



Discourse Analysis Approach to Euphemism at Word and Sentence Level: A Case of Political Speech

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Abstract

This study was a critical discourse analysis of the US and Iran's politician speeches from 2013 to 2015 on the issue of nuclear negotiations in order to show how a single reality like nuclear agreement was presented and viewed by the politicians of the United States and Iran. Using Van Dijk's (2004) framework, this study investigated how the politicians of each country try to justify their ideas and persuade their audience by utilizing subtle ideological discourse structures in their speech. In doing so, the present study tried to identify the similarities and differences between English and Persian political discourse regarding euphemism on the basis of the frequency of each category. Having analyze data via descriptive statistics and chi-square methods, the results of the speeches indicated that politicians employ euphemistic strategies related to authority and evidentiality to establish a framework for burden or topos, which facilitates robust arguments against specific topics. In essence, they present substantial evidence or validation through references to authoritative figures, including esteemed experts, moral leaders, and reputable international organizations. By citing trustworthy individuals, scholarly articles, and relevant scenarios, they aim to project objectivity, reliability, and credibility. This approach serves to bolster their claims and perspectives within an argument, rendering their assertions self-evident, adequate, rational, and plausible.

Keywords: Euphemism; Political discourse; Iranian politicians; American politicians

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as a powerful tool in political discourse, where speakers strategically use linguistic devices to influence public perception and opinion (Van Dijk, 1997). Political discourse, defined by its actors—politicians and political institutions—is characterized by purpose-driven language choices and strategic communication (Ilic & Radulovic, 2014). Politicians address critical national and international issues, such as war, peace, trade, and legislation, often

employing nuanced linguistic techniques to persuade and appeal to their audiences (Ilic & Radulovic, 2014; Van Dijk, 1997).

Among these devices, euphemism plays a critical role in softening harsh realities, mitigating controversial topics, and framing ideologies in a more acceptable manner. Euphemism, defined as the substitution of potentially offensive terms with milder expressions, allows politicians to navigate sensitive topics without alienating audiences (Burridge, 2012; Crespo-Fernandez, 2014). While euphemism can promote politeness and consensus, its darker counterpart—double-

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speak or deceptive euphemism—can distort realities and manipulate public opinion, reinforcing ideological divides (Luts, 1990; Van Dijk, 2004).

Euphemism operates at various linguistic levels, notably at the word and sentence levels, allowing politicians to subtly manipulate meaning and obscure potentially damaging information (Burridge, 2012; Crespo-Fernandez, 2014). Word-level euphemisms often involve substituting direct or potentially offensive terms with more neutral or vague expressions, while sentence-level euphemisms encompass broader structural strategies, such as hedging, passive constructions, and indirectness, to soften statements or deflect responsibility. The interplay between euphemism at the word and sentence levels in political speeches remains underexplored. Existing research has primarily focused on word-level euphemisms, neglecting how sentence-level constructions work synergistically to shape political narratives. This gap in the literature limits a comprehensive understanding of how politicians employ euphemistic strategies to construct persuasive and ideologically loaded discourse.

Van Dijk's (2004) "ideological square" framework outlines how political discourse emphasizes positive self-representation and negative other-representation. Through specific discursive strategies, politicians encode ideologies into their language, requiring critical discourse analysis (CDA) to uncover hidden meanings and power dynamics. CDA investigates the relationships between linguistic choices, sociopolitical contexts, and ideological structures, revealing the covert mechanisms behind political communication (Fairclough, 2005).

The interplay between euphemism at the word and sentence levels in political speeches remains underexplored. Existing research has primarily focused on word-level euphemisms, neglecting how sentence-level constructions work synergistically to shape political narratives. This gap in the literature limits a comprehensive understanding of how politicians employ euphemistic strategies to construct persuasive and ideologically loaded discourse. Another gap that stands out in the related literature is the

lack of a critical analysis of U.S. and Iranian politicians, especially during nuclear negotiations (2013–2015). This study, then, uses Van Dijk's (2004) socio-cognitive model to critically analyze the speeches of U.S. and Iranian politicians during nuclear negotiations (2013–2015). It investigates how language, particularly euphemism, is strategically employed to construct ideologies, justify actions, and persuade audiences. By comparing English and Persian political discourses, the study identifies similarities and differences in euphemistic strategies and their role in shaping public perceptions, revealing the subtle mechanisms of ideological manipulation in political communication.

