# Marked and Unmarked Thematization Patterns: A Contrastive Study of Translated and Non-Translated Persuasive Texts [In English]

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### ABSTRACT

Thematization is the process of arranging theme, rheme patterns in a text. The present study aims to investigate thematization strategies in translated and non-translated persuasive texts. To this end, the translated versions of one of the leading newspapers in the United States, The New York Times, and the original versions of Hamshahri newspaper (an Iranian counterpart) were chosen. Based on the qualitative and quantitative analysis of textual features and marked and unmarked themes of 12 translated and non-translated version of the opinion articles from The New York Times and Hamshahi (6 from each), this study aimed to find out how the translators organize their themes into marked and unmarked ones and how these organizations are related to the non-translated versions. The current research attempted to find out whether thematization patterns have any effect on the comprehension of sentences, or whether marked themes have any impact on the audiences and are these effects the same in the translations and non-translations. The findings revealed that thematization patterns can help the understanding of the texts. The results also showed that marked themes have an impact on the audiences. The results were relatively the same in the translations and non-translations.

**Keywords:** Thematization Patterns, Marked Theme, Unmarked Theme, Theme and Rheme, Systemic Functional Grammar, Language Teaching**.**

## 1. Introduction

Theme/rheme plays a major role in organizing the message and in enabling it to be communicated and understood clearly (Halliday, 1994). Whatever is chosen to be the first place, will influence the hearer/reader's interpretation of everything that comes next in the discourse since it will constitute the initial textual context for everything that follows (Alonso, Belmonte & McCabe, 1998).

Theme and rheme analysis is an area that has attracted the attention of some translation scholars. The basic premise is that sentences consist of themes, which present known, context-dependent information, and rhemes, which present new, context-independent information. Because they represent new information, it is rhemes rather than themes which push text development forward.

Thematization is one of the subcategories of textual analysis. Textual analysis is the analysis of the text in terms of its textual features or its texture. Thematization strategies are what the writer chooses as the theme of the clause.

Newspapers are probably still the most read text types today, in hard copy or online. Newspaper editorials as a kind of opinion texts are different from the other types of news discourse in that they are supposed to present evaluations and comments about the news events already reported in the newspapers.

An increasing volume of studies carried out by various scholars (Hall, 1982; Fairclough, 1989, 1995; Fowler, 1991; Hodge & Kress, 1993; Caldas-Coulthard et.al., 1996; Van Dijk, 1988a, 1991, 1993) has demonstrated that news, due to its nature, cannot be a totally value-free reflection of facts. News production process comprises selection, interpretation, and presentation of events to audiences, thereby constructing reality in a manner corresponding with the underlying ideologies of the news producers and presenters. News imposes a structure of values on whatever it represents, and therefore produces meanings which construct ideological representations of a society (Fowler, 1991).

Taking the importance of thematic structures in creating a more cohesive text into account, it requires shedding more light on the role of thematicity in translation. This means, to see what happens to the theme types and how they are tackled by translators when the text goes through a translation process.

Any unmotivated and unreasonable change into thematic structures may cause difficulties in conveying the intended meaning of source text's author and then getting readers into great troubles because thematic structures and progression may be quiet different among various languages.

To Barzegar (2008), markedness does not greatly vary in English thematized constructions compared to Persian equivalents and there are some differences between marked and unmarked translations of English thematized sentences concerning their effect on the audiences. The results of Jallilifar's (2010) research on theme indicated overall similarities in both journals regarding different types of theme and patterns of thematic progression. But there were significant differences in the number and the

context of the usage of different patterns of thematic progression in the introduction.

Baker (1992) encourages formal academic training of translators through which they make a conscious effort to understand various aspects of their work. She claims " throughout its long history, translation has never really enjoyed the kind of recognition and respect that other professions such as medicine and engineering enjoy" and suggests "translators need to develop an ability to stand back and reflect on what they do and how they do it" (Baker 1992, p. 2-4).

### Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study, then, is to emphasize on the importance of thematization patterns especially in newspaper discourse and the effect of marked and unmarked themes on the audiences of newspapers.

The investigation also aims at comparing the translated and non-translated opinion articles with regard to the use of marked and unmarked themes.

