Evaluative Language in Political Speeches: A Case Study of Iranian and American Presidents' Speeches

Farhad Mazlum (Corresponding author)

English Department, University of Maragheh, PO Box: 55136-553, Iran

E-mail: mazlumz@yahoo.com

Sanaz Afshin

English Department, University of Maragheh, PO Box: 55136-553, Iran

E-mail: sanaz_afshin6081@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The study of evaluative language of political speeches is a fresh area of investigation in the field of stylistics. This study aimed at exploring and investigating evaluative instances in the speeches by Hassan Rouhani—Iran's president— and Barak Obama at UN assembly in 2014. To this end, Martin and White's Appraisal system of meaning was adopted to examine the mechanisms through which Obama and Rouhani express their feelings towards different people and issues. Additionally, in this study it was intended to represent how each politician 'positions' himself vis-à-vis different inter/national phenomena. The findings suggested that both presidents preferred to apply more adjectives and nominalizations than verbs and adverbs to express their emotion. Also the results of the study suggested that Rouhani opted for greater use of authorial and non-authorial affect in his speech than Obama. In both speeches, the flexible nature of the different emotional markers let the speakers frame them to the current social, economic, political situation of the world. One applied them to mention the threats and horrors all around the globe and the other employed them to make confidence and sympathize with other nations.

Keywords: Appraisal, Attitude, Affect, Authorial, Non-authorial , Political speech

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

To make a speech more effective and persuasive includes many factors, one of which is the ability of the speaker to apply an appropriate language which can lead to establishment of unseen and interpersonal relation between the orator and the intended audience(s). Language and politics are interconnected. Language is the mean by which political ideas are transmitted to the community (Harris, 1984). In politics, words have a powerful effect. They have the power to make an action or an idea un/justifiable. They can create or provoke feelings in the listeners to judge a phenomenon as praiseworthy or blameworthy. They have the power to touch the hearts of the hearers. So a skillful politician should be able to benefit these characters in his/her speech and try to successfully apply them according to his/her wants and needs to attract the attention and provoke the emotion of the audience(s). So employing an effective and appropriate language is a crucial element in political discourse and also an important factor in persuading and convincing the target listeners. The ability of a politician to choose and use the most applicable and acceptable forms of language to gain the intended objectives can be an indication of her/his success or failure.

1.2 Scope of the Study

This study presents an extra-linguistic comparison between speeches made by Barak Obama and Hassan Rouhani at UN in 2014 based on emotional features they applied in their words. The comparison attempts to display the areas of similarities and differences in terms of authorial (1st person) and non-authorial (2nd or 3rd person) emotional positioning.

1.3 Significance of the Study

The complicated and sophisticated mechanisms judiciously used by politicians to make their speeches as effective and convincing as possible have attracted the attention of both linguists and political scientists. Targeting the emotions of the audience is one such mechanism. The study contributes to the field by shedding light on this issue by investigating and exploring emotional positioning in speeches of two presidents known for symbolizing two politically-known nations: Iran and the US.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Politics and Language

Nowadays, both political scientists and linguists take an in interest in the study of the relationship between language and politics. However, each group addresses different issues when investigating the relationship between two. Also, the theories and methods each group applies are different. According to Schäffner (1997), while linguists are interested in the linguistic features employed by politicians to convey their messages to the audience, political scientists are primarily concerned with the consequences that follow political decisions and actions.

Political discourse is typically made to convince and persuade an audience—whether

ordinary people or politicians. In so doing, political speech makers rely on and take advantage of the intricate potentials of language. They manipulate language in complicated ways: e.g., application of influential rhetorical devices, phrasal allusions, the connotative meanings of words, a combination of language and visual imagery, to name but a few (Rozina & Karapetjana, 2009). To unmask the intents of politicians and to demonstrate the ideological aspects of language use among them, discourse analysts make attempts to systematically delineate the delicate relationship between linguistic forms and political functions.

According to Schäffner (1997), political language, political discourse, and political text are vague terms. Political language might refer to the particular political jargons and words used by politicians or it might refer to the specific politically-motivated language (Dieckmann, 1981). Cedroni (2010) argues that political language is multifaceted and multifunctional. When a politician makes a speech, not only s/he does a linguistic action—illocutionary as well as performative—but also a political action since both public and systemic spheres are affected. Due to its multidimensionality, political language is described as a "symbolic ritual" and a specific type of "social practice" that has constitutive and interpretive functions (Cedroni, 2010)

According to Austin (1962), the constitutive feature of political language is of paramount significance since it deals with how political language might exert effects on behaviors. The study of the potential effects of political language on behaviors is a field of study in its own right nowadays and is called *politolinguistics* (Reisigl & Wodak, 2001). As an interdisciplinary field, it draws upon pragmatics, sociolinguistics, critical discourse analysis, textual linguistics, semiotics, critical theory, and political science.