The importance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding how language is strategically used in political discourse to shape ideologies and influence public perception. By analyzing the euphemistic strategies employed by U.S. and Iranian politicians during nuclear negotiations, the study provides insights into how linguistic choices reflect and reinforce power dynamics, cultural values, and political objectives. It highlights the dual nature of euphemism as both a tool for consensus-building and a mechanism for manipulation, shedding light on its role in constructing and concealing ideological narratives. This research not only enriches the field of critical discourse analysis but also equips readers with a deeper awareness of the persuasive and ideological functions of political language, fostering critical engagement with political communication.

Theoretical Background

Introduction to Discourse and CDA

Discourse analysis explores how language functions within its social, cultural, and political contexts, examining both written and spoken communication. Traditional linguistic approaches focused on the sentence as the primary unit of analysis. However, modern discourse analysis emphasizes language as a tool for interaction and meaning-making, moving beyond isolated sentences to include broader social and cultural dimensions (Fairclough, 1992). CDA, an interdisciplinary branch of discourse analysis, emerged in the 1970s as a response to the need to study power dynamics

and ideologies embedded in language. CDA reveals how language reflects and reproduces social power, dominance, and inequality, making it particularly suited for analyzing political discourse (Van Dijk, 1993; Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

CDA offers a comprehensive lens to examine how euphemistic language reflects and reinforces power dynamics in political contexts. CDA emphasizes the interplay between language, power, and ideology, highlighting how euphemistic expressions are used to legitimize policies, justify actions, and maintain authority. Additionally, Chilton's (2004) model of political discourse underscores the strategic use of linguistic choices to shape political reality and influence public opinion.

Key Theoretical Frameworks in CDA

CDA relies on several theoretical models to uncover hidden power structures in discourse:

Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model

Fairclough (1995) introduced a comprehensive framework connecting textual analysis with discursive and social practices. This model examines how language choices within texts reflect broader societal norms and power relations. The framework emphasizes description (linguistic features), interpretation (text-production processes), and explanation (sociocultural contexts), providing a systematic approach to uncovering ideology in language.

Van Dijk's Socio-Cognitive Approach (SCA)

Van Dijk (1998) proposed a triangular relationship between discourse, cognition, and society, highlighting the role of mental models in shaping discourse. His "ideological square" framework—emphasizing positive self-representation and negative other-representation—illustrates how political language creates in-group and out-group dynamics. This approach underscores the cognitive mechanisms that underlie ideological manipulation in texts.

Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach

Wodak (2001) integrates historical and sociopolitical contexts into CDA, providing a multidimensional analysis of texts. This method investigates how past events and

cultural backgrounds influence discourse structures, making it particularly effective for analysing politically charged or historically significant texts.

Among these models and frameworks, Van Dijk's SCA offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing discourse by integrating linguistic structures, cognitive processes, and social contexts. Unlike traditional discourse analysis models that focus solely on textual features or social power relations, the SCA bridges the gap between language and cognition by emphasizing the role of mental models in discourse production and comprehension (van Dijk, 2008). Mental models are subjective representations of events shaped by personal experiences, beliefs, and ideologies, influencing how individuals interpret and construct discourse. In political speech, euphemisms operate within these mental models to subtly shape public perception and normalize controversial policies (Badakhshan & Mousavi, 2013). Another key advantage of the SCA over other models is its integration of cognitive and social dimensions, offering a more holistic understanding of how language both shapes and is shaped by social structures. Furthermore, its adaptability across various discourse types makes it a versatile tool for analyzing the strategic use of euphemisms in political speech. By employing the SCA, this study can uncover how word- and sentence-level euphemisms are cognitively processed and socially constructed to influence public opinion and maintain ideological dominance.

Political Discourse and the Role of Euphemism

Politics depends on language for persuasion, legitimacy, and the exercise of power. Political discourse encompasses the text and talk of politicians, reflecting their ideological goals and strategies. According to Chilton and Schäffner (1997), political discourse operates on multiple levels, linking linguistic choices to political behaviors such as coercion, resistance, and legitimization. These strategies are essential for shaping public opinion and achieving political objectives.

Euphemism is a significant linguistic phen-

nomenon that serves as a communication tool, particularly in contexts involving sensitive topics or taboos (Jaganegara, 2023). It allows speakers to convey messages while prioritizing politeness and social harmony. Euphemisms often emerge in various forms of media, including news headlines, where their use helps navigate potentially harsh realities in a more palatable manner (Jaganegara, 2023). Euphemism is a central feature of political language, serving as a rhetorical device to manage public perception. Euphemistic expressions soften unpleasant realities, allowing politicians to navigate controversial topics while maintaining their audience's favor (Allan & Burridge, 1991). For example, terms like “collateral damage” replace harsher descriptions of civilian casualties, obscuring the moral and ethical implications of military actions. Such linguistic choices demonstrate the dual role of euphemism in facilitating politeness and disguising ideological manipulation (Lutz, 1990; Van Dijk, 2004). This discourse highlights the tension between effective communication and the responsibility of political leaders to convey transparency in their messaging.

