

Editorials and Ideologies

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Abstract

The present paper is based on a research conducted to investigate how English newspaper editorials in Iran express their political ideologies in the ninth presidential election. All texts usually encode the ideological position of their producers, but they are not always explicit for all readers. They need to be revealed and unmasked, so the use of critical discourse analysis in this regard is to examine the ideologies underlying the texts. In the methodological framework of Van Dijk's model, the ideology carrying categories were identified, scrutinized and compared in the clause structure of the editorials in four English newspapers in Iran. It was generally found that the relationships of the newspapers with the institutions, political parties and government influenced the way the editors conveyed their ideas and thoughts about the candidates in the presidential election.

Key Words: CDA, ideology, editorial

1. Introduction

Each day we find editorials, usually at the same page and at the same location. The editorial page of a newspaper is radically different from the rest of the paper; formally, an editorial has restricted length, and often has special type or page lay-out, and a typical header, which may be different from one newspaper to another. The editorial page, as Bhatia (1993: 170) puts it, offers views and opinions of the newspaper, and is generally regarded as the newspaper's analysis, discussion, opinion or verdict on the issues of the day. Sinclair (1995) defines an editorial as "an article in a newspaper that gives the opinion or ideology of the editor or publisher on a topic or item of news" (as cited in Ansari & Babaei, 2004: 7). The editorials of different newspapers are quite diverse in their styles and textual strategies, e.g., in the selection of lexical items, syntactic structures and modes of argumentation, suggesting a distinctive voice for each newspaper.

An editorial as a discourse may carry and enact some type of ideology. The notion of 'ideology' is widely being used in social sciences, politics, and mass media. To Van Dijk (1991), "ideologies are viewed as interpretation frameworks which organize sets of attitudes about other elements of modern society. Ideologies, therefore, provide the cognitive foundation for the attitudes of various groups in societies, as well as the furtherance of their own goals and interests" (as cited in Dellinger, 1995:7).

An understanding of ideology that aims to establish it as a field of study is Van Dijk's (2001b) multidisciplinary framework for theorizing ideology. In van Dijk's view, ideologies are principles that form the basis of a group's beliefs and, as such, allow people, as group members, to organize the multitude of social beliefs about what is the case, good or bad, right or wrong, for *them*, and to act accordingly. Here are some of the major brief tenets about ideology listed by Van Dijk (2001b): 1) Among many other things, ideologies are systems of beliefs. 2) These systems of beliefs are shared by members of a social group. 3) The beliefs shared by a group will be called 'social representations' (SRs). 4) Ideologies are the organizing, 'basic' beliefs of these SRs. 5) Ideologies and the social representations organized by them control the social practices of actors as group members.

2. Ideology and CDA

Ideology is one of the most important notions that is taken into account and dealt with in critical discourse studies. The objective of CDA is to uncover the ideological assumptions that are hidden in the words of our written text or oral speech in order to resist and overcome various forms of power or to gain an appreciation that we are exercising power over, unbeknownst to us (Fairclough, 1989). A critically oriented discourse analysis can systematize awareness and critique of ideology in different social and political context. CDA focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge, and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, schools, the media, and the political arena (Luke, 2005). Van Dijk (1993: 249) explains CDA as "a focus on the role of discourse in the (re)production and challenge of dominance".

In the analysis of ideology in news discourse, Van Dijk (2004a) has used a discourse analytical approach to the study of ideology. He has examined an example of editorial from the *Sunday Telegraph* on August 8, 2004 and he has used a multidisciplinary theoretical

framework to study the discourse–ideology interface. The editorial was construed, interpreted and analyzed as an ideological text by him. He applied different kinds of categories in his analysis of editorial text due to language use, interpretation of communication of beliefs or cognition and also due to actions and interactions in a social context. In 1996, he also examined an example of newspaper editorial to show how the mental representation of opinions and ideologies are eventually manifesting themselves in discourse of specific genre. He has concluded that many opinions of editorials are not expressed explicitly and that the degree of explicitness depends not only on the nature of the opinions themselves, but on the context (or rather context model), viz, the role and political position of newspaper (*Washington Post*), its relation with congress, and hence its relation to a U.S. ally and president. Van Dijk (2001a) examined the role of knowledge in news, news production and news comprehension in the press. Van Dijk (2004c) has analyzed some examples from a debate on asylum seeker in British parliament and showed that there are many ways ideologies may be expressed, for instance in the actor description, fallacies, disclaimers, metaphors, comparisons, euphemisms, hyperboles, and so on. He has also focused on examples from a large scale, empirical case study of the international press coverage of the assassination of president-elect, Beehir Gemayel of Lebanon, in September 1982. For that study 250 newspapers from 1000 countries were collected, from which more than 700 articles were subjected to both quantitative and (especially) qualitative analysis. Then he focused on the thematic and schematic structures of news.

