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MEDIA DISCOURSE AND INTERNATIONAL POLITICS: FOCUS ON THE
REPRESENTATION OF IRAN'S NUCLEAR PROGRAM IN THE MEDIA

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Chapter 1

Introduction:

1.1 Background: A glance on Iran's nuclear programme

Iran's nuclear programme was launched by the Shah of Iran with the strong support of the United States and the West in 1950s as a natural technological development. This continued until the 1979 Islamic Revolution which put an end to most of Iran's international nuclear cooperation. In order to understand the perception of Iran's nuclear programme, it is crucial to clarify the historical continuity of the pre- and post-revolutionary identities of Iran. Eleven years before the Islamic Revolution in 1968, Iran joined the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT); and a year after an American-supplied nuclear reactor started its activities in Tehran. Following that, the Shah of Iran manifested his plans to build some nuclear power plants.

After the 1979 Revolution and the establishment of the Islamic Republic government in Iran and the change in political perspectives, the nuclear programme of Iran changed into a controversial issue between Iran and the West. The Islamic

revolutionary ideology and its continuing tension with the West and especially the United States are the result of a swing in Iran's official world view from a pro-Western, secular monarchic system to an anti-Western, post-colonial system after 1979 (KhosraviNik, 2015). After the 1979 Revolution and just before the invasion of Iran by the Iraqi army, the Western nuclear cooperation with Iran was suspended. Predictably, during the war time most of the financial resources of the country were invested on war; this period, officially referred to as 'imposed war' or 'sacred defense', lasted eight years (1980–1988). Iranian nuclear activities and plans were put on hold until the early 1990s, when Iran moved to have its long-awaited Bushehr power plant functioning with the support of the Russians in 1988. (KhosraviNik, 2014 *Discourse & Society*, Vol. 26(1) 52–73).

By the mid-1990s Iran's nuclear programme became a real concern for the West and became more controversial in both political sides in 2002 after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) discovered two nuclear sites under construction in Iran. Iran defended that it was not violating the NPT because the announcement of nuclear sites could be published within six months since their construction. In 2003 IAEA started an investigation and in the same year EU-3 (United Kingdom, France and Germany) had negotiations with the reformist government of Khatami; these negotiations led to an agreement in late 2003 named as "Tehran declaration", in which Iran voluntarily suspended its enrichment activities and in return the West agreed to recognize Iran's peaceful nuclear rights. But later IAEA pointed out that Iran had violated the declaration as it possessed some nuclear materials and nuclear facilities.

In 2005 EU-3 suggested a package including benefits in the political, trade and nuclear fields, as well as long-term supplies of nuclear materials and assurances of non-aggression by the EU (but not the US) and in return asked Iran for the

permanent cessation of enrichment of Uranium. Iran rejected the offer while the new conservative president, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, called the package a humiliating, empty and insulting box. The Islamic Republic of Iran resumed the enrichment activities along with recently installed IAEA monitoring equipment. Then, because of Iran's noncompliance with its NPT obligations the United Nations Security Council asked Iran to suspend the enrichment programme.

By January 2006, news and commentary about Iran and its nuclear programme had become the hottest news topic in the Western world as Iran continued its enrichment, along with some intermittent rounds of negotiation. In 2006 the IAEA referred Iran to the United Nations for punishment actions and new sanctions; as a consequence, Iran suspended its voluntary cooperation with the IAEA beyond the original requirements of NPT. In June 2006, China, Russia, and the United States joined the three EU-3 countries, which had been negotiating with Iran since 2003, and they shaped P5+1 to offer another proposal for comprehensive negotiations with Iran.

After the 2013 presidential election and Rouhani's presidency, a new period of negotiations with P5+1 started. On 24 November, the foreign minister of Iran - Javad Zarif - and the P5+1 agreed to a six-month interim deal that involved the freezing of key parts of the Iranian nuclear programme in exchange for a decrease in sanctions (the UN Security Council had passed eight resolutions on Iran and imposed a complete embargo on Iran), to provide time to negotiate a permanent agreement.

Senior officials of the P5+1 and Iran met on 18–20 February 2014 in Vienna and agreed on a framework for future negotiations. The P5+1 and Iran planned to have monthly meetings to try and forge a final, comprehensive deal. The Joint

Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) , known commonly as “the Iran deal” or “Iran nuclear deal”, is an international agreement on the nuclear programme of Iran reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran, the P5+1 (the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, namely China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States plus Germany) and the European Union.

Under the agreement, Iran agreed to delete its stockpile of medium-enriched uranium, axe its stockpile of low-enriched uranium by 98%, and reduce by about two-thirds the number of its gas centrifuges for 13 years. For the next 15 years, Iran will only enrich uranium up to 3.67%. Iran also agreed not to build any new heavy-water facilities for the same period of time. Uranium-enrichment activities would be limited to a single facility using first-generation centrifuges for 10 years. Other facilities will be converted to avoid proliferation risks. To monitor and verify Iran’s compliance with the agreement, IAEA will have access to all Iranian nuclear facilities. The agreement provides that in return for verifiably abiding by its commitments, Iran will receive relief from U.S., European Union, and United Nations Security Council nuclear-related economic sanctions.

Regardless of its historical background, Iran’s nuclear programme has been shifted to a very critical issue for both the West and Iran at the turn of millennium and it has had its peak over the last few years; it was told that the two sides have been on the edge of war before The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action so the agreement signed in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 on Iran’s nuclear programme was a real turning point since the beginning of the controversy.

The lack of similarity in selection and presentation between topics and meta-topics in Iranian and Western news discourses caused a polarization of texts and

contexts, so it is worth trying to provide a contextualisation of how contradictory identities substantiated via this kind of discourse.

1.2 Research focus

Writing about the contemporary socio-political context of Iran can be particularly sensitive and complicated. Iran is “a country in passing”, with significant contradictory forces impacting on the nation (Khiabany, 2010). Ample research on Iran was carried out regarding its revolution. The roots of the revolution have been analyzed from various social, economic, cultural, political and religious perspectives. Researches on the socio-political characteristics and changes in Iran after the revolution, however, have not received as much attention in Western scholarship (KhosraviNik, 2015). One of the most controversial and covered newsworthy areas has been Iran’s nuclear programme since the Islamic revolution in 1979. However, it has received less critical exploration by discourse analysts than expected. Some critical discourse studies focusing on the representation of Iran’s nuclear activities have been carried out, most of them conducted by Iranians, not by the Western scholars. This may well be due to the fact that in many European countries the press gives only marginal attention to this issue. There is a widespread suspicion of Iran’s nuclear purposes, even among Iran’s most notable business and nuclear partners.

Most studies of how the Western media deal with the issue try to show that in many cases media discourse strives to inculcate xenophobia in their audiences. One of the studies carried out on the representation of social actors in US newspapers in the case of Iran’s nuclear programme was done by Izadi and Saghaye-Biria. Based on their analysis of three elite American newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The*

Washington Post, and *The Wall Street Journal*, the authors found that these “editorials selectively framed the issues surrounding the Iranian nuclear dispute by employing linguistic, stylistic, and argumentative maneuvers”. This study employs Said’s concept of orientalism and van Dijk’s concept of ideological square to excavate the three mentioned American newspapers’ editorial coverage of Iran’s nuclear programme. A critical discourse analysis of the above-mentioned newspapers from 1984 to 2004 identified six orientalist themes. The study found that *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* more predominately drew on Orientalist arguments than *The New York Times*. In the same vein, in another study done by Atai and Rezaie Adriani on the issue, the researchers found a “penetration of bias in the representation of a discursive vent, in this case the journalistic debate over Iran’s nuclear issues” (2009: 20).

In light of the above considerations, it could be said that these Iranian studies are biased in some ways. All in all, some studies came out in this area of discourse studies which attest to less-explored domain of news discourse on Iranian nuke debate. The present research aims at shedding new light on the Iran nuclear question especially since the issue has been one of the most newsworthy in the last decade, and after all it was ended by the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), known commonly as “the Iran deal” or “Iran nuclear deal”, which is an international agreement on the nuclear programme of Iran reached in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran, the P5+1.

A study conducted by Atai and Mozaheb in 2013 focused on the representation of Iran’s nuclear programme in British mass media from August 2007 (during the Bush administration) to August 2010 (the Obama administration). It is important to note that following the U.S. presidential election in November 2008, Barack Obama’s administration stressed a new voice of change about Iran’s nuclear

programme. Iran's nuclear programme was featured as one of the most important topics in newspapers and the media since the Islamic Revolution of Iran in 1979. Iranian nuclear officials tried to convince the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) as well as the U.S. and the allies including Britain, France and Germany, of peacefulness of the nuclear agenda. However, Iran faced economic sanctions, military boycotts, resolutions, etc. The process of uranium enrichment was an object of hot debates since it started and there are always a number of claims and counter claims in the media on this issue. Hence, probing the reality of these claims and counter claims in the media is critical for understanding the real terms of the issue.

Some CDA studies have addressed the representation of Iran's nuclear issues in the Western media (e.g., Atai & Rezaie, 2009; Behnam & Moshtaghi Zenous, 2008; Shams, 2006). Shams (2006) dealt with the Iranian nuclear programme, analyzing 160 news articles published by various British newspapers from 2003 to 2006. He concluded that Iran's nuclear programme is not represented as peaceful in any of the British newspapers and Iran's nuclear programme was granted a negative representation in all British editorials. Behnam and Moshtaghi Zenous (2008) conducted a comparative study in which the Iranian and the British press publishing stories on Iran's nuclear program were analyzed. Their study showed a negative picture of it dominating the British newspapers, while the Iranian newspapers mostly promoted a positive view of the programme. Atai and Rezaie (2009) studied the representation of Iranian nuclear issues in American newspapers and broadcast editorials, mainly after the post-resolution period, from July 2006 to July 2007. Atai and Mozaheb (2013) showed that a negative picture of the programme prevailed in American newspapers and explored its representation in British mass media from August 2007 (under the Bush administration) to August 2010 (under the Obama administration).

My work aims to look at the role of language and Media discourse in the coverage and representation of events related to Iran's Nuclear Programme from January to July 2015, during Barack Obama's administration, which brought about an important change in the attitude towards Iran's nuclear programme in both the Iranian and the Western Media. In fact, I study the news articles published in both Iranian and selected Western sources during the six months before the time of the agreement or Iran nuclear deal (which may be largely considered a win-win agreement for both sides after so many years of negotiations), signed in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1. Since all previous studies were conducted during the long term of negotiations with substantially different viewpoints of the two sides of the negotiations, it could be claimed that this research may offer distinctive results in terms of media discourse. The research focuses on the latest months that ended up with the definitive agreement so it could be somehow considered the discourse of negotiation as well as agreement.

Unlike the previous studies, I selected both English and American newspapers to widen the spectrum of the viewpoint of the West: *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times* (two American newspapers), *The Guardian* and *The Times* (two British newspapers) for analysis. The selection of newspapers to be considered was dictated by the intention to have a spectrum as representative as possible of the different positions. Because of the special orientation of American-Iranian relationships after the Islamic revolution, two American newspapers have been chosen as well as two British newspapers which could be comparable with them. This project is significantly different from previous researches on the same topic as it focuses on both the European and the American press at the same time. Most previous studies only analyzed the newspapers of one side of argument (e.g. Izadi and Saghaye-Biria

(2007) only investigated American newspapers or Shams (2006) only analyzed the British newspapers). But in my study the analysis focuses on newspapers from both sides of the nuclear deal. The aim of this study is to analyze language and discourse by means of some significant and related methodologies in order to shed light on the ideologies, if any, underlying the press coverage and dissemination of the issue in Iran and in the Western world respectively.

An attempt will be made to find answers to the following questions:

How were events, players and policies related to the Iranian nuclear programme question portrayed in the media, in Iran and the West respectively in the period under consideration?

What was the role of language and Media discourse in the dissemination of information about events related to Iran's nuclear programme in both Iranian and Western printed media?

How were the main actors and the most important themes presented in the Persian and Western newspaper articles on Iranian nuclear discourse?

To what extent did the views put forth by the two sides of the negotiations differ in the six months before the JCPOA (The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action)?

1.3 Iran's nuclear corpus

In order to examine the representation of Iran's nuclear issues in the Western media, 150 western news articles (approximately 19,195 words) published from 1st January 2015 to 15th July 2015 (the day after the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action or JCPA was created) have been collected from Lexis-Nexis which provides electronic accessibility to legal and journalistic documents (<http://academic.lexisnexis.eu.pros.lib.unimi.it/>).

The collected articles for the Western corpora came out from four news agencies including two British agencies (*The Guardian* and *The Times*) and two American news agencies (*The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*).

The news stories were examined at two levels, that of headlines and that of full text news stories. To pick up the most relevant news stories, the news articles have been filtered for at least one occurrence of Iran's name in the headlines and a minimum of five occurrences of the word "nuclear" in the headline and the lead paragraph of the news stories. The first rationale behind the selection process is providing a spectrum as representative as possible of the various positions.

The next reason for selecting the above-mentioned papers was their popularity in releasing news related to Iran's nuclear issues in Western society. In order to ensure objectivity in the choice of the articles to be included, it was determined that every month one article every five days (six articles per month) would be selected.

Among national Iranian newspapers, four have been selected (two reformist and two Principalist newspapers). The Iranian reformists (Persian: اصلاح طلبان) are a political party in Iran that back former President Mohammad Khatami's plans to

alter Iranian political system to gain more democracy and freedom in Iran. Iran's reform period is usually said to have lasted from 1997 to 2005 – the length of Khatami's two terms in presidency. The supporters of this fraction are usually youngsters who ask for more freedom in society and they are usually against the Principalist party (Persian: اصولگرایان), also interchangeably known as the Iranian Conservatives and formerly referred to as the Right or Right-wing in Iran; their fans are called fundamentalists. The Principalists party is one of two main political parties born after the Iranian revolution of 1979. Some Western sources refer to them as 'hardliners' because of their rough and strict ideology towards different issues and especially because they are more religiously oriented. They believe in supporting the Supreme Leader of Iran and advocating to protect the ideological principles of the Islamic revolution's early days.

160 Persian news articles published from 1st January 2015 to 15th July 2015 (the day after the JCPA was created) were gathered from an archive of Iranian press called www.magiran.com. The two Reformist newspapers are (*Shargh* +شرق) and the other two well-known Principalist newspapers are (*Keyhan* +کیهان) and (*Resalat* رسالت), which cover the orientations and stances of two important parties in Iran.

In the next chapter, I will illustrate the theoretical model I will rely on in the analysis and the contributions of an interdisciplinary approach combining Critical Discourse Analysis and Corpus Linguistics.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Background

2.1 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Critical discourse analysis (hereafter CDA) is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that views “language as social practice” (Fairclough and Wodak 1997). In CDA the relationship between language, power and ideology is very crucial and CDA tries to describe, interpret and explain this relationship by its diverse approaches (O’Halloran 2011). Fairclough sees the language as a part of society and not external to it. He believes that language is a social process, and a socially conditioned process (Fairclough 1989: 22). He explains that “discourse is use of language seen as a social practice, and discourse analysis is analysis of how texts works within sociocultural practice” (Fairclough 1995:7).

For van Dijk (1998a) the fundamental purpose of CDA is concerned with its definition, which sees the discipline as a tool for analyzing written and spoken texts with the aims to unveil “the discourses sources of power, dominance, inequality, ideology and bias as manifested in language” and to reveal the covert ideological threads hidden in discourse (van Dijk 1998; Kress & Hodge 1979). CDA explores how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within specific social and political and historical contexts.