The study will focus on three primary objectives:

1. To determine the relationship between thematization patterns and newspaper discourse.

2. To determine the effect of marked and unmarked themes on the comprehension of newspaper audiences.

3. To indicate the degree of homogeneity between the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts with regard to the use of marked and unmarked themes.

This study is devoted to characterize thematization patterns or theme/ rheme organization in a sample of translations and non-translations in the field of newspaper discourse.

### 2. Literature Review
#### Thematization Patterns

According to Lotfipour-Saedi (1991), the texture of a text can be characterized by textual features of 1) thematization strategies, 2) schematic structure, 3) paralanguage and 4) cohesion (cited in Yarmohammadi, 1995).

Halliday writes: "the 'textual' component in language is the set of options by means of which a speaker or writer is enabled to create texts" (Halliday 1994, p. 161). One key choice in the textual configuration of discourse is that of what will appear in Theme position; indeed, for Halliday (1985, p. 53), "the textual function of the clause is that of constructing a message" and the Theme/Rheme structure is the "basic form of the organization of the clause as message". In the organization of discourse,

then, an important concern is which participant, process or circumstance will be chosen as the ideational point of departure for the message.

According to Bell (1991), thematization patterns organize the initiation of the clause and acts to direct the attention of the receiver of the message to the parts the sender wishes to emphasize.

While explaining something to another person, whether in speech or writing, we try to organize what we say in a way that makes it easier for the reader to understand (Bloor and Bloor, 1995). The structuring of language as a message is realized in the thematic structure of the constituent clauses of a text.

Not (1996) asserts that thematic development is necessary for the construction of an optimally coherent and grammatically cohesive structured text. The investigation of thematization patterns in scientific texts were carried out by Dubois (1987) and by Nwogu and Bloor (1991). Both studies were based on naturally occurring data and found that the simple pattern and the constant pattern are frequent. Thematization is the process of arranging theme, rheme patterns in a text. Angela Downing (2001) points that the essential nature of a text lies largely in terms of its semantic coherence and the reason for less than optimal coherence may be that the writer is simply not good at controlling the mass of new information that is successively accumulated as the text unfolds. This mass of information is mostly so extensive that the writer should make a choice, and this choice, is determined directly or indirectly by the selection of utterance Theme.

Grzegorek (1984) introduces four main types of thematization in English: (1) passivization, (2) clefts and pseudo-clefts, (3) topicalization, left-dislocation, focus movement, and (4) presentation sentences with proposed expressions. She compares these thematization types with those existing in Polish. She says that thematization is governed by a variety of factors, most of which are of pragmatic rather than purely syntactic nature.

Halliday (1994) who is the main representative of the positional approach to the definition of theme characterizes thematization in English as the process of shifting various sentence elements to the initial position plus any grammatical changes within a sentence, which are caused by such a movement. According to Fries (1983) different discourse genres (i.e., narratives, descriptives, argumentatives, and so on) have different patterns of thematic progression. For example, an argumentative text can be characterized by high proportion of cross-reference from the rheme of one sentence to the theme of the text.

According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), coherence refers to the way a group of clauses or sentences relate to the context. A text is cohered when one part of a text follows another part of the text. The outcome of coherence

is that each part of the text creates a context within which the next bit of the text is interpreted. Then, there is a relationship between what is said or written and what was said or written a moment ago. Reid (2000, p. 116) says that coherence means "to stick together". One way writers make a text cohesive is through 'thematic' organization (Halliday and Hassan, 1976). Halliday (1976) defined coherence as the probability of connecting what has been mentioned above. To ensure the successful development of a topic, the application of various techniques for cohesion is vital. Some forms of cohesion are realized through the grammar and others through vocabulary (Halliday, 1976). Cohesion contributes to coherence. Thematic progression is a kind of cohesion (Halliday, 1976). According to Danes, thematic progression means "the choice and ordering of utterance themes, their mutual concatenation and hierarchy, as well as their relationship to the hyperthemes of the superior text units (such as paragraph, chapter...) to the whole of the text and to the situation" (Danes, 1974, p. 114).

Halliday (1985, p. 67) explained that thematic progression is of crucial importance to the internal relation between sentences in the text. Thematic progression contributes to text coherence in that it lets us know what the text is about and where the text is going. By analyzing the thematic structure of a text, "we can gain an insight into its texture and understand how the writer made clear to us the nature of his underlying concerns".

