

## An Investigation of the Hortatory Texts in Persian Medical Discourse

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### Abstract

Longacre (1996) recognizes four major discourse genres including narrative, procedural, behavioral and expository discourse. He considers exhortations to be a sub-branch of behavioral discourse, which “deals with how people did or should behave” (Longacre 1996, p. 9, in Dooley & Levinsohn, 2000).

Accordingly, this study is going to analyze Persian hortatory texts of two genres: Persian General Practitioners’ Books (GPBs) and Online Medical Journals (OMJs). In particular, it looks at the relative potency of different forms of exhortation and distinguishes between default, highlighted and backgrounded hortatory forms based on Levinsohn (2015).

The corpora of this study consisted of 100 texts from two written Persian GPBs and 100 texts from two Persian OMJs. The addressees of the GPBs were general practitioners and students of medical sciences, though writers sometimes directed their exhortations to patients. The addressees of OMJs were the public with some medical knowledge. Our initial step to conduct this research was to classify each sentence as an exhortation or setting it aside as a supportive material; then, 2) listing the different hortatory devices used; 3) counting the frequency of each one; 4) then deciding: a) which one was default, and b) whether using the others had the effect of highlighting or backgrounding the exhortations concerned; and 5) analyzing the statistical significance of the findings through the use of SPSS software version 24.

Results of the research indicated that the default devices and the most frequent hortatory devices used in GPBs were “verbless commands” (in the prescription sections of the GPB texts) and “imperatives” (in non-prescription parts of GPBs).

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Highlighted forms of exhortations found were “must” and “it is necessary” in GPBs. Backgrounded forms of exhortations in GPBs included “it is better”, “it is recommended” and “indirect exhortations”. Example 1, 2 and 3 show the use of the default (verbless command), highlighted (*bayæd* “must”) and backgrounded hortatory forms (it is better) in GPBs:

1) <i>bØrAj-e</i>	<i>control-e</i>	<i>tØngi-j-e</i>	<i>nØfØs</i>
for	controlling-EZ	tightness-EP-EZ	breath
“For controlling shortness of breath”			
-	Inhaler salbutamol N=1		2 puffs if necessary
-	Inhaler beclomethasone N=1		2 puffs every 6 hours

(Attar, 2016, p. 191, Bronchiectasis, PFP)

2) <i>kæpsul-e</i>	<i>/æmperazol-ra</i>	<b><i>bayæd</i></b>	<i>betorekamel</i>	<i>væ</i>	<i>qæbl</i>
capsule	Omeprazole-OM	<b>must</b>	completely	and	before
<i>/æz</i>	<i>qæza</i>	<i>mæsraef</i>	<i>nemud</i>	<i>/æz</i>	<i>dʒævidæn</i>
	<i>væ</i>				
from	food	consumption	do.PAST.3SG		from
	chewing and				

<i>baz</i>	<i>kærd-æn-e</i>	<i>kæpsul</i>	<i>bajæd</i>	<i>/edʒtenab</i>
open	do.PAST-INF-EZ	capsule	must	avoidance

*Σæv-æd*

SUBJ.become.PRES-3SG

“Omeprazole capsule **must** be consumed fully before eating food. Chewing and opening the capsule must be avoided.”

(Ayati Firoozabadi and Fallah, 2015: 17, Tennis elbow, DPG)

3) <i>behtær</i>	<i>/æst</i>	<i>dʒæhæt-e</i>	<i>tæzriq-e</i>	<i>/epinefrin</i>	<i>/æz</i>
better	be.PRES.3SG	for-EZ	injection-EZ	epinephrine	
	from				

<i>soræng-e</i>	<i>/ænsolin</i>	<i>/estefade</i>	<i>Σæv-æd</i>
syringe-EZ	insulin	use	SUBJ.become.PRES-3SG

- “It is better to use Insulin Syringes for injecting Epinephrine.”

