

# A Comparative Study of Metaphorical Markers in National and International News Articles about Revolution of Egypt

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**Abstract-** Figurative speech and metaphor play significant role in understanding a text, especially political texts. Because little studies have been done in this field, decision was made to do a research regarding comparative study of metaphorical markers about revolution in Egypt. This study described the comparative study of metaphorical markers in National and International news about revolution in Egypt as defined and classified by Goatly (1997) in two corpora: one consisting of (National news articles, NNs) and another of (International news articles, INNs). Marker categories, the occurrences of markers category were analyzed using Chi-square statistics to determine the occurrences of metaphorical markers in the two corpora and find any probable significant differences. Results showed that a wide range of marker types and a larger number of marker categories were available in the corpus of both NNs and INNs. The frequency of a relatively of individual markers was also higher in this corpus. The differences indicate different attitudes towards the use of metaphors in both NNs and INNs corpora. Implications of this study suggest that pedagogical practitioners dealing with the political texts either in teaching politics, translation or political corpus should be aware of similarities and differences among NNs and INNs text types.

**Key words-** Metaphorical markers, Political texts, National and International news

## 1. Introduction

Over the past few decades, attention has been given to the study of discourse markers; however, there are other cohesive elements that seem to be equally important, metaphorical markers are one group of such elements. Although they are equally important, they seem to have been ignored in cross linguistic studies especially in the analysis of national and International newspapers. Over the last two decades, text analysis has been one of the most polemic issues which have had its focus on such issues as discourse markers and meta-discourse markers. One of the recently addressed areas is metaphorical markers which have their roots in cognitive linguistics and conceptual metaphor theory, in particular (Cameron, 1999; Charteris, 2005; Charteris & Ennis, 2001; Smith, 1995; White, 2003).

Today, the most important community is that of the nation-state which we are born into. The important political concepts which thus influence our lives to such a great extent are numerous, for instance the concept of the state itself, the government and the relationship with the people it rules, the economy of the state, as well as political parties, taxes, programs, education, employment, welfare and crime, to mention a few (Johnson, 2007). Any text does not exist in a vacuum—it is produced by someone for someone else in a certain situation and way for a particular purpose. “Discourse is a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context, featuring participants (and their properties) as well as production and reception processes” (van Dijk, 1988, p. 2). Consequently, natural discourse provides a much richer source for investigating the function of metaphor.

In short, the present study intends to trace the application of metaphorical markers in National and international news articles about revolution of Egypt in order to discover how this genre is treated indifferent cultures. The choice of this genre is motivated by its role in revolution of Egypt. There seems to be little if any studies about political situations of Arabic countries especially cross-linguistic studies on conceptual metaphor markers. The research questions are stated as: (1) what kinds of metaphorical markers are used by writers in National and international newspapers covering revolution in Egypt? And (2) can any correlation be found among the articles written by Iranian and international non-Iranian writers regarding to metaphorical markers used in newspapers?

## 2. Review of literature

Aristotle, who noted more than two millennia ago that the skillful use of metaphors by political actors can induce listeners to “see things” that they might not otherwise perceive—as well as the findings of modern cognitive psychologists who have long recognized that the way in which people interpret and respond to new information will depend in part on how this new information is presented or “framed.” Because metaphors, by definition, draw attention to similarities across different domains, they invite listeners to conceive of one issue or phenomenon in the light of another issue or phenomenon. It can be said that the development in this field, started by Richards (1979) and followed by Black (1962) and Reddy (1993), had as its landmark Lakoff and Johnson’s (1983) publication of *Metaphors*

We Live By in which the authors describe the conceptual role played by metaphor and its interplay with language and thought. These first studies inspired a number of theories and researchers. Lynne Cameron's (2003) investigation - *Metaphor in Educational Discourse* - emerges from this paradigmatic change occurred in metaphor studies and reaches its unique value by tackling the classroom dimension in which metaphor is also settled, within its complexities and peculiarities. Under an interactional, contextualized and social-cultural approach to metaphor she successfully drives into the depths of language and thought (talking and thinking as she argues) in order to depict a clearer picture of the teaching/learning context within a framework in which language use, understanding in situated talk, and learning are connected.

