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Positioning Strategies in Iranian vs. Western Media Discourse: A Comparative Study of Editorials on Syria Crisis

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Fatemeh Mahdavi-rad
(Corresponding Author)

Department of English Language and Literature
Yazd University
Yazd, Iran

Fatemeh Mokhtari

Department of English Language and Literature
Yazd University
Yazd, Iran

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the editorials of Iranian vs. Western media coverage of Syria crisis in order to reveal how the writers of journalistic texts employ various discursive strategies to produce or reproduce the same issue differently and consequently manipulate the thoughts of the readers. Working within the framework of van Dijk (2000) and concentrating on two prominent newspapers, namely, Tehran Times Daily and New York Times, representing the Iranian and American media discourse, respectively, the present study investigated a set of editorials developed to discuss different aspects of Syria crisis. The critical analysis of the texts under investigation indicated a close relationship between language and ideology and the findings revealed that different discursive strategies, including compassion, disclaimer, implication, national self-glorification, polarization, vagueness, and negative lexicalization are employed differently by editors to create or recreate specific ideologies in diverse sociopolitical settings. The implications of the study for language teaching and learning, and the applications of the findings in journalism studies are explained.

Keywords: CDA, Editorials, Hidden Ideology, Media Discourse, Positioning, Syria Crisis

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1. Introduction

In the last decades, there has been an increasing interest in studying the hidden ideologies realized via various linguistic devices in media discourse and there are many studies which focus on the discursive strategies employed to crystalize journalistic ideologies in political texts (e.g., Yang, 2013; van Dijk, 1984; Sunderland, 2004). Syria crisis has been one of the controversial issues dealt with in recent years in the media and different political perspectives have been incorporated in newswriting on this issue by journalists. A number of studies have already been conducted on positioning in media discourse (e.g., Ghane & Mahdavi-rad 2016, 2018; Ghane, Allami & Mahdavi-rad, 2016; Mokhtari & Mahdavi-rad, 2012; Shojaei, Youssefi, & Shams Hosseini, 2013); however, few cross-cultural studies have been done to specifically examine positioning strategies in journalistic texts on

Syria crisis. Thus, the present study is an attempt to compare and contrast Iranian vs. American newspaper editorials on Syria crisis in order to uncover the discursive strategies used to convey specific meanings, manipulate readers' minds, and achieve long-run institutionalized policies. It can shed more light on the role of positioning strategies in media discourse and the way such strategies are employed to convey certain hidden ideologies to the addressees.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ideology

Ideology is used in many fields with different, but overlapping meanings. Critical discourse analysts consider ideology as “a practice that operates in processes of meaning production in everyday life, whereby meaning is mobilized in order to maintain relations of power” (Jorgensen & Philips, 2002, p. 75). Ideologies are mental systems that organize socially shared



attitudes, and these mental systems are social representations that function as “models which control how people act, speak or write or how they understand the social practices of others” (van Dijk, 1995, p. 2).

2.2 *The Study of Hidden Ideology*

An emerging body of research has set out to analyze the possible relationships between language and society. The basic claim of CDA is that all human usage encodes ideological patterns, i.e., language is not just a transparent medium of communication about the objective world, but a constantly operative part of the social process. Thus CDA analyzes discourse to discover the hidden meanings. Kress (1990) emphasizes that the defined and delimited set of statements that constitute a discourse are expressive of, and organized by a specific ideology. Language, therefore, can never appear by itself since it always appears as the representative of a system of linguistic terms, which themselves reflect the prevailing discursive and ideological systems. Thompson (2002) states that a critical approach to discourse analysis seeks to link the text (micro level) with the underlying power structures in society (macro level) through discursive practices upon which the text is drawn. That is a text, a description of something happening in a larger social context, replete with a complex set of power relations, is interpreted and acted upon by readers or listeners depending on their rules, norms, and mental models of socially acceptable behavior and background knowledge (McGregor, 2003).

In a study done by Yang (2013), seven promotional radios showed as data were analyzed by means of CDA under Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional framework. The outcome showed that albeit radio shows on women's health were entertaining and educational and they were produced to convince the women to buy a special product. Hence, according to Yang (2013), the shows had an ideologically biased base, and they reflected the social influence of marketization in discourse. The findings revealed the importance of CDA in raising people's critical awareness of language.

