

Discourse analysis and political rhetoric politics essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The 2008 Presidential election was important for many reasons. The U. S. economy was steadily declining, unemployment was rising, the housing market was deteriorating and consumer confidence was decreasing due to the changing economic tides (Hill, 2008; Kirchhoff and Hagenbaugh, 2008; Stark, et al., 2008; Weisman and Meckler, 2008). The incoming president had to contend with two wars – Iraq and Afghanistan – that were becoming increasingly unpopular among the American public (Ignatius, 2008; Weisman et al., 2008). This was also the first election in which minorities and younger voters came out in droves. Various forms of social media were used to reach voters from all demographic and socioeconomic groups (Barone, 2008; Hartman, 2008; James, 2008; Rove, 2008; Meacham, 2008; “The African-America,” 2008). This use of technology allowed the presidential candidates to reach more voters than ever before (Gordon-Murnane, 2009; James, 2008). This election also garnered record numbers of fundraising dollars (Gordon-Murnane, 2009; James, 2008). Lastly, this election was the first time when black political leaders were divided over a black political candidate’s race. Longtime black leaders and activists were split, based on their life experiences whether a black man would get the candidacy, let alone the nomination (Bai, 2008; Hollinger, 2008; Remnick, 2008).

Since the creation of the first languages, language has been considered as the most important device to express one’s ideas for the purpose of influencing others. The written form of a language can never be as persuasive as its oral counterpart. This is especially true in politics because most ordinary voters do not devote their time on reading political programs. Therefore, he or she may accidentally see a politician talking about his or her

beliefs or a political program on the television. This can persuade the voter to vote for him in the election. So, it is very important for the speaker to select the best words carefully, in addition to using body language to put more emphasis on what is said. In addition, the purpose of making an speech is important in this regard. For example, when a speech is delivered enthusiastically by using a lot of gestures and facial expressions, and with appropriate intonation, may raise not only money for the cause, but also new supporters for the particular politician.

2. 1 Discourse Analysis and Political Rhetoric

Politics is always bound up with language until there is a way for establishing a new way of communication between people around the world. According to Fairclough (2000), political differences have always been constituted as differences in language, and political struggles have always been partly struggles over the dominant language (p. 3). Although, if taken to the extreme, the first part of the sentence may not be challenged, the second part invokes doubts. With regard to the first part, if a person does not use a language similar to other person's language (synonyms, etc.) it results in difference in opinion. The problem becomes worse when the speakers and hearers cannot understand other person's opinion, which accordingly may evoke the feeling of different opinions, although their opinions do not have to differ at all. Therefore, it is possible to agree with this opinion where there is an inner-state struggle. More likely, projection of power is the fundamental reason for international struggles. In summary, we can come to this conclusion that language can be regarded as an essential feature of politics.

Regarding the definition of 'discourse analysis', Wodak believes that the meaning carried by this term is different in every discipline (Wodak & Kryzhanowski, 2008, p. 4). Discourse is not an object, but it can be regarded as a set of relationships existing between discursive events (Ibid., p. 5). In discourse analysis, there are some external factors which play a significant role and influence formulation of a text, its nature and content.

With regard to the above-mentioned issues, speeches considered for this article are considered to be discourses. Further, the analysis will deal with events leading to a particular speech, reasons for the delivery of the speech and the context of its formulation and presentation. This approach is also justified by the idea that discourse production and comprehension is context-dependent (Van Dijk in Wodak & Chilton, 2005, p. 71). As van Dijk put it

..... language users not only need to have general "knowledge of the world", and not only knowledge about the current communicative situation, but of course also mutual knowledge about each others' knowledge (Van Dijk in Wodak & Chilton, 2005, p. 72)

As far as political rhetoric is concerned, Reisigl (2008) contend that rhetoric is defined as 'the practical science and art of effective or efficient speaking and writing in public' (Reisigl, as cited in Wodak & Kryzhanowski, 2008, p. 96). I believe that efficiency is the main purpose behind this occasion.

