Metaphor, Metonymy, and Voice in Political Debates: A Discourse Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT

The art of rhetoric is linked to a very old science, and political speeches have been studied from different approaches ever since the Greeks created the term politics itself. The main aim of the present study, therefore, was to examine linguistic elements in political speeches by the recent 2017 presidential election candidates' debates in order to persuade the audience. To this end, the data were collected from the recorded speeches of live TV programs at the Official News of Iran. The political rhetoric used by four challenging candidates present in the debates were analyzed. The linguistic devices explored in this debate included political rhetoric, politeness strategies, and propaganda language. The presidential political debates were analyzed by checking the frequency of speech acts types: Metaphor, metonymy, and voice. The frequency of linguistic features that were used in the third debate by the four candidates was almost the same. Therefore, it might be stated which of the candidates used the features more effectively. Findings of this study might have implications for those concerned with sociolinguistic research and discourse analysis.

Keywords: Metonymy metaphor; voice; presidential debates; discourse analysis.

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1. Introduction

Individuals do not only produce words which contain grammatical construction and words when they speak but also perform an action through those sounds. Therefore, the actions that performed in saying something, are generally related to the language. What is a language for? Most of the people think language occurs so that we can "say things" in the feeling of communicating information. However, language helps a large number of purposes in our lives. Giving and getting material is by no means the individual one. Language does, obviously, enable us to inform each other. But it also permits us to do things and to be things, as well. Actually, saying things in language never goes without also doing things and being things. Language enables us to do things. It allows us to occupy in actions and events. We guarantee individuals things, we open committee conferences, we propose to our sweethearts, we maintain over politics, and we "talk to God" (pray). These are among the countless of things we do with language outside giving

and getting information (Gee, 2014). There are many important associates and connections in language among saying (informing), doing (action) and being (identity).

In other word, the terms which we use in ordinary speeches can be the same, yet they will mean very unlike things. Our identity and what we are doing when we say things matters. This is associated with the study of language" Discourse Analysis". Discourse analysis is the investigation of language-in-use. There are many different methods to discourse analysis. Some of them appear only in the "content" of the language being used, the themes or issues being discussed in a conversation or a daily paper article, for instance. Different methodologies pay more consideration to the structure of language ("grammar") and how this structure purposes to make meaning in particular contexts (Gee, 2014).

At a much deeper level, language is about how to distribute social, political and power in a society: who acquires what in terms of money, position, power, and obtained on a variety of different terms, all social things. Then, when we use language, social things and their spreading are always at interest, language is always "political" in a deep sense. Language is taught to a level of certain scholarly capabilities, additionally referred to as academic knowledge (AK): 1) grammatical competence to include suitable use of grammar, broad vocabulary knowledge, and proper pronunciation, 2) sociolinguistic competence, which is the correct usage of words and grammar dependent on social conditions and knowledge of cultural politeness 3) discourse competence – the capacity to use the language in different settings, such as a debate or locality gathering, and 4) strategic competence, the ability to use verbal and non-verbal intends to convey, particularly during challenging situations (Murcia, Dornyei & Thurrell, 1995).

As mentioned before, one aspect of language is dealing with social conditions and the use of language as a power. Language Power additionally discussed to as Language Power Theory (LPT) is the study of concrete communication ability. Communication ability is the ability to speaking comprehend and listening to understand. LPT draws from and underpins thoughts from language knowledge, understanding there is a pragmatic and social construction that needs to be in place for fruitful language learning ...since discussion is the most crucial methods of conducting human affairs (Murcia, Dornyei&Thurrell, 1995).

The presidential election in Iran is a highly followed event. The whole world is watching with pleasure who becomes the new president of the superpower that Iran undoubtedly is. The most significant tool of this event is language. Via language presidential candidates connect with their coming voters. Through language, they express their ideologies, their thoughts. They become closer to the audience by language. Their capacity to express themselves is broadly exercised in presidential debates. Therefore, this article is going to focus on political discourse and speech act used in presidential debates. However, Various analysis has been conducted around the speaker's analysis of presidential candidates' debates in the world, but in Iran, there are so few studies of this kind. Examples of these studies include: (Wang, 2010; Tereza, 2012; Mardani, 2013; Shaw,1999) and in Iran: (Soleimani & Nouraei, 2013; Jalilifar & Alavi-Nia, 2012; Rashidi & Souzandehfar, 2010; Kazemian & Hashemi, 2014) and other researchers that expression their names here is not possible. It should be noted that there are not more studies such as this article which include the analysis of domestic candidates in Iran.

