

A contrastive discourse analysis of English newspaper headlines: Facing syntactic challenges in translation

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Abstract

Among the various news genres, the distinctive telegraphic syntax and stylistic features of newspaper headlines have drawn a good deal of linguistic attention. However, no substantive analysis has been conducted to compare English headlines published in native and non-native contexts. To this end, the present study was done in two phases. In the first phase, 2000 English headlines were randomly selected from the electronic versions of *New York Times* (1000) and *Tehran Times* (1000) and analyzed syntactically and stylistically based on Haixin's (2003) model. Results indicated differences in syntactic and stylistic features of the headlines of the two newspapers. In the second phase, 26 male and female senior BA students of English were asked to translate 60 headlines chosen from the two newspapers. The analysis of the translations revealed that, in general, the participants experience greater difficulty comprehending and translating English headlines of *New York Times*, suggesting contextual variations being important in comprehending and translating headlines.

Keywords: headline, syntactic features, stylistic features, New York Times, Tehran Times

1. Introduction

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 most citizens, news is perhaps the type of written discourse with which they are confronted most frequently (Fuertes-Olivera, Velasco-Sacristan, Arribas-Bano, & Samaniego-Fernandez, 2001; Kronrod & Engel, 2001; Van Dijk, 1986). Nowadays, newspapers are also frequently used in language classrooms by teachers and learners. Other things aside, one thing that makes newspapers attractive for language study is the wide variety of genres that one finds in them (Bell, 1991). Genre specificity, thus, within the page of a newspaper is so significant that any attempt to use a newspaper without being aware of it can become misleading (Bhatia, 1993, p. 161). Language teachers tend to use newspapers for three reasons: to develop language competencies including reading comprehension and grammar/vocabulary work, to focus on aspects of the target society and its culture, and to stimulate discussion of issues raised by the news (Grundy, 1993, p. 3).

The language of newspaper headlines is elliptical and compressed, yet it is quite different from other condensed codes such as telegrams or Short Message System (SMS). Often, the fractured grammar and idiosyncratic vocabulary of English headlines challenge the understanding even of native speakers. Headlines have been studied quite extensively not only by journalists but also by linguists. The analytical study of headlines might go back to more than 40 years ago, when their linguistic complexity was investigated in 3000 headlines (Brisau, 1969). Brisau argued that the linguistic makeup of the headline could vary widely from one newspaper to another.

The linguistic make-up of the headline might also take shape with the social position of the addressee. Van Dijk (1988), for example in analyzing over 400 headlines in the Dutch press reporting the 1985 Tamil panic, found that the authorities dominated first position in the headline, with active verbs. When the disadvantaged Tamils were mentioned first, the verb tended to be passive.

Linguistic organization (or the rhetorical modes) also varies across languages. Scollon (2000), in his study of Chinese and English editions,

argued that the English headlines, following general Western journalistic practice, put the main point right in the headline in what had also been called a deductive rhetorical mode. The Chinese headline, on the other hand, used the headline to establish the setting but did not provide any further information about the content of the talks, which was the inductive ordering of the topics elsewhere found in contrast between Chinese and English language news stories. Along the same line, Khodabandeh (2007a) conducted a contrastive study of English and Persian newspaper headlines and concluded that, syntactically and morphologically, the headlines of English and Persian are similar in using dynamic verbs, active voice, short words, declarative sentences, finite clauses, and simple sentences and different in the use of tense forms, headline types, modification, and omission of words. Ptashchenko (2008) studied the headlines of English speaking newspapers and magazines as an independent and effective persuasive element of a text and argued that the choice of words reflected not only differences in evaluation (positive or negative) or in emotions, but it was also able to thrust reader's attitude to the core of a message and to direct and control one's perception and comprehension. Language can be a very powerful and persuasive tool which draws the readers' attention, being operated by skilful editors in a news paper or magazine headline.

