



On the Evaluation of Fairclough's Interpretation Stage through a Goodness Criterion: An Iranian Case

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Abstract

The present study was an evaluation attempt to investigate the practicality of interpretation procedures proposed by Fairclough (1989) in the critical analysis of Persian texts. The evaluation was implemented on the basis of a goodness criterion, analytical induction (AI) framework developed by Silverman (1993). In so doing, we went about the interpretation of the inaugural speech made by the president of Iran, Dr. Rohani to the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 2013. The interpretation was done according to the Fairclough's interpretation model in light of AI theoretical framework. The outcome of the study supported the practicality of the overall interpretation model in the Iranian context. However, considering Iranian special sociolinguistic context, the study also put forward some suggestions with respect to the interpretation of local coherence and text structure in the lower section of the model as well as situational context and intertextual context in upper section.

Keywords: critical discourse analysis (CDA), interpretation model, analytical induction (AI), Iranian context

Introduction

Till 1970s, much of linguistic research was dedicated to the standard analysis of different aspects of language (Chomsky, 1975; Hymes, 1972; Labove, 1972; Levinson, 1983). At that time and in that context, shifting the attention toward the text (discourse) production, interpretation, and its role in constructing the social hierarchy and power relations in society was very inspiring. A host of works were done to elaborate the assumptions, procedures, and maxims of what today is known as Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) (Fairclough, 1989; Kress & Hodge, 1979; van Dijk, 1985).

In the same line, Widdowson (1995) argues that Fairclough has failed to take into consideration alternative readings of texts. He argues that Fairclough has analyzed the text production and understanding according to his tendency of analysis. Critical linguistics is “strongly reminiscent of literary criticism” and the only reason for that is its better tool (Widdowson, 1998, p. 149). He also notes that interdisciplinarity of CDA is open to question as long as it invokes the idea of interdisciplinarity with respect to the sociopolitical theory with scant attention to the other relevant inquiries. The issue of inconsistency between practical analysis and theoretical foundation has brought out some questions to the validity of CDA. Indeed, theory in CDA has instrumental definition which Widdowson refers to as “a tool-kit for expedient use, a descriptive device.” In that sense, the whole notion of validity is summed up in the face validity so long as it is convincing and explaining the cause. Thus, the main problem with CDA is that “it is resolutely uncritical of its own [critical] discursive practices” (Widdowson, 1998, p. 150).

Blommaert (2005) proposes two levels where criticisms are raised against CDA. As the present study is going to be conducted in a non-western context, Iran, then from each level only those kinds of criticism are mentioned that are more relevant to the present study. At the first level, criticisms are geared toward the defects of “method, methodology, and analytical approaches” in CDA practices (Blommaert, 2005, p. 31). Likewise, Widdowson (1996) blames CDA for disturbing the boundaries of disciplines, principles and methodologies creating vagueness in analytical models. It could be inferred that this confusion has eventuated in the biased interpretation. This shortcoming was debated more seriously by Emanuel Schegloff (1997). He sees some problems with CDA, according to him, because CDA analysts project their biased assumptions and interpretation

into the analyzed text. Schegloff presented conversational analysis as a solution of such a defect.

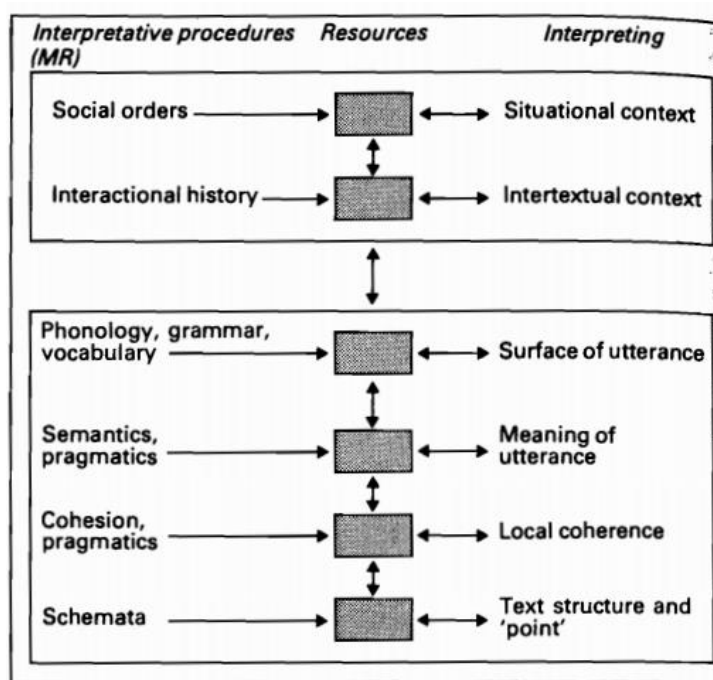
At the second level, criticisms are directed to the CDA's potentiality as critical study of language. One critique of CDA that is most relevant to the current study is "its closure to particular kinds of societies" (Blommaert, 2005, p. 35). A large amount of critical discourse analysis was produced in the countries called the core of the world system, such as Fairclough's (1989) critical description in Great Britain in Thatcher era. Blommaert (2005) argues that it is not reasonable to confine the critical analysis of discourse to the western first-world societies and less rational to assume the description of such societies as a model of discourse interpretation for the world since the world is much bigger than Europe and USA.

