

# *They Want To Eradicate the Nation: A Cross-Linguistic Study of the Attitudinal Language of Presidential Campaign Speeches in the USA and Iran*

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## **Abstract**

Politicians adopt a variety of linguistic strategies in their speeches to connect with their audience. To name one, appraisal, as a system of interpersonal meaning, is concerned with evaluation where resources are used for negotiating social relationships. Despite their significance in shaping texts, there have hardly been any extensive inventories of appraisal tools contrasting electoral speeches. The current study examined the evaluative strategies used by presidential candidates during the American 2008 and Iranian 2009 national polls. To this end, we applied qualitative and quantitative analyses and the results revealed significant differences among the winners and losers of each group. While affect and judgment were substantially utilized by the winners in both American and Iranian contexts, appreciation resources were context-sensitive. Differences in the kind and nature of attitudinal markers revealed their different political, social, economic and international statuses at election time.

**Keywords:** Appraisal Theory, Presidential Speech, Stance, Graduation

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## **1. Introduction**

Political speeches are but a part of the election campaign and may not be quite persuasive to many when other factors best predict election outcomes. However, to those who seek to explain election outcomes inside speech effects, political discourse, according to Jones and Wareing (1999), relies very heavily on the principle that people's perception of certain issues or concepts can be influenced by language. Considering this fact, during the chess game of election, voters are influenced by aspects that are of paramount importance in the era of mass communication. As argued by Tenorio (2002, p. 245), "it seems easier to accept the general view that linguistic ability of politicians can be one of their strengths when trying to convince voters of their proposal and, especially, their good intentions". Politicians adopt a variety of linguistic strategies in their speeches to connect with the audience and to appear as the best choice to vote for. To name one, appraisal, as a system of interpersonal meaning, involves evaluation where resources are used for negotiating social relationships (Martin & Rose, 2003). As such, since evaluation "focuses on attitudes of speakers or writers toward what they are saying or toward their interactants" (Thompson & Hunston, 2006, p. 305), it is important and may even be crucial to decipher attitudinal traits in presidential candidates' speeches to find out how appraisal elements might help orators persuade their target audiences.

Despite awareness of the phenomenon of evaluation by linguists and the public (Brown & Levinson, 1987; Culpeper, 2001; Martin, 2000; van Dijk, 1987), and appreciation of cross-cultural differences in both categorizing and expressing emotions by linguists, psychologists, and anthropologists (Bazzanella, 2004), there have hardly been any extensive inventories of appraisal tools contrasting electoral speeches. Furthermore, very few, if any,

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cross-linguistic or cross-cultural studies have been conducted to investigate the use of appraisal tools in the televised speeches of Iranian and American presidential candidates. The current study aims to investigate the means of evaluation used by the presidential candidates during the US 2008 and Iranian 2009 national polls. More specifically, the study investigates the following questions:

1. How are attitudinal expressions deployed in Iranian and American presidential speeches?
2. How are graduation resources exploited in Iranian and American presidential speeches?
3. Do these linguistic devices contribute to the candidates' final success or failure?

## **2. Theoretical Background: On Appraisal**

Appraisal, involvement, and negotiation are the three major discourse semantic resources construing interpersonal meaning (Martin & Rose, 2003; Martin & White, 2005). Appraisal is concerned with evaluation: attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned (Martin & Rose, 2003). Appraisal is a system of interpersonal meanings for negotiating our social relationships by telling our listeners and readers how we feel about things and people.

The appraisal theory suggests that emotions are extracted from our evaluations (appraisals) of events and persons that lead to specific reactions in different people. Hence, our appraisal of a situation might draw on an emotional, or affective, response that is going to be based on that appraisal (Scherer, Shorr & Johnston, 2001). According to Roseman and Smith (2001), there are two basic types of appraisal models. The first is a structural model

which concentrates on picking apart the evaluations we make and helps to explain the relation between appraisals and the emotions they elicit. This model involves examination of the appraisal process as well as examination of how different appraisals influence which emotions are experienced. Structural-based appraisals rely on the idea that our appraisals cultivate the emotional responses. The second is a process-orientated model which concentrates on the actual operation of emotional processes. This model is rooted in the idea that it is important to specify the cognitive principles and operations underlying these appraisal modes.

Appraisal theory provides an analytical tool “to better understand the issues associated with evaluative resources and the negotiation of intersubjective positions and opens a new area of interpersonal meaning” (Liu, 2010, p.133). It “examines evaluative lexis expressing the speaker’s or writer’s opinion on, very broadly, the good/bad parameter” (Liu, 2010, p.133). The overall system of choices used to describe this area of meaning potential is called appraisal (Liu, 2010). The whole point about evaluative devices is that they are a way of enriching a narrative, of grabbing and holding attention (Chen, 2004). By analyzing the use of appraisal elements -in a cross-cultural study- we can learn much about the cultural context within which a linguistic exchange takes place. Such elements help, in a sense, to fix the immediate linguistic exchange within a much richer and deeper cultural context. They also reveal a great deal about the relationship between speaker or writer and listener or reader, and about their expectations and perceptions of each other. Appraisal elements are usually adopted by speakers and writers to persuade their audience (Bednarek, 2006). Appraisal is made of three interacting domains: attitude, engagement, and graduation (Martin & Rose, 2003).

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Attitude is also realized into three subtypes: affect, judgment, and appreciation. By affect (emotion) the speakers/writers indicate how they are emotionally willing to approve of the person, thing, happening, or state of affair. Judgment (ethics) is when the writers/speakers make assessments of human behavior, and appreciation (aesthetics) is shown by assessing the form, appearance, composition, impact, and significance of individuals, natural objects, and artifacts (White, 2001). People express their affect in two general ways (positive or negative) and each of them can be direct or implied. On the other hand, judgment, in addition to the above-mentioned aspects for feeling, can also be personal judgment of admiration or criticism and moral judgment of praise and condemnation.

One distinctive feature of attitude markers is that they are gradable. This means that we can say how strongly we feel about someone or something. This feature is called graduation. It deals with the strength and weakness of the feelings. Some choices turn the volume up (e.g., *extremely, sharply*) and others tone it down (e.g., *fairly, somewhat*) (Martin & Rose, 2003). Some scholars suggest that in English there are more resources for turning the volume up than down and that the former are used more frequently (Martin & Rose, 2003). Two kinds of resources of amplifiers are force and focus. The former is for turning the volume up and down. This includes words that intensify meanings, such as *very, really, and extremely*, and vocabulary items that have a degree of intensity such as *happy* and *ecstatic*. The latter involves sharpening or softening categories of people and things, using words such as *about/exactly* or *real/sort of/kind of*.