Dor (2003) suggested an explanatory functional characterization of newspaper headlines. Couched within Sperber and Wilson's (1986) relevance theory, he claimed that headlines provide their readers with the optimal ratio between contextual effect and processing effort and direct readers to construct the optimal context for interpretation. His analysis explains why the construction of a successful headline requires an understanding of the readers—their state-of-knowledge, their beliefs and expectations, and their cognitive styles—no less than it requires an understanding of the story.

Among other parts, headlines in newspapers have the highest readership (Khodababdeh, 2007a). In describing the essence of a complicated news story in a few words, a headline informs quickly and accurately and piques the reader's curiosity (Ungerer, 2000). Having their own specific structure, headlines are frequently reported to be difficult to comprehend by English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. This is hardly surprising, for, as Waterhouse (1993, as cited in

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Sanderson, 1999, p. 29) points out, this genre is not one that people actually use in normal everyday speech. Due to difficulties that EFL students report about understanding English headlines, it is assumed that if the rules and tactics of headlines are understood, a lot of difficulties may disappear. The key to ease the difficulty of this special genre lies in analyzing newspaper headlines syntactically and stylistically, to investigate the variations involved. Khodabandeh (2007b) analyzed some problems which students face in translating headlines. She assigned 58 graduate Iranian students of English a task which required them to translate 30 Persian and 30 English headlines. Analysis of the translations revealed grammatical followed by lexical and discursal difficulties.

The study in linguistic, syntactic, and stylistic features of English newspaper headlines has been short (Khodabandeh, 2007b) and the scarcity is greater in relation to English headlines produced in socially and linguistically diverse contexts. In fact, up to this time, there has hardly been any substantive comparative analysis of the English headlines written in different contexts, particularly in Persian (Persian-English hereafter) and in English contexts to discover possible variations. The comparison allows one to see whether and how the context of situation— native or non-native English contexts— determines or affects the rhetorical structure of headlines which may consequently affect their comprehension by EFL learners. Therefore, considering the massive role they have in reading the news, the present study is an attempt to see if the context in which the English headlines are written plays any role in the syntactic and stylistic choices and if it leads to difficulties in understanding of English newspaper headlines by EFL learners. The present study, thus, seeks to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent are the Persian-English headlines syntactically and stylistically similar to the native English ones?
2. Does the context of situation in which the headlines are written affect the comprehension of headlines by EFL learners?

2. Methodology

2.1 Materials

The study relied upon English headlines selected from the electronic versions of two newspapers: *The New York Times*, representing English newspapers published in a native speaking English country, and *Tehran Times*, representing English newspapers published in a non-native context, 1000 from each. These two papers have prestige, popularity (the former at international and the latter at national level), and a large circulation. The headlines were issued during a twenty-day period from July 22, to August 15, 2009 except for three days (July 24, July 31, and August 14) due to the Internet connection problems. Each day, 50 headlines were chosen randomly, amounting to 2000 headlines on the whole, and thus the number guaranteed that the sample would be representative. The total number of words in the English dataset reached 7781 and in the Persian-English sample it was 8482.

2.2 Participants

Twenty-six male and female senior BA students of English, majoring in English language and literature or English language translation from Shahid Chamran University of Ahvaz took part in the present research. At the time of conducting this research, they had already passed the course *Reading Journalistic English*, in which linguistic and stylistic features of different components of an English newspaper are taught. Thus, there was no ground for controlling the students' field of study since the course is passed by both groups.

2.3 Instruments

The English headlines were characteristically scrutinized for syntactic and stylistic features in light of the framework adopted in this study. The syntactic features of headlines embody the type and linguistic characteristics. Headlines may come under such types as straight, question, quotation, and feature (Haixin, 2003). Straight headlines simply tell the reader the main topic of the story.