(Ayati Firoozabadi & Fallah, 2015. p. 99, Anaphylaxis, DPG)

The default device in OMJs was “imperative”. Highlighted hortatory forms found in OMJs were “must” and “it is necessary”, “imperatives used with immediately” and “it is highly recommended” were used, as well. Backgrounded hortatory forms in OMJs included “it is better”, “it is recommended” and “indirect exhortations”, “imperatives directed to 1<sup>st</sup> person plural”, “(it) is helpful”, “infinitives” and “very indirect exhortations”. Example 4, 5 and 6 illustrate the use of the default (imperatives), highlighted (*hætmaen* “must”) and backgrounded hortatory forms (infinitive):

4) <i>dær</i>	<i>suræt-e</i>	<i>da.Σt-æn-e</i>	<i>sabeqe-j-e</i>	<i>bimari-j-e</i>	
in	form-EZ	have.PAST-INF-EZ	preexistence-EP-EZ	disease-EP-EZ	
<i>xas</i>	<i>ja</i>	<i>mæsraef-e</i>	<i>daru</i>	<i>be</i>	<i>pezeΣk-e-tan</i>
special	or	consumption-EZ	drug	to	physician-EZ-CLIT.3PL
<i>/etela/</i>	<i>dæh-id</i>				
information	IMPER.give.PRES-2PL				

“If you have a special disease or consume some drugs, inform your physician.”

(Angiography of coronary vessels, DWB, <http://www.pezeshk.us/?p=31745>)

5) <i>dær</i>	<i>suræt-i</i>	<i>ke</i>	<i>sabeqe-j-e</i>	<i>bimari-ha-j-e</i>
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in form-INDEF that preexistence-EP-EZ disease-PL-EP-EZ  
*/en/eqadi-j-e xun-i dar-id haetmaen pezeΣk-ra*  
 coagulation-EP-EZ blood-INDEF have.PRES-2PL **must** physician-OM  
*motaæ/ saz-id*  
 informed IMPER.do.PRES-2PL

“If you have the pre-existence of blood coagulation, you **must** inform your physician.”

(Angiography of coronary vessels, DWB, <http://www.pezeshk.us/?p=31745>)

6) *kaheΣ-e maesraef-e qaæa-ha-j-e hejvan-i*  
 decreasing-EZ consumption-EZ food-PL-EP-EZ animal-ATTR  
*bexosus guΣt-e qermez*  
 speciallymeat-EZ red

“Decreasing the consumption of animal foods especially red meat.”

(Prevention from breast cancer, DWB)

Chi-square test results of the study confirmed significant differences between the application of the default, highlighted and backgrounded hortatory forms used in GPBs and OMJs. In addition, the results confirmed that the factors mentioned by Levinsohn (2015) affected the choice of hortatory forms in GPBs and OMJs; in this regard, the findings demonstrated that the “physician’s superior knowledge”, “the type of the hortatory texts”, “the position of the exhortations in the text”, “the degree of prominence each exhortation is to receive”, and “its scope” all influenced the form of exhortations chosen by the writers of GPBs and OMJs. Our study, further, reached some results contradictory with the ones obtained by Levinsohn (2015) which may be related to language- and culture-specificity and different discourse types studied by the authors of these studies:

- using “it is necessary” as a highlighted form of exhortation, not a backgrounding one as mentioned by Levinsohn (2015);
- using “imperatives” directed to 3<sup>rd</sup> person with equal potency of “imperatives” directed to second person, despite the assertion stated by Levinsohn (2015) where he claims that “imperatives” directed to second person are more potent than “imperatives” directed to 3<sup>rd</sup> person; and finally,
- revealing a different result in Persian medical texts from that of Levinsohn (2015) regarding the arrangement of highlighted forms of exhortations and backgrounded ones.

### List of abbreviations

ATTR	Attributive	INF	Infinitive
1	1 <sup>st</sup> person	OM	Object marker
2	2 <sup>nd</sup> person	OMJs	Online medical journals
3	3 <sup>rd</sup> person	PAST	Past tense
DO	Dr online	PRES	Present
EP	Epenthesis	PRO.CLIT	Pronominal clitic
EZ	Ezafe	PL	Plural
GPBs	General practitioners’ books	PFP	Prescribing for practitioners
IMPER	Imperative	SG	Singular
INDEF	Indefinite	SUBJ	Subjunctive

**Keywords:** Exhortation devices, Persian general practitioners’ prescription books, Online medical journals, Medical discourse, Levinsohn’s model