Notably, the prevalence of euphemisms in political speech has sparked significant discussion regarding ethical considerations (Kameneva & Rabkina, 2020). Critics argue that the reliance on euphemistic language can lead to a disconnect between political discourse and the actual circumstances faced by citizens, potentially masking critical societal issues and exacerbating public disillusionment (Yafarova, 2015).

Features and Functions of Political Euphemism

Political euphemisms are characterized by:

1. **Deviating from Literal Meanings:** Euphemisms often obscure their true meanings, creating conceptual distance between the term and its referent. For instance, “peacekeeper” as a term for a missile masks its destructive nature (Zhao, 2010).

2. **Ambiguity and Vagueness:** By replacing specific terms with general or neutral ones, political euphemisms make discourse less transparent. For example, “military operations” or “rescue missions” are used to obscure aggressive actions.

3. **Context-Specific Adaptability:** Euphemisms evolve with political and cultural contexts, reflecting changes in societal values and priorities. For instance, terms like “downsizing” emerged in economic discourse to soften the impact of layoffs (Page, 2003).

The pragmatic functions of euphemisms in political discourse include concealing unpleasant truths, minimizing public resistance, and persuading audiences. These functions align with Austin’s (1962) speech act theory, where euphemisms perform illocutionary acts to influence perception and perlocutionary acts to shape behavior.

CDA’s Role in Analyzing Political Euphemism

CDA provides critical insights into how euphemisms operate within political discourse to manipulate ideology and power. By analyzing linguistic structures and their sociopolitical implications, CDA exposes the hidden mechanisms through which politicians shape public opinion. This is particularly relevant in contexts where euphemisms are used to justify contentious actions, as seen in the speeches of U.S. and Iranian politicians during nuclear negotiations. Understanding the strategic use of language in political discourse, particularly euphemisms, is essential for uncovering the ideologies and power dynamics embedded in texts. CDA, with its robust theoretical frameworks, offers a systematic approach to analyzing these linguistic strategies, highlighting the critical role of language in shaping societal perceptions and political realities.

As a take-home message, CDA provides a robust framework for examining the intersection of language, power, and ideology, particularly in political discourse. By analyzing linguistic strategies like euphemism, CDA reveals how politicians shape ideologies and influence public perception. This literature highlights the importance of critical engagement with political language to uncover its ideological and manipulative dimensions.

In order to pursue the purposes of the present study, the following research questions were posed:

1. What are the most and the least frequent euphemistic categories at word and sentence

levels in Iran and America's politician speeches as a whole regarding Van Dijk's classification of euphemistic strategies?

2. Is there any significant difference between Iran and America's politician speeches as whole regarding Van Dijk's classification of euphemistic strategies at word and sentence levels?

The study addresses a group of euphemistic clusters in English and Persian contemporary political discourse. The induced analysis is an attempt to deconstruct the meaning of such terms and to become familiar with political euphemistic expressions in the context of their use to show how their loaded nature and their social force guide people's thinking and shapes their action. Moreover, this study can provide beneficial information of euphemistic elements and strategies on political texts in teaching for both teachers and students in this field, particularly, while reading such a text. In other words, being familiar with euphemism and euphemistic strategies at word and sentence levels can pave the way for students to understand the text much better when they are taught by the teachers in class as a part of a lesson. The findings of this research are also of vital importance to textbook developers and syllabus designers to incorporate these strategies in their teaching materials. For example, a course in euphemism can be proposed for those who are interested in politics and want to continue their studies academically at universities in this field.

This research is also significant because it offers deeper insights into the mechanisms of political persuasion and the subtle ways language shapes public discourse. Understanding these strategies is crucial for fostering critical media literacy, enabling audiences to better interpret and critique political messaging. Moreover, this study contributes to the broader field of discourse analysis by bridging the gap between lexical and syntactic approaches to euphemism in political language.