1# Sixteen killed in Iraq bomb attack (*Tehran Times*, 22, 7,

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2009)

2# Britain says it fears 2 hostages in Iraq are dead (*The New York Times*, 30, 7, 2009)

Most question headlines are not really typical questions at all. The purpose of a typical question is to seek information or create limbo, and it is the news story which is supposed to provide information to the readers (Shams, 2007, p. 32).

3# What is the sound of 200 guitars wailing? (*The New York Times*, 26, 7, 2009)

4# Do working women get lower quality sleep than men? (*Tehran Times*, 15, 8, 2009)

The third type, direct quotation, serves a number of functions. First, by using a direct quote, the headline writer implies that the reported statement is an *incontrovertible fact* or *scientific discovery* to be relied on. Second, using a direct quote permits the headline writer to distance himself and the newspaper from approving of the statement (Haixin, 2003).

5# Leader has ordered president to dismiss Rahim-Mashaii: top MP (*Tehran Times*, 22, 7, 2009)

6# Mexico: Drug smuggler arrested in scheme to kill president (*The New York Times*, 11, 8, 2009)

Not all newspaper stories report serious events or features. Some stories are included because they are highly unusual while others are very amusing. For such stories, the headline writer uses a clever, attention-getting and unusual headline to catch the reader's interest (Shams, 2007, p. 33).

7# Man on a mission (*Tehran Times*, 11, 8, 2009)

8# For today's graduate, just one word: statistics (*The New York Times*, 8, 8, 2009)

Besides the type, headlines can also be linguistically described in terms of deletion, use of acronyms, premodification, and action deletion, briefly described below:

Given that the space is limited, lexical words are far more useful to the headline writer than grammatical words. Therefore, wherever no severe ambiguity results, such lexical items as verbs, articles, demonstrative adjectives, possessive adjectives, and titles (Mr., Miss and Mrs.) are often left out in headlines (Haixin, 2003, p. 34).

9# Ahmadinejad seen as increasingly vulnerable since re-election (*Tehran times*, 27, 7, 2009)

10# U.K. regulator scrutinizing high-frequency trading (*The New York Times*, 4, 8, 2009)

Moreover, headline writers use acronyms and abbreviations to save space.

11# \$1 billion to save IKCO (*Tehran Times*, 29, 7, 2009)

12# S.E.C. starts crackdown on 'flash' trading (*The New York Times*, 5, 8, 2009)

The third group is a premodifier that precedes the word it modifies (McLoughlin, 2000, p. 15).

13# Majlis and administration agree on economic reform plan (*Tehran Times*, 5, 8, 2009)

14# Gunmen kill 5 Iranian pilgrims in Iraq (*The New York Times*, 23, 7, 2009)

The fourth group of headlines often combines phrases or a series of nouns used as adjectives blocked together without any verbs or conjunctions.

15# India's nuclear submarine dream, still miles to go (*Tehran Times*, 9, 8, 2009)

16# Given BB&T liberty, but not bailout (*The New York Times*, 2, 8, 2009)

To attract and involve readers in news stories, newspaper editors construct the headlines in a way that would influence the readers' feelings. To achieve this goal, they use the following stylistic devices. Rhyme: identity of the final accented vowel and all the following sounds in two words.

17# We all scream for ice cream! (*Tehran Times*, 30, 7, 2009)

18# Exiled Honduran leader make 2nd trip to border (*The New York Times*, 27, 7, 2009)

Alliteration: the repetition of a sound at the beginning of two or more words,

19# A rocky road to the election in Afghanistan (*Tehran Times*, 4, 8, 2009)

20# Nostalgic trip home for a hip-hop icon (*The New York Times*, 10, 8, 2009)

Ambiguity: the use of words or structures that have two meanings and, hence, lead to headlines with double meaning,

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21# New vaccine may contain rabies (Shams, 2007, p. 43)

22# Squade helps dog bite victim (Shams, 2007, p. 43)

Homophony: words pronounced alike but different in meaning and spelling,

23# A tale about a tail (Shams, 2007, p. 43)

24# Friends to carry bier at drunken star's funeral (Shams, 2007, p. 43)

Homonymy: one word with two distinct meanings.