CDA emerged in the 1970s and was created by a group of linguists at the University of East Anglia (Hodge & Kress, 1979). The 1990s saw the emergence of a form of discourse and text analysis that recognized the role of language in structuring power relations in society which then had become known as Critical Linguistics. CDA emerged from Critical Linguistics (CL) and the terms are often used interchangeably. By the 1990s the label CDA had come to be used more consistently to define this particular approach to linguistic analysis. In recent decades it seems that the term CDA is preferred and is often used also to refer to the former CL theory (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 5). Fairclough (1992) believes that scholars in CL tried to combine linguistic text analysis with a social theory of the functioning of language in political and ideological processes as described in Halliday's "systemic linguistics" (Fairclough 1992: 26).

There is a wide and diverse literature on CDA produced by remarkable academic scholars who adopt distinct and different approaches, but there are points in common among the differing theoretical approaches within CDA (Wodak and Meyer 2001: 4). At the beginning of the 1990s Norman Fairclough, Gunther Kress, Theo van Leeuwen, Ruth Wodak and Teun van Dijk were the academic researchers who specified the early intellectual lines of CDA, but much has been changed since then by some scholars such as Ron Scollon, Roger Fowler, Bob Hodge, Siegfried Jäger, Lilie Chouliaraki and Mary Talbot (Wodak and Meyer, 2001). Here below is a description of some fundamental models of CDA.

2.2 Models of CDA:

2.2.1 Fairclough's approach:

It is usually agreed that CDA is not a single method, but rather an approach that includes different perspectives in the use of language and the social context (Wodak and Meyer, 2001: 14). Fairclough and Wodak believe discourse is a form of social action which addresses social problems and does ideological work, while power relations are discursive (Fairclough and Wodak 1997: 271-80). Norman Fairclough is one of the founders of CDA. At first, in his book *Language and Power* (1989) he referred to his approach as critical language study (Fairclough 1989: 1). In his later works he refined the CDA approach, further specifying its peculiarities. Fairclough (1995) defines CDA as follow:

By critical discourse analysis I mean discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations a process; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (Fairclough 1995: 132-33).

Fairclough (1989) articulates CDA in three levels. He distinguishes his three-dimensional framework for CDA as text, discourse practice and sociocultural practice. (Figure 2.1)

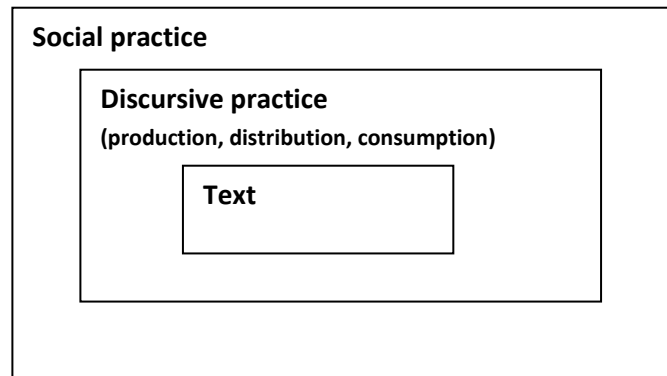


Fig. 2.1 Three-dimension conception of discourse (Fairclough 1992:73)

The first dimension focuses on discourse as text and examines the characteristics of linguistic units beyond the sentence. This same first dimension is text analysis, which includes both the micro- and macro-levels of text structures. Fairclough's analysis at the textual level involves the use of Halliday's systemic functional linguistics (SFL) and the three dimensions of ideational, interpersonal, and textual analysis (Halliday and Matthiessen 2004). The ideational meta-function expresses the experiential and the logical content of the text as it reports our experience of the outer world in the environment. Analysis at this level includes investigation of the transitivity system, which focuses on the different processes or verb types involved in the interaction, and on actors and the way they are encoded in the text. The interpersonal meta-function is realized in the meanings of social relations established among participants in the interaction. Research in this domain

includes the analysis of mood (i.e. whether a sentence is a statement, question, or declaration) and modality. The textual meta-function involves the thematic structure of the text.

The second of Fairclough's dimensions is the analysis of the discourse practices through which texts are produced and received. This dimension involves analysis of the process of text production, interpretation, distribution, and consumption. It is related to how people interpret and reproduce or transform texts.

The third dimension is the analysis of social practices and focuses in particular on the relations of discourse to power and ideology. The analysis of this dimension includes exploration of the ways in which discourses operate in various domains in society. The way Fairclough analyses discourse according to his three-part framework includes linguistic analysis in the text dimension, which is his first analytical focus, i.e. analyzing 'vocabulary', 'grammar', 'cohesion' and 'text structure' above the sentence level (Fairclough 1995: 75). He believes the analysis of discourse practice requires attention to text 'production', 'interpretation', 'distribution', and 'consumption' while the text is embedded within the discourse practice (Fairclough 1995; 9).

Fairclough points out that discourse practices, orders of discourse and intertextuality embody the relationship between text, society and culture. In his critical language studies approach in his book, *Language and Power* (1989), Fairclough follows the theoretical objective to manifest the role of language in creating, maintaining and changing the social relations of power. At the same time, the practical goal for him is to raise the awareness of the contribution of language to the exercise of power. He believes awareness is the first step towards emancipation which can fulfill the more practical goal which is to help increase consciousness of

how language contributes to the domination of some people by others, because consciousness is the first step towards emancipation (Fairclough 1989: 1).

Fairclough (2001) described three stages in critical discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. Description is concerned with the properties of the text. Interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction. And explanation is concerned with interaction and the social context (Fairclough 2001: 21-2). He adds that the analysis at each of these stages differs from the other stages. Analyzing text in the explanation stage Fairclough (2001) addresses 10 questions and sub-questions regarding (A) vocabulary, (B) grammar and (C) textual structures. He distinguishes three different values that the formal features of a text may have: experiential, relational and expressive. The text producer's experience of the natural and social world would be represented via the content through his/her personal belief and knowledge in experiential value. The relational value deals with the social relationships which are enacted through the text in the discourse. And social identities would be evaluated by producer of a text in the last value which is the expressive value. He believes the choice of vocabulary and grammar and textual structures is characterized by the above-mentioned values. (Fairclough 2001: 93)

2.2.2 van Dijk: Socio-Cognitive approach

van Dijk believes in the discourse-cognition-society triangle. He emphasizes the importance of cognition in the critical analysis of discourse, communication and interaction (van Dijk in Wodk and Meyer 2001: 97). In his triangular model of CDA van Dijk argues that the discipline should theoretically bridge the gap between the micro level of the social order (language use, discourse, verbal interaction and

communication) and the macro level (power, dominance and inequality between social groups)" (van Dijk, 2001: 354). His analysis usually starts with an examination of topics because of the important top-down influence of topics in the text comprehension and follows with the investigation of local meanings such as word meanings, propositional meanings, coherence between propositions and implicit meanings including presuppositions, implications and vagueness. The analysis of formal features deals with sentence and clause structures, including the active and passive voice, nominalisation, and rhetorical figures.

van Dijk (2001) points out that what is crucial for critical discourse analysis is the "explicit awareness of their role in society". He believes a number of requirements are needed to be fulfilled for an acceptable critical research on discourse. He summarizes a number of requirements, he believes the focus should be on social problems and political issues rather than paradigms and fashions. He claims the critical analysis of social problems should be multidisciplinary and should explain discourse structures instead of describing them in terms of properties of social interaction. Finally, he suggests CDA should revolve around relations of power and dominance in society (van Dijk 2001; 352-3).

van Dijk (1993) argues that the discourse dimension of power abuses and the injustices resulting from it is the primarily aim of CDA. He contends CDA should take an explicit sociopolitical stance, as discourse theory and discourse analysis are ultimately political.

van Dijk also advocates the integration of social and cognitive approaches to discourse and critical analysis. The critical socio-cognitive analysis of a text may first analyze its discursive and semiotic structures, rhetorical questions, vocabulary choices. The discourse analysis interpretation of the message needs various

cognitive structures, for example sociocultural knowledge. Discursive and cognitive structures are at work in the communicative interaction between the writer/producer and the readers of the text. At the very final stage, the societal component would be examined. van Dijk's (2015) socio-cognitive approach looks at the structures on all three levels (discourse, cognition and society) as a whole, and never considers them independently, not only in theory but also in the actual text analysis.

In the discourse-cognition-society triangle model of van Dijk, the structures pertaining to discourse and society have different natures, so they can only be related via the mental representation of language users as individuals and social members. Thus, the social level can influence text and talk and in turn discourse can affect the cognitive interface of mental models, knowledge, attitudes and ideologies (van Dijk 2015).

2.3 CDA and News discourse

Most scholars use the term media discourse and news discourse interchangeably (e.g. Cotter 2001; 417). They divide media content into news and advertisement (Cotter 2003, Bell 1991), to which some scholars also add entertainment (cf. Fairclough 1995a). van Dijk is one of the most referenced and frequently quoted in critical studies of media discourse.

van Dijk (1988) defines news discourse as discourse which deals with “news items or news reports, i.e. a text or discourse in the radio, on TV or in the newspaper, in which new information is given about recent events” (van Dijk 1998: 4). The early studies of media explored the surface structures, e.g. the biased or partisan use of words in the description of Us and Them (Our/Their actions and characteristics). van Dijk (2001; 359) points out that critical media studies traditionally reveal biased,

sexist or racist images in news discourse. My study will have recourse to the CDA approach to news discourse as defined by van Dijk to identify the presence of biased images if any.

In recent years many studies have been conducted on TV news, but newswriting also has a crucial role in mass communication (van Dijk 1988; 4). Media power all around the world has inspired a lot of critical studies in many disciplines, especially in discourse studies (van Dijk 2001; 359).

Some important CDA studies deal specifically with media discourse. van Dijk (1988a, 1988b, 1991, 1993) developed a framework for analyzing news discourse, especially newspaper articles. Noteworthy in this respect is his study of racism in the press (van Dijk 1991)

There is a collection of works by Roger Fowler and his associates (Fowlers et al. 1979) that also focuses on the media. van Dijk (1988b) applies his theory of news discourse (van Dijk 1988a) to critical studies of international news and racism in the press. (van Dijk 2001; 360). His main objective in linking media text to context is to unveil how social relationships are accomplished through routine practices, whereas Fairclough's main aim is to show how shifting language and discursive practices in the media reflect and at the same time produce social and cultural change. (Fairclough 1995: 29).

Among many studies which have focused on news media, there are quite a few which focuses on bias or slant in news discourse (van Dijk 1998: 9). Given that it is globally recognized that news discourse can be strongly affected by means of different mechanisms such as manipulating the readers' perception by using presuppositions to orient the views of readers on the facts which are reported,

language use by writers (journalists), such as choice of tenses and voice, plays a key role in orienting the readers towards a preferred interpretation of events; for this reason newspapers are eminently suitable as objects of investigation.

The popularity of news media in the world has made media discourse, and especially news discourse, an important area of study for scholarly research. According to Cotter (2003: 417), the three main methodologies of studying media discourse are: discourse analytic, sociolinguistic, and non-linguistic. Discourse analytic methodologies concentrate on discourse-level analysis like participants, structures, quotation, etc., and are derived from traditional methods like Conversation Analysis, Pragmatics, Labovian Narrative Analysis, Interactional Sociolinguistics, etc. Sociolinguistic research requires the study of style, genre, variation and register. Non-linguistic research utilizes work in political science, sociology, media and communication and cultural studies. She points out that media discourse researchers tend to blend all these three different approaches (Cotter 2001: 417).

Various journalism conventions, political stances and ideologies strongly affect the news carried by different media for the same event. News discourse has traditionally been considered as an important topic for linguistic analysis. van Dijk (1988), Fairclough (1995,1998), Fowler (1991) and Bell (1991) are just some of the linguists who have explored news and media discourse, highlighting its inherent bias or slant. In particular, analyses carried out within the framework of critical linguistics have focused on revealing the bias, or “the angle of representation”, in seemingly neutral language use (Kress 1990), showing how this bias can mystify the actual nature of events (Simpson 2011).

2.4 The contribution of Corpus Linguistics

According to Paul Baker (2006), “Corpus Linguistics utilizes bodies of electronically encoded text, via performing more quantitative methodology, for example by using frequency information about occurrences of particular linguistics phenomena” (Baker, 2006:1f). Corpus Linguistics has been employed in many linguistic studies, including the analysis of discourse (Baker 2006: 3). The most important benefit of the corpus-based approach to discourse analysis could be that of reducing research bias, although of course there is no hope to remove it completely. Using a corpus enables us to avoid our cognitive biases (Baker 2006: 12). Another problem is that of the selection of discourse samples for analysis. It is inevitable that the researcher should be tempted to choose texts that will support the preferred interpretation (Phillips 1989: 8). Furthermore, in many cases the samples selected for analysis are too small to be representative.

The Corpus Linguistics approach is a complementary approach to CDA, as it integrates the qualitative approach of CDA by means of large corpora, which mainly aim to be objective and unbiased (McEnery and Wilson A. 2001:103).

As CDA has often been criticized for the “inadequate linguistic basis for many cultural and ideological interpretations of texts” (Stubbs 1996: 128-129), by using Corpus Linguistics methods “CDA can go beyond an approach based on the in-depth analysis of small representative text samples and can consider the recurrence of traits over large corpora of related events, in order to check the results of the qualitative analysis or add any new elements that may emerge from quantitative investigation” (Garzone/Santulli 2004: 353-54).

According to Garzone and Santulli (2004) it can be stated that recourse to Corpus Linguistics instruments can help overcome some of the main objections to CDA, and it contributes to increase the validity of statements resulting from an analysis based upon larger amounts of texts. It would also guarantee the “objective criteria” in the selection of texts to construct the corpus. Thirdly, “CDA’s often criticized ideological bias” will be overcome by verifiable evidence in CL. And finally, CL can yield some indications which may not be identified simply by means of the qualitative analysis of a limited amount of text (Garzone/Santulli 2004: 366).

According to the above explanations, CDA as “a tool for deconstructing- the ideologies of the mass media” is used for the study but the added value of Corpus Linguistics in this project of media discourse is its ability to look at large amounts of media material, allowing both qualitative and quantitative statements.

Chapter 3

Discourse features in Iran's nuclear discourse

3.1 Characteristics of news articles

As I mentioned previously in the first chapter, the news stories of four different English-language newspapers published in Western countries were collected (*The Guardian, The Times, The New York Times and the Washington Post*) through Lexis-Nexis. And Persian news articles published from 1st January 2015 to 15th July 2015 (the day after the JCPA was signed) were gathered from an archive of the Iranian press, www.magiran.com. The Persian news articles were taken from four newspapers (*Shargh* +شرق, *Etemad* +اعتماد, *Keyhan* +کيهان, *Resalat* +رسالت). The dimension of the corpora is shown in the tables below:

	number of words		number of words
<i>New York Times</i>	42.345	<i>Shargh</i>	54.388
<i>Washington Post</i>	43.428	<i>Etemad</i>	66.684
<i>Times</i>	25.287	<i>Keyhan</i>	65.175
<i>Guardian</i>	39.817	<i>Resalat</i>	29.015
Total	150.877	Total	215.262

Table 3.1: Dimension of the corpora

An examination of the statistics of the individual newspapers also confirms the internal quality of the two sub-corpora, the Persian and the English one.

