Critical Discourse Analysis of Iranian Presidents' Addresses to the United Nations General Assembly

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Abstract

Critical Discourse Analysis studies of communication in political contexts have scrutinized the use of language by politicians striving to win public opinion and votes. Utilizing Teun A. van Dijk's framework for political discourse analysis, this thesis examines linguistic features in eight addresses of Iranian Presidents, Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, to the United Nations General Assembly. The study described in this thesis combines micro-level text analysis (following 25 discursive devices introduced by Van Dijk, 2005) with a macro-analysis focusing on the dichotomy of *'positive self-representation'* and *'negative other-representation.'* The data analysis demonstrates that President Rouhani made more use of the discursive devices *'consensus', 'illustration', 'hyperbole'* and *'polarization',* whereas President Ahmadinejad employed more frequently *'lexicalization'* and *'vagueness'*. The comparison of the speeches by two presidents at macro-level shows that Rouhani relied more on *'positive self-representation'* and Ahmadinejad on *'negative other-representation'*. The results of the study also show that the two presidents convey different viewpoints on most topics covered in the eight UNGA addresses although their ideological stances on a few topics, such as world Zionism and the occupation of Palestine, seem quite similar.

Acknowledgements

Dedication

To my dear wife –

Thank you for all your immeasurable support and tremendous sacrifice;

To my mother and mother-in-law –

No words to thank them;

To Dr. Arash Dalili –

Meeting him was the turning point of my life.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Abbreviations

DA   Discourse Analysis

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

JACOB   Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

NATO   North Atlantic Treaty Organization

UN   The United Nation

WMDs   Weapons of Mass Destruction

Chapter 1

Introduction

People may adopt various attitudes towards world events. Studying the language, they use to describe their perspectives helps to reveal differences in their opinions. Language plays a crucial role in our social and cognitive development and in shaping and expressing our identities (Bayram, 2010). Language use is also a major instrument for making judgements or evaluations of a social context (Mason, & Platt, 2006; Post, 2009). "The language we use both reflects and shapes the kind of world we create around us" (Strauss & Feiz, 2014, p. 1). This means that most forms of public language use are saturated with an ideology reflecting the worldview of the speaker or writer (Simpson, 1993). Discovering why an orator or writer prefers using some particular linguistic items in their discourse can be crucial to uncovering the orator or writer's ideology (Post, 2009). This is especially true in the political domain which presents "a struggle for power in order to put certain political, economic and social ideas into practice." (Bayram, 2010, p. 24).

Language can be used to take control of those with whom there is a conflict of interest, a process known as "language manipulation" (Rudyk, 2007). It is defined as "a communicative and interactional practice, in which a manipulator exercises control over other people, usually against their will or against their best interests" (Van Dijk, 2006, pp. 360-361). In language manipulation, the power inequality relationship is established through the construction of a dominant ideology for which language is the fundamental medium (Post, 2009). Language itself has no power assigned to it, but "language can be used to challenge power, to subvert it, to alter distributions of power in the short and long term. Language provides articulated means for differences in power in social hierarchical structures" (Wodak, 2001, p. 11).

1. 1. Ideology

For most social organizations which are involved in ideological struggle, ideological superiority inherent in the linguistic items or word choices is valued more than the meaning of the words or linguistic terms (Mumby, 2000, Koide, 2012). This way, these social institutions instill their respective social values and beliefs into the dominated group. Gaining this ideological ascendency, the dominant group will justify their lead in socio-political/economic ground (Bayram, 2010; Mumby, 2000; Van Dijk, 2005, 2006). Language connects with ideology via providing vocabulary for its key terms and labels, as well as through channeling ideology in discourse on the whole. Language "has a key role in the exchange of values in social life and transforming power into right and obedience into duty. It may both create power and become an area where power can be applied" (Bayram, 2010, p. 27).

The concept of ideology has a wide range of definitions. The word "ideology" was first introduced at the end of the 18th century to relate to a set of ideas and beliefs (Van Dijk, 2005). Marxist interpretation of ideology as a part of superstructure serving to oppress the working class introduced its negative perception as a fallacious, immutable and sectarian perspective of one group in a society or community (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 729). In modern times, ideology is seen as a compendium of "sociocultural values, such as Equality, Justice, Truth or Efficiency" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 248). Social institutions, groups, castes and communities make a choice out of these values and put them in order of priority (Van Dijk, 1995, 2005). Symbols, rituals, discourse and other social customs can be utilized to express ideology (Van Dijk, 1998; Matić, 2012).

In politics, the term "ideology" is used to refer to a set of conventions and opinions of a political system (Freeden 1996, Van Dijk, 2005).

In Discourse Analysis, ideology is defined as "significations or constructions of reality which are built into various dimensions of the forms or meanings of discursive practices and which contribute to the production, reproduction or transformation of relations of domination" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 87). Discourse analysis demonstrates how daily texts and talks are affected by ideologies and how production and reproduction of ideologies occur within the discourse (Van Dijk, 2005; Fairclough, 1992). Ideology within the confines of discourse is the art of justifying the access and control of a special group over resources to fulfill the requirements and wishes of the group. In this way, the group with a dominant ideology is in the ascendant, thereby "neutralizing alternative and oppositional views" (Koide, 2012, p. 12). The dominated groups "accept[s] dominant ideologies as natural or commonsense" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 729). This form of ideological dominance in the words of Gramsci (1971) is called "hegemony" (Van Dijk, 2005; Koide, 2012). Therefore, according to Post (2009), ideology within the framework of discourse is an indispensable tool for the dominant group to maintain supremacy of opinion over its counterpart(s), and to position "one group's view of the world as being dominant over another" (Post, 2009, p. 21). This ideological construction in a discourse is rooted within the discourse instead of its outside (Hall, 1999, cited in Post, 2009, p. 21).

1. 2. Political discourse

A clash of interests, a struggle for power superiority, a desire for presenting the prevailing attitudes as commonsensical and a tendency for inculcation of specific beliefs in the mind of in/out-group members are found across multiple social domains (e.g., a workplace discourse, a high school class with popular and unpopular groups, etc.). However, of all the social spheres, the world of politics features the aforesaid properties the most (Bayram, 2010; Sajjad 2015; Matic 2012). Regarded as a sub-category of discourse (Schaffner, 1996), political discourse is concerned with

the (re)production of political dominance, political hegemony, power abuse and legitimization or de-legitimization of social phenomena (political events are considered as a part of social phenomena), and moreover, with resistance to any of these (Bello, 2013; Fairclough, 1995; Van Dijk, 1993). Politicians seek to win power struggles to meet their intended targets, to set guidelines on the values shaped in a society and to obtain regulatory authorization over the resources distribution and decision-making process (Sajjad, 2015; Bayram, 2010). To achieve this, politicians need their ideology to triumph in ideological conflicts. On this subject, Van Dijk (2005) states:

> If there is one social field that is ideological, it is that of politics. This is not surprising because it is eminently here that different and opposed groups, power, struggles, and interests are at stake. In order to be able to compete, political groups need to be ideologically conscious and organized. (p. 732)

Van Dijk claims that "if the political field is thoroughly ideological, then so are its political practices, and hence its discourses" (2005, p. 732). For him, there is a bilateral relation between political ideologies and political discourses in which political discourses are not only the product of political ideologies but are also central to the (re)creation of the ideologies (Van Dijk, 2005). According to Van Dijk (2005) and Ghazani (2016), ideology explicitly permeates all political activities, such as political campaigns, rallies and elections; it is mostly expressed implicitly in rhetoric.

A discourse is considered to be political if it meets two criteria. Firstly, it must be functional. This means that it arises in politics, within special historical and cultural frameworks. Secondly, it must be thematic and relevant to politics (Schaffner, 1996). For Van Dijk (1998, cited in Jalali &

4

Sadeghi, 2014, p. 11), political discourse is "a socially constituted set of genres, associated with a social domain or field". According to another definition of political discourse, "agnostic ability (competitive nature of political discourse), aggressiveness, ideological character and theatricality" (Kenzhekanova, 2015, p. 197) are the essential features of a political discourse.

The art of effective language utilization, by which politicians gain their intended political advantage, is of the essence in the world of politics: "the connection between language and politics is strong as political action itself is carried out through language" (Bello, 2013, p. 86). Fairclough (2006) also highlights the importance of language to the politics: "[language can] misrepresent as well as represent realities, it can weave visions and imaginaries which can be implemented to change realities and, in some cases, improve human well-being, but it can also rhetorically obfuscate realities, and construe them ideologically to serve unjust power relations" (Fairclough, 2006, p. 1). And finally, Van Dijk (2005) states that "it is largely through discourse that political ideologies are acquired, expressed, learned, propagated, and contested" (p. 732).

To sum up, political discourse is an instrumental tool in the hands of politicians to establish certain objectives for their audience, recruit support, place value on their political views, secure power, shape the general deportment of the society, and more importantly, to spread the dominant ideology. In this way, political discourse enables politicians to inculcate their thoughts and ideas into the mind of society and consequently, persuade the society to believe in whatever the politicians want (Bayram, 2010; Bello, 2013; Jones & Peccei, 2004; Matic 2012).

1. 2. 1. A chance to burnish or tarnish an engraved image

Political discourse encompasses all talks, speeches and texts which are provided by political institutions for all political activities. The annual speeches of the world leaders before the United

Nations General Assembly (henceforth referred to as the UNGA) are among the most important political talks anywhere in the world. The speeches provide a golden opportunity for all nations to be heard. The annual UNGA talks provide a path to success in establishing a constructive international dialogue which may potentially lead to further cultural, sociopolitical and economic accomplishments. As a result, it is in a nation's hands in general, and the leaders' hands in particular, to make the optimum use of this occasion to exacerbate or ameliorate the image of their state, particularly in cases when a country is already involved in confrontations with other countries across the world. If the state is already enjoying an impeccable reputation of operating within the international standard framework, the yearly speech delivery to the UNGA is still an opportunity to solidify the status quo.

Therefore, the world leaders' implementation of discursive characteristics and strategies in their UNGA addresses are incontrovertibly of profound significance to burnishing or tarnishing the image of the states throughout the world. To take maximum advantage of this opportunity and win the support of the United Nations (from now on the UN), the world leaders' choice of persuasive discourse is at the core of their talk. Such strategy allows them to take the lead in the power struggle since "the winner is a party whose language, words, terms and symbolic expressions are dominant once reality and the context have been defined" (Teittinen, 2000, cited in Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014, p. 86).

Given the importance of language and discourse in the world of politics, many Critical Discourse Analysis studies of political talks have been conducted using various methodologies, such as Fairclough's tripartite framework of CDA and Van Dijk's CDA approach to political discourse (Bayram, 2010; Blommaert & Bulaen, 2000; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Bazargani, 2015). However, only a small number of CDA studies have analyzed leaders' addresses to the

UNGA. Rudyk (2007) examined President Bush's 2007 talk to the UNGA within Fairclough's framework; the findings revealed linguistic evidence of manipulation at syntactic, semantic and pragmatic levels of the discourse.

Sabry's CDA (n. d.) study on President Bush's 2006 speech before the UNGA showed that the US president relied on presupposition and entailment as two discursive strategies to describe America's military intervention in the Middle East as a war for freedom and democracy preservation. Aladist & Wahyudi (2012) analyzed the Israeli prime minister's 2011 speech before the UNGA within Van Dijk's framework of CDA at micro-level and macro-level of analysis, focusing on the use of the disclaimer as one of the discursive strategies. The study demonstrated that, using disclaimers, the prime minister represented his political ideology as being legitimate, and the one held by his opposition as illegitimate (Aladist & Wahyudi, 2012).

Within the Iranian political context, Sardabi, Biria, & Azin (2014) conducted a study of President Rouhani's speech to the 68ᵗʰ UNGA in 2013, using Van Dijk's framework of CDA. The results indicated that Rouhani "employed a wide range of discursive mechanisms such as the positive self-representation and negative other-presentation strategies" in the addresses (Sardabi, Biria, & Azin 2014, p. 84).

Employing Wodak's discourse-historical analysis, Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji (2017) conducted a comparative CDA study of two Iranian presidents' speeches, Ahmadinejad's in 2012 and Rouhani's in 2013 before the UNGA. The findings showed that the speeches by the two presidents varied in style and content. President Rouhani was more willing to deal with controversial issues Iran was involved in throughout the region or the world, but the central focus of President Ahmadinejad's talk was the irresponsibility and misconduct of the main powers of

the world. Moreover, the results showed that President Rouhani sounded like a more moderate Muslim than his predecessor. Sadeghi & Tabatabai (2015) made a comparative study on Presidents Ahmadinejad and Obama's speeches before the 65th to 67th UNGA with a focus on the use of the world 'justice' to reveal their ideology regarding human rights. Sadeghi & Tabatabai (2015) showed that President Ahmadinejad made extensive use of the world 'justice' in his speeches to represent himself as a more active defender of human rights and of a safe world.

1. 3. The Statement of Problem

There are thousands of studies of political discourse in the world of politics such as presidential election debates, live or recorded interviews with political personages and so forth (Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Matic 2012), but very few CDA studies have been carried out to analyze the annual UNGA talks. These talks can demonstrate world nations' ideology and viewpoints about world issues, and are therefore of particular interest in political discourse studies. Additionally, in most studies (e.g., Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji 2017), only one of a world leader's UNGA addresses is subjected to CDA analysis. Analysis of one talk does not seem sufficient to draw conclusive results of a world leader's ideology, due to a limited sample. Therefore, analyzing more than one talk of a leader can provide more insights into the ways the leaders use language manipulatively to affirm their ideology-laden beliefs for the favorable outcomes. This thesis contributes to the field by analyzing the UNGA talks of two Iranian presidents, Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Finally, CDA researchers of Iranian political discourse (Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji 2017) have focused mostly on the grammatical features of discourse and not on a wider semantic construction of discourse. Hence, the present study attempts to consider a variety of discursive devices, particularly the 25 discursive devices

introduced by Van Dijk (2005) to reveal the ideological stances of the speakers at the macro semantic-level.

The overall purpose of the current study is to conduct a comparative Critical Discourse Analysis of eight speeches by two Iranian presidents, Presidents Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, before the UNGA. These presidents represented two ideologically opposed political parties (the Reformist and the Principalist) in Iran with different ideological standpoints towards regional and global issues.

Relying on Van Dijk's 2005 framework for political discourse analysis, the study aims to address the following research questions:

1. What discursive devices (micro-level) are prevalent in the speeches of the two presidents?

2. What are the similarities and differences in the use of discursive devices in the speeches by the two presidents?

3. What political or non-political ideologies (macro-level) are reflected in their speeches and how are they related to the internal and external socio-political issues Iran is involved in?

4. Is there any evidence of more collaborative and peace-seeking language (the use of vocabulary, expressions, etc.) in President Rouhani's speeches to support his reputation of a moderate politician ("Profile: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani", 2017; Erdbrink, 2013, cited in Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji 2017), as compared to Ahmadinejad's speeches?

1.4. Delimitations of the study

The first delimitation is the scope of investigation. Since Van Dijk's 2005 CDA model for analyzing political discourses is a more semantic-oriented framework, the researcher did not consider the grammatical, syntactic and other related linguistic features in analyzing the two presidents' eight UNGA talks. Furthermore, the analysis is restricted to Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices. The main reason to justify this delimitation is time constraints.