25# Women who smoke have lighter children (Shams, 2007, p. 44)

26# She cannot bear children (Shams, 2007, p. 44)

2.4 Procedure

The study was carried out in two phases: First, the headlines were analyzed by applying the above paradigm. Some 200 headlines were analyzed initially. To guarantee coding reliability of analysis, another applied linguist, who was acquainted with the analytical model was requested to analyze the headlines. The minor differences were then discussed and complete agreement was reached on the analysis. The frequency of each category used in each group of 1000 headlines was computed and then frequencies were compared in detail. Second, in order to meet the challenge of the headlines at the syntactic level, the participants were asked to translate 60 selected headlines chosen from the two newspapers –30 from each– into their native language. The headlines (Persian-English and Native English) were randomized so that students would not be affected by the order of presentation of the headlines. No time restriction was imposed in order to allow the participants sufficient time for analysis and subsequent translation. They were allowed to use dictionaries because their vocabulary knowledge was not controlled in the study. The percentage of their correct translations of the headlines was computed, and *chi-square* was then administered to see if the differences between frequencies were significant and the results were later discussed. The criterion for judging the accuracy of their interpretations was correct syntactic structures and translation of the headlines accurately and completely.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Syntactic Features

The occurrence of straight headlines in both papers was the highest, but still there was a considerably significant difference in the distribution of this type of headline. A substantial difference was also observed in the occurrence of feature headlines in both papers. Quotation headlines were very low in New York Times but moderate in Tehran Times and the difference was statistically significant. On the other hand, question headlines were kept in low profile in both papers with no statistically meaningful difference. Table 1 exhibits the distribution of the headline types in both newspapers.

Table 1: Frequencies and Chi-Square analyses of headline types

No	Headline Types	NYT (%)	TT (%)	χ^2
1	Straight	690 (66.80)	971 (84)	47.53
2	Question	16 (1.55)	17 (1.47)	0.03
3	Quotation	17 (1.65)	97 (8.39)	58.062
4	Feature	310 (30)	71 (6.14)	149.924
Total		1033 (100)	1156 (100)	

(critical $\chi^2 = 3.84$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 2$)

Newspaper headlines published in native and non-native English contexts differ in types, use of abbreviations and acronyms as linguistic features, and rhyme as a stylistic feature. Headlines are, however, similar in the use of such linguistic features as deletion, action deletion, premodification, and the stylistic feature of alliteration.

The newspapers evinced differing tendencies in the use of feature and straight headlines both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitatively, *Tehran Times* uses more straight headlines while *New York Times* relies more on feature headlines. Straight headlines, being typologically the least complex, are simpler to understand. Analysis of the participants' translations confirmed this hypothesis, where they committed more errors translating feature as compared to straight headlines.

Straight and feature headlines in both newspapers differ qualitatively, too. A noticeably important source of variation was the

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plethora of idioms and expressions employed in *New York Times*, as shown in the example below:

27# Toilet had it coming! (*The New York Times*, 11, 8, 2009)

Political, cultural, and religious factors seem to represent a major setback in the use of English lexicon in *Tehran Times*. Note the following example, where religious restrictions would not allow *Taking more than beer* to occur in the Iranian press. Note also that since alcoholic drinks are prohibited in the public and people do not usually drink, the concept of the amount of time spent drinking a beer is rather far fetched.

28# In New York, it takes more than beer to end feuds (*The New York Times*, 1, 8, 2009)

Moreover, some of the structures used in the headlines in *New York Times* seem to be more difficult to decipher. The analysis of the participants' translations also proved this complication involved, where they faltered in the structure as in the following:

29# Iran, then I ate (*The New York Times*, 15, 8, 2009)

30# Given BB&T liberty, but not a bailout (*The New York Times*, 2, 8, 2009)

An additional variation noticed was the wit and the humor employed in the headlines in *New York Times* while this was hardly traceable in *Tehran Times*. In the following example, personalizing the pig as having a local fame is, in fact, making a joke out of it, a sort of humor.

