

A Contrastive Rhetoric Analysis of English and Hindi Editorials*

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Bolgün, M. A. & Mangla, A. (2017). A contrastive rhetoric analysis of English and Hindi editorials. *Journal of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 21(2), 15-39.

This study explores and identifies a number of key qualitative and quantitative differences in textual discourse styles in English and Hindi editorials found in the *New York Times (NYT)* and *Navbharat*, respectively. These differences could be the source of strenuous processing of such editorials by learners of Hindi. Our contrastive rhetoric analysis reveals that, in general, *NYT* editorials are more detailed and stand-alone pieces; that is to say, writer-responsible. The arguments, suggestions, and recommendations therein are directly stated. The main argument appears early, and details are provided later, following a deductive writing style. Also, there is an observed avoidance of passive voice constructions. *Navbharat* editorials, on the other hand, seem to rely on readers' background knowledge of the issue presented and, therefore, consists of fewer details and, as such, are reader-responsible. The arguments, suggestions, and recommendations are often indirectly stated. The main argument is often missing or stated at the end of the editorial after a number of details are provided, evidencing an inductive writing style. In *Navbharat* editorials, there is also an observed ample use of passive voice constructions. Rhetorical organization of editorials in each of these publications may work for the readership of the respective publications within the culture in which they operate. However, such differences would require language professionals to develop teaching materials and strategies to help learners comprehend editorials and other high level texts in each of the respective languages. To that end, we are suggesting a few strategies.

Keywords: contrastive rhetoric, editorials, Hindi, language education, text analysis.

* **Acknowledgment:** The authors would like to thank Mr. Michael McGuire for English editing, and Dr. Jayeon Lim (Editor-in-Chief) and the anonymous reviewers for their valuable feedback.

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² The views expressed in this article are those of the authors and are not necessarily the official policies or views of, or endorsed by, the Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center (DLIFLC).

1 Introduction

This paper reports on the analysis and findings on English and Hindi in the genre of editorials. Editorials are a genre of articles in newspapers giving opinion³ on topical issues; they try to persuade their readers by using specific strategies, and even influence the social cognition of their readers, spreading their ideologies to them (Van Dijk, 1992a). Since the strategies employed in editorials in one language may not be the same as those employed in another (Farrokhi & Nazemi, 2015), this may slow down the processing and comprehension of the editorial, to say the least, or even impede comprehension altogether. This is because, as per Schema Theory (Bartlett, 1932), a written text alone does not carry meaning (Carrell, 1998; Hudson, 1998); it simply provides directions for readers to retrieve or construct meaning from previously acquired knowledge (i.e., background knowledge) and knowledge structures often referred to as *schemata* (Bartlett, 1932; Rumelhart, 1980). Speakers of different languages will typically have different background knowledge and different formal schemata (i.e., different rhetorical organizational structures) that help them comprehend a given text—in this case, an editorial.

From a language learning perspective, to operate at higher levels of proficiency, language learners should be familiar and comfortable with the rhetorical organizational structures of the languages they are learning. If learners know what these structures are, they can create text and discourse in line with the target language/culture conventions and understand the ones that have already been created. Otherwise, failure to produce the intended rhetorical patterns will often lead to misunderstandings, to say the least, if for example, the writer of a given text and the reader of this text belong to two separate language and culture groups. This is because rhetoric is about how ideas are arranged and reported, and languages differ in how this is accomplished. When the arrangement and presentation styles do not match, “the interaction between reader and text, and the reconceptualization of the notions conveyed, may be skewed” (Bliss, 2001, p. 13).

The problem stated above is often seen with foreign language learners, especially at lower levels of proficiency. By employing native language writing conventions in the languages they are learning, learners may write a text that is replete with disconnected information or ideas. Therefore, uncovering rhetorical patterns enables us to see how writers in two different languages influence their readers’ understanding of the issues they are writing about.

³ Opinion is a kind of belief with an evaluative dimension and is based on social and cultural grounds (Van Dijk, 1995).

2 Literature Review

Contrastive Rhetoric Analysis (CRA), originally focusing on different aspects of writings of English language learners, was first proposed by Kaplan (1966). In this seminal article, Kaplan argued that the reason for differences in writing between native and non-native speakers is because they come from different speech communities, different cultural backgrounds and their writings reflect their own cultural thinking. Kaplan's ideas have been adapted and expanded by many other researchers ever since. For example, Van Dijk's *News as Discourse* (1988b) is an interdisciplinary approach to news; it combines linguistic and discourse analyses of news. (See also, inter alia, Ansary & Babaii, 2002; Bhatia, 2004; Connor, 1996; Connor, Davis, & De Rycker, 1995; Flowerdew & Dudley Evans, 2002; Van Dijk, 1988a, 1988b, and 1992a; Wang, 2007). Oliver's (1965, pp. x-xi) definition of rhetoric, as quoted by Kaplan (1966, p. 1), is that it "...is a mode of thinking or a mode of finding all available means for the achievement of a designated end." Corbett (1990, p. 32), on the other hand, defines it as "the art or discipline that deals with" spoken or written discourse with the aim "to inform or persuade or motivate" a particular audience in given contexts.