	Std. type/token ratio TTR	Mean word length (in characters)
<i>New York Times</i>	44,73	4,89
<i>Washington Post</i>	46,43	4,98
<i>Times</i>	49,08	4,90
<i>Guardian</i>	45,97	4,99

Table 3.2: Statistics related to the English corpus

	Std. type/token ratio TTR	Mean word length (in characters)
<i>Shargh</i>	40,43	3,85
<i>Etemad</i>	39,65	3,79
<i>Keyhan</i>	39,74	3,86
<i>Resalat</i>	43,85	3,87

Table 3.3: Statistics related to the Persian corpus

As can be seen from the data shown in the above Tables 3.2 and 3.3, the differences between the individual values within the two groups are not particularly distinguishable as regards both the type-token ratio, indicating a similar linguistic density, and the mean word length. If the two corpora are compared, it can be observed that the values referred to in the Persian newspapers are generally lower than those of the Western newspapers for both items.

3.2 Frequency list and Key words

3.2.1 List of Frequency

The first access to the words is shown by the frequency lists, a function that allows obtaining a list of all the words a corpus includes, organized by order of frequency or alphabetically. In this way hundreds of words are processed electronically in a very short time, returning a sort of index of the words contained in the corpus in reverse order of frequency with the indication of both the number of occurrences and the frequency in relative terms (in percentage) after removing the function words. Here below is the frequency list for the English corpus:

Rank	Word	Freq.	%	Texts	%
1	Iran	1996	1.27	150	100.00
2	nuclear	1511	0.96	150	100.00
3	deal	690	0.44	129	86.00
4	sanctions	602	0.38	125	83.33
5	us	589	0.38	134	89.33
6	United	529	0.34	144	96.00
7	Obama	526	0.34	107	71.33
8	agreement	514	0.33	129	86.00
9	States	511	0.33	145	96.67
10	we	469	0.30	108	72.00
11	Iran's	465	0.30	135	90.00
12	Iranian	460	0.29	124	82.67
13	they	456	0.29	122	81.33
14	talks	454	0.29	115	76.67
15	foreign	416	0.26	117	78.00

Table 3.4: English frequency list

The frequency list in Table 3.4 shows only lexical words, because almost the very first words on the list were function words, which were removed as non-significant for the purposes of this study. The same applies to the Persian corpus:

Rank	Persian	English	Freq.	%	Texts	%
1	ایران	Iran	3008	1.40	156	97.50
2	هسته	nuclear	1892	0.88	156	97.50
3	توافق	aggrement	1405	0.65	132	82.50
4	آمریکا	America	997	0.46	141	66.26
5	ما	we	915	0.43	126	78.75
6	تحریم	sanctions	887	0.41	120	75.00
7	مذاکرات	negotioation	858	0.40	95	59.38
8	خود	onself	834	0.39	141	88.13
9	تا	until	646	0.30	130	81.25
10	باید	must	623	0.29	138	86.25
11	خارجہ	foreign	565	0.26	101	63.13
12	آژانس	agency	465	0.22	46	28.75
13	بین	between	465	0.22	121	75.63
14	دولت	government	465	0.22	112	70.00
15	طرف	side	464	0.22	104	65.00

Table 3.5: Persian frequency list

From the list obtained, all the words (except the grammatical ones, i.e. the function words) that appear most frequently have been taken into consideration, as they can be considered representative of the themes of a certain importance addressed within the pre-deal discourse about the Iranian nuclear issue. At first, I did not focus on the differences between the individual newspapers, which will be discussed later; I have only considered the order of frequency with which the various themes occur, in order to obtain a general picture of the situation. On this basis there

emerged the following main areas of meaning, subdivided in turn according to the various topics: the role of the other countries in this discourse (America, European countries), the importance of the negotiation and agreement/deal, and the position of the sanctions.

Predictably, the first two meaningful lexical items in both corpora are the same words: *Iran* and *nuclear*. The third most frequent lexical word in the Western corpus is *deal* where the Western newspapers focus on the probable deal in the near future, but the third most frequent word in the Persian corpus is *agreement*. This feature suggests that both sides intend to achieve this objective and state it clearly in the Press coverage of the negotiations.

For the Iranian Press, the role the United States plays in the relationship of Iran and the West is obviously so important that in the Persian corpus the fourth most frequent word is *America*. On the other hand, it is obvious that the recourse to *sanctions* as a leverage for the West is very important, as we can see the word *sanctions* in the fourth place, before other words such as *agreement*.

3.2.2 Actors

Taking as reference the entire corpus of English newspapers and the entire Persian corpus, a cultural difference initially emerges that makes this analysis more significant for the Iranian area than for the Western one. Considering the main actors, we note that in the English-language newspapers the writers use names and surnames, such as Obama or Kamenei, while in the Persian newspapers they refer to them with their titles, e.g. *Supreme Leader* and *leader of Revolution*, which are two popular titles for *Khamenei* as the leader of Iran. However, each language presents

a substantial difference in the way in which the two heads of state are named, as shown in the tables below:

Obama	526	Zarif	143
President	330	Khamenei	131
Kerry	258	Rouhani	116
Foreign Minister	198	Supreme Leader	85

Table 3.6: The frequency of actors in English corpus

Foreign Minister	434	President	195
Zarif	299	Khamenei	141
Supreme Leader	221	Rouhani	127
Obama	221	Kerry	114

Table 3.7: The frequency of actors in Persian corpus

Moreover, in the Persian corpus the usage of the same titles is remarkably more frequent than in the English corpus, e.g. the frequency of *foreign Minister* in the Persian corpus is 434, while the same title appears 198 times in the English corpus. The name of the leaders of two sides are appeared differently in the English and Persian corpora. In the English newspapers the name of *Obama* has been appeared 526 times which is the most referred name while *Obama's* name repeated less than half -221 times- in the Persian corpus. Iran's Supreme leader's name, *Khamenei*, has been appeared in two corpora almost equally. (131 occurrences in

English corpus against 141 occurrences in Persian corpus). It could be inferred that Western journalists focused on Western side (US) rather than Iran (OTHERS).

3.2.3 Themes: War and other themes

When we look at some important themes in this kind of political conflicts, we expect the different types of threads from both sides (e.g. we may expect some words such as *war* and *attack* would be in the very top of the world lists). But surprisingly the word *war* in both frequency lists is one of the words we can find at the very end with frequency of 86 and 72 times in the English and the Persian corpora respectively (as shown below).

	English corpus	Persian corpus
war	86	72
weapon	83	5
bomb	87	35

Table 3.8: The frequency of some other themes in the English corpus and the Persian corpus

3.3 Key Words

Comparing the newspapers, the function that allows us to identify the words that are unusually frequent in a text or a set of texts is the keyword list. To begin this comparison, the salient lexical choices in the Persian newspapers were found. In the Tables below they are listed in Persian, and an English translation is also given:

<i>Shargh</i>			<i>Etemad</i>		
keyword	English	Freq.	keyword	English	Freq
مذاکره	negotiation	22	امریکا	America	304
وي	him	19	مساله	problem	120
که	that	15	امریکایی	Americans	58
خصوص	special	12	شرق	East	3
اعتماد	trust	12	آژانس	Agency	56
رهبر	Leader	8			
آمریکا	America	8			

Table 3.9: Persian keyword list

<i>Keyhan</i>			<i>Resalat</i>		
keyword	English	Freq.	keyword	English	Freq
و	and	2243	ایران	Iran	294
ملت	nation	54	آمریکا	America	162
فکت	fact	49	تحریمها	sanctions	82
کشور	county	24	آمریکایی	Americans	64
آیت الله	Ayatallah	13	اعضای	members	47
خامنه ای	Khamenei	10	روز	day	24
حضرت	majesty	9	آژانس	Agency	23
کرد	did	8	برنامه	programme	19
مذاکره	negotiation	7			

Table 3.10: Persian keyword list

As in the frequency list, in the keyword list we can observe some repeated words such as *negotiation* in *Shragh* newspaper, *America* in *Etemad* newspaper, *nation* in *Keyhan* and *Iran* in *Resalat* as the lead words in the list. *Rights* and *US* are the top keywords in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

<i>New York Times</i>		<i>Washington Post</i>		<i>Times</i>		<i>Guardian</i>	
keyword	Freq.	keyword	Freq.	keyword	Freq.	keyword	Freq.
rights	5	us	79	edition	103	transcontinental	35
us	81	zone	47	London	61	division	35
post	5	interactive	39	newspapers	52	Times	12
		times	11	Time	37	Mr.	5
		Mr.	17	limited	39		
				region	50		
				yesterday	25		

Table 3.11: English keyword list

3.4 Concordances

It is clear that frequency lists and keywords are very important aspects providing a comprehensive view of the corpus, but the function of concordances allows us to examine in detail the context in which the individual words appear to evaluate them from an ideological point of view.

A concordance table is simply a table of all the occurrences of a word, phrase or other linguistic feature [...] in a corpus, occurring with a few words of context either side (McEnery & Baker 2015: 2-3).

By using a concordance list, we can analyze the words and phrases in detail in their original context. Examining the same words in two parallel corpora will reveal a lot about the position of lexicon and the way the words have been used by the authors, and it could provide insights into the ideological and political stances of the writers. Moreover, we may observe the more frequent collocations, which are the words that usually go together in the context.

To shape the concordance list, I referred to the top three words (except for proper nouns) in frequency lists in English and Persian corpora which are the same words: *nuclear*, *agreement* and *sanctions*.

3.4.1 Concordances of *nuclear*

As regards the word *nuclear*, a regularity emerged in the Persian articles that can be considered significant in terms of displaying of opinions and stances. Observing the concordances extracted from the *nuclear* node in the Persian corpus, an element of excessive description of the word *nuclear* through different adjectives can be observed. These adjectives, revealing the authors' stances towards the issue, include *peaceful*, *specialized*, *comprehensive*, *new*, *Intrusive*, *good*, *bilateral*, *transparent*, *normal*, *major*, *scientific*, *breathtaking*, *different*, *final*, *suspending*, *unconventional*, *bad*, *possible*, *recent*, *senior*, *advanced*, *current*, *international*, *compact*, *complex*, *former*, *hot*, *compressed*. Although some of these above-mentioned adjectives can also be found in the English corpus, they are not as

C:\Users\Faramarz\Desktop\Corpora unicode\English corpus\The Guardian\concordance nuclear\April 2015+February 2015+January 2015+July 2015+June 2015_files_nuclear.cnc

File Edit View Compute Settings Windows Help

N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word	#	Sent.	Para.	Para.	Head	Head	Sect.	Sect.	File	Date
315	Tehran's view of where the other side stands in	the nuclear		talks. In his State of the Union address on	262	4	18	0	261		0	261	21 Jan. 15	2017/Sep/21 00:00
316	will only jeopardise the chance to peacefully end	the nuclear		stalemate with Tehran through diplomacy.	290	5	28	0	289		0	289	21 Jan. 15	2017/Sep/21 00:00
317	. "We are seeking the Iranian people's rights in	the nuclear		negotiations and our assessment show that	217	3	11	0	216		0	216	21 Jan. 15	2017/Sep/21 00:00
318	for Israel, and decried the international rules in	the nuclear		Non-Proliferation Treaty. Israel's history is	197	2	44	0	196		0	196	24 Feb. 15b	2016/May/24 00:00
319	the US administration as determined to end	the nuclear		standoff with Iran. "We are seeking the	204	2	35	0	203		0	203	21 Jan. 15	2017/Sep/21 00:00
320	that Iran is ready to take a number of steps on	the nuclear		issue.. at the first stage, provided we get	992	37	29	0	991		0	991	01 July 15	2016/May/24 00:00
321	eventually admitted the malware had damaged	the nuclear		programme. Israel, which stands firmly	462	12	17	0	461		0	461	11 June 15	2016/May/24 00:00
322	as I said, if we are going further into detail on	the nuclear		issue, we need to also do the same on the	767	29	15	0	766		0	766	01 July 15	2016/May/24 00:00
323	is that in Lausanne we went into a lot of detail on	the nuclear		side. We also discussed sanctions, but	726	26	28	0	725		0	725	01 July 15	2016/May/24 00:00
324	, but compared to what we achieved on	the nuclear		issue, we didn't get as far. So, this is now of	740	27	14	0	739		0	739	01 July 15	2016/May/24 00:00
325	group that was supposed to be negotiating over	the nuclear		programme. Moscow issued a rare public	1,531	58	30	0	1...0		0	1...0	22 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
326	shouldn't read too much into it," he said. While	the nuclear		accord is not final, the US and Iran are	1,088	35	4	0	1...7		0	1...7	29 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
327	Fordow's existence. Iran had declared it to	the nuclear		watchdog organisation, the International	1,477	57	8	0	1...6		0	1...6	22 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
328	tone to emphasise the incompleteness of	the nuclear		agreement with Iran in debate about when	89	0	88	0	88		0	88	06 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
329	were a test of diplomatic stamina which too	the nuclear		negotiators to way-stations around Europe,	362	11	12	0	361		0	361	22 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
330	examining the bill, which aims "to protect	the nuclear		rights and achievements of Iranian people".	186	2	24	0	185		0	185	03 Feb. 15	2016/May/24 00:00
331	, he said, it will only jeopardise the chance to end	the nuclear		stalemate with Tehran through diplomacy.	379	9	36	0	378		0	378	03 Feb. 15	2016/May/24 00:00
332	on it." According to the broad parameters of	the nuclear		deal provisionally agreed in Lausanne on 2	485	14	9	0	484		0	484	30 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
333	US ally Saudi Arabia, which is uncomfortable with	the nuclear		deal. Echoing Obama, Zarif also said it would	1,173	36	56	0	1...2		0	1...2	29 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
334	not represent a direct threat to the outcome of	the nuclear		negotiations between Iran and a six-nation	395	9	30	0	394		0	394	30 April 15	2016/May/24 00:00
335	an agreement. "Iran has come to conclude that	the nuclear		option is not necessary for them to have	1,172	47	9	0	1...1		0	1...1	24 June 15c	2016/May/24 00:00
336	in Congress have attempted to thwart	the nuclear		deal with Iran and will continue doing so.	366	10	10	0	365		0	365	26 March 15	2016/May/24 00:00
337	and long-running talks with world powers over	the nuclear		programme are now concentrating on how	266	6	12	0	265		0	265	24 June 15c	2016/May/24 00:00
338	, known as the Additional Protocol, operated by	the nuclear		watchdog, the International Atomic Energy	912	31	32	0	911		0	911	29 June 15	2016/May/24 00:00
339	without congressional approval, adding that	the nuclear		agreement, if signed, would also be a	379	10	24	0	378		0	378	10 March 15	2016/May/24 00:00
340	also potentially undermine the efforts to solve	the nuclear		crisis by reinforcing the idea that it's	299	7	29	0	298		0	298	25 June 15The_	2016/May/24 00:00
341	that the president stands to lose support for	the nuclear		negotiations the longer the sanctions	470	9	22	0	469		0	469	24 June 15b	2016/May/24 00:00
342	American officials accusing Israel of spying on	the nuclear		talks and using the intelligence gathered to	560	16	26	0	559		0	559	11 June 15	2016/May/24 00:00
343	would provide Congress with the ability to review	the nuclear		accord and give lawmakers 30 days to pass	348	7	19	0	347		0	347	01 May 15	2016/May/24 00:00
344	PM GMT Did the Supreme Leader just torpedo	the nuclear		talks?; An adamant speech by Ayatollah Ali	72	0	71	0	71		0	71	24 June 15	2016/May/24 00:00
345	lift the sanctions immediately. At least 53% say	the nuclear		deal would lower the unemployment rate and	323	5	7	0	322		0	322	24 June 15b	2016/May/24 00:00

concordance collocates plot patterns clusters timeline filenames source text notes

362 entries Row 25 0% English T S ts nuclear infrastructure and scientists, these comments hit close to home for Tehran. Secretary Ke...