31# Roaming free in Florida, a pig gains local fame (*The New York Times*, 25, 7, 2009)

On the other hand, the use of quotation headlines in *Tehran Times* outnumbered *New York Times*. Moreover, the aims beyond quotations were also different in the two sources. Quotation headlines deployed in *Tehran Times* may be categorized into four different groupings. The first category refers to headlines in which the *saying* is something ordinary or a general issue but quoting it from a man in power increases the validity of the words.

32# Quran should be understood and practiced: Leader (*Tehran Times*, 26, 7, 2009)

In this example, *Leader* has the highest political position in Iran, and also he is considered the religious and spiritual leader of Iranian

Muslims. Thus, the headline writer is asking people to follow the advice because the supreme *Leader* has said so.

Some quotation headlines in *Tehran Times* are those for which anonymous sources are provided. It is believed that the major purpose beyond such quotation headlines is developing rumors and spreading negative or positive views of somebody or something. In the example below, the headline writer tries to develop a positive view of his country in the region by quoting it from a *Lebanese MP*! Who is this *MP* exactly?

33# Lebanese MP: Iran is an important regional power (*Tehran Times*, 1, 8, 2009)

The third category can be subsumed under the second one. Under the current political turmoil, the *Tehran Times* journalists sometimes have to conservatively disown some of the controversial news; otherwise, they may be accused of threatening national security. In the following example, the news might be the writer's view point rather than *MP*'s!

34# Ahmadinejad not consulting Majlis on cabinet makeup: *MP* (*Tehran Times*, 1, 8, 2009)

The fourth category of quotation headlines found in *Tehran Times* appears to be neutral or without political sensitivity. They revolve around scientific findings or minor social issues. Note the following example in which the headline writer capitalizes on a new medical discovery.

35# Superficial blood clots may be warning sign: Study (*Tehran Times*, 22, 7, 2009)

In *New York Times*, quotation headlines fall into two different categories. The majority of quotation headlines in the English newspaper belong to the first above-mentioned category where, mostly, for the sake of the news related to an event being authentic enough, the exact words of the associated authority are mentioned.

36# Niger: Opposition leader arrested (*The New York Times*, 12, 8, 2009)

The authority in charge of the *arrest* of the *opposition leader* is *Niger* government from which the news is quoted. In the second category, the headline writers play very smart. A *saying* is quoted from somebody, not for the sake of the news itself but in fact, pragmatically, the *saying* implies a message to the reader. This way they let the reader mock and

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make fun of or judge the speaker. In the example that follows, the readers would either make fun of or judge Ahmadinejad for such a claim.

37# Iran refuted Western theory of government: Ahmadinejad
(*The New York Times*, 27, 7, 2009)

Table 2 reveals the linguistic features as they appeared in the sample headlines representative of both papers. Deletion, premodification, and action deletion occurred almost equally in the two groups. Premodification prevailed in the headlines, followed by deletion as a dominant linguistic feature. This similarity can be attributed to the nature of this genre, that the above features mark the patterns adopted in writing English headlines. Table 2 also reveals that the occurrence of acronyms and abbreviations in *Tehran Times* headline samples outnumbered the headlines in *New York Times*, suggesting a statistically meaningful difference. In *New York Times*, around 70 percent of abbreviations deployed were *U.S.* suggesting the limited diversity of this strategy. Other abbreviations like *VP*, *MP*, *IRGC* (Islamic Revolution Guard Corps) were more frequent in the non-native newspaper headlines

Table 2: Frequencies and Chi-Square analyses of the linguistic features of headlines