The final part of appraisal which is not of concern in this study has to do with the sources of attitude. It is concerned with the doer of the evaluation. In other words, it is concerned with the one who is doing the evaluation. If the

source of an attitude is the speaker/writer him/herself, it is called monogloss, and where the source of attitude is other than the writer/speaker, it is defined as heterogloss (Martin & Rose, 2003).

### **3. Review of the Literature**

#### **3.1 Presidential Campaigns and Presidential Speeches**

Political discourse including the speeches of politicians, parliamentary debates, political manifestos, campaign brochures and posters, as well as textbooks, academic papers or essays which discuss political ideas, beliefs or practices (Tekin, 2008) has been a fertile field for a plethora of studies in both the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries since political events are at the core of the national agenda and cannot be simply ignored (Gavriely-Nuri, 2008; Lauerbach & Fetzer, 2007). Studies in political discourse are diverse varying from, for example, judging the political power of presidents in editorials (Schaefer, 1997), the role of discursive strategies in political campaigning (Tenorio, 2002), linguistic patterns in presidential campaign speeches (Jarvis, 2004), to pseudo-argumentation in TV debates (Hess-Luttich, 2007). Still other studies have focused on expressing commitment when asking multiunit questions in parliamentary debates (Sivenkova, 2008), conversational violence in political TV debates (Luginbuhl, 2007), the presentation of political self in electoral media dialogue in France in 2007 (Johansson, 2008) critical analysis of political press conferences cross-linguistically (Bhatia, 2006), and investigation of newspapers for evaluative strategies which have a strong impact on readers (A'Beckett, 2009).

Political campaigns involve different activities. Among these activities, speeches have always played a major role in candidates' schedules. National speeches are the most outstanding and potentially influential weapon in the

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presidents' political armory (Schaefer, 1997). Through these speeches, the candidate informs others of his/her policy preferences and allows them to meet public expectations (Eshbaugh-Soha, 2010). Political campaign speeches as a discourse type are addressed to an overhearing audience; the direct audience might be members of the press, other politicians and perhaps a small section of the public, but the main audience will usually not be present at the time of utterance. They will hear/see/read elements of the speech at a later time (via the mass media). Speeches are usually delivered in a more formal speech style than ordinary conversation, although not always (Allen, 2007). They may be authored by a person other than the speaker, such as a professional speech writer but this is not always so. They are often followed directly by another discourse type, that of the political press conference. van Dijk (2005) adds that a well-known political move in national speeches is that of consensus, that is, making sure that policies are not of concern to a special party or group but in the national interest and hence should be supported by the opposition. Overall, political speech is functionally similar to an answer sequence, although without any clear and exact question. In that extended kind of answer, the politician is supposed to provide information and clear opinions (Fetzer, 2008). Indeed, the speeches made by politicians to the public are always both informative and exaggerated simultaneously (Luginbuhl, 2007).

When candidates stand for election with the intention of becoming the next president in their country, they promote their political agendas in order to persuade the electorate to vote for them. To reach this goal, the candidate should seem convincing to the public. In electoral discourse, and especially in the run for presidency, presidential candidates need to convince people of their ability to be the president, which they do by presenting an ideal identity of self according to the target community expectations. The situated event of a

presidential election requires the politician to construct an identity of president-to-be and, therefore, to create a persuasive relationship with the public hoping to have the perlocutionary effect of voting, that is winning their support (Johansson, 2008). Thus, in such campaigns politicians make promises, pledges, affirmations and declarations (Bull, Fetzer & Johansson, 2008). In Tenorio's (2002) views, political victories have a lot to do with the appeal of the candidates' distinct ideological positions, their socio-economic policy proposals and their explicit concerns with the electorate's welfare. Nonetheless, voters are influenced by other aspects that are of paramount importance in the era of mass communication. Their decisions are determined not just by the content of the campaign but also by the techniques that are used to convey this content.

Skilful and seasoned politicians seem to utilize various rhetorical techniques much like basic primary colors in a paint palette, which can be combined together in different quantities to get new results that satisfy their purpose (Bhatia, 2006). In other words, orators and politicians use different resources consciously to promote the way they use language (Bloor & Bloor, 2007). Among these are grammatical choices which, according to Quaglio (2009), are functionally motivated. He showed that, for example, the use of hedges can be an instrument of reducing the effect that a statement can have and, by the same token, the implementation of adverbial intensifiers may reflect the emotional nature of the speech. Such evaluative components are used in politicians' speeches to attract public attention to controversial issues; this way, they try to stress the importance, seriousness and appropriateness of the subject matter (Sivenkova, 2008). This selective utilization of such techniques and rhetorical devices may help politicians, when making their speeches during an election campaign, present positive aspects of themselves and negative aspects of their opponents (Allen, 2007) or in van Dijk's (2005)



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words, positive ingroup and negative outgroup descriptions. Additionally, through evaluative components they can satisfy their informational needs and express their commitment (Sivenkova, 2008). These techniques could be workable because other people's emotions influence one's emotions and appraisals during decision-making in naturalistic settings (Parkinson & Simons, 2009). Accordingly, it is suggested that studying political speeches and the processes that shape them can shed light on the ways information, values, ideologies, and beliefs are transferred in the course of making politics.

### **3.2. The Study**

The current study makes a number of significant contributions to understanding the discourse of politicians' speeches. At a general level, it helps exemplify the functions of appraisal tools in specific resources in relation to interpersonal meaning. This would appear to be the first study to provide readers with insights into the meta-discourse make-up of Iranian political discourse in comparison with its American counterpart in relation to the use of appraisal tools. The study will also include explanations of: (a) the ways in which candidates try to appear objective while making speeches for their own objects, (b) the evaluative means by which the presidential candidates manage to maintain solidarity with their voters while, at the same time, trying to underestimate their rivals. The application of appraisal theory to the study of evaluative stance in the speeches in the presidential campaigns will also inform aspects of the theory itself and will result in an expansion of the theoretical model. In particular, an interrogation of the theory in the context of this study will enable an expansion of the system network of graduation and will point to the significant role that the grading of non-attitudinal meanings plays in evoking attitude in this register.