CRA studies have reached two different conclusions. Some have confirmed that editorial rhetorical styles differ across cultures while some studies have found that culture does not play a crucial role in the way editorials are rhetorically organized; instead, they have argued that it appears as though editorials across cultures have a universal pattern (see, for example, Ansary & Babaii, 2009). The paragraphs below provide brief reviews of CRA studies.

Among numerous other contributions involving CRA, Dantas-Whitney and Grabe (1989) examined the texts of news editorials in Portuguese and English and concluded that English news editorials are more formal than their Portuguese equivalents.

Tirkkonen-Condit and Lieflander-Koistinen (1989) found that Finnish editorials did not offer any perspective; instead, they presented information. Also, in German, the main argument is often at the beginning as compared to English, and Finnish editorials are devoid of arguments.

Riazi and Assar (2000) analyzed 60 Persian editorials and confirmed that Bolivar (1994)'s Lead, Follow, and Valuate exist in Persian editorials as well. Bolivar's triad consists of the following: (1) The Lead introduces the content and the orientation; (2) the Follow responds; and (3) the Valuate concludes the editorial with an evaluation.

Ansary and Babaii (2009) found no difference in the way rhetoric is organized in the three different contexts that were investigated (namely, Iran, Pakistan, and the United States). In all three contexts, the English news editorials consist of four rhetorical elements—namely, Run on Headline (RH), Addressing an Issue (AI), Argumentation (A), and Articulating a Position

(AP). In a related study, Ansary & Babaii (2005) found that in 90% of the editorials that they analyzed, the obligatory elements⁴ appeared in the same order (i.e., RH, A, A, and AP, respectively). Also, Ansary & Babaii (2009) found no significant difference between native and non-native English editorial texts in terms of the underlying rhetorical structure; authors of the editorials appear “to operate fundamentally within the same discourse schema” (p. 236). They argue that variations that exist between the editorials “do not characterize the local culture or nationality of the editorial writers” (p. 236).

Similarly, Bonyadi (2010) found that both the *New York Times* and *Tehran Times* had the same rhetorical moves; namely, the Introduction, the Body, and the Ending. However, the writers themselves had unique strategies for implementing a given genre.

Katajamaki and Koskela (2006), closely following Van Dijk’s rhetorical structure model, found that editorials retrieved from business newspapers in English, Swedish, and Finnish follow the pattern that the model proposes. This led them to argue that the newspaper editorial genre across all types of journalism is unified. However, they also found that the editorial conclusion usually varied.

Fakhri (2004) analyzed the introductions in Arabic research articles in an attempt to capture the main rhetorical patterns, using Swales’ CARS⁵ model. He discovered that most introductions are different from what is proposed in the CARS model; Arabic introductions are varied when it comes to rhetorical organization. He also found that the Arabic prose is repetitious and orotund.

Ashipu (2013) analyzed editorials in *Newswatch* and *Tell Magazine* and found that in African societies figurative language is central to elaborating on a given thought and noted the extensive use of similes, personification, hyperbole, rhetorical questions, clichés and idioms.

Farrokhi and Nazemi (2015) examined the rhetorical devices editorial writers of the *New York Times* and *The Australian* use to persuade readers. Following Richardson (2007), they focused on and identified the rhetorical devices “hyperbole,” “metaphor,” and “metonymy” in 30 editorials of the aforementioned publications (15 from each). They found that the use of these rhetorical devices was comparable in both publications, probably due to the genre conventions. Expressed differently, it may be that the genre (of an editorial) requires the use of such devices, and the cultural differences are

⁴ Halliday & Hasan (1989, p. 62) characterize “obligatory elements” as those that “define the genre to which a text belongs.”

⁵ CARS stands for “Creating A Research Space.” CARS model developed by Swales (1990) describes the organizational pattern of “introduction” to academic studies. The pattern is made up of three components, namely (1) establishing a territory, (2) establishing a niche, and (3) occupying the niche.

negligible. However, note that the American and Australian cultures are similar and use the same language.

Given the range of findings summarized above, uncovering rhetorical tools and structures used in Hindi editorials when compared to those in English would be a welcome contribution to both a general linguistic knowledge of Hindi and CRA studies. Moreover, learners of Hindi at some point would need to read and understand Hindi news editorials. A solid understanding of the rhetorical intricacies of news editorials in Hindi may also contribute to students' pursuit of writing persuasion and argumentation essays at higher proficiency levels. The questions that this study attempts to answer through comparative rhetoric analysis of editorials in *Navbharat* and the *New York Times (NYT)* are as follows: What differences, if any, are there in the way English and Hindi use rhetorical devices? What other structural and stylistic patterns are employed in the editorials of each of these publications?

3 Method

Thirty randomly selected news editorials in English and in Hindi (15 from the *NYT* and 15 from *Navbharat*), written by native speakers of the respective languages and all published in 2017, were compared and analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively for content and rhetoric. Specifically, this study attempted to uncover the similarities and differences in editorials in English and in Hindi.