No	Linguistic Features of Headlines	NYT (%)	TT(%)	χ^2
1	Deletion	534 (39.96)	574 (36.33)	1.444
2	Acronyms and abbreviations	115 (8.6)	231 (14.62)	38.890
3	Premodification	611 (45.69)	710 (44.94)	1.419
4	Action deletion	77 (5.76)	65 (4.11)	1.014
Total		1337 (100)	1580 (100)	

(critical $\chi^2= 3.84$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $df= 2$)

3.2 Stylistic Features

Of the stylistic features of headlines, only two features were studied in the representative sample of headlines: rhyme and alliteration. The other three features –ambiguity, homophony, and homonym– did not occur in the headlines and so they were excluded from the analyses. Table 3 exhibits the occurrence of these two stylistic features in the newspaper headlines. In both samples, alliteration occurred almost equally high

with a slight fluctuation while the occurrence of rhyme was comparatively low and the difference was statistically meaningful.

Table 3: Frequencies and Chi-Square analyses of stylistic features

No	Stylistic Features	English (%)	Persian-English (%)	χ^2
1	Rhyme	36 (11.96)	19 (5.77)	5.255
2	Alliteration	265 (88.04)	310 (94.23)	3.522
Total		301 (100)	329 (100)	

(critical $\chi^2= 3.84$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $df= 2$)

Results from the participants

Table 4 reveals the percentage of correct and incorrect translations as well as the participants' failure to translate headlines. In general, their correct translations were low, but the difference suggested contextual variations being important in comprehending and translating headlines.

Table 4: Observed frequencies and Chi-Square analysis of correct and incorrect translations of TT and NYT

No	Translations	NYT (%)	TT (%)	χ^2
1	Correct	107 (13.71)	216 (27.69)	36.783
2	Incorrect	632 (81.03)	536 (68.71)	39.825
3	Unanswered	41 (5.26)	28 (3.60)	0.926
Total		780 (100)	780 (100)	

(critical $\chi^2= 3.84$, $\alpha = 0.05$, $df= 2$)

Further comparison revealed that the participants' correct translations of the *Tehran Times* headlines outnumbered the headlines of *New York Times*, indicating the greater ease involved in rendering better translations of the former headlines. The students sometimes erroneously translated words and proper names into concepts that were far from the contextual requirement. In example (38), the concept *to woo* has wrongly been translated into Persian as *reject*, while in the next three examples proper nouns have been inappropriately translated. In (39), *Holder* is the name of a politician erroneously taken as having propositional content while in (40), *Reyes* and *Mets* as famous baseball teams in the U.S. have been misinterpreted as people and *House*, the

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reduced form of *White House*, was wrongly assumed as an ordinary house in (41).

38# How firms wooed a U.S. agency with billions to invest (*The New York Times*, 29, 7, 2009)

[chetor sherkætha mokha:lefæt kærdænd ba: yek a:zha:nse a:mri:ka:i: bæraye særmayegozari:ye chænd bi:li:oni:]

39# For Holder, inquiry on interrogation poses tough choice (*The New York Times*, 22, 7, 2009)

[bæra:ye negæhda:rænde tæhghi:gh dær ba:reye ba:zporsi: entekha:be sakhti: æst]

40# Reyes has another setback, and Mets add to the pain (*The New York Times*, 5, 8, 2009)

[a:gha:ye reyes shekæst khord væ a:gha:ye mets be dærd æfzu:d]

41# Senators progress as House delay again on health bill (*The New York Times*, 28, 7, 2009)

[sena:torah: pi:shræft kærdænd hæmantorke su:ræthesa:be sæla:mæte kha:ne tækhi:r kærd]

Most students have difficulty understanding acronyms and abbreviations. In the example that follows, VP stands for Vice-President, but since the student did not know the equivalent, he transferred it to his translations.

42# President writes to Leader on first VP resignation (*Tehran Times*, 26, 7, 2009)

[rai:sjomhu:r dær ba:reye bærkæna:ri:ye ævvæli:n VP be ræhbær nevesht]

The omission of certain popular words in English headlines can be a stumbling block in comprehending the headlines.