However, speaking and writing does not have to be efficient among people in the way that it can earn money for charity or gains votes for a politician.

2. 2 Political Speeches

According to Schäffner (1996), linguistics believe the term “ political language” means the use of language in the context of politics, or to mean specific political vocabulary connected to the political domain. Political discourse is connected to inner-state, as well as inter-state discourse. Schäffner (ibid) states that political texts are a part of politics, but they can be also a result of politics. He considers political speeches to be a sub-genre of political texts (p. 202). Nevertheless, it is possible to suggest an interconnection among the three terms. Political language is undoubtedly included both in political discourse and political texts. At the same time, political texts are a part of political discourse. Speeches during a campaign are political texts, as political speeches are the sub-genre of political texts. Thus, political speeches might be considered to be a sub-genre of political discourse.

We should believe that politicians who are making a speech for a community do not consider it as individuals, while they are doing this as representatives of political parties, governments or nations. As Schäffner points out, they are limited in what to say and how to say it (Ibid., p. 203). Therefore, although a speech delivered during a presidential political campaign is intended to gain votes for the particular politician, such a politician must articulate their ideas which accords with the ideas which have been expressed by a party which nominated this candidate. To some extent, Chilton (2004) is in opposite to these ideas. He emphasized that ‘ in principle’, it is possible to use language creatively, and without considering the socio-political and linguistic constraints (p. 27).

Purpose of the study

The vast bulk of studies of political discourse is about the text and talk of professional politicians or political institutions, such as presidential and prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties, both at the local, national and international levels. Some of the studies of politicians take a discourse analytical approach (Carbó 1984; Dillon et al. 1990; Harris 1991; Holly 1990; Maynard, Teun A. van Dijk) In this paper, we are working in the political discourse, power and politeness of George Bush and Obama's speech. In fact, this article deals with the speeches of Obama and Bush made as Norouz messages to Iranian people.

Obama's presidential campaign will become one of most debated and political campaign. In examining the dispositions of President Barack Obama, I will focus in this paper on the disposition of authenticity. Integral to this disposition are: honesty and integrity, the valuing of public education, commitment to a democratic community, and policies and practices consistent with authenticity. This disposition seems to be the fount of the powerful hope of those who elected Obama. Its absence, however, is the source of equally strong frustration for some of these same constituents, including the educators who now observe his actions which seem in direct contradiction to his words (Batagiannis, 2007).

In general, this is an empirical study where the focus is into pragmatic function of certain pronouns. One of the purposes of this study is to investigate, for example, what Barak Obama means with a phrase like "today I say to you that the challenges we face are real". It is not always easy

to define what referential source is intended to when it comes to interpersonal pronoun such as you and we.

Another issue which is considered in this study is “deliberation” It is a form of communication. Deliberation is different from discussion because it is a measured conversation and almost always leads to action. Deliberation is focused around an issue, generally laws or policy, but also can cover public behavior and cultural practices. The public includes everyone, not just experts and politicians, but everyday people who have an opinion on the topic. Current deliberation practices offer three possible choices or outcomes, and then arrange the conversation around the pros and cons of each.

An overview of Bush and Obama’ Norouz messages to Iranian People

The way in which the formulation of Bush rhetoric on the war or terror represents language as a machine that produces discourse and as a result forms the social world (Philips and Jørgensen, 2002) by discourse. Rhetoric does not only reflect political ideology but also represents the process of doing politics or constructing discourse that influences public perception toward some end (van Dijk, 1997).

The question of whether and how an Iranian president can manage to open political routes to Washington may eventually be more important for his domestic legitimacy than the number of centrifuges spinning in Iranian nuclear facilities and the fact that former U. S president George W. Bush named Iran as one of the two greatest threats to the United States may well

have pleased the Iranian president. Iranian policy makers often tend to see the united states as the only counterpart worth dealing with an equal terms (Volker Perthes).

