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On English Native Speakers' and Advanced Persian Speaking EFL Learners' Use of Animal Metaphor in Addressing People

Mansour Shabani

Assistant professor of general linguistics, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran

Mohammad Amin Sorahi

Assistant professor of general linguistics, University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran

Sedighe Moradi

MA student of TEFL, University of Guilan, University Campus 2, Rasht, Iran

ABSTRACT: *Animal metaphors as a pervasive phenomenon in all languages "demonstrate how certain aspects of animals and their instinctual and physical attributes as well as their behavior patterns are mapped onto human beings" (Silaski, 2013, p. 323). The present study was an attempt to compare English native speakers with advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names to address people. In doing so, 30 American native speakers were selected through convenience sampling. In addition, 24 advanced Persian speaking EFL learners were selected through running the Oxford quick placement test and convenience sampling. A questionnaire containing 50 animal names based on the questionnaire used by Halupka-Resetaa and Radic's study (2003) and Szamosfalvi's study (2011), with some modifications, were given to participants and were asked to choose if they would use a given animal name to refer a male or female, to select if they would use the animal name abusively or affectionately, to give an example of morphosyntactic structure in which they would use the animal name, and to explain a concrete situation in which they would use the animal name. The inferential statistics (Chi-Square test) suggested that there are significant differences , ($p < .05$), between English native Speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names to refer to a single gender or both, in using animal names affectionately or abusively, and in terms of morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are used. However, it was found that there are no significant differences, ($p > .05$), between the two groups in using animal names in terms of meaning. The findings of the present study can be of help to teachers and textbooks and syllabus designers in that they can include different types of metaphors including animal metaphors in EFL contexts. Furthermore, translators and error analysts can take advantage of the findings of this study since they are in some way concerned with cultural similarities and differences.*

KEYWORDS: addressing, animal metaphors, terms of abuse, terms of endearment, morphosyntactic structure, EFL learner

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INTRODUCTION

Although the study of metaphor has attracted the attention of scholars since the ancient time, it is still an infant branch of linguistic study (Zhang & Hu, 2009). "Naturally a great diversity of views have come into being, mainly falling into two schools, namely traditional metaphor and modern metaphor, which interpret metaphor in the line of rhetorics and cognition respectively" (Zhang and Hu, 2009, p. 77). We can find the trace of traditional metaphor in Aristotle's views that gave the following definition to metaphor: "Metaphor consists in giving the thing a name that belongs to something else; the transference being either from genus to species, or from species to genus, or from species to species, or on grounds of analogy" (Gibbs, 2002, p. 210). Lakoff and Johnson (1980) changed the view about metaphors and introduced the conceptual metaphor theory in "Metaphors We Live By". "Metaphors, they suggested, are not simply poetic parts of speech, or obscure idiomatic expressions, but rather part of our larger cognitive reasoning. Metaphors in the language form part of larger, conceptual metaphors that help us understand and talk about the world we live in" (Psomadakis, 2007, p. 221). They proposed that "metaphor is a matter of thought and action rather than a device of poetic imagination and the rhetoric flourish" (Zhang & Lu, 2009). What Lakoff and Johnson claimed was a revolution and new look in the understanding of metaphor concept. They defined metaphor as a matter of ordinary rather than extraordinary language that can be found in everyday life, in thoughts and actions. In other words, metaphors are not merely a linguistic device in literature domains, but rather a cognitive phenomenon that control and manage our everyday functioning. For example, according to Lakoff and Johnson (2003), the concept *argument* and conceptual metaphor ARGUMENT IS WAR can be seen in a wide variety of expressions in a language as follows:

- Your claims are indefensible.
- He attacked every weak point in my argument.
- His criticisms were right on target. I demolished his argument.
- I've never won an argument with him.
- You disagree? Okay, shoot!
- If you use that strategy, he'll wipe you out. He shot down all of my arguments.