The second delimitation of the current study is that it does not account for any possible change in the views of Presidents Rouhani and Ahmadinejad over the time that elapsed between the first and the last of their UNGA talks.

Only the first four UNGA talks of each president were selected for data analysis in this study for the following reasons. First, the study aimed to compare the political priorities of Rouhani and Ahmadinejad in their first period of presidency. Second, President Rouhani had only given four speeches to the UNGA by the time this study commenced. Therefore to maintain the balance in the samples, only four UNGA talks by President Ahmadinejad were selected for analysis as well.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Chapter 2 of this thesis deals with the main framework for this study. For this purpose, discourse analysis is first defined, then a thorough definition of critical discourse analysis is presented. Following CDA definition, the three main approaches to CDA, those of Fairclough, Wodak and Van Dijk, will be introduced. Since Van Dijk's framework of CDA is the main analytical framework of this study, I explicate his model of CDA and discuss its application and features at the micro and macro levels of analysis for analyzing political discourse. Finally, the advantages and disadvantage of Van Dijk's CDA framework for political discourse analysis are discussed.

2. 1. Discourse Analysis

Discourse Analysis (DA) is a more generic name for a set of methodological approaches which are utilized to scrutinize language in use, either written or oral, in various social sciences, namely psychology, sociology, linguistics, anthropology and communication studies. Regarded as an interdisciplinary approach (Wiggins, 2009; Brown &Yule, 1983), DA originates in ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1967; Wiggins, 2009). However, Wiggins (2009) contends that as an interdisciplinary approach, DA has "developed from work within speech act theory, ethnomethodology and semiology as well as post-structuralism theorists such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, and the later works of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein" (p. 427). For Gee (1991, cited in Shartiely, 2013, p. 36), DA is "an instrument of social construction of experience. Such experience in lectures would be constructed by lecturers' choice and use of discourse strategies." Discourse analysis, in addition to the pattern and structure of the discourse (text or

11

talk), considers the context (social, political, etc.) within which the language functions (Brown and Yule, 1983; Jalali & Sadeghi 2014; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Van Dijk, 2003). The utmost significance of DA lies in structuring the execution of social activities, establishing human relationships within cultural and social community and apprehending the way and discursive practices by which humans build up, cultivate or break off their relationships (Gee, 1991; Wiggins, 2009). Making a differentiation between language analysis and DA, Johnstone (2008, p. 3) clarifies that DA does not regard language as an abstract system but views language as a communicative tool to pool information about memories and voice feelings.

Using a sophisticated discourse analytical tool can substantially aid in revealing the covert medium by which, either knowingly or unknowingly, an orator or writer represents world events or brings about dominance and inequality in their discourse within their ideological framework (Post, 2009, p. 15). Such an analytical framework must be well-equipped with devices "to identify the linguistic mechanisms or semantic categories through which ideology is constructed" (Post, 2009, p. 15).

Predominantly laying its foundations on the Marxist principle that "some groups in the society have more power than others, and oppression is mediated through discourse" (Wiggins, 2009, para. 3), Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is a prominent orientation of DA. Its prominence comes from the fact that CDA studies concentrate on illuminating power inequality or abuse and ideological struggle in social context through language. Since Van Dijk's model of CDA was selected as the analytical framework in the present study, a brief overview of CDA is provided in the next section (Section 2. 2).

2. 2. Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse Analysis as an interdisciplinary method of text/speech analysis as well as a subfield of applied linguistics is a recently-established school within DA (Fairclough, 1995). It bears a close resemblance to Foucauldian Discourse Analysis; for both analytical frameworks power is floating between political or social groups, can be exercised positively or negatively and is in intimate relation to discourse and knowledge (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Post, 2009; Wiggins, 2009). CDA is a heterogeneous analytical tool which incorporates elements of linguistics, semiotics, psychology, anthropology, and sociology. It was inspired by "Foucault's (1971, 1977) formulations of orders of discourse and power-knowledge, Gramsci's (1971) notion of hegemony, Althusser's (1971) concepts of ideological state apparatuses and interpellation" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 451-2), and some contributions from social theories of Marx, Bourdieu and Habermas as well as Systemic Functional Linguistics theory of Halliday (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Post, 2009; Fowler, Hodge, Kress & Trew, 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979, Wiggins, 2009, Sheyholislami, n. d). The evolution of CDA can be traced in the studies on critical linguistics at the University of East Anglia in the early 1970s (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Post, 2009; Fowler et. al., 1979; Kress & Hodge, 1979, Wiggins, 2009, Sheyholislami, n. d). However, historical surveys show that the rudiments of CDA might go back to the critical theory developed in the Frankfurt School prior to World War II (Agger, 1992, cited in Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi, 2015, p. 318; Rasmussen, 1996, cited in Al-Haq & Al-Sleibi, 2015, p. 318; North, 2014).

According to Blommaert & Bulcaen, (2000), Sheyholislami (n. d.) & North (2014), the more up-to-date foundations of CDA in the 1970s are profoundly based on Michael Halliday's methodology of "systemic-functional and social-semiotic linguistics" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 454) or "Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)" (Sheyholislami, n. d., p. 1). This means

that the methodology is still of paramount significance to CDA, considering "it offers clear and rigorous linguistic categories for analyzing the relationships between discourse and social meaning" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 454). Investigating this relationship is crucial for CDA studies:

> CDA's locus of critique is the nexus of language/discourse/speech and social structure. It is in uncovering ways in which social structure impinges on discourse patterns, relations, and models (in the form of power relations, ideological effects, and so forth), and in treating these relations as problematic, that researchers in CDA situate the critical dimension of their work (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 449).

Adopting a critical attitude within the CDA framework means generating:

> a careful analytic interrogation of the ideological categories, and the roles and institutions and so on, through which a society constitutes and maintains itself and the consciousness of its members…All knowledge, all objects, are constructs: criticism analyses the processes of construction and, acknowledges the artificial quality of the categories concerned, offers the possibility that we might profitably conceive the world in some alternative way. (Fowler, 1981, as cited in Jaworski and Coupland, 2006, p. 27)

The "critical" aspect of CDA makes it different from other branches of DA (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016). Within its critical paradigm CDA also reveals underlying ideologies such as inequality, power asymmetry or struggle and social change, brought about by language (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016).

CDA as a method of analysis is employed in socio-political and socio-cultural spheres to unveil the infiltrated ideology, which has become naturalized throughout time and is regarded as common sense (Fairclough, 1995). To state it more precisely,

> critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context. With such dissident research, critical discourse analysts take explicit position, and thus want to understand, expose, and ultimately resist social inequality. (Van Dijk, 2011, p. 466)

The term 'critical' is easily traceable in the basic elements of all social science research with a critical nature (Van Dijk, 2011). A critical approach highlights the use of discourse to produce or reproduce socio-political power abuse and its consequences such as racism, illegitimate dominance, ideological superiority, power inequality, sexism, and biased economic privileges on the one hand, as well as the resistance to this domination in socio-political contexts on the other hand (Van Dijk, 1995, 2003, 2005). In this regard, the focus of CDA is to decrypt how the exerted power in discourse is used to control the mind and actions of others to fulfil the interests of the dominant groups, even if it acts against the interest of others (Van Dijk, 1995, 2003, 2005). The socio-political power derived from the persuasive or manipulative use of discourse (text or talk) originates from the access and hegemony of the dominant group over financial resources, socio-economic sources, socio-economic positions, information and knowledge; such hegemony strengthens or at least extends the hegemony of power holders over these sources (Gramsci, 1971; Van Dijk, 1998; Van Dijk, 2011).

In the words of Wodak, CDA "studies real, and often extended, instances of social interaction which take (partially) linguistic form. The critical approach is distinctive in its view of (a) the relationship between language and society, and (b) the relationship between analysis and the practices analyzed" (1995, p. 173). For her, the objective of CDA is to systematically decipher the non-transparent and apparent structural links between dominance, discrimination, power and hegemony as displayed in discourse, written or spoken, as well as the social context the discourse is produced in (Wodak, 1995). The goal of CDA is

to reveal how [discourse, talk or] texts are constructed so that particular (and potentially indoctrinating) perspectives can be expressed delicately and covertly; because they are covert, they are elusive of direct challenge, facilitating what Kress calls the "retreat into mystification and impersonality". (Batstone, 1995, p. 198-9)

In conclusion, CDA is a strong tool to unpack the ideological agenda established in the discourse that compels its consumers to see the real world within special and, often, biased boundaries, thereby favoring the interests of the dominant group (s) (Coffin, 2001; Renkema, 2004, Van Dijk, 2003). For this purpose, "CDA has to theoretically bridge the well-known "gap" between micro and macro approaches, which is of course a distinction that is a sociological construct in its own right" (Van Dijk, 2003, p. 354).

2. 2. 1. Approaches to CDA

Several well-known approaches towards CDA have been developed, for example, Discursive Social Psychology, Social Semiotics for which non-verbal aspects of discourse (context-bound features) such as semiotic and visual devices are crucial in generating the meaning of discourse, systemic-functional linguistics, and political discourse analysis (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000;

Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). However, "the core CDA" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 454)-, is associated with the works by Norman Fairclough (1989, 1992a, 1992b, 1995b), Ruth Wodak (Wodak et al., 1990, 1994, 1995, 2001) and Teun A. van Dijk (1993, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005, 2006) (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Sheyholislami, n. d.; Wiggins, 2009; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Alhumaidi, 2013).

An overview of these three programmatic frameworks is provided in the next section, with an emphasis on Van Dijk's theory of CDA since it is the theoretical framework in this thesis.

2. 2. 1. 1. Norman Fairclough's CDA Framework

Influenced by Halliday's systemic functional linguistics theory (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Sheyholislami, n. d; Alhumaidi, 2013), Fairclough sketches a tri-dimensional CDA framework with the aim of making "a contribution to the general raising of consciousness of exploitative social relations, through focusing upon language" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 4). For Fairclough (1992, 1998) language use is a social practice, as it is involved in various social activities, directions and changes, such as cultural, economic, ideological and political ones. The micro-level of analysis as the first dimension of his framework considers discourse as text which analyzes the linguistic features of texts (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Bazargani, 2015; Sheyholislami, n. d; Alhumaidi, 2013). At this level of analysis, vocabulary selection and patterning (metaphor, wording), grammar (intransitivity, transitivity, passivization, modality), cohesion (conjunction, clauses), and "text structure (e.g. episoding, turn-taking)" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 448) are subject to investigation (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Alhumaidi, 2013; Sheyholislami, n. d; North, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010).

The meso-level of analysis as the second dimension of the framework involves the matters of "text production, distribution, and consumption" and their variability under the impact of social factors (Fairclough 1992, p. 78). Attention is devoted to "speech acts, coherence and intertextuality" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 448). At meso-level, vocabulary, grammar, cohesion and text structure are studied in terms of the connection between text and its context (intertextuality) (North, 2014). Intertextuality exists in two versions: Manifest intertextuality, other texts that are "overtly drawn upon within a text" (Fairclough, 1992, p. 85); and Constitutive intertextuality or interdiscursivity which concerns the multilevel structure of texts including "generic conventions, discourse types, register, style" (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, p. 448).

The macro level of analysis as the third dimension of Fairclough's model views discourse as a sociocultural practice (Fairclough, 1998, p. 311). Analysis at this level "pertains to three aspects of the sociocultural context of a communicative event: economic (i.e. economy of the media), political (i.e. power and ideology of the media), and cultural (i.e. issues of values)" (Sheyholislami, n. d., p. 9).

Analysis is not necessarily conducted at all three levels of the framework but at the level which is pertinent to the comprehension of a particular text (Fairclough, 1998).

2. 2. 1. 2. Ruth Wodak's CDA Framework

Wodak and her colleagues initiated a new approach to CDA called Discourse-Historical framework (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000, Alhumaidi, 2013; Sheyholislami, n. d, Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). As its name indicates, the emphasis within this framework is on the historical and socio-political features of context in analyzing a discourse. The term "historical" serves a pivotal role in her CDA framework (Alhumaidi, 2013; Sheyholislami, n. d) since it demonstrates

the importance of incorporation of "all available background information in the analysis and interpretation of the many layers of a written or spoken text" (Wodak, 1995, p. 209). The historical feature of her approach in discourse processing draws a distinction between Wodak's CDA model and its two counterparts: those of Fairclough and Van Dijk, particularly Van Dijk's model (Alhumaidi, 2013; Sheyholislami, n. d.). This approach originated in Wodak's analysis of anti-Semitism discourse in 1990 (Alhumaidi, 2013; Sheyholislami, n. d.).

Wodak's model of CDA amalgamates information regarding the historical sources and socio-political circumstances in which the discourse is produced; it also investigates the factors that induce changes in some discourse genres diachronically (Wodak 2000, cited in Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010, p. 58).

2. 2. 1. 3. Teun A. van Dijk's CDA Framework

Van Dijk's framework started to take shape in the 1980s when he conducted a critical analysis of media text with a specific emphasis on portrayal of minorities. (Sheyholislami, n. d.). The distinctive characteristic of Van Dijk's 1988 framework for media discourse (news, press, and political text and talk) is inherent in applying the analytical framework to go beyond the textual and structural analysis (i.e. analysis of grammar, phonology, morphology and semantics) and to examine the discourse at production, reception or comprehension levels (Sajjad, 2015; Sheyholislami, n. d.). It includes scrutiny of "higher level properties such as coherence, overall themes and topics of news stories and the whole schematic forms and rhetorical dimensions of texts" (Sheyholislami, p. 3, n. d.). This holistic analytical view sheds light on discourse as "a complex communicative event that also embodies a social context featuring participants (and their properties) as well as production and reception processes" (Van Dijk, 1988, p. 2).

For Van Dijk, discourses, written or spoken, are not merely produced to serve informational roles, but rather they are generated by various social and institutional organizations to propagate their intended underlying ideologies, thereby resulting in the creation of pre-planned reality (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). Ideologically produced discourses, whether they are individual or organizational, can be best described in the words of Van Dijk (1995): "ideologies are typically, though not exclusively, expressed and reproduced in discourse and communication, including non-verbal semiotic messages, such as pictures, photographs and movies" (p. 17). Thereupon, he views critical discourse analysis as ideology analysis (Van Dijk, 1995; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). To analyze discourses that are replete with ideology, Van Dijk proposes a Socio-cognitive model of CDA. The socio-cognitive model of ideology analysis incorporates discourse, social and cognitive analyses (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Sheyholislami, n. d.; Alhumaidi, 2013). The discourse analysis is conducted on different text and talk structures (Van Dijk, 1995): this is the micro-level of analysis, which is comprised of syntax, lexicon, local semantics, topics, schematic structures (Sheyholislami, n. d.). The social analysis encompasses "overall societal structures, e.g. parliamentary democracy and capitalism; Institutional/Organizational structures, e.g. racist political parties; Group relations, e.g. discrimination, racism and sexism; Group structures, e.g. identity, tasks, goals, norms, position and resources" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 20). It is the macro-level of analysis which brings power, dominance, and inequality between social groups to attention. Cognitive analysis, which is a noticeable distinction of Van Dijk's CDA framework, serves a mediatory function between discourse and society. This level of analysis, according to Van Dijk (1995, p. 20), includes social cognition and personal cognition analyses.