METHOD

Research Design

A mixed-methods approach design was employed for the current study; one which is the synthesis of both quantitative and qualitative

modes. It was a quan-qual design in which a part of data was collected quantitatively followed by the qualitative analysis of the data. Based on the research questions, there were three pairs of applied euphemistic strategies taken by the politicians. Quantitatively, each pair was compared separately to see if there was a significant difference between them. As for the qualitative side of the study, content or document analysis as a kind of qualitative research method was applied in this study for the purpose of identifying specified characteristics of the materials (speeches). To this end, the researcher went through the speeches pinpointing various types of euphemistic strategies exhibited in different tables and graphs. The purpose was to see the most and the least applied euphemistic strategies used in politicians' speeches by comparing and contrasting them and to see manipulation of realities and ideologies in speeches with respect to euphemistic strategies and critical discourse analysis. In addition, this study enjoyed content validity since it was conducted in terms of an accepted theoretical framework that was introduced by van Dijk (2004).

Research Materials

The data for this study consisted of the transcriptions of the direct quotations of American and Iranian politician speeches in English and Persian about nuclear negotiations. All the speeches were taken from the internet to be used for analytic purposes. Instead of using newspapers, direct quotations were selected to avoid political orientation and speech editions common in most of the newspapers. These speeches included the President Obama and President Rouhani's speeches as well as Foreign Secretaries, Kerry and Zarif, between November, 2013 and September, 2015 regarding nuclear negotiations. Also, all their speeches in the mentioned time span were selected as the data of the study because a more comprehensive treatment of the issue was needed and one obvious way of being comprehensive was to have a large corpus.

Regarding the politicians' speeches, the Presidents of these two countries, Obama and Rouhani, delivered four speeches and their

Foreign Secretaries made two speeches. So, they were the same in the number of speeches they made on nuclear negotiations. But the criterion for the analysis of these speeches was the number of words not the number of speeches, that is, it was tried to consider all the politician speeches on the basis of word counting. With respect to word counting, there was a limitation. The United States politicians' speeches was higher than that of their counterparts. In order

to have an equal number of words, only some parts of the long speeches were randomly selected to be analyzed.

Lastly, the materials of the study included all the speeches delivered by the Presidents and Foreign Secretaries of the United States and Iran. There were about 31000 words in which the number of words in politicians' speeches of each country is about 15500. Tables 1 to 4 presents a synopsis of the speeches.

Table 1

Date and word numbers of Obama's Speeches

| Obama | Speech one | Speech two | Speech three | Speech four |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Date | Nov., 23, 2013 | April, 2, 2015 | July, 14, 2015 | August, 5, 2015 |
| Word number | 1026 | 2102 | 2601 | 6381 |
| Total number of words | 12110 | | | |

Table 2

Date and word numbers of Rouhani's Speeches

| Rouhani | Speech one | Speech two | Speech three | Speech four |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Date | Nov., 23, 2013 | Nov., 24, 2014 | April, 9, 2015 | July, 14, 2015 |
| Word number | 1602 | 1509 | 2546 | 2955 |
| Total number of words | 8612 | | | |

Table 3

Date and word numbers of Kerry's Speeches

| Kerry | Speech one | Speech two |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------|
| Date | July, 19, 2014 | 1241 |
| Word number | Sep., 2, 2015 | 7670 |
| Total number of words | 8911 | |

Table 4

Date and word numbers of Selected Speeches

| Zarif | Speech one | Speech two |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------|
| Date | Dec. 2, 2014 | 4256 |
| Word number | July 21, 2015 | 2749 |
| Total number of words | 7014 | |

Furthermore, Table 5 compares the differences between the two min types of speeches in two languages. It shows that the number of words in the presidents' speeches of these two countries is 17224 and Foreign

Secretaries' speeches of these two countries include 14028 words. In addition, politicians' speeches of each country consist of 15626 words and the total number of words in all speeches is 31252.

Table 5
Comparison of Total Words in Two Languages

| Politician | President | Foreign Secretary | Total |
|------------|-----------|-------------------|-------|
| America | 8612 | 7014 | 15626 |
| Iran | 8612 | 7014 | 15626 |
| Total | 17224 | 14028 | 31252 |

Research Instruments

The framework used in this study was based on Van Dijk's (2004) framework adopted from *Politics, Ideology and Discourse* to detect discursive structures within the transcripts of the politicians' speeches to be compared and contrasted and to find out whether there was a significant difference between them or not. In addition, this framework was used to discover the ideologies lies behind the discursive structures. To attain the aims of the study, the macro strategies of 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other- representation' (which are intimately tied up with 'Polarization' of in-group vs. out-group ideologies or US-THEM) plus the other 25 more subtle strategies were turned out to be very accurate criteria for the evaluation of attitudes, and opinions. Van Dijk (2004) elaborates on 27 ideological strategies among which the fundamental dichotomy of 'self-positive-representation' and 'other negative-representation' as the two semantic macro- strategies is conspicuous. Positive self-representation or in-group favoritism was used for the purpose of 'face keeping' or 'impression management' (Van Dijk, 2004) and negative other-representation was complementary to positive self-representation. This dichotomy was used to show the division between in-groups and out-groups, between 'good' and 'bad', superior and inferior, US and THEM.