## 4. Methodology

### 4.1. Dataset

The data, analyzed in terms of attitudinal stance and graduation, comprised four Iranian and two American presidential campaign speeches of the duration of about 30 minutes each. The Iranian speeches were recorded from the Iranian television Channel One. They were broadcast on 22 May 2009 (Mirhossein Mousavi), 23 May 2009 (Mohsen Rezaei), 24 May 2009 (Mehdi Karrobi), and 25 May 2009 (Mahmood Ahmadinejad). The American speeches were downloaded from Youtube.com and were broadcast on 18 March 2008 (Barak Obama) and 15 April 2008 (John McCain).

### 4.2. Instrument

In this study, we applied the work on appraisal theory by Martin and Rose (2003) and Martin and White (2005) which provide important theoretical bases for a comprehensive study of evaluative stance. In this system, the semantic resources made for evaluating human behavior ethically (judgment), evaluating and assessing the form, phenomena and appearance (appreciation), and indicating and constructing emotions (affect) were exploited. The main categories of affect, according to Martin and Rose (2003), which we encapsulated, are as follows:

**Table 1. The Main Categories of Affect (Martin & Rose, 2003)**

Categories	Sub-categories	Examples
Happiness/unhappiness	Cheer/affection/misery/antipathy	Laugh, hug, cry, hate
Security/insecurity	Confidence/trust/disquiet/surprise	Declare, trusting, uneasy, surprised
Satisfaction/dissatisfaction	Interest/admiration/ennui/displeasure	Curious, reward, fidget, cross
Inclination/disinclination	Emotions relating to desire	Request, desire

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The attitudinal sub-system of judgment encompasses norms about how people should and should not behave. Like affect, this taxonomy has positive and negative dimensions corresponding to positive and negative judgments about behavior.

**Table 2. The System of Judgement (Martin & Rose, 2003)**

<b>Social esteem</b>	<b>Positive (admiration)</b>	<b>Negative (criticize)</b>
Normality: fate, Is s/he special?	Lucky, fortunate, charmed, normal, average, fashionable	Unfortunate, pitiful, odd, dated, retrograde, peculiar,
Capacity: Is s/he capable?	Powerful, insightful, gifted, balanced, robust, clever	Weak, wimpy, slow, stupid, thick, flaky, neurotic
Tenacity: resolve Is s/he dependable?	Plucky, brave, heroic, reliable, tireless, dependable	Rash, cowardly, unreliable, undependable, distracted
<b>Social sanction</b>	<b>Positive (praise)</b>	<b>Negative (condemn)</b>
Veracity: truth Is s/he honest?	Truthful, honest, credible, authentic, real, frank	Dishonest, deceitful, glitzy, fake, deceptive, manipulative
Propriety: ethics Is s/he beyond reproach?	Good, moral, ethical, caring, law abiding, fair, just	Bad, immoral, evil, corrupt, unfair, unjust, mean

The appreciation sub-system, like affect and judgment sub-systems, has positive and negative dimensions corresponding to positive and negative evaluation of texts, things, processes and natural phenomena as shown in the following table.

**Table 3. The System of Appreciation (Martin & Rose 2003)**

	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>
Reaction: Did it grab me, did I like it?	Arresting, absorbing, striking, lively, beautiful	Dull, boring, dry, ugly, unremarkable, monotonous
Composition: Did it hang together, was it hard to follow?	Balanced, harmonious, unified, simple, rich, detailed	Unbalanced, unfinished, extravagant, puzzling
Valuation: Was it worthwhile?	Challenging, significant, deep, profound, fruitful	Shallow, insignificant, conservative, forgettable

Alongside these three subcategories of attitude, we also employed the graduation category of appraisal system to grade the strength and the weakness of the explicit feelings and attitudinal meanings. This category was employed under the overall sub-categories of force and focus.

### **4.3. Procedure**

The speeches were first transcribed and then revised twice to ensure complete and correct transcription. They were saved in Rich Text Format (RTF) and their words were counted. The data were then analyzed to identify explicit attitudinal meanings and resources used for grading them. In order to avoid any bias or arbitrariness, we selected two of the speeches randomly and analyzed them separately and after that we computed inter-rater reliability. Moreover, to make the analysis more accurate and to improve its reliability, one of the researchers reanalyzed all the speeches with a time interval of about one month and also calculated the intra-rater reliability using Cronbach's alpha. The slight differences did not affect the result and conformity was achieved for both inter and intra-rater reliability and the calculated Cronbach's alphas were 0.95 and 0.90 respectively.

Each instance of explicit attitude in the data was coded as affect (of emotions), judgment (of characters and behavior), or appreciation (of things), and their sub-classifications were explored with reference to Martin and Rose (2003) and by considering both micro and macro contexts. After presenting a qualitative analysis and identifying preferences of attitude in the speeches made by the candidates, the frequencies of explicit attitudinal meanings and graduation resources were counted to detect the possible differences between Iranian and American speeches and to determine whether these differences were significant.

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At this point, it needs to be pointed out that some considerations were made in the course of this study. The first was the subjective nature of the analysis. No matter how basic the role of evaluation in text and discourse, its identification and coding is not always straightforward (Thelta, 1997), and the lack of consensus among researchers on labeling discourse and lexical items as evaluative or non-evaluative and also the categories they are classified into is significant. For instance, “good and bad” were valued as positive and negative in the present research while these two had been considered equal in value with no loading for Thelta (1997) since, in his opinion, they are both worth investigating.

The second consideration concerned overlapping. The data showed that it was possible for an evaluative or grading term to express more than one parameter or value. This overlapping can be noticed in cases such as **bozorg** (*big*, value + & force), **binæzir** (*unique*, value + & force), and **grievous** (react + & force). The data also showed that sometimes speakers amplify their discourse by repeating words, phrases or sentences, as in McCain’s “**confidence** my friends, **confidence**”.

Finally, there appeared to be a number of religious phrases in Persian which were absent in English speeches. We classified these phrases into the proper categories of Martin and Rose’s (2003) taxonomy according to their meaning. For instance, **en sha ællah** (God willing) was classified in the inclination sub-category.