### Theme and Rheme

Theme and rheme analysis is an area that has been the center of some translation scholars' attention (see Grzegorek 1984, Newmark 1988, Bell 1991, Baker 1992, Halliday 1994, among others).

Topic is a non-structural discourse category which describes what the text is about (Brown & Yule, 1983). Given information is the information that can be predicted or which belongs to that knowledge shared by both listener and speaker, whereas new information is that information which is contextually non-retrievable and says something about the given (Prince, 1981). According to Halliday (1994), the grammatical subject is the one that of which something is predicated. Also, Halliday (1994) distinguishes three different kinds of subject. Grammatical subject which is defined above, psychological subject which is the concern of the message and the logical subject which is the doer of an action. But Halliday (1994) used three equivalent terms for these expressions. He used theme for psychological subject, subject for grammatical subject and actor for logical subject.

Halliday believes that each clause conveys a message that has two parts, i.e., what comes first or the theme, and what comes last or the rheme. The

theme usually constrains given information and the rheme, new information (1994).

In the English language, the theme includes the lexical items (up to and including the first participant, process or circumstance) taking first position in the clause. These lexical items signal what the message will be about (White, 2000). According to Bloor and Bloor (1995), theme in English is the idea represented by the constituent at the starting of the clause.

Fries (1983, p. 118) makes the point that "there are good and sufficient internal grammatical reasons to say that the beginning is special for some reason" and goes on to argue that "initial position in the sentence, or sentence level Theme, means 'point of departure of the sentence as message" (ibid, p. 119). Martin (1992) provides evidence which indicates that "point of departure does indeed mean something more than coming first" (p. 151).

The Theme is the first constituent of a clause (Thompson, 2004). White (2000, p. 153) describes it as the "angle or departure of a clause…[it] is what each utterance is 'about'…" The Theme is the starting point of a clause and includes the first Participant, Process or Circumstance (White, 2000, p. 154). Additionally, Halliday and Matthiessen (2004 cited in Thompson, 2004, p. 143) explain the Theme as "that which locates and orients the clause within its context."

According to Fairclough (1994), the Theme is the text producer's point of departure in a clause, and generally corresponds to what is taken to be 'given' information, that is information already known or established for text producers and interpreters.

For Brown and Yule (1983), Theme is not only the starting point of the message, but it also has a role of connecting to what has been said. They assume that it is the left-most constituent of the sentence which has two important functions:

1) It maintains a coherent point of view by connecting back and linking into the previous discourse.

2) It serves as a point of departure for the further development of the discourse (p. 133).

Halliday (1994) provides different definitions for theme which will be listed as follows:

"1. The theme is what is being talked about, the point of departure for the clause as a message.

2. The English clause consists of a theme and a rheme. The theme of the clause is the element which, in English, is put in the first position.

3. The theme is the statement which serves as the point of departure of the message.

4. Within that configuration, the theme is the starting point for the message; it is what the clause is going to be about" (Cited in Fries, 1995, p. 3).

For Strauss and Corbin (1990), the links between expressions and themes are "conceptual labels placed on discrete happenings, events, and other instances of phenomena". Themes, or categories, are the classification of more discrete concepts. "This classification is discovered when concepts are compared one against another and appear to pertain to a similar phenomenon. Thus, the concepts are grouped together under a higher order; more abstract concepts are called a category" (p. 61). Halliday (1970) refers to theme as a line of nails on the wall. The contents of the texts are carried along the nail line. He suggests that theme is "what the clause is about", and no matter what the author wants to talk about, he must arrange the relative information around this topic in a logic order, with the thematic structure arranged distinguishingly according to the specific genres and aims. In a word, thematic structure is one of the necessary conditions for creating discourse coherence.

### Markedness

In linguistics, *markedness* refers to the way words are changed or added to give a special meaning. The *unmarked choice* is just the normal meaning. Gosden (1996) asserts that the manipulation of Unmarked and Marked thematic choices is a means of achieving textual cohesion and coherence.