From a brief survey of some studies about news discourse and media contents analysis especially editorials in the last decade, we can conclude that few works are specifically concerned with the newspaper editorial and ideology – discourse interface. Most research has focused on the structure of the news discourse and media content analysis. In order to limit discussion of the vast domain of critical discourse- analytical media research, the focus of this study is on newspaper editorials in our country (English newspapers) in the ninth presidential elections in Iran to see how they use language to convey or dictate their ideas and thoughts. This study is a replication of Van Dijk's Study on ideology analysis of newspaper editorial in 2004, but in a different location and context with different culture and society.

3. Methodology

This study intended to determine how ideology or opinion is expressed in newspaper editorials. For this analysis, twenty-four editorials from *Kayhan international*, *Tehran Times*, *Iran News* and *Iran Daily* were selected. The corpus of data consisted of twenty four editorials from the mentioned newspapers. These editorials were chosen on the basis of their relation to the coverage of the ninth presidential election campaigns. Types of editorials used in this study included those of interpretation, criticism, argumentation, commendation and expression of ideas and opinion.

The collected data were scrutinized in terms of some of the Van Dijk's (2003, 2004b) ideology carrying categories such as actor descriptions, disclaimers, metaphors, comparisons, euphemisms, hyperbole, vagueness, presuppositions, positive self- presentations, negative other-presentations, national self-glorifications, irony, lexicalizations, generalizations, evidentiality and so on.

4. Data analysis and discussion

The selected editorials are critically analyzed in terms of some of the Van Dijk's (2003, 2004b) ideology carrying categories mentioned above. By applying Van Dijk's categories to the analysis of editorials of Iran News, the results are shown in Table 1. The numbers in the table show the frequency of categories in this newspaper with regard to different candidates.

Table 1. Distribution of ideology carrying categories in Iran News

Iran News	Actor Description	Modality	Nominalization	Comparison	Categorization	Evidentiality	Illustration	Hyperbole	Implication	Irony	Lexicalization	Metaphor	National Self G..	Negative Other	Norm Expression	Number Game	Positive Self r...	Vagueness	Euphemisms	Presupposition	Authority
Rafsanjani	14	5	1		2	9	5		2	1	9	1			1	1	2	4			1
Ahmadi-Nejad	3	1				4	6	1			3	2		2		2					
Moin	2	6	1			7			4	1	4	2		8	1			2			2
Karroubi							1				2			1							
Galibaf							1				1			1							
Larrijani																					
Mehr Alizadeh																					
Total	19	12	2	6	2	23	13	1	6	2	19	5	17	14	2	4	2	5	1	1	3

Different candidates have been referred to positively or negatively due to the tendency of the editors of the paper.

On the basis of Van Dijk's model, the results of the analysis in Table 1 show that Rafsanjani is at the center of the meaning stage. Iran news focused on Rafsanjani and Moin more than others by giving actor description category that is from 19 actor description, Rafsanjani took 14 actor descriptions. This high amount of positive actor description was biased and ideological.

The writer tried to describe him positively via using different categories. Then, Moin is the second person that the writer focused on in the newspaper, but most of the times he has been negatively described. His disqualification by the powerful GC is the reason for the writer's attention to him. Ahmadi-Nejad is in the third place. There are 2 cases of positive actor descriptions for Moin. In contrast, Ahmadinejad has 3 cases of negative actor descriptions. As it is crystal clear from the analysis on the basis of van Dijk categories in Iran News, from 12 modality cases, Rafsanjani had 5 cases in which he has got 4 positive and 1 negative modality, whereas Moin took 6 negative cases of modality because the writer argued that other party members or the leader decides for him and he had to follow what they decided. Moin as a controversial candidate, because of his disqualification at the beginning, owns 6 modality categories. There is 1 modality that is against Ahmadi-Nejad. The analysis of

evidentiality category in Iran News indicates that out of 23 cases, Rafsanjani made profits from 8 ones and there is one evidentiality against Rasanjani, while Ahmadinejad and Moin gained demerits from 4 and 7 cases respectively. There are three other evidentiality categories that are unrelated to the candidate, but describe the election conditions.