We chose editorials for analysis because from the language learner's perspective, they are harder to understand. Editorials, as a genre, express the opinion of the journalist or journalists (or collectively of the newspaper) about a given issue. They are in accord with Bell's (1991) opinion category. The language of the editorials is typically argumentative or persuasive, with the purpose of influencing readers' opinions. "Editorials reflect the writing preferences of their background cultural context and language. They are regarded as rich sources of writing conventions" (Farrokhi & Nazemi, 2015, p. 155). This may necessitate the use of complex language structures and may include figurative speech, cultural references, background knowledge, and certain compositional styles. As such, on the Interagency Language Roundtable (ILR)⁶ Scale, editorials may require language at proficiency level of L3 or above. This is in contrast to the genre of news stories, which can be defined as articles that contain factual information. News stories often do not include journalistic opinion. They mostly require Level 2 language on the ILR Scale.⁷ News items include information that answers "wh" questions; they are easier for non-native speakers to process and comprehend.

⁶ ILR, 2011.

⁷ ILR, 2011.

We chose *NYT* because it is a widely read newspaper in the United States and represents conventional media use of the English language. We chose *Navbharat* because it appears to be representative of the news media usage of the Hindi language; it does not appear to have been influenced by western writing conventions.

We chose editorials that are all published in 2017 because this study is concerned with having a snapshot of the current state of editorials in English and Hindi in terms of any similarities or differences in rhetorical styles. It is not concerned with diachronic changes in rhetorical styles that editorials may have gone through over the years.

Both the English and Hindi editorials analyzed in this study address issues that are social, political, economic, and legal (or any combination of two or more of these). However, we did not make precise distinctions between these areas as this was not relevant to the study.

The first striking difference was in the lengths of English and Hindi editorials. For that reason, we looked at the word and paragraph counts as measures of length and inclusion of details in editorials. Note that the word count in *Navbharat* was based on the English translation of the Hindi original. This is because different languages use different number of words to express the same (or similar) idea, and we did not want this difference to skew the count. For example, the Hindi “*chahe*” is one word. However, a possible translation is “no matter what,” which would be three words. Conversely, the word “naturally,” in English, is one word. Yet, it could be translated as “*savaal hi paida nahi hota*,” consisting of five words. [Literally, it means “The question does not even arise.”].

Analysis of other features of the Hindi editorials was done by considering both the original texts and their English translation. One of the co-authors is a native speaker of Hindi and therefore, her knowledge of Hindi, the local culture(s), and native speaker intuition was instrumental in determining features of the Hindi editorials analyzed, as in when determining whether or not Hindi editorials are standalone pieces as is the case with English (*NYT*) editorials (See Findings and Discussion below).

The schematic structure of the editorials was analyzed according to Van Dijk’s (1992b) theoretical classification (See Table 1 below). We analyzed each of the editorials at the paragraph, sentence and word level to see if they contain the textual parts that are given in Table 1 and how these parts are arranged in the editorials.

Table 1. Van Dijk's Schematic Structure of Editorials

Text part	Function
Definition	Summarizing the event
Evaluation	Evaluating the event
Conclusion	Giving recommendation / advice / warning

When analyzing the passive voice constructions, in a few instances, we had to make a judgement call as to whether the structure is passive voice or not. An example of this in English would be a sentence like “The vase was broken,” which may be interpreted as a passive voice sentence where someone broke the vase, or as a sentence where the copula simply links the subject to the adjective “broken” to denote a state of being (i.e., This is how we found the vase; it was already broken).

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Length of the editorials

One difference between the editorials in the two publications is the amount of detail included in them. The difference in the length of the editorials as measured by word count is significant. In the *NYT*, the average length of the editorials (excluding the title) is 540.2 words, whereas in *Navbharat*, the average length is 385.4 words. With regards to the number of paragraphs, the *NYT* has an average of 8.1 paragraphs per editorial, whereas *Navbharat* has an average of 3.4. This in itself is a quantitative indication that the *NYT* editorials contain more details about the issue discussed and/or about the editors' ideas presented. Also, the number of words in the titles of the editorials is significantly higher in the *NYT* than it is in *Navbharat*. On average, it is 6.8 in the *NYT* and 2.8 in *Navbharat*. More words often mean more details, and in the *NYT*, this is often the case. For example, the *NYT* editorial title “Terror Respects No Borders, Sympathy Shouldn't Either” is more revealing in terms of both content and the editors' stance on the topic than the *Navbharat* editorial title “New Beginnings.”