In his speech for new year congratulation president obama hinted that united states might be willing to ease trade sanctions against Tehran if it behaves more responsibly in international affairs. Mr. Obama's comments which were videotaped for broadcast to Iranian people contrasted with exhortations from Bush administration for Iranian people rise up and overturn their Islamic government. Instead, Mr. Obama made it plain that he was seeking a change in Iranian behavior, not a change in the regime (Volker Perthes, 2008).

On the occasion of your new year , I want you , the people and leaders of Iran , to understand the future that we seek . It's a future with renewed exchanges among our people and greater opportunities and commerce, it's a future where the old divisions are overcome , where you and all of your neighbors and the wider world can live in greater security and greater peace . He said that Iran must assume real responsibilities and take actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization and the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create, or in somewhere else (in Los Angeles Times, March 20, 2009):

“ In this season of new beginnings, I would like to speak clearly to Iran's leaders,” said Obama, who despite vociferous criticism from opponents declared during his presidential campaign that he would be willing to meet

with leaders of Iran and other hostile nations. “ The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations,” he added. “ You have that right — but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions.”(Los Angeles Time, March 20, 2009) The image of a U. S. president delivering a speech in commemoration of the Nowruz holiday was unusual though President Bush did several interviews marking the occasion last year, including one with the Voice of America. The speech, which stressed the potential for peaceful cooperation with Iran, continued a series of attempts by Obama to directly engage public opinion in Muslim nations. reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions.”

Like the Bush administration, the Obama administration has deep differences with Iran over its efforts to develop nuclear weapons technology and its support for Islamic extremist groups linked to terrorism, including Hezbollah in Lebanon and Hamas in the Gaza Strip. The video commemorating Nowruz follows an overture to Muslim nations that Obama included in his inaugural address. Obama underscored his efforts to engage Islamic audiences by granting his first White House television interview as president to Al Arabiya, a Dubai, United Arab Emirates-based Arabic satellite news channel with a large following in the Middle East.

Obama also pledged during the campaign to give a major address in an Islamic forum within his first 100 days in office, a commitment advisors say he intends to keep, although they have cautioned that he may not deliver it within the timeline he set (Los Angeles Times).

<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

In March 2008, Bush took to the airwaves of Radio Farda once again. “ First of all, the United States of America wishes everybody a Happy New Year. . . My message to the young in Iran is that someday your society will be free. And it will be a blessed time for you. My message to the women of Iran is that the women of America share your deep desire for children to grow up in a hopeful society and to live in peace,” said the 43rd president of the United States.

In Bush’s greeting speech, he tries to criticize the mullas and praised Iranian and citizenry and blunt offers of American friendship. He addressed the young and women in Iran society. Bush proved to be a not infrequent broadcaster. Over the years, he praised the courage of many Iranian political prisoners and congratulated Iranians such as Shirin Ebadi “ on receiving the Nobel Peace Prize – a first for an Iranian, and for a Muslim woman. . . I strongly support the Iranian people’s aspirations for freedom, and their desire for democracy. The future of Iran must be decided by the people of Iran. Americans look forward to the day when a free Iran stands as an example of tolerance, prosperity, and democracy in the Middle East and around the world.”

The difference between Bush’s and Obama’s approaches is that Bush never apologized for America and, more important, never flattered the tyrants who tormented average Iranians. Bush’s record here is impressive and demands a more thorough airing. He set the tone in the fall of 2002, when he announced, “ As Iran’s people move towards a future defined by greater freedom, greater tolerance, they will have no better friend than the United States of America.” Bush expanded on his theme:

<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

Iranian students, journalists and Parliamentarians are still arrested, intimidated, and abused for advocating reform or criticizing the ruling regime. Independent publications are suppressed. And talented students and professionals, faced with the dual specter of too few jobs and too many restrictions on their freedom, continue to seek opportunities abroad rather than help build Iran's future at home. Meanwhile, members of the ruling regime and their families continue to obstruct reform while reaping unfair benefits. Bush explained that the U. S. would attempt to fill news and information gaps caused by the repressive regime in Tehran, and restated his premise from months earlier: " If Iran respects its international obligations and embraces freedom and tolerance, it will have no better friend than the United States of America."