In comparison and categorization, Rafsanjani has been collated with Ahmadinejad and others, mostly in favor of Rafsanjani. Concerning the illustration category, we can find 5 cases for the sake of Rafsanjani. In 6 illustrations, a negative face has been given to Ahmadinejad to block his presidency. Concerning implication, we discovered that Moin took 4 examples of negative impression toward himself, but Rafsanjani had two useful implications on behalf of the editor. Half of lexicalization categories used in editorial of Iran News were for Rafsanjani, but 8 cases were against Ahmadinejad and Moin. This unbalanced distribution shows the editor or newspapers inclination toward a specific candidate. Moin and the leftist took 9 negative other presentation in Iran News, whereas there were two for Ahmadinejad and two cases for Qalibaf and Karroubi.

In the following comes the analysis of the editorials of Iran Daily.

Table 2. Distribution of ideology carrying categories in Iran Daily

Iran Daily	Actor	Modality	Nominalizatio	Comparison	Categorization	Evidentiality	Illustration	Generalization	Hyperbole	Implication	Irony	Lexicalization	Metaphor	National Self	Negative Other	Norm	Number Game	Positive Self	Euphemisms	Presupposition	Authority
Rafsanja-ni	2	1		1	2	2	1	2	2	10	2	3							2		
Ahmadi-Nejad				2					1												
Moin	1	6	1	7		3	3	1	3	10	3	3	5			4				2	
Karroubi																					
Galibaf																					
Larrijani																					
Mehr Alizadeh																					
Total	3	7	1	14	2	6	4	6	6	23	5	8	6	7	10	4	1	27	2	2	

In Van Dijk's categories, out of 3 actor descriptions, Moin gained profits from 1 instance in Iran Daily. The other 2 actor descriptions were in relation to Rafsanjani. Rafsanjani has been described in mitigated terms, but it seemed that his elevation to a level above the presidential office was contrary to the editor's opinion. In Iran Daily, there were 14 comparisons. 7 out of these comparisons were for the profit of the leftist. All seven men were compared with each other in 2 instances. There was also 1 comparison between the first and the second round of the election while first round had surprised the editor. In three cases, Ahmdinejad and Rafsanjani have been compared in their preferences and line of thought with each other.

Rafsanjani derived benefits from 2 evidentiality categories whereas there were three advantageous categories for the left party. From among 4 illustration, the left party gained profits from three instances while Rafsanjani made profits from one of them. From 3 examples of hyperbole in these editorials 2 of them were in favor of Rafsanjani, but 1 for Ahmadinejad. There were cases of hyperbole not related to the candidates. The writer exaggerated Rafsanjani's return to the presidential campaigns positively and the same has been done for the possibility of Ahmadinejad's winning but in an opposite way. We found out 23 implication category in Iran Daily. The left wing in the country took advantage of 10 cases. In almost all of the above mentioned clauses the struggled to praise the achievements of the president Khatami and the left party and how their line of thought affected other presidential candidates and the society. This choice expresses the ideology that the previous government was influential and reached the allocated goals and indirectly implied to invite the nation to take part in the voting and electing leftists, specially Moin. In the remaining three implicative sentences, the editor criticized the GC's work and the right conservatives about the disqualification of two leftist candidates. The editor, in the next ten clauses, represented the election scene in favor of Rafsanjani by mentioning some important group of supporters. Eight of these ten sentences were in relation to the second round. As the left wing did not have a candidate in the second round, they gave a prior role to Rafsanjani and tried to persuade the readers to vote him in order to stop Ahmadi-Nejad becoming a president in Iran. The reason for this was the implicit opposition of the editor with Ahmadi-Nejad's presidency.

In Iran Daily from 10 negative other presentation, almost around 8 cases have negatively been used for the GC and the rightists. Two instances have been used for Rafsanjani negatively. These examples conveyed the editor's strong criticism and opposition with the GC's decision in preventing some factions from their rights. These were in favor of the left party and their achievements. In this category, the newspaper mostly tried to belittle the enemies of Iran and Islam, specially the U.S.