43# Syria boosts economic ties with Ø neighbors (*Tehran Times*, 22, 7, 2009)

[su:ri:ye hæmka:ri:ha:ye eghtesa:di: ra: ba: hæmsa:yeha:yi: æfza:yesh mi:dæhæd]

In the above example, the pronoun *its* is omitted and this omission causes ambiguity. It is not clear what *neighbors* refers to.

44# U.S., China gap could delay N. Korea talks (*Tehran Times*, 30, 7, 2009)

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[a:mri:ka: goft: chi:n mi:tæva:næd ba:ese tækhi:r dær
moza:kera:te koreye shoma:li: shævæd]

In the above example, the conjunction *and* is omitted to save space and is replaced by a comma. The participant wrongly translated the comma as a quotation mark which totally reversed the meaning of the headline.

Sometimes, the participants ignored whether a headline was declarative or interrogative, so the meaning of the headline was reversed in the translation.

45# The earth is warming? Adjust the thermostat (*The New York Times*, 11, 8, 2009)

[zæmi:n gærm mi:shævæd termosta:t ra: tænzɪ:m kon]

Example (45) is a question headline which raises doubt about the truth or accuracy of it, but the translation is a declarative sentence which conveys the feeling of certainty and so the whole meaning of the headline is reversed.

46# Iran, India to continue talks on Farzad Gas field (*Tehran Times*, 26, 7, 2009)

[iran væ hend sohbæthayesha:n ra: dær ba:reya mæntægheye
ga:ziye færza:d edame da:dænd]

Most students lack the knowledge of special tenses of English headlines. In English headlines, infinitive refers to the future but the students wrongly translated it in the past tense (Example 46); simple present tense refers to the past but it was erroneously translated in the simple present tense in example 47.

47# Teams visit disabled war veterans on behalf of Leader (*Tehran Times*, 28, 7, 2009)

[gu:ru:hi: æz tæræfe ræhbær mælu:li:ne jængi: ra: mola:gha:t
mi:konænd]

4. Conclusion

The analysis of headlines shows diversity in some syntactic and stylistic features of newspaper headlines. These differences were discussed in relation to type and style of headlines. The differences reveal the journalists syntactic and stylistic choices motivated by the context for their headlines. For these choices, readers' expectations are a very important factor. Political, social, cultural, and historical features of each context are unique, and both journalists and readers living and

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growing in a context have their own personal experiences and backgrounds. All these factors affect the way a headline is chosen for a news story. The socio-political condition in Iran is not an exception. Journalists of this context have specific experiences and mindsets and they should be cautious about the kind of news, the associated headline, and the way the headline is put. Their responsibility in such a context is very great. To save their lives and jobs, they should write as conservatively as possible. That is why, for example, *Tehran Times* journalists employ more quotation headlines.

The analysis of the translations shows that a limited number of participants provided acceptable translations of the *New York Times* English headlines, which proves the difficulty in comprehending the native English headlines as compared to the headlines in *Tehran Times*. Newspapers have diverse and interesting topics for different readers, including students, and are easily accessible. It is important that, in addition to local English newspapers, native English newspapers be used. This way, students will be acquainted with the social, cultural, and political context as well.

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List of Newspapers

The English Newspaper

- The New York Times. 22 July 2009
- The New York Times. 23 July 2009
- The New York Times. 25 July 2009
- The New York Times. 26 July 2009
- The New York Times. 27 July 2009
- The New York Times. 28 July 2009
- The New York Times. 29 July 2009

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The New York Times. 30 July 2009
The New York Times. 1 August 2009
The New York Times. 2 August 2009
The New York Times. 3 August 2009
The New York Times. 4 August 2009
The New York Times. 5 August 2009
The New York Times. 8 August 2009
The New York Times. 9 August 2009
The New York Times. 10 August 2009
The New York Times. 11 August 2009
The New York Times. 12 August 2009
The New York Times. 13 August 2009
The New York Times. 15 August 2009