Table 3.13: *nuclear* concordance (*the nuclear* collocation) in *The Guardian*

Instead of using modifiers, the Western writers tend to simply mention the word *nuclear* with the definite article *the* (Table 3.13) or even with the indefinite article *a*. Table 3.13 above shows this fact and also indicates that the usage of *nuclear* in English corpus is more excessive than in the Persian corpus. So, it could be concluded that Western journalists do not believe the *nuclear programme* is *peaceful* as Iranian journalists do.

3.4.2 Concordances of *agreement*

The word *agreement*, for the ideological importance that accompanies it on the nuclear issue of Iran, plays a crucial role in the corpus. Accordingly, the most interesting data, from which polarization also emerges among the various

newspapers, seem to concern the references to the word *agreement* and the way it appears in the English corpus. As with the concordance of the word *nuclear*, for the word *agreement* the descriptive adjectives in the Persian corpus are more than the adjectives in the English corpus. Moreover, the existence of some similar adjectives in both corpora has a significant meaning which can be interpreted as the fact that Iranian and Western news writers share stances on the *agreement*.

For example, looking at the concordance lists of the two corpora we can notice that all the eight newspapers (all the English and Persian newspapers) use adjectives such as *good*, *bad*, *comprehensive*, *final* (the adjective *political* is used in all the newspapers except *The Times* and *The New York Times*) for describing the word *agreement* as well.

N	Concordance	Set Tag	Word	# Sent	# Para	# Head	# Sect	# Pos	File	Date
1	که این حرف را آمریکا می‌تواند بد توافق کند. البته این را هم ما گفتیم که توافق نکردن بهتر از است		توافق	1,751	61	13	01...0	01...0	94.01.22.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
2	رای ایران است نه مخالفت» با اصل است که سناریوی این رژیم و لابی طرفدار آن در آمریکا، اما		توافق	1,387	42	20	01...6	01...6	94.04.16.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
3	توافق بد صورت نگرفته موافق هستند اگرچه ممکن از مقامات رژیم صهیونیستی با این تحلیل که با ایران ممکن		توافق	3,605	122	40	03...4	03...4	94.01.15.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
4	توافق بد ترجیح می‌دهند، رشته‌های آمریکا را بنه کردای بودن توافق و تاکید بر اینکه رسیدن به توافق را بر کرد		توافق	1,610	43	22	01...9	01...9	93.11.26.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
5	توافق بد ترجیح می‌دهم اما اگر بتوانم از طریق یکارانه کنیم، من قبلاً هم گفته ام که عدم توافق را به یک یک		توافق	1,054	30	13	01...3	01...3	93.11.13.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00

Table 3.14: *agreement* concordance (*bad agreement* collocation) in Keyhan

The adjective *bad* appeared in one of the Persian newspapers (Keyhan) five times alongside the word *agreement* as shown in above table (Table 3.14). Not only Iranian journalists think it is a *bad agreement*, but also Western writers used the same collocation in their news stories. For example, below is the table of *bad agreement* in *The Times*.

N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word #	Sent.	Para.	Para.	Head	Head	Sect.	Sect.	File	Date
				#	Pos.	#	Pos.	#	Pos.	#	Pos.		
1	developing nuclear weapons. However, the hint of an agreement, which could allow Iran to keep			104	2	7	0	103		0	103	04 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
2	trade freely again and end its isolation. I believe an agreement is possible if the Iranians have the will. If			263	12	5	0	262		0	262	07 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
3	, however, the regime is desperate to reach an agreement to stabilise its floundering economy.			353	13	13	0	352		0	352	27 April 15 2016/May/25 00:	
4	still remain". He said he could not guarantee that an agreement would be reached even by today. The			454	17	10	0	453		0	453	14 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
5	have narrowed. So it's not impossible to have an agreement in principle next month, with a final deal			318	15	9	0	317		0	317	07 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
6	from each side to walk out. Some spoke of an agreement being finalised last night, with a grand			159	3	6	0	158		0	158	13 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
7	Tehran was far from certain. Key elements of an agreement appeared to fall into place, however, with			144	3	6	0	143		0	143	06 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
8	a deal at any price. We will not put our name to an agreement that would allow Iran to develop a			348	17	10	0	347		0	347	07 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
9	they had hoped would be the announcement of an agreement. "The foreign ministers are gathered to			310	9	47	0	309		0	309	14 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
10	whether he would go ahead in the absence of an agreement. For President Obama, meanwhile,			625	22	32	0	624		0	624	14 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
11	the country's reach. Before today's deadline for an agreement, Mohammad Javad Zarif, Iran's foreign			114	2	7	0	113		0	113	30 June 15 2016/May/25 00:	
12	can be struck to lift sanctions on the country. If an agreement is reached, Tehran will have up to nine			195	5	4	0	194		0	194	03 June 15 2016/May/25 00:	
13	, meanwhile, perhaps the most critical deadline for an agreement has already been passed, that which			637	23	13	0	636		0	636	14 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
14	. We believe that the United States must bolster any agreement by doing more in the region to check			631	21	11	0	630		0	630	26 June 15 2016/May/25 00:	
15	night, accusing Washington of trying to hide a bad agreement. "We know that Tehran knows the			185	4	19	0	184		0	184	20 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
16	proposed agreement," he said. "I think this is a bad agreement that is dangerous for the state of Israel."			218	7	8	0	217		0	217	20 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
17	. Iran and the West hope to thrash out a binding agreement by a week today, placing strict curbs on			143	3	12	0	142		0	142	23 June 15 2016/May/25 00:	
18	required the United States to step in and broker agreement. The US government, in its rush for an			521	21	16	0	520		0	520	30 April 15 2016/May/25 00:	
19	, with the technicalities of a comprehensive agreement in place by June 30. Two previous			363	11	21	0	362		0	362	30 March 15 2016/May/25 00:	
20	creating the space to negotiate a comprehensive agreement. Since then, both sides have been			150	3	24	0	149		0	149	07 Feb. 15 2016/May/25 00:	
21	reading what appeared to be the text of a draft agreement, smiling broadly. Laurent Fabius, the			447	13	26	0	446		0	446	13 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
22	issues" still needed to be resolved before a final agreement replacing the interim deal now in place			217	5	16	0	216		0	216	13 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
23	place, expressed optimism last night that a final agreement was at hand - capping nearly a decade			118	2	18	0	117		0	117	13 July 15 2016/May/25 00:	
24	on opposite sides in recent conflicts. There is no firm agreement yet on how or when international			515	17	6	0	514		0	514	14 April 15 2016/May/25 00:	

Table 3.15: *agreement* concordance (*bad agreement* collocation) in The Times

3.4.3 Concordances of *sanctions*

It is interesting to note the lack of existence of some special modifiers for the next word I have analyzed for the concordances section, *sanctions*. The concordance list for the word *sanctions* shows that we have some adjectives only in the Persian corpus such as *cruel sanctions*, *cudgel of sanctions*, *wrong sanctions*, *yoke of sanctions*, *anti-Iranian sanctions*, *bypassing sanctions* which can easily be considered as a significant ideological attitude of Iranian writers towards the *sanctions* issue. One of these adjectives, *cruel*, which is used to qualify the noun *sanctions* in the Iranian corpus, is shown in the below table 3.16.

N	Concordance	Set Tag	Word #	Sent. #	Para. #	Head #	Sect. #	File	Date
1	تحریم های ظالمانه		2,025	66	15	02...4	02...4	23.11.93.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
2	تحریم های ظالمانه		1,202	30	27	01...1	01...1	19.03.94.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
3	تحریم های ظالمانه		790	17	20	0 789	0 789	19.12.93.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
4	تحریم های ظالمانه		713	23	17	0 712	0 712	27.01.94.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
5	تحریم های ظالمانه		4,714	123	17	04...3	04...3	18.11.03.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
6	تحریم های ظالمانه		636	16	57	0 635	0 635	24.10.93.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00
7	تحریم های ظالمانه		1,040	27	35	01...9	01...9	29.04.94.txt	2017/Jul/04 00:00

Table 3.16: *sanctions* concordance (*cruel sanctions* collocation) in Etemad

Moreover, in the English corpus the *economic sanctions* collocation has repeatedly been used in all English-language newspapers; this seems to reflect the belief of Western journalists that economic *sanctions* function, or their viewing *economic sanctions* as a leverage to achieve the final agreement. Below is a part of the concordance for *sanctions* which shows that the word *economic* is used more than ten times in *The New York Times*.

N	Concordance	Set Tag	Word #	Sent. #	Para. #	Head #	Sect. #	File	Date
8	policy is empowering Iran. Whether diplomacy and sanctions would ever have worked against the		759	41	5	0 758	0 758	26 Mar. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
9	, the vice chancellor, citing "regulatory reasons and sanctions reasons." The university changed her		1,124	48	10	01...3	01...3	23 Feb. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
10	and Yemen. Gulf nations worry further that any sanctions relief that results from an agreement will		930	38	8	0 929	0 929	12 May 15 2016/May/19 00:	
11	-- and freeze the president's ability to lift any sanctions while that review is continuing. The		356	11	23	0 355	0 355	27 Apr. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
12	achieving a comprehensive nuclear deal that brings sanctions relief and provides Iran the option of		977	45	26	0 976	0 976	26 Jan. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
13	, though, the president added: "There are certain sanctions that we have that would remain in place		3,988	153	27	03...7	03...7	06 Apr. 15 2018/Oct/10 00:	
14	to seek congressional approval to roll back certain sanctions against Iran in the event of a nuclear deal,		782	45	22	0 781	0 781	06 May 15 2016/May/19 00:	
15	Mr. Obama agreed to completely lift congressional sanctions , which only Congress could do		841	46	8	0 840	0 840	11 Mar. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
16	to the Western and United Nations Security Council sanctions that have hurt the country's economy for		378	9	28	0 377	0 377	10 June 15 2016/May/19 00:	
17	While Iran has never regarded the Security Council sanctions as valid, the report suggested to Iran's		692	34	10	0 691	0 691	01 May 15 U.S. 2016/May/19 00:	
18	. The sanction-and-dismantle devotees are deluded. Sanctions have hurt Iran, but the country is largely		461	22	2	0 460	0 460	13 Feb. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
19	Obama has the authority to temporarily ease sanctions on Iran, and he has done that to a limited		462	19	10	0 461	0 461	11 Jan. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
20	and the prospect that it could grow as economic sanctions are lifted as part of a nuclear deal. Prince		252	8	41	0 251	0 251	06 Mar. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
21	inspection provisions, the pace at which economic sanctions against Iran would be removed and how		385	15	15	0 384	0 384	28 June Kerry, 2016/May/19 00:	
22	have been in years. Plummeting oil prices economic sanctions and the Obama administration's willingness		772	47	6	0 771	0 771	02 Mar. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
23	stressed the importance of quickly easing economic sanctions . URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/		807	46	13	0 806	0 806	28 June Kerry, 2016/May/19 00:	
24	the United States was prepared to ease economic sanctions in Iran without fully resolving evidence		113	5	29	0 112	0 112	17 June 15 U.S. 2016/May/19 00:	
25	limiting its nuclear program and expected economic sanctions to be quickly lifted if an accord was		119	2	34	0 118	0 118	09 Feb. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
26	Saturday that he expected relief from economic sanctions within a "couple of months" after an		116	1	34	0 115	0 115	14 June 15 2016/May/19 00:	
27	to carry out their obligations before economic sanctions were lifted. The outstanding issues of the		433	20	54	0 432	0 432	06 July 15 U.S. 2016/May/19 00:	
28	peaceful in exchange for a termination of economic sanctions in the country. Mr. Kildee's constituents		376	14	49	0 375	0 375	01 May 15 U.S. 2016/May/19 00:	
29	resolved yet is: When exactly do the economic sanctions in Iran get lifted? When the		3,817	145	18	03...6	03...6	06 Apr. 15 2018/Oct/10 00:	
30	regime in exchange for a lifting of economic sanctions . Negotiators have until the end of June to		319	9	56	0 318	0 318	27 Apr. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
31	find internal solutions for dealing with economic sanctions and that the United States could not be		104	1	25	0 103	0 103	8 Jan. 15 2016/May/19 00:	
32	concern for Arab states is that lifting economic sanctions against Tehran -- the quid pro quo for the		400	15	12	0 399	0 399	06 Mar. 15 2016/May/19 00:	

Table 3.17: *sanctions* concordance (*economic sanctions* collocation) in *The New York Times*

A glance at concordance lists suggests that Iranian newspapers have used positive adjectives to qualify the word *nuclear* more frequently than English-language newspapers. In particular, the use of *peaceful*, *good*, *normal* and *comprehensive* stands out in the Persian corpus.

Unlike the adjectives used for the word *nuclear*, Iranians have used both *negative* and *positive* adjectives such as *bad*, *good*, *achieving*, *approved*, *final*, *political*. But at the same time the Iranian writers used more negative adjectives such as *cruel* and *wrong* for the word *sanctions* which show their negative attitude towards the term in question. In the light of the above-mentioned points on concordance lists, it may be suggested that the Iranian journalists believe on the positive aspects of *nuclear activities* of their own country, they have a neutral stance towards the *agreement* and finally they believe the imposed *sanctions* are *wrong* and *cruel*.

Chapter 4

Headlines

4.1. Analysis and Discussion

In his article “Titles and texts” Harald Weinrich (2007: 49) states that “if a text is understood in its narrowest sense, written or printed, the title can be considered as the main supporting element” (my translation). As headlines typically function as framing devices, setting the stage for the story to come, they play a key role in orienting the reader towards a preferred reading of the events; for this reason, they are eminently suitable as objects of investigation. The choice of headlines for close examination is motivated by the fact that headlines serve to define the topic of a text, and what appears in the headline is usually considered the most relevant and important information in the text (Wang 2009).

The headlines chosen for the analysis in this project concern aspects of Iran’s nuclear programme as in the previous chapters. This topic tends to be ideologically controversial since Iran’s viewpoints on it may differ from those of its Western counterparts. The headlines of the same newspapers from the two sides were investigated for the study of this chapter and I have tried to select the headlines of the same dates and topics. The focus here is on the headlines of news stories published in both languages reporting the events on Iran’s nuclear programme.

4.2 Lexical choices

As a part of the ideational meta-function that was discussed in the methodology chapter, the type of vocabulary chosen by a speaker or writer influences the readers' and listeners' perception of a text. The kinds of words that a writer uses can activate particular presuppositions, reveal the speaker's attitudes and so forth. This emerges clearly in the following examples:

Democrats rally around Obama amid furore over Netanyahu Congress visit; Boehner's invitation sparked controversy despite White House growing more confident it can withstand efforts to frustrate its policy of nuclear talks with Iran (*The Guardian*, Friday, January 23, 2015).