As it can be seen, when we talk about argument in terms of war, there are win or lose, attack or defense, gain or lose ground, changing strategies, and having an opponent (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). "It is in this sense that the ARGUMENT IS WAR metaphor is one that we live by in this culture; it structures the actions we perform in arguing" (Lakoff & Johnson, 2003, p. 5). "The cognitive study on metaphors reflects a renewed interest in the study of metaphors and focuses the attention on conceptual metaphors, for conceptual metaphors are believed to play a significant role in shaping the process of thinking itself" (Lu, 2012, p. 151). Cognitive linguists view metaphor as important and not marginal at all, emphasizing the construal of meanings and our embodied

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understanding of the situation (Ma & Liu, 2008). Metaphor is a conceptual and experiential process that forms our world and it is not only a linguistic device (Su. L, I. 2002).

The metaphorical transfers from animal domain to human domain are so pervasive in all languages that can be considered as a part of language and culture. Silaski (2013) asserts that in many languages animal imagery can be considered as one of the tools of creating social identity. For this reason any survey in this regard provides an important insight about thoughts, beliefs, and current moral rules which are governed in a society.

Animal metaphors, let us go beyond the literal meaning of words and provide opportunities for speakers of a language to decorate their statements in an effective way. They can be used affectionately or abusively depending on the situation in which they are used, the intended meaning of the speaker and the culture of a society. For example, in the world of metaphor pig is considered as a model of dirtiness in almost all European languages and metaphorically refers to a dirty person both moral and physical (Domínguez & Zawislawska, 2006). By contrast, there are some particular metaphors which only work in a given language or culture and they receive completely different meanings in different languages. *Owl* is an example, it refers to something as ominous in the Persian language while it is the paradigm of wisdom in the English language.

In the area of teaching and learning a second language, animal metaphors can play an important role too. Knowing how the target language reflects or encodes its concepts on the basis of metaphorical structuring have a crucial role in L2 learning. For understanding and being fluent in a second language one should be aware of form, meaning and use. All these three dimensions are interconnected with each other. Metaphors and specifically animal metaphors are a part of correct use of language. Although metaphors can help simplify complicated ideas, they can be distracting if we just appeal to their literal meaning. Any failure in receiving and getting the exact meaning of a metaphorical expression may lead to misunderstanding and communication breakdown between two cultures. "There is a need to familiarize language learners with metaphoric expressions, especially those containing animal names and those which may cause serious communication failure. This issue is more serious when interlocutors belong to different cultures and/or when metaphors convey different connotations for language users" (Aliakbari & Faraji, 2013, p. 8).

The present study tries to make a comparison between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names to address human beings. So, the following research questions are addressed:

1. Are there any significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using a given animal name to address a male or a female person?

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2. Are there any significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names both abusively and affectionately?
3. Are there any significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are used?
4. Are there any significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names in terms of meaning?

To answer the research questions, the following null hypotheses are proposed:

1. There are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using a given animal name to address a male or a female person.
2. There are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in terms of using animal names both abusively and affectionately.
3. There are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are used.
4. There are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names in terms of meaning.

This paper is organized in the following way: in next section, we review the previous related research carried out on animal metaphors across some languages. In section 3, the methodology including participants, instruments, procedure, and data analysis is dealt with. Section 4 is dedicated to the results of the study. In this section, the data are analyzed through running some appropriate tests. The focus of section 5, will be on the discussion of the findings of the study. Finally, we will present the conclusion in section 6.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Animal metaphors can be used affectionately or abusively for naming or attributing a character to a person depending on the similarities between the animal and person in terms of size, sex, characteristics, and physical features. They have been merged with language, ideology, and principles of a nation so seriously that cannot be considered as an isolated phenomenon in literature. The culture, society, human relations, and their thoughts have a direct influence on animal expressions and that is why they have different positive or negative values and usages in each lingual society (Nakhavali, 2011). Animal metaphors like all linguistic devices help us to make our statements more powerful and impressive, they let us express meanings beyond the mere definitions of words.