Marked theme is considered as a cover term consisting of different classifications like Topicalization, Left-dislocation, Cleft and Pseudo- cleft sentences. According to Grzegorek (1984), a thematic structure is communicatively marked when it does not follow the sequence from the old to the new information.

It is obvious that an unmarked theme shows a grammatical subject that forms the point of departure while the marked theme employs a technique that fronts other information. The marked theme uses three main context frames for this purpose: Conjunctive/Modal adjunct and Conjunctions, Prepositional and Adverbial Phrases and Subordinate Clauses and Nonfinite Clause (Gosden, 1992).

According to Eggins (1993) the term "Unmarked" simply means 'most typical/usual, while "Marked" means 'atypical'/'unusual'. Eggins further notes that Theme predication is another strategy to producing Marked Themes. To Eggins, all predicated Themes are in some sense Marked, since the subject of the original clause is made Rheme in the predicated version. She notes that skillful writers choose Marked Themes to add emphasis to their texts.

According to Halliday (1985), theme plays an essential role in the way discourse is organized. Theme is known and context-dependent information while rheme is new and context independent information. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, p. 65) believe that "As a message structure, therefore, a clause consists of theme accompanied by a rheme; and the structure is expressed by the order- whatever is chosen as the theme is put first". Alice Davidson (1980) suggests the more marked the construction, the more likely that an implicated meaning will be that which the utterance is intended to convey (Cited in Brown & Yule, 1983).

Simply put, the unmarked member of any pair is the most natural, the most frequent, the simplest, the more basic, the logically prior, the more universal, the first learned, the one implied by the marked member; the one understood, unstated, taken for granted, ordinary, usual., etc.

Baker (1992) believes that the degree of markedness will depend on the frequency with which the element in question generally occurs in theme position and the extent to which it is normally mobile within the clause.

Based on Bell (1991) view, marked theme in English is signaled by predicting, proposing, clefting, or fronting of the theme and combinations of these options. It is the theme where the writer consciously or unconsciously affects the organization of the text by choosing something other than the subject for the starting point of their message. Fries (1983) claim that marked themes are more truly thematic than non-marked themes. If 'theme' is everything located at the beginning of the sentence, as a result of choice, then markedness of theme or use of special resource to put complements, objects and verbs in initial position betrays a deliberate choice.

### Translation and Thematization

Translating is a process of transforming a text originally in one language into an equivalent text in another language. Catford (1965, p. 20) states that "translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)".

The most important point for source text thematic analysis is that the translator should be aware of the relative markedness of the thematic and information structure. What is marked varies across languages.

According to Hatim and Mason (1990), translators have to take into account thematic structures of the original text to keep the intentions and implications of text producers. Larson (1984) explains translation as transferring the meaning of the source language into target language by way of the form of the first language to the form of the second language and by way of semantic structure. Baker (1992) believes that consideration of

thematic structure not only can help for the coherence of the target text, but also can save translation efforts.

The possibility of applying systemic functional theory to translation research lies in the fact that translation itself is a meaning-realization process which involves choices of different language resources, while systemic functional grammar provides us with a way of describing lexical and grammatical choices from the system of wording that enables us to see how language is being used to realize meaning (Fang, 2008).Ventola (1995) states that there is no question about the usefulness of the analytical devices --thematic structures, but these tools are not expected to function in the same way in various languages. Contrastive linguistics has paid some attention to these differences. But an area that is relatively unexplored is what happens to the texts' thematic organization and their thematic progression when the text goes through a translation process. She suggests that "what is needed by is a more thorough investigation of the theme/rheme issues and the role they play in creating textuality and cohesion in translation of texts"(1995, p. 102).

Researches have shown that thematic structure, organization, and progression are not quite the same among various languages. With respect to this notion, Matthiessen (2004) asserts that," for example, in Japanese, as in Tagalog, interpersonal theme is realized positionally by initial position; and the same is true about textual themes. Japanese, in contrast to Tagalog, tends to place topical theme early in the clause, after textual and interpersonal themes, but in line with Tagalog, Japanese may mark topical themes segmentally by a 'postposition" such as *wa* or *mo* "(p. 550).

### Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) theory, founded by Halliday views languages as a social semiotic resource people use to accomplish their purposes by expressing meaning in context.