4.2 Writer-responsible vs. reader-responsible

With regards to the content, the *NYT* editorials may be read and understood without prior knowledge of the issue discussed. As such, they are writer-responsible pieces; the writer supplies all the necessary information for the text to be understood. For example, consider the first paragraph from this *NYT* editorial:

- (1) The most important thing about a carbon tax plan proposed last week may be the people behind it: prominent Republicans like James Baker III, George Shultz and Henry Paulson Jr. Their endorsement of the idea, variations of which have been suggested before, may be a breakthrough for a party that has closed its eyes to the perils of man-made climate change and done everything in its power to thwart efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. (A rare Republican call to climate action, *NYT*, 2017)

From the very first paragraph, the editors state that there was a carbon tax that was proposed last week (i.e., one week prior to the date of publication of the editorial). They tell us the names of the people who proposed it, and their political party affiliation. They also tell us about the general tendency of that party with respect to the greenhouse gas emissions issue, as seen from the editors' perspective. Nothing piques the reader's curiosity about what happened, by whom, where, etc. Perhaps some readers might want to read additional resources and find out more about the information in this paragraph; however, as it stands, there is nothing to prevent understanding the paragraph on a substantial level. Compare the preceding paragraph with the following one from a *Navbharat* editorial:

- (2) Rammandir issue of Ayodhya is again in discussion. The Supreme Court has made important comments about it. A bench headed by Chief Justice J.S. Khehar said that this is a matter related to religion and faith, so it is better to solve it with dialogue. Chief Justice Khehar said that he himself is ready for mediation, or any judge can be appointed for this too. On this, different sides responded in their own ways. Hindu organizations have welcomed this proposal while the Babri Masjid Action Committee did not agree to it. He said that many rounds of talks have already happened, but there were no results. Some political parties also believe that no solution was reached from the talks, that's why the accepting the decision of the court came about. (Leave the stubbornness, *Navbharat*, 2017)

In contrast to the one in *NYT*, the *Navbharat* paragraph is difficult to follow unless the readers have been following the news or at least this particular news story for an extended period of time. For example, what is the "Ramandir issue of Ayodhya"? What is it about? Why is the Supreme Court involved? Who complained about what or whom? These questions are not answered anywhere in the *Navbharat* editorial.

While the *NYT* editorials are writer-responsible, *Navbharat* editorials are reader-responsible. Stated differently, *Navbharat* readers would have to do additional research or supply the missing information extracted from their background knowledge to fully understand the editorial content. The *NYT*

editorials, on the other hand, may be understood without needing any additional information. In fact, the *NYT* editorials seem to leave nothing unexplained. For example, referring to a tweet by the far-right political candidate Marine Le Pen, the editors say: “Using the French acronym for the court, he tweeted: “Even the CJUE votes Marine.”” (Legalizing, *NYT*, 2017). This way, the readers know that CJUE is the acronym for the Belgian court that made the decision on the issue being discussed.

When referring to entities that are well-known, *NYT* editorials still define or explain anything that readers may not know or that might be confusing. *NYT* readers do not need to do additional search for them. For example, in this sentence, “Caltrain” is explained right after it is mentioned: “...increase the capacity of Caltrain, a commuter train line in the San Francisco Bay Area.” (Don the builder, *NYT*, 2017). Even further, TV news programs, such as “Face the Nation” and “Meet the Press,” which are very well known to Americans (and certainly to readers of *NYT*) are also mentioned along with the TV channel’s name: “...CBS’s Face the Nation” and “On NBC’s Meet the Press” (On Syria, *NYT*, 2017). Contrast this with this sentence from *Navbharat* where “The Sang Parivar” is not explained at all: “The Sang Parivar considers this a question of Hindu faith.” *Parivar* in Hindi means “family.” However, it is not clear why the editors refer to the Sang family (“Sang Parivar”). It appears that the editors assume readers of *Navbharat* know who the intended referent is and, as such, there is no descriptive clause that follows it.

Please note that we do not argue that proper names, acronyms, and concepts are never explained in *Navbharat*; however, we argue that the analysis shows that the *NYT* explains most of the referents mentioned in the editorials, leaving only those acronyms, and proper names deemed to be known without further description or explanation; everything else is explained, leaving little to no additional work for the readers to find out about them. *Navbharat*, on the other hand, seems to assume that readers would know most of the proper names, acronyms, and/or concepts found in its editorials.

4.3 Schematic structure of editorials

There is a difference in the rhetorical styles between the *NYT* and *Navbharat* editorials. *NYT* editorials conform to Van Dijk’s “schematic structure of editorials.” All the *NYT* editorials that we analyzed have elements that Van Dijk identifies as “definition” where the issue is summarized; “evaluation” where the issue is evaluated; and “conclusion” where the editors give recommendation, state their opinions, or voice their concerns.

The same argument can be made in regards to Ansary & Babaii (2005)’s findings, namely, the *NYT* editorials follow the pattern consistently

as follows: Run-on headline, Addressing an issue, Argumentation, and Articulating a position.

In the *NYT*, in the Definition or Addressing an Issue section, the editors state their (main) argument up front. In fact, in all the *NYT* editorials, we found this to be the case. For example:

- (3) In history, this is where Congress steps in. During the Vietnam War, Watergate and the Iran-contra scandal, when a president's actions or policies crossed the line, Congress investigated and held the White House to account. The time has come for it to do so again. (Time for Congress to investigate, *NYT*, 2017)

The editors' argument, which is in fact already clear from the title ("Time for Congress to Investigate Mr. Trump's Ties to Russia"), can be formulated as one that Congress must perform its balance of power role to keep the executive branch in check. The remainder is devoted to details as to why this should be the case, giving examples of what the executive branch has done that would warrant congressional intervention. Here is another example from the *NYT* where the editors' stance is apparent in their main argument:

- (4) This country needs a few good Republicans—one more would do—to rescue it from Betsy DeVos, one of President Trump's worst cabinet choices and his pick to run the Department of Education. (Wanted: One republican, *NYT*, 2017)

NYT editors are completely against Betsy DeVos. Note the use of "worst" when they describe the choice mentioned. The rest of the editorial is about why they think so.