The amalgamation of personal and social information in Van Dijk's socio-cognitive model of CDA makes it possible to clarify the "well-known missing link between the individual and the

social, between the micro and the macro analysis of society" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 20). Furthermore, the combination also makes it feasible to elucidate the connection between the mainstream ideologies of a group and the real discourse (text or talk) (Van Dijk, 1995). The integrated model, in fact, controls the way the members of a society "act, speak or write, or understand the social practices of others (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 19-20).

Central to the socio-cognitive model is the mental representation of events, especially when there is a conflict of interest. Ideologically such mental representations "are often articulated along an *us* versus *them* dimension, in which speakers of one group will generally tend to present themselves or their own group in positive terms, and other groups in negative terms" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 22).

Similarly to Fairclough's approach towards CDA, in Van Dijk's model, discourse and society (context) are the major dimensions. What differentiates these two frameworks is the mediation between discourse and society. The mediation is cognition according to Van Dijk, but Fairclough sees mediation as discourse practice (Sheyholislami, n. d.).

The socio-cognitive model of CDA laid solid foundations for Van Dijk's 2005 framework for analyzing political discourse which is ideology-laden and provides fertile ground for ideological standpoints (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). Hence, to win political competitions, politicians ideologically need to be cognizant and coordinated (Van Dijk, 2005).

2. 3. Van Dijk's seminal 2005 work for Political Discourse Analysis

Consisting of an amalgamation of argumentative, rhetorical, semantic and political strategies at the micro-level of analysis, and an ideological dichotomy to reveal the manipulation of language to benefit in-group members and disadvantage out-group members at the macro-level of analysis,

Van Dijk's seminal 2005 work for analyzing political discourse seems to be a dynamic and thorough framework of analysis in CDA studies (Matic 2012; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014).

Language and society intersect in many areas. According to Blommaert & Bulcaen (2000, p. 450-1), *"Political discourse, Ideology, Racism, Economic discourse, Advertisement and promotional culture, Media language, Gender, Institutional discourse, Education and Literacy"* are the domains at this intersection which are worthy of being chosen for CDA studies. Using Van Dijk's political discourse analysis framework, the focus of the present thesis is analyzing political discourse as one of the domains in which language and society intersects.

Since political discourse was discussed thoroughly earlier in this study, it suffices here to mention that political discourse is produced or reproduced to gain political advantages, for instance, power, domination and hegemony. Furthermore, politicians generate or regenerate political language to exercise political abuse, validate their political claims and raise their approval in the eyes of the public (Bello, 2013; Bayram, 2010; Sabry, n. d., Van Dijk, 2005). As a result, using language or discourse within the political domain "encapsulates the vision, perception and world view of the people that create it and its intended perlocutionary effect is to have whatever views carried or lines of action taken expressly believed or acted upon" (Bello, p. 86). In this regard, Van Dijk appropriately asserts "it is crucial to relate such use to such categories as who is speaking, when, where and with/to whom, that is, to specific aspects of the political situation" (2005, p. 733). Given the condition of the political domain,

> we again need a cognitive interface between such a situation and talk or text, that is, a
> mental model of the political situation. Such mental models define how participants

experience, interpret, and represent the for-them-relevant aspects of the political situation. (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 733)

A critical attitude to political discourse analysis helps to recognize the distortion of reality transpired via tactful and diplomatic usage of language (Bello, 2013; Van Dijk, 2005; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). It is precisely through decoding linguistic items that we can reveal the ideological position and language meditation in representing the world differently (Fairclough, 1995, 1989). On equal terms, studying the structure (verbal properties) such as

"the topics, topoi, coherence, arguments, lexical style, disclaimers and many rhetorical features (metaphors, euphemisms, hyperboles, etc.) of a political discourse may of course reveal much about the unique character of such a discourse, and also allow inferences about the cognitive, social and especially political functions of such discourse. (Van Dijk, 2002, p. 22)

Therefore, political discourse helps politicians legitimize action of self and delegitimize the action of others. Delegitimization is shown through representing others or their actions negatively, questioning the sensibleness, morality and humanity of others, etc., in political discourse; legitimization is represented via representing us or our actions positively, justifying our acts, etc. (Chilton, 2004, p. 47)

In relation to such ideologies adopted by political groups, there is a kind of polarization structure in the political discourse, demonstrating "competing or conflicting group membership and categorization in ingroups and outgroups" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 734). This way, the mental models of *us* versus *them* regulate the contents of political discourse to show whether there is any kind of polarization if the discourses become polarized (in-group or out-group affiliation), and the

ways of expressing self and others (Van Dijk, 2002, 2005; Bello, 2013). For distinguishing such ideological polarization in political discourses, Van Dijk's 2005 political discourse analysis framework seems a comprehensive analytical tool (Van Dijk, 2005; Bello, 2013; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Sadrabi, et al., 2014; Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). The overall strategies of the **"ideological square"** introduced by Van Dijk (2005) to analyze an ideological discourse can be summarized as follows:

> ➤ **Emphasize *Our* good things**
> ➤ **Emphasize *Their* bad things**
> ➤ **De-emphasize *Our* bad things**
> ➤ **De-emphasize *Their* good things** (p. 734).

This ideological square can be summarized into a "fundamental dichotomy" (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010, p. 69) with a focus on '**Positive Self-representation**' and '**Negative Other-representation**' (Van Dijk, 2005). The dichotomy polarizes "actors into in and out groups and how the former project their positive side but downplay their negative side; while they project the negative side of the latter and downplay their positive side" (Bello, 2013, p. 86). Programs, propaganda, interviews, speeches and debates in the political sphere characteristically emphasize "the preferred topics of 'our' group or party, on what we have done well, and associate political opponents with negative topics such as war, violence, drugs, lack of freedom, and so on" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 734). Both *self-positive representation* or in-group favoritism and *negative other-representation* are semantic macro-strategies (Van Dijk, 2005). The dichotomy is alternatively employed with the aim of "face-keeping or impression management" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 739) and exclusion of the opponents or the oppositions from the in-group, thereby placing them in the out-

group (Van Dijk, 2005). The general aim of these categories is to portray oneself as the so-called *good*, *superior* and *us* and the other as *bad*, *inferior* and *them*.

Along with this macro-semantic ideological square, other properties such as lexical items, syntax, and discursive devices at the micro-level can be used to inculcate the favorable ideology in the mind of the public (Van Dijk, 2002, 2005). In this respect, together with the dichotomy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation, Van Dijk (2005) applied 25 discursive devices which in his words are "general strategies of ideological discourse production and also a handy discovery or recognition procedure for ideological analysis of political discourse" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 735). These 25 discursive devices with their discourse analysis domain according to Van Dijk (2005) are:

> *actor description (meaning), authority (argumentation), burden (topos), categorization (meaning), comparison (meaning, argumentation), consensus (political strategy), counterfactuals (meaning, argumentation), disclaimers (meaning), euphemism (rhetoric, meaning), evidentiality (meaning, argumentation), example/illustration (argumentation), generalization (meaning, argumentation), hyperbole (rhetoric), implication (meaning), irony (meaning), lexicalization (style), metaphor (meaning, rhetoric), national self-glorification (meaning), norm expression (normalization), number game (rhetoric, argumentation), polarization; US-Them categorization (meaning) populism (political strategy), presupposition (meaning), vagueness (meaning), and victimization (meaning). (p. 735-36)*

2. 3. 1. Definition of the Discursive Devices

Actor description

Actor description provides detailed information of an entity such as a person, place or thing or the way this entity plays its role in a context, social or political, etc., either positively or negatively (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). Our ideologies impose the way entities are explained in discourse (speech or talk). Ingroup members tend to be described in a neutral or positive way, and outgroup members in a negative way. Similarly, people tend to "mitigate negative descriptions of members of our own group and emphasize the attributed negative characteristics of Others" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 735).

Authority

Authority refers to discourse producers' expertise in a topic, subject, etc. by resorting to information provided by authorities to back up the discourse producers' opinions, beliefs or claims to touch the feelings of the audience; authority also indicates the discourse producers' employment of deductive reasoning (logic) to convince the listeners (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). These authorities, according to Van Dijk (2005), are "usually organizations or people who are above the fray of party politics, or who are generally recognized experts or moral leaders. International organizations (such as the United Nations or Amnesty International), scholars, the media, the church or the courts" (p. 735).

Burden (topos)

Burden (topos) refers to the financial or human loss of a group, whether a small group or one

as big as a nation, to victimize the group or touch the feelings of audience (Van Dijk, 2005 & Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010).

Categorization

Categorization is applied to classify people in terms of their viewpoints and acts such as political and religious ones. As Van Dijk (2005, p. 735) states "people tend to categorize people".

Comparison

In general, a comparison is used to demonstrate the similarities and contrasts between two entities such as people, places, processes, events and things. Comparison in discourse, in the words of Van Dijk (2005) is made to "compare ingroups and outgroups" (p. 735). He adds "outgroups are compared negatively, and ingroups positively" (2005, p. 735).

Consensus

Put simply, consensus is developed to foster and build solidarity and agreement. For Van Dijk (2005), in political context, consensus is a "cross-party or national" (p. 736) device to defend a country against external threats.

Counterfactuals

Counterfactual is an expression to show what something or somebody would be like if certain conditions are or are not created. Counterfactuals "is a persuasive argumentative move that is also related to the move of asking for empathy" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 736).

Disclaimers

A disclaimer is seen as an ideologically-based strategy to demonstrate positive attributes of an entity such as a person, people or thing and then presenting a denial of the attributes using particular terms such as *'but'* (Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). Van Dijk adds that "disclaimers briefly save face by mentioning Our positive characteristics, but then focus rather exclusively on Their negative attributes" (2005, p. 736).

Euphemism

A euphemism is the use of milder or less harsh words instead of derogatory or direct terms, for instance *'decease'* instead of *'death'*. Van Dijk explains that euphemism is "a semantic move of mitigation [which] plays an important role in talk" (2005, p. 736). He adds that euphemism is used to mitigate "negative impression formation" (2005, p. 736) of others and "the negative acts of the own group" (2005, p. 736).

Evidentiality

Evidentiality is used to provide facts or proof by a discourse producer to support their own opinions, beliefs or information (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). "This may happen by references to authority figures or institutions …, or by various forms of evidentiality" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 736). To highlight the importance of evidentiality, Van Dijk adds it is "an important move to convey objectivity, reliability, and hence credibility" (2005, p. 736).

Example/Illustration

Example/illustration is providing the audience with factual or fictional examples by which a discourse producer tries to back up his opinion or make his or her beliefs more conceivable.

Illustrations or examples are often presented "in the form of a vignette or short story, illustrating or making more plausible a general point defended by the speaker" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 737).

Generalization

Generalization is the attribution of negative or positive aspects of a person or small group to a larger population (Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016 & Van Dijk, 2005).

Hyperbole

Hyperbole is the employment of exaggerated language to intentionally lay stress on something. Van Dijk contends hyperbole is "a semantic rhetorical device for the enhancement of meaning" (2005, p. 737). He adds that "the alleged bad actions or properties of the Others are expressed in hyperbolic terms (our bad actions in mitigated terms), and vice versa" (2005, p. 737).

Implication

Briefly and simply expressed, implication refers to understanding what is not explicitly expressed in discourse (text or talk). The context in which a discourse is produced induces the producer to avoid sharing their information and perspective implicitly; therefore, this is the recipients' responsibility to infer what more is expressed in the discourse (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 737).

Irony

Irony is the deliberate contrast between what is said and what the speaker intends to convey through language use, often humorously. Van Dijk asserts that "accusations may come across as more effective when they are not made point blank (which may violate face constraints), but in apparently lighter forms of irony" (2005, p. 737).

Lexicalization

Lexicalization refers to using semantic features of words to portray somebody or something positively or negatively (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). Discourse producers' choice of lexical items, according to Van Dijk, is contingent on "the position, role, goals, point of view, or opinion of the speaker, that is, as a function of context features" (2005, p. 738).

Metaphor

Metaphor is the comparison of two things or phenomena which bear no resemblance to assign the attributes of one to another.

National self-glorification

National self-glorification creates a positive representation of one's country through "positive references [such as] its principles, history, traditions" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 738).

Norm expression

Norm Expression is used to convey the norms of how something should/not be done, or what somebody should or should not do (Van Dijk, 2005).

Number game

Number game is the application of numbers or statistics by a discourse producer in argument to increase the credibility of their opinions or ideas. Van Dijk (2005) emphasizes that "numbers and statistics are the primary means in our culture to persuasively display objectivity, and they routinely characterize news reports in the press" (p. 738).

Polarization

Polarization refers to the categorization of people; the in-group and its allies with positive characteristics and the out-group ones with negative properties (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005).

Populism

Populism refers to political ideas and activities that are intended to represent ordinary people's needs and wishes.

Presupposition

Presupposition is an idea or proposition inserted in a discourse (oral or written) without any evidence of proof (Jones and Peccei, 2004, cited in Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016, p. 43). Van Dijk believes that "strategically, presuppositions are often used to assume the truth of some proposition when such truth is not established at all" (2005, p. 739).

Vagueness

Vagueness is the use of language by which discourse producers "create uncertainty and ambiguity, as in talking about delicate issues like immigration and the expressions of possibility" (Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016, p. 43). Vagueness is usually used to keep face: "virtually in all contexts speakers may use vague expressions, that is, expressions that do not have well-defined referents, or which refer to fuzzy sets" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 739).

Victimization

Victimization is the use of "binary us–them pair of ingroups and outgroups" (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 739) to show out-group members negatively and portray in-group members as the victims of unfair treatment.

2. 3. 2. The Advantages and Disadvantages of Van Dijk's Political CDA Framework

The framework is effectual for political discourse analysis (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010), since it deals with discourse at two levels: the analysis of discursive devices at the micro-level which reveals ideological positive self-representation and negative other-representation at the macro-level. The micro-level of analysis is the building block of the macro-level. At the micro-level, using the 25 devices, the framework helps to examine the discourse to decode the meanings of words and phrases. Decoding the meaning at the micro-level facilitates the revelation of ideology at the macro-semantic level. Furthermore, what makes Van Dijk's approach distinctive in comparison to other analytical frameworks of CDA is the "combination of argumentation, political strategies, rhetorical devices, semantic strategies, and stylistic information" (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010, p. 67). The next significant advantage of Van Dijk's CDA framework is that it mostly emphasizes semantic features of the discourse instead of the grammatical features of the discourse. This means that the model is mostly semantic-oriented in comparison to its counterpart frameworks conceived by Fairclough and Wodak.

The primary disadvantage of Van Dijk's model is shared with other CDA frameworks. Critics of CDA perpetually argue that researchers are not unbiased enough not to develop their own political and social interests while analyzing the speeches, because "analysts project their own political biases and prejudices onto their data and analyze them accordingly" (Blommaert &

Bulcaen, 2000, p. 455-56). In other words, researchers working in the field of critical discourse analysis have been frequently condemned for prioritizing what Shalani (2009, p. 28) calls "an overt political agenda" and Widdowson (2004, p. 104) names "pretextual agenda". Thus, a comprehensive analysis, which is produced according to the clear and systematic guidelines of CDA, is sacrificed for the deliberate ideological and political predilection of the researcher (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000; Widdowson, 2004; Sahlani, 2009). In summary, a work of CDA is of higher value if the researcher's personal perspective on the outcome of the study is not clearly identifiable.