## **5. Results of Qualitative Analysis**

### **5.1. Expressing Attitude Explicitly**

In this study, the direct or explicit means by which attitude was explored were analyzed; however, attitudes expressed indirectly or implicitly were not within

the scope of the present study. Explicit instantiations, referred to as inscribed, encode values as positive or negative directly and that value can be graded up or down. Inscribed appraisal makes attitudes explicit through evaluative lexis or syntax. It intrudes directly into the text through attitudinal epithets, as in ‘an **untrained** ear’ (Obama1-USA) or relational attributes, as in ‘they may seem **jarring**’ (Obama1-USA) or comment adjuncts such as [**motæsefane** hæ'ta æz niruhaye xoob] (**sadly** even from good manpower...) (Karrobi1-Iran). It should be mentioned that there could be some other options of inscribed appraisal; however, in our data the prominent features dealt with are the mentioned instances. In the following extract, the expressions in bold are interpreted as instantiations of inscribed attitude.

- 1) sælɑ:m ærz mi:konæm xedmætə melætə **bozorge** ?i:rɑ:n, melæte **?i:mɑ:ni:**, melæte **?ɑ:rmɑ:ni:**, melæte **færhæng væ tæmædon sɑ:z.** Bɑ:være mæn nesbæt be **tævɑ:nmændi:hɑ:** væ **bozorgi:hɑ:**je melæte ?i:rɑ:n jek bɑ:være **?æmi:q** ?æst. Mæn hæmvɑ:re be se ?onsore **?æsi:l** ?eteqɑ:de **rɑ:sæx** dɑ:stæm; ?ævæl **lotf** væ **?enɑ:jæt** væ **tævædʒohe** xodɑ:je **bozorg.** (Iran-Ahmadinejad)

(I say hello to the **great** Iranian nation, the nation of faith, the **idealistic** nation, the nation of **culture and civilization**. My belief in the **capacities** and **greatness** of Iran is deep. I always had **firm** conviction in three **genuine** elements: first, **kindness**, **heed** and **attention** of the **great** God.)

The above example clearly signals the way Ahmadinejad appealed to the nation's feelings and emotions by using expressions of adulation and touching on religious beliefs. It seems that using inscribed attitudes can leave a lasting impression on the target audience and, as Rudman (2004) asserted, inscribed attitudes forge a response that is more thoughtful or deliberative.

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In this study, appreciation proved to be more significant compared to the other two instances as shown in the following extract. The three sub-categories of appreciation (reaction, composition, and valuation) also indicated more delicate distinctions; however, the analysis does not apply to this level of delicacy. Note the following example from McCain's speech:

2) Meanwhile, the people we expect to be most **sober** (judgment: tenacity+) and **level-headed** (judgment: tenacity+) in their economic decisions -bankers and other home lenders- forgot some of the **basic** (appreciation: valuation+) standards of their own profession. **Hard-working** (judgment: capacity) homeowners are learning for the first time about the endlessly **complicated** (appreciation: composition-) borrowing, bundling, and betting that has been going on in our **capital** (appreciation: valuation+) markets. Americans **worry** (affect: insecurity) about a system, they **worry** (affect: insecurity) about a system that allows 4 million **bad** (appreciation: reaction-) loans to affect 51 million **good** (appreciation: reaction+) ones.

To understand these values, we need to insist strongly on the importance of the actual context in which such values occur. It was a time of bankruptcy for America and other countries in general, and this fact caused the candidates to linger on this situation which was likely to be the main obsession of the target voting community.

## **5.2. Grading of Explicit Attitude**

An outstanding feature in the recognition of inscribed attitude is that it encodes a positive or negative value such as happy or unhappy, satisfying or unsatisfying, etc. Macken-Horavic (2003) construes these contrasts in terms of

loading. The other defining feature is that the value is gradable (Martin & Rose, 2003). In the following extract, notice how one of the Iranian prospective candidates combines positive rhetorical values with elements of graduation to tacitly criticize the government. The underlined terms represent graduation with the bold ones indicating attitude.

- 3) mɑ: je **ʔɑ:rɑ:mɛʃe** rævɑ:ni: rɑ: dær dʒɑ:mɛʔe bɑ:ʒæd ʔi:dʒɑ:d  
bekoni:m væ ʔi:n nemi:ʃævæd mægær ʔi:nke dolæt **mohe**mtæri:n  
ʔehtemæmɛʃ hæle mæsʔæle ʔeqtesɑ:di: bɑ:ʃe. (Mousavi-Iran)  
(We should create a psychological **comfort** in the community, and  
this is not possible unless the government makes the solution of the  
economic problems its **first** priority.)

In the analyzed speeches, other than distinguishing between upgrading and downgrading, the model provided by Martin and Rose (2003) identifies two other categories for grading attitude. While force, as the first category, shifts the degree of intensity of attitude, focus deals with sharpening and softening of the meanings. The following examples from the data illustrate the above categories. Examples 4 and 5 display focus and examples 6 and 7 display force.

- 4) ...they have been **particularly** privileged by .... (Obama-USA)  
5)...melæt hæmvɑ:rə væ **bexosus** dær doreʒe ʔenqelɑ:b...(Ahmadinejad-Iran)  
(...our nation always, **especially** in the revolution era...)  
6) ...trade to continue for **at least** twenty **more** years... (Obama-USA)  
7)...ʔelæt rɑ: **bɑ:ʒæd** dær modiri:ʒæt dʒostedʒu:  
koni:m...(Ahmadinejad-Iran)  
(...we **should** look for the reason in the management...)



### 5.3. Preferences in the Expression of Attitude

An important issue to investigate is the strategic functioning of attitudinal markers the Iranian candidates used in encoding values, that is, whether speakers reveal inclinations for expressing feelings, judging behaviors, or appreciating phenomena. The analyses of the Iranian candidates' speeches showed a very strong preference for coding attitude as appreciation by all four candidates, with fewer instances of either affect or judgment. Appreciation, in fact, ranged from 3.22% to 4.99% in those four speeches. Ahmadinejad had the lion's share in utilizing all sub-categories of attitude. The following are some instances of his coding attitude as appreciation:

- 8) melæte ʔi:rɑ:n dær ʔi:n hæmɑ:værde **tɑ:rɪx-sɑ:z** (Appreciation, Valuation+) pi:ru:z ʃod. (The Iranian nation won this **historic** rival.)
- 9) melæte ʔi:rɑ:n næqfə **mehværi:** (appreciation, valuation+) væ **ʔæsi:l** (appreciation, valuation+) rɑ: dær hæmeje dʒelvehɑ:je **bærdʒæsteje** (appreciation, valuation+) tæmædone bæfæri: bær ʔohdɑ dɑ:ʃte ʔæst.