Raising some questions followed by the proposals, Stubbs (1997) had some critical comments on CDA. The salient question which is closely related to the present study and remained unanswered by CD analysts is as follows: By what criterion can CDA's textual analysis be evaluated? Stubbs criticized CDA in the sense that it is not unequivocal with "explicitness and testability of underlying hypotheses, [and] the replicability of methods of analysis" (p. 205). This has led CDA to an inexplicit position regarding the formal elements of discourse and discourse interpretation. According to Stubbs, contradiction is more reflected in the list of formal textual features which carry ideological significance argued by Fairclough (1989) and Fowler (1991). On the other hand, they claim that there is no correspondence between linguistic elements and the ideologies. In fact, they take the stand that these features do not build a good platform to read off ideologies. This position produces what Stubbs (1997) has called "the circularity problem" (p. 206).

Fairclough (1989, p.109) posits three stages for critical discourse analysis: "1. description of text, 2. interpretation of the relationship between text and interaction, and 3. explanation of the relationship between interaction and social context." They correspond to the three elements in the discourse (text, interaction, and social context.) According to Fairclough, if an analyst is concerned with social values and ideologies embedded in a text, the description of the text would not be enough and it needs to be complemented with interpretation and explanation since they are suitable devices "to unmask ideologically permeated and often obscured structures of power, political control, and dominance, as well as strategies of discriminatory inclusion and exclusion in language in use" (Fairclough, 1992, p.8). More specifically, Fairclough (1992) presents two kinds of interpretations: denotative and connotative. The former relates to the

ordinary sense-making of the semiotics while the latter links the first interpretation to the socio-cultural context of semiotic production (explanation). The first type will be employed in the present study to trace down the differences and similarities in different cases.

In the second stage of critical discourse analysis, interpretation is produced through combination of linguistic cues within the text and members' resources (MR) in the interpreter (Fairclough, 1998). To Fairclough, MR is a common sense assumption rather than background knowledge and is activated by means of formal linguistic features of the text, which finally yields interpretation. Fairclough (1989) has schematically proposed a model for the process of interpretation in the following figure.



Fairclough's (1989) model for Interpretation

This framework contains six fundamental domains two of which in upper part pertain to the interpretation of context while the lower section deals with interpretation of the text. It is strongly argued that interpretation stage "makes explicit what for participants is generally implicit" (Fairclough, 1989, p.162).

The main purpose of the present study is to evaluate the procedure of interpretation presented by Fairclough (1989) in CDA by means of analytical induction (AI) in an Iranian context. Thus, this study is an evaluation attempt to answer the following question:

1. How applicable is the Fairclough's interpretation procedure in the critical analysis of Persian texts?

Theoretical framework

Analytical induction refers to the detailed decipherings of the raw text to constitute new concepts or a model via exhaustive interpretation of the text by the analyst or researcher (Thomas, 2006). Such a definition of the inductive analysis is in harmony with Strauss and Corbin's (1998) supposition: "The researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data" (p. 12). While analytical deduction is used in experimental studies for evaluating the prior hypothesis made by researchers, the inductive analysis, according to Scriven's (1991, p. 56), is a "goal-free" verification on which the investigator tries to derive actual effects rather than predetermined effects. In fact, analytical induction is more appropriate for qualitative data and analysis (Punch, 1998). Analyzing qualitative methodologies of different studies, Thomas (2006) argues that inductive study is a commonly used tool in health and social science. In addition, it has been stated that the most prevalent strategy in qualitative data analysis is inductive approach (Bryman & Burgess, 1994; Dey, 1993).