The next disadvantage of Van Dijk's framework is that researchers may have different interpretations of the discursive strategies that they use to make the analysis at the micro-level. Having a different analysis at the micro-level can influence the macro-level analysis. Hence, by employing Van Dijk's model of political discourse analysis to study one and the same speech, two different researchers may come up with various results. This means the analysis is susceptible to inaccuracy. From some researchers' points of view, the last problem with Van Dijk's model is the amount of time and energy a researcher must spend on doing a CDA. Conducting a CDA study via Van Dijk's framework is time-consuming if a researcher aims at applying all 25 discursive strategies since they must read through the text to identify the phrases or lexicons which can signal the use of one of the 25 devices.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3. 1. The Corpus

The corpus selected for this study is the transcripts of four successive (2013-2016) annual speeches of Iran's current president, Hasan Rouhani, and four consecutive (2005-2008) annual speeches of President Ahmadinejad to the United Nations General Assembly. The talks were delivered in Persian, but the English scripts of the speeches which were submitted by the Iranian government to the United Nations were employed for the analysis. I used the English scripts for the following main reason. Presidents Rouhani and Ahmadinejad could not speak English, UN participants from other countries as well as the rest of the world do not understand their language (Persian), so most people followed the speeches in English. Since the English translations are the actual sources of political impact of the speeches on the UN and the world, it is more relevant to examine the speeches in their English translations.

The corpus encompasses 23224 English words, of which 8969 words constitute president Rouhani's speeches and 14255 words form his predecessor's talks. The scripts of the speeches were retrieved from the official website of the United Nations (www.un.org/en/index.html).

Table 1 summarizes the related information regarding President Rouhani's four addresses (2013-16) to the UNGA.

Table 1. President Rouhani's four consecutive addresses to the UNGA (2013-16)

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016
Date	Sep. 24	Sep. 25	Sep. 28	Sep. 22
Session	68th	69th	70th	71st
Word count	2673	2496	2240	1560
Time	26'40″	21'27″	21'42″	17'15″

A summary of the related information about President Ahmadinejad's four addresses (2005-8) to the UNGA is illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2. President Ahmadinejad's four consecutive addresses to the UNGA (2005-8)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008
Date	Sep. 17	Sep. 19	Sep. 25	Sep. 23
Session	60th	61st	62th	63rd
Word count	3525	3189	4393	3148
Time	28'44″	30'50″	38'17″	27'52″

3. 2. Analytical Framework

The analytical tool in this study draws on the framework of political discourse analysis presented by Van Dijk (2005). The analysis is conducted at the semantic micro-level with a focus on the use of the 25 subtle discursive devices introduced by Van Dijk (2005) to reveal if the speeches fall within the "fundamental dichotomy" (Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010, p. 69) of '**Positive Self-representation**' and '**Negative Other-representation**' (the semantic macro-level) postulated by Van Dijk (2005).

3. 3. The Procedure

The study began by collecting the required data for the qualitative and quantitative analyses. For this purpose, the scripts of eight addresses, including four consecutive (2013-16) talks of President Hassan Rouhani and four successive (2005-2008) speeches of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad before the UNGA were collected from the official website of the United Nations. The audio files of the eight speeches were also downloaded and examined to check the accuracy and reliability of the scripts of the talks. The audio files and the scripts collected from the website were in English, but the presidents delivered their talks in the Persian (Farsi) language. To verify the quality and accuracy of the English scripts of the speeches and the speeches, a back-translation method was used for the English scripts collected from the website. Back-translation refers to a procedure in which a document previously translated into another language is retranslated into its original language (Rosyidah, Kharis & Lilis Afifah, 2017). This is usually done by a translator or a team of translators. For my thesis, two certified translators from English to Farsi (an Iranian university professor and the author) applied the back-translation to the English scripts of Rouhani and Ahmadinejad's eight UNGA speeches. After confirming the quality and accuracy of the scripts

of the talks via the back-translation method, they were saved on computer. Then, the analysis of the texts began.

For the qualitative analysis at the micro-level, I read through each script to identify the frequency of the use of Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices by the two presidents. To identify which phrases or words fall within one of the specific 25 devices of Van Dijk's classification (2005), I relied on the definitions of discursive devices provided by Van Dijk (2005). Furthermore, I read a number of articles and papers in which the researchers had applied the 25 devices to analyze the discourses (texts/talks) of different politicians. Relying on these sources, I could identify which phrases or words could be classified as belonging to one of the 25 Van Dijk's devices. At the same time, for the qualitative analysis at the macro-level, I examined in the ways which the two presidents used these discursive devices to spread the dichotomy of ideology i.e., p*ositive self-representation* and *negative other-representation* of Iran and other countries, in their UNGA addresses. Then the data representing discursive devices and positive/negative representations in each talk were entered into the Microsoft Excel 2016 sheets for quantitative analysis. The first dataset contains the frequency of each of the discursive devices in each of the eight speeches, the total frequency of the discursive devices in each speech and the total frequency of the 25 devices each president employed in their four UNGA talks. These data were used for quantitative analysis at the micro-level. The second dataset contains the frequency of positive/negative representations in each speech, and the total frequency of the positive/negative representations used in all the four UNGA addresses by each president. These data entries were employed for quantitative analysis at the macro-level.

The datasets were imported into R package 3.3.2 (R Core Team, 2016) for descriptive analysis. First, the percentage of the discursive devices at the micro-level and the percentage of the

ideological dichotomy at the macro-level of two presidents' speeches were calculated. Then the Chi-square test was used to determine whether the difference in the total use of each of the 25 discursive devices as well as of positive/negative representations employed by the two presidents were statistically significant. The results of the analysis are reported in chapter 4 (Quantitative Data Analysis).

Chapter 4

Quantitative Data Analysis

The results of the quantitative analysis of the two presidents' eight talks before the UNGA at the micro-level and macro-level of analyses are presented in this chapter. The analysis is illustrated in the tables followed by related explanation for each table. Tables 3-8 show the descriptive statistics obtained for two levels of analysis of the eight UNGA addresses of Presidents Hassan Rouhani and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad; the analyses of discursive devices at the micro-level and the fundamental dichotomy of ideology at the macro-level. Since I employed the same methodology in analyzing the speeches of both presidents, and the differences in word numbers of the speeches by both presidents were not significant for the given sample, I could compare the absolute frequencies of the use of Van Dijk's 25 devices across the speeches by both presidents using absolute frequencies of these devices. While, of course, ideological dichotomy of positive/negative representation at the macro-level is somewhat subjective, the uniform application of the approach to the speeches of both presidents allowed for some measure of objectivity in the analysis when it comes to the comparison of the speeches by the two presidents. However, some subjectivity of the Critical Discourse Analysis methodology overall has been mentioned as its inherent feature, i.e., different researchers may come up with somewhat different interpretations of the ideology of the same political text at the macro-level (Matić, 2012).

Table 3 represents the frequency of each of Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices at the micro-level of analysis of President Rouhani's four consecutive (2013-16) UNGA talks and President Ahmadinejad's four successive (2005-08) UNGA talks.

Table 3. Frequency of Discursive devices (the Micro-level) in the eight UNGA Talks of the two presidents

	Rouhani					Ahmadinejad				
Discursive devices	2013	2014	2015	2016	Total	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Actor description	13	15	28	21	77	32	25	18	16	91
Authority	8	16	11	5	40	12	6	6	5	29
Burden	0	2	2	1	5	1	2	2	0	5
Categorization	2	4	3	1	10	2	4	0	1	7
Comparison	5	9	7	1	22	3	6	2	1	12
Consensus	0	3	4	2	9	0	0	0	0	0
Counterfactuals	3	9	1	5	18	12	5	4	0	21
Disclaimers	1	0	3	0	4	1	2	4	1	8
Euphemism	1	3	2	0	6	2	1	0	0	3
Evidentiality	5	9	17	8	39	13	5	3	3	24
Illustration	14	15	7	12	48	7	6	12	3	28
Generalization	4	10	7	6	27	13	5	1	1	20
Hyperbole	16	21	27	21	85	17	13	7	3	40
Implication	22	41	35	11	109	30	34	16	18	98
Irony	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	0	3
Lexicalization	33	34	62	35	164	64	59	63	44	230
Metaphor	4	6	2	4	16	3	3	1	0	7
National self-glorification	4	6	4	3	17	4	0	3	2	9
Norm expression	9	13	12	10	44	16	12	7	5	40
Number game	1	1	2	5	9	3	4	5	3	15
Polarization	9	24	4	3	40	3	0	2	4	9
Populism	2	5	5	4	16	6	4	2	1	13
Presupposition	17	49	24	18	108	39	38	20	5	102
Vagueness	1	5	1	3	10	4	15	16	8	43
Victimization	4	7	4	5	20	4	10	3	2	19
Total	178	308	274	184		292	261	197	126	

Table 3 also represents a total of discursive devices for each talk of the presidents (Rouhani: 2013:178; 2014:308; 2015:274; 2016: 184, and Ahmadinejad: 2005: 292; 2006: 261; 2007: 197; 2008: 126) and the sum of each discursive device for the four talks of each president (for example: Rouhani: Actor description: 77, etc. and Ahmadinejad: Actor description: 91, etc.).

As can be seen in Table 3, President Rouhani made use of the discursive devices 178 times in his 2013 UNGA speech. Among these devices, lexicalization (33) was used the most, followed by implication (22), presupposition (17), hyperbole (16), illustration (14), actor description (13), norm expression (9), polarization (9), authority (8), comparison (5), evidentiality (5), generalization (4), metaphor (4), national self-glorification (4), victimization (4), counterfactuals (3), categorization (2), populism (2), disclaimer (1), euphemism (1), number game (1), and vagueness (1); Rouhani did not use burden, consensus and irony in his 2013 talk.

In his 2014 UNGA talk, he used the discursive devices 308 times of which presupposition (49) is the most common followed by implication (41), lexicalization (34), polarization (24), hyperbole (21), authority (16), actor description (15), illustration (15), norm expression (13), generalization (10), comparison (9), evidentiality (9), counterfactuals (9), victimization (7), metaphor (6), national self-glorification (6), populism (5), vagueness (5), categorization (4), euphemism (3), consensus (3), burden (2), number game (1) and irony (1); he did not make use of disclaimer in his 2014 talk.

In his 2015 UNGA talk, he employed the discursive devices 274 times of which lexicalization (62) is the absolute champion of the discursive devices count, followed by implication (35), presupposition (24), actor description (28), hyperbole (27), evidentiality (17), norm expression (12), authority (11), generalization (10), illustration (7), comparison (7), categorization (7),

populism (5), polarization (4), victimization (4), national self-glorification (4), consensus (4), disclaimer (3), euphemism (2), burden (2), metaphor (2) and number game (2), counterfactuals (1), vagueness (1); Rouhani did not utilize irony in his 2015 talk.

In his 2016 UNGA talk, President Rouhani used the discursive devices 184 times, of which lexicalization (35) has the highest frequency, followed by actor description (21), hyperbole (21), presupposition (18), illustration (12), implication (11), norm expression (10), evidentiality (8), generalization (6), authority (5), counterfactuals (5), number game (5), victimization (5), metaphor (4), populism (4), national self-glorification (3), polarization (3), vagueness (3), consensus (2), burden (1), categorization (1) and comparison (1); President Rouhani did not employ disclaimers, euphemism or irony in his 2016 talk.

The data in Table 3 shows that President Ahmadinejad used discursive devices 292 times in his 2005 UNGA talk of which lexicalization (64) is the most frequent discursive device, followed by presupposition (39), actor description (32), implication (30), hyperbole (17), norm expression (16), evidentiality (13), generalization (13), authority (12), counterfactuals (12), illustration (7), populism (6), national self-glorification (4), victimization (4), vagueness (4), comparison (3), metaphor (3), number game (3), polarization (3), categorization (2), euphemism (2), burden (1), disclaimers (1) and irony (1); Ahmadinejad did not make use of consensus.

In his 2006 talk, he employed the discursive devices 261 times of which lexicalization (59) is the most, followed by presupposition (38), implication (34), actor description (25), vagueness (15), hyperbole (13), norm expression (12), victimization (10), authority (6), comparison (6), illustration (6), generalization (5), counterfactuals (5), evidentiality (5), categorization (4), number game (4),

populism (4), metaphor (3), burden (2), disclaimers (2), irony (2) and euphemism (1); he did not use consensus, national self-glorification or polarization in his 2006 talk.

In his 2007 speech, he made use of the discursive devices 197 times of which lexicalization (63) is the absolute champion of the discursive devices count, followed by presupposition (20), actor description (18), implication (16), vagueness (16), illustration (12), authority (6), hyperbole (7), norm expression (7), number game (5), counterfactuals (4), disclaimers (4), evidentiality (3), national self-glorification (3), victimization (3), burden (2), comparison (2), polarization (2), populism (2), generalization (1) and metaphor (1); the president did not utilize categorization, consensus, euphemism or irony in his 2007 address.

In his 2008 UNGA talk, President Ahmadinejad employed the discursive devices 126 times of which lexicalization (44) is the most common, followed by implication (18), actor description (16), vagueness (8), authority (5), norm expression (5), presupposition (5), polarization (4), evidentiality (3), illustration (3), hyperbole (3), number game (3), national self-glorification (2), victimization (2), categorization (1), comparison (1), disclaimers (1), generalization (1) and populism (1); President Ahmadinejad did not make use of burden, consensus, counterfactuals, euphemism, irony, metaphor in his 2008 talk.

Table 4 illustrates the frequency and percentage of the total of each discursive device (the micro-level) in the four UNGA talks by each president.

Table 4. Frequency and Percentage of the total of each Discursive device (the Micro-level) for the two presidents' eight UNGA Talks

Discursive devices	Rouhani		Ahmadinejad	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Actor description	77	8.16%	91	10.39%
Authority	40	4.24%	29	3.31%
Burden	5	0.53%	5	0.57%
Categorization	10	1.06%	7	0.80%
Comparison	22	2.33%	12	1.37%
Consensus	9	0.95%	0	0.00%
Counterfactuals	18	1.91%	21	2.40%
Disclaimers	4	0.42%	8	0.91%
Euphemism	6	0.64%	3	0.34%
Evidentiality	39	4.13%	24	2.74%
Illustration	48	5.08%	28	3.20%
Generalization	27	2.86%	20	2.28%
Hyperbole	85	9.00%	40	4.57%
Implication	109	11.55%	98	11.19%
Irony	1	0.11%	3	0.34%
Lexicalization	164	17.37%	230	26.26%
Metaphor	16	1.69%	7	0.80%
National self-glorification	17	1.80%	9	1.03%
Norm expression	44	4.66%	40	4.57%
Number game	9	0.95%	15	1.71%
Polarization	40	4.24%	9	1.03%
Populism	16	1.69%	13	1.48%
Presupposition	108	11.44%	102	11.64%
Vagueness	10	1.06%	43	4.91%
Victimization	20	2.12%	19	2.17%
Total	944		876	

As can be seen in Table 4, President Rouhani made use of the discursive devices 944 times, of which lexicalization occurred 164 times (17.37%), followed by implication (109 times

=11.55%), presupposition (108 times =11.44%), hyperbole (85 time = 9.00%), actor description (77 times = 8.16%), illustration (48 times = 5.08%), norm expression (44 times = 4.66%), polarization (40 times = 4.24%), authority (40 times = 4. 25 %), evidentiality (39 times = 4.13%), generalization (27 times = 2.86%), comparison (22 times = 2.33%), victimization (20 times = 2.12%), counterfactuals (18 times = 1.91%), national self-glorification (17 times = 1.80%), metaphor (16 times = 1.69%), populism (16 times = 1.69%), categorization (10 times = 1.06%), vagueness (10 times = 1.06%), consensus (9 times = 0.95%), number game (9 times = 0.95%), euphemism (6 times = 0.64%), burden (5 times = 0.53%), disclaimers (4 times = 0.42%) and irony (1 time = 0.11%) respectively.