In the 80s, van Dijk (1984) and his colleagues analyzed a set of interviews of spontaneous conversations taking place in Amsterdam and San Diego, which indicated that conversations were quite similar and typical at every level. For example,

regarding the topics, it was found that there were a very limited set of subjects triggered when people speak about foreigners. Typically, these subjects were about Cultural differences, Deviations (crime, violence, etc.) and Menaces (economic, social and cultural). As to the local coherence relations between clauses, van Dijk's (1984) research reveals that people tend to use specific semantic movements. These movements enact a Positive representation of *us* and a Negative Presentation of *the other*. Regarding the structure of narratives about minorities, van Dijk (1984) indicates that they become complaint stories in which the personal experiences related are the premises of negative conclusions such as they don't want to adapt, they just live here at our expense, etc.

2.3 *Media Discourse and CDA*

The news is normally expected to be objective not only from the point of view of journalists who aim to be so but also typically from the point of view of the news reader (Fowler, 1991; Allan, 2005). The news both strives to be and often is viewed as a collection of facts, and this is at least partially so because they are represented as such by lacking forms that indicate modality (Fairclough, 1995). Also the existence of opinion pieces and editorials suggests to the readers that the hard news items are factual (Fowler, 1991). The seemingly unambiguous facts are presented to the readers who then presume the information provided is factual.

The factor of access to the media means that some groups in the community have opportunity to represent their opinions in the media and impose limitations and constraints on the represented facts. Van Dijk called these powerful people "elites who can influence the structure of language and then society" (1993, p.258). When we see that those who belong to the powerful sections of the society try to confiscate the mass media like television and newspapers we can understand that they consider them as powerful means that can be used to change the opinions of people and propagate their own ideas. This means that the language used in media is not authentic because it is determined and controlled by dominant ideologies or as Fowler (1991, p.11) said, "The world of the press is not the real world, but a world skewed and judged".

Different models have been also used to examine the way journalists' positions and

attitudes are entextualized in media discourse. For example, Ghane & Mahdavi-rad (2016) studied how the journalistic personal and institutional ideologies and policies are realized via certain textual features. Using Perrin's (2012) progression model, they investigated journalistic stancing with regard to the Iranian nuclear issue. The results of that study showed a systematic ideological bias towards portraying a negative presentation of Iranian nuclear policy by western media.

Working within the appraisal framework (Martin & White, 2005), Ghane, Allami & Mahdavi-rad (2017) studied dialogic positioning, by which texts can favor particular value positions while pretending to be sharing their readers' views through employment of certain lexical choices, hence stance markers.

Ghane and Mahdavi-rad (2018) investigated how journalistic ideologies and political positions are realized through attitudinal terms. The results indicated an ideological bias towards portraying a negative presentation of Iranian nuclear policy in the western media. It was also found that Iranian journalists, however, tend to highlight the positive dimension of the Iranian nuclear program

2.4 Van Dijk's Framework

Although there are some leading figures who have strived to clarify the details of the CDA field by presenting different frameworks with varied components that can be used by those who are interested in the critical analysis of the texts, most of the analysts resort to the van Dijk's (2000) design. Van Dijk's (2000, p.44) framework illustrates the categories that he believes to be important in doing CDA studies. This framework is based on an ideological square which presents a general and practical strategy of ideological analysis. This square has four principles that will be presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Van Dijk's Framework (van Dijk, 2000:44)

	Us	Them
Emphasize	Emphasize positive things about Us.	Emphasize negative things about Them.
De-emphasize	De-emphasize negative things about Us.	De-emphasize positive things about Them

Thus, according to van Dijk's model, there are two major strategies that represent most of the ideologies, "say positive things about Us, say negative things about Them" van Dijk (2000, p. 44). These strategies are

materialized through different discursive moves like Compassion, Disclaimer, Implication, National self-glorification, Polarization, Presupposition, Vagueness, Negative lexicalization. The selected components of van Dijk's (2000) framework that were used in the present study are defined and elaborated in the following:

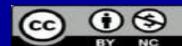
1. *Compassion*: Showing empathy or sympathy for weak victims of the other actions, to enhance the brutality of the other.
2. *Disclaimer*: Presenting an idea as something positive and then rejecting it by the use of terms such as 'but' in the second sentence.
3. *Implication*: Deducing or inferring implicit information.
4. *National Self Glorification*: A device to create positive self-representation by glorifying one's country.
5. *Polarization*: Categorizing people as belonging to US with good attributes and THEM with bad attributes
6. *Presupposition*: The common shared knowledge between people or the ideas taken for granted in a proposition.
7. *Vagueness*: Creating uncertainty and ambiguity.
8. *Negative Lexicalization*: The selection of strongly negative words to describe the actions of the others.

In the present paper, attempt is made to examine the hidden strategies incorporated in ideological messages to the editorials' readers, so the researchers will investigate a number of ideological editorials that try to mobilize people against their will by relying on certain manipulative strategies defined in Van Dijk's framework.