The use of metaphorical markers, understood as linguistic expressions signalling a particular metaphor, is a relatively unexplored area, especially in terms of a specific type of discourse. Goatly (1997) defines metaphorical markers as "the words and phrases occurring in the environment of a metaphor's vehicle term, or a unit of discourse that unconventionally refer to or colligate with the topic of a metaphor on the basis of similarity, matching or analogy (p. 172)". Metaphor context, together with the social context in which metaphor is produced, may influence its interpretation to such an extent that the lack of co-textual and contextual clues could lead to metaphor misinterpretation. Therefore, words and phrases used in the co-text of the vehicle term for the purpose of metaphor marking or signalling seem to be related to the reader's processing effort. The less explicit metaphor marking is, the greater the processing effort would be (p. 169). By contrast, those metaphors, which are marked out of existence in Goatly's words, may be marked to the degree that they become literal comparison or similes. As the above studies show, some studies have been done directly on metaphor and its role in the text understanding; however, the present study intends to consider metaphorical markers within a cross-linguistic framework: Comparing the use of such markers in the discourse of local and international journals.

The use of metaphorical markers as a compensatory strategy for overcoming lexical gaps (Cameron & Deignan, 1998) as well as for articulating the same conceptual metaphor should also be recalled here. Of special interest seems to be the use of different linguistic expressions in different languages for this purpose Deignan (2005). In addition, the correct use of certain phrases and grammatical structures that can be used as metaphorical markers may be the source of considerable difficulties in the production stage for learners of English as a foreign language. This could be the case of intensifiers, hedges and down toners, not to mention modals and conditionals. If they were practised in the environment of figurative expressions-which may be retained more easily given the Vehicle's incongruence - their correct use could perhaps be reinforced. To sum up, discursive and pragmatic aspects of metaphors and their surrounding discourse are just as important as the

semantic and lexical, and they may serve to train students to communicate more successfully and to better understand their chosen specialist fields.

### 3. Methodology

#### 3.1. The corpus

The corpus consisted of 60 political news articles (30 from Iranian and 30 from International from six newspapers). On the international basis, *The Times*, *The Independent*, and *The New York Times* chosen based on non-random judgment sampling method and on the national basis *Iran Daily*, *Tehran Times* and *Kayhan International* were selected based on sample method. Their availability is the rationale for their selection online. Thus the articles were selected from the available newspapers published in 2011. Then, they were selected on a period of two months, ranged from January to March, in which the peak of unrest was noticed on the news.

#### 3.2. Procedure

Sixty news articles from international newspapers and sixty news articles from Iranian newspapers have been selected at non-random sampling. Care was taken to choose equal number of articles from each newspaper. The articles were scanned and word count run on, and then, the metaphorical and their frequency classified and data analyzed. Metaphorical markers were detected and counted by two rates. Accordingly, the data selected based on non-random judgment sampling. Regarding the method of study used, the phrases listed in Table 1 were identified in the corpora mentioned using *Word Smith Tools*, version 3, a concordance program (Scott, 1999). Once located in the corpus, their collocations were analyzed from the point of view of their metaphorical or literal meaning. Finally, the metaphorical markers signaled metaphors. All marker types, except group 16 (Orthography), were searched for in the two corpora, since the software used did not allow for their immediate identification. However, the use of certain orthographic markers, especially inverted commas, was considered when used in addition to other metaphorical markers.

#### 3.3. Data analysis

Data were collected through reviewing of 60 articles. Even though Goatly's (1997) corpus on which this categorization is based is not fully described in his study, we considered that it could be readily used as a starting point in a corpus-based analysis of metaphorical marking. Goatly's classification would allow for relatively immediate access to possible metaphorical material in electronically-stored linguistic data, and thereby enable one to highlight the phrases used as markers of metaphors in context, accordingly to the metaphorical marker

categories developed by Goatly (1997, pp. 174-5) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Marker Categories