Of Ahmadinejad's 876 uses of the devices in the talks, lexicalization was employed 230 times (26.26%), followed by presupposition (102 times = 11.64%) and implication (98 times = 11.19%), actor description (91 times = 10.39%), vagueness (43 times = 4.91%), hyperbole (40 times = 4.57%), norm expression (40 times = 4.57%), authority (29 times = 3.31 %), illustration (28 times = 3.20%), evidentiality (24 times = 2.74%), counterfactuals (21 times = 2.40%), generalization (20 times = 2.28%), victimization (19 times = 2.17%), number game (15 times = 1.71%), populism (13 times = 1.48%), comparison (12 times = 1.37%), national self-glorification (9 times = 1.03%), polarization (9 times = 1.03%), disclaimers (8 times = 0.91%), categorization (7 times = 0.80%), metaphor (7 times = 0.80%), burden (5 times = 0.57%), euphemism (3 times = 0.34%), irony (3 times = 0.34%), and consensus (0 time = 0.00%) respectively.

I have reported the use of the discursive devices by the two presidents to identify where there were significant differences between the usage of the devices in the speeches of the presidents. Then, I conducted a Chi-square test of independence to compare the total frequency of discursive

devices at the micro-level in the eight UNGA talks. The results of the test are represented below in Table 5.

Table 5. Chi-square Analysis of Discursive devices (the Micro-level) in the eight UNGA Talks of the two presidents

Discursive devices	Rouhani	Ahmadinejad	Chi-sq	p. value
Actor description	77	91	1.167	0.280
Authority	40	29	1.754	0.185
Burden	5	5	0	1
Categorization	10	7	0.529	0.467
Comparison	22	12	2.941	0.086
Consensus	9	0	9	0.003
Counterfactuals	18	21	0.231	0.631
Disclaimers	4	8	1.333	0.248
Euphemism	6	3	1	0.317
Evidentiality	39	24	3.571	0.059
Illustration	48	28	5.263	0.022
Generalization	27	20	1.043	0.307
Hyperbole	85	40	16.2	0.000
Implication	109	98	0.585	0.445
Irony	1	3	1	0.317
Lexicalization	164	230	11.056	0.001
Metaphor	16	7	3.522	0.061
National self-glorification	17	9	2.462	0.117
Norm expression	44	40	0.19	0.663
Number game	9	15	1.5	0.221
Polarization	40	9	19.612	0.000
Populism	16	13	0.31	0.577
Presupposition	108	102	0.171	0.679
Vagueness	10	43	20.547	0.000
Victimization	20	19	0.026	0.873

As can be seen in Table 5 a significant difference was found in the use of the following devices by the two presidents: consensus ($\chi^2 = 9$, *p-value* $= 0.003$), illustration ($\chi^2 = 5.263$, *p-value* $= 0.022$), hyperbole ($\chi^2 = 16.2$, *p-value* ≤ 0.000), lexicalization ($\chi^2 = 11.056$, *p-value* $= 0.001$), polarization (χ^2

=19.612, $p \leq 0.000$) and vagueness ($\chi^2 =20.547$, $p \leq 0.000$). President Rouhani tended to use consensus, evidentiality and illustration in his UNGA talks significantly more than President Ahmadinejad; *9 vs. 0, 39 vs. 24 and 48 vs. 28* respectively. The findings also demonstrate that President Rouhani employed hyperbole in the talks approximately twice as much as President Ahmadinejad did; *85 vs. 40*. Rouhani's utilization of polarization in comparison to Ahmadinejad's use of the same discursive device in the talks was four times greater: *40 vs. 9*. The results also indicate that President Rouhani utilized lexicalization in his UNGA talks far less than President Ahmadinejad; *85 vs. 40*. Rouhani's employment of vagueness in the speeches is four times less than Ahmadinejad's use of the same discursive device; *40 vs. 9*.

The difference between the use of other discursive devices in the eight UNGA addresses of two presidents was non-significant.

Table 6 represents the frequency of the fundamental dichotomy of ideology, *Positive self-representation* and *Negative other-representation*, at the macro-level of analysis of the four consecutive UNGA talks (2013-16) of President Rouhani and the four successive (2005-08) UNGA talks of President Ahmadinejad.

Table 6. Frequency of the Fundamental dichotomy of ideology (the Macro-level) in the eight UNGA Talks of the two presidents

	Year	Positive self-representation	Negative other-representation
Rouhani	2013	35	35
	2014	41	35
	2015	44	22
	2016	23	18
	Total	143	110
Ahmadinejad	2005	37	44
	2006	15	65
	2007	28	78
	2008	28	44
	Total	108	231

As can be seen in Table 6, President Rouhani utilized positive self-representation 143 times in his four (2013-16) UNGA talks. The highest number of positive self-representations (44) is found in his 2015 UNGA talk, followed by 41 times in 2014 talk, 35 times in 2013 and 23 times in 2016 speech respectively. The president made the maximum use of negative other-representation in his 2013 and 2014 talks (35 times in each talk), followed by 22 times in 2015 talk and18 times 2016 talk respectively.

The data provided in Table 6 also reflect that President Ahmadinejad employed positive self-representation 108 times in his four (2005-06) talks. The highest number of positive self-representations (37) is found in his 2005 talk, followed by 28 times in 2007 speech, 28 times in

2008 talk and 15 times in 2006 speech respectively. Ahmadinejad's most common use of negative other-representation can be seen in his 2007 UNGA talk, when he used it 78 times, followed by 65 times in his 2006 talk and 44 times in his 2005 talk and 44 times in his 2008 speech.

Table 7 illustrates the frequency and percentage of the total of the macro-level positive and negative self-representations observed in the two presidents' eight UNGA talks.

Table 7. Frequency and Percentage of the total of each Fundamental dichotomy of ideology (the Macro-level) for two presidents' eight UNGA Talks

	Rouhani		Ahmadinejad	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Positive self-representation	143	56.52%	108	31.86%
Negative other-representation	110	43.48%	231	68.14%
Total	253		339	

As can be seen in Table 7, President Rouhani made use of the positive/negative representations 253 times in his four consecutive (2013-16) UNGA talks. He utilized the positive self-representation (143 times =56.2%) slightly more than negative other-representation (110 times =43.48%).

Table 7 also shows that President Ahmadinejad employed positive/negative representations 339 times in his four successive (2005-08) UNGA speeches. He utilized negative other-representation (231 times = 68.14%) far more than positive self-representations (108 times = 31.86%).

An inferential test was also utilized to assess the significance of the observed differences between the two presidents' use of positive self- and negative other-representations. Table 8

illustrates the calculation of a Chi-square test of independence to compare the total frequency of the positive/negative representations in the eight UNGA talks of the two presidents.

Table 8. Chi-square Analysis of the total of the positive/negative representations (the Macro-level) in the eight UNGA Talks of the two presidents

	Rouhani	Ahmadinejad	Chi-sq	p. value
Positive self-representation	143	108	4.880	0.027
Negative other-representation	110	231	42.935	5.658e-11

As can be seen in Table 8, President Rouhani used positive self-representations significantly more often than President Ahmadinejad (χ^2 = 4.880, *p-value* = 0.027), and significantly fewer negative other-representations (χ^2 = 42.935, $p \leq 0.000$).

Chapter 5

Qualitative Data Analysis and Discussion

In chapter 5, I will provide the qualitative analysis of the two presidents' UNGA speeches at macro and micro levels of analysis. For this purpose, I will use the quantitative findings presented in chapter 4 and some excerpts of the two presidents' UNGA addresses to discuss the similarities and differences regarding the two presidents' use of Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices at the micro-level. I also use the findings in chapter 4 and some of excerpts the two presidents' UNGA addresses to discuss the similarities and differences in the two presidents' employment of the dichotomy of ideology, positive self-representation and negative other-representation, at the macro-level. Chapter 5 concludes by presenting a general discussion about the findings and the qualitative data analysis at both levels of analysis.

5. 1. The Micro- level of analysis

Presidents Rouhani's and Ahmadinejad's use of discursive devices did not differ very much. However, the results of analysis of the devices show that president Rouhani utilized a wider range and larger number of the discursive devices; *944 vs 876*. The difference might be explained by two reasons; firstly, Rouhani's talks seem to be more formal, so they include more complex structures and discursive strategies. This is in line with the findings of Sharififar & Rahimi (2015) who state that "Rouhani used more difficult words and his language is rather hard and formal" (p. 34) in comparison to President Obama's language in the two presidents' talks before the 2013 UNGA. It is also comparable with the findings of Sardabi, Biria, & Azin (2014), which shows that Rouhani employed a wide variety of discursive and rhetoric devices in his 2013 UNGA talk. The second reason for this difference can be found in President Rouhani's experience in the world of politics.

He has been a senior politician at the highest level of Iran's domestic and international policy for approximately four decades and known as a veteran politician; therefore, he is expected to be more skillful in delivering political speeches. His proficiency in the political sphere is manifested in President Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk which consists of a fairly varied selection of discursive strategies in comparison to President Ahmadinejad's 2012 UNGA talk (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017).

President Rouhani used the discursive device *'consensus'* which was not used at all by President Ahmadinejad: *9 vs 0*. The discursive device was used for two purposes: firstly, seeking a compromise during nuclear talks; for example, *"we have engaged in the most transparent dialogue to build confidence regarding Iran's peaceful nuclear program."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk)*,* and *"I deem it necessary to recognize the role of all the negotiators, the leaders and the heads of state and government of the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Russia, Germany, China and the Islamic Republic of Iran in achieving this agreement."* (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA talk). Secondly, 'consensus' was used to show the accord of the international community on termination of the regional or world-spread violence; for example, *"I warned against the expansion of violence and extremism. ... The right solution to this quandary comes from within the region and regionally provided solution with international support and not from the outside the region."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk) and *"I called for combating violence and extremism. Consequently, you, the representatives of the international community, unanimously gave it a seal of endorsement and hence, the WAVE resolution came to be."* (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA talk). For both purposes, Rouhani used the device *'consensus'* to lend the international support to Iran's willingness to end his country's controversial nuclear dossier and regional and global violence. Rouhani's greater use of *'consensus'* can be explained by his political views. As compared to his

predecessor, Rouhani tends to impersonalize his political views to sound moderate and mitigate the imposition (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017).

President Rouhani's application of *'illustration'*, according to Table 5, is much more frequent than Ahmadinejad's usage of this device: *48 vs 28. 'Illustration'* helps a speaker either back up their claims or opinions or persuade the audience with solid examples so the speakers' ideas or claims seem natural and persuasive (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 737). Rouhani has been described as having more rational and pragmatic views as compared to Ahmadinejad's rather illusory and far-fetched stance (Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017), and this could explain the difference in the use of 'illustration' by the two presidents. President Rouhani's UNGA talk shows his use of *'illustration'* to sound more persuasive and rational: *"Yet another reflection of the same cognitive model is the persistence of Cold War mentality and bi-polar division of the world into "superior us" and "inferior others.""* (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk); *'Cold war'* as a concrete illustration/example was used to show how old powers are seeking domination and superiority in the world. *"Military aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq and improper interference in the developments in Syria are clear examples of this erroneous strategic approach in the Middle East."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk): *"Military aggression against Afghanistan and Iraq'* and *'improper interference ... in Syria"* are two illustrations/examples to make the audience aware of the inefficiency of Western policy in the Northern Africa and the Middle East.

The discursive device *'hyperbole'* was also used by Rouhani more often than by Ahmadinejad in his talks (*85 vs 40 instances)*. Hyperbole is used to magnify the positive attributes of in-group members and negative characteristics of out-group members on the one hand, and downplay the negative aspects of in-groups and positive properties of out-group members on the other hand (Van Dijk, 2005, Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). Most hyperbole consists of hard and complex

structures and words. These features of hyperbolic terms fit into the overall structure of Rouhani's language: he uses a high degree of formality, complexity and difficulty (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017). Another probable reason for the greater use of hyperbole by president Rouhani stems from his experience in the world of politics. The third explanation of high use of hyperbole by Rouhani probably originates from the topics he had covered in his four UNGA talks.

Hyperbole helps to highlight the topics of his talks: the depth of crisis in the Middle East and North Africa. Two examples of his use of hyperbole are as follows: the hyperbolic term *'turbulent regions'* in *"Unfortunately, the Middle East and North Africa has turned into one of the world's most turbulent regions"* (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA address); the hyperbolic term *'the most savage and destructive policies'* in *"Today in fact, the discourse of hatred and violence in the Middle East and North Africa is spreading with an astonishing speed, and this region is stuck in a web of the most savage and destructive* policies (Rouhani's 2016 UNGA talk).

To warn the world community of the spread of terrorism, violence and their consequences, President Rouhani implemented the discursive device *'hyperbole'* in virtually all the UNGA talks. Some examples are as follows: the hyperbolic term *'gravest and most important threat'* in *"The gravest and most important threat to the world today is for terrorist organizations to become terrorist states."* (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA address); the hyperbolic term *'devastating war'* in *"On that day, ... resulting in a devastating war in the Middle East and the spread of insecurity across the globe."*. (Rouhani's 2016 UNGA address).

Rouhani used the discursive device *'hyperbole'* to condemn the sanctions imposed on Iran by the Western countries and their allies. Two examples of his use of hyperbole for this purpose are

as follows: the hyperbolic term *'catastrophic practices'* in *"One such imaginary threat is the so-called "Iranian threat" -... catastrophic practices over the past three decades."* (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA address); the hyperbolic term *'deep hatred'* in *"When sanctions set in, deep hatred for those imposing them also begins."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA address).

Rouhani applied the discursive device *'hyperbole'* to criticize the acts of the Israeli government towards Palestinians. Two examples of this are the the hyperbolic term *'brutal repression of the Palestinian people'* in *"...brutal repression of the Palestinian people, assassination of common people and political figures in Iran..."* (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA address) and the hyperbolic term *'tragically violated'* in *"Palestine is under occupation; the basic rights of the Palestinians are tragically violated, and they are deprived of the right of return and access to ..."* (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA address).

Rouhani made use of the discursive device *'hyperbole'* to refute any claims made to portray that Iran's nuclear programs have a non-peaceful nature and highlight the importance of 5+1 nuclear talks. The following two examples show his use of hyperbole for this purpose: he uses the hyperbolic term *'historic opportunity'* in *"Arriving at a final comprehensive nuclear agreement with Iran will be a historic opportunity for the West to show that it does not oppose the advancement and development of others ..."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA address); and the hyperbolic term *''utmost effort''* in *"Our seven countries and the European Union expended considerable ..their utmost effort to protect and implement the agreement."* (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA address).

Hence, I would argue that the nature of topics covered in Rouhani's talks necessitated using *'hyperbole'*.