(The Iranian nation has undertaken a **central** and **noble** role in all **leading** aspects of human civilization.)

These examples depict the influence of Iran as a powerful country in the world and especially in the region. As illustrated, there was a strong preference for coding appreciation as valuation. Valuation comprised 51.5 percent of the appreciation category from which 2.24 percent was negative.

In other parts of his speech, Ahmadinejad related his evaluation to the actions and capacities of Iranian people. He tended to speak more positively in exploring judgments, and this played a significant role in raising motivation and creating an atmosphere of hope and enthusiasm among the target voters. Note the following examples:

10) sælɑ:m ʔærz mi:konæm xedmæte melæte **bozorge** (judgment, capacity+) ʔi:ra:n, melæte **ʔi:ma:ni:** (judgment, propriety+), melæte **ʔɑ:ɾma:ni:** (judgment, propriety+), melæte **færhæng væ tæmædon-sɑ:z** (judgement, capacity+). Bɑ:være mæn nesbæt be **tæva:nmændi:hɑ:** (judgment, capacity+) væ **bozorgi:hɑ:je** (judgment, capacity+) melæte ʔi:ra:n jek bɑ:være ʔæmi:q ʔæst.)  
(I greet the **great** Iranian nation, the **faithful** nation, the **ideal** nation, the **culture and civilization making** nation. I bear a deep belief in the **capabilities** and **dignity** of the Iranian nation.)

The above extract shows the great persuasive effects the speaker carries in his speech by referring to the Iranian nation's ability to perform actions or achieve its goals by evaluating Iranians' compliance with ethical norms. The significant point here is the positive loading in his utilizing attitude.

Ahmadinejad also utilized the sub-system of affect to explore his emotions and feelings, but this sub-system was the least strong compared to the appreciation and judgment sub-systems. The scarcity of this sub-system does not downgrade its prominence as Ahmadinejad used it judiciously in his speech, but as he intended to express more objective data with no or few subjective viewpoints, he just used it where he felt it was needed, mostly in the beginning and closing parts of his speech:

11) mæn ʔæz hæmeje ʔæqfɑ:r **tæfækor mi:konæm** (affect, happiness)...

(I **thank** all (Iranian) strata...)

12) bavære mæn ʔi:n ʔæst ke ʔi:n **ʔæzm** (affect, inclination+) vudzu:d dɑ:ræd.

(I believe that this **intention** exists.)

To express his emotion toward the nation and the country, Ahmadinejad made considerable use of the affect sub-system. He expressed negative feelings

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toward enemies and the threats from them. These enemies, as the examples show, could be internal as well.

The analyses of the American candidates' speeches showed a very strong preference for coding attitude as judgment by Obama and appreciation by McCain, with fewer instances of affect for both of them.

Obama's speech centered mostly around judging people by presenting the racism which still has its roots in the United States. He tried to increase his votes by uniting the polling communities of blacks and whites. The norm expressions of black and white in Obama's speech carried no negative loading but seemed positive. The following extract marks how he invested on the axis of color:

13) I am the son of a **black** (judgment, norm+) man from Kenya and a **white** (judgment, norm+) woman from Kansas. I was raised with the help of a **white** (judgment, norm+) grandfather **who survived a Depression** (judgment, capacity+) to serve in Patton's Army during World War II and a **white** (judgment, norm+) grandmother **who worked on a bomber assembly line** (judgment, capacity+) at Fort Leavenworth while she was overseas.

Although judgment was the biggest sub-category of attitude in Obama's speech, appreciation was also noticeable. In the same way, this sub-category discussed the same topic of racism. Here also color carried no negative loading, although the negative react sub-category strongly emphasized the Depression and disrespect practiced against colored people by some ethnic groups. On the other hand, the affect sub-category carried in itself the love, bitterness, cruelty, desires and happiness accompanied with that experience. Note the following extract which demonstrates Obama's usage of these sub-categories:

14) But we do **need** (affect, inclination) to remind ourselves that so many of the **disparities** (affect, antipathy) that exist between African-American communities today can be directly traced to **inequalities** (affect, antipathy) passed on from an earlier generation that **suffered** (affect, misery) under the **brutal** (appreciation, react-) legacy of slavery and Jim Crow.

## 6. Quantitative Analysis of Results

### 6.1. Attitude and Graduation between Groups

Considering individual lexical items as the unit of analysis, we ran a word count and a quantitative estimate was given. Then the attitudinal expressions and graduation resources in the speeches made by American and Iranian candidates were identified and calculated. The results are displayed in the following table.

**Table 4. Attitudinal and Graduation Expressions in Iranian and American Speeches**

	<b>Iranian</b>	<b>American</b>
Main systems	F (%)	F (%)
Attitudinal expressions	1702 (11.738)	925 (9.905)
Graduation expressions	836 (5.77)	921 (9.86)
Total words	14499	9338

As Table 4 shows, while American candidates utilized roughly an equal number of graduation and attitudinal expressions, Iranian candidates relied more on attitudinal resources, and in fact Iranian candidates utilized a greater number of attitudinal expressions than American candidates. Because the groups were of varying length and were not directly comparable, the data were normalized and chi-square was administered to compare the frequencies. Accordingly, the attitudinal expressions used in the speeches made by Iranian

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and American presidential candidates were statistically similar ( $X^2=0.059$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.808$ ).

The analysis of attitude in both sets of speeches revealed a considerable variation in the extent to which attitudinal meaning is graded. Although what immediately appears from the raw data in Table 4 is that the instances of grading attitude by American candidates outnumbered the graduation expressions used for grading attitude by Iranian candidates, the significance obtained for graduation expressions provided no meaningful difference between the two groups ( $X^2=1.000$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.317$ , **Critical value**=3.841).

## **6.2. Attitude within Groups**

To test the third hypothesis, an intra-group comparison was done within the Iranian candidates, and then within the American candidates respectively.