2.1.1 Political Speech

As a sub-genre of political texts, political speeches help with the fulfillment of several functions. To label a speech as political is generally based on thematic and functional criteria. Fairclough (1995) maintains that such speeches are determined historically and culturally. According to Schäffner (1997), political speeches are often made to a wider public.

The study of political speech involves a close scrutiny of how linguistic behavior and political behavior relate to each other. This can be done in two ways: Micro-level analysis which entails the investigation of linguistic features (e.g. lexical and syntactic properties) first; and, macro-level analysis in which the overall communicative function is set as the first step followed by determining its linguistic constituents (Schäffner, 1997).

2.2 Appraisal

As an attempt to study the language of evaluation rather systematically, Appraisal Theory (hereafter AT) was first proposed in 1990s by Martin and his colleagues. Of course, it was an extension of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (1992) that sought to give an equal weight, if not more, to 'appraisal' vis-à-vis 'system'. The term 'appraisal' is an umbrella term covering all evaluative uses of language. Three basic systems of 'attitude', 'graduation', and 'engagement' are important in AT (Martin & White, 2005). The way speakers show their

attitudes toward each other or events, how language users make alignments with their audiences, and how they downgrade or intensify their feelings are the major issues in three systems of AT.

2.2.1 Attitude: Ways of Feeling

Attitude is a meaning-making mechanism. Attitudinal meanings are subdivided into three main categories: affect (emotion), judgment (ethics) and appreciation (aesthetics). According to Painter (2003), the first attitudinal meaning is more fundamental simply because we are born with it.

With regard to affect, human beings express their positive and negative feelings towards each other, events and objects using different ways. The most empirically established means of affectual positioning involves the use of 'verbs of emotion' (e.g. regret, enjoy …), 'adverbs' (e.g. happily, hopefully, joyfully …), and 'nominalization' (i.e. turning adverbs or verbs into nouns). This study deals with the first category. Thus, a brief account of authorial and non-authorial affect follows.

2.2.1.1 Authorial (1st person) Affect

When the speaker tries to emotionally response to the persons, things, events, situations being appraised, in fact he takes responsibility for that attitudinal/affectual assessment.

It is an entirely personalized way of evaluation and assessment. Through 'authorial affect' the speaker makes attempts to prove his subjective presence in the communicative process. He then applies 1st person to show his direct emotional assessment. Through this direct declaration of emotional response he seeks to establish an interpersonal and unseen bond with the listener in the sense that, for the evaluation to carry any rhetorical weight, the audience must accept this personalized response as in some way relevant, significant, valid, justified, and comprehensible. Thus by the use of such affect, he makes himself as acceptable and understandable as possible to provoke the listener's encouragement and sympathy towards the uttered emotional words. Examples are:

We will do our part − to help people feed themselves; power their economies; and care for their sick. If the world acts together, we can make sure that all of our children can enjoy lives of opportunity and dignity (Obama, 2014).

I deeply regret to say that terrorism has become globalized: From New York to Mosul, from Damascus to Baghdad, from the Easternmost to the westernmost parts of the world, from Al-Qaeda to Daesh (Rouhani, 2014).

2.2.1.2 Non-authorial (2nd and 3rd person) Affect

In non-authorial affect positioning, the speaker prefers to avoid direct emotional assessment of or reaction to events and phenomena. Instead, she prefers to describe the feelings and emotions of other individuals or organizations with regard to events, people, and objects. Put another way, the speaker seems to only report the emotional status of others. As a result, she resorts to 2nd and 3rd persons to report others' evaluations of emotions.   Examples are:

Of course, terrorism is not new. Speaking before this Assembly, President Kennedy put it well: "Terror is not a new weapon," he said. "Throughout history it has been used by those who could not prevail, either by persuasion or example" (Obama, 2014).

They do however have a single ideology: violence and extremism. They also have a single goal: the destruction of civilization, giving rise to Islamophobia and creating a fertile ground for further intervention of foreign forces in our region (Rouhani, 2014).

2.3 Prior studies

Political speeches have been studied from different perspectives and using different ways of analyses. However, setting the application of theoretical frameworks and the primary focus on evaluative language of political speeches would definitely mean few studies in literature.