The data analysis in Table 5 demonstrates that President Rouhani utilized roughly four times more instances of *'polarization'* than President Ahmadinejad did: *40 vs 9*. According to Van Dijk (2005, p. 738), *'polarization'* is one of the semantic strategies which is commonly used to split people into in-group with positive attributes and out-group members with negative properties. Rouhani's tendency to sound impersonal in expressing his political perspectives usually achieved through using the pronouns 'we' and 'our' (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015) can be assumed to be the most plausible reason for his greater application of *'polarization'* than his successor. To sound impersonal, he uses the discursive device *'polarization'* as a tactic to represent his political ideology-laden points of view not as a personal but as an accepted political viewpoint by Iran and its allies. He also exploited *'polarization'* to manifest Iran's opponents as the major agents of threat to peace and expansion of terrorism, etc. Using this discursive device, Rouhani could form a bipolar axis of ideology with a positive representation of Iran, its allies and the acts of in-group members on one side and a negative representation of Iran's enemies and their partners on the other side.

Some examples are presented here to clarify how president Rouhani used the discursive device *'polarization'* to represent our group members positively and their group members negatively: *"those who harp on the so-called threat of Iran are either a threat against international peace and security themselves or promote such a threat. Iran poses absolutely no threat to the world or the region. In fact, in ideals as well as in actual practice, my country has been a harbinger of just peace and comprehensive security"* (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk): using *'polarization'*, the president firstly classified Iran into a group of countries looking for stable peace through the discursive device *'metaphor'* (*'a harbinger of just peace and comprehensive security'*). Secondly, using *'polarization',* he also classified countries which make this claim into a group as *'a threat*

56

against international peace and security' to represent them negatively. *'The pain is made greater when these terrorists spill blood in the name of religion and behead in the name of Islam. … What is more astonishing is that the Western media, in line with them, repeat this false claim, which provokes the hatred of all Muslims. Muslim people, who everyday recall their God as merciful and compassionate and have learned lessons of kindness and empathy from their Prophet, see this defamation as part of an Islamophobic project."* (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk): Rouhani made use of *'polarization'* to put Islamic terrorist groups and the media in the west in one group to represent them negatively and non-extreme Muslims in one group to represent them positively.

President Ahmadinejad utilized the discursive device *'lexicalization'* much more than his predecessor: *230 vs 164*. The first reason to explain more use of *'lexicalization'* by President Ahmadinejad can emanate from the fact that political speakers mostly use lexicalization to exert their specific beliefs into the mind of public (Van Dijk, 2005; Matić, 2012). This is especially true when speakers tend to represent themselves positively and others negatively: "the positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (often inextricably combined) are achieved mostly through lexicalization" (Matić, 2012, p. 61). Regarding Ahmadinejad's higher use of the dichotomy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (See Table 7), it could be expected to see him using the discursive device *'lexicalization'* more than Rouhani. However, Rouhani's employment of *'lexicalization'* is far more than that of other devices as well since his use of the dichotomy of positive self-presentation and negative other-presentation (See Table 7), particularly positive self-representation, is fairly high. The next reason can be sought in the style of the talks of the two presidents; President Ahmadinejad tended to use lengthy sentences containing many words in his four talks, but Rouhani was more willing to use shorter sentences with fewer words; this is in line with the findings of Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji (2017) who found

that Ahmadinejad's 2012 talk to the UNGA was lengthier and more prolix than Rouhani's 2013 UNGA speech. A further contrast between the comments of the two presidents is found in Ahmadinejad's use of lengthy and verbose sentences to voice his religious opinion about Islam and Imam Mahdi (the 12th Imam of Shitte Muslims): *"Oh God, hasten the arrival of Imam Al-Mahdi and grant him good health and victory and make us his followers and those who attest to his rightfulness"* (Ahmadinejad's 2007 UNGA talk); *"All praise be to Allah, the Lord of the universe, and peace and blessing be upon our Master and Prophet, Mohammad, and his pure household, and his noble companions. Oh God, hasten the arrival of Imam Al-Mahdi and grant him good health and victory and make us his followers and those who attest to his rightfulness."* (Ahmadinejad's 2008 UNGA talk).

Lexicalization as a discursive device can be used to represent others negatively or delegitimize the action of others (Van Dijk 2005; Alhumaidi, 2013; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010). This is done through "the selection of (strongly) negative words to describe the actions of the Others" (Van Dijk, 1995, p. 154). Considering this property of lexicalization and high frequency of President Ahmadinejad's negative representation of others at the macro-level of analysis (see Table 7), we should expect to see that he utilized this device in the four UNGA talks a lot more than Rouhani did in his addresses. Here are some examples to demonstrate how President Ahmadinejad represented others negatively using negative *'lexicalization'*: *"the Islamic Republic of Iran believes that it is necessary to revitalize the NPT and create the above-mentioned ad-hoc committee so that it can combat nuclear weapons and abolish the apartheid in peaceful nuclear technology."* (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk). Here, using the lexicalization *'apartheid'*, the president made a negative representation of the countries which discriminate between countries in accessing peaceful nuclear technology. *"Millions of people have been killed or*

displaced, and the occupiers, without a sense of shame, are still seeking to solidify their position in the political geography of the region and to dominate oil resources." (Ahmadinejad's 2008 UNGA talk). In this extract, the president utilized lexicalization several times, *'occupiers', 'without a sense of shame' and 'dominate oil resources'*, to represent the US and its allies negatively.

The data analysis of the discursive devices at the micro-level of analysis also shows that there is a considerable difference in two presidents' usage of the discursive device *'vagueness'*. According to the data illustrated in Table 5, Ahmadinejad's application of *'vagueness'* is approximately four times higher than Rouhani's use of the device: *43 vs 10*. The discourse producers make use of the discursive device *'vagueness'* for its two distinctive features: lack of clarity in referring to an entity and face-keeping quality, especially when mitigating the positive properties of the out-group members (Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Van Dijk, 2005). Considering President Ahmadinejad's avoidance of naming countries for what he calls *'the wrongdoings of the world powers'* throughout the world and his willingness to lower the positive properties of the out-group members, the higher use of *'vagueness'* in the four UNGA talks of the president is not unexpected. This result is in line with the study by Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji (2017) who found that Ahmadinejad had no tendency to relate the global issues such as widespread terrorism, violence, etc. to any particular countries or people in the world in his 2012 UNGA speech. The following excerpts are exemplars of his mastery of utilizing the discursive device *'vagueness'* in the four UNGA talks: *"Even more dangerous is that certain parties relying on their power and wealth try to impose a climate of intimidation and injustice over the world make bullying, while — through their huge media resources — portray themselves as defenders of freedom, democracy and human rights."* (the 2005 UNGA talk); adverbs such as some and certain can be implemented in a discourse to sound vague (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 739). Using the adverb

'certain' in '... certain parties relying on their power...', the president employed 'vagueness' to avoid mentioning the name of "the parties" to keep face and lower the positive properties of the powers which pretend to be the "defenders of freedom, democracy and human rights". Quantifiers such as few, a few and a lot can be used in a discourse to look vague (Van Dijk, 2005, p. 739). In the following excerpt: "... under pressure from a few bullying powers, even paves the way for supporting these Zionist murderers..." (the 2008 UNGA talk), President Ahmadinejad utilized 'vagueness' through the quantifier 'a few' in 'under pressure from a few bullying powers' to keep face by not mentioning the name of the supporters of the Israeli government.

5. 2. The Macro- level of analysis

Comparing the utilization of the positive self-representation and negative other-representation at the macro-level of analysis of the two presidents' eight UNGA addresses demonstrates that there is a substantial difference between the use of positive self-representation and negative other-representation. As shown in Table 7, President Ahmadinejad's total employment of positive self-representation and negative other-representation in the four UNGA addresses is more than President Rouhani's application in his four UNGA talks; *339 vs 253.*

Ahmadinejad's employment of *negative other-representation* is twice as much as Rouhani's: *231 vs 110* (see Table 8). Although President Rouhani's application of the *positive self-representation* exceeds President Ahmadinejad's significantly (*143 vs 108)*, the difference is not as big as it is in the use of the *negative other-representation.*

The first reason to justify the widening gulf between the use of *'negative other-representation'* and a significant difference in the utilization of *'positive self-representation'* can be sought in the two presidents' political stances. While Rouhani tends to sound moderate and non-radical in

expressing his political viewpoints and ideologies, Ahmadinejad is more willing to see things in black and white, and take extreme political views (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Gowhary, Rahimi, Azizifara, & Jamalinesari, 2015).

The topics the two presidents covered in their four UNGA addresses can be the next explanation of the difference in the utilization of each of the dichotomy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation in two presidents' eight UNGA addresses. This in line with Matić's (2012) explanation of the relation between discourse topics and the utilization of dichotomy of *positive self-representation* and n*egative other-representation*. He believes that

> information emphasized as the most important in the speech is expressed in topics or semantic macrostructures and many of them are already worded with a view to positively representing the speaker and negatively the opponent. In these macrostructures we can find ideological opinions which can shape the coherence of the speeches. (2012, p. 58)

The difference in the use of the dichotomy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation in the four UNGA talks of the two presidents is also commensurate with the socio-political context of Iran, the Middle East and the world.

Exploring the topics covered in the eight UNGA talks of Rouhani and Ahmadinejad along with the ideological stance adopted in these talks can assist in elucidating the difference or similarity at the macro-level of analysis of the two presidents' UNGA addresses. For this purpose, some excerpts of each president's four UNGA talks on some of the same topics are presented here to reveal the ideological stances of the two presidents on the topics at the macro-level of analysis.

1. Expansion of Terrorism and Violence

War and expansion of violence and terrorism constitute one of the major topics in the two presidents' eight UNGA addresses. However, considering that spread of war, terrorism, and violence was covered in much greater detail in Ahmadinejad's four speeches than in Rouhani's four addresses. This might be evidence of certain points of divergence in the two presidents' ideological stances towards these issues. Considering the expansion of terrorism and violence, both presidents shared the opinion that misconduct and wrongdoings of some world powers is the origin of the spread of terrorism and violence in regions such as the Middle East, North Africa, etc. However, President Ahmadinejad was more direct to represent the powers negatively *(negative other-representation)* as in the following excerpts:

"After September 11, a particular radical group was accused of terrorist activities -- although it was never explained how such huge intelligence gathering and security organizations failed to prevent such an extensive and well-planned operation.
Why have powers that, not so long ago, were supporting the activities of such groups in Afghanistan — and thus portraying themselves as supporters of human rights and the Afghan people —overnight turned into their most fierce critic? Are we to believe that their benefactors, i.e. the very same hegemonic powers have lost control?" (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk)

By referring to the perpetrators of 09/11/ 2001 terrorist attack, Ahmadinejad made a *negative representation* of the USA as it is generally believed the Al-Qaeda and its allies were "yesterday's US-sponsored Mujahidin (holy 'freedom fighters') against the Soviet Union occupation" (Sahlane, 2009, p. 24). The negative other-representation is achieved through **presupposition**: *"... powers that, not so long ago, were supporting the activities of such groups in Afghanistan".*

Another example illustrating the directness of Ahmadinejad in representing the powers negatively by referring to their faults as the origin of terrorism and violence growth is provided below.

"Occupation of countries, including Iraq, has continued for the last three years. Not a day goes by without hundreds of people getting killed in cold blood. The occupiers are incapable of establishing security in Iraq. Despite the establishment of the lawful Government and National Assembly of Iraq, there are covert and overt efforts to heighten insecurity, magnify and aggravate differences within Iraqi society, and instigate civil strife.
There is no indication that the occupiers have the necessary political will to eliminate the sources of instability. Numerous terrorists were apprehended by the Government of Iraq, only to be let loose under various pretexts by the occupiers." (Ahmadinejad's 2006 UNGA talk)

By referring to the occupation of Iraq and the incapability of the occupiers to provide security, Ahmadinejad made a *negative representation* of the USA, as the 2nd Persian Gulf War leader, and its allies through **presupposition:** *"Occupation of countries, including Iraq, has continued for the last three years",* **victimization:** *"...people getting killed in cold blood"* and **lexicalization:** *"incapable of establishing security".*

The following excerpt from Ahmadinejad's 2007 UNGA talk also manifests his directness in representing the powers negatively by blaming them as agents of terrorism and violence expansion.

"Iraq was occupied under the pretext of overthrowing a dictator and the existence of weapons of mass destruction. The Iraqi dictator who had been supported by the same occupiers was disposed of, and no weapons of mass destruction were discovered, but the occupation continues under different excuses. No day passes without people being killed, wounded or displaced, and the occupiers not only refuse to be accountable and ashamed of their adventure, but speak in a report of a new market for their armaments as the result of their military venture. They even oppose the constitution, National Assembly and the government established by the vote of the people, while

they do not even have the courage to declare their defeat and exit Iraq." (Ahmadinejad's 2007 UNGA talk)

Once again, the occupation of Iraq gave Ahmadinejad a strong tool to accuse the US and its allies of expanding violence and terrorism in the Middle East; in this excerpt he repeatedly exerted his favored ideological stance, *negative other-representation*, through a variety of discursive devices: **presupposition**: *"Iraq was occupied under the pretext of overthrowing a dictator and the existence of weapons of mass destruction"*, **actor description**: *"No day passes without people being killed, ... declare their defeat and exit Iraq"* and **victimization**: *"No day passes without people being killed, wounded or displaced..."*.

Expansion of violence and war in Afghanistan is the last example given below to highlight Ahmadinejad's directness in denoting the powers negatively.

"In Afghanistan, production of narcotics has multiplied since the presence of NATO forces. Domestic conflicts continue. Terrorism is spreading. And innocent people are bombarded on a daily basis in streets, markets, schools and wedding ceremonies. The people of Afghanistan are the victims of the willingness of NATO member states to dominate the regions surrounding India, China, and South Asia. The Security Council cannot do anything about it because some of these NATO members also happen to be the major decision makers in the Security Council." (Ahmadinejad's 2008 UNGA talk)

Making a reference to the intervention of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in Afghanistan, President Ahmadinejad highlighted the consequences of this military intrusion, *"Terrorism is spreading. And innocent people are bombarded on a daily basis in streets, markets, schools and wedding ceremonies",* to make a negative representation of NATO and its allies. The negative representation of other is attained through **victimization**: *"innocent people are bombarded*

on a daily basis in streets, markets, schools and wedding ceremonies" and **lexicalization**: *"dominate the regions surrounding India, …"*.

Now we consider some excerpts from President Rouhani's four UNGA speeches to see how he addressed the same world issues ideologically. The examples also show the stylistic difference between the two presidents in representing the powers negatively.

"Coercive economic and military policies and practices geared to the maintenance and preservation of old superiorities and dominations have been pursued in a conceptual mindset that negates peace, security, human dignity, and exalted human ideals. Ignoring differences between societies and globalizing Western values as universal ones represent another manifestation of this conceptual mindset. Yet another reflection of the same cognitive model is the persistence of Cold War mentality and bi-polar division of the world into "superior us" and "inferior others." Fanning fear and phobia around the emergence of new actors on the world scene is another." (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk)

While ideologically Rouhani made a negative representation of the perpetrators of *"coercive economic and military policies"*, the president did not make a direct reference to any agents. The *negative other-representation* of the performers of the policies was achieved using **presupposition**: *"coercive economic and military policies and practices geared to the maintenance and preservation of old superiorities and dominations have been pursued in a conceptual mindset…"* and **illustration/example:** *"Ignoring differences between societies and globalizing Western values as universal ones represent another manifestation of this"*

Another example to show President Rouhani's indirect strategy to illustrate the powers as agents of the violence and terrorism expansion is given below.