The theoretical section will be devoted to the characterization of the presidential election together with the brief introduction to discourse and a discourse analysis. Then, the end of the theoretical part the linguistic features typical for political discourse and also speech act part will be introduced. Concerning the practical part, the corpus is going to be established. It will consist of three transcripts of presidential debates. Therefore, the language of these debates is going to be analyzed. The core aim of the study is to

demonstrate whether linguistic features characterized in the theoretical section are applied in the language used in debates. Moreover, the aims are to discover which of candidates used linguistic features and rhetoric more successfully, with a good impact upon the audience. The hypothesis is that linguistic features mentioned in the hypothetical part are used in political debates and different ways in the usage of these features.

In order to investigate the discourse, the study is considered speech acts analysis. The speech acts will be examined by theories of a British philosopher of language, Austin (1962), and an American philosopher, Searle (1975) who recommend how these concepts can act as a framework for eliciting the used speech acts of Iranian candidates (Soleimani &Nouraei,2013).

2. Literature Review

2.1. Discourse analysis

Cook (1989) describes two different methods towards the study of language. The first approach is associated with language teaching which is acknowledged by a conception of applied principles. With respect to the second approach, the comprehensible communication is the core reason for studying a language, besides this approach, is considered as "language in use" (1989, 6) and the term discourse is applied. Gee (2014) says that to investigate a discourse, not only grammar, pronunciation or vocabulary are examined as well as nonlanguage or prosodic constructions used as a part of a specific circumstance should be considered, specifically gestures, convictions, feelings etc. To get a more precise picture of a discourse, Widdowson (2007) contrasts a content and a discourse. He describes a text as a section of language which was formed in order to communicate, however, this language product does not should be comprehensible, for instance when a foreign language is utilized. When a meaning of a text is recognized by a listener, more exactly it is coherent to a listener, the content becomes a discourse.

Fairclough (1992) declares that there exist a few ways to deal with the investigation to the analysis and he bestows to some of them in his work. Fairclough together with Wodak or Van Dijk (1997) characterizes the critical discourse analysis. As indicated to critical discourse analysts, language is used to misuse power. Van Dijk (1997) concurs with Fairclough and says that critical analysts perceive the discourse as an instrument which is utilized to control and influence the public. They are chiefly absorbed in language concerning social changes.

2.2. Critical discourse analysis

As sated in Blommaert and Bulcaen (2000), the origins of the critical approach to the discourse analysis are in the late 1980s. This method is principally represented by Norman Fairclough (1992), Michael Halliday (as cited in Gee, 2014), and Teun van Dijk (2006). Critical discourse experts are mostly intrigued by social themes such as political discourse, racism, ideology, immigration, anti-Semitism, etc. Van Dijk (2001) expresses the critical discourse investigation as a type of discourse analysis worried with social power misuse, dominance, and gender variation characterized in language that is used in the social and political setting.

2.3. Political discourse

Van Dijk distinguishes political discourse as "a class of genres defined by a social domain" (Van Dijk 2002, 19). Fairclough and Fairclough (2012) states political discourse as "primarily argumentative discourse" (Fairclough 2012, 17). This definition is depending on the method of politics which is conventional in a contradiction and feeling of ambiguity while making decisions. Van Dijk (2002) expresses that political discourse is ideological since it is utilized

to introduce individual opinions and positions which are generally impacted by ideology. The connection between belief system and language is expired by critical analysis.

2.4. Linguistic features for political discourse

As was earlier specified, the motivation behind the political discourse is to pass ideological information and to convince a listener. In order to maintain these goals, different linguistic structures are used. The following will deal with the most used features in political discourse, in specifically different methods of expression, for instance, metaphor and metonymy, pronoun reference, adjectives, their superlative structures and adverbials, and the rule of three.