Helander (2014) investigated and compared alignments in speeches held by two historically well-known politicians: Churchill's 1939 and Blair's 2003 speeches. The study utilized Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal Theory. Drawing primarily on the appraisal framework, the study investigated each speaker's use of positive and negative judgments. The results of the speakers' different alignments, that are the grouping of us and them, positive self and negative other presentation, and strategies of legitimization, were also examined. The analysis clearly demonstrated that both Blair and Churchill used positive judgment. The results also showed that Blair employed the negative counterpart, whereas only one instance of this concept was found in Churchill's speech. Furthermore, through the use of positive judgment, as well as negative judgment (more in Blair's case than in Churchill's), the speakers aligned themselves with certain individuals and policies, and dis-aligned with oppositional forces. The positive and negative judgments were used in relation to themselves, their nation, and others.

In 2012, Jalilifar and Savaedi examined the evaluative strategies used by presidential candidates in Iran and America during national polls of these two countries. They employed Martin and Rose's (2003) 'appraisal framework'. The researchers investigated preferences of attitude made by candidates in their speeches, the frequency of explicit attitudinal meanings and graduation resources to detect the possible differences between Iranian and American speeches. The results showed significant differences among the winners and losers in Iranian and American contexts. In both American and Iranian contexts affect and judgment were basically employed by the winners. Appreciation resources, however, were found to vary in different contexts. The researchers maintained that political, economic, social, and international factors lead to differences in the nature and kind of attitudinal markers.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Questions

The current study aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the difference between Obama's and Rouhani's speeches as far as expressed emotions through verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nominalizations are concerned?

2. What is the difference between Obama's and Rouhani's speeches with regard to affectual positioning (authorial and non-authorial)?

3.2 Research Design

The present study is a descriptive one aiming at describing the evaluative features of political speeches made by Iranian and American presidents at UN assembly in 2014. According to Bickman and Rog (1998), descriptive studies address 'what is' or 'what was' questions using and analyzing existing records and documents to describe the status quo. This study involves collections of quantitative data that are reported as frequencies. The survey does not stop with mere frequencies, however. Attempts are made to 'discuss' the findings too. This is generally done using the existing literature and arguments surrounding the nature of political speech in general and the particular features of the two presidents.

3.3 Procedures

At the first step, two political speeches by Hassan Rouhani and Barak Obama at UN assembly in 2014 were transcribed and then their words and sentences were counted. To study the intended speeches discursively, Martin and White's (2005) Appraisal System was adopted so that emotional features (as an extra-linguistic factor) and positioning could be investigated. Discourse analysis based on appraisal theory guided the current study to explore the speakers' attitudes (especially affect) towards different critical national and international phenomena. It should be noted that the explicit means by which affect was explored were analyzed; however, attitude/affect expressed implicitly was not within the scope of this study. Furthermore, whether the speakers adopted authorial (1st person) or non-authorial (2nd and 3rd person) affect to position emotionally was another concern of this survey.

After presenting a qualitative analysis and identifying preferences of explicit affect and positioning in the speeches made by Rouhani and Obama, the frequencies of each were counted and represented in graphs.

4. Data Analysis and Discussion

Mechanisms used for affectual positioning proposed by Marin and White (2005) guided data analysis procedures. In other words, verbs of emotions (mental process), adverbs (circumstances of manner), adjectives of emotions, and nominalizations were extracted followed by calculating frequencies for each. To increase the inter-analyst reliability, the researchers did the analysis independently, compared the results then, and negotiated the discrepancies. Finally, a third expert analyzed some data of the study to check and increase reliability. The results of data analysis are given below.

4.1 Affect Signs

The findings demonstrated that there were high frequencies of affect signs in both speeches as shown in tables one and two. They were indicated through verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nominalization. The occurrence of expressed emotions by adjectives and nouns were more than adverbial and verbal affect signs.

Following are the examples of affect (emotional features) in speeches made by president Rouhani and president Obama.

I deeply **regret** to say that terrorism has become globalized (Rouhani, 2014).

If the world acts together, we can make sure that all of our children can **enjoy** lives of opportunity and dignity (Obama, 2014).

When generals step into a region, do not expect diplomats to greet them **warmly**… (Rouhani, 2014).

Indeed, it's time for a broader negotiation in which major powers address their differences directly, **honestly**, and **peacefully** across the table from one another, rather than through gun (Obama, 2014).

Muslim people who everyday recall their God as **merciful** and **compassionate** and… (Rouhani, 2014).

In the most **horrific** crimes imaginable, **innocent** human beings have been beheaded… (Obama, 2014).