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Animal metaphors as a widespread phenomenon have attracted many researchers' attention in the past few years and directed them to carry out research on animal names used as metaphors, idioms, and proverbs. One of the first and the most popular research which caused the basis for further studies was conducted by Sabina Halupka - Resˇetar

and Biljana Radic (2003). The paper deals with combined metaphorical/vocative uses of animal names in Serbian in addressing people, both abusively and affectionately, thereby expressing the speakers' attitude towards their addressee. The result indicates that the Serbians intend to use animal names more frequently as terms of abuse than as terms of endearment. Based on the results, animal names are used to refer to people both abusively and affectionately in Serbian, but more frequently as terms of abuse than as terms of endearment. Men and women are addressed abusively by the names of animals from different species with some characteristics such as appearance, eating habits, character, and intelligence of the addressee. In positive usage of animal names, fewer animal names occur as terms of endearment than as invectives because the positive use of animal names happens less than negative use of animal names in Serbian society. Affectionately, the metaphoric transfer from animal domain to human domain is only based on the size, the immaturity, or helplessness of the animal and no other features such as eating habits, character or intelligence which are important in using animal names abusively.

Olateju (2005) made another study entitled "The Yorùbá Animal Metaphors: Analysis and Interpretation" with a view to highlight the stylistic and communicative potentials of animal metaphors. In this study, the individual distinctive characteristic features of animals – domestic and wild – involved in metaphors and motivated their metaphorical interpretations are highlighted. Also, the sources of animal metaphors were discussed through three areas, namely: the Yorùbá naming culture, animal characteristic habits and behavior, and the Yorùbá poetry.

The results of this study indicate that certain conditions need to be met before considering any utterance as animal metaphor. First, both the speaker and the hearer must share the same assumptions about a specific animal metaphor and this can happen through sharing the same knowledge of animal characteristics and behaviors that is the basis on which a metaphor is drawn. Second, animal metaphors transfer meaning. It means an action or a character associated with an animal are transferred to the people. The third factor is the motivation which has a direct relation to culture. It means the Yoruba beliefs about specific characteristics of an animal attributing to human beings depend largely on their culture and philosophy of life. That is why the metaphorical meaning of an animal name like tortoise is "slow" in English language and "cunning" in the Yoruba. So, for understanding animal metaphors in Yoruba sharing the same assumptions that it is both context and culture depended is very important. Conclusion shows the stylistic and semantic effects of animal metaphors. Stylistically, animal metaphors are used, especially in poetry, in paying tributes and compliments to animals and humans as well. They are

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also used in achieving communicative goals as they are used as new or additional mode of expression in both literary and routine communication.

Another study was made by Domínguez and Zawislawska (2006). They tried to study animal names used as insults and the derogation in Polish and Spanish by analyzing lexical materials from Polish and Spanish corpora. The main focus of this research is on the study of animal names; names of their body parts, secretions and actions; and finally derivation of animal names which can be used as insults in Polish and Spanish languages. According to the results of this research, animal names can be considered as insults in the human domain by referring to physical features of human, by referring to sexual activities, by referring to features of human character, by referring to groups of people, by referring to human jobs, and by referring to human secretions, diseases, injuries, and intoxications. In addition, animal names can be based for derivation of nouns, verbs and adjectives, which convey offensive meanings to insult human. For example, the Polish corpus includes the adjective *pieski* which derives from the noun *pies* – dog and metaphorically means miserable, bad or paltry. Generally, the results of this study show that how extensive and diverse is the classification of animal names as human insult in Polish and Spanish. Some of them can be used with reference to both sexes, only to women or exclusively to men. Although there are some differences in thinking about a human being in terms of an animal between two languages, they are small and not significant.

The differences and similarities in the understanding of animal metaphors between English and Chinese children and adults were examined by Wang and Dowker (2007). The results indicated that the psychological interpretations to animal metaphors are more common among adults than children because they were probably more familiar with conventional psychological explanations and children are given more perceptual interpretations than adults. Although there were differences in psychological interpretations between children and adults in both English and Chinese groups, differences were slightly smaller among Chinese children and adults than English children and adults. This revealed that both Chinese children and adults have a closer understanding in psychological metaphorical expressions than English children and adults.