In *Navbharat*, however, there is no particular pattern followed. Specifically, there does not seem to be a main argument in the first paragraph and, therefore, an editors' stance; if there is one, is often not clear. In fact, we found that in only two of the 15 (or 13.3%) of the editorials, there are statements that could qualify as the main argument. Consider the following first paragraph, translated into English from *Navbharat*:

- (5) Ways of maximizing the use of alternative or clean energy in the country are just beginning to open. At the auction held by the government past Friday, record-low rates of wind power were filed. In the bidding for the 1 GW projects, five companies won the contract by bidding Rs 3.46 per unit. A few days ago record-low solar energy rates, whose price has gone even lower than Rs 3 per unit, were also filed. (Affordable green energy, *Navbharat*, 2017)

Notice that the entire paragraph is devoted to reporting factual information. None of the sentences qualifies as an argument, and none of them indicates the editors' stance. Similarly, consider the first paragraph of the following *Navbharat* editorial, titled "See business or safety?" Note in the paragraph that the editors are simply reporting the Supreme Court's decision and its effects on some businesses in a number of cities in India. It is impossible to know the editors' stance in this first paragraph:

- (6) The Supreme Court's decision to sell and consume alcohol in all the contracts, shops, restaurants and hotels that fall within 500 meters of the National and State Highways has become the throat of many people. This decision has spread the silence across many prominent hotels and pubs in Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai and Chennai. (See business or safety?, *Navbharat*, 2017)

Another finding of this study is that the *NYT* editorials are more precise and specific with respect to details, examples, opinion, and conclusions or recommendations when compared with *Navbharat* editorials. We mentioned earlier that this is already evident from the difference in the lengths of the editorials in the two publications. The following (third paragraph in an eight-paragraph editorial) is an example taken from the *NYT*.

- (7) In two districts – one encompassing parts of South and West Texas, and the other in the Dallas-Fort Worth area – the court found that mapmakers used the former, a Latino-majority district, they broke up cohesive Latino areas, higher turnout rates, and included more high-turnout white voters. (Texas needs a remedial lesson, *NYT*, 2017)

Notice the details in the preceding paragraph, explaining the two districts mentioned, in addition to details about how districts were broken up to influence the voting of Latinos and Blacks. Contrast this with the following paragraph, taken from *Navbharat*:

- (8) There is nothing new in this attitude of India, but there is something new in what the US representative has said. Nicky Haley clearly said that tension is rising in South Asia, so that is why America wants to see what it can do to resolve the disputes. The question is, what could be the meaning of a US representative to come to India and say this. Is this an indication of the new understanding of the American administration regarding South Asian conditions? Is the United States under the leadership of Trump to be more pro-active than his predecessor in the current situation? (American initiative, *Navbharat*, 2017)

If we set aside the first sentence in the paragraph above (because it alludes to what was said in the previous paragraph of that editorial), there is no explanation for the tension in South Asia or why that tension is rising. Similarly, there is no mention of the so-called disputes that America is willing to help to resolve. Further, the two questions at the end of the paragraph add to the editors' speculation; they do not explain the issue for the readers, nor do the questions attempt to persuade.

In terms of the editorials' conclusions, we noticed two features. One is that in the *NYT*, the conclusions are very clear (just like the other parts of the editorial) in that the editors' stance or suggestion is stated clearly. The other is that *Navbharat* editorials are often not very clear or direct in their stance or suggestions, and they seem to contain what might qualify as a main argument. The following examples illustrate these observations. The following is an example of a conclusion from the *NYT*:

- (9) Too often in recent years, presidents have taken military action without the authorization of Congress, which shares war-making responsibilities with the president. It is essential that Congress consider a new authorization for the use of military force in Syria both to demonstrate the need for legal justification for military action and to ensure a full vetting of Mr. Trump's intentions there. (On Syria, *NYT*, 2017)

What the editors want and what their justifications are seem clear. The editors want Congress to have a say in decisions that lead to wars. Their justification: Congress shares constitutional responsibility with the president when declaring war; however, it has been ignored in recent years. In some cases, such as in the one below, the conclusion is even more specific:

- (10) Since the department has the final say on virtually all proposed changes, discriminatory laws could take effect even in places that must seek pre-approval. Still, there's every reason for the court to take an aggressive approach here. If any state should be monitored for its racially discriminatory voting practices, it's Texas. (Texas needs a remedial lesson, *NYT*, 2017)