زیرمیزی های هسته ای (*Shargh*, Sunday, January 4, 2015) = (English equivalent: under the table nuclear payment)

In the Persian headline, the journalist uses a conceptual metaphor which analogises the nuclear agreement to receiving a bribe by choosing the word “nuclear under table payments” and in *The Guardian* headline of the same month the journalist uses some words such as “rally” “furore” “controversy” which show that both the journalists attack the agreement which has been reached. In both versions of the headlines we can observe dissatisfaction as a bold element, which is mentioned as a metaphor in the Persian newspaper, while in the English newspaper it is expressed as a description of this dissatisfaction by democrats' rally. In a nutshell, both headlines introduce the agreement not as an achievement but as a failure

In the English headline the verb “spark” (*spark the controversy*) highlights this discontent of democrats, while in the Persian headline recourse is made to the metaphor which accused the Iranian government of paying levy behind the curtain to the other sides of agreement. The fact that the White House withstands efforts to frustrate its policy of nuclear talks with Iran shows the dual stances in the society of United States as in Iran’s. The Persian headline is a metaphor that invites the audience to ask themselves about the very famous Iranian allusion by using the expression “paying under the table” This expression means “paying a bribe”. It may encourage some members of the audience to think about the reason for using this proverb. The audience may ask themselves unconsciously why the Iranian government should pay a bribe. It may connote that the agreement is an awful deal for Iran, and it stimulates the audience against the deal. On the contrary, the English headline is a long statement presenting the information as a truthful account.

The next headline to be examined here concerns sanctions, as an important issue in the international relationships with Iran and a significant aspect in national matters for Iran. It emerged at the turn of the nuclear issues after Iran’s revolution when Iran started its nuclear activities and the West used sanctions as an instrument to stop Iran from utilizing the nuclear facilities

Iran flexible on sanctions timing in order to seal nuclear deal, Zarif suggests; Foreign minister says nuclear deal is 'once-in-a-decade' opportunity but concedes. Iran would be willing to accept ‘a few weeks’ before sanction relief. (*The Guardian*, Wednesday April 29, 2015)

1+5 لغو يکجاي تحریم ها را پذیرفته است (*Resalat*, Monday, April 27, 2015)

(English equivalent: 5+1 has approved the sanction removal entirely)

Here we have two different stances towards the issue of the removal of sanctions and the cessation of the nuclear activities of Iran. In the English headline the author announces Iran is ready to seal nuclear facilities according to the foreign minister of Iran, and Iran will do this a while before the sanction's relief ends. The Persian headline – instead of referring to the timing – says that the sanctions will be removed entirely. The Persian word *بکجا* has the meaning: “entirely” and “in one time”. It can be observed that the use of this word suggests the Iranian journalist concentrates on the removal of sanctions and the necessary procedures related to it, but on the other hand the English writer focuses on the sealing of Iranian nuclear facilities rather than the lift of the embargoes. These two newspaper stories were published in the same period and are about the same agreement which was concluded some days before the news stories were published, but the headlines show two completely different stances regarding this same agreement. This could indeed be an example of lexical choices that convey specific views of the identity of interlocutors, with obvious ideological implications.

The next headline to be analyzed is about a post-agreement conflict which refers to the requests of two sides to ensure the agreements will be accomplished by the other side.

Iran: France Insists on Inspections of All Nuclear Sites, Including Military's (The New York Times, May 28, 2015 Thursday)

اجازه زياده خواهي نمي دهيم (*Keyhan*, Saturday, May 23, 2015)

(English equivalent: We do not admit more requests)

The English headline asserts that France insists on inspecting all Iranian nuclear facilities including Military facilities. France is the subject and the author reports this allegation via the Iran's claim. The Persian headline does not mention France or any other negotiation sides and removes them to the background thanks to the indirect structure of the headline, where the action is performed by "We", the Iranians. The Persian headline does not even mention which requests it is speaking about. It only indirectly mentions the authors' stance regardless of the suspense it may arise in the mind of the reader both about the audience of the headline and about the ambiguity of requests which are extraordinary in the eyes of the author as well as about the main theme of the headline which has been removed from the headline while it is clear for the Iranian reader that the author is speaking about the nuclear negotiations.

The verb *let* in the negative form meta-discursively evaluates the requests as an important disclosure, but the Persian headline does not refer to possible requests of any kind surrounding the nuclear issues. The English headline mentions France's request to inspect all nuclear sites, whereas the Persian headline does not, which suggests the background information is different for the two envisaged audiences.

The next headlines to be examined here concern the extension of the negotiations between Iran and the West and on the nuclear issue, which has been among the most controversial topics before reaching the agreement on the international stage.

Iran nuclear talks deadline extended to end of June. (*English version of BBC*, 24 November 2014) Iran nuclear talks: optimism as deadline is extended. (English version of BBC, 24 November 2014)

تمدید دوباره مذاکرات هسته ای چه کسانی را راضی کرد؟ (*Persian version of BBC*, 25 November 2014)

(English equivalent: Who is satisfied with another extension of nuclear talks?)

There were two different articles, and therefore two headlines, about the extension of Iran nuclear talks published on 24 November 2014 on the English website of BBC News, while there was only one equivalent Persian news article on the same topic, which was published on the following day. The first English headline merely announces the extension to the end of June of the Iran nuclear talks. The second English headline interprets the extension in an “optimistic” way by using the word “optimism,” alluding to a successful conclusion of the talks. On the contrary, the Persian version uses a WH-question to state the same content, thus inviting reflection on the political meaning of the extension, rather than announcing it. It exploits the verb “satisfy” to imply this extension would be of interest for one party in the talks and would not necessarily benefit both sides in the negotiation.

The answer to this WH-question could be rather complicated, as it seems the author has asked it in order to introduce an element of ambiguity. When reading the Persian headline, the Iranian audience may think that the West and in particular the P5+1 countries would benefit from the extension. But experts on Middle East political issues may provide another answer to the same question, i.e. that the Iranian reformist government is looking for an agreement on the nuclear issue in order to remove the international embargoes against the country.

4.3 Agency Structures

In English and Persian linguistic structures, the choices about the representation of actions, actors and events are mostly conveyed by giving preference to the active or the passive voice for the verb forms used. Critical linguistics often relies on this distinction in its analyses. It aims to reveal the bias, or better the “angle of representation”, in seemingly “transparent” language use (Kress 1990) and to show how these biases can mystify the actual nature of the events in reporting them. One key focus of critical linguistics is how agency is represented. Agency structures have been successfully analyzed in previous studies on different genres for similar purposes using systemic functional categories, that is, categories that track the relationship between grammar and meaning in a clause. For instance, where the passive voice is used, there is an absence of explicit connection between the Actor (or the doer in the clause) and the Process. As a result, agency for the action must be inferred from the circumstances, i.e. information which supplements the Goal (or the “done to” in the clause) and the Process (O'Halloran 2011).

Here, I follow the same systemic functional categories for the analysis of the two headlines below.

4.6.1 President Obama sent secret letter to leader of Iran (*English version of BBC news*, 7 Nov.2014)

ایران می گوید به نامه های اوباما پاسخ داده شده (*Persian version of BBC news*, 13 Nov.2014) (English equivalent: The letters of Obama have been replied to, Iran Says)

Table 4.1 shows the two diverse structures of active and passive sentences in the two languages:

		Actor
Voice of the English headline	Active	President Obama
Voice of the Persian headline	Passive	-----

Table 4.1: Voice in the English and the Persian headlines

Table 4.2 shows the passive format for the Persian headline:

-----	have been replied to	The letters of Obama
Actor	Process Passive	Goal

Table 4.2: Passive sentence of the Persian headline

Although the difference between the two headlines above may also depend on the fact that the Persian article was published a few days later than the English one, it may still be worth highlighting the use of the passive voice in the Persian headline whereby the action of “replying” is not attributed to an actor. As a result, agency for the action of replying has to be inferred from the circumstance, i.e. information which supplements ‘the letters of Obama’, the Goal (or the “done to” in the clause), which is the entity towards which the activity expressed by the predicate is directed, and “have been replied to”, the Process. From this functional analysis a tendency has emerged to shift the focus away from the agents who replied, in order to direct it onto the letters (O'Halloran 2011).

In the English headline above, the actor is simply the President of the USA who has written a secret letter to the leader of Iran and this secrecy is missing in the Persian headline. Bearing in mind the attitude of a large section of society and of conservative officials in Iran, who consider a political relationship with the United States a taboo, in the Persian headline published six days after the English headline about the same incident we find a passive sentence, which indicates that the letters (not only one letter as stated in the English headline) have been replied to, but the identity of whoever wrote the replies – whether Iran’s leaders or officials in the government – is not given. It can be concluded that the Persian version downplays the sensitivity for Persian readers of having a relationship with the US government via a passive process. The information structure in the Persian headline presents the letters as given information, differently from the English version, in which they are presented as new. There is also a difference in the number of letters sent. This suggests that, when the headline considered here was published, the news of the letters being sent had already been given to the Persian audience.

4.4. Actor/Process Representation

Another linguistic concept that critical linguists give considerable importance to is the representation of a Process by a noun form rather than by a verb, i.e. nominalisation. Syntactically, verbs tend to convey concrete notions, actions or processes rather than less effective abstract concepts.

Tense moment for U.S., Israel (*The Washington Post*, Sunday, March 1, 2015)

در امریکا رقابتي بر سر مساله هسته ای ایران وجود دارد (*Etemad*, Tuesday, March 10, 2015) (English equivalent: There is a competition in the US on nuclear issue of Iran)

The Persian version uses the existential form “there is”, as the author announces his or her prediction as an apparent fact, while in the English headline it is represented by the pre-modified noun phrase “Tense moment.” Moreover, the English headline presents the US and Israel as the sides which are entangled in a tense situation without mentioning the reference subject and the reason for this tense moment, which is the nuclear conflict with Iran mentioned in the news story itself.

Yemen bombing targeting Iranian ambassador kills two (*English version of BBC news*, 3 Dec. 2014)

القاعده مسئولیت انفجار در برابر اقامتگاه سفیر ایران در یمن را بر عهده گرفت

(*Persian version of BBC news*, 3 Dec.2014) (English equivalent: Al-Qaeda accepted responsibility for blast in front of the residence of Iran’s ambassador)

The two headlines were published on the same day, 3 December 2014. In the English headline it is simply stated that the bombing that occurred in Yemen and caused two victims was aimed at the Iranian ambassador, and this may turn the mind of the reader from the perpetrator of the action to the circumstances. Instead, the Persian headline’s focus is on the responsibility for the bombing, but the bombing action itself is normalised and represented only as a “blast.” Furthermore, the name of the perpetrator is specified and its acceptance of the responsibility for the action is emphasized. The two headlines differ in lexical choices as well as in the – deliberate or unintentional – omission of information, such as the explicit mention of Al-Qaeda in the Persian headline and its omission in the English headline.

This chapter has examined how language frames the representation of news events in two different languages (English and Persian) to shed a different light on the same events being communicated in the news and shows that in the English and the Persian press implicit invisible assumptions and ideologies have been added.

The headline study shows that news related to same topic or event can be framed differently in language in different lingua-cultural contexts (English and Persian), thereby conveying different attitudes by means of tacitly encoded assumptions and ideologies. This comparative analysis reconfirms that language choices carry crucial ideological implications.

Chapter 5

News stories

5.1. Analysis and Discussion

In this chapter news articles will be analyzed in the same aspects which were examined in the chapter on headlines including lexical choices and agency structures. For the analysis, news articles from Western newspapers and Persian ones were selected focusing on texts published in the same periods (July 2015) and dealing with the same topics.

5.2 Lexical choices

Because of the importance lexical choices have in CDA studies, and since lexical analysis is one of the most useful tools to understand whether a news story is ideologically biased or not, this linguistic tool was chosen as the first parameter of analysis for this chapter.

An important question is what kind of relationship there is between lexical choices and the ideological context. For Halliday (1978), as well as for critical discourse analysts such as Fairclough (2001), it is the sociocultural context or

location of power which to a large extent determines lexicogrammatical choices (2008:3). Fairclough (1989) underlines the ideological significance of lexical choices and stresses that “a text’s choice of wordings depends on, and helps to create, social relationships between participants” (p. 116).

Lexical choices may affect the discursive power of the media. To analyze the lexical choices characterizing the corpus I have picked up some salient words at the top of the frequency list obtained from the corpus, three of them with a positive connotation (*deal, agreement and negotiation*) and their counterparts in Persian (معامله، توافق و مذاکره,) and two words with a negative connotation (*sanction and war*) and their counterparts in Persian (تحریم و جنگ,) and I examined their use in context in some articles in each language published at the final stage of the negotiation in July 2015.

	Date of publication	<i>deal</i>	<i>sanctions</i>	<i>agreement</i>	<i>negotiation</i>	<i>war</i>
<i>Guardian</i>	13.07.2015	14	7	7	6	1
<i>New York Times</i>	01.07.2015	8	3	5	2	0
<i>Times</i>	06.07.2015	9	5	3	1	1
<i>Washington Post</i>	01.07.2015	5	2	4	3	0

Table 5.1 Significant lexicons in English news stories

	Date of publication	Deal معامله	Sanction تحریم	agreement توافق	negotiation مذاکره	War جنگ
<i>Etemad</i>	02.07.2015	0	5	48	35	0
<i>Resalat</i>	02.07.2015	0	0	13	12	0
<i>Shargh</i>	02.07.2015	0	17	38	26	0
<i>Keyhan</i>	02.07.2015	0	6	20	43	0

Table 5.2 Significant Lexicons in Persian news stories

As shown in the tables (5.1 And 5.2) above, the word *deal* has been repeated 35 times in the Western newspapers, while it does not appear in the Persian newspapers in the last stage of the negotiations. Even the main headline of the *Guardian*'s and *New York Time*'s articles includes the word *deal* as can be seen in the following examples:

Iran nuclear talks: comprehensive *deal* inches closer; (*The Guardian*, July 13, 2015)

Amid Final Talks on Nuclear Deal, Obama Calls Strict Verification Crucial
(*The New York Times*, July 01, 2015)

In my opinion Western authors focused on the actual probability of reaching a *deal*, so they used the word more frequently than their Persian counterparts. On the other hand, it is obvious that the Persian news writers utilized the word *negotiation* (116 occurrences) very frequently, where Western writers used the word *negotiation* 12 times. We may conclude that Western authors are more interested in the *deal* (to be reached) while, on the contrary, the Persian writers emphasize the *negotiation* process (to be continued) rather than chance to reach a *deal* soon.

The analysis of the word *sanction/s* shows this issue is a matter of discussion on both sides. In the western articles the word *sanction/s* appears 17 times. And in the news articles of the Persian newspapers the frequency is higher than in the Western news (17 against 28 times). Interestingly in only one of the Iranian news articles, the *Shargh* newspaper has been repeated the word *sanction/s* as many times as in all the articles of the Western side together.

The analysis of the lemma *sanction/s* in the news articles indicates that there is a big difference in way Westerners and Iranians consider *sanction/s*. The superiority of usage frequency of the word *sanction/s* over the word *deal* may indicate that westerners consider imposed *sanction/s* as a tool to force the country (Iran) to make a *deal* on the nuclear programme. For example, in the News story of *Times* published on 6th July 2017 the journalist states “*Diplomats reported headway in the dispute over how quickly sanctions against Iran would be lifted if a deal were struck.*” So, the author believes the lifting of the *sanction/s* totally depends on the deal to be reached.