Another study has been carried out by Rodríguez (2009) in animal metaphors for women in English and Spanish. She classified animal images in the three main categories, namely, pets, farmyard, and wild animals when women are identified by them. The results of this study showed that there is a gender difference through animal imagery for both English and Spanish speakers. The names of offspring, weak, small and nice animals are used with positive meaning in order to show youth, beauty, and slimness in a woman. Conversely, the names of big animals in their size, certain pets and farmyard animals carry negative connotation such as fatness, ugliness, and elderliness when they refer to women. Although the names of specific pet and farmyard animals signify positive

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meaning, all the animals which belong to the wild category suggest and transfer undesirable meaning.

A comparative study of animal names used in addressing people, in English and Hungarian languages while focusing on gender, age and place of living is presented by Szamosfalvi (2011). The study dealt with metaphorical vocative uses of animal names in English and Hungarian languages in addressing people, both abusively and affectionately.

The analysis of the data indicates that there are similarities and differences between English and Hungarian people in using animal names for addressing or describing each other. English and Hungarian are common in using ten animal names. On the other hand, there are some differences in using animal names depending on their age, gender and place of living. According to the results of this research there are not great differences in using animal names as terms of abuse or endearment and also in using animal vocatives to address men, women or both.

Estaji & Nakhavali (2011) investigated Semantic Derogation in Persian Animal Proverbs. The main aim of this research was to determine if there was a semantic derogation in Persian, and if there was, ascertain whether it applied equally to both sexes (male & female) terms. The analysis revealed that sex and semantic derogation were not shown in Persian structures and proverbs as much as other languages, but in the cases with semantic derogation, the metaphorical meanings of the female proverbs connoted worse qualities than those connoted by the male proverbs.

Another study was carried out by Sommer and Sommer (2011). They conducted three studies on the use of zoomorphs (nonhuman animals) as metaphors for addressing human characteristics. In the first study, they rated thirty six mammal names based on their age, gender, and favorableness in applying to a person metaphorically. In the second study, they searched the metaphorical meaning of thirty six mammalian species when attributed to people through fourteen general dictionaries of colloquial English that were published between 1811 and 1998. In the third study a list of twenty four animal names consisting of eight birds, eight fishes and eight insects were given to twenty eight undergraduate students. The analysis of the data of three studies shows most animal names are uncomplimentary when applied to people. Bird and insect names mostly transfer negative metaphorical meaning and fish names received generally ‘cannot say’ rating when applied to people. Predatory birds such as hawk, eagle, and vulture are used for describing male characteristics while less aggressive birds such as pigeon and goose are used for females. Finally, animal names which belong to mammal group are used more than fish, insect, and bird names by people for addressing and describing each other.

Although all previous studies mentioned above are about metaphorical meaning of animal names in one language or between two different languages, none of them contribute to English learning and teaching. They only underline cultural values, similarities and differences between two languages, or a speaker’s attitude toward the addressee within one language in using animal names when they are attributed to people. There is not any

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survey in order to show to what degree English learners of a language are aware of using animal names metaphorically in their conversations and how much they are qualified in receiving the metaphorical meaning of animal names. So as it seems there is a gap in this regard which needs a different survey. This paper aims to address this gap and takes a close look at to the position of animal metaphors in the process of English learning and teaching.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Fifty four participants took part in this study. Thirty female and male American native speakers and twenty four male and female Persian speaking EFL learners participated in this study. Persian speaking learners of English were MA. students of English literature and MA. students of English teaching at the University of Guilan in Iran and English learners of Shokooh Institute in Rasht, Iran. The age level of English native speakers ranged from 21 to 35 and Persian speaking learners aged 21 to 45. The level of proficiency of Persian speaking EFL learners was advanced and they were selected through running the Oxford quick placement test in one MA English literature class, two MA English teaching classes, and four advanced EFL learner classes in Shokooh institute.