Systemic Functional Linguistics or SFL concerns language as a system of meaning. This argumentation is in line with Halliday in Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 2). "For SFL, a language is 'a system of meanings'. That is to say that when people use language, their language acts, produce or, or more technically, construct meaning." According to Weil (1844 as cited in Wang, 2007), the theoretical principles underlying the study of theme and rheme are derived mainly from the Systemic-Functional Linguistics. "In the systemic functional approach to language study, each sentence encodes not just one, but three meanings simultaneously, and these meanings are related to the three different and very basic functions of language" (Butt et al., 2003 p. 6). Derewianka (2001, p. 256) says, "Halliday's approach has been to develop a model of grammar which provides a clear relationship between functions

and grammatical systems". Such an approach reflects Halliday's belief that, "language is as it is because of its function in social structures" (Halliday, 1973, cited in Fairclough, 1992, p. 26).

Butt (2000, p. 29) says that SFG redefines traditional grammar to recognize that, "words have functions as well as class, and that how a word functions can tell us more than any description of words in terms of class can about the piece of language, where it occurs, the person who chose to use it in that function, and the culture that surrounds the person and the message".

Halliday (1985, p. xiv) defines systemic theory as "a theory of meaning as choice, by which a language, or any other semiotic system, is interpreted as networks of interlocking options". According to Martin, Matthiessen, and Painter (1997, p. 1) "Functional grammar is a way of looking at grammar in terms of how grammar is used".

Within SFL the *clause* is the main constituent by which language is communicated. "The clause is the fundamental meaning structure in our linguistic communication with each other" (Butt et al. 2003, p. 33). A clause can be described as "any stretch of language centered on a verbal group "(Thompson, 2004, p. 17).

In systemic functional grammar (SFG) (Halliday, 1994, 2000; Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), texts are viewed as social processes and the context of a text is manifested through language, especially on the level of lexicogrammar. In the view of SFG, clause is the basic linguistic unit which can be divided into three constituent parts: (i) the process itself; (ii) participants in the process; (iii) circumstances associated with the process. These parts construct the frame of reference for interpreting our experience of happening, doing, sensing, meaning, being and becoming.

To Martin and Rose (2007), Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is a big multi-perspectival theory with more dimensions in its theory banks that might be required for any one job. SFL is called systemic because compared with other theories it foregrounds the organization of language as options for meaning and is also functional because it interprets the design of language with respect to ways people use it to live. A key concept in Halliday's approach is the "context of situation" which obtains" through a systematic relationship between the social environment on the one hand, and the functional organization of language on the other" (Halliday, 1985, p. 11). According to Gerot and Wignell (1994), functional grammar tries to explain language in actual use and focus on text and their context. Systemic functional grammar concerns not only with structure but also how those structures construct meaning. The most prominent unit in functional grammar is clause rather than sentences. The principle unit of analysis in SFG is text, which is defined as any kind of passage, whether spoken or

written that makes a unified whole. The term" unified whole" is described as texture which is claimed to be the distinguishing feature of texts (Eggins, 2004). According to Halliday (1999), systemic functional linguistics can be efficiently employed to help us analyze different types of texts and relate them to the original context in which they were produced as well as their general background-for whom it is written, what its angle is on the subject matter, and so on.

### Previous research on thematization

Various scholars have in recent years contributed to the study of textuality of texts by analyzing their theme, thematic structure, and thematic progression in text across different languages to find out how academic texts unfold thematically.

Hasselgard (2004) worked on thematic structures in 1200 sentences in English and their translation in Norwegian. She found that there were significant differences between these two languages regarding the grammatical structure of sentence openings. Barzegar (2008) has done a study on Differences between Marked and Unmarked Translation of English Thematizad Sentences regarding their Effect on the Audience. In this study, he investigated whether the audiences consider the matter of thematization and thematic structure in their translation, in other words, whether they translated marked thematized sentences in a form of marked or unmarked in Persian. Having done the study, he concluded that markedness does not greatly vary in English thematized constructions compared to Persian equivalents and there are some differences between marked and unmarked translation of English thematized sentences regarding their effect on the audience.