The preceding tables (5.1 & 5.2) also show a substantial difference in how Iranian and English or American journalists used the word *agreement* (119): in the final stage of the *negotiation* in July 2015 they used it much more frequently than western writers (19). As for the last word to be analyzed, which is *war* we may say the stances of two sides meaningfully could be seen quantitatively as equal. (Iranian news articles 0 frequency and English counterpart 2). So, it could be interpreted that both sides do not really focus on *war* as a conclusion or as a choice for nuclear struggle.

To sum up, lexical choices can echo the reporter’s opinions about the participants in news event and also their respective affiliation (Western or Iranian)

which in turn can reveal something about their ideological stance. As a reaction, by employing certain words, a positive or a negative attitude could be elicited in the readers as well as their approval (Herman and Chomsky, 1988).

This function of vocabulary items is so crucial that McGregor (1993) compellingly reminds us about its significance by stating that: "We should never again speak, read/hear others' words without being unconscious of the underlying meaning of words. Our words are politicized, even if we are not aware of it, because they carry the power that reflects the interests of those who speak "(p.2).

A closer look at the above tables for lexical choices can demonstrate that the frequency of the two words *agreement* and *negotiation* (lexical items that carry a positive load in depicting Iran's nuclear program) by Iranian newspapers is considerably larger than its English counterparts. This huge difference in frequency of use may represent the tendency of Iranian authors to advocate that *negotiation* should be used to solve the problem peacefully by *negotiations* and *agreement*. On the other hand, the lexical item *deal* indicates that Western newspapers tend to foresee the idea of the end of the *negotiation/s* should be reached as soon as possible and lead to a final *arrangement*.

5.3 Agency Structures / Passivization

As mentioned previously, one key focus of critical linguistics is the attention on how the agency of an action is represented. Discourse analysis is a qualitative approach to the analysis of text (Brown and Yule 1983). Regarding news discourse, the approach concentrated on the linguistic mechanisms that contribute to the process of ideological production of news, i.e., to the role of news in maintaining

unequal relations of power and preserving the legitimization of the social order (Trew 1979a). Media news is a salient source of political and ideological conflict. Newspapers, like any other media, “have a major ideological role” (Trew 1979b:156). Passivization, nominalization, classification of processes and participants, modality, are some of the many linguistic devices utilized in discourse to reproduce ideologies (Trew 1979a:97). Here, I focus on passivization and nominalization since the linguistic processes they involve contribute directly to the issues of agency.

There are several reasons why a writer might choose a passive voice, rather than active, in the construction of a sentence; “one is that it allows for the omission of the agent, though this may itself be variously motivated by the fact that the agent is self-evident, irrelevant or unknown and obscure.” (Fairclough 1992:182) Another, political or ideological, reason for the use of a passive voice may be to distract agency, and hence blur causality and responsibility. The backgrounding of agency, causality and responsibility is crucial in the reconstruction of different events. In some sentences the agents that are responsible for an action are simply not there. In this case discourse analysis suggests that the writer of news stories avoids attributing responsibility to a specific agent. Some examples will now be discussed to illustrate the issue:

1. The deadline of midnight was not absolute, given that it represented the expiry of an existing, temporary agreement that **had already been extended** three times since this round of negotiations in the process, which has been going on for a decade, began on June 27. (*The Times*, July 14, 2015) ≠1

2. Now should a deal be done, the Republican-controlled legislature will have 60 days to review it, giving greater scope for opponents to scupper it.

The smiles and public statements of optimism on Sunday gave way to grim faces and silence yesterday on the subject of whether the talks **should be extended**. (The Times, July 14, 2015) #2

In above example #1 the author avoids mentioning the agent of the extension of the *negotiations* because he/she denounce the fact that the *negotiations* have been extended for three times previously. We can conclude he/she avoid mentioning the agent because she/he does not want to make explicit refer to past repeated extensions.

In example #2 the same issue of extension of talks is discussed but in this example the agent is self-evident and obviously the author does not feel the need to mention it.

Passivization is syntactic transformation, causes the grammatical object or the so-called logical patient of an utterance "to be placed in the subject position in the sentence, the left-hand noun-phrase slot which is conventionally regarded as the theme or the topic of the sentence" (Fowler et al., 1979, p.209), which can obscure the agency through hiding its responsibility. The presence of this syntactic transformation throughout some other examples in News stories is illustrated in Table 5.3.

1	<i>The Guardian</i> 13.07.2015	European diplomats at the talks said on Sunday that the major obstacles to a deal had been cleared away and that they expected an announcement on Monday afternoon, but their American counterparts were more cautious. They distributed logistics information to US journalists covering the negotiations about the choreography of events after an announcement, but a senior state department official insisted "major issues" remain.
2	<i>The New York Times</i> 06.07.2015	Secretary of State John Kerry warned Iran on Sunday that hard choices were still needed to seal a landmark nuclear accord, and that the United States was prepared to walk away if a sound agreement could not be reached .
3	<i>The Times</i> 06.07.2015	Diplomats reported headway in the dispute over how quickly sanctions against Iran would be lifted if a deal were struck. Meanwhile, an intervention by Yukiya Amano, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog, forced a breakthrough in the investigation into Iran's past atomic weapons work.
4	<i>The Washington Post</i> 06.07.2015	Kelsey Davenport, director for nonproliferation policy at the Arms Control Association, said she was still "optimistic" that a deal could be finalized by Tuesday. Although Kerry was clearly seeking to "manage expectations," she said, "only a small number of manageable issues on sanctions and inspections remain, on which there has been progress."

Table 5.3 Passivization in News stories

In examples #1 to #4 above the authors used passivization. In the first example the writer has focused on “the major obstacles to a *deal*” which *had been cleared* rather than the agency of the action, thus hiding the agent’s responsibility. In the second example, which is a warning by Secretary of State John Kerry to Iran, the passive voice moderates the tone of the statement. In example #3 the lifting of imposed *sanctions* is represented in the passive voice: “sanctions against Iran *would be lifted*” and this has the effect of concealing the agent of the action. In example #4

the possibility of finalizing a deal is discussed in the passive voice (*could be finalized*) for the evident purpose of avoiding attributing responsibility to a specific agent.

5.4 Nominalization

Another linguistic concept that critical linguists give considerable importance to is the representation of a Process by a noun form rather than by a verb, i.e. nominalization. Syntactically, verbs tend to convey material notions, actions or processes rather than less effective abstract concepts. The transformation of verbs into nouns is a major linguistic tool used to conceal agency in discourse (Fairclough 1992:179-182). Nominalization is commonly used in newspaper headlines to remove the perpetrators of despicable acts (Fowler et al. 1979:14). Like passivization, nominalization is not an inconsequential linguistic choice; it reveals underlying ideological practices aimed at maintaining unequal power relations (Billig 2008:786). These linguistic practices may be conscious or unconscious. They may well be based on taken-for-granted assumptions, the result of professional training and “years of craft apprenticeship” (Tuchman 1978:105), aimed at creating an aura of objectivity and at spinning a “web of facticity” (Tuchman 1972, 1978:82-103). But, conscious or unconscious, these linguistic practices end up having ideological consequences.

In the table below, examples are shown of sentences in the news stories where nouns have been used instead of verbs. On the other hand, in Iranian news headlines published in the same period the authors do not utilize any nominalization.

1	<i>The Guardian</i> 13.07.2015	The Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, told reporters that his team "believes that no agreement could be perfect, and conditions are already in place for us to reach a good agreement," as he joined his counterparts for the endgame of the negotiations. "We believe that there cannot, and should not, be further delay."
2	<i>The New York Times</i> 01.07.2015	As a high-level team of Iranian officials flew here on Tuesday for what appears to be an intensive final week of negotiations for a comprehensive nuclear accord, President Obama issued a warning that he was prepared to walk away from any agreement with a verification regime that consisted of "a few inspectors wandering around every once in a while."
3	<i>The Times</i> 06.07.2015	Diplomats reported headway in the dispute over how quickly sanctions against Iran would be lifted if a deal were struck. Meanwhile, an intervention by Yukiya Amano, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog, forced a breakthrough in the investigation into Iran's past atomic weapons work.
4	<i>The Washington Post</i> 01.07.2015	U.S. and European officials have said no more than a few days are contemplated before they will know whether they have a deal that would place restrictions on Iran's nuclear program in exchange for lifting some sanctions.

Table 5.4 Nominalization in News stories

In the above examples, the roles of agents of actions are downplayed by backgrounding their agency from them and using the nominals *endgame* (#1), *warning* (#2), *dispute* (#3), *lifting* (#4), which not only avoid the modality and any indication of time clues, but also do their best in effacing any allusion to the agent of the action as the real cause behind the existing actions. Using nominal structures inserts a sense of confusion and obscurity: for instance, in example (#1) the word *endgame* is used, which refers to the final stage of a game such as chess or bridge, when few pieces or cards remain.

5.5 The Analysis of a Full-text News Story (*The Times*; 6th July 2015)

In order to examine the image of Iran's nuclear issues more in detail, a full-text news story (*The Times*; 6th July 2015) will now be analyzed with regard to lexical choices, passivization / voice. In the following subsection the details of these strategies are illustrated. As already illustrated above, the choice of words plays a significant effect in setting an association of ideas for the readers of texts through representing facts in a way which legitimizes a certain view and perception of the facts represented and of participants. If one has a close look at the news story on which this section focuses, it is immediately evident that, although the author says the two sides are on the brink of a historic *deal*, a sense of *doubt* emerges throughout the full-text story about Iran's nuclear activities and about the *deal*. This sense of *doubt* is boosted even by the use of certain lexical items such as *obstacles*, *far from certain*, *contentious*, *dispute*, *unclear*, *unrealistic*, *breakout*. This *doubt* in an article about the chance to reach a historic agreement on Iran's nuclear programme indicates the author is not really sure if actually a deal will soon be struck, as he believes there are a lot of *obstacles* on the way. These above-mentioned words help to magnify the negative attitudes and stances towards the *negotiations* and the probable *deal*. There are some elements that seem obvious in order to counteract the writer's *doubt* regarding the chance to reach a deal soon. For example, the journalist uses other words, such as *hope*, to suggest there is *doubt* about the deal, but also *hope* to achieve it.

The two sides hope to finalise a deal tomorrow.

Following the sense of *doubt* about the chance to reach a deal, the author of this news story is magnifying the *sanction/s' issues* by repeating the word in the news story several times (5 frequencies). He states the *sanction/s* on Iran *would be lifted if a deal were struck*.

Another look at the lexical choices throughout the full-text story shows that Iran's nuclear activities are perceived as a *threat* for the West. Using expressions such as *efforts to build a bomb* – a kind of lexical choice that is capitalized on throughout these news articles - presumes that the Iranian nuclear programme may be highly prone to a deviation toward the development of a nuclear *bomb*.

Mr Amano's intervention appears to have been critical. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) flew to Tehran late last week seeking to break the deadlock in a stalled UN investigation into allegations of Iranian *efforts to build a bomb*.

The use of terms and expressions such as *contentious, dispute, building a bomb, suspected of conducting weapons testing, refused to allow scientists in its atomic programme, not a breakthrough but a collapse by the West*, serves best in depicting a highly *dubious* picture of the nuclear programme as a *threat* in this news story.

5.5.1 Voice and Passivization

In this selected News story, the author uses some passive forms, as in examples below:

Diplomats reported headway in the dispute over how quickly sanctions against Iran **would be lifted** if a deal were struck.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, has insisted that sanctions **should be lifted** in full when a deal is struck.

Another \$100 billion would be released later, while sanctions against the oil and banking sectors **would be lifted** once inspectors confirm full compliance.

Although a deal **must be approved** by parliament and the national Security Council, Ayatollah Khamenei's verdict will be decisive.

As is clear in the sentences above, there is a difference between the four sentences. Two of them refer to Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei. Using the passive form in the sentences above may depend on the fact that the author emphasizes the action rather than the agent. In two of the above passive sentences it is Iran's Supreme leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, who insists the West in general (example #2) would lift the *sanction/s*. In (example #4) it is stated that the parliament and the National Security council must approve the deal, but his Supreme leader's verdict is crucial. The use of the passive voice in these sentences suggests that the Western journalist intends to play down Iran's Supreme leader's role since the action of *insisting to remove the sanctions* and *approving the deal* are not attributed to his official position in the international diplomacy. As a result, agency for the action of insisting that the deals should be approved, and the sanctions should be lifted is

removed from the agent position. From this functional analysis the tendency emerges to shift the focus away from the agent who is Iran's Supreme leader, to the actions themselves.

5.6 Provisional conclusions

This chapter has addressed the representation of Iran's nuclear programme through examining the news articles included in the corpus at the level of the full-text stories. To this end, initially, the News stories published in July 2015 were examined with regard to their lexico-thematic patterns. Likewise, the same analysis was conducted for a full-text story of *The Times* published on 6th July 2015 looking in particular at their embedded features of lexical choices, passivization, and voice. Overall, the findings suggest that the Western side of the conflict was given an image of Iran's nuclear programme overstating the importance of *sanction/s* as a tool to have a chance to reach the expected deal, and this was done by capitalizing on loaded lexical items *sanctions* and *deal*.

On the other hand, by passivizing contributions of this fact in affairs regarding Iranian's nuclear capability, journalists conceal the agents in order to moderate the pressure of the conflict at the time of *negotiation*. Moreover, the Western side was pushed to the margin by using more negatively loaded lexical items to convey *threats* and *doubts* about the nuclear programme. However, it should be pointed out the results depicted here should not be over generalized in their implications regarding the nature of the mass media in a Western and Iranian context respectively, since the scope of the study was limited to certain news casting outlets. However, the current chapter bears a testimony to CDA's diversity in uncovering the connotative beliefs broadcast by the mass media. In fact, CDA can provide language

practitioners with new perspectives and attitudes towards language use by highlighting its complex and significant nature, and its underlying social and ideological processes. Nevertheless, the investment of researchers on this type of studies contributes to raising consciousness among news audiences, affecting the way they react to them.

Chapter 6

Metadiscourse

6.1 Metadiscourse

This chapter of the study concentrates on Metadiscourse in Media discourse related to international Politics. It focuses on the representation of Iran's nuclear programme in the media. Political discourse can simply be defined – following John Wilson (1985) – as a discourse which is itself political, or simply an example of a discourse type, without explicit reference to the political content or context. Fairclough (1989) refers to political discourse as a “form of social practice with a malign social purpose” and “Nukespeak” is formed on analogy with Orwell's famous “Newspeak” on nuclear media discourse.

Metadiscourse is an approach to conceptualizing interactions between text producers and their text, and between text producers and their users (Hyland, 2005), and includes aspects of a text which explicitly organize a discourse or the writer's stance towards either its content or the reader (Hyland, 2005). Metadiscourse is an aspect that may vary according to the mother tongue of the writer (Hyland, 2004). Within metadiscourse, markers, hedges and boosters are the most significant parameters to evaluate the above-mentioned purposes such as the author's stance.

The significant usage of English as an international language for communication in most of the international media discourse is irrefutable. We should consider that international media discourse, as any type of discourse, is culturally situated and therefore context-dependent, and that discourse, culture and context all play a key role in the communication process. In this way, intercultural differences in settings such as international issues are relevant and should be considered when interpreting discourse (van Dijk, 2008). While in all discourses, the speaker or the writer tries to have an appropriate communication, at the same time he/she is worried to be understood. Writers find themselves involved in a continuous negotiation with language, a continuous back and forth, in order to transmit meaning and ideas to their audiences. Cultural influence on writing is a notion that is closely associated with many other concepts such as freedom, creativity, and style, but it should be emphasized that culture has an influence on both whether and how individuals express their thoughts.