Procedures of data collection

The transcriptions of the politicians' speeches collected from the internet between November, 2013 and September, 2015 comprised the data of the study. The reason behind the mentioned time span within which the data were collected was the important negotiations about nuclear issues that took place after a long period of tension between the United States and Iran. Furthermore, to avoid probable errors of identification and in order to have a uniform set of data, an

inter-rater (inter-coder) reliability was used. In doing so, all the selected speeches were examined and analyzed by a rater (coders) who was quite familiar with the objectives of the study and the strategies of the theoretical framework. Then, the results were correlated with those of the researcher as an estimate of the inter- rater (inter- coder) reliability of the judgment made by the researcher and the rater (coder).

Procedures of data analysis

The euphemistic strategies at word and sentence levels were coded, extracted, and counted in the two languages. Then they were classified based on the categorization suggested by Van Dijk (2004) to define the frequency of each euphemistic strategy in each language to be compared and contrasted. In order to know whether the difference was significant or not, a quantitative analysis was done using chi-square as the appropriate nonparametric statistical test to examine and determine any significant differences in the frequency of the elements.

After classifying the data and defining the frequency of the euphemistic elements, they were subjected to detailed qualitative analysis within the critical discourse analysis of Van Dijk's (2004) framework to know the underlying ideological points of the two politicians. It is worth mentioning that in detecting discursive strategies within the transcripts of the candidates' speeches and discovering the ideologies underlying them, the macro strategies of 'positive self-representation' and 'negative other-representation through other 25 more subtle strategies were used for the evaluation of underlying ideologies. In this framework, Van Dijk (2004) elaborates on 27 ideological strategies among which the fundamental dichotomy of 'positive-self presentation' and 'negative- other presentation' stand out.

RESULTS

By having a look at the following tables, it can be understood that the euphemistic devices used

in the speeches of all American politicians are as follows respectively: polarization, burden/ topos, categorization, positive self-presentation, evidenti-

ality and authority and the least frequent euphemistic strategies are victimization, and metaphor, national self- glorification, and Irony.

Table 6

A Comparison of the Degree of utilization of Euphemistic strategies in American and Iranian Politicians' speech

| Euphemistic Strategy | Obama | Rouhani | Kerry | Zariff |
|------------------------------|--------------|----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Actor description | 51 | 47 | 20 | 36 |
| Authority | 115 | 107 | 65 | 86 |
| Burden/ topos | 218 | 120 | 144 | 132 |
| categorization | 209 | 93 | 99 | 71 |
| Comparison | 42 | 15 | 21 | 13 |
| Consensus | 30 | 5 | 18 | 14 |
| counterfactuals | 23 | 11 | 9 | 5 |
| Disclaimers | 9 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| euphemism | 8 | 14 | 6 | 9 |
| Evidentiality | 149 | 98 | 73 | 149 |
| example/ illustration | 76 | 67 | 48 | 37 |
| Generalization | 8 | 9 | 1 | 12 |
| Hyperbole | 83 | 10 | 28 | 16 |
| Implication | 74 | 24 | 25 | 36 |
| Irony | 4 | 0 | 1 | 3 |
| Lexicalization | 15 | 17 | 1 | 15 |
| Metaphor | 2 | 11 | 1 | 12 |
| National self- glorification | 4 | 2 | 0 | 3 |
| Number game | 74 | 68 | 59 | 41 |
| Norm expression | 26 | 22 | 5 | 19 |
| Negative other- presentation | 91 | 43 | 41 | 48 |
| Polarization | 276 | 191 | 271 | 106 |
| Populism | 48 | 52 | 19 | 30 |
| Positive self- presentation | 124 | 111 | 100 | 130 |
| Vagueness | 42 | 90 | 19 | 50 |
| victimization | 0 | 10 | 3 | 9 |
| \bar{X} | 69.26 | 47.96 | 41.57 | 41.73 |