In Obama's point of view, I think he accepts Iranian government and try to be direct with people and government that was different with Bush point of view.

President Obama's speech on U. S policy in middle east and north Africa gave more ground to the critics who were quick enough to declare that Obama just borrowed the Bush doctrine. Kruthmmer wrote in an article published in may 20 , 2011 in Washington post that Obama adopts the Bush doctrine which made the spread of democracy the key U. S objective in the middle east (Anna Dimitrova, 2009).

The Obama administration continues to hold a hard-line stance on the nuclear issue and is threatening Iran with more sanctions-harder and tougher. Yet, during his presidency which is still very young, there have been

fresh initiatives for Iran and the US to talk to each other. Apart from the publicized contacts which are known, there are reasons to believe that there have been unpublicized contacts too. Since President Obama is a realist, he knows that it would be very difficult to solve any of the regional problems without Iran as Iran is the largest entity in the Gulf. There is no doubt that Iran's relationship with Hezbollah and Hamas has the potential to influence regional issues. Moreover, it has a long border with Afghanistan which is one of Iranian zones of influence in terms of cultural linkages which are ancient and Iran has carefully kept them alive and cultivated.

Although a kind of dialogue has been going on between Iran and the West but meaningful, result oriented and deep dialogue is still not visible. The two sides have started from maximal positions. The US demands that Iranians should completely wrap up its nuclear program which would never be accepted by Iran. Some compromises would have to be found in such a manner that Iran's self esteem, its sense of dignity and interests are safeguarded. Yet, the United States has not abandoned or given up the policy of containing Iran. It has been its traditional policy and it is too early and premature to assume that there has been any significant shift in that policy. The shift has been in Obama's own position very rightly.

It is extremely unlikely that Iran would be seen to have climbed down under pressure from the West because it is a proud nation and there is no reason and no objective factors on the ground as to why Iran should buckle under pressure. It has resisted the pressure and defying it has not brought it down.

It is a fact that Iran could do better by developing good relations with the West as it badly needs an injection of modern technology and other basic

<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

things. But even while the sanctions and American hostility with Iran have slowed down Iran's development and progress over the years, it has continued to march forward regardless of consequences of UN Security Council resolutions against it.

Three prominent scholars examine the emergence of an Iranian nuclear political strategy and its role in shaping domestic political discourse and international security policy.

Farideh Farhi examines Iran's nuclear policy and the rhetorical instruments used in the shaping of public opinion between 2002 and 2007. She argues that while the foundations for a nationalist nuclear discourse were carefully laid out during the presidency of reformist Mohammad Khatami, the failure of negotiations between the reformist government and European representatives and subsequent increased pressure on the Mahmoud Ahmadinejad government contributed to the increasingly strident tone Iranian negotiators took after 2006 (Judith S. Yaphe, 2010).

Bahman Bakhtiari explores how Iran's leaders use Western opposition to the country's nuclear program to validate their quest for international legitimacy and to generate domestic national unity. Dr. Bakhtiari concludes that Iranian politics in the past three decades have been so contentious and chaotic and its leaders so immersed in internal political struggles that they have failed to see how their comments damage their goals of achieving international legitimacy and security.

Anoushiravan Ehteshami analyzes the troubled presidential election of June 2009 and finds that while we may not be sure of the makeup of a " new"
<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

Iran, we can be confident that the relationship between state and society and between the forces that make up the Iranian power elite will never again be the same. The zero-sum game in play has made compromise supremely difficult, and he believes we are probably witnessing the disaggregation of the Islamic republican state as a single ideological monolith. He blames Iran's lack of clarity in negotiating, its policy of deliberate obtuseness, and the diversity of its nuclear objectives for driving its neighbors to pursue their own nuclear programs.

President Obama's 2009 Nowruz Message

THE PRESIDENT: Today I want to extend my very best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz around the world.