Therefore, since the present study is a qualitative attempt in the evaluation of Fairclough's interpretation model in CDA, it seems appropriate to use the analytical induction as a theoretical approach for that purpose. Supporting the appropriateness of this theoretical framework in the CDA model evaluation, D. R. Thomas (personal communication, October 25, 2014) confirmed the applicability of analytical induction as a goodness criterion for the present purpose. In addition, researchers from Chicago School of American Sociology has taken AI as a suitable approach to the qualitative studies (Kell, 2005). Thomas (2006) holds that the initial hypotheses are examined and modified in light of empirical evidence rendered by crucial or deviant cases. He has listed the main purposes for using inductive approach in qualitative analysis as follows:

- (a) Condense raw textual data into a brief, summary format;
- (b) Establish clear links between the evaluation or research objectives and the summary findings derived from the raw data; and
- (c) Develop a framework of the underlying structure of experiences or processes that are evident in the raw data. (p. 237)

Method

Data Collection

In order to accomplish the objective of the study, which is to evaluate the Fairclough's interpretation model in critical analysis of Persian texts, we analyzed the inaugural speech made by the President of Iran, Dr. Rohani in his address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York. The current study employed a typical sampling on which, according to Wodak and Meyer (2001), most studies in CDA are conducted. The rationale behind using Dr. Rouhani's inaugural speech (2013) in United Nations was twofold. The first reason is that as the president in Iran, he employed a variety of strategies to pursue the political, social, and economic goals concerning the Iran's present sociopolitical situation in the world. The second and foremost is that the newly elected president tries to use a strong and persuasive speech to make audience, either national or international, trust him and acknowledge that they have selected the right person. From that speech five paragraphs were randomly selected for the analysis. Each paragraph in the speech was regarded as a macro unit.

Procedures and Data Analysis

A criterion was used to determine the quality of the analysis rather than to analyze the data. The analysis of data was done based on a goodness criterion (analytical induction) proposed by Silverman (1993, p. 160) in order to evaluate the practicality of the interpretation model developed by Fairclough. Silverman (2006) argues that "we should not assume that techniques used in quantitative research are the only way of establishing the validity of findings from qualitative or research field" (p. 43). Following Thomas (2006), the following principles in AI approach were taken into consideration in the data analysis:

1. The analysis of data should be guided by objective of evaluation which is the verification of Fairclough's interpretation model. The analysis should commence with multiple readings and interpretations of raw data. The finding of the analysis is derived from raw data (the inaugural speech) rather than prior expectations which is quite common in experimental studies. Then, the objective(s) of the evaluation provide a focal basis for analysis rather than setting expectations.
2. The very first step in analysis is to use categories derived from the raw data for forming a model (here in the present study is interpretation model).

3. Findings (categories of the model) are developed from multiple interpretation of the same raw data by the evaluator. The findings are constructed according to the evaluator's assumption and experiences. (p. 239-240)

The following procedures (Thomas, 2006) were also taken in the inductive analysis of qualitative data:

1. Preparation of raw data files (data cleaning): Format the raw data files in a common format (e.g., font size, margins, questions or interviewer comments highlighted) if required. Print and/or make a backup of each raw data file.
2. Close [and multiple] reading[s] of text: Once the text has been prepared, the raw text is read in details until the evaluator is familiar with its content and gains an understanding of the themes and events covered in the text.
3. Creation of categories: The evaluator identifies and defines categories or themes. The upper-level or more general categories are likely to be derived from the evaluation aims [objectives]. The lower-level or specific categories will be derived from multiple readings of the raw data, sometimes referred to as *in vivo* coding. In inductive coding, categories are commonly created from actual phrases or meanings in specific text segments. When using a word processor, marked text segments can be copied into the emerging categories.
4. Overlapping coding and uncoded text: Among the commonly assumed rules that underlie qualitative coding, two are different from the rules typically used in quantitative coding: (a) one segment of text may be coded into more than one category, and (b) a considerable amount of the text (e.g., 50% or more) may not be assigned to any category, because much of the text may not be relevant to the evaluation objectives.
5. Continuing revision and refinement of category system: Within each category, search for subtopics, including contradictory points of view and new insights. Select appropriate quotations that convey the core theme or essence of a category. The categories may be combined or linked under a superordinate category when the meanings are similar. (p. 241-242)