The Persian-English Newspaper:

Tehran Times. 22 July 2009
Tehran Times. 23 July 2009
Tehran Times. 25 July 2009
Tehran Times. 26 July 2009
Tehran Times. 27 July 2009
Tehran Times. 28 July 2009
Tehran Times. 29 July 2009
Tehran Times. 30 July 2009
Tehran Times. 1 August 2009
Tehran Times. 2 August 2009
Tehran Times. 3 August 2009
Tehran Times. 4 August 2009
Tehran Times. 5 August 2009
Tehran Times. 8 August 2009
Tehran Times. 9 August 2009
Tehran Times. 10 August 2009
Tehran Times. 11 August 2009
Tehran Times. 12 August 2009
Tehran Times. 13 August 2009
Tehran Times. 15 August 2009

Appendix

Please translate the following English headlines into Persian.

1. Graft inquiry in Namibia finds clues in China
2. Japan PM Aso calls election, risks historic defeat
3. Concerns on plan show clashing goals
4. U.S. may rearm Georgia, despite Moscow's opposition
5. Apartheid wall remain in place: Netanyahu
6. Yankees subdue A's for eighth in a row
7. How Israel lobby controls U.S.
8. For Holder, inquiry on interrogation poses tough choice
9. North Dakota, a place to go for employment
10. U.S. faces logistics nightmare in Iraq
11. Sarkozy has health scare while exercising
12. Ahmadinejad seen as increasingly vulnerable since re-election
13. A president kicked out, but not alone in defiance
14. Asia trip propels Clinton back into limelight
15. China to try suspects held after riots
16. Senators progress as House delays again on health bill
17. Gates says Iraq troop withdrawal could be accelerated
18. Toilet had it coming
19. Homeland chief offers shift in tone
20. In Iran, 50 political detainees transferred to Evin
21. Hacker's extradition to U.S. more likely
22. Anti-theft software could create security hole
23. North Drilling Company to go public
24. India's nuclear submarine dream, still miles to go
25. President writes to Leader on first VP resignation
26. How firms wooed a U.S. agency with billions to invest
27. The vice-presidential saga
28. Episcopal church picks gay priests for promotion
29. Khatami condemns 'show trial' of detainees
30. Reyes has another setback, and Mets add to the pain
31. Rivalry between Apple and Palm intensifies
32. Protein key to premature births
33. California prisons must cut inmate population
34. MPs concerned about fate of detainees: Deputy Majlis speaker
35. Leader's rep at universities calls for persecution of dorm attackers

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36. Senator fears letter sends wrong signal on Honduras
37. Ex-president urges end to Colombia-Venezuela fight
38. In some prison breaks across Europe, helicopters replace the file in the cake
39. Berlusconi pipeline deal claim “exaggerated”: Turkey
40. Syria boosts economic ties with neighbors
41. Effort to rein in pay on Wall Street hits new hurdle
42. Safety of Afghan women comes up for questions
43. The earth is warming? Adjust the thermostat
44. White House adopts to new playbook in health care debate
45. Iran will participate in 2009 Asian Indoor Games
46. Clinton presents plan to fight sexual violence in Congo
47. Iran, India to continue talks on Farzad gas field
48. Asian stocks end slightly higher but caution remains
49. Fate of Lackerbie convict to be decided soon
50. Iran, Iraq seek to settle common border issues
51. Teams visit disabled war veterans on behalf of Leader
52. Governor’s race exposes Republican rift in Texas
53. Haniya: Hamas will never recognize the Zionist entity
54. U.S., China gap could delay N. Korea talks
55. In release of journalists, both Clintons had key roles
56. Leader’s letter on firing first VP released
57. Biden hears Georgia’s plea for Western protection
58. A cold war ghost reappears in Honduras
59. Given BB&T liberty, but not bailout
60. NATO chief seeks Kosovo exit plan