In 5 examples of metaphor in Iran Daily, the writer strongly complained and criticized the GC considering two reform minded candidates unfit for the job. He believed that this was in opposition with the public interest and could cause many difficulties for the system and nation in the election process and might create a faded public turnout in it. All of these remarks, ideologically, seemed to be beneficiary for the left party and against the GC, and the right wing in Iran Daily. To deal with the lexicalization category, we identified eight examples in Iran Daily. The first one described the election scene in which the writer called it a new phenomenon because of entering a 'dark horse candidate' (in the editor's sense) to the second round and loss of the leftists. In another sentence, the writer complained about ignoring some leftist values by using a passive sentence. But the other three examples indicated the editor's strong criticism about GC's recent decision with regard to the left presidential candidates and tried to show that they were not fair and just and caused many problems. Three instances were in favor of Rafsanjani in this left newspaper and the selection was against Ahmadinejad's presidency.

Table 2 indicates the unequal distribution of the categories between Moin and Rafsanjani as the two top presidential candidates from different line of thoughts. The writer has been positive about Moin and the left party because the newspaper is thought to be at the same line of thought with the leftists. In sum, we can conclude that this leftist newspaper, tries to pay attention to the reformist or leftist candidate by covering the details about the events and

issues. This was true about the first round, but in the second round to prevent Ahmadinejad from becoming a president, the editor had Rafsanjani at the center of the meaning stage.

Editorials of Tehran Times were scrutinized and the results are in the table 3.

Table 3. Distribution of ideology carrying categories in Tehran Times

Tehran Times	Actor	Modality	Nominalization	Comparison	Categorization	Evidentiality	Illustration	Generalization	Hyperbole	Implication	Irony	Lexicalization	Metaphor	National Self	Negative	Norm	Positive Self	Vagueness	Euphemisms	Presupposition	Authority
Rafsanjani		1		3		1	2			1							1		1		
Ahmadi-Nejad	1	2				2	3			1	2		1								
Moien																					
Karroubi		1																			
Galibaf																					
Larrijani																					
Mehr Alizadeh																					
Total	1	5		6		11	7	1	5	2	2		1	36	17	11	1	3	1		4

Table 3 shows right oriented characteristic of this newspaper. Positive self presentation and national self glorification are remarkable in this table, too. We can summarize that Tehran Times had a low contribution to the presidential candidates, especially to the leftist candidates. The editor in this paper did not want to be specific and to the point in covering the issues and he tried to write about issues in general. The outstanding category was the use of 36 national self glorification categories to encourage the voters. The strange part on behalf of this newspaper was lack of attention to leftist candidates. The remarkable characteristic for Tehran Times was its unilateral attention to role allocation. This was also evident in *Table 3* where we saw that the contribution was for the rightist favor. We saw this unbalanced attention in categories like: the Evidentiality, modality, comparison, and illustration. As the analysis of negative other presentation indicated in almost all of the editorials, we had a negative reference to U.S. and other western countries who were hostile to our country. We can refer to this kind of expressing of meaning as biased and ideological representation in the press, in Van Dijk's sense. Pondering in the analysis and interpretation of ideology carrying categories revealed that in almost all of the categories involved Rafsanjani candidacy has been foregrounded and the editor tried to give a effective and positive face to him in comparison to both the leftist or the rightist candidates in Tehran Times.

Table 4. Distribution of ideology carrying categories in Keyhan International

Keyhan	Actor Description	Modality	Comparison	Evidentiality	Illustration	Generalization	Hyperbole	Implication	Irony	Lexicalization	Metaphor	National Self	Negative Other	Norm	Number Game	Positive Self	Vagueness	Euphemisms	Presupposition	Authority
Rafsanjani	2														1	1				
Ahmadi-Nejad	8			1																
Moin	1	2	2					1	1	2										
Karroubi																				
Galibaf	1																			
Larrijani	1																			
Mehr Alizadeh																				
Total	13	4	6	5	11	7	3	2	2	14	2	19	13	6	2	2	4	1	3	7

Table 4 shows that this newspaper had little attention to the presidential candidates, especially to the leftist candidates. Dealing with the categories that Van Dijk proposed for ideology analysis, we can conclude that this paper uses 13 instances of actor description. From these amount of actor description Ahmadinejad has role in 8 cases. The editor has concerned about him positively describing his campaign mottoes and his beliefs and character. As we found out, all the actors introduced in this paper were the rightist candidates. Because of the similarity in their thoughts and ideology, all of them were described positively, but Rafsanjani highlighted more than others. What is interesting in this regard is the description of Moin, one of the leftist candidates, by using a negative attribute while the editor uses it for the sake of contrast and opposition. Rafsanjani has been foregrounded in description in two instances.