In the preceding paragraph, the editors clearly assert that the Department of Justice has the final say, and the court should pursue the issue aggressively, and Texas is the worst when it comes to racially discriminatory voting practices. In contrast, consider this conclusion from *Navbharat*:

- (11) The strangest thing is that BJP is not able to determine its CM candidate in those states, where it has got a huge majority. Making someone in the UP and Uttarakhand a chief minister is proving to

be a difficult task for the party. Indeed, in these states, there are several groups within the party, which the high command is obligated to please. Then offerings need to be made to the leaders who come from the other party. It has gotten stuck in the odd dilemma of satisfying and balancing everyone. (New beginnings, *Navbharat*, 2017)

In the passage above, there is no recommendation; at least, not a direct one. Instead, there are observations (for example, *BJP is not able to determine chief minister candidates, and it is stuck in the strange dilemma of satisfying and balancing everyone*). There is no evidence that the editors are trying to influence the readers; only that they state their observations. If there is an implied recommendation, it probably would be this: *BJP should do a better job determining its chief minister candidates in the states mentioned*. However, this goes back to *Navbharat* being a reader-responsible publication (as far as editorials are concerned), and it is the reader who is expected to reach this conclusion, if at all.

We stated earlier that it seems that in *Navbharat*, the main arguments (if any) appear at the end or toward the end of the editorial. This causes the main argument to be combined with conclusions, making it hard to differentiate between the two. The last sentence of the last paragraph of an editorial from *Navbharat* exemplifies this:

(12) Doubts of collusion of ministers with the accused in the BJP-ruled states are not only a big challenge for law and order, but the instances of fair governance in India are also being demolished by such examples. (Euphemism, *Navbharat*, 2017)

The preceding statement comes after a discussion of an attack on a 55-year-old man by a group of people because he was transporting cows banned in the state of Rajasthan. This conclusion appears very much to be as the main argument of the editorial, and it would have been stated (perhaps with some modification) at the beginning of or earlier in the editorial if it were an editorial in the *NYT*.

4.4 Passive voice

At the grammatical level, we found that the *NYT* uses the passive voice only when it is needed or when using the active voice leads to artificial sentences. Excluding a couple of passive voice structures in fixed expressions, such as “lest it be judged _____”, where the passive voice is an integral part of the expression, we found 51 instances of the passive voice, with the lowest number of passive voice instances being 0 in one editorial, and the highest being 9 in another. The average over 15 editorials is 3.4 passive voice

structures per editorial. An example of where the passive voice is preferred is the following:

- (13) Federal student loan defaults are dragging on the economy — making it impossible for people to buy cars or homes — and are increasingly following people into old age, where their Social Security benefits are being garnished for loan payments. (The wrong move on student loans, *NYT*, 2017)

In this example, while it is possible to state the message in the active voice (“...Social Security Administration garnishes the Social Security benefits of people...”), stating it as such would direct the focus away from the “benefits.” There are at least two other reasons why the editors might have preferred the passive voice here: (1) “Social Security Administration” is understood from “Social Security” to begin with, and (2) it may not be completely accurate to pinpoint the Social Security Administration as the “guilty one” since in the end it is the government that collects the loan payment money. Similarly, in the example below, using the active voice would not clarify “who” the intended referent is:

- (14) Soon after the 1986 bill passed, employers and undocumented workers settled into a routine that was well understood in sectors like construction, hospitality and agriculture, which rely heavily on undocumented labor. (No crackdown on illegal employers, *NYT*, 2017)

While the passive voice in the example above does not reveal “who understood the routine,” replacing it with the active voice would not reveal it either: “...a routine that people understood well...” The same argument holds for the example below as well:

- (15) The system, which was designed to allow employers to cross-reference an applicant’s work-eligibility documents against government records, remains voluntary for most employers two decades after its rollout. (No crackdown on illegal employers, *NYT*, 2017)

In the example above, it is impossible to identify the people who designed the system. Furthermore, even if we were to identify the designers of the system, listing them in the sentence above would not contribute to comprehension of the editorial; in fact, it would distract because who designed the system is irrelevant to the argument in the paragraph and the editorial.

Therefore, the *NYT* editorials seem to refrain from the use of the passive voice because frequent use of it would take away from the credibility

of the statements within. In any of the preceding passive-voice related examples, if the agent (the doer) of the action were at the heart of the editorial, the use of the passive voice would sound as if the editors were hiding something. To illustrate this, consider the following:

- (16) Scientists and economists have long argued that putting a price on carbon would encourage conservation and investment in renewable energy. (A rare Republican call to climate action, *NYT*, 2017)

The editors could have chosen to use the passive voice above (as in “it has been argued that...”) but the use of the active voice makes the statement sound more authoritative than it actually is. Note that in the example above, no evidence is provided about who these “scientists and economists” are; no mention of the names of the scientists or economists has been provided. Yet, the use of the passive voice (as in “it has been argued that...”) would have been perceived as making a weaker argument compared to that of the active voice as it appears in the example above.