 Moreover, Jallilifar (2009) applied a research on Thematic Development in English and Translated Academic Texts. He investigates thematic development and progression in English academic texts and their translations in Persian. The corpus was selected from the first three pages of the first chapters of nine English applied linguistics books and their translation versions. Applying Halliday's (1994) thematic organization and McCabe's (1999) thematic progression, the study reveals significant differences in the original texts and their translations regarding thematic schemes. The study concludes that both authors and translators must be conscious of these tools in order to use them effectively and create more cohesive texts.

Zhou (2006) worked on the theme construction of Chinese language showing some grammatical dissimilarity with English. Working on interpersonal metafunction, she tried to show whether advertisement texts in Chinese and English journals engender similarities in interpersonal

metafunction. Results indicated that the modal themes were not prevalent across both corpora, and so the advertisement texts did not engender similarities in interpersonal metafunction across two languages. Jallilifar and Khedri (2011) scrutinized thematic development and progression in English academic texts and their translations in Persian. Applying Halliday's (1994) thematic organization and McCabe's (1999) thematic progression, they analyzed sample academic texts selected from the first three pages of the first chapters of nine English applied linguistics books and their translation versions that were representatives of applied linguistics books taught in the Iranian universities at undergraduate and graduate levels. Analyses of original texts and their Persian counterparts indicated that there were significant differences between the two text types regarding thematic development and progression especially in terms of unmarked and multiple themes.

### 3. Methodology
### 3.1. Materials

The data of this research came from the translations from the opinion column of an important newspaper: The New York Times, from the United States and the original versions of the Hamshahri newspaper. Of the 120 (60 from each) articles collected from the online archives of these newspapers, 12 texts (6 from each) were finally chosen for the analysis since there was a need to control the different variables involved in the writing of the texts and the translations. First, a careful selection was made among the texts collected from the newspapers in order to choose those written by Iranians (as Native-Persian Speaking writers) and those translated by Iranians (as English-to-Persian translators).

In order to have a focused analysis of the texts, and prevent the biased vision of the texts, the choice of topic was controlled in this research. The selected opinion articles cover the following topics: health issues; and environmental issue.

Another instrument used in this study was a questionnaire derived from the Hamshahri newspaper and the Persian translations of The New York Times to study the reader's comprehension of the texts and the differences in this regard.

### 3.2. Participants

The participants in this study were 30 Persian Native speakers to answer the questionnaires which were both written in Persian. The participants were both male and female, and they were contacted via mail.

### 3.3. Procedure

The texts were analyzed for identification of thematization patterns in Persian newspapers and the English to Persian translations. Marked and unmarked themes were analyzed to see how these organizations influence the audiences, or whether thematization patterns have any influence on sentence comprehension.

In general, both qualitative and quantitative data analysis were employed in this study. Qualitative analysis was carried out in order to identify and categorize thematization patterns. Quantitative analysis, on the other hand, was conducted to determine the occurrences of marked and unmarked themes in translated and non-translated versions of the mentioned newspapers.

In order to carry out this study the following steps were taken: The first step was to choose the 12 (6 from each) persuasive texts among 120 (60 from each) articles. The articles were chosen based on specific topics (i.e., health issues, environmental issues). Then the articles from The New York Times were given to a professional translator to be translated, afterwards the translated versions were given to another professional translator to be revised. The next step was to read the original Persian newspaper texts and identify the sentences containing Marked and Unmarked thematic sentences. The next step was to read the Persian translations of The New York Times translated by Iranian translators to find the thematization patterns used in these texts. Halliday's (1960) SFG was used as the framework of the study. It is one of the most powerful models of grammatical theory that has been constructed for the purpose of text analysis. SFG refers to how messages are organized in relation to other messages to create coherence and cohesion. He classified themes into textual, interpersonal, and topical. Textual theme is concerned with theme and rheme and was the focus of the present study. The element of the clause which is in first position is known as the theme, and everything that follows is the rheme.