The statistical analysis of types of attitude showed significant differences among the Iranian candidates' speeches. As revealed in Table 5, Ahmadinejad had the biggest share in utilizing all the sub-categories. Iranian candidates used affect expressions differently, ranging from 34.1% by Ahmadinejad to 17.5% by Rezaei. That is, Ahmadinejad utilized the most and Rezaei the least. Chi-square revealed a significant difference in the use of affect ( $X^2=23.036$ ,  $df=9$ ,  $P=0.006$ , **Critical value**=16.919). Judgment expressions were also revealed to be used differently, ranging from 38.99% by Ahmadinejad to 17.40% by Karrobi as the highest user to the lowest in order, and a meaningful difference was observed in the use of judgment ( $X^2=31.937$ ,  $df=12$ ,  $P=0.001$ , **Critical value**=21.075). Likewise, the Iranian candidates did not use appreciation expressions similarly, ranging from 32.9% by Ahmadinejad to 21.56% by Mousavi. Again, the result subjected to chi-square revealed a significant

difference in the use of appreciation ( $X^2=22.519$ ,  $df=6$ ,  $P=0.001$ , **Critical value**=12.592).

**Table 5. Frequency and Percentage of Attitude in Iranian Speeches**

	<b>Ahmadinejad</b>	<b>Mousavi</b>	<b>Karrobi</b>	<b>Rezaei</b>	<b>Total</b>
Sub-systems	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Affect	160 (34.1)	118 (25.2)	109 (23.2)	82 (17.5)	469 (3.2)
Judgement	186 (39.0)	98 (20.5)	83 (17.4)	110 (23.1)	477 (3.3)
Appreciation	249 (32.9)	163 (21.6)	178 (23.5)	166 (22.0)	756 (5.2)

The analysis of the speeches made by the American candidates indicated that the difference between them varied from that existing among the Iranian candidates. While Ahmadinejad proved to be the first in using all attitudinal resources, for the American rivals the situation was different. As shown in Table 6, Obama made more use of affect expressions than McCain, and the difference proved to be significant ( $X^2=19.204$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $P=0.000$ , **Critical value**=7.815). Similarly, the American candidates made use of judgment expressions differently, ranging from 61.2% by Obama to 38.83% by McCain, and a meaningful difference was recorded ( $X^2=58.749$ ,  $df=4$ ,  $P=0.000$ , **Critical value**=9.488). But for appreciation expressions, although a slight difference was seen in their use, 43.1% by Obama to 56.86% by McCain, chi-square recorded no significant difference ( $X^2=0.419$ ,  $df=2$ ,  $P=0.811$ , **Critical value**=5.991).

**Table 6. Frequency and Percentage of Attitude in American Speeches**

	<b>Obama</b>	<b>McCain</b>	<b>Total</b>
Sub-systems	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Affect	115 (53.5)	100 (46.5)	215 (2.3)
Judgement	189 (61.2)	120 (38.8)	309 (3.3)
Appreciation	173 (43.1)	228 (56.9)	401 (4.3)

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One further point to be made was the kind of attitude the Iranian and American candidates preferred to use in encoding values, that is, whether speakers displayed preferences for expressing feelings, judging behavior, or appreciating phenomena. In general, while analysis of the total frequency of the Iranian and American speeches revealed a very strong preference for coding attitude as appreciation, the results point to very interesting facts: the preference for coding attitude as judgment or affect has led to a more persuasive argument, which resulted in winning the audience's attention and the ensuing presidential election.

### **6.3. Graduation within Groups**

In both American and Iranian groups, force was the dominant feature of all the political speeches in this study. As Table 7 shows, Iranian candidates did not make use of graduation resources in the same way, ranging from 28.8% by Rezaei to 22.5 by Ahmadinejad. In other words, Ahmadinejad, the winner of the election, used the least and Rezaei, who obtained very few votes, made the most use of graduation resources. Chi-square revealed a significant difference in the use of total graduation resources ( $X^2= 24.015$ ,  $df=3$ ,  $P=0.000$ , **Critical value**=7.815).

**Table 7. Frequency and Percentage of Graduation Resources Made by Candidates**

	<b>Ahmadinejad</b>	<b>Mousavi</b>	<b>Karrobi</b>	<b>Rezaei</b>	<b>Obama</b>	<b>McCain</b>
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Force	171 (91.0)	179 (86.9)	170 (84.6)	215 (89.2)	367 (86.0)	445 (90.1)
Focus	17 (9.0)	27 (13.1)	31 (15.4)	26 (10.8)	60 (14.1)	49 (9.9)
Total	188 (22.5)	206 (24.6)	201 (24.0)	241 (28.8)	427 (46.4)	494 (53.6)

Table 7 also shows that American candidates used total graduation resources differently. In this regard, McCain relied more on elements of graduation s than Obama. Chi-square revealed a significant difference in their use of total graduation resources ( $X^2=4.874$ ,  $df=1$ ,  $P=0.027$ , **Critical value**=3.841).

An important point here is that while in both Iranian and American groups, the losers tended to make greater use of graduation resources, the winners opted to use them less. This result may point to an important principle which marks a preference for limited and controlled use of graduation resources.

## **7. Discussion**

The decision to use the appraisal framework for this study was motivated by the desire to uncover ways of encoding attitude by presidential candidates. An additional goal of the study was to explore how the encoding of attitude and the use of graduation resources by presidential candidates serve to potentially manipulate and persuade voters. Moreover, a further goal was to show whether there are meaningful differences between the two groups of speeches analyzed in the present study.

As the first key finding of the study, it was found that affect and judgment as appraisal markers were the significant sub-systems utilized by the winners in both American and Iranian contexts. This choice shows that these markers are the distinguishing features of presidential speeches that could possibly satisfy both needs of leading and reflecting opinions. This finding is, in part, in line with studies which suggested that emotions influence other people's emotions and hence decisions (Bollow, 2004; Parkinson & Simon, 2009). A'Backett (2009) also suggested that subtle ways of delivering evaluation have a strong impact on the target population. Appreciation resources, as the second key



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finding, seemed to be context-sensitive. In the Iranian context, while appreciation seemed to be one of the determining features of a successful speech, it was not true in the American context. The third key finding revealed that while the losers tended to make greater use of graduation resources, the winners opted for less use, marking preferences for limited and controlled use of graduation resources. This awareness could be gained by experienced speakers based on studies carried out in the language of graduation resources in leading opinions. Stock (2010) suggested that those who manipulate the truth tend to make abundant use of force expressions because liars are always afraid of not being believed by others. Tenorio (2002) suggested that the winning candidates employed the poorest discursive strategies. This finding contradicts the current study when attitudinal expressions are considered; however, both studies seem to be in agreement that the winners tend to use fewer graduation resources. Another counter-claim was suggested by Sivenkova (2008) who did not make any limitation when suggesting that graduation resources are used in politicians' speeches to attract and gain more public attention. In what follows, the results are discussed in two separate sections.