To be more specific, based on principles and procedures in AI, the critical analyst who was the researcher of the study analyzed all five paragraphs using Fairclough's interpretation model. That is, the analyst started with lower section to produce the interpretation of the text with respect to the surface of utterance, meaning of utterance, local coherence, and text

structure and ‘point.’ Then, to have the context interpretation of each text, researcher continued with the upper section which comprised of situational and intertextual context. In this analysis, the analyst gave a particular attention to the president’s context since the new president was elected at a time when the country was going through an economic crisis and he had a very important role in calming down his people. Through multiple readings and interpretations of the speech, the researcher could find or create divergent or convergent categorizations or themes. AI criterion postulates that in case that all of the given categorizations and concepts individually and completely fit Fairclough’s model, it could be safely concluded that the interpretation model benefits from a practical certainty in its use across the eastern contexts. However, if the deviant and new categories which do not lend themselves to the critical analysis via this model, it could be inferred that evaluation (better to say practicality) of the model will be open to question. To be more specific, deviant cases could demonstrate the limit of generalization of the model.

Results

Contextualization of the Political Context of Dr. Hassan Rouhani’s Statements

Before working on the interpretation of some inauguration extracts by Dr. Hassan Rouhani at the sixty-eighth session of the United Nations General Assembly, we need to briefly contextualize the political and economic situation of Iran in 2013. At the time when the victory of Dr. Rouhani in the 11th Iranian presidential election was announced, Iran was facing a hard time. Economically speaking, the purchasing power of the public has noticeably fallen off in 2011 and 2012; the economic growth has become negative. The low-income people were suffering from the hard economic condition which was exacerbated by the crippling international sanctions imposed on Iran over its nuclear program and high inflation and the wealth gap was growing. On the other hand, the foreign policy was deadlocked and the attention was shifted from developed countries to less-developed countries. The hostility was growing toward the western governments such as The United States and United Kingdom. Being announced as the winner of the 2013 presidential election, Dr. Rouhani appeared as pragmatic and moderate politician who called his cabinet *the Foresight and Hope Cabinet*, which has been supposed to bring hopes and changes in the public life. He promised to curb on the high inflation, increase the public purchasing power, and alleviate the unemployment situation through some urgent

economic plans in a short time. In relation to foreign policy, he pledged to repair Iran's international standing and to recalibrate its interaction with other nations. In so doing, he tried to develop the political dialogues between Iran and other political rivals such as P5+1. He believed that these open dialogues can ease the process of lifting the economic sanctions which have harshly damaged Iranian economy.

The Speech Outline

According to Sardabi, Biria, and Azin (2014), Dr. Rouhani's inauguration at the UN session could be topically divided into following six segments:

1. Fears and hopes existing in today's world (paragraph 2)
2. Iran's last presidential election (paragraph 3)
3. Division of the world into "US" and THOSE" paragraphs 4-6
4. Fears: different forms of violence in the international political discourse (paragraphs 7-17)
5. Hopes: resolving Iran's nuclear issue (paragraphs 18-24)
6. Inviting the global community to join the WAVE- World Against Violence and Extremism (paragraphs 25-27, pp.88-89)

In the following lines each paragraph is separately interpreted according to the interpretation model (Fairclough, 1989). It should be said in advance that the interpretation model is applied to the Persian text rather than the English one. Further, since all the extracts were taken from the same lengthy text (political speech), there was no need to repeat all the parts of the model for all excerpts. Once used in the analysis of the first excerpt, they did not need to be used in the following excerpts since they have the same outcome in all the excerpts. Among different parts in the interpretation of the text, surface features of utterances were used in the analysis of the first excerpt and in interpretation of the situational context, "who's involved?", "in what relations?", and "what is the role of language in what's going on?" were considered only in the analysis of the first extract.

(P. 3). The recent elections in Iran represent a clear, living example of the wise choice of hope, rationality and moderation by the great people of Iran. The realization of democracy consistent with religion and the peaceful transfer of executive power manifested that Iran is the anchor of stability in an otherwise ocean of regional instabilities. The firm belief of our people and government in enduring peace, stability, tranquility, peaceful resolution of disputes and reliance on the ballot box as the basis of power, public acceptance and legitimacy, has indeed played a key role in creating such a safe environment.