Halliday (1985) then classified theme into the following types: MTs and UMTs. In declarative clause, a theme that is something other than the subject is referred to as MT. The most usual form of MT is an adverbial group, or propositional phrase. Least likely to be thematic is a complement, which is a nominal group that is not functioning as subject (something that could have been subject but is not). If the theme of the clause is Unmarked, then the theme is normal. UMT means mapping of the theme on to subject. The subject is the element that is chosen as theme unless there is good reason for choosing something else. Then, all data were reviewed and the data were analyzed by comparing and contrasting the translated and non-translated versions of the suggested newspapers. Next, the frequency of each Marked

and Unmarked thematic text was computed and the results were presented through tables and charts. After that, T-Test was employed to compare and contrast the obtained frequencies to see the statistically significant differences. In sum, the data were analyzed using the SPSS (Statistics Package for Social Sciences). In order to make a valid comparison and judgment about the marked and unmarked themes extracted from translations, T-Test was applied. The data were calculated with computational analysis. Having done all the procedures, and gathered all the data, the researcher checked the outcomes in order to find answers to the first question posed in this research. Then a questionnaire was devised for each text to check the comprehension of the readers of the texts and to see the possible effect of the persuasive texts on the audiences. To check the reliability of the questionnaires Cronbach's alpha formula was applied. According to Streiner (2003), Cronbach's alpha is a measure of internal consistency, that is, how closely related a set of items are as a group. A "high" value of alpha is often used (along with substantive arguments and possibly other statistical measures) as evidence that the items measure an underlying (or latent) construct. For validity of the questionnaires, they were given to experts in this regard to check them, they were also adapted culturally.

At last the questionnaires were distributed among the participants and the results were analyzed using Regression Test to answer the second and third questions of the study.

### 4. Results
**Frequency of Marked Thematization Patterns in the Translated and Non-Translated Versions of Persuasive Texts**

This part represents the results for Marked Themes in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts and investigates whether it is statistically significant or not. The results were tabulated and a general explanation about the results follows the Table (1).

**Table (1) Frequency of Marked Themes (MT) in the Translated and Non-Translated Versions of Persuasive Texts**

|  | Frequency of MT | average | Std. Deviation | T | SIG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Persian Texts | 6 | 6.17 | 2.041 | 0.793 | 0.446 |
| Translated Texts | 6 | 5.17 | 2.317 |  |  |

Table (1) indicates the frequency of marked thematization patterns in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts, it also shows whether it is statistically significant or not. The averages indicate that, Marked Themes in Persian non-translated texts (6.17) were more than the Marked Themes in Persian translations (5.17). The difference between the two averages was characterized by the T-Test. The result of the T-Test was equal to 0.793. The Sig= 0.446 indicates that, the difference between the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts with regard to marked thematization patterns were not statistically significant.

**Frequency of Unmarked Thematization Patterns in the Translated and Non-Translated Versions of Persuasive Texts**

This part represents the results for Unmarked Themes in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts and investigates whether it is statistically significant or not. The results were tabulated and a general explanation about the results follows the Table (2).

**Table (2) Frequency of Unmarked Themes (UMT) in the Translated and Non-Translated Versions of Persuasive Texts**

|  | Frequency of UMT | average | Std. Deviation | T | SIG |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Persian Texts | 6 | 11.67 | 7.789 | 0.116 | 0.910 |
| Translated Texts | 6 | 11.17 | 7.195 |  |  |

Table (2) indicates the frequency of unmarked thematization patterns in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts, it also shows whether it is statistically significant or not. The averages indicate that, Unmarked Themes in Persian non-translated texts (11.67) were more than the Unmarked Themes in Persian translations (11.17). The difference between the two averages was characterized by the T-Test. The result of the T-Test was equal to 0.793. The Sig= 0.910 indicates that, the difference between the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts with regard to unmarked thematization patterns were not statistically significant.

**The Impact of Markedness on the Comprehension of Newspaper Audiences**

This part represents the results for the impact of markedness on the comprehension of newspaper audiences. The results collected from 30 questionnaires (15 derived from translated versions and 15 derived from the

Persian original texts) were tabulated and a general explanation follows the table (3).