The fact is that writers often repeat expressions they have heard before in their own culture and use idioms or concepts from their own language. This results from the fact that we conceptualize cultural features in different ways, and this is reflected in writing. Every writer processes reality in a unique way, and the transmission of this reality is, in turn, bound by a degree of subjectivity (Carrió- Pastor, M. L. & Muñiz, R.2015). A large body of literature shows that there are meaningful differences between native speakers and non- native speakers of a language (Kachru, 1985, 1990, Carrió-Pastor, 2013). One aspect that may vary according to the mother tongue of the writer is metadiscourse (Hyland, 2004). Metadiscourse plays a key role in knowledge construction by managing the interactions between readers and writers, who often come from the same discourse community and possess shared cultural and rhetorical practices. Metadiscourse is usually studied in terms of a cross-

cultural exploration of interpersonality mainly in academic English, but it would be absolutely useful in media contexts while the aim in this discourse is to be as obvious and direct as possible and to prevent any kind of ambiguity that may mislead the audiences.

Metadiscourse has been divided into interactive and interactional categories (Hyland, 2005), depending on the writer-reader relationship built into the text. Items in interactive metadiscourse categories aim to organize the information depending on the needs and expectations of the reader, whereas interactional metadiscourse features seek to stimulate interaction between the writer and the reader. In this chapter we will concentrate on boosters and hedges as important issues in media context in order to emphasize the writer's point of view about facts such as certainty and uncertainty, which in most of these cases concerned news writing principals. Boosters and hedges are the linguistic devices that increase the illocutionary force of speech acts, emphasize certainty about a proposition or confidence in an assertion, express authorial commitment to a proposition or close off alternative viewpoints by strengthening the asserted position. They are also used to emphasize the writer's certainty, which is especially important in the mass media atmosphere.

Several classifications of the words or phrases that can be classified as boosters and hedges have been made. For example, Hyland (2005) labelled the following words as boosters: *obvious, obviously, very, extremely, far, full, never, certain, certainly, sure, find, must, realize, really, surely, think, truly, true, without doubt*, etc. More recently, other scholars compiled a longer list of words identified in a corpus of academic papers on different discourses. The list of boosters varies depending on the context or on the specific field of the writings analyzed.

The focus here is on the identification and analysis of the interactional metadiscourse devices categorized as boosters and hedges used in media discourse.

Our hypothesis is that the different genre and context might give rise to variation in the use of boosters and hedges and when we add in the fact that there are different underlying mother tongues, these metadiscourse devices could indicate different ways of communicating assertion or certainty in a news context. It might also be possible to identify different functions of boosters when used in media discourse. The research questions of this chapter are as follow:

What are the most frequent usages (certainty, politeness, assertiveness, or...) of boosters and hedges in written news stories in English and Persian press?

In this regard the following questions could be asked:

In what ways do views on the Iranian nuclear effort put forth in the Western press differ from the coverage of this same issue in the Iranian media in terms of hedges and boosters?

What would be the reasons for the different distribution and function of boosting and hedging in the two corpora?

The chapter is based on Hyland's taxonomy of metadiscourse (Hyland 2005a), in which hedges are considered as a separate category from that of boosters. Hedges are devices which indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition (Hyland, 2005).

6.2 Hedges

Hedges are devices such as *possible*, *might* and *perhaps*, which indicate the writer's decision to recognize alternative voices and viewpoints and so withhold complete commitment to a proposition. Hedges emphasize the subjectivity of a position by allowing information to be presented as an opinion rather than a fact and therefore open that position to negotiation. Writers must calculate what weight they lean to give to an assertion, considering the degree of precision or reliability that

they want it to carry and perhaps claiming protection in the event of its eventual overthrow (Hyland, 1998a). Hedges therefore imply that a statement is based on the writer's plausible reasoning rather than certain knowledge, indicating the degree of confidence it is prudent to attribute to it (Hyland, 2005).

The high occurrence of hedges in media discourse is justified by the assumption that they can fulfill a number of functions, such as projecting an image of honesty and humility; conveying vagueness and tentativeness to make propositions more acceptable to reader (Salager-Meyer 1994: 150), expressing positive and negative politeness (Myers 1989) or negotiating the right representation of the state of knowledge discussed.

Hyland (1998: 1) points out that hedges are a means whereby writers can present a proposition as an opinion or plausible reasoning rather than a fact or certain knowledge with the avoidance of responsibility for the certainty of a proposition (Hyland, 1998, 2005 & 2008). In the light of the above-mentioned viewpoints, Hyland (2005: 130) specifically categorizes hedges into three functions: (i) reducing force of statements by using *fairly, almost, partly*; (ii) making statements indefinite by means of frequency adverbs, e.g., *usually, sometimes*; and (iii) decreasing responsibility for the truth of one's statement with the use of *probably, perhaps, or may*.

Salager-Meyer (1994) presents two main purposes for the use of hedges. The first one is to imply purposive vagueness and tentativeness and to make sentences more acceptable to the hearer/reader by using understatements, and thus to reduce the risk of negation. Lakoff (1973) indicates that a sentence can be true to a certain degree and false to another degree or true in a certain context and false in another context. Accordingly, hedges are referred to as "words whose job is to make things fuzzier or less fuzzy" (ibid, p.471). Fuzziness can help writers avoid embarrassing situations and express the writers' commitment to the true value of statements, and

it can also provide them with more open room for the possibilities of interpretation (Salager-Meyer, 1994).

Accordingly, for our analysis we adopted four different categories of hedges (Table 6.1) adapted from Hyland's (1998) hedging items.

Type of hedges	Hedges
Modal auxiliary.	would, could, may, should, might, must
Epistemic lexical verbs	suppose, guess, think, believe, doubt, indicate, suggest, appear, assume, suspect
Epistemic adj.	Possible, likely, unlikely, apparent
Epistemic adv.	Usually, mostly, apparently, perhaps, approximately, maybe, fairly, mainly, probably

Table 6.1 Hyland's hedges analyzed in this study (Hyland 2005a)

Type of hedges	Hedges	English corpus.	Persian corpus.
Modal aux.	would, could, may, should, might, must	1618	1102
Epistemic lexical verbs	suppose, guess, think, believe, doubt, indicate, suggest, appear, assume, suspect	250	272
Epistemic adj.	Possible, likely, unlikely, apparent	120	71
Epistemic adv.	Usually, mostly, apparently, perhaps, approximately, maybe, fairly, mainly, probably	88	52
Total		2,076	1,497
		0.95	1.35

Table 6.2 The distribution of hedges in the two corpora

As displayed in Table 6.2 above, the total raw number of hedges used in the Iranian corpus was 1,497, while the hedges used in the Western corpus was 2,076. One of the possible explanations of this difference maybe is the intention of the Western authors - rather than their corresponding authors in the Persian language. - to leave their news stories open since the content is between the controversial subjects of political discourse.

Below are the tables show the overall frequency of *lexical verbs*, *epistemic adjectives*, *epistemic adverbs* and *modal auxiliaries* and some of their examples such as *think*, *possible*, *perhaps*, *would* in two English and Persian corpora.

R	Word	Freq.
1	suppose	9
2	guess	1
3	think	116
4	believe	83
5	doubt	0
6	Indicate	0
7	suggest	0
8	appear	0
9	doubt	0
10	assume	8
11	suspect	33
Total	0.11	250

Table 6.3 Lexical verbs in the English corpus

	Persian	English	Freq.
1	فرض کردن	suppose	6
2	حدس زدن	guess	2
3	فکر کردن	think	37
4	اعتقاد داشتن	believe	23
5	شک داشتن	doubt	6
6	نشان دادن	indicate	171
7	پیشنهاد کردن	suggest	0
8	ظاهر شدن	appear	14
9	گمان کردن	suspect	13
Total			272
	Ave. per 1000	0.25	

Table 6.4 Lexical verbs in the Persian Corpus

Concord															
File Edit View Compute Settings Windows Help															
N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word	#	Sent	Para	Para	H...	H...	Sect	Sect	File	Date	%
1	opt for deal-killing sanctions if members think the agreement is too vague.				170	5	23	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	19%
2	House, on the other hand, seems to think new sanctions would have the				313	10	11	0	...		0	...	01 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	31%
3	verification mechanism. And that, I think, is going to be the test as to whether				554	24	5	0	...		0	...	01 July 15	2017/Jul/05	55%
4	plane. "I am here to get a final deal, and I think we can," Mr. Zarif said after a				241	9	12	0	...		0	...	01 July 15	2017/Jul/05	26%
5	sounded confident it would happen. "I think this can be solved," he said.				1,363	56	3	0	..2		0	..2	01 July 15	2017/Jul/05	91%
6	is something we've insisted upon, and I think our colleagues have understood this				1,075	41	14	0	..4		0	..4	01 July 15	2017/Jul/05	72%
7	should be given to the members. I don't think there will be any problem in the				480	16	4	0	...		0	...	01 July 15	2017/Jul/05	34%
8	who is still part of his inner circle. "I think the notion that this speech is for				1,391	76	3	0	..0		0	..0	01 March 15	2017/Jul/05	82%
9	to move on these amendments. I don't think they undermine this one bit," Rubio				853	25	4	0	...		0	...	01 May 15	2017/Jul/05	71%
10	colleagues to go, but added: "I don't think the Speaker should have ever				645	21	30	0	...		0	...	03 March 15	2017/Jul/05	78%
11	capabilities," the president said. "I think when you look at what happens in				4,311	...	3	0	..0		0	..0	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	81%
12	against what Assad has done? I also think that I can send a message to them				4,370	...	4	0	..9		0	..9	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	82%
13	responsive to their people." One way to think about it, Obama continued, "is [that]				4,451	...	5	0	..0		0	..0	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	83%
14	to Iran's nuclear program, and this, I think, gets to a central point that we've				4,008	...	47	0	..7		0	..7	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	75%

Table 6.5 Think in the English corpus

Concord															
File Edit View Compute Settings Windows Help															
N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word	#	Sent	Para	Para	H...	H...	Sect	Sect	File	Date	%
1	فکر می کند او تنها کسی است که به نمایندگی از ای اعلام کرد: این «نامید کننده است که رئیس جمهور از				1,154	43	27	0	..3		0	..3	11.12.93	2017/Jul/04	92%
2	فکر می کند ما یا باید با دنیا بجنگیم یا باید تسلیم قدرت جمهوری در بخش دیگری از سخنانش گفت: بعضی قدر				531	17	10	0	...		0	...	15.01.94	2017/Jul/04	40%
3	فکر می کردند بسته می شود، برای همیشه باز می ماند یا فناوری مدرن تر فعال خواهد شد، فردو که بعضی .				407	12	16	0	...		0	...	15.01.94	2017/Jul/04	31%
4	فکر می کنم چارچوب اساسی ایران را فرا می خواند تا هستند که باید مورد بررسی قرار گیرند باین حال، من تا				2,357	98	14	0	..6		0	..6	18.01.94	2017/Jul/04	83%
5	فکر می کنند تنها راه جلوگیری از تکرار گذشته مسیر که بیشتر و اکتسی بوده نمایز قابل تسویم چرا که آنان مسیر				1,654	71	39	0	..3		0	..3	18.01.94	2017/Jul/04	58%
6	فکر کردم: ایوی» این تابلو روی دیوار با کاشی و گچ دیوار گچ کاری و کاشی کاری شده بود. من با خودم گچ				92	4	5	0	91		0	91	18.01.94	2017/Jul/04	3%
7	فکر کنیم سه روز کنفرانس نتواند گر هم از گره های بررسی نشده در این کنفرانس بود. اما بی راه نبود های				89	1	6	0	88		0	88	21.11.93	2017/Jul/04	6%
8	فکر می کنم، آنها همان سوءظنی که ما نسبت به آنها مخالف حضور بیشتر آمریکا در منطقه است، گفت: آنها				386	12	19	0	...		0	...	21.12.93	2017/Jul/04	83%
9	فکر می کنم در نهایت ترکیبی از اینها موضوع را به آنها ازنس را مکلف کنند، موارد گذشته را پاک کنند. به				4,484	...	2	0	..3		0	..3	23.03.94	2017/Jul/04	74%
10	فکر می کنم از همان دید سیاسی چون آنها هم مایل هستند گذشته خیلی خفیف شده است؛ اگر هم به توافق نرسند، هر				4,550	...	44	0	..9		0	..9	23.03.94	2017/Jul/04	76%
11	فکر می کنم استراتژی تیم مذاکره کننده این شد که به هر دیگری برایتان می سازیم، اما این اتفاق رخ نداد. هر				5,667	...	2	0	..6		0	..6	23.03.94	2017/Jul/04	94%

Table 6.6 Think in the Persian corpus

Rank	Word	Freq.
1	Possible	55
2	Likely	41
3	Unlikely	18
4	apparent	6
Total		120
		0.055

Table 6.7 Epistemic adjectives in the English Corpus.

	Word		Freq.
1	Possible	ممکن	44
2	Likely	محتمل	10
3	Unlikely	نامحتمل	0
4	apparent	ظاهرا	17
Total			71
			0.64

Table 6.8 Epistemic adjectives in the Persian Corpus.

