawn different metaphors; not all metaphors mean the same to all cultures (Kukulska-Hulme,1999). As an example, in the Persian language, the metaphor *Iran aatashe zire khakestar ast*, has a different literal meaning (the fire beneath the ash) and an intended meaning (the calm before the storm). English people never know what it means because there are social and cultural differences between the English and Iranian people. Therefore, this headline might be interesting and attracting for the newspaper readers from the same cultural background. To give another example of the semantic aspect, the rhetorical device of hyperbole occurred more in the English corpus (28) than the Persian one (4). For instance:

(14) Ban this monster (The Daily Telegraph, 25 June 2014).

(15) Aarzhanin mord ta bord. (Argentina tried to death to win) (Abrar Varzeshi,22 June 2014).

Generally, hyperbole has been used in the English literature for many centuries. Heroic dramas, which are dramas with an emphasis on grandeur and excess, often make use of hyperbole to extend the effect and epic nature of this genre. Modern tales also make use of hyperbole to exaggerate the feats and characteristics of their protagonists (JenSence, 2012). Hence, one reason can be attributed to the fact that, hyperbole is used in English to lay emphasis on a point or real situation (Cuddon, 1995).

Moreover, according to Cuddon (1995), in order to express their thoughts and opinions, English poets use hyperbole more expressively. By knowing this reality, English sport journalists resort to hyperbole in the headlines to increase the effect and the strength of their words. For example, in the sentence '*ban this monster*', the copywriter intended to exaggerate what Suarez did when he bit the Italian defender's shoulder. Suarez was not literally a *monster*, but the copywriter used the *monster* hyperbole to emphasize how aggressive he was. In fact, the copywriter employed hyperbole for extra effect on the readers in a more efficient way than through plain language.

Another reason can be explained by the fact that hyperbole is commonly used to grab the readers' attention. There are many sources of sport news in England such as TV, radio, online news, and newspapers. Thus, sport copywriters try to utilize some techniques to attract the readers' attention, and hyperbole has such an effect. Typically, English sport journalists use hyperbole to exaggerate some points in order to boost the sales and popularity of their newspapers. For example, in the headline '*dying for the world cup*', the readers understood the term *dying* was exaggerated and literally meant trying hard. Nonetheless, the term might effectively grab the attention of the intended audience.

Another reason can be that hyperbole might be frequently used in the sport newspaper headlines to offer a humorous description of somebody or something. In the English literature, hyperbole is made use of in order to make humorous effects (Cuddon, 1995). Accordingly, in English sport newspaper headlines collected for this study, hyperbole was utilized to attach a fun value to the headlines in order to persuade the readers to pay more attention to the headlines.

Conclusion

This study was an attempt to investigate the similarities and differences between English and Persian football newspapers headlines (published during 12 June to 13 July 2014 in England and Iran) in the use of linguistic means or rhetorical figures. The results of the present study disclosed that there were mostly significant differences between the English and Persian corpora.

Concerning similarities, the results revealed that the two corpora were almost similar in the use of *rhythm* and *metaphor*. This similarity is attributed to the fact that both English and

Persian sport copy writers are aware of the rhetorical norms and preferences of the sport newspaper genre. In other words, it seems both English and Persian journalists are familiar with the preferred patterns of writing like rhythm and metaphor in order to make newspapers headlines vivid, conspicuous, and impressive with high readability.

However, regarding differences, the results indicated that *alliteration*, *foreign words*, *idiomatic constructions*, and *personification* are utilized more by Iranian sport journalists. On the other hand, the employment of *formation of new words and phrases*, *hyperbole*, and *phrases* are higher in English sport newspapers. One possible explanation for these differences between English and Persian corpora might be the cultural and linguistic variations between two communities.

Language cannot be viewed in isolation from the culture it is part of. Since language is not only a component, but also a faithful reflection of culture, its rhetoric is likely to be shaped by the main cultural traits specific to each nation (Hofstede & Minkov, 2012). Thus, this was perceived from the results that besides linguistic differences between Iranian and English sport journalists, they are culturally different as well.

Implications

The results of contrasting English and Persian sport newspapers headlines in terms of linguistic means can have pedagogical implications for teaching journalistic English and Persian, translation, and also ESP/EAP learners and teachers.

In teaching journalistic English and also Persian to students of journalism, the teacher who is familiar with the similarities and differences between the newspaper headlines of the two languages will know the potential areas of difficulty and can be better prepared and equipped to teach them. As a result, teachers may be able to help their students get a better understanding of the language of newspapers.

With respect to translation, rhetorical figures are broadly used in newspapers headlines to reinforce their persuasive power and to enrich them, producing a special atmosphere to printed ones. Consequently, when translating the newspapers headlines, they should be taken into consideration. Contrasting English and Persian newspapers headlines can help learners become more conscious of the features of headlines in the two languages and help them to avoid problems when they translate.

Finally, the present study may have implications for raising students' and instructors' awareness of the generic and schematic structures of newspapers headlines. Raising ESP/EAP students' awareness of various rules and conventions such as rhetorical figures can make them sensitive to the genre structure and can enable them to understand, articulate, and reflect on newspapers headlines from the point of their own experiences.

Likewise, the awareness also concerns teachers. Being aware of linguistic similarities and differences of newspapers headlines in English and Persian, language teachers can offer more effective descriptions of language. Finally, the present study may have implications for raising students' and instructors' awareness of the generic and schematic structures of newspapers headlines.

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