In *Navbharat* editorials, we found 104 instances of the passive voice, with the lowest number of instances being 3 each in three editorials, and the highest being 12 in one editorial. The average in 15 editorials is 6.9 passive voice structures per editorial. This is a significantly higher number when compared to the *NYT* editorials’ average of 3.4, especially since *Navbharat* editorials are shorter, (average = 385.4 words, excluding the titles) compared to the *NYT* editorials (average = 540.2 words).

One common usage involves expressions that could be translated as “it is being believed that...,” “it is being said that...,” and “it should be hoped that...” The following example illustrates one use:

- (17) It is believed that this new rate change and the dynamics of the market demand for alternative energy can take a massive jump. (Affordable green energy, *Navbharat*, 2017)

In the example above, it is not clear who the referent is. It is not clear if the editors are referring to economists, politicians, the government, the Indian people, or the editors themselves, among possible others. If they are referring to the Indian people, it is still not clear which segment of the population the editors are referring to. By contrast, in the *NYT*, there are no instances of this structure or the literally translated version of “it is being believed...” in any of the 15 *NYT* editorials we analyzed. In fact, there are only two instances of the verb “believe,” and in both cases the verb is in the active voice and the referents are significantly more specific than the *Navbharat* version shown in the example above. The following is the first instance of the verb “believe” in the *NYT*:

- (18) Many conservatives believe they'll be able to dismantle Mr. Obama's regulations through administrative, legal or legislative maneuvers, without compromising. (A rare Republican call to climate action, *NYT*, 2017)

In the instance above, the editors' claim of who believes what involves a portion of conservatives. The claim may be refuted by polls, by conservative parties, or by political experts. In any case, it is a claim that is stated directly, revealing the editors' position on this issue or hinting that they have communicated about the issue with some conservatives and are reporting it in the editorial the way it is stated in the example. Contrast this with the passive voice structure of "it is believed..." which does not reveal anything about the referent. Consider the second instance of the verb "believe" in the *NYT*:

- (19) Mr. Tillerson, on CBS's "Face the Nation" on Sunday, said "we believe that the first priority is the defeat of ISIS." (On Syria, *NYT*, 2017)

Mr. Tillerson is Secretary of State, and this fact is given earlier in the editorial. Therefore, when he is quoted as saying the above, the readers know that he is referring to the current administration of which he is a part.

The use of the passive voice in *Navbharat* is not limited to the structures given above, namely, to "it is being believed that...", "it is being said that...", or "it is being hoped that..." Use of the passive voice abounds. For instance, in the example below, the use of the passive voice conceals the subject claimed to be trying to exempt the big hotels from the restrictions mentioned in the editorial. Who it is that is trying to exempt the big hotels is unclear. Is it the government, political parties, policy makers, big hotel owners, or someone else?

- (20) It is being tried that somehow big hotels are exempted from these restrictions. (See business or safety?, *Navbharat*, 2017)

We are not arguing that the use of the active voice always reveals the identity of the subject but that the *NYT* seems to be making an effort to avoid the passive voice because of the obscurity that it brings on the statements and it strives to use the active voice even if it does not reveal the subject any more than when it is used in the passive voice (see examples from the *NYT* above). In fact, in the *Navbharat* example cited, the editors could have phrased the statement in the active voice without revealing the source. For example: "Some are trying to exempt big hotels from these restrictions." This would still raise the question of "who" while at the same time making the statement stronger by insinuating that someone is taking an action about

exempting big hotels from the restrictions, and that this is a serious issue that the authorities should look into. The passive voice, on the other hand, communicates a lack of seriousness regarding the “trying” as though there were an insignificant effort or consideration to exempt big hotels from the restrictions. Consider the following example:

- (21) It is being said that the government has decided to set up the NSEBC in view of the demand for reservation. (Confusion on reservation, *Navbharat*, 2017)

In example (21), the editors could have avoided the passive voice and stated the source of the rumor and reported the main clause in the active voice, as in, “(Reliable) sources told us that...” However, the *Navbharat* editors refrain from doing so, avoiding an assertive statement. This relieves the editors of the responsibility of identifying the sources if asked and the relieving them of the liability of having made a statement regarding the government’s decision to set up the NSEBC (National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes). It gives the impression that the editors heard about the government’s decision serendipitously. In the following example as well, editors employ a similar strategy:

- (22) Doubts are being expressed that the new commission is preparing to bring the powers of reservations for Jat, Mrathe, Patel and Kapu into the purview of reservation. (Confusion on reservation, *Navbharat*, 2017)

Through the use of the passive voice, the editors chose not to reveal who is expressing these doubts while at the same time not being held responsible for making such a claim if the statement were made in the active voice. Note how stronger it would be to have stated the above in the active voice, using “we” to refer to the editors themselves: “We doubt that the new commission is preparing...”

4.5 Implications for teaching Hindi as a foreign language

The most obvious implication of the findings above is that Hindi, being a reader-responsible language, teachers of Hindi might want to provide students with more scaffolding when assigning editorials. This can be done in several ways. One way would be for teachers to first read ahead of time the editorial that they are assigning and identify the key pieces of information not explained in the editorial itself. Teachers could then find other—perhaps shorter—articles, news pieces, blogs, and wikis, etc. and assign those to students either along with the main editorial to be assigned, or beforehand.