3. Methodology

3.1 Data Collection Procedure

Editorial is a specific genre in newspapers that aims to argue for a particular line of thought on a given situation. The researchers tried to focus on the Editorials of newspapers that were published in two different settings, Iran and the US. Although the settings are different, the topics of the selected editorials are the same. The subject under investigation was the crisis of Syria. In recent years, lots of revolutions and movements have happened in Arab countries. The movements in Syria's were the most controversial and long-lasting, because there were two groups in Syria who were involved in civil war, one group was against President Bashar Assad and the other was for him. In the fall of 2011 the conflict turned into an armed



confrontation. As Syria plays an important role in the Middle East, the world powers (and their media) quickly became involved in this new conflict as its outcome could shift the balance of power in the region.

For the purposes of the present study, the researchers selected Tehran Times and New York Times newspapers to be critically analyzed in order to manifest their positions toward the crisis. According to Fowler (2004), it can be stated that the selected words by print media are not free from impartiality; rather, they bear a power that indicates the preferences of speakers and writers. As van Dijk (2006, p. 115) puts it, “ideologies are expressed and generally reproduced in the social practices of their members, and more particularly acquired, confirmed, changed and perpetuated through discourse”.

The main reason for choosing this topic is that it is known for most of the readers and is considered as a controversial issue with higher possibility of being biased. For the purpose of this study, the archives of the two newspapers were searched and some of the relevant editorials were selected. The aim was to critically analyze them according to van Dijk's (2000) framework to show that writers do not use language neutrally and try to manipulate the beliefs and thoughts of the readers by using their own desirable discursal strategies. The rationale behind choosing these two newspapers was that they possess the two features Fowler (1991, p. 122) states for the expression and formulation of ideologies in printed media, i.e. the extent of publication and the number of readers. Thus, the online versions of these newspapers were used because they are accessible to most people.

3.2 Materials

The researchers selected some editorials included in Tehran Times (TT) and New York Times (NYT) newspapers in order to be critically analyzed according to van Dijk's framework. The Iranian daily, Tehran Times, is an English newspaper published in Tehran. People over from many countries read this newspaper that has got sixteen pages to learn what is running in the world. The American daily newspaper, New York Times is published in New York City. This newspaper has the largest circulation in America. The thirty-six relevant editorials on Syria crisis were collected from these two newspapers. Fifteen editorials were selected from the newspaper that is published in Iran and twenty one editorials were chosen from

the newspaper published in the West. The two newspapers, number of editorials, and number of words are listed in Table 2. In order to ensure the reliability of the critical texts analysis results, a rather similar number of words were considered in text selection for the two groups of editorials.

Table 2: The frequency of the Editorials and the total number of words

	Total number of texts	Total number of words
TT newspaper	15 Editorials	3157 words
NYT newspaper	21 Editorials	3234 words

3.3 Research Question

The following research question was addressed:

What is the relationship between the common ideological norms of context and the way of presenting the intended ideologies in editorials?

3.4 Data Analysis

For analyzing a text critically and making the hidden ideologies more transparent, the researchers tried to focus on van Dijk's (2000) framework components including Compassion, Disclaimer, Implication, National self-glorification, Polarization, Presupposition, Vagueness, and Negative lexicalization. In the following lines, by focusing on the above components, some selected parts of the TT and NYT's editorials are analyzed to show how journalists manipulate the language to prevail their own ideologies.

Strategy 1: Compassion

Extract 1:

Now millions of people in Syria and Yemen are suffering from lack of food, medical facilities, shelter, etc. (September 4, 2016) (TT)

The writer is *worried about* the people of Syria and Yemen (**the strategy of compassion**).

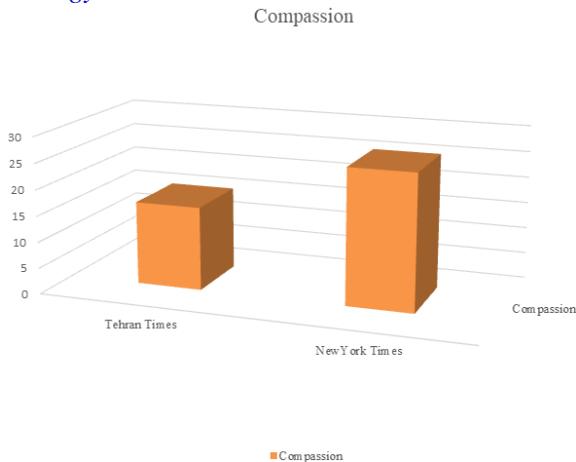
Extract 2:

The agreement can be salvaged if *all sides unite*, for now, around a simple and undeniably important goal: *Stop the killing*. It may be more likely than it sounds. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

The writer is worried about *the killing of people* (**the strategy of compassion**) and wants to show that there is not a unity between the all sides of the war and *wants to imply that some of the groups may not be anxious about the important goal of stopping the killing of people* (**the strategy of implication**).