Table 7

A Comparison of the Total Degree of utilization of Euphemistic strategies in American and Iranian Politicians' speech

| Euphemistic Strategy | American politicians | Iranian Politicians |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Actor description | 71 | 83 |
| Authority | 180 | 193 |
| Burden/ topos | 362 | 252 |
| Categorization | 308 | 164 |
| Comparison | 63 | 28 |
| Consensus | 48 | 19 |
| Counterfactuals | 32 | 16 |
| Disclaimers | 13 | 6 |
| Euphemism | 14 | 23 |
| Evidentiality | 222 | 247 |
| Example/ illustration | 124 | 104 |
| Generalization | 9 | 21 |
| Hyperbole | 111 | 26 |

| | | |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Implication | 99 | 60 |
| Irony | 5 | 3 |
| Lexicalization | 16 | 32 |
| Metaphor | 3 | 23 |
| National self- glorification | 4 | 5 |
| Number game | 133 | 109 |
| Norm expression | 31 | 41 |
| Negative other- presentation | 132 | 91 |
| Polarization | 547 | 297 |
| Populism | 67 | 82 |
| Positive self- presentation | 224 | 241 |
| Vagueness | 61 | 140 |
| Victimization | 3 | 19 |
| Total | 2882 | 2325 |
| Mean | 55.41 | 44.71 |

Table 8*A Summary of utilization of Euphemistic strategies in American and Iranian Politicians' speech*

| | |
|--|-------|
| American Total Use of Euphemistic Strategies | 2882 |
| Iranian Total Use of Euphemistic Strategies | 2325 |
| Mean of American Total Use of Euphemistic Strategies | 55.41 |
| Mean of Iranian Total Use of Euphemistic Strategies | 44.71 |

Table 9*The most frequent euphemistic devices used by American and Iranians' politicians*

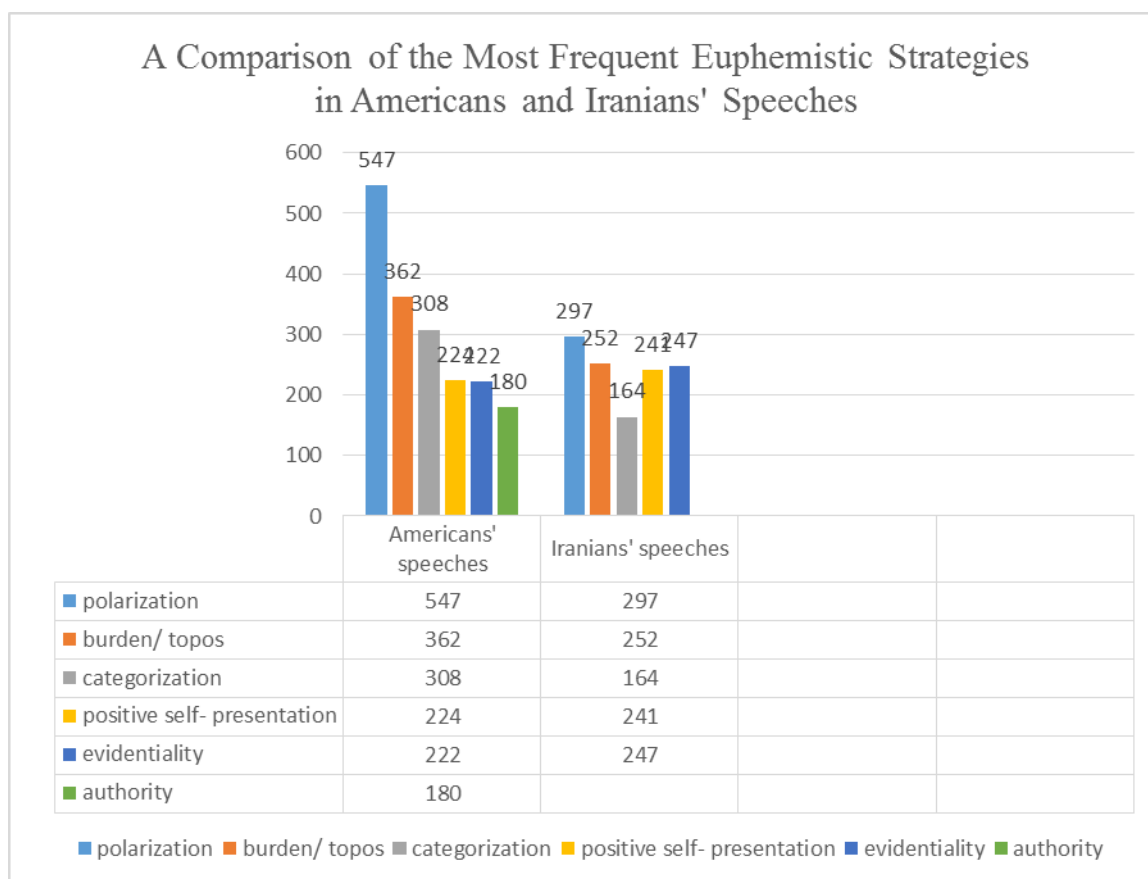
| Americans' politicians | Iranians' politicians |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| polarization | polarization |
| Burden/ topos | Burden/ topos |
| categorization | evidentiality |
| Positive self- presentation | Positive self- presentation |
| evidentiality | authority |
| authority | categorization |