By comparing four tables with regard to some categories the results can be discussed clearly in the following lines. Concerning with National Self Glorification, Tehran Times cited 36 and Keyhan International 19 cases while Iran News used 17 and Iran Daily 7 National Self Glorification. The most outstanding and eye-catching categories in Tehran Times were national self glorification. The writer has used 36 cases of national self glorification in order to encourage people to have massive turnout in the election and to show nation's loyalty to Islamic Revolution and the system. The other reason was to fight against enemies negative propaganda and discouraging remarks. The editor wanted to show that the election was fair in Iran and it made the world surprised. He indicated that Iranian style of freedom and democracy is unique and superior in comparison with the other countries, specially western ones.

With regard to positive self presentation, Iran Daily mostly conveyed the leftist ideology in presentation of presidential issues. This resulted in focusing on leftist ideals and trying to present and highlight it in the editorials. The existence of 27 cases of positive self presentation proved this fact. There were two positive self presentation for Rafsanjani in Iran News and there was one case of the same category for Rafsanjani in Tehran Times. In Keyhan, there were one positive self presentation for Rafsanjani and one for Ayatollah Sistani.

Considering the norm expression, the existence of six cases were evident in the editorials of Keyhan International and there were 11 norm expression in Tehran Times. The norms were the same in both of these newspapers. Tehran Times had 11 instances of norm expression which was the highest among other papers. The editor listed following things as norms and values: 'sacrifice, martyrdom, Sacred Defense against aggression, heroic resistance, presence on the battle field, principles and achievements of Islamic revolution, safeguarding Islamic Republic, reform of different kind, continuation of reform, being in power means being servants of people, being traditional and religious and idealistic principles'.

We also saw two norm expressions for Moin and Rafsanjani in Iran News. As the analysis in Iran Daily showed us that the ideals of the reformists were the most outstanding norms that were used by this newspaper in 4 cases. The negative description of the U.S. and Western enemies was the most remarkable and fundamental feature of editorials in Tehran Times with 17 cases and Keyhan International with 13 cases. In three cases the left wing and their ideals have negatively stated in the editorials of these two newspapers.

5. Conclusion

The analysis revealed the following conclusions about ideology and opinion in the ninth presidential elections of Iran. Iran News had great contribution to Rafsanjani. It had specific focus on presidential candidates, specially the rightist candidates. Moin was included in editorials of Iran News due to his challenging character and his disqualification by the GC. Iran Daily like the former one paid attention to the details of the events. The editorials in Iran Daily highlighted the leftists and their ideals. Moin was positively given the main role and Rafsanjani was in the second place. Keyhan International and Tehran Times did not have equal and balanced explanation and description about the four candidates. Their focus was to right wing candidates and to issues and events that were generally aimed at the whole nation, the governmental issues, fighting enemies and everything that is of high interest for the political system of our country.

The understanding of ideology can help educate informed citizens to cope with the realities of the twenty-first century, increasing their awareness of sub-cultural diversity and of a society's types of socioeconomic and political inequality as reflected in minority group perceptions and reactions. They become aware of what many powerful politicians do in different political situations. It is hoped that a systematic analysis of the newspaper editorials that is the analysis of editorials from Keyhan International, Iran News, Tehran Times and Iran Daily in Iran and other news reports be beneficial to different people and especially to English students. English newspapers mostly are read by them, so this analysis may give some insight to the readers of newspaper editorials to encounter with the standard argumentation patterns in their writings.

Ideology analysis is of great importance in any education system because most of the time those in power (politically and scientifically) try to select textbooks and educational curriculum on the basis of aims and ideologies that they have. For example, in most textbooks for schools, we can find out religious and political beliefs and ideologies conveyed through written materials. This is the ideological developments of the textbooks through these readings which may change or form the thought, Knowledge and ideology of the children in present time in their childhood and these are the basis of future actions and behaviors for the readers and consumers of these materials. That is why it is thought that critical analysis of ideologies of any kind is useful for educational and social purposes. It brings awareness and creates a critical thought and mind for the learners and teachers. And also teachers, parents, school principals and all those who are in connection with educational issues will become aware of the goals and purposes of the providers of the educational materials for the children.

Newspapers present the use of language which is fresh, topical and current. Every day we get fresh linguistic data on different topics. This can also help the teacher to preserve human interest and motivation in his/her teaching program because s/he will not have to use the same linguistic input year after year in English lessons. According to Bhatia (1993) "Coming to the exploitation of English newspapers, there seem to be three main areas of pedagogical application. It is possible to use this source for EGP (English for general Purposes), EAP (English for academic Purposes) and ESP (English for Specific Purposes); it is equally good for use across, as well as beyond, the curriculum".

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