Figure 1 shows the difference between the frequency of the strategy of compassion in TT and NYT. As the Figure shows this strategy was used in NYT more than in TT.

Figure 1: The frequency of the compassion strategy in TT and NYT



Strategy 2: Disclaimer

Extract 1:

Although Madaya is only an hour's drive from downtown Damascus, residents and international aid workers say much of the town is starving. (January 12, 2016) (NYT)

The aim is to reveal that there is an obvious contradiction (the strategy of disclaimer). The distance between the two parts is not a lot but the residents of Madaya are suffering from hunger (the strategy of compassion and disclaimer).

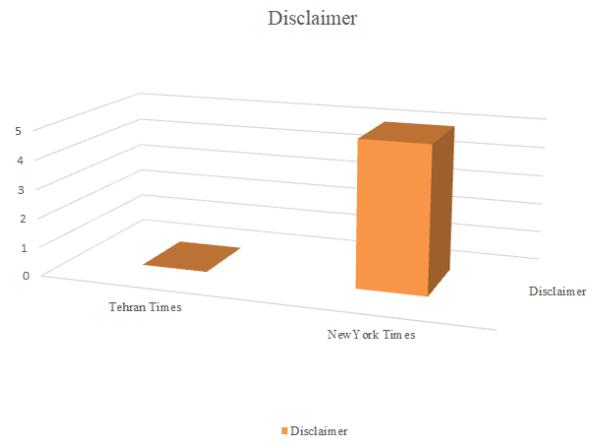
Extract 2:

But all of this misses the central point: Syria, one of the most important states in the Arab world, has cracked up, and no peace settlement can put it back together. (April 16, 2016) (NYT)

The writer tries to focus on this fact that he is aware about the history of Syria, but there is a big difference between the old Syria and modern Syria (the strategy of disclaimer). He also wants to show that the current situation of Syria is dreadful (the strategy of compassion).

As it is shown in Figure 2, TT editorials did not include any disclaimer strategy.

Figure 2: The frequency of the disclaimer strategy in TT and NYT



Strategy 3: Implication

Extract 1:

These governments did not imagine that the people and legal government of Syria could resist against the foreigners' invasion and interference for about six years. (October 3, 2016) (TT)

The writer implies that Syria and its nation are in the same line (the strategy of implication), since the people know that the government is legal and resistant to difficulties (the strategy of positive self-glorification) that are imposed by the foreigners who want to interfere in the interior issues of this country (the strategy of negative lexicalization).

Extract 2:

Since the Syrian government and nation have been standing against the Zionist regime these countries inflicted great losses on the country, Velayati added. (September 26, 2016) (TT)

The writer implies that the people of Syria stay with the government because they believe that the government and the president are legal (the strategy of implication).

Extract 3:

These shocking numbers alone should convince all concerned that war itself is the greatest violation of human rights and the ultimate enemy of Syria. (September. 20, 2016) (NYT)

The writer implies America is concerned about the situation since this country respects the human rights and is eager to stop the war (the strategy of implication).

Figure 3 displays the difference between TT and NYT in using the strategy of implication in the editorials under investigation. As shown in this figure, TT editorials included more implications.

Figure 3: The frequency of the implication strategy in TT and NYT

Strategy 4: National Self-Glorification

Extract 1:

After many years of sincere debate and based on our vast experiences, today we know enough about dangers of war. (September 4, 2016) (TT)

The writer emphasizes the experience of Iran (**the strategy of positive self-glorification**) since this country tolerated an imposed war (**the strategy of compassion**).