2.4.1. Metaphor

Mio (1997) expresses that the capacity of metaphor utilized in political discourse lies in persuading concealed bents or symbolic representation since politics issues are hypothetical and not everybody can encounter it. Therefore, the speaker enlists required feelings of the audience through metaphors. Moreover, metaphors support the speaker to accentuate the topic and, therefore, to avoid an issue he does not want to challenge with. Beard (2000) states that the procedure of metaphors varies in each country, for instance, metaphors used in the USA are more frequently associated with baseball e.g. to be back at first base, while metaphors utilized in the Great Britain are pretty associated with cricket e.g. batting on a sticky wicket.

2.4.2. Metonymy

The capacity of metonymy is to impact the listeners' awareness to something. Beard gives an illustration (Beard 2000, 26): The White House today threatened Saddam *Hussein* … The White House refers to the president and his team and Saddam Hussein refers to the country of Iraq. This example displays how the use of metonymy helps the President not to be associated with this choice personally since assault to a foreign nation is not a positive message. The use of Saddam Hussein offers the addresses with the inclination that it will be only Hussein who will experience the ill effects of this assault; no innocent peoples will be included.

2.4.3. Voice

Beard (2000) describes that this linguistic element is associated with the utilization of active or passive voice. The active voice signifies the contributor while the passive voice discards the contributor, e.g. the president announced the war; the war was proclaimed by the president. Though, politicians should prefer active voice rather the passive one.

3. Method

This study intended at the identification, occurrence, and analysis of linguistic elements used by six candidates throughout three presidential debates held in Iran in 2017. In fact, the study analyzed the frequency of metaphors and metonymies. Then the pronoun reference, adjectives strong in the meaning and the rule of three were taken into account. Four candidate's speeches were finally compared and examined and the conclusion were drawn based on the mentioned elements. The debates transcripts were taken from the official domestic website of the presidential election at *https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ Mehr_News_Agency and an international official website, the Guardian, at https://www. theguardian.com.*

The corpus contained three transcripts of four candidates namely Rohani, Raisi, Qalibaf, and Jahangiri. Two other candidates were not included in our analysis. The full transcripts of the third debate as well as related videos are available on the official website of the

British World News (https://www.theguardian.com) and other domestic websites in Iran such as the Mehr News Agency. In this presidential debate election, there were three live televised debates in total. The first debate focused on social issues while the next two focused on economic and political matters. According to the schedule, the candidates could hold a meeting of 15 minutes with the aides and advisors after 90 minutes of debate.

Mehr News Agency reported that the debate had been put off half an hour to 16:30 local time (12: 00 GMT) upon the request of Rouhani's campaign. Morteza Heidari, the renowned Iranian television news host, and presenter who moderated the debate, also said he was prepared for the task and everything had been rehearsed. The debate began with Heidari's outlining the format and regulations of the debate and how the time would be allocated among the candidates.

The first debate was held on April 28, 2017, at the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB) headquarters in Tehran.The duration of the first debate was three hours. The debate contained two rounds. In the first round, opened by moderator's question, each candidate was provided with two fifteen-minute times to answer. The first debate focused on social issues. The second debate took held on May 5, 2017. Again, the debate started by the moderator's question, and each candidate was assigned two fifteen-minute rounds to answer. The third and last debate was held again on May 12, 2017 with focus on economic issues. The details of the third debate are the same as the two previous debates. In this study, the third debates were analyzed.

3.1. Linguistic features

This section deals with the analysis of linguistic features of the political discourse, in specific metaphor, metonymy, and voice.

3.1.1. Metaphors

Rohani: Opportunities and threats of liquidity growth; Electronic government; oil spills.

Reisi: The stagnation in our country has been highlighted; Honest diplomacy. Do not go ahead; The floor of the market, from the bottom of agricultural labor and from the bottom of the work in the village; Dignified Diplomacy; Corruption under my turn.

Qalibaf: Unequal opportunities; Astronomical real estate; I hope nobody goes to the dirt road and does not deal with marginal issues; Meritocracy; Frozen economy.

Jahangiry: They consider sanctions a chance; In the past, banks were used as a state treasury; Economic people; The reality of the market and the reality of the village.

3.1.2. Metonymy

Rohani: The media will talk; This is a millennium of transformation and justice.

Reisi: The status of the public table; Key government achievement; You have been wronging the country; Poverty has increased in this government; The table has become smaller; Families speaking today have not speaker; I do not have a newspaper in this country that, as I speak, its echoes will be published in newspapers and chains. A misfortune who does not have bread; What kind of literature is this?; Stealing by special people.