"The human tragedy in Syria represents a painful example of catastrophic spread of violence and extremism in our region. From the very outset of the crisis and when some regional and international actors helped to militarize the situation through infusion of arms and intelligence

into the country and active support of extremist groups, we emphasized that there was no military solution to the Syrian crisis." (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk)

Once again, without making a specific reference to the perpetrators of violence and terrorism in Syria, the president made a negative representation of the supporters of militaristic actions to terminate the crisis in the country without indicating any particular agents. Furthermore, portraying Iran as a neutral side in Syria's crisis, the president was representing Iran positively. The negative other-representation and positive self-representation were achieved through the discursive device **polarization***: 'From the very outset of the crisis and … we emphasized that there was no military solution to the Syrian crisis.'*

The following excerpt is another exemplar of Rouhani's strategy of indirectness to make a negative representation of the powers as the agents of the development of violence and terrorism.

"I am coming from a region of the world whose many parts are currently burning in fire of extremism and radicalism. To the East and West of my country, extremists threaten our neighbors, resort to violence and shed blood. They of course do not speak a single language; they are not of a single skin color and not of a single nationality; they have come to the Middle East from around the world. They do however have a single ideology: "violence and extremism". They also have a single goal: "the destruction of civilization, giving rise to Islamophobia and creating a fertile ground for further intervention of foreign forces in our region"." (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk).

Although there is a mention of external intervention in the Middle East in this excerpt, there is no direct indication of the powers which tend to increase their presence by expanding terrorism. The president sounded ideologically negative. The *negative other-representation* of the perpetrators of terrorism and violence was acquired by **lexicalization** such as *"threaten, violence, shed blood"* and the **hyperbolic terms** *such as* "destruction of civilization" and *"giving rise to Islamophobia"*.

All in all, the two presidents sounded similar ideologically when they described the expansion of terrorism and violence in the eight UNGA talks. President Rouhani, however, sounded more moderate in his ideological stance. This is well-founded since Rouhani is known for his moderate and non-extreme viewpoints in the world of politics while Ahmadinejad politically affiliates with the Principlists or the Conservatives who are notorious for extremism and radicalism in politics (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Gowhary et al, 2015).

2. World Zionism and the Occupation of Palestine

Expressing radical political views on Zionism and the occupation of Palestine on important national and international occasions has been at the core of Iran's foreign policy since 1979 Islamic Revolution (Cooley, 1979; Hooglund, 1995; Menashri, 2006; Rakel, 2007; Sick, 2003, as cited in Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017). It has brought considerable political prestige to many Iranian politicians belonging to the main body of the Islamic Republic of Iran especially since Ahmadinejad was elected as the president of Iran in 2005 (Vick, 2005, as cited in Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sohrabi, 2006). Therefore, it is expected to see anti-Zionism as a major topic of the two Presidents' talks in such an important assembly. A comparison of the two presidents' discourse can reveal the ideology adopted by two presidents towards world Zionism and the occupation of Palestine.

"People around the world are fully aware of what is happening in the occupied Palestine. Women and children are being murdered and adolescents taken prisoner. Houses are being demolished and farms burnt down. Yet, when the people of Palestine resist these conditions, they are accused of terrorism. At the same time, the occupier, which does not abide by any principles and terror is part of its pronounced and routine policy enjoys the support of the previously mentioned governments. Let me be blunter. State terrorism is being supported by those who claim to fight terrorism." (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk)

By indicating the inhuman acts of the Israeli government, for example, occupation of Palestine, murdering children and women, etc., Ahmadinejad was representing Zionism negatively. The negative representation was attained through **presupposition**: *"the occupied Palestine"*, **victimization**: *"Women and children are being murdered and adolescents taken prisoner. Houses are being demolished and farms burnt down."* and **actor description**: *"At the same time, the occupier, which does not abide by any principles and terror is part of its pronounced and routine policy…"*.

The three following excerpts of Ahmadinejad's 2006 UNGA talk highlight the importance of Israeli-phobic strategy to Ahmadinejad and therefore making a negative representation of Israel's government is his UNGA talks.

"The pretexts for the creation of the regime occupying Al-Qods Al-Sharif are so weak … The tragedy does not end with the establishment of a regime in the territory of others. Regrettably, from its inception, that regime has been a constant source of threat and insecurity in the Middle East region, waging war and spilling blood and impeding the progress of regional countries, and has also been used by some powers as an instrument of division, coercion, and pressure on the people of the region."

"Just watch what is happening in the Palestinian land. People are being bombarded in their own homes and their children murdered in their own streets and alleys. But no authority, not even the Security Council, can afford them any support or protection. Why?"

"This is blatantly manifested in the way the elected Government of the Palestinian people is treated as well as in the support extended to the Zionist regime. It does not matter if people are murdered in Palestine, turned into refugees, captured, imprisoned or besieged; that must not violate human rights." (Ahmadinejad's 2006 UNGA talk)

As far as it is obvious from the excerpts, president Ahmadinejad accused Israeli government of many evil deeds to exert his ideological stance on Zionism. **Actor description:** *"Regrettably,*

*from its inception, that regime … pressure on the people of the region.", **lexicalization** "regime",*

***victimization**: "People are being bombarded in their own homes and their children murdered in*

their own streets and alleys" and ***victimization**: "…people are murdered in Palestine, turned into*

refugees, captured, imprisoned or besieged" were the discursive devices the president applied at

the micro-level to base the ideology of *negative other-representation* (the Zionist) at the macro-

level.

The president continued to accuse the Israeli government of murdering of Palestinians,

bombarding their homes, etc. in his 2007 and 2008 talks, to represent the Zionist world negatively.

The examples given below show Ahmadinejad's repeated attempts to represent Israeli government

and world Zionism negatively.

"The dignity, integrity and rights of the American and European people are being played with by

a small but deceitful number of people called Zionists. Although they are a miniscule minority,

they have been dominating an important portion of the financial and monetary centers as well as

the political decision-making centers of some European countries and the US in a deceitful,

complex and furtive manner. It is deeply disastrous to witness that some presidential or premiere

nominees in some big countries have to visit these people, take part in their gatherings, swear their

allegiance and commitment to their interests in order to attain financial or media support."

"This means that the great people of America and various nations of Europe need to obey the

demands and wishes of a small number of acquisitive and invasive people. These nations are

spending their dignity and resources on the crimes and occupations and the threats of the Zionist

network against their will." (Ahmadinejad's 2008 UNGA talk)

Furthermore, as we observe in excerpts from his 2008 UNGA address, Ahmadinejad extended

his accusations against the Zionist world, associating Zionists with new crimes such as *"playing*

with dignity, integrity and rights of the American and European people" to promote his ideology;

the negative representation of Zionism. The negative representation was achieved using ***actor***

description: 'The dignity, integrity and rights ... the US in a deceitful, complex and furtive manner', *lexicalization*: 'acquisitive and invasive people' *victimization*: 'This means that the great people of America and various nations ... Zionist network against their will' and *lexicalization:* using lexicalization '...crimes and occupations and the threats of the Zionist'.

Now, we will consider if President Rouhani's ideological perspective toward the Israeli government and World Zionism in his UNGA addresses bears resemblance to his predecessor's ideological stance or not.

"What has been - and continues to be - practiced against the innocent people of Palestine is nothing less than structural violence. Palestine is under occupation; the basic rights of the Palestinians are tragically violated, and they are deprived of the right of return and access to their homes, birthplace and homeland. Apartheid as a concept can hardly describe the crimes and the institutionalized aggression against the innocent Palestinian people." (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA talk)

By referring to the occupation of Palestine, violation of Palestinians' rights and access to their homes, Rouhani was representing Israel negatively. To make the *negative other-representation*, the president utilized **victimization**: *"Palestine is under occupation; the basic rights of the Palestinians are tragically violated, and they are deprived of the right of return and access to their homes, birthplace and homeland"*, **hyperbole**: *"tragically violated"* and **lexicalization**: *"deprived of the right…"*

Another example is given below to show President Rouhani's effort to make a negative representation of Israel as the agent of humanitarian crisis in Palestine.

"Had we had greater cooperation and coordination in the Middle East, thousands of innocent Palestinians in Gaza would not have been fallen victim to the Zionist regime's aggression." (Rouhani's 2014 UNGA talk)

By mentioning the Palestinians' loss due to the aggressive policy of the Zionist regime, the president exerted his ideology i.e., the negative representation of Israel. To do so, he made use of the discursive device **counterfactuals:** "*had we had greater cooperation and coordination … victim to Zionist regime's aggression.*".

The following excerpts are other exemplars of Rouhani's strategy of negative representation of Israel's government by representing Israel as the major agent of expansion of Weapons of Mass Destructions in the Middle East and suppression of Palestinians.

"*Parallel to the implementation of the JCPOA, we also expect the nuclear-weapon states to take necessary steps to fulfill their commitment of full nuclear disarmament based on Article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Furthermore, we expect them to play a positive role in the creation of a "nuclear weapons-free Middle East" and not to allow the Zionist regime to remain the only impediment in the way of realizing this important initiative.*"

"*We must not forget that the roots of today's wars, destruction and terror, can be found in the occupation, invasion and military intervention of yesterday. If we did not have the US military invasion of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the US's unwarranted support for the inhumane actions of the Zionist regime against the oppressed nation of Palestine, today the terrorists would not have an excuse for the justification of their crimes.*" (Rouhani's 2015 UNGA talk)

By accusing Israel of being an obstacle to 'a Middle East free from nuclear weapons' and suppressing Palestinians, the president was making a negative representation of Israel. The *negative other-representation* was attained using **actor description**: "*Representing the others 'the Zionist regime to remain the only impediment…*" and **presupposition**: "*the oppressed nation of Palestine*".

The last excerpt of Rouhani's talk provided below is an illustration of his effort to magnify Israel's destructive role in the world:

"Any failure in implementing the JCPOA will further erode the credibility of the United States in the world. The lack of compliance with the JCPOA on the part of the United States in the past several months represents a flawed approach that should be rectified forthwith. Unfortunately, such illegal actions are not unprecedented: the latest case in point is the US Supreme Court ruling to seize billions of dollars of the Iranian people's assets. This experience demonstrated that the Zionist pressure groups could go as far as having US Congress pass indefensible legislations forcing the highest American judicial institution to violate preemptory norms of international law." (Rouhani's 2016 UNGA talk)

Like Ahmadinejad, Rouhani expanded the domain of accusation against the Zionist world, blaming them for influencing the US Congress and judiciary system to freeze Iran's properties in the USA to represent Zionism negatively. The negative representation of other was achieved through **actor description**: *'the Zionist pressure groups could go as far as having US Congress pass indefensible legislations forcing ...'.*

Regarding the world Zionist and the occupation of Palestine, the two presidents adopted an extreme ideological stance on the topic, however Ahmadinejad was tougher on this topic. Ahmadinejad's ideology regarding the Zionists is justifiable as he is well-known for his controversial idea of the removal of Israel and the denial of the Holocaust (Sohrabi, 2006; Zohar, 2014; Lake, 2011/2012). According to Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji (2017), "this radical stance was reflected in Ahmadinejad's talk at the UN where he explicitly introduced Zionism as a world agent and also indirectly called it a fake government" (p. 12). The next reason for Rouhani to avoid sounding as radical as Ahmadinejad did on this topic is best described by Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji (2017)

"Unlike Ahmadinejad, who reiterated his radical stance on the issue of Palestine, Rouhani, as expected from his campaign 'motto' of *taking the moderate path*, did not

make direct reference to Zionism but rather condemned the occupation of Palestine in accordance with Iran's foreign policy". (p. 12)

For this reason, despite Rouhani's rather extreme ideology on this topic, the topic did not constitute much of his four UNGA talks.

3. Iran's nuclear program

President Ahmadinejad's radical political viewpoints such as the elimination of Israel from the world map led to considerable attention worldwide being paid to the Iranian nuclear program since Ahmadinejad took office in 2005 (Chaudhri & Fyke, 2008; Zohar, 2014; Lake, 2011/2012). The early days of Ahmadinejad's first period of presidency coincided with Rouhani's resignation from Iran's nuclear negotiation team after serving as the president of the team for two years ("Profile: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani", 2017). Therefore, a comparison of the two presidents' talks regarding Iran's nuclear program can shed light on their ideological stance on this topic.

The two representative excerpts from Ahmadinejad's four UNGA talks provided below illustrate how he left behind addressing Iran's controversial nuclear issues and Iran's fulfillment of world expectations by collaborating with the international community in regard with Iran's nuclear dossier. Instead, the president commenced blaming world powers for their insatiable desire for expanding the WMDs infrastructures.

"Some powers proudly announce their production of second and third generations of nuclear weapons. What do they need these weapons for? Is the development and stockpiling of these deadly weapons designed to promote peace and democracy? Or, are these weapons, in fact, instruments of coercion and threat against other peoples and governments? How long should the people of the world live with the nightmare of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons? What bounds the

powers producing and possessing these weapons? How can they be held accountable before the international community?" (Ahmadinejad's 2006 UNGA talk)

"Would it not be easier for global powers to ensure their longevity and win hearts and minds through the championing of real promotion of justice, compassion and peace, than through continuing the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons and the threat of their use?" (Ahmadinejad's 2006 UNGA talk)

Adopting a voice of accusation especially in the form of accusatory questions in the excerpts presented above, Ahmadinejad made a negative representation of the powers which lead the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions (WMDs) and allow Israel to access these weapons, especially nuclear weapons. The negative other-representation was achieved through ***actor description***: *"Some powers proudly announce their production of second and third generations of nuclear weapons,* ***irony***: *"Is the development and stockpiling of these deadly weapons designed to promote peace and democracy?",* ***actor description***: *"Are these weapons, in fact, instruments of coercion and threat against other peoples and governments?"* and ***comparison***: *"Would it not be easier for global powers ... threat of their use?"*

The two representative excerpts given below illustrate how Ahmadinejad had shifted the focus from Iran's nuclear dossier onto the exclusive access of some world powers to the nuclear technologies to make a negative representation of these powers.

"Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress through the threat of use of force and based on mere allegations of possibility of military diversion? We believe that all countries and nations are entitled to technological and scientific advancement in all fields, particularly the peaceful technology to produce nuclear fuel. Such access cannot be restricted to a few, depriving most nations and by establishing economic monopolies, use them as an instrument to expand their domination." (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk)

"Some powerful states practice a discriminatory approach against access of NPT members to material, equipment, and peaceful nuclear technology, and by doing so, intend to impose a nuclear apartheid. We are concerned that once certain powerful states completely control nuclear energy resources and technology, they will deny access to other states and thus deepen the divide between powerful countries and the rest of the international community. When that happens, we will be divided into light and dark countries." (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk)

The analysis of the excerpts presented above demonstrates that Ahmadinejad exerted his ideological stance, a negative representation of other, through denouncing some powers for their unfairly all-inclusive access to the nuclear technologies and the prevention of other countries from peaceful nuclear achievements. The ideology of *negative other-representation* was based using the discursive devices like **generalization**: "*Can nations be deprived of scientific and technological progress…*", **actor description**: "*such access cannot be restricted to a few, depriving most nations and by establishing economic monopolies, use them as an instrument to expand their domination*", **implication**: "*Some powerful states … to impose a nuclear apartheid.*", **actor description:** *'certain powerful states completely control nuclear energy resources and technology, they will deny access to …*",

The following two excerpts of Ahmadinejad's UNGA talks demonstrate that when it comes to Iran's part in Iran's controversial nuclear program, he did avoid talking about the doubts surrounding the program. Instead, he stressed Iran's commitment to peaceful nuclear technologies to represent Iran positively.