Marker category	Metaphorical markers
1. Explicit markers	Metaphor/-ically, figurative/-ly, trope
2. Intensifiers	Literally, really, actually, in fact, simply, fairly, just, absolutely, fully, completely, quite, thoroughly, utterly
3. Hedges and down toners	In a/one way, a bit of, half-...,practically, almost, not exactly, not so much...as....,...if not
4. Semantic language	In both/more than one sense/s, mean(ing),import
5. Mimetic terms	Image, likeness, picture, parody, caricature, model, plan, effigy, imitation,artificial, mock
6. Symbolism terms	Symbol(-ic/-ically), sign, type, token, instance, example
7. Super ordinate terms	(some)(curious, strange, odd, peculiar, special), sort of, kind of
8. Copular similes	Like, as
9. Precision similes and other comparison	material verbs +like x, they y of a x, y 's x, noun- adj, the x equivalent of
10. Clausal similes	as if, as though
11. Perceptual processes	seemed, sounded, looked, felt, tasted +like/as though, as if
12. Misperception terms	delusion, illusion, hallucination, mirage, phantom, fantasy, unreal
13. Cognitive processes	believe, think, regard, unbelievable, incredible
14. Verbal processes	say, call, refer to, swear
15. So to speak	Not traced!
16. Orthography	“ “ ! white space
17. Modal + verbal processes	could say, might say
18. Modals	must, certainly, surely, would, probable/ly, may, might, could, possible/-ly, perhaps, impossible/-bilty
19. Conditional	if...could, would, might, imagine, suppose
20. As it were	

#### 4. Data analysis and results

Goatly's (1997) inventory of 20 types of metaphorical markers was used as a reference model. In order to do the data analysis, descriptive as well as inferential statistical techniques such as *chi-square* were used. In so doing, a recent version of *SPSS* were used to see if possible differences are statistically significant. In addition to the differences in the marker categories used in the two corpora, the figures related to the use of individual markers are dissimilar: the Corpus 1, NNS, as compared to Corpus 2, INNS (Table 1). INNS, then, clearly employs not only a wider range of marker types, but also a greater number of individual markers than the corpus of research articles. The frequency of metaphorical markers in the two corpora is remarkably

high (Graph 4.1), with the highest value being belonged to *Precision similes and other comparison* category with 26.5% (172) in NNS as well as 21% (239) in INNS 1, and the least frequencies were *so to speak*, *As it were*, with no frequencies in both corpora. This may be indicative either of the poor marking of metaphors employed or the generally infrequent use of metaphors in the corpora studied, assuming that some of them are marked. The latter suggestion, however, challenges the claims of the authors commented previously about the two types of discourse being considerably metaphorical, both on the conceptual and on the text surface level. This claim, nonetheless, needs to be addressed in a contrastive study of marked and unmarked metaphors.

Table 2. The frequency of metaphorical markers in National and International newspapers

Marker categories	Metaphorical markers
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	National	%	International	%		P-value
1. Explicit markers	0	0	1	0.08	.333	0.564
2. Intensifiers	21	3.23	50	4.48	11.84	0.001 *
3. Hedges and down toners	4	0.61	7	0.63	.818	0.366
4. Semantic meta-language	5	0.77	2	0.18	1.29	0.257
5. Mimetic terms	16	2.46	13	1.67	0.310	0.577
6. Symbolism terms	20	3.08	23	2.06	0.209	0.647
7. Super-ordinate terms	28	4.31	59	5.29	11.05	0.001 *
8. Copular similes	111	17.10	211	18.94	31.06	0.000 *
9. Precision similes and other comparison	172	26.50	239	21.45	10.92	0.001 *
10. Clausal similes	1	0.15	1	0.08	0	1
11. Perceptual processes	0	0	17	1.53	14.22	0.000 *
12. Misperception terms	12	1.85	1	0.08	9.31	0.002 *
13. Cognitive processes	14	2.16	27	2.42	4.12	0.42
14. Verbal processes	50	7.70	79	7.09	6.52	.011 *
15. So to speak	0	0	0	0	0	1
16. Orthography	59	9.09	245	21.99	113.80	0.000 *
17. Modal + verbal processes	1	0.15	0	0	0.333	0.564
18. Modals	77	11.86	125	11.22	11.41	0.001 *
19. Conditional	10	1.54	14	1.26	0.67	0.414
20. As it were	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	649		1114			

Note: \* shows the significant differences of Marker Categories

In order to make one to one comparison of metaphorical markers in the two corpora, *Chi-square* analysis was run and the results (Table 2) indicated statistically significant differences in the case *Intensifiers*, *Super ordinate terms*, *Copular similes*, *Precision similes and other comparison*, *Clausal similes*, *Perceptual processes*, *Misperception terms*, *Cognitive processes*, *Verbal processes and Conditional categories*. It was found that the category of *Intensifiers* was applied twenty one in NNS and fifty in INNS, so the p-value analysis indicated significant differences among these two groups of corpora.