Table 10*The least frequent euphemistic devices used by American and Iranians' politicians*

| Americans' politicians | Iranians' politicians |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Victimization, metaphor | Irony |
| national self- glorification | National self- glorification |
| Irony | disclaimers |

By considering the euphemistic devices in the speeches of all Iranians' politicians, the most frequent euphemistic devices are polarization, burden/ topos, evidentiality, positive self-

presentation, authority and categorization while the least frequent ones in their speeches are Irony, national self- glorification, and disclaimers respectively.

**Figure 1**

A comparison of the most frequent euphemistic strategies in American and Iranians' speeches

To check if there are significant differences in the use of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian politicians at all. The analysis of crosstabs (two-way Chi-square) was performed

to answer this research question and the same steps had been taken to calculate the use of the euphemistic devices in the all speeches of the American and Iranian politicians (Table 6).

Table 11

Chi-Square Tests for the use of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian Politicians

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 63188.235 ^a | 528 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 15391.143 | 528 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 2148.854 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 2882 | | |

As appeared in Table 4.3, chi-square found significant differences ($p < .05$) in the use of euphemistic devices applied by the American and Iranian politicians; subsequently the third null hypothesis of the present study that is "There are no significant differences in the use of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian politicians" was rejected, and it was asserted that there are significant differences in the uses of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian politicians.

Further, to check if there are significant differences in the use of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian politicians at all. Again, the analysis of crosstabs (two-way Chi-square) was performed to answer this research question and the same steps had been taken to calculate the use of the euphemistic devices in the all speeches of the American and Iranian politicians (Table 7).

Table 12
Chi-Square Tests for the use of euphemistic devices by American and Iranian Politicians

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DISCUSSION

The euphemistic strategies are used to manipulate the meaning in discourse, particularly in political discourse. As it was seen in this study, the politician uses the euphemistic devices to manipulate the truth and to achieve their goals inside their countries and even all over the world. In fact, it is in the industry of politics that politicians take advantage of these euphemistic strategies to rearrange public awareness of facts, beliefs, and ideologies to their own objectives. In all the Iranian speeches, the politicians try to represent a “rosy” view of negotiation in which it leads to better economy in the life of Iranians while simultaneously they will keep their programs in nuclear reactors. On the other hand, American politicians are very proud of themselves in stopping the Iranian nuclear program which they believe as the main source of world threat. In this way, by stopping their nuclear program, they can bring peace to people all over the world.

In Polarization, the politicians try to represent their supporters. In addition, the high frequency of polarization, namely the high use of collective pronouns, “we” and “they”, indicates the distance between the United States and Iran politically and historically in which the politicians try to show their profound problems in their relationships through speeches in nuclear negotiations. In doing so, they attested to make

an image of discrepancy and difference by referring to the problems in their speeches. Moreover, the collective pronouns refer to inclusiveness to reflect solidarity and oneness with themselves as a member of the government, with people as their general public, and with other countries as their allies, friends, and partners.

In short, the function of “we” in political discourse accompanied by a sense of collectively. So, the politicians in both countries, use a high frequency of “we”, “our”, and “us” to show that all political parties especially the Conservative (Osulgara) in Iran and the Republican in America agree with nuclear negotiations and support their political rivals in such an issue (Bull & Fetzer, 2006; Håkansson, 2012).