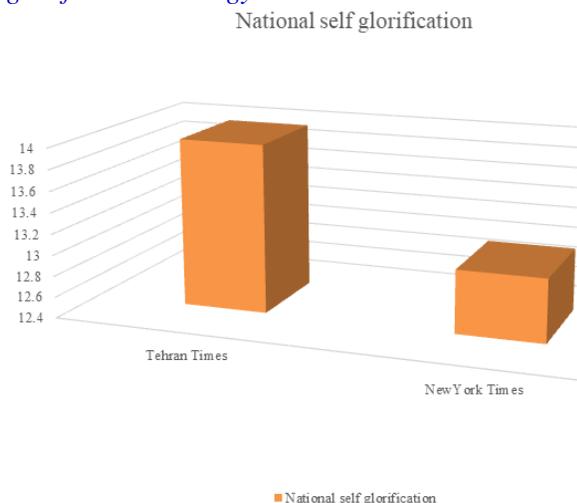
Extract 2:

It was a major player among the dizzying cast of foreign powers that intervened in Lebanon's 15-year civil war, and brought that conflict to an end with an outright occupation blessed by the United States. (April 16, 2016) (NYT)

It is focused on the role of America in bringing the conflict in Lebanon to an end (**the strategy of positive self-glorification**).

Figure 4 shows the difference between TT and NYT in employing the strategy of national - self - glorification. As the figure shows, a considerably larger number of national- self- glorification strategies were employed in TT editorials.

Figure 4: The frequency of the national-self-glorification strategy in T.T and N.Y.T



Strategy 5: Polarization

Extract 1:

Some 80 countries, most of which being Western states and reactionary Arab countries in the region" have been fanning the flames in Syria since the crisis broke out in 2011, however, they paid a big price for their action, he stated. (September 26, 2016) (TT)

The aim is to classify Western countries and reactionary Arab countries in a group (**the strategy of polarization**) to show that the policies of them are the same and they follow the similar goals.

Extract 2:

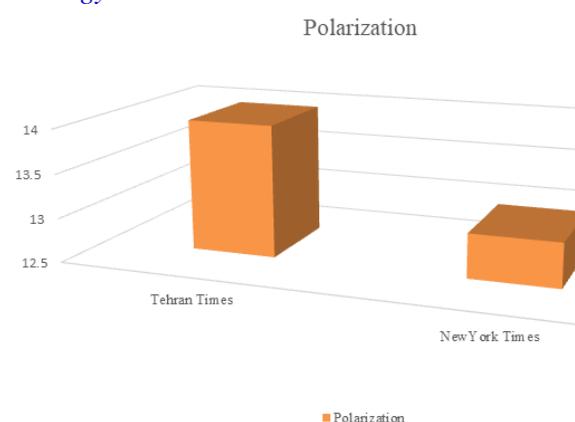
Russia is interested in a Mediterranean port; Iran wants a linkage with Hezbollah in Lebanon; Turkey's

primary goal is undermining Kurdish ambitions; and Saudi Arabia cares most about preventing another Iranian foothold in the Arab world. These interests are already threatening the tenuous cease-fire. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

It is manifested that different countries pursue their own aims and they don't take care about current situation (**the strategy of polarization**).

Figure 5 indicates the different use of the Polarization strategy in TT and NYT. As the figure displays, compared to NYT editorials, more polarization strategies were used in TT editorials.

Figure 5: The frequency of the polarization strategy in TT and NYT



Strategy 6: Presupposition

Extract 1:

Still, there is reason for hope. If Russia and the United States were willing to come far enough in their negotiations to reach this deal, these setbacks can be overcome. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

The writer believes that America and its allies can resolve the problem if they will (**the strategy of presupposition**).

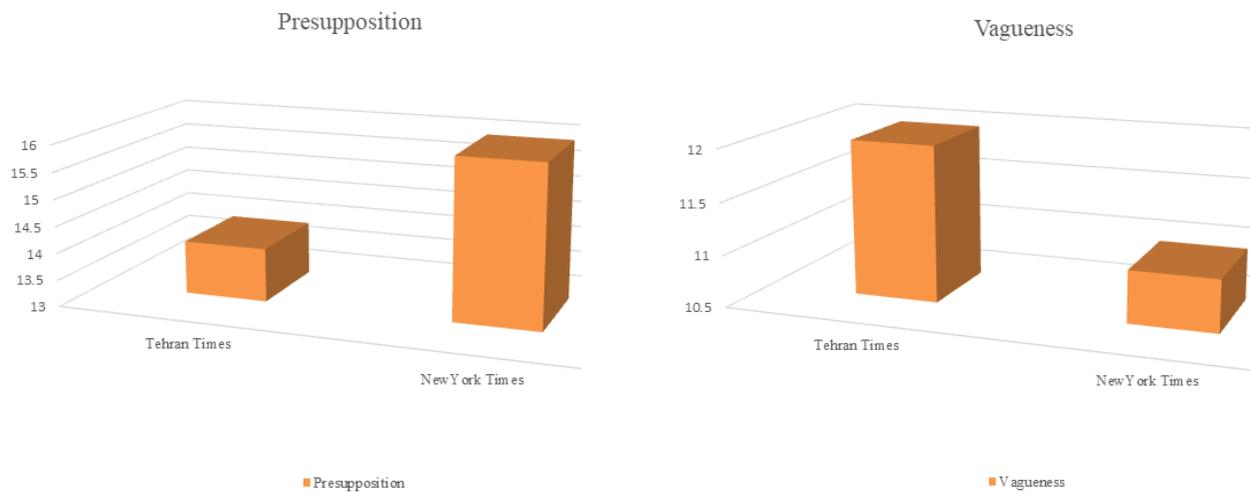
Extract 2:

But the America and Russia expectations that they reach an agreement on issues of transitional governance by Aug. 1 was unrealistic. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

It is elaborated that America and its allies found that Bashar should decide to accept the defeat and leave the power (**the strategy of presupposition**).

Figure 6 shows that the strategy of presupposition was used in these two newspapers differently, i.e., a greater number of presupposition strategy was found in NYT editorials.

Figure 6: The frequency of the presupposition strategy in TT and NYT



Strategy 7: Vagueness

Extract 1:

The Middle East is caught in its worst humanitarian crisis. (September 4, 2016) (TT)

The writer aims to show that *the Middle East is trapped in a bad situation and they cannot find a way out (the strategy of Vagueness).*

Extract 2:

The whole world knows today which absurd mentality is nurturing the dark forces of terrorism, and how it should be stopped. (September 4, 2016) (TT)

The writer wants to show that *the solution for resolving the problems is not clear (the strategy of Vagueness).*

Extract 3:

Additionally, measures could be agreed upon to stabilize conditions in territories controlled by these belligerents. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

The writer wants to show that there is not a certainty about the decisions made by the foreign countries **(the strategy of vagueness)**. They may or may not agree to solve the problems. As can be seen in Figure 4.7 there was a difference between TT and NYT in using this strategy.

Figure 7: displays the frequency of the vagueness strategy in TT and NYT. As the figure shows, the number of vagueness strategy used in TT was considerably higher than the one employed in NYT.

Strategy 8: Negative Lexicalization

Extract 1:

Supporters of terrorism and the countries that through miscalculations backed the Takfiri and terrorist groups in the region are now trapped in a situation and cannot find a way out. (October 3, 2016) (TT)

The writer uses some *biased phrases, like supporters of terrorism, to represent the action of the other countries negatively (the strategy of negative lexicalization).*

Extract 2:

Qassemi dismissed the West's perception of Iran's role in Syria, saying, "They should have already realized that they should not ask Iran to use its influence against those who are fighting global terrorism at the forefront." (September 28, 2016) (TT)

The focus is on the *negative image of the West countries that are not able to realize the important role of Iran (the strategy of negative lexicalization)*, in order to focus on the positive characteristics of this country.

Extract 3:

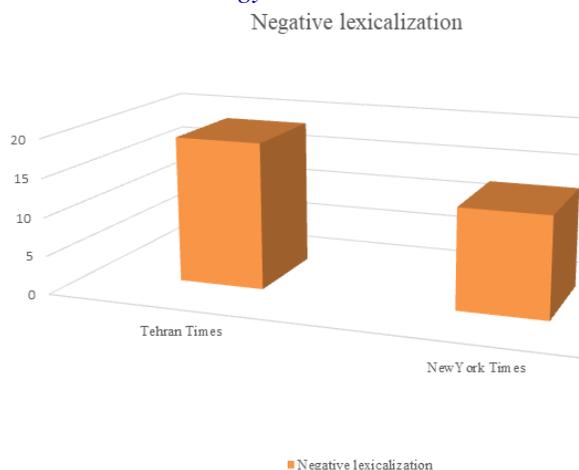
The announcement this month of a new cease fire agreement in Syria is good news. But a lack of trust among the Syrian belligerents and their foreign supporters means this agreement, like the one that came before it, is vulnerable to collapse. (September 20, 2016) (NYT)

The writer portrays the foreign countries negatively by using the phrase *a lack of trust to put emphasize on this fact that these countries do not like to experience the settlement in Syria (the strategy of negative lexicalization).*

Figure 8 can be used to get a clear picture of the difference between the frequency of the Negative Lexicalization in TT and NYT.