**Table (3) The Relationship Between Markedness and Its Effect on the Comprehension of Newspaper Audiences**

|  | R | $R^2$ | $R^2$ Ad | Std. Error | B coefficient | Beta | T | F | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Marked Themes | 0.149 | 0.022 | 0.016 | 0.003 | -0.005 | -0.149 | -1.954 | 3.783 | 0.043 |

In the Table (3), the researcher used regression techniques in order to examine the relationship between markedness and its effect on the comprehension of newspaper audiences. As the results show, there is a weak correlation (R=0.149) between the marked themes and their effect on the comprehension of the audiences of newspapers. The $R^2$= 0.022 shows that, the predictor variable (marked theme) accounted for only 2.2% of the criterion variable. When $R^2$ is modified and number of observations in regression is considered, modified correlation coefficient ($R^2$ Ad**)** will be reached which is more accurate for prediction. The $R^2$ Ad=0.016 indicates that, criterion variable has a little impact in considering the observed differences with regard to marked themes and the effect on newspaper audiences. The Beta=-0.149 indicates that, there is a negative point and a reversed relationship between the two variables. It also represents that, for every unit increase in the standard deviation of the predicted variable 0.149 unit decrease is seen in the standard deviation of the criterion variable. The B=-0.005 indicates that for every unit increase in the predicted variable (marked themes), 0.005 unit is decreased from the criterion variable (the degree of impact on newspaper audiences). For the significance of this relationship, based on T=-1.954, F=3.783, and Sig=0.053 the above relationship cannot be verified, that is, the effect of marked themes on the comprehension of newspaper audiences was equal to 2.2% and there is a weak correlation between the two variables (i.e., marked themes and its impact on the comprehension of newspaper audiences).

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

In this study, the researcher intended to analyze whether marked and unmarked thematic sentences were similarly realized in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts or not. It also tried to discover the

possible effect of the original Persian texts and the English to Persian translations on the comprehension of the audiences of each text. In this regard, three questions were posed and having analyzed the data, the following results were obtained.

The first question dealt with marked and unmarked sentences in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts. Simply put, the question was:

1. To what extent are the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts written by Persian columnists translated by Iranian translators different with regard to marked and unmarked thematization patterns?

Based on the results reported in Tables (1) and (2), the frequency of all marked and unmarked thematic sentences were somehow the same in the translated and non-translated versions. The researcher used T-Test to become sure about these differences. As the T-Test indicated, the differences were not statistically significant. Therefore, marked and unmarked thematic sentences were similarly realized in the translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts.

The second and third questions were about the impact of marked themes on the comprehension of the newspaper audiences. In other words, the questions were as follows:

2. To what extent does marked theme have an impact on the comprehension of audiences of newspapers?

3. To what extent does thematization have any effect on the comprehension of sentences?

As for the second and third research questions, the results of the questionnaires and the regression test revealed that the effect of marked themes on the comprehension of newspaper audiences was equal to 2.2% and there is a weak correlation between the two variables (i.e., marked themes and its impact on the comprehension of newspaper audiences). Zhou's (2006) research was in total contrast with the present study. She worked on the theme construction of Chinese language showing some grammatical dissimilarity with English. The present study showed that there weren't any significant differences between marked and unmarked sentences of translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts. The results of Jallilifar and Khedri's (2011) research on thematic development and progression in English academic texts and their translations in Persian were in total contrast with the present study. Their research indicated that there were significant differences between the two text types regarding thematic development and progression especially in terms of unmarked and multiple

themes while in the present study the differences between the translated and non-translated versions were not statistically significant.

Hasselgard's (2004) research was somehow in total contrast with the current research. She found that there were significant differences between English and Norwegian languages regarding the grammatical structure of sentence openings while the researcher in this study concludes that, there are no significant differences in translated and non-translated versions of persuasive texts.

Ventola (1995) contends that "the analysis of theme/rheme structures in the clauses and the thematic progression helps us to see whether the text is unsuccessful in its realizations"(p. 98). She adds that sometimes readers may find texts fuzzy since they consider some odd thematic structures that are not typical of the target language. The fault in these texts is very often placed on the author's failures of argumentation and rhetorical skills; it is presumed that the author's logic is not functioning well and his/her argumentation and rhetoric are seen to fail. But often the original argumentation is clear and well-structured rhetorically in the source text; it is the translation that fails and distorts the argumentative and rhetorical patterns (Ventola, 1995).

The findings of this research contribute evidence to support the view that thematic structure is a useful and important tool in translation. It is recommended that translators consider the transfer of the thematic structure in translation after conveying the message. They also should get mastery over the grammar and structure of both source and target languages, especially in terms of thematization patterns.

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The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship and/or publication of this article.

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