Qalibaf: Unemployment day by day; The behavior of the four-percent government is like the Qajar Dynasty; Who betide us when the former turns corrupt; crippling economy; crippling sanctions; Rural tablecloth and urban table-cloth. These are the same speculators as leeches.

Jahangiri: Military spirit; National goods; Lobby; Government sources were detained; I have never used any patronage or relationships; With the actions that took place in the past government, the table was tiny.

3.1.3. Voice

Rohani: Concerns and expectations and complaints received; Oil was given to a corrupt person

Reisi: The executing system produces a file; The previous government is responsible; You were an expensive state; Liquidity instead of getting into production, some bad bankers have gone bankrupt; The poverty situation in this state has increased with the existing ones; Why did you not care for the poor? Any government must follow the empowerment of the poor; Four years have been your country and you've put it to these days; The stagnation has hit record highs in our country; This corruption is not our system; We are glad why it was not resolved.

Qalibaf: Have long been told; Without the benefit of mobility; Our country faces an economic crisis; Permanent pressure came on the people.

Jahangiri: Useless use of poverty.

4. Results

As the analysis demonstrated, linguistic features characterized in the theoretical part, namely metaphor, metonymy, and voice were almost applied in presidential political debates. In the third debate, the most frequent linguistic feature was metonymy that occurred 27 times through one debate. Metaphors were used 20 times in this debate. Finally, the frequency of passive voice was 19. The third debate was rich in these features. The second most frequently used linguistic feature was metaphor, which occurred 20 times.

It is important to link these discoveries to each candidate in order to find out which of them used linguistic features more successfully, with a better effect upon the audience. As we can see in Figure 1, Rohani's frequently used linguistic feature was metaphor, which was presented in the third debate. The second linguistic feature used by Rohani was voice, and metonymy was used next For Reisi, findings of analysis are indicated in Figure 2. On the basis of this figure, it might be stated that Reisi used most metonymies. Qalibaf also used metonymy more than metaphor in his speeches. The passive voice was used less than the other two features. Figure 3 shows the results. Jahangiri used these three features less than the other candidates. Figure 4 proves this claim. Based on these findings, we can draw the following conclusion: The frequency of linguistic features that were used in the third debate by these four candidates is almost the same. Therefore, it cannot be said which of these candidates used them more effectively.
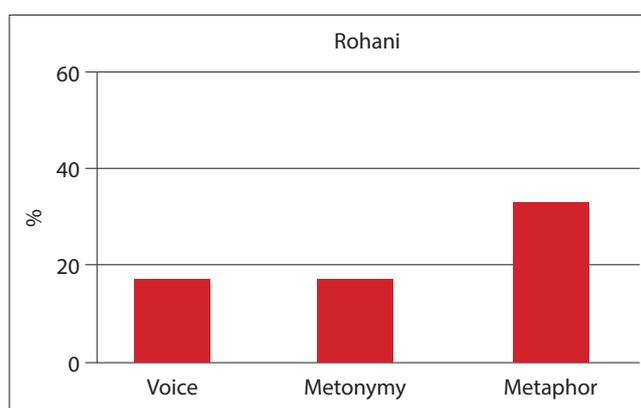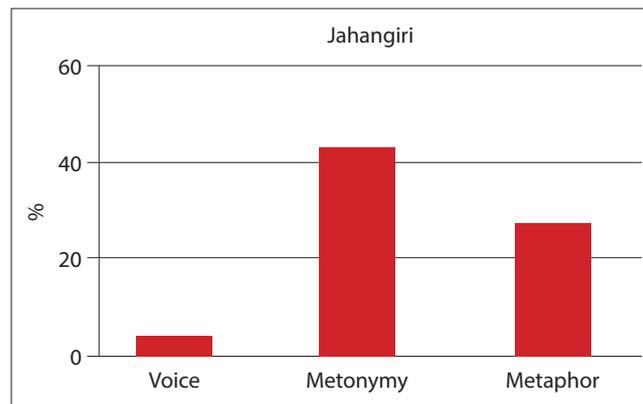