Violence is currently being spread to other parts of the world like a contagious disease (Rouhani, 2014).

And we have not confronted forcefully enough the **intolerance**, **sectarianism**, and **hopelessness** that feeds violent **extremism** in too many parts of the globe (Obama, 2014).

Table 1 below is a list of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nominalizations through which Rouhani tried to convey his explicit feelings and emotions.

Table 1. Affect Signs in Hassan Rouhani's Speech at UN 2014

Affect Signs in Hassan Rouhani's Speech at UN 2014			
VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	NOMINALIZATION
Like	Sincere	Warmly	Congratulation
Regret	Strict	Surely	Appreciation
Justify	Well-deserved		Hope
Longs for	Genuine		Fears
Enjoy	Excessive		Security
Attract	Critical		Succession
Hope	Favorable		Extremism

Devote	Divine		Excess
Satisfy	Motivated		Violence
Discriminate	Innocent		Islamphobia
	Flexible		Iranophobia
	Astonished		Discrimination
	calm		Humiliation
	Murderous		Injustice
	Astonishing		Justice
	False		Brutality
	Impressive		Cruelty
	Merciful		Pain
	Compassionate		Distortion
	Islamophobic		Sanctions
	Iranophobic		Hatred
	Non-peaceful		Kindness
	Weak		Empathy
	Constructive		Interference
	Delusional		Defamation
	Perplexing		Aggression
	Impervious		Desire
	Criminal		Interests
	Anti-western		Threat
	Pro-western		Danger
	Neglectful		Peace

	Tired	Prosperity
	Weary	Confidence
	Fearful	Failings
	Sincerest	Misdeeds
	Worried	Seriousness
	Safe	Optimism
	Sow	Faith - Doubts
	Tumultuous	Realism
	Chaotic	Success
	Tranquil	Trust - Pride
	Secure	Conflict
	Stable	Foresight
	Improper	Prudent
	Positive	Anti-westernism
	Oppressive	Colonialism
	Sensitive	Racism
	Peaceful	Impediments
	Serious	Negotiation
	Honest	Agreement
	Determined	Cooperation

Table 2 is the list of verbs, adjectives, adverbs, and nominalizations which Obama used to show his direct emotional positioning.

Table 2. *Affect Signs in Barak Obama's Speech at UN 2014*

Affect Signs in Barak Obama's Speech at UN 2014			
VERBS	ADJECTIVES	ADVERBS	NOMINALIZATION
Overwhelm	Worst	Peacefully	Fear – Hope
Threaten	Best	Forcefully	Peace - Disorder
Trample	Difficult	Perilously	Unease
Enforce	Inconvenient	Honestly	Dangers
Reaffirm	Violent	Dramatically	Aggression
Reject	Terrible		Brutality
Deserve	Corrupt		Darkness
Bully	Destructive		Failure
Support	Horrific		Intolerance
Welcome	Diplomatic		Hopelessness
Assure	Peaceful		Extremism
Promote	Ambitious		Will
Help	Lethal		Right
Care for	Nightmarish		Might
Make sure	Brutal		Truth
Enjoy	Motivated		Falsehoods
Succeed	Innocent		Freedom
Protect	Hateful		Cooperation
Rely on	False		Diplomacy
Risk	Accountable		Obligations
Ravage	Vicious		Interests
Pervert	Positive		Respect

Intimidate	Democratic		Suffering
Deny	Respectful		Security
Rely upon	Better		Dignity
Reaffirm	Dear		Persuasion
Aspire to	Perfect		Justice – Hate
Degrade	Free		Fanaticism
Destroy	Courageous		Exaggeration
Terrorize	Proud		Danger
Shock			Corruption
Condone			Rape
Justify			Death
Hate			Atrocity
Harm			Evil
Endure			Force
Betray			Threats
Defend			Tolerance
Thrive			Misery
Tolerate			Strife
Shy away from			Brutality
Shrink from			Aspiration
Criticize			Madness
Cooperate			Ignorance
			Safe-heaven
			Ambitions

			Sanctions

4.2 Positive in-group and Negative Out-group Evaluations

The distinctive features of both speeches were investigated applying Appraisal Theory. Martin and White (2005) provide important theoretical bases for a comprehensive study of evaluative stance. This theory provides a framework to identify the speakers' emotions and feelings and their intentions to provoke the senses of sympathy in their audiences to establish unseen bonds with them and make them emotionally negotiate with them. When such emotional invitation is accepted, the listeners will be open to broader ideological perception.