Instruments

The following instruments were used to serve the objectives of this study:

1. Oxford Quick Placement Test (Oxford University Press and University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate, 2001) version 2:
This test is divided into two parts. Part one, questions 1-40, and part two, questions 41-60. All questions in this test are multiple-choice. The test was administered, in order to select advanced learners. The learners whose scores were in the range of 48-54, were chosen to participate in the study.

2. Questionnaire
This questionnaire, with some slight changes, follows the same procedures used by Halupka-Resetaa and Radic's study (2003) and Szamosfalvi's study (2011). The modification took place as follows: deleting one out of five questions, the omitted question is 'how frequently would you use a given animal name in addressing people'? In addition, we added one choice, no idea, in response to the questions 'would you use an animal name to refer to a male or female'? and 'would you use an animal name abusively or affectionately'? The questionnaire contains 50 animal names found in English and Persian. Animal names are *turkey, hen, goat, dog, mouse, frog, lamb, donkey, horse, cow, snail, bear, pigeon, rat, chick, bee, calf, wolf, rabbit, pig, rooster, cat, duck, ox, fox,*

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goose, snake, bull, vixen, squirrel, louse, toad, magpie, worm, peacock, gorilla, parrot, monkey, skunk, owl, mole, ostrich, puppy, dove, chicken, bunny, piglet, kitten, duckling, and *ape*. There are four questions for each of animal names and participants must say if they use a given animal name to address a male or a female person, or both, to determine if they use the name abusively or affectionately, to give the morphosyntactic structure in which they use the name, and to describe a concrete situation in which they use the name. It is also asked if they know some other animal names that are not included in the questionnaire, but they use them while addressing people, add them at the end of the questionnaire.

Procedure

It is a quantitative research that compares native speakers of English with advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and aims to generalize the results to the larger population of advanced Persian speaking EFL learners.In the first step by running Oxford quick placement test, 24 advanced Persian speaking EFL learners were selected between MA. students of English literature and MA. students of English teaching at the University of Guilan in Iran, and English learners of Shokooh Institute in Rasht, Iran. Those who correctly answered 48-54 questions from 60 multiple - choice questions were considered as advanced EFL learners.
In the second step, the advanced EFL learners were given a questionnaire containing fifty animal names and were asked to choose if they would use a given animal name to address a male or a female person, or both, to determine if they would use the name abusively or affectionately, to give the morphosyntactic structure in which they would use the name, and to describe a concrete situation in which they would use the name. The same questionnaire was also given to thirty American native speakers who live in Washington, DC. and were asked to answer the same questions.

Data Analysis

The data were statistically analyzed after the survey questionnaire were gathered completely. The descriptive statistics for general information about all of the research questions were calculated and reported through frequency distribution tables. In addition, the inferential statistics through Chi-Square test was used to investigate whether or not there are any significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names in addressing people.

RESULTS

The frequency of the use of animal names in addressing people as male or female, in terms of meaning, function, and morphosyntactic structure by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers are shown in the tables below:

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Animal Names Used as Male or Female

Descriptive data of the frequency percentage of the animal names used as male, female, both, neither, or no idea by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers can be seen in the table 1:

Table 1
Frequency Percentage of Animal Names Used as Male, Female, Both, Neither, or No Idea by Both Groups

		Animal					
		Male	Female	Both	Neither	No Idea	Total
Group							
	EFL Learners	19	13	27	18	23	100
	Native speakers	5	10	20	61	4	100
Total		24	23	47	79	27	200

According to the table above, 19% of the advanced Persian speaking EFL learners use animal names as male, 13% as female, 27% both, 18% neither and 23% have no idea. In contrast, 5% of American native speakers use animal names as male, 10% as female, 20% both, 61% neither, and 4% have no idea.