This holiday is both an ancient ritual and a moment of renewal, and I hope that you enjoy this special time of year with friends and family. In particular, I would like to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Nowruz is just one part of your great and celebrated culture. Over many centuries your art, your music, literature and innovation have made the world a better and more beautiful place. Here in the United States our own communities have been enhanced by the contributions of Iranian Americans. We know that you are a great civilization, and your accomplishments have earned the respect of the United States and the world.

For nearly three decades relations between our nations have been strained. But at this holiday we are reminded of the common humanity that binds us together. Indeed, you will be celebrating your New Year in much the same

way that we Americans mark our holidays — by gathering with friends and family, exchanging gifts and stories, and looking to the future with a renewed sense of hope.

Within these celebrations lies the promise of a new day, the promise of opportunity for our children, security for our families, progress for our communities, and peace between nations. Those are shared hopes, those are common dreams.

So in this season of new beginnings I would like to speak clearly to Iran's leaders. We have serious differences that have grown over time. My administration is now committed to diplomacy that addresses the full range of issues before us, and to pursuing constructive ties among the United States, Iran and the international community. This process will not be advanced by threats. We seek instead engagement that is honest and grounded in mutual respect.

You, too, have a choice. The United States wants the Islamic Republic of Iran to take its rightful place in the community of nations. You have that right — but it comes with real responsibilities, and that place cannot be reached through terror or arms, but rather through peaceful actions that demonstrate the true greatness of the Iranian people and civilization. And the measure of that greatness is not the capacity to destroy, it is your demonstrated ability to build and create.

So on the occasion of your New Year, I want you, the people and leader of Iran, to understand the future that we seek. It's a future with renewed exchanges among our people, and greater opportunities for partnership and

<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

commerce. It's a future where the old divisions are overcome, where you and all of your neighbors and the wider world can live in greater security and greater peace.

I know that this won't be reached easily. There are those who insist that we be defined by our differences. But let us remember the words that were written by the poet Saadi, so many years ago: "The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence." With the coming of a new season, we're reminded of this precious humanity that we all share. And we can once again call upon this spirit as we seek the promise of a new beginning.

Thank you, and Eid-eh Shoma Mobarak.

But, in 2010 Nowruz speech, he used differed in tone from the one he issued in 2009. It contains criticism.

Today, I want to extend my best wishes to all who are celebrating Nowruz in the United States and around the world. On this New Year's celebration, friends and family have a unique opportunity to reflect on the year gone by; to celebrate their time together; and to share in their hopes for the future.

One year ago, I chose this occasion to speak directly to the people and leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and to offer a new chapter of engagement on the basis of mutual interests and mutual respect. I did so with no illusions. For three decades, the United States and Iran have been alienated from one another. Iran's leaders have sought their own legitimacy

through hostility to America. And we continue to have serious differences on many issues.

I said, last year, that the choice for a better future was in the hands of Iran's leaders. That remains true today. Together with the international community, the United States acknowledges your right to peaceful nuclear energy – we insist only that you adhere to the same responsibilities that apply to other nations. We are familiar with your grievances from the past – we have our own grievances as well, but we are prepared to move forward. We know what you're against; now tell us what you're for.

For reasons known only to them, the leaders of Iran have shown themselves unable to answer that question. You have refused good faith proposals from the international community. They have turned their backs on a pathway that would bring more opportunity to all Iranians, and allow a great civilization to take its rightful place in the community of nations.

Faced with an extended hand, Iran's leaders have shown only a clenched fist. Last June, the world watched with admiration, as Iranians sought to exercise their universal right to be heard. But tragically, the aspirations of the Iranian people were also met with a clenched fist, as people marching silently were beaten with batons; political prisoners were rounded up and abused; absurd and false accusations were leveled against the United States and the West; and people everywhere were horrified by the video of a young woman killed in the street.

The United States does not meddle in Iran's internal affairs. Our commitment – our responsibility – is to stand up for those rights that should be universal
<https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

to all human beings. That includes the right to speak freely, to assemble without fear; the right to the equal administration of justice, and to express your views without facing retribution against you or your families.