Figure 8: The frequency of the negative lexicalization strategy in TT and NYT



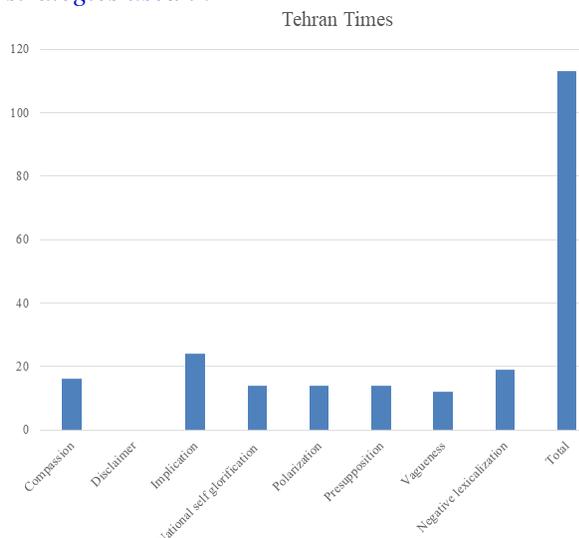
4. Results and Discussion

The frequency and percentage of each micro discourse feature in each newspaper were calculated separately and then both newspapers were compared and contrasted. Tables 3 and 4 and Figures 9 and 10 display the frequency and percentage of all discursal strategies used in TT and NYT newspapers, respectively.

Table 3: Frequency and percentage of individual discursal strategies in TT newspaper

Discursal Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Compassion	16	7.2
Disclaimer	0	0
Implication	24	11.4
National self-Glorification	14	6.2
Polarization	14	6.2
Presupposition	14	6.2
Vagueness	12	5.3
Negative Lexicalization	19	9.8

Figure 9: The frequency of all discursal strategies used in TT

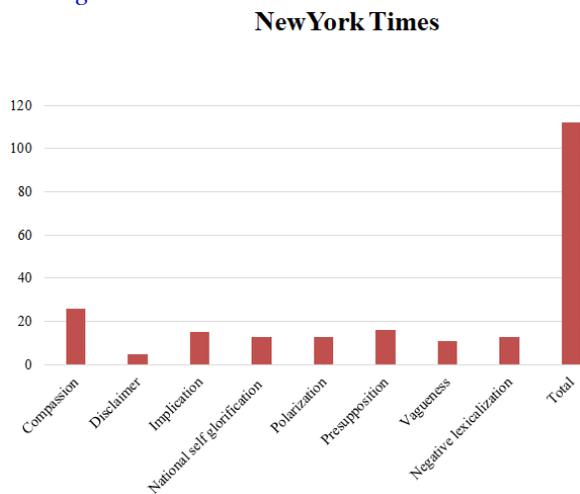


As Figure 9 indicates, the most frequent strategies used in TT editorials were implication and negative lexicalization, while the least frequent strategies were disclaimer and vagueness.

Table 4: Frequency and percentage of individual discursal strategies in NYT newspaper

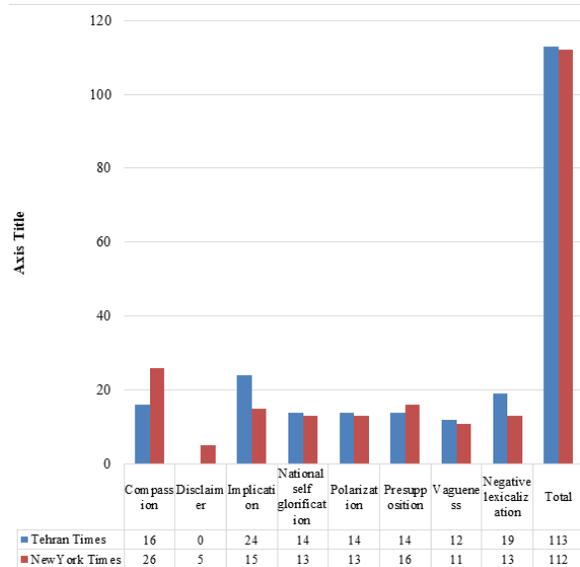
Discursal Strategies	Frequency	Percentage
Compassion	26	11.4
Disclaimer	5	2.3
Implication	15	7.7
National self-Glorification	13	6.2
Polarization	13	6.2
Presupposition	16	7.9
Vagueness	11	5
Negative Lexicalization	13	6.2

Figure 10: The frequency of all discursal strategies used in NYT



As shown in Figure 10, the most frequently used strategies in NYT editorials were compassion and presupposition, and the least frequent strategy were disclaimer and vagueness. The total discursal strategies that were employed in TT and NYT newspapers are manifested in Figure 11.

Figure 11: The total discursal strategies used in TT and NYT



As figure 11 displays, the total number of discursal strategies used in the two groups of editorials under investigation are similar.