To ascertain whether or not there are any significant differences between the two groups in terms of male, female, both, neither, and no idea, Chi-Square test can be employed as shown below:

Table 2
Chi-Square Results for the Use of Animal Names as Male, Female, Both, Neither, or No Idea by Both Groups

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	46.376	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	49.649	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.497	1	.034
N of Valid Cases	200		

As can be seen by the frequencies cross tabulated in Table 2, there are significant differences between Advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers in animal names used in addressing people as male, female, both, neither, and no idea, X^2 (4, N = 200) = 46, p = .00. As indicated in the table, the p-value is lower than the assumed alpha level ($p < .05$).

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Animal Names Used Abusively or Affectionately

Descriptive data of the frequency percentage of the animal names used abusively, affectionately, both, neither, or no idea by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers are shown in the table 3:

Table 3
Frequency Percentage of Animal Names Used Abusively, Affectionately, Both, Neither, or No Idea by Both Groups

	Animal					
	Abusively	Affectionately	Both	Neither	No Idea	Total
Group						
EFL Learners	27	15	7	25	26	100
Native speakers	13	17	3	63	4	100
Total	40	32	10	88	30	200

According to the table above, 27% of the advanced Persian speaking EFL learners use animal names abusively, 15% affectionately, 7% both, 25% neither and 26% have no idea. In contrast, 13% of American native speakers use animal names abusively, 17% affectionately, 3% both, 63% neither, and 4% have no idea.

Table 4, shows the results of Chi-Square test in the frequencies of the use of animal names in addressing people abusively, affectionately, both, neither, and no idea by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers.

Table 4
Chi-Square Results for the Use of Animal Names Abusively, Affectionately, Both, Neither, or No Idea by Both Groups

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	39.167	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	41.766	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.011	1	.315
N of Valid Cases	200		

As can be seen by the frequencies cross tabulated in Table 4, there are significant differences between advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers in animal names used in addressing people abusively, affectionately, both, neither, and no idea, X^2 (4, N = 200) = 39, p = .00. As indicated in the table, the p-value is lower than the assumed alpha level ($p < .05$).

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Morphosyntactic Structures

Descriptive data of the frequency percentage of morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are used by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers are presented in the table 5:

Table 5
Frequency Percentage of Morphosyntactic (Simile or Vocative) Structures Used by Both Groups

		Animal		
		Simile	Vocative	Total
Group				
	EFL Learners	74	26	100
	Native speakers	40	60	100
Total		114	86	200

According to the table 5, 74% of the advanced Persian speaking EFL learners make use of simile, whereas 26% employ vocative. In contrast, 40% of American native speakers use simile, while 60% employ vocative.

The results of Chi-Square test in the frequencies of morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are used by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers have been illustrated in the table 6:

Table 6
Chi-Square Results for the Morphosyntactic Structures Used by Both Groups

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.582	1	.000
Continuity Correction	22.215	1	.000
Likelihood Ratio Fisher's Exact Test	24.112	1	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	23.464	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

As can be seen by the frequencies cross tabulated in Table 6, there are significant differences between advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers in using morphosyntactic structures when they refer an animal name to a person, X^2 (1, N = 200) = 23, p = .00. As indicated in the table, the p-value is lower than the assumed alpha level ($p < .05$).

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Animal Names Describing Characters, Intelligence, Appearance, and Eating Habit

Descriptive data of the frequency percentage of using animal names to refer to a person's character, intelligence, appearance, and eating habit by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers are presented in the table 7:

Table 7
Frequency Percentage of Animal Names Used to refer to Character, Intelligence, Appearance, and Eating Habit by Both Groups

		Animal				
		Character	Intelligence	Appearance	Eating habit	Total
Group						
	EFL Learners	67	8	23	2	100
	Native speakers	59	5	33	3	100
Total		126	13	56	5	200

According to the table above, 67% of the advanced Persian speaking EFL learners use animal names to address a person's character, 8% a person's Intelligence, 23% a person's appearance, and 2% a person's eating habit. While, 59 % of American native speakers employ animal names to address a person's character, 5% a person's intelligence, 33% a person's appearance, and 3% a person's eating habit.