I want the Iranian people to know what my country stands for. The United States believes in the dignity of every human being, and an international order that bends the arc of history in the direction of justice – a future where Iranians can exercise their rights, to participate fully in the global economy, and enrich the world through educational and cultural exchanges beyond Iran’s borders. That is the future that we seek. That is what America is for.

That is why, even as we continue to have differences with the Iranian government, we will sustain our commitment to a more hopeful future for the Iranian people. For instance, by increasing opportunities for educational exchanges so that Iranian students can come to our colleges and universities and to our efforts to ensure that Iranians can have access to the software and Internet technology that will enable them to communicate with each other, and with the world without fear of censorship.

Finally, let me be clear: we are working with the international community to hold the Iranian government accountable because they refuse to live up to their international obligations. But our offer of comprehensive diplomatic contacts and dialogue stands. Indeed, over the course of the last year, it is the Iranian government that has chosen to isolate itself, and to choose a self-defeating focus on the past over a commitment to build a better future.

Last year, I quoted the words of the poet Saadi, who said: “ The children of Adam are limbs to each other, having been created of one essence.” I still <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

believe that – I believe it with every fiber of my being. And even as we have differences, the Iranian government continues to have the choice to pursue a better future, and to meet its international responsibilities, while respecting the dignity and fundamental human rights of its own people.

Thank you. And Aid-e-Shoma Mobarak.

President Bush's Nowruz Message in 2008

This statement by President George W. Bush on the occasion of Nowruz, 2008, is presented as a contrast with the statement of President Obama on the same occasion one year later. In particular, President Bush stresses in his statement the U. S. support for the “ people” of Iran and the U. S. view that the Iranian people deserve to live in a free society. That was viewed as expressing the view of President Bush and his Administration that

For the millions of people who trace their heritage to Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Turkey, Pakistan, India, and Central Asia, Nowruz is a time to celebrate the new year with the arrival of spring. . . . Our country is proud to be a land where individuals from many different cultures can pass their traditions on to future generations. The diversity of America brings joy to our citizens and strengthens our nation during Nowruz and throughout the year.

The people of the United States respects the people of Iran, that we respect the traditions of Iran, the great history of Iran. We have differences with the government, but we honor the people, and we want the people to live in a free society. We believe freedom is a right for all people and that the freer the world is, the more peaceful the world is.

And so my message is, please don't be discouraged by the slogans that say America doesn't like you, because we do, and we respect you. . . .

I'd say to the regime that they made decisions that have made it very difficult for the people of Iran. In other words, the Iranian leaders, in their desire to enrich uranium – in spite of the fact that the international community has asked them not to — has isolated a great country; and that there's a way forward. I mean, the Iranian leaders know there's a way forward, and that is verifiably suspend your enrichment and you can have new relationship with people in the U. N. Security Council, for example. It's just sad that the leadership is in many ways very stubborn, because the Iraqi — the Iranian people are not realizing their true rights.

And they're confusing people in Iraq, as well, about their desires. It's a tough period in history for the Iranian people, but it doesn't have to be that way. . . .

The people of Iran must understand that the [poor economic] conditions exist in large part because of either management by the government or isolation because of the government's decisions on foreign policy matters — such as announcing they want to destroy countries with a nuclear weapon. It is irresponsible remarks like that which cause great credibility loss with the Iranian government, the actions of which are affecting the country.(us Iran relation)

Methodology

In favor of a common set of values or aspirations., Obama's rhetoric of

consilience can foster reconciliation. It also is the symbolic strategy of what <https://assignbuster.com/discourse-analysis-and-political-rhetoric-politics-essay/>

Mark Lawrence McPhail terms “ coherence” (a conscious understanding and integration of difference in order to transform division) because it acknowledges that many members of his composite audience have and are suffering from shared and unique traumas that can be worked through with multiracial and class coalitions appealing to the ideal of justice.

In contrast t