"Technically, the fuel cycle of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not different from that of other countries which have peaceful nuclear technology. Therefore, as a further confidence building measure and in order to provide the greatest degree of transparency, the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage in serious partnership with private and public sectors of other countries in the implementation of uranium enrichment program in Iran. This represents the most far reaching

step, outside all requirements of the NPT, being proposed by Iran as a further confidence building measure.” (Ahmadinejad's 2005 UNGA talk)

"You are all aware that Iran is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has always observed its rules and regulations and has had the most extensive cooperation with this Agency in all areas. All our nuclear activities have been completely peaceful and transparent." (Ahmadinejad's 2007 UNGA talk)

Regarding the representative excerpts, it can be observed that Ahmadinejad made a positive representation of Iran through its total obedience and commitments to the articles and requirements of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), and Iran's transparency in its nuclear activities. The analysis of the selected excerpts of his UNGA talks shows he utilized a variety of discursive devices at the micro-level to make a *positive self-representation* of Iran. These devices are **comparison**: *"Technically, the fuel cycle of the Islamic Republic of Iran is not different from that of other countries which have peaceful nuclear technology"*, **actor description:** *"Therefore ... the Islamic Republic of Iran is prepared to engage ... a further confidence building measure"*, **evidentiality**: *"You are all aware that Iran is a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency and has always observed its rules and regulations and has had the most extensive cooperation with this Agency in all areas"* and **lexicalization**: *"completely peaceful and transparent"*.

Here, an analysis of President Rouhani's talks concerning Iran's nuclear program is presented to explore if any divergence of ideological stance can be identified in two presidents' ideology on the topic. The goal is to find if Rouhani adopted the same accusatory strategy as the main tool not to dispel the doubts about Iran's nuclear program.

"Iran seeks to resolve problems, not to create them. There is no issue or dossier that cannot be resolved through reliance on hope and prudent moderation, mutual respect, and rejection of violence and extremism. Iran's nuclear dossier is a case in point. As clearly stated by the Leader

of the Islamic Revolution, acceptance of the inalienable right of Iran constitutes the best and the easiest way of resolving this issue." (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA address)

"Iran's nuclear program - and for that matter, that of all other countries – must pursue exclusively peaceful purposes. I declare here, openly and unambiguously, that, notwithstanding the positions of others, this has been, and will always be, the objective of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nuclear weapon and other weapons of mass destruction have no place in Iran's security and defense doctrine and contradict our fundamental religious and ethical convictions. Our national interests make it imperative that we remove any and all reasonable concerns about Iran's peaceful nuclear program." (Rouhani's 2013 UNGA address)

Contrary to his predecessor, President Rouhani did not develop an accusatory policy, blaming other parties to constitute serious impediments to Iran's nuclear program negotiation. Instead, he made much effort to represent Iran's nuclear activities positively. From his point of view, negotiation was the only solution to terminate Iran's nuclear program, which again was a positive ideological stance on the topic. By referring to Islamic creeds and Iran's supreme leader's fatwas, the president was making a positive representation of the defensive doctrine of his country. The set of *positive self-representation* at the macro-level of discourse was achieved through implanting the discursive devices such as **polarization**: *"Iran seeks to resolve problems, not to create them. There is no issue … extremism"*, **authority**: *"As clearly stated by ... resolving this issue"* and **actor description**: *"I declare here, openly and unambiguously, … ethical convictions."*.

Regarding Iran's nuclear program, a considerable divergence of ideology was found between the two presidents' perspectives. While Rouhani tended to deal with Iran's nuclear program in moderation, thereby inviting all parties to solve the issue through diplomatic negotiation and non-radical acts, Ahmadinejad adopted an invading and accusatory policy to blame the other parties for not reaching an international consensus on Iran's nuclear program. Utilizing the ideological

strategy of representing the other negatively, Ahmadinejad diverted world attention away from Iran's controversial nuclear program. The difference in the ideological stances of the presidents regarding Iran's nuclear dossier is understandable as the two presidents differ ideologically in foreign policy: known as 'the diplomat Sheikh' for his major contribution to nuclear negotiations before Ahmadinejad's presidency, Rouhani took power in Iran in 2013 and promised to build constructive relations with the international community (Mazlum & Afshin, 2016; "Profile: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani", 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Gowhary et al, 2015). Ahmadinejad, a right-wing politician, is known for his extreme and ineffective foreign policy which has caused Iran to suffer a range of economic sanctions and led to high tension between Iran and the world community (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Gowhary et al, 2015; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017).

Regarding the use of the 25 discursive devices (Van Dijk, 2005) at the micro-level of analysis the results of this study are comparable with the findings of other CDA studies (e.g. Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Matić, 2012; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016), which show that '*lexicalization*' is the most frequent of all the 25 devices. Regarding the importance of the discursive device '*lexicalization*' in formulating the ideology of positive self-representation and negative other-representation (Van Dijk, 2005; Matić, 2012; Alhumaidi, 2013; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010), and the high frequency of the dichotomy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation in the two presidents' UNGA speeches (See Table 7), a greater use of *lexicalization* as compared to other devices is not surprising. Ahmadinejad's higher use of *lexicalization* is due to his tendency to represent the

political actors within the dichotomy of positive/negative representation, especially negative other-representation (Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017).

As to the differences between the talks by the two presidents, the study shows that the two presidents, in general, made use of the discursive devices *'implication'*, *'presupposition'*, and *'actor description'* (See Table 4). This agrees with earlier studies which show that polarization, presupposition, disclaimers and implications are among the top discursive devices to represent in-group members positively and outgroup members negatively (Mazlum & Afshin, 2016; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Matić, 2012; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Aladist & Wahyudi, 2012). The difference emanates from the fact that each discourse is produced considering the context, audience and the intended ideological stances, etc. (Matić, 2012; Van Dijk, 2005). The next reason can be the large amount of data I used for my study. Many other researchers (e.g. Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Matić, 2012; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Aladist & Wahyudi, 2012) used one or two speeches of politicians for their CDA studies. Hence, the number of specific discursive devices can fluctuate due to the amount of data for the analysis.

Regarding the employment of the dichotomy of positive self-representation and negative other-representation (Van Dijk, 2005), the two presidents' philosophy was in line with the findings of most CDA studies, which show that politicians often rely on a positive representation of *Us-members*, thereby legitimizing their actions, and making a negative representation of Them-members, thereby delegitimizing the actions of the latter group (e.g. Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Sabry, n. d.; Matić, 2012; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016; Aladist & Wahyudi, 2012). However, what makes a difference between the results of this study and the findings of earlier studies is President Ahmadinejad's

speech style, that is, his extreme directness in expressing his ideological stances in comparison to President Rouhani who is more indirect (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Gowhary et al, 2015). This is especially true when Ahmadinejad is expressing his controversial ideas of the removal of Israel frorm the world map (Cooley, 1979; Hooglund, 1995; Menashri, 2006; Rakel, 2007, as cited in Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017). Another interesting difference between the results of this study and other CDA studies is that while most politicians tend not to indicate any positive attributes of their opponents (Van Dijk 2005; Matić, 2012; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Darweesh & Muzhir, 2016), the findings of this study show that President Rouhani made several positive representations of Iran's opponents, especially when he was indicating the fruitful results of the 5+1 nuclear talks.

Topics covered in a discourse influence the impression and the ideological stance politicians take (Matić, 2012; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017). Regarding the three similar topics covered in the four UNGA addresses of each of the two Iranian presidents, Rouhani and Ahmadinejad differ ideologically in their political viewpoints. Although their ideological stances on certain cases such as the world Zionist and the occupation of Palestine bear close resemblance, their style and strategies to express their political ideology diverge. While Ahmadinejad was more willing to make derogatory remarks about Iran's opponents in his four UNGA speeches, Rouhani tended to be more rational about controversies between Iran and the international communities, offer positive emotions to the audience, and show collaboration to reach common goals.

Although the two presidents sounded different ideologically, like most politicians, Presidents Rouhani and Ahmadinejad manipulate language to garner support for their underlying ideologies and fulfillment of their aims.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Human thought and the concrete understanding of words take shape not only through verbal interaction within texts, but also through the derivable experience of reality to which words belong (Malinowski, 1935, as cited in Van Leeuwen, 2008, p. 5). However, reality "can be manipulated by usage of linguistic and socio-semantic categories from within discourse to shape meaning for the advancement of political ends" (Post, 2009, p. 61). Studying political discourse gives us the opportunity to recognize how politicians can falsify or distort reality for their ideological purposes. Utilizing Van Dijk's 2005 CDA framework for analyzing political discourse, I analyzed four UNGA (2013-2016) addresses of current Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, and four UNGA (2005-2008) talks of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to find out how these two presidents employ the discursive strategies to exert their ideological stance. To answer the four research questions, I analyzed the speeches at two levels; the micro-level of analysis with a focus on the application of the 25 discursive devices of Van Dijk (2005) and macro-level of analysis with a concentration on the use of the dichotomy of ideology, positive self-representation and negative other-representation in the eight speeches.

Having analyzed the four UNGA talks of each of the two presidents in terms of the usage of Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices, I can say although Rouhani and Ahmadinejad did differ in the range and the number of the discursive devices, there was a close similarity in the utilization of most of the discursive devices; *19 out of 25* discursive devices in Van Dijk's approach were used by both Rouhani and Ahmadinejad. As to the difference between the other six devices, the findings revealed that Rouhani made more use of the discursive devices *'consensus', 'illustration',*

81

'hyperbole' and 'polarization' compared to Ahmadinejad who made more employment of 'lexicalization' and 'vagueness'.

Having analyzed the four UNGA talks of each of the two presidents to identify the predominant ideology according to Van Dijk's 2005 dichotomy of ideology, 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other-representation', at the macro-level of analysis, I can conclude that Rouhani and Ahmadinejad adopted two different ideological stances on most of the topics covered in their talks. Rouhani sounded ideologically more positive than Ahmadinejad. on the one hand, Rouhani was found to have the tendency to lower negative representation of other to keep face and mitigate the tension between Iran and the world community. On the other hand, he concentrated on making a positive representation of us and the opponents in certain cases such as Iran and 5+1 nuclear consensus. His ideological perspective in the four UNGA talks is justified as for during his presidential campaigns and from early days of his presidency, Rouhani aimed to establish a peace-seeking dialogue with the world through moderation, positivism, avoidance of radical views, pragmatism and logic (Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Mazlum & Afshin, 2016; "Profile: Iran's President Hassan Rouhani", 2017; Sardabi, Biria, & Azin, 2014; Gowhary et al, 2015).

According to the results at the macro-level of analysis, contrary to Rouhani, Ahmadinejad was inclined to the view that highlighting the negative representation of other would be an extreme contributory factor in inculcation of his ideological stance in the mind of the audience. For this purpose, he sacrificed positive self-representation, thereby minimizing its use in comparison to negative other-representation to a large extent in the four UNGA talks. This predominant ideology adopted by Ahmadinejad in the talks is in line with his general viewpoints in the world of politics specially his controversial and extreme ideologies such as elimination of Israel and denial of

Holocaust which caused Iran's relations with many of countries to turn sour (Sharififar & Rahimi, 2015; Gowhary et al, 2015; Alemi, Tajeddin & Kondlaji, 2017; Chaudhri & Fyke, 2008; Zohar, 2014; Lake, 2011/2012).

It is worth mentioning that Rouhani and Ahmadinejad were found ideologically similar regarding topics such as the Zionist world and the occupation of Palestine with Rouhani being more moderate in talking about the topic to a certain point.

The limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this study which must be identified. The first limitation is the subjectivity of the researcher. As mentioned earlier, the results of a CDA study are reliable only if no ideological and political intents of a researcher intervene with the analysis process. To tackle this problem, I made my utmost endeavor to take into consideration this criticism and get the analysis done with no political and ideological priority or even national prejudice. Secondly, the current study only aimed at studying four annual UNGA addresses of each president and left behind several other speeches of the two presidents which may not be as important as the UNGA talks but deserve as much attention. For this reason, no conclusion can be drawn on how closely the talks have mirrored the general policy of the two presidents' administrations on the controversial issues Iran was alleged to have a hand in.

Thirdly, I analyzed the speeches through a linguistic lens to find whether the two presidents were different in expressing their ideologies. No field work such as survey or interviews were conducted to see if the study results are in line with the opinion of the public. Fourthly, the central theme of this study is studying the role of language in the world of politics, with no investigation of the political, economic and social outcomes of the talks.

The next limitation of the study is that most talks in the world of politics especially within the international scope, are pre-planned written speeches with no clues to indicate whether the speeches are necessarily indicative of the lecturers' political thoughts and ideology. Most of these sorts of speeches are constructed with the intention of commanding the attention of the audience and making a positive representation of us and a negative representation of the opponents.

Last but not least, the researcher restricted himself to the use of Van Dijk's 25 discursive devices at the micro-level and the fundamental dichotomy of ideology of positive self-representation and negative other-representation at macro-level to conduct the CDA of the two presidents' eight UNGA addresses. With a focus on the semantic features of the talks, the researcher ignored the grammatical and syntactic features of the texture of the speeches; furthermore, with a focus on the 25 discursive devices, some other discursive devices which are certainly worthy for a CDA study may have been missed.

The implications for future research

Comparing the findings of future CDA studies on the same UNGA talks of the two presidents and these findings can be an accurate measurement of the objectivity of researcher in the current study. For this reason, future studies can implement the same framework or a different one to find out if the findings of this research are free from bias and ideological stance. In addition to studying the UNGA talks of the two presidents, the future CDA studies can include a wider domain of data sources such as interviews, presidential campaign speeches, etc. to determine to what extent the study results can be generalized about the two presidents' political perspectives on various topics discussed in my study.

Future research can also enhance the domain of analysis and add interviews, surveys or questionnaires to assess the opinion of the general public and to gauge whether the presidents were really different in their political and ideological viewpoints. The research can further explore the sociopolitical and socioeconomic upshot of the speeches.

Finally, as mentioned earlier, I employed a semantic framework to analyze the eight UNGA addresses of Rouhani and Ahmadinejad. Future studies can implement a hybrid methodology which includes grammatical and syntactic features of the speeches to see if the hybrid framework produces the same or different results for the eight UNGA talks of the two presidents.

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Appendix 1

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Appendix 2

http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/61/pdfs/iran-e.pdf

Appendix 3

http://www.un.org/webcast/ga/62/2007/pdfs/iran-eng.pdf

Appendix 4

http://www.un.org/ga/63/generaldebate/pdf/iran_en.pdf

Appendix 5

https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/68/IR_en.pdf

Appendix 6

https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/69/IR_en.pdf

Appendix 7

https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/70/70_Iran_en.pdf

Appendix 8

https://gadebate.un.org/sites/default/files/gastatements/71/71_IR_en.pdf