Differences among the frequencies of the use of animal names to address a person's character, intelligence, appearance, and eating habit by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers have been illustrated in the table below:

Table 8
Chi-Square Results for the Use of Animal Names to refer to Character, Intelligence, Appearance, and Eating Habit by Both Groups

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.186	3	.364
Likelihood Ratio	3.204	3	.361
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.163	1	.141
N of Valid Cases	200		

As can be seen by the frequencies cross tabulated in Table 8, there are not significant differences between advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and American native speakers in using animal names to address a person's character, a person's intelligence, a person's appearance, and a person's eating habit. X^2 (3, N = 200) = 3.19, p = .36. As indicated in the table, the p-value is higher than the assumed alpha level (p > .05).

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DISCUSSION

The results of this study suggest that there are significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using a given animal name to address a male or a female person. There are significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in terms of function (abusively and affectionately), and morphosyntactic structures in which animal names are

used. However, it was found that there are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names in terms of meaning ($p > .05$).

It is worth noting that to the best of our knowledge, there is no research which compares native speakers of a language such as English, Chinese or Arabic with learners of those languages in using animal names in addressing people through a questionnaire in the same way, to check whether the results of this study are in accordance with their findings or not. As mentioned in the section on review of literature, previous studies have investigated animal metaphors within a single language or they have compared two languages.

This study highlights the importance of sociolinguistic competence in language learning because it is expected advanced EFL learners be at an acceptable level of this competence and be able to create a harmony between their knowledge of language and accurate use of language. Knowing a huge quantity of vocabularies and knowledge of grammatical rules do not necessarily lead to the proficiency in a language. EFL learners should be aware of the correct meaning of words in transferring the intended meaning and use well-formed sentences along with society norms in order to remove any misunderstandings or wrong judgments. Without appealing to sociolinguistic competence, EFL learners lose social distances and differences between two languages and cultures and it contributes to significant differences between EFL learners and native speakers in correct use of language.

This study opens a new window on the importance of metaphors in English learning in order to expand EFL learners' communicative competence. Nowadays metaphor is a part of peoples' everyday conversation. "In Metaphors We Live By, Lakoff and Johnson (1980) introduce a powerful theory for the study of the role of metaphor in our ordinary conceptual system" (Romero & Soria, 2003, p. 2). Metaphor is now considered as one of the foundations of everyday language. So, it is necessary that EFL learners have enough knowledge about metaphor along with other rules of the language correctly. This study puts extra emphasis on learning metaphor by advanced Persian speaking EFL learners and shed some light onto the expectation of advanced Persian speaking EFL learners.
The results of this study implicitly emphasize the necessity of revising learning materials in order to improve EFL learners' abilities in understanding and performing different utterances in various contexts. It also indicates that EFL learners need to furnish

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themselves "with linguistic tools that allow them to realize and comprehend linguistic action in a contextually appropriate way" (Rueda, 2006, p. 171). Since it is expected advanced EFL learners be aware of social and cultural dissimilarities and apply them correctly while using language in different contexts (formal, informal, or casual), different relationships (friendliness or respect), and different subjects (entertainment, information, technical, etc.).

CONCLUSION

The present study was an attempt to compare the use of animal names in addressing people by English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners. This comparison took place based on a questionnaire used by Halupka-Resetaa and Radic's study (2003) and Szamosfalvi's study (2011). The results of this study suggest that the first, second, and third null hypotheses are rejected. To be more exact, there are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian seeking EFL learners in terms of using animal names as male or female, in terms of using animal names abusively or affectionately, and in terms of using morphosentactic structures. Moreover, the results of Chi-Square test illustrated that the significant values of using animal names in terms of meaning are higher than .05. So, the fourth null hypothesis of the study is verified in that there are no significant differences between English native speakers and advanced Persian speaking EFL learners in using animal names in terms of meaning.

The findings of the present study can be of help to teachers and textbooks and syllabus designers in that they can include different types of metaphor including animal metaphors in EFL contexts. Furthermore, translators and error analysts can take advantage of the findings of this study since they are in some way concerned with the cultural similarities and differences.

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