Figure 1. Total frequency of Rohani's linguistic features.
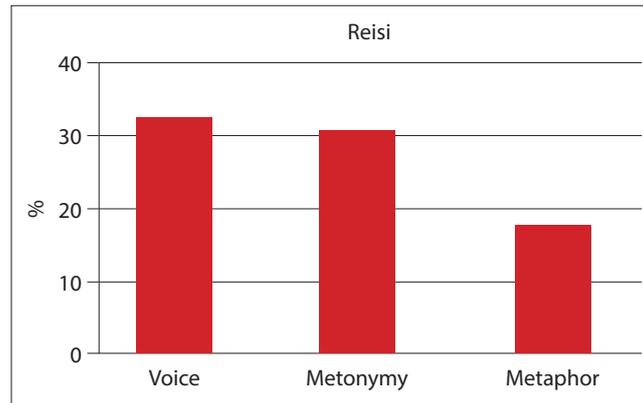
Figure 2. Total frequency of Reisi's linguistic features.
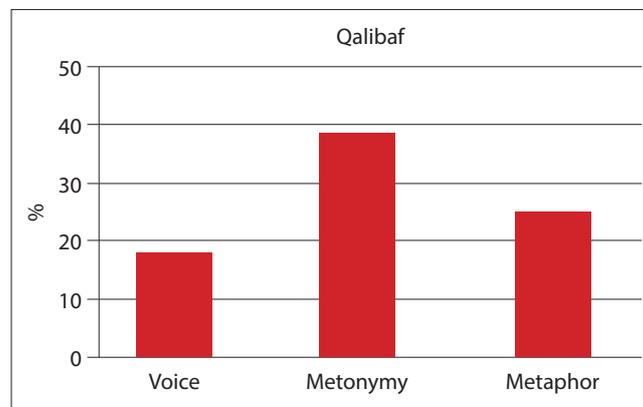
Figure 3. Total frequency of Qalibaf's linguistic Features.

Figure 4. Total frequency of Jahangiri's linguistic Features.

5. Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine linguistic features typical for political discourse used in presidential debates held in May 2017 and to infer which of presidential candidates used linguistic features successfully, with a better impression on the audience. The study was divided into the theoretical part and the practical part. Theoretical part was used to describe the process of the third presidential debate in Iran. It was followed by the characterization of pragmatics, discourse and discourse analysis. At the conclusion of the theoretical part, linguistic features typical for political discourse was described. The

most used figure of speech was metonymy. Its frequency was more than 20 times. And metaphors frequency was on the second level. Qalibaf used often the metaphor and metonymy. Reisi's speeches were full of metonymy and metaphor.

According to theoretical section, such a wide usage of metaphors made the discourse more emotional and helped the addressees to understand and to visualize the abstract thing persons talked about as it is indicated in the mentioned example. Using metaphor and metonymy made language emotional. In addition, metaphors were used to highlight some important facts and to help the audience to better understand what candidates said, for example, the Qalibaf's statement "*the economic system had frozen up*". This metaphor helped the listener to better picture and comprehend what happened with the economic system. Or the most used metaphor in Reisi's language was the metaphor of weight associated with the low class. Regarding voice, a temporarily active voice was frequently used, the conclusion emphasizes the usage of passive voice. As mentioned in the theoretical part, the passive structure is generally used in a political discourse. In this study, it is found that more passive structures were used in the debates. However, the speaker should desire active voice considering the fact that the passive construction is frequently used to contextual or ignore the speaker by not making the reference towards the subject. Then, a passive voice is used when some bad news needs to be reported. On the other hand, active voice is preferred when the speaker wishes to increase the recognition.

The second part, the practical section, was dedicated to the analysis that was based on the corpus. The corpus contained the transcription of the third presidential debates. According to the analysis, three linguistic features characteristic for political discourse that was mentioned in the theoretical part were used in this debate. The most frequently used linguistic feature was metonymy which widely occurred in the third debate. The second most ferequently used linguistic feature was metaphor. Voice was used in lesser extent and more by one of the candidates. Based on these findings, we can say that the language used in debates is pretty emotional in order to request and to influence the audience.

The findings did not accomplish our expectation which was formed by the reading of the transcript. We assumed that it would be Reisi and Qalibaf who used more linguistic policies and therefore their language was more emotional and appealing. However, the study demonstrated that all three mentioned candidates used linguistic features with almost the same frequency.

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