Furthermore, the pronoun “they” is used as a distancing device (Håkansson, 2012) and the speeches on nuclear negotiations can be considered as a discourse in which the opposing countries use such a discourse as an instance of confrontation and antagonism with a hostile or argumentative situation. In addition to the pronoun “They” as a distancing device, the politician’s resort to categorization as a euphemistic strategy in which they categorize the countries, political parties, and also people as their “in- group” when they are in line of their ideas and “out-group” when they are against their viewpoints regarding an issue such as nuclear negotiations. In this study, all politicians use categorization in their speeches though their frequencies is different from each other, the United States politicians use this euphemistic strategy more than the Iranian politicians (337 versus 173).

As it is clear, the categorization in politicians’ speeches imbued with norms and values that are positively expressed about in-groups and negatively about out- groups. Consequently, the politicians represent their aims under the category of in- group and out- group and try to represent the in- group positively and out- group

negatively through their aims and specific actions in certain issue like nuclear negotiations. Needless to say that the above euphemistic strategies, polarization and categorization, are used to pave the way for the macro-structure of positive self- presentation and negative other- presentation. It should be mentioned that positive self- presentation and negative other- presentation is considered as a strategy in Van Dijk taxonomy (2004) and has the highest frequency in the politician speeches among all euphemistic devices. From the data analysis, it is found that the most common occurring strategy in the speeches is positive-self presentation. The strategy, positive self- presentation, is used more frequently by the collective pronouns (we, our, us) than negative other- presentation that is represented by the third person pronouns (they, them). The politician's resort to positive self- presentation as a strategy to represent their actions positively in favor of their aims as well as in- group and public requests in a way to keep their face in order to make a positive image of themselves in their country and all over the world.

The fact that positive-self presentation as the most frequent in occurrence among discursive euphemistic devices shows that by representing politicians as social actors and their actions in a more positive way, the politicians emphasize their positive-self presentation in order to enable themselves to invest their ideology in the audience and impose their ideological intentions on them. In the sentences by the American politicians, they distinctly declare that nuclear negotiations will prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons and also this deal will bring peace all over the world and make America and the world safer and more secure. On the other hand, the Iranian politicians try to persuade the world that they are not going to make nuclear weapons and also, they attempt to convince the in- group and out- group as well as public in their country that nuclear reactors continue their activities and the achievements in nuclear issue will be kept and continued like before. In this way, they try to legitimize their activities in nuclear issues by making a positive image of themselves in the eyes of the in-group and out-group as well as the public. Therefore, they try

to show themselves as the real winner in this negotiation in the eyes of opposing party inside their country, and try to convince the public that the economy and the people life will get much better by this agreement.

In addition, the politicians of these two countries, especially the Presidents, show a positive image of themselves by referring to the members of negotiating team as hardworking, efficient, courage, honest, loyal, and professional. From the viewpoint of American president, the negotiating members are professional, expert, hardworking and loyal who is trying hard to bring peace and security through their commitments to strong and principled American diplomacy. On the other hand, the Iranian politicians thanks the members of negotiating team who are hardworking, serious, logical, professional, trustworthy, and courage and have the support of the leader of Iran as well as the public as their most important achievement in the negotiation.

All taken together, the politician speeches is a kind of political communication in a site of struggle in which the politicians involve in a race to win public acclaim at the cost of maligning their opponents (Van Dijk, 2006). The politicians frequently present themselves as credible and truthful to establish credibility in the eyes of the public (Ross & Rivers 2018), as a legitimized authoritative real winner country in the negotiation to make a shield against sharp criticism and to change the direction of sharp criticism by deflection from criticism as mentioned by Lakoff (2017). To this end, a rosy view is depicted to the public to convince the mass into an ideology through representing a good image of the self by politically-motivated appreciation and self-proclaiming praises of their deeds done in the negotiations. This rosy view is manifested by the politicians by the tools of discursive euphemistic devices through ideologically manipulated legitimized strategies in their own interest

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to conduct a discourse analysis of euphemisms at both the word and sentence levels in political speeches made by the U.S and Iranian politicians over the

nuclear deal from 2013 to 2015. By examining how these two linguistic levels interact to convey nuanced meanings and influence audience perception, this study aims to uncover the strategic deployment of euphemism in political communication.

By referring to the speeches, it could be concluded that the politicians use euphemistic strategies of authority and evidentiality to pave the way for burden/ topos, that is, good argumentations against a topic. In other words, sufficient evidence or proof by references to authority figures such as recognized experts, moral leaders and international organizations like United Nations or Amnesty International or institutions, reliable people, papers and scenes for their knowledge or opinion are presented to convey objectivity, reliability and credibility in order to support themselves and hence to show that their claims or points of view in an argument and their argumentations against a topic are self-evident, sufficient, reasonable, and plausible.

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