#### **7.1. Iranian Presidential Speeches**

As was explained earlier in the results section, Ahmadinejad, the winner of the Iranian 2009 presidential polls, tended to utilize all attitudinal expressions more than his three rivals. While a combination of judgment and affect sub-systems comprised the bulk of Ahmadinejad's speech, with appreciation in third place, his rivals utilized other combinations of attitudinal expressions: affect and appreciation expressions (by Musavi), appreciation and affect (by Karrobi), and judgment and appreciation

expressions (by Rezaei). Note the following examples from Ahmadinejad:

15) tæzɑ:hɒm (affect, antipathy), dærgi:ri: (affect, antipathy), ki:ne  
væ:ri: (affect, antipathy) væ bærxord (affect, anti-pathy) dær  
fæzɑ:je ?omu:mi:e kefvær montæfer mi:fod.

(disturbance, contention, malice, and conflict spread all over the  
country's general atmosphere.)

16) Mi:xɑ:hænd (affect, desire) ri:feje melæt rɑ: bekænænd (affect,  
antipathy). Melæte ?i:rɑ:n [...] mi:tævɑ:næd dær ?ærsehɑ:je beinol-  
melæli: ?elhɑ:mbæxf (judgment, capacity), tæhævol ?ɑ:færi:n  
(judgment, capacity) væ pi:ftɑ:z (judgment, capacity) bɑ:fæd.

(They want to eradicate the nation. Iranian nation [...] can be  
inspiring, transformative, and leading in the international arenas.)

All candidates utilized attitudinal expressions but in different combinations. However, the combination of emotions with judgment had the most effect in the Iranian context. In what follows, this point is discussed from ideological and political-sociological viewpoints.

The stress caused by the modernist era has led to the formation of certain ideologies in the social and political areas in Iran, all arising from fear and insecurity of the renewal process and its consequences. These ideologies have focused on the government's supreme power, social identity, obedience, discipline, leadership (mostly charismatic), national glory, and solidarity as a remedy for these tensions and fears. In this situation, by using any possible measures, a politician may take advantage of these fears to ride a wave of popularity. Accordingly, such political leaders seem to be populist and opportunist. Stimulating emotions and arousing feelings of the masses are two such measures. This way they can mobilize the largest possible number of

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people onto their side. They can also highlight nations' illusionary or real capacities to ensure the nation they can if their programs are implemented. They say what the frightened masses wish to hear; in fact, they make themselves the language of the masses, or at least they try towards this goal. As can be seen in example 15 above, Ahmadinejad tried to magnify Iranians' fears, outline the dangers and count the internal and external horrors through affect expressions. In 16, while riding these fears he satisfied the audience by attributing them with different capacities through the utilization of the judgment-capacity sub-category.

Due to the weakness of civil society, the marginalization of some intellectuals, the breadth of populist society, and also because the appraisal process, according to Scherer (2009), does not necessarily require a complex cognitive calculus but often occurs in an automatic, unconscious, and effortless fashion, political leaders of such a government do not need to design or analyze the existing internal and external issues comprehensively to achieve political power. In order to absorb the small number of activists who are present in the political scene, politicians approximate their own level of thought to the common people's level of thoughts, and in most cases politicians even follow them. Thus, their speech becomes identical to the language of the masses where sensations and emotions and the tendency to take things at their face value are its prominent features:

17) be sɑ:hate melæte ?i:rɑ:n tohi:n kærdænd (affect, antipathy)

(They insulted the Iranian nation.)

18) etema:d (affect, confidence) væ xodba:væri:je (affect, confidence)

meli: dær noqt?i: hæzi:z qarar gereft)

(The national confidence and self-esteem were at their all-time low point.)

19) ?emru:z mi:bi:ni:m ke dær fæzɑ:je ?omu:mi:je keʃvær etema:do be næfs (affect, confidence) væ xodbɑ:væri: (affect, confidence) dær odʒ æst)

(Today, we see that confidence and self-esteem are at their highest point.)

As can be seen in the examples above, Ahmadinejad attempted to create the feeling that, before his first four-year period of presidency, everything was horrible, but with his insight, at present, everything is at its maximum state of excellence. Such linguistic tactics create the fear of others and build hope on a specific person as the sole stronghold against those threats and solutions to real and imaginary problems. The above examples have some emotive expressions which are clearly close to everyday speech, with no scientific analysis, so that they are absorbed easily by the worried masses.

## **7.2. American Presidential Speeches**

Comparing American speeches showed that Obama utilized affect and judgment expressions more than his rival, McCain, while there was no significant difference in their exploitation of appreciation expressions. Additionally, their focus on the sub-systems was revealed to be different; while Obama focused on judgment, affect and appreciation, McCain focused on appreciation, affect and judgment respectively. Similarly, in the sub-systems of judgment, Obama relied on normality while McCain capitalized on capacity more than other sub-categories. In short, it seems that normality and affect were the prominent features of the speech made by the winning candidate of the American 2008 presidential election. These features were what the American community needed at that juncture. Note the following examples from Obama:

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- 20) We built a powerful coalition of African (judgment, normality) American and White (judgment, normality) American.
- 21) Problems that are neither Black (judgment, normality) nor White (judgment, normality) or Latino (judgment, normality) or Asian (judgment, normality), but rather problems that confront us all.

Although not generalizable to Obama's campaign strategy as a whole, the extensive analysis of our limited speeches revealed that Obama did not enter the race as a black, but as a Democrat and American. He did not try to focus on his dark color. Unifying the various ethnic minorities (Blacks, Latinos, Asians, and Spanish) and the Whites comprised the axis of his campaign. Obama's non-racial strategy made it possible for a black candidate with a limited political history to enter the White House. For this purpose, while Obama tended to utilize the judgment category, especially its normality sub-category, more than other attitude categories in his speeches, he also directed appreciation expressions to serve the ultimate goal of solidarity.