Text Interpretation: The Lower Section

In terms of surface of utterance, this level of text interpretation has already been done through converting this extract of speech into words, phrases, sentences, and finally paragraphs. In the next level of the text interpretation (meaning of the utterance), the addresser made three semantic propositions: First, the Iranians made their right and meticulous choice of the president (Dr. Rouhani) in the recent election. Second, this election reflects the stability of Iran which was besieged by tumult in other neighbor countries, and finally it is people (and their votes) who play an important role in keeping the country safe. Regarding the speech act performed by addresser, drawing on the textual context of utterance, we can say that the president makes statement. At the third level, the cohesion of the extract was considered either via internal or situational cohesive features. Regarding the logical connectors, it could be argued that the security of any society is determined by people's votes and beliefs, otherwise confusion and disorder will come up. The role of complex sentences is evident in the beginning of the extract. The Iranian presidential election (as the topmost event in a country) plus the election of Dr. Rouhani formed the main clause and that Iran has remained stable and tranquil among all turmoil in the surrounding regions is to do with the subordinate clause. This serenity in the country cannot do without a peaceful election. In fact, the tranquility of the country presupposes a safe and sound presidential election. Considering the presence of definite articles and pronouns in the Persian excerpt, no definite article was found and the only pronoun was *we (ma)* which refers to the governmental officials. At the last level, drawing on the schemata (the general organization of discourse) of the Iranian presidents' discourse about presidential election, we could expect a particular order in their discourse. Considering the given excerpt we can see that the president starts with his own election and continues with role of people in his presidential legitimacy and ends with the equanimity of the country. In terms of the point of the excerpt, we can refer to the paramount role of the Iranian in presidential election and establishing the security of the country.

Context Interpretation: The Upper Section

In this part we need to interpret both situational and intertextual context; regarding situational context, five questions, according to Fairclough's model, should be answered: What is going on? (activity type, topic, purposes), who's involved? in what relations? What's the role of language in what's going on?

Regarding the first question, it should be said that the given excerpt belongs to a larger scale textual structure of an inauguration made by the new Iranian president at the 68th session of United Nations General Assembly. The activity type here is making a speech and the topic could be, according to the textual cues in the given excerpt, the description of the Iranian people and the purpose of the excerpt is to represent the Iranian people's ideology regarding the last election. Even though, it is only the overt purpose of the speech, nevertheless, there is a covert purpose; he, as the new president of Iran tries to make an international impact on the audience through constructing an image of himself, his people, the audience, and their relationships. In terms of "who's involved" and "in what relations", the subject position for the participants are: speaker/addresser (the new President of Iran) and the direct hearers/addressees (the politicians from other nations) in the UN session and the indirect hearers and addressees (other people either politician or ordinary) via media. These subject positions are related to the situation. However, since there is a dual institutions status, we can identify two sets of identities attributed to the participants.

Concerning the interpretation of the intertextual context of the given excerpt, first, it should be said that this excerpt belongs to political discourse type in an international societal order. Second, the interpretation of any text is a matter of what can be taken as common ground and presupposition. Some presuppositions of this extract are: The choice was wise (*Gozineše hošyârâne*), the executive power was peacefully transferred (*entegal ârâm godræte ejrâi*), "that Iran is the anchor of stability in an otherwise ocean of regional instabilities" (*ke irân længærgâhe sobât dær dæryâe nâ ârâmihâye mæntege æst*), our people and government have a firm belief in enduring peace, stability, and tranquility (*etegâd râsekh mærdom væ hokumæt be solhe pâyedâr, sobât væ ârâmesê*), and disputes should be resolved peacefully (*hæle mosâlemmætâmez monâgesât*).

(P. 4). The current critical period of transition in international relations is replete with dangers, albeit with unique opportunities. Any miscalculation of one's position, and of course, of others, will bear historic damages; a mistake by one actor will have negative impact on all others. Vulnerability is now a global and indivisible phenomenon.