## 5. Discussion and conclusion

This section explores possible reasons for the results by directly addressing the questions raised in chapter one. The findings of this research lead us to recognize whether there is similarity between the two corpora in using metaphorical markers. The results obtained from the application of Goatly's (1997) inventory of metaphorical markers showed that there are clear differences in the use of metaphorical markers in the two corpora, while certain similarities can also be noted. All metaphorical markers, more or less were found in each corpus, however, just ten metaphorical markers showed significant differences, namely *Intensifiers*, *super ordinate terms*, *copular similes*, *Precision similes and other comparison*, *Perceptual processes*, *Misperception terms*, *Cognitive processes*, *Verbal processes*, *Orthography*, *Modals* categories. While, there were not significant differences between NNs and INNs regarding *Explicit markers*, *Hedges and downtowners*, *Semantic met language*, *Mimetic terms*, *Symbolism terms*, *So to speak*, *Modal + verbal processes*, *Conditional*, *As it were*. *Explicit markers* which directly reflects using of figurative

language were not used frequently in two corpora i.e., this may show that corpus, NNs vs. Corpus 2, INNs were not interested in using *Explicit markers*. *Intensifiers markers*, words which are semantically close and belong to the same lexical set a share number of translation, may allow writer not only to place adequate emphasis, but also to reinforce metaphor's effort.

The majority of the metaphorical markers were more often used in Corpus 2, except in both, Semantic meta language (*In both/more than one sense/s*, *mean(ing)*, *import*) and *Mimetic terms* (*Image*, *likeness*, *picture*, *parody*, *caricature*, *model*, *plan*, *effigy*, *imitation* *artificial*, *mock*), *Perceptual processes* (*seemed*, *sounded*, *looked*, *felt*, *tasted* + *like/as though*, *as if*) and the *Clausal similes* (*as if*, *as though*) and which had the same frequency values and *Clausal similes* which was more frequent in Corpus 1 than in Corpus 2.

The results of the present study will be helpful for Iranian writers to write the newspaper articles more cohesively and cogently. The results also are helpful for them in raising their awareness of their weakness in writing academic articles to be published in newspapers. Moreover, the results of this study makes them very sensitive in their writing and how they use metaphorical language and especially metaphorical markers and give their information in classes and in the texts. The inclusion of metaphor itself in EFL instruction curricular has been widely discussed. Therefore, the results of this study will be helpful for text writers and material developers in EFL contexts. On the one hand, metaphor carry out a number of communicative and cognitive roles which could further make their identification more complex. On the other hand, metaphors provide useful insights into the conceptual domain of a particular subject, which not only provides learners with better comprehension of the subject itself, but also enhances their vocabulary

acquisition strategies and assimilation of unfamiliar figurative expressions.

Therefore, skillful writers can use metaphors in a way that makes their texts as cohesive and interesting as possible. Using metaphors can be helpful means for the recognition and interpretation of potentially problematic metaphorical language. Moreover, it can be concluded that students can use metaphorical markers as compensatory strategies. It means that they can use metaphorical language in problematic contexts. Fifth, the last, correct use of phrases and grammatical markers are the source of difficulties for the learners of English as a Second /Foreign Language in their production stage. This could be the case of intensifiers, hedges, and down tones, not to mention modals and conditionals. Thus comparative studies of using metaphors between male and female writers and contrastive studies of metaphorical marker between native and non-native speakers could be a good line of research in future. Finally, with regard to the pedagogical implications of the research carried out, raising learners' metaphoric awareness and building their metaphoric competence should necessarily involve considering metaphor not only in its communicative context, but also as an element within its surrounding discourse, as it may provide indications for the metaphor's correct interpretation.

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