In fact, what America needed at that specific time of bankruptcy and financial problems which led to condemning each other was unity. Obama tried to build solidarity through attitudinal techniques and to mobilize this unity for his own benefits. The above examples introduced Obama neither as Black nor as White but as an American who suffers what other Americans suffer. All this became possible through the proper use of the judgment-normality sub-category.

Both candidates devoted a reasonable proportion of their speeches to the issue of economic recovery. Appreciation expressions were the main attitudinal resources which the rival candidate used in delivering his speeches. In other words, in the American context, appreciation could not play the role of a distinguishing feature as affect and judgment did because of its similar usage

between the presidential candidates. The interesting point here is that while Obama utilized the appreciation sub-system to explore the economic and financial problems of the United States, he gave it a direction that allowed him to exploit it his overall goal of creating unity among the diverse communities comprising America. In the following examples, he tended to create solidarity among the American nation while speaking about American temporary problems, something he thought was necessary at that time:

- 22) We all want to move in the same (appreciation, composition) direction toward a better (appreciation, react) future for our children and our grandchildren.
- 23) We need to come together to solve a set of monumental (appreciation, valuation) problems –two wars, a terrorist (appreciation, react) threat, a falling (appreciation, composition) economy, a chronic (appreciation, valuation) health care crisis and a devastating (appreciation, react) climate change.

In addition, Obama used affect and judgment expressions in his speeches to underline and exploit the fact of slavery as well. For America, which had once considered slavery as legal, letting an African-American reach the highest position in the country would bring a feeling of moral and psychological superiority. This psychological need for a historical purge led to many of the electoral components (electoral norms) being ignored (Deheshyar, 2009). Obama exploited this fact through the proper use of affect and judgment expressions. Note this example:

- 24) We do need (affect, desire) to remind ourselves that so many of disparities (affect, antipathy) that exist between African-American (judgment, normality) community today can be directly traced to inequalities (affect, antipathy) passed on from an earlier

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generation that suffered (affect, dissatisfaction) under the brutal legacy of slavery (affect, antipathy) [...].

As for the question of emotions in western countries, the present situation is characterized by rapid change. Daneš (2004) argues that there appears to be a marked tendency to show emotions openly and without discrimination in public. If the common principle which says *if you want someone else to make a decision, first find how emotional or logical they prefer to be in that process, and follow their normal preferences* is accepted, then it could be inferred that emotional speeches could be very persuasive in western societies. That is why affect was one of the distinguishing features of the speech of the winning candidate. The following examples show how Obama exploited this kind of feeling:

- 25) The church contains [...] the kindness (affect, affection) and the cruelty (affect, antipathy) [...] the love (affect, affection) and the bitterness (affect, misery) [...]
- 26) The memories of humiliation (affect, misery) and doubt (affect, insecurity) and fear (affect, insecurity) have not gone away.

Through utilization of affect in this way, Obama managed to open his way directly through American emotions that made his color an advantage and not a disadvantage. Finally, as the following example shows, Obama played well on creating hope among American society. The most prominent characteristic of Obama, according to Mottaghi (2008), is putting society in a situation of hope (see the following example), so that he could gain the support of most Americans:

- 27) What we have already achieved gives us hope (affect, confidence) – the audacity to hope (affect, desire)– for what we can and must achieve tomorrow.

## **8. Conclusion**

Both Iranian and American winners of the election were aware of the fact that an accurate use of language is a key factor in winning the public opinion; hence, the exploitation of the appropriate linguistic resources became crucial for them. Winning the acquiescence of the masses depended largely on the language they employed, which, in its own turn, depended on the social, political and economic situations of their own countries at that time.

Iran as one of the foremost, self-proclaimed enemies of the west and one of the most serious threats to the stability in the Middle East, as claimed by the west, has always been a bull's eye for the western countries' rhetoric of intimidation and threatening. Ever since the Islamic revolution in 1979, Iran has regularly appeared to be on the brink of being stroked by Israel and the USA but never has the speculation been as fevered as it has in the first round of Ahmadinejad's presidency period as a result of his direct threats toward Israel and other western countries. The sum-up of this political situation made the scene ready for Ahmadinejad to build his rhetoric based on these threats and exploit and explore them through the proper application of discourse markers. Attitude discourse markers, the concern of this study, have been of great help to him to push toward attracting Iranians' attention. Here, we saw that Ahmadinejad managed to lead the ball to his own court by playing a good mix of affect and judgment attitude markers.

One the other side of the world, America had some other worries. The economic recession of 2007-2008 was the concern of US people and hence the candidates topic in their speech campaigns. The economic recession side effects accompanied with USA's slow growth could have continued to provide obstacles to national solidarity of the United States. As a result, the national solidarity, the key factor of America's unity, seemed to be one important



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priority to Obama at that time. On the other hand, Obama tried to exploit his dark color for his own benefit. And he also made a clever use of attitudinal markers in his hot speeches.

Although it seems both candidates used the same categories of attitudinal markers, the flexible nature of these markers let the candidates frame them to their present social, economic and political situations. One reframed them to help him exploit threats and horror and the other employed them to rebuild solidarity and also remind the nation of an old stigma.

In this research, the particular site of concern was speeches of the presidential candidates in which candidates were required to make their own messages, a task that required the candidates to argue for their own programs in relation to internal and external issues. The specific focus was on the construal of evaluative stance, an aspect of writing and speaking that is perceived as an informative and persuasive strategy. This study sits at the intersection of linguistics and politics in that it aims to explore the linguistics of politics in order to uncover linguistic specifications of political speeches and impact directly on political practice. In any such endeavor, there are likely to be tensions between the complexity of linguistic insight and accessibility for political application. The specific challenge in this research is how to find theoretically sound explanations for the very complex processes by which politicians construct an evaluative stance: how to model evaluative stance in a comprehensive and theoretically sound way, yet remain accessible to politicians and linguists and all those who are interested in critical discourse analysis.

The research undertaken in this study grew out of experiences in responding to a complex need of politicians who are supposed to make effective and persuasive lectures and speeches. The contribution this study makes to the conception and investigation of attitudinal markers can be the

focus of linguists, too. Because of its focus on cross-cultural discourse-analytic examples, it will be of interest not only to those who are interested in discourse analysis, politics, and media, but also to those interested in translation and interpretation studies as well as cultural studies. The study can be a source of theory and practice of political discourse in the media across cultures.

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