Text Interpretation: The Lower Section

At the second level of interpretation, three propositions could be understood from the excerpt: the criticality of the international relationships, the critical position and role of some international actors, and the globalization of vulnerability. Regarding the speech act, considering his

tone of voice, and some vocabularies such as miscalculation (*mohâsebât nâdorost*) and historic damage (*âsibhâye târikhi*), he is making a warning of the impending threat to the international relations. At the third level of interpretation (local coherence), drawing on the ideological cues of the text, we could expect that a mistake by one nation could threaten all other nations across the world. There is only one complex sentence detected in the excerpt: Any miscalculation of one's position, and of course, of others, will bear historic damages (the main clause) and a mistake by one actor will have negative impact on all others (the subordinate clause). The subordinate clause as the given information for the addressees presupposes that even a small mistake can lead to a historic worldwide damages. Regarding the cohesive connectors some grammatical refereeing devices were found; an actor (*yek bâzigær*) and everyone (*hæmegân*) refer to the indefinite pronouns one's (*khod*) positions and others' (*digærân*).

Context Interpretation: The Upper Section

As for the interpretation of situational context, considering the "what's going on?" the activity type is to make a statement in the institutional setting of UN General Assembly. The topic has to do with giving a clear picture of international relationships and the role of some actors (nations) in altering the present situation; the purpose of the extract relates to the making awareness of potential danger triggered even by one actor in the global interactions. The interpretation of intertextual context reveals two presuppositions: The current period in the international relations is critical (*dorân hæsås entegâli konuni dær rævâbet byeinolmælæl*) and even that a mistake by one actor will have negative impact on all others (*tâ jâi ke khætâye ek bâzigær æsær mænfi bær hæmegân khâhæd dâst*).

(P. 5). At this sensitive juncture in the history of global relations, the age of zero-sum games is over, even though a few actors still tend to rely on archaic and deeply ineffective ways and means to preserve their old superiority and domination. Militarism and the recourse to violent and military means to subjugate others are failed examples of the perpetuation of old ways in new circumstances.

Text Interpretation: The Lower Section

Regarding the surface of the utterance (or the locutionary act), two main propositions were detected. The first has to do with the end of the age of zero-sum game and the start of the win-win game; that is, the players (governments) should know that that the benefit of one government does not necessarily happen through someone else's loss. The second relates to the old fashioned means (militarism and violence) that some governments go to

a great length to maintain their domination over other nations. The producer has made multiple indirect speech acts simultaneously: constatives and directives. Regarding the constatives, he disagrees with the zero-sum game and informs others of the win-win game in international interactions while admonishing (directive) other nations of the danger of zero-sum game. In the next level of interpretation, a logical connector can be identified in the excerpt, which implies violence and militarism through the idea of zero-sum game. One complex sentence was also detected: A few actors still tend to rely on archaic and deeply ineffective ways and means (*mædudi æz bâzigærân rævešhâ væ æbzârhe kohne šodeh væ æmigæn nâkârâmed râ bekâr migirænd*; the main clause) to preserve their old superiority and domination (*tâ bærtæri væ solteh pišîn khod râ hefz konæd*; the subordinate clause). The subordinate clause implies that the old superiority and domination can be preserved through old-fashioned ways. Regarding anaphoric connectors, only one cohesive element was identified in the given excerpt: their old superiority and domination (*bærtæri væ solteh pišîn khod*) refers to a few actors (*mædudi æz bâzigærân*).

Context Interpretation: The Upper Section

In the interpretation of “what’s going on?” it could be said that the same activity type, similar to the previous ones, could be considered for this case; that is, giving a speech at UN. Regarding the topic of the excerpt, the topic here is to disclose the negative effect of idea of zero-sum game played by some governments and the overriding purpose deals with implicitly proposing a new way (win-win situation) for international interactions in the new international circumstances while invalidating the age of zero-sum game which underpins military actions. The interpretation of the intertextual context shows three presuppositions: This juncture in the history of global relations is sensitive (*gozær hæšâs dær târikh monâsebât jêhâni*), *the ways and means are archaic and deeply ineffective* (*rævešhâ væ æbzârhe kohne šodeh væ æmigæn nâkârâmed*), *so that they preserve their old superiority and domination* (*tâ bærtæri væ solteh pišîn khod râ hefz konæd*).