This way, learners would not be overwhelmed by a sentence or a paragraph containing information that editors assumed the readers would know.

Another way of scaffolding would be to assign learners to identify all the elements (concepts, expressions, proper names, etc.) in the editorials that they do not know, and search for those in various sources. Learners can be asked to create wikis or a database for future reference of various issues that appear in the news repeatedly.

Also, regarding the rhetorical style of Hindi editorials (i.e., the flow of the editorials), learners may be asked to rearrange the elements contained in the editorial and then research and supply the missing elements that, if included, would help the readers understand it.

Materials and test developers might want to ensure that learners understand certain elements within a given editorial. If materials developers believe learners will not be able to comprehend the editorial, they may augment it with background information or develop exercises that will lead to understanding. Test developers need to ensure that the details intended to be elicited via the questions they are developing are in fact in the editorial.

4.6 Implications for teaching English as a foreign language

Since English editorials are writer-responsible, teachers of English would most likely not need as much scaffolding when assigning editorials as teachers of Hindi would. This is because English editorials are free-standing pieces; they include most, if not all, of the pieces of information readers might need. Instead, teachers may want to point out the pattern that English editorials follow in order to raise learners' awareness of the pattern. Activities involving students' guessing what pieces of information they expect to find in the editorials would be beneficial. For example, teachers can show the title of the editorial and ask students to state what pieces of information they expect to find in the introductory paragraph of the editorial. Similarly, the teacher can hand out the students only the introductory paragraph and ask them to write down the kinds of information they expect to find in the subsequent paragraphs. This would help to develop an awareness of the organizational pattern of English editorials.

Materials and test developers might want to ensure that learners understand the organizational pattern of the English editorials as this would help to speed up learners' reading and comprehending them. Materials developers may want to incorporate into the materials they are developing similar activities as mentioned in the previous paragraph. Test developers need to be aware that certain parts of the English editorials may give away the answers to the questions. For example, including the introductory paragraph of an editorial in the reading passage of a test item might reveal the answers to the questions since the introductory paragraph of an English editorial provides an outline of the editorial and gives the reader an idea of

what the general stance of the authors is and what will be discussed in the rest of the editorial.

5 Conclusions and Further Research

5.1 Conclusions

This study of the *NYT* and *Navbharat* editorials has revealed significant differences between English and Hindi editorial rhetoric styles. In general, the *NYT* editorials are detailed and stand-alone pieces, where the information included is defined enough for the reader to comprehend it; hence, writer-responsible. In the *NYT*, arguments, suggestions and recommendations are stated directly. In the *NYT*, the main argument is stated early and details are provided later; hence, a deductive style.

Navbharat, on the other hand, seems to rely on the readers' background knowledge of the issue and, therefore, consists of fewer details; hence, reader-responsible. The arguments, suggestions and recommendations in *Navbharat* are often indirectly stated. In *Navbharat*, the main argument is often not stated and, when it is stated, it is at the end of the editorial once details have been provided; hence, an inductive writing style. The differences in rhetorical organization of each of the publications require language educators to devise teaching strategies for better and faster comprehension of high level texts in each of the respective languages.

The purpose of this study is not to criticize either of the publications; it is simply to note the observed differences and similarities. For example, while the *NYT* editorial titles are more revealing and efficient for the busy reader who may be browsing titles to see which one he or she wants to read, the shorter *Navbharat* editorial titles may invoke interest in readers and keep them wondering about the content. Similarly, the more detailed *NYT* editorials may be taking into account the multicultural nature of the American population who may not be sharing most of the elements found in the content of the editorial, whereas *Navbharat* may be reflecting Hindi speakers' or Indian society's collective understanding of the topic being reported. It is also possible that the directness found in *NYT* editorials is a reflection of the American culture's fondness for straight shooting in interpersonal relations. The indirectness observed in the *Navbharat* editorials, on the other hand, could reflect the indirectness in Indian culture. The analysis presented in this paper, therefore, should be evaluated in view of these considerations.

5.2 Further research

This study is limited in that the number of editorials analyzed is small because we analyzed each editorial in greater depth than we otherwise would

have if we had been searching for a single specific feature. Further research with a larger sample of editorials is needed to confirm our findings. Researchers may want to identify a specific feature and analyze a substantial number of editorials for that feature. Depending on the feature that researchers might want to investigate, a Hindi linguistic corpus could be used for more efficient and faster processing. Moreover, researchers may want to limit the “topic” to just one (for example, economy) to see if that particular topic lends itself to more or less use of certain features. Alternatively, researchers may want to examine editorials obtained from more than just one publication source to determine if the arguments in this study are sound. Also, the passive voice in Hindi seems to be prolific ground for linguistic research. Finding out why it is used significantly more frequently in Hindi than it is in English may reveal truths about the social, cultural, and political norms in India.

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Appendix

List of editorials used for this study

New York Times editorials

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Received: August 16, 2017
Revised: November 29, 2017
Accepted: December 2, 2017