The aim of the above analysis was to show the differences between the frequency and percentage of the micro strategies used

in TT and NYT newspapers. As it is obvious in the above tables the discursive strategies that are used to present the same subject are not the same in different contexts. The reason for this difference lies in the fact that those who are in power want to manipulate the language in order to prevail their own ideologies in the society.

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test (X^2 test) was conducted to show whether the differences in the corpora were statistically meaningful or not.

Table 5: The Chi-square Analysis of Micro Strategies in TT and NYT newspapers

	COM	DIS	IMP	NAT	POL	PRE	VAG	NEG	Total
TT	1.22	2.51	0.99	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.53	5.39
NTY	1.24	2.53	1.003	0.01	0.01	0.07	0.01	0.53	5.43

Table 5 shows that the two newspapers are significantly different in using discursive strategies at the micro level since the critical X^2 (10/829) with $df=7$ is less than the observed X^2 (14/067) at the significant level ($p<0.05$).

The analysis of the editorials of the TT and NYT newspapers shows that:

1. The editorials have not been neutral; rather, they have been manipulatively employed to express their own ideologies towards the political crisis in Syria.
2. Different strategies have been used to show negative other-representation and positive self-representation.
3. Implication, negative lexicalization, and compassion in Tehran Times' editorials, and compassion, presupposition and implication in New York Times' editorials are the most frequent discursive strategies and disclaimer in TT and vagueness in NYT were used less than the other strategies.
4. The most important discursive strategies utilized in the editorials under investigation are compassion and implication.
5. As it was indicated the English newspapers such as NYT employ the discursive strategies to represent a negative image of the government of Syria and a positive image of the Western countries in solving the problems and removing the current hindrances of the peace negotiations. On the other hand, it was revealed that the same image was seen in the Tehran Times which tried to emphasize the efficiency of this government and the presidency of Bashar Assad and the positive role of Iran in solving the problems and deemphasizing the role of

the US in the negotiations for the settlement and peace in this country.

5. Discussion, Conclusions, Implications, and Limitations

The present study presented a critical discourse analysis of editorials published by Iranian vs. American media dealing with the controversial issue of Syria crisis. The study adopted van Dijk's (2000) framework to examine the hidden ideologies in the texts under investigation. The strategies crystallized through different discursive moves namely, Compassion, Disclaimer, Implication, National self-glorification, Polarization, Presupposition, Vagueness, Negative lexicalization were identified and calculated.

Comparing and contrasting the discursive strategies employed by the two sets of editorials revealed that the Iranian journalist have a tendency to positively present the Syria government side, while the American editorials were found to materialize a rather negative perspective toward Assad's administration. In other words, the Iranian media tried to reflect to the readers a positive sensation which conveys a supportive and persuasive tone toward the government led by Assad. The American media, on the other hand, take a rather negative ideological position toward that government. It supports Fishman (1980) stating that news is not a neutral description of facts, but rather a (re)construction of reality based on the perspectives of some society. Thus, since the perspectives of Iranian and American societies towards the Syria government greatly differ, their manifestations in the media texts are also different.

The results are also in line with van Dijk (1993) which defines dominance as the exercise of social power by special groups and with Jorgenson and Philips' (2002) theory of the practice of hegemony. Furthermore, the findings support the results of the studies by Thompson (2002), Yang (2013), van Dijk (1984, 1993, 1988, 2000), Sunderlands (2004), Behnam and Mahmoudi (2013), White (2012), Yang (2018), Ghane and Mahdavi-rad (2016, 2018), and Ghane, Allami and Mahdavi-rad (2017) all of which emphasize the realization of special ideologies via textual devices for convincing the readers to take particular ideological directions.

The results of this research can shed more light on the way media texts are introduced to language learners. Teacher should remind the readers that such texts are



not neutral carriers of meaning. Readers should be taught how to employ critical language awareness to have a better understanding of the hidden ideologies of the journalists which are materialized via various textual strategies in order to manipulate the readers' mind.

Moreover, the findings can be applied in journalism studies. Although journalists usually claim neutrality in presenting the events to their potential readers, their attitudes, beliefs, and ideologies are incorporated in the development of such texts. Consequently, the addressees' views are unconsciously influenced by journalists' perspectives.

The results of the study may have been affected by a number of limitations. It seems that a higher number of texts as well as a greater number of newspapers belonging to a wider variety of western geography could lead to more reliable results. Also, the results of this study are limited to a specific media genre, i.e., editorials, so the other researchers can look for some other ideologies in genres other than the one investigated in this study. Moreover, the researchers employed the framework proposed by van Dijk (2000); however, the replication of the study with frameworks other than the one used in the present study is suggested for obtaining more generalizable results.

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