Text Interpretation: The Lower Section

As for the second level of interpretation, there is one main proposition in this excerpt. That is, the prevalent political discourse in international relations has discriminated those in north (the center of power) from those in south (the peripheries). This meaning is supported by the “*superior us*” and “*inferior others*” in paragraph six. Further, out of this discourse faith-phobic, Islamo-phobic, Shia-phobic, and Iran-phobic discourses have emerged which threaten humanity as well as world. From this excerpt, we can recognize two indirect/direct speech acts. At the beginning of the

paragraph, he indirectly makes an informing statement about the current situation of nations in the global interactions while at the end of paragraph he indirectly makes a warning and predicting statement regarding the future of world in a sense that nothing has been done against the hegemonic and unfair distribution of power. At the third level of interpretation, the ideological assumption could be that the creation of monologue and discriminatory division among world power could eventuate in threats against world peace and human security. Concerning the complex sentences, no complex sentences were identified. Examining the cohesive connectors inside and outside the paragraph, we found interesting results. Within the given excerpt, it was found that the producer has relied on the synonyms and repetition of words to ascertain the cohesiveness of his speech. *Goftemân* used at the beginning of the paragraph (discourse) was repeated twice in the speech. *Tæsvir* (the picture) is repeated in the following parts of the speech. *Mærkæz motemæden bâ hâsiehâe gheir motemæden* (a civilized center surrounded by un-civilized peripheries) which is used at the beginning of the excerpt is replaced by their synonyms *kânun godræte jæhâni væ hâsiehâ* (the center of world power and the peripheries). Finally, regarding the exophoric connectors, it could be said that *šomâl* (north) refers to the European and the United States in the north hemisphere while *jonub* (south) refers to the African and Middle East nations in the south hemisphere.

Context Interpretation: The Upper Section

Considering “what’s going on?” we can see the same activity type for this case as the previous one since the producer is giving a statement in the UN General Assembly. However, the topic in this excerpt is different in that the speech giver tries to give a clear picture of the current political discourse and its international consequences. He also has an important purpose of predicting an impending danger and making people aware of its effects. An implicit purpose could be also traced in his speech in that he wants to be pioneer to challenge the construction of political discourse and renders his new substitution. The interpretation of intertextual context represents the following presuppositions in the speaker’s common ground: The international interactions have a prevalent discourse (*Goftemân motâref siyâsi beinolmææl*), The power of world has a center and peripheries (*kânun godræte jæhâni væ hâsiehâ*), Identity distinction is illusory (*mærzhâe nâdorost hoviyæti*), and The advertisement discourse is faith-phobic, Islamo-phobic, Shia-phobic, and Iran-phobic (*din setizâne, islâm hârâsâne, shie hârâsâne, Irân hârâsâne*).

(P. 16). Violence and extremism nowadays have gone beyond the physical realm and have unfortunately afflicted and tarnished the mental and spiritual dimensions of life in human societies. Violence and extremism leave no space for understanding and moderation as the necessary foundations of collective life of human beings and the modern society. Intolerance is the predicament of our time.

Text Interpretation: The Lower Section

As for meaning of utterance, there are two main propositions in paragraph 16. The first one pertains to the spiritual and physical effect of violence and extremism on the modern men and world. The second is concerned with replacing the mere (negative) tolerance and intolerance with collective collaboration in the modern era. Regarding speech acts, the main speech acts practiced by the speaker are directly making a statement of the negative washback of violence, extremism, intolerance, and mere tolerance and indirectly making a suggestion for their replacement by cooperation and positive tolerance. At the third level of interpretation, the ideological connector could be understood in that the mere (negative) tolerance and intolerance could be the real reason for violence and extremism in the world. Concerning the complex sentences, this excerpt contains two subordinations: Violence and extremism leave no space for understanding and moderation (*khoşunæt væ efrât jâe bærâe modârâ vâ tæfâhom næmigozâræd*; the main clause); as they are necessary foundations of collective life of human beings and the modern society (*ke lâzemye zendegi ensân væ jâmæe modern æst*; the subordinate clause). The subordinate clause is backgrounded in that the understanding and moderation are the only foundations for human life and modern societies. The other complex sentence is as following: We should not just tolerate others (*digærân râ næbâyæd fæghæt tæhæmol kærð*; the main clause), we should also rise above mere tolerance and dare to work together (*bælke bæyæd bâ digærân kâr kærð*; the subordinate clause). According to this subordinate clause, collaboration prerequisites positive tolerance not mere tolerance. Similar to the preceding case, in this excerpt, word repetition, synonyms, word explanation, and pronouns were used to make reference inside and outside the text. The examples of word repetition could be *khoşunæt væ efrât* (violence and extremism), *zendegi ensân* (life of human beings), and *digærân* (others); the examples of synonyms are *jâmæe emruz* (nowadays) and *jâmæe modern* (modern society), *nâbordbâri* (intolerance) and *bordbâri mænfi* (mere/negative tolerance). Regarding word explanation, a sentence is used to refer to a word inside the text. For example, *bælke bæyæd bâ digærân kâr kærð* (we should rise above mere tolerance and dare to work