Concordance														
N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word	# Sent	Para	Para	H...	H...	Sect	Sect	File	Date	%
					# Pos	# Pos	# Pos	# Pos	# Pos	# Pos				
1	Iran talks nor sway Congress to block a possible agreement. The senior official,				744	34	30	0	...	0	...	01 March 15	2017/Jul/05	45%
2	, including through investigation of possible breaches." Britain put TESA on				472	14	29	0	...	0	...	01 May 15	2017/Jul/05	74%
3	retaliatory plan designed to counter possible fresh sanctions against Tehran				86	0	85	0	85	0	85	03 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	13%
4	also by our commitments, then what's possible is you start seeing an				4,209	...	50	0	..8	0	..8	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	79%
5	put in a box. And if we can do that, it's possible that Iran, seeing the benefits of				4,132	...	9	0	..1	0	..1	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	77%
6	to be preparing the Iranian public for a possible deal and laying the groundwork				919	46	15	0	...	0	...	06 July 15 U.	2017/Jul/05	79%
7	negotiations. Mr. Kerry said it was still possible to reach an agreement by				236	13	7	0	...	0	...	06 July 15 U.	2017/Jul/05	22%
8	its isolation. I believe an agreement is possible if the Iranians have the will. If I				265	12	7	0	...	0	...	07 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	34%
9	of the Iran deal, including overcoming a possible presidential veto, then Obama				499	19	18	0	...	0	...	08 May 15	2017/Jul/05	39%
10	a satisfactory technical agreement is possible, but they are increasingly				1,036	52	17	0	..5	0	..5	09 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	74%
11	over Ukraine as diplomats discussed a possible new cease-fire arrangement				385	20	21	0	...	0	...	09 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	29%
12	sign on to a letter intended to blow up a possible deal on Iran's nuclear program.				352	16	33	0	...	0	...	09 June 15	2017/Jul/05	31%
13	appeared headed on Tuesday toward a possible confrontation over the recent				107	1	27	0	...	0	...	10 June 15	2017/Jul/05	16%

Table 6.9 Possible in the English corpus

	Word	Freq.
1	Perhaps	29
2	probably	21
3	Mostly	9
4	apparently	9
5	Usually	6
6	Mainly	5
7	Possibly	5
8	Maybe	2
9	approximately	1
10	Fairly	1
Total	0.040	88

Table 6.10 Epistemic adverbs in the English Corpus

	Word		Freq.
1	Mostly	اغلب	11
2	apparently	ظاهراً	10
3	Possibly	احتمالاً	14
4	Fairly	نسبتاً	5
5	Usually	معمولاً	3
6	Mainly	عمدتاً	9
7	Perhaps	شاید	0
8	approximately	تقريباً	0
9	probably		0
	Ave. per 1000	0.047	52

Table 6.11 Epistemic adverbs in the Persian Corpus

N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word #	Sent #	Sent Para	Para H...	H... Sect	Sect	File	Date	%	
				#	Pos	#	Pos	#	Pos				
1	negotiators and prompting Tehran and perhaps even our negotiating partners to			338	10	36	0	...	0	...	01 Feb. 15	2017/Jul/05	34%
2	adept at dealing with Congress, indeed perhaps more so than the president and			441	19	13	0	...	0	...	04 May 15	2017/Jul/05	28%
3	not invaded from the outside, and that perhaps will ease some of their concerns			4,399	...	19	0	..8	0	..8	06 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	83%
4	three pairs of gloves, two pairs of socks, perhaps a balaclava and certainly a			1,173	45	18	0	..2	0	..2	06 April 15	2017/Jul/05	79%
5	back up. Netanyahu was full of bluster - perhaps mostly for the voters back home,			799	34	8	0	...	0	...	06 March 15	2017/Jul/05	85%
6	and bring the bill to a final vote -- perhaps as early as Thursday -- without			222	6	32	0	...	0	...	06 May 15	2017/Jul/05	20%
7	invite more sanctions, new tensions and perhaps even military action and a			782	33	10	0	...	0	...	11 Jan. 15	2017/Jul/05	81%
8	Mr. Obama is offering and therefore perhaps scuttle the talks. At first, Iran			427	20	7	0	...	0	...	11 Mar. 15	2017/Jul/05	30%
9	anchor their military position in Syria, perhaps stationing missiles there.			698	32	13	0	...	0	...	11 March 15	2017/Jul/05	66%
10	, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and perhaps Egypt are looking at how they			594	27	12	0	...	0	...	11 March 15	2017/Jul/05	56%
11	.28 LENGTH: 797 words @rogerboyes Perhaps the most unsettling conversation			110	2	7	0	...	0	...	11 March 15	2017/Jul/05	14%
12	of sanctions. The past week has been perhaps the toughest of the entire			251	6	7	0	...	0	...	13 July 15	2017/Jul/05	36%
13	. For President Obama, meanwhile, perhaps the most critical deadline for an			630	23	6	0	...	0	...	14 July 15	2017/Jul/05	78%
14	it be balanced with a nuclear accord? Perhaps: Indyk proposes "providing a			805	38	2	0	...	0	...	16 March 15	2017/Jul/05	79%

Table 6.12 *Perhaps* in the English corpus

	Word	Freq.
1	would	728
2	Would not	8
3	could	282
4	Couldn't	5
5	may	283
6	should	172
7	Shouldn't	4
8	might	62
9	must	73
Total	0.74	1618

Table 6.13 Modal verbs in the English Corpus

Rank	Persian	English	Freq.
1	*تواند	could	398
2	نتواند*	Could not	37
3	باید	should	623
4	ممکن	might	44
Total		0.99	1102

Table 6.14 Modal verbs in the Persian Corpus

Since modal auxiliaries were one of the most frequent hedge types in the corpora, they could be considered as one of the core elements of hedging types. A

high percentage of modal verbs can be observed in tables 5.13 and 5.14 and, consequently, in both corpora. In both the Iranian corpus and the Western corpus, modal verbs are the most frequent type of hedge category among the four categories. Western writers used modal auxiliaries, more frequently than their Iranian counterparts. This made the frequency of modal auxiliaries in the Western corpus approximately one and a half times higher than that in the Iranian corpus. The pattern of clusters for modal auxiliaries *would* is shown in Table 6.15 below:

Concordance														
N	Concordance	Set	Tag	Word #	Sent	Para	Para	H...	H...	Sect	Sect	File	Date	%
				.#	.Pos	.#	.Pos	.#	.Pos	.#	.Pos			
1	into some kind of "R & D facility" that would not process uranium. The other			736	22	76	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	49%
2	. Zarif's deputy declared anew that Iran would not ship any of its stockpile of fuel			750	24	8	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	50%
3	by America for additional demands that would undermine the foundations of the			1,182	43	51	0	..1		0	..1	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	78%
4	tied. As much as the American team would like to treat the negotiations as a			586	20	8	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	40%
5	out too many specifics about what they would give up or put in storage, or how			327	8	28	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	24%
6	in storage, or how much nuclear fuel they would either hand over to the Russians or			340	8	41	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	24%
7	sense. There is a sense that the hurdles would be lower if the negotiations were			450	11	9	0	...		0	...	01 Apr. 15	2017/Jul/05	31%
8	on its centrifuge development, saying it would render the country dependent on			669	20	13	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	68%
9	spin but do not process uranium. They would purify other elements used for			747	25	3	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	75%
10	missed, none of the parties at the table would walk away. "Both sides stand to			783	26	28	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	79%
11	reduce Iran's breakout time (the period it would need to build a bomb, should it			647	19	27	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	66%
12	official meetings in Moscow, but said he would return to Lausanne later on			203	2	20	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	23%
13	diplomats said the final day of talks would show whether Iran's seemingly			439	12	10	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	45%
14	, but there are disagreements on what would happen afterwards. The six-nation			619	18	28	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	63%
15	reached in Lausanne. Iran has said it would walk away if new sanctions were			448	16	6	0	...		0	...	01 April 15	2017/Jul/05	62%

Table 6.15 *Would* in the English corpus

Much of the literature on modality (Coates 1983, Perkins 1983, Lyons 1977, Palmer 1986, Chafe and Nichols 1986) often assumes that the sole function of modals is to reveal the speaker/writer's state of mind or knowledge, to indicate that the speaker/writer is uncertain or tentative and is not committed to the truth value of the

proposition. Palmer (1992: 191) pointed out a number of examples of the use of modals to make polite requests as well.

According above regarding the use of *would* and *could*, it is visible that in English corpora the significant usage of *would* and *could* are the most frequent clusters in English corpora which support predictions about the future or to show future likelihoods relative to the past actions.

	No. of News articles	No. of words	Hedges	Ave. Per 1000 words
English Corpus	150	2,175,960	2076	0.95
Persian Corpus	160	1,109,670	1497	1.35

Table 6.16 Comparative table of hedges in the two corpora

The frequency of hedges in the English corpus exceeded the number of occurrences of the same items in the Persian corpus, which could be the result of uncertainty and mitigating directness and probability, leaving the debate open for further discussions and predictions.

Overall, English newspapers tend to use hedges more than their Iranian counterparts. This can be interpreted as an attempt on their part to leave a discursive space where interpretations can be disputed.

6.3 Boosters

On the other hand, boosters are words which allow writers to close down alternatives, head off conflicting views and express their certainty in what they say. Boosters suggest that the writer's metadiscourse model recognizes potentially diverse positions but has chosen to narrow this diversity rather than enlarge it. Of the boosters found in the two corpora, it is worthy to highlight the use of *of course* (133 occurrences) and *in fact* (61 occurrences) in the Persian corpus. In the English corpus the adverb *clearly* has been repeated 84 times.

	News articles	No. of tokens	<i>Hedges</i>	Ave. Per 1000 words	<i>Boosters</i>	Ave. per 1000 words
English corpus	150	2,175,960	2076	0.95	842	0.39
Persian corpus	160	1,109,670	1497	1.35	806	0.73

Table 6.17 The number of *boosters* and *hedges* in the corpora

The hedges and boosters identified in the corpora are specific to media discourse in Persian and English. Between the hedges found, it is worth highlighting the use of *would* and *could*. The word *should* be used quite differently by the Iranian and the English journalists, as can be seen in the tables 6.13 and 6.14 above.

The frequency of hedges (2076) in the English corpus exceeded the number of occurrences of the same items (1497) in the Persian corpus which could be interpreted the result of uncertainty, mitigation the directness, probability and leaving the debate open for discussion. Overall, Western journalists tend to use hedges more than their Iranian counterparts which can be interpreted as they seek to leave a discursive space where interpretations can be disputed. Also, the overabundance of hedges over boosters in two corpora would be interpreted that the journalists still have doubts (uncertainty) about the result of the Iran's nuclear negotiations, even in the last six months before the final agreement.

The idea that recourse to hedges and boosters varies in different cultures can be confirmed considering the overuse of hedges and boosters by the Western journalists. This difference between the two corpora can be explained by the fact that different language speakers may have a different strategy of using metadiscourse markers as a result of the different practices which operate in their own cultures.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The present study fits into the broader context of describing the political aspects of Media discourse, focusing on nuclear issues. In particular this project looks at the role of language and Media discourse in the coverage and representation of events related to the negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme carried out in 2014-2015 and the agreement signed in Vienna on 14 July 2015 between Iran and the P5+1 (China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States—plus Germany), considering both Iranian and selected Western sources in the written media in the period preceding the agreement. It aims to seek replies to some questions and the analysis carried out in this work immediately showed that news related to the same topic or event can be discursively framed in a different manner in different lingua-cultural contexts (English and Persian), thereby conveying different attitudes by means of tacitly encoded assumptions and ideologies.

The study relies on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as “a tool for deconstructing- the ideologies of the mass media”. The added value of Corpus Linguistics in this study of media discourse is its ability to look at large amounts of media material, allowing to make both qualitative and quantitative statements. The project was based on the analysis of traditional Media-Newspapers - for the last six months before 14 July 2015, the date of the agreement signed in Vienna between

Iran and the P5+1 on Iran's nuclear programme and focuses on the attitude towards Iran's nuclear programme in both Iranian and Western Media

Starting from the assumption that the media's central role in determining what information should be made available to the public justifies the recent increased attention to how the media shapes public knowledge, attitudes, and behavior, the first findings of this study is the degree of neutrality or bias of the views put forth by the Iranian and the Western Press regarding Iran's nuclear programme which differs as a function of the journalists' stance on that particular issue mentioned in the news story.

The study shows that the different cultural backgrounds of the Iranian and the Western audiences result in different versions of the News addressed to the respective audiences.

As regards the headlines (chapter four), they have been analyzed at the level of the topics dealt with and at that of lexical choices, agency structures, Actor/Process Representation. The study provides confirmation that underlying ideological filters frame the news, working most often as an invisible hand, which makes every media text biased even when ostensibly reporting the same facts, in different language versions. In this chapter of the study, the use of different linguistic resources frames the same news event differently, relying on different assumptions and triggering different interpretations. The discourse is clearly differentiated as the headlines differ in length, thematic structure and quantity of information given, depending on the assumed background information of the two audiences. They also differ in terms of lexical choices, syntactic and functional structures. If one then tries to find the underlying rationale for these differences and variations, two important factors emerge, which may have a role in determining the difference in

representations across languages: political adaptation and audience adaptation. However, differences may depend not only on ideological reasons, but also on different journalistic and more generally cultural conventions. According to Hofstede's model of cultural dimensions (Hofstede 2005), some cultures tend to be more indirect than others, and this also affects language use, as in this case the Persian headlines seem more implicit than the English ones. The exploration of the impact of cultural dimensions on the portrayal of Iran in press headlines may well represent an interesting area suitable for further investigation.

Furthermore, the main body of the news stories has been investigated regarding metadiscourse parameters -hedging and boosting- in chapter six. As mentioned previously, the idea that recourse to hedges and boosters varies in different cultures can be confirmed considering the overuse of hedges and boosters by Western journalists. Differences in the use of hedges and boosters in two corpora can be explained with the fact that different language speakers may have a different strategy of using metadiscourse markers as a result of the different practices which operate in their own cultures.

The present study investigated the representation of Iran's nuclear programme in a corpus of English and Persian outlets analyzed at the two levels of headlines and full text stories. All in all, this kind of study reveals the impact of culture and national identity on political practices in mass media. The findings of this research demonstrate how adopting a CDA approach can be used to analyze language and discourse in different lingua-cultural and political contexts about the same topic, thus identifying differences in how the two sets of articles convey tacitly encoded assumptions and values. It helps to uncover the ideologies underlying the press coverage of important issues in the mass media.

Appendix

(Chapter 5)

The Times (London)

July 6, 2015 Monday

Edition 1;

National Edition

Hugh Tomlinson

America and Iran on brink of historic nuclear agreement

A nuclear accord between Iran and the West appeared within reach yesterday after a breakthrough at the talks in Vienna removed key obstacles to a deal placing atomic weapons beyond Tehran's reach.

Representatives from Iran and six other powers locked in negotiations at the Coburg Palace insisted a deal to end the decade-long nuclear stand-off with

Tehran was far from certain. Key elements of an agreement appeared to fall into place, however, with progress made on two of the most contentious issues.

Diplomats reported headway in the dispute over how quickly sanctions against Iran would be lifted if a deal were struck. Meanwhile, an intervention by Yukiya Amano, the head of the UN's nuclear watchdog, forced a breakthrough in the investigation into Iran's past atomic weapons work.

The two sides hope to finalise a deal tomorrow. "We have never advanced this far during the past talks," Abbas Araghchi, Iran's deputy foreign minister, told Iranian state television. "Extending the talks is not an option for anyone. We are trying to finish the job."

Mr Amano's intervention appears to have been critical. The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) flew to Tehran late last week seeking to break the deadlock in a stalled UN investigation into allegations of Iranian efforts to build a bomb. Iran has denied UN inspectors access to key military sites where it is suspected of conducting weapons testing, and refused to allow scientists in its atomic programme to be interviewed.

After meeting Iranian officials on Friday, Mr Amano said that the IAEA aimed to publish a report clarifying the outstanding issues by the end of this year, but emphasised that "more work" was needed.

It is unclear whether Iran is willing to grant inspectors access to all its sites, notably the Parchin military complex, where the regime is accused of testing components for a nuclear warhead.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran's supreme leader, has insisted that sanctions should be lifted in full when a deal is struck. That demand was always unrealistic, however, and he has allowed his negotiators room to compromise.

The West wants sanctions phased out as the IAEA confirms that Iran has dismantled the most sensitive elements of the nuclear programme. The aim is to push Iran's "breakout" time for building a bomb to one year, through curbs on its uranium enrichment programme and stringent inspections.

Iran should receive about \$50 billion up front if a deal is struck, as frozen assets overseas are released. Another \$100 billion would be released later, while sanctions against the oil and banking sectors would be lifted once inspectors confirm full compliance.

The language and sequencing of sanctions relief has proved one of the thorniest issues. The US and Iran must overcome opposition to a deal from domestic hardliners.

Congress will have 30 days to approve or reject the agreement, with President Obama facing opposition from hostile Republicans and Democrats. They are supported by lobbyists for Israel, which bitterly opposes a deal.

America's Middle East allies in Israel and the Gulf states are furious at the tentative détente between Washington and Tehran.

Speaking at a cabinet meeting in Jerusalem yesterday, Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli prime minister, denounced the latest progress in Vienna as "not a breakthrough but a collapse" by the West.

Iran's task is comparatively straightforward. Although a deal must be approved by parliament and the national Security Council, Ayatollah Khamenei's verdict will be decisive.

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