together) is used to refer to the *tâvon moštæræk* (collective collaboration). Finally, *digærân* (others) is employed to refer to other nations particularly, according to the paragraph six and nine, to the nations in the southern hemisphere who are considered as the inferior. At the last level of interpretation, the speaker follows the same strategy used in the preceding case to intensify the global coherence of his speech. He first declares the problem with its all concomitant suffering, then he presents his proposal as an alternative

Context Interpretation: The Upper Section

The analysis of subdivision of the “what’s going?” gives a clear picture of the activity type, topic and purpose of the excerpt. The activity type relates to speech addressed to the UN members either the present or the absent. The topic has to do with the current problem of the world (violence and extremism) and possible solutions. The speech giver has the important purpose of making UN members and other addressees aware of the amount of danger of violence and extremism and of convincing them the solution that he presents. Considering the interpretation of intertextual context, the following presuppositions could be extracted from the excerpt: The modern world is suffering from violence and extremism (*khošunæt væ efrât emruz*), understanding and moderation are required in the human life and modern community (*ke lâzemye zendegi ensân væ jâmæ modern æst*), and we should work together (*bælke bæyæd bâ digærân kâr kærð*).

Discussion

Considering the lower section of the text interpretation, the analysis of surface of utterance, meaning of utterance showed a high convergence in all the given cases. However, the local coherence accounted as the center of interpretation (Fairclough, 1992), according to the findings, revealed some divergences in the present study in a sense that Persian text in general and Iranian political discourse type in specific hardly relies on the complex sentences (either coordination or subordination) such as paragraph nine. It seems that simple sentences contribute more to the simplicity and transparency of the speech which are highly demanded in the political interactions. Furthermore, even though Fairclough describes the definite articles and pronouns as the most prominent devices intensifying the local coherence of the discourse, the findings indicated that the Iranian political text producers probably tend to use other cohesive elements such word repetition, word explanation, and synonyms (see paragraphs 9 and 16). The other divergence could be observed in the interpretation of the text structure,

namely schemata. According to the findings of paragraphs four and five, it could be argued that no specific scheme was activated through the analysis of the excerpts. It might be explained on the grounds that the unstable international collaboration impels the political figures and practitioners to pick up a particular overall organization for their discourses to meet their momentary requirements. That is why no particular scheme could be evoked through the analysis of the present excerpts. Although some of the paragraphs (see paragraphs 9 and 16) revealed some consistency in the overall pattern of the text structure, it could not be regarded as a convergent category since, according to the AI theoretical framework, convergence should be evident in all cases to support the practicality of a category.

On the other hand, the results of the present study also supported the practicality of the interpretation model in terms of situational (what's going on? who's involved? in what relation? and what's the role of language in what's going on?) and intertextual context. It could be said that the analysis of these categories in the model showed a convergence among all the analyzed excerpts. Although Fairclough (1989, p.150) states that "values for each of the four dimensions of situation are determined independently" the analysis of the text in Iranian context showed that there might be interdependency among the four categories of the interpretation of situational context. That is, the identity and socio-economic status of the "who's involved?" could affect the discourse type of content (the topic and purpose) as well as relations. It seems that the Iranian political discourse type falls under the influence the discourse producers and subjects. To be more specific, that the Iranian president is making speech in the institutional setting of UN plays an unavoidable role in altering the content, relations, and connections.

There could be also some other relevant (probably contextually relevant) themes and categories feeding into the interpretation of the situational context as well as intertextual context. Some of them including social identity, ethnicity, gender, age are considered effective in being foregrounded or backgrounded in the interpretation of the text (Fairclough, 1992). Even there are some more other features emerged in the interpretative analysis of Persian text which might have been overlooked in the rough and step-by-step analysis done according to the developed interpretation model. One of these features could be the physical context which can involve the arrangement of participants, their positions, clothing, reactions, and their number in an oral discourse. In this study, we employed just a part of a long political speech for critical discourse analysis, which

indeed makes the generalization limited. Therefore, it is recommended that future studies employ a whole speech to provide a better analysis.

Declaration of interest: none

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Biodata

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