In both speeches, there were high frequencies of affect signs. Affect is concerned with registering positive and negative feelings and deals with resources for construing emotional reactions (Martin & White, 2005).

"I am astonished that these murderous groups call themselves an Islamic group. What is more astonishing is that the Western media, in line with them, repeats this false claim, which provokes the hatred of all Muslims. Muslim people who everyday recall their God as merciful and compassionate and have learned lessons of kindness and empathy from their Prophet, see this defamation as part of an Islamophobic project" (Rouhani, 2014).

Note: At first, Rouhani has demonstrated his affectual evaluation about naming such terrorist groups as "Islamic" and also his emotion towards "western media" and their claim. Then via non-authorial emotional provoking terms, he has tried to justify and explain his assessment by bringing the real beliefs of Muslim people and also their reactions towards such false claims.

"When sanctions set in, deep hatred for those imposing them also begins. Mr. President, the oppressive sanctions against Iran go on in continuation of a strategic mistake against a moderate and independent nation under the current sensitive condition in our region.

The people of Iran, who have been subjected to pressures especially in the last three years as

a result of continued sanctions, cannot place trust in any security cooperation between their government with those who have imposed sanctions and created obstacles in the way of satisfying even their primary needs such as food and medicine. The sanctions will create additional impediments in the way to the future long term cooperation" (Rouhani, 2014).

Note: It is a negative case through the attributive relation of affect. People of Iran are not pleased with "imposed sanctions". They are taking responsibility in the speech and work as emotional resources which the speaker applies to indicate a negative evaluation of the false strategic plan of western countries against Iran. So through non-authorial affectual direction, the audiences will be able to judge and response emotionally towards sanctions imposed and can easily negotiate their feeling with the speaker.

"But they are also symptoms of a broader problem – the failure of our international system to keep pace with an interconnected world. We have not invested adequately in the public health capacity of developing countries. Too often, we have failed to enforce international norms when it's inconvenient to do so. And we have not confronted forcefully enough the intolerance, sectarianism, and hopelessness that feeds violent extremism in too many parts of the globe" (Obama, 2014).

Note: Obama introduces himself and his government as a part of international system and then tries to criticize and count the failures of it, and provides a negative evaluation of functions of this system. Such emotional assessment resides, of course, entirely in the individual subjectivity of the speaker. It is an entirely personalized and individualized mode of evaluation and various rhetorical consequences follow from this. Through such `authorial Affect', the speaker strongly foregrounds his subjective presence in the communicative process.

"America is pursuing a diplomatic resolution to the Iranian nuclear issue, as part of our commitment to stop the spread of nuclear weapons and pursue the peace and security of a world without them. This can only happen if Iran takes this historic opportunity. My message to Iran's leaders and people is simple: do not let this opportunity pass. We can reach a solution that meets your energy needs while assuring the world that your program is peaceful" (Obama, 2014).

Note: In this example, utterances do not completely indicate positive or negative affectual positioning of U.S. towards Iran's nuclear program. But America's president expresses his optimistic and peace seeking view and that as part of his government's commitment, they try to find a logical solution to this important issue. So first he tries to provide some logical and emotional reasons for his positioning in this issue, like "commitment", "peace", and "security" then when the audiences accept his assessment as justified, valid, and significant, he can easily make them accompany with what will come next.

It seems that both presidents were opportunists (Jalilifar & Savaedi, 2012). They aimed to utilize creatively and judiciously the opportunity provided for them in such an international assembly to their advantages. They mentioned their positive in-group and negative out-group emotional assessment. They targeted the most sensitive part of their audiences, i.e. their

feelings. Human beings are emotional beings and both politicians tried to utilize the current issues and by stimulating the emotions and arousing the feelings of their audiences, they hoped to persuade them to sympathize with them, emotionally accompany them, and mobilize the largest possible number of audiences onto their own sides (Jalilifar & Savaedi, 2012).

Another point in the current study is that both presidents highlighted their nations' and also governments' imaginary or real capabilities and capacities and their rivals' and opponents' weak points and mistakes. In other words, they provided mostly positive assessment of themselves (and their allies) and negative evaluation of others. Rouhani speaks of "erroneous strategic approach of west in the Middle East" and "innocent Palestinians fallen victim to Zionist regime's aggression". He mentions "his country's commitment in nuclear commitment in good faith" and "his government's constructive interactions with their neighbors". Obama is not satisfied with Russia's actions in Ukraine when he says "we will impose a cost on Russia for aggression and counter falsehoods with the truth". Russia as the old rival of America would never be on the side of U.S. But America and his allies are always ready "to support the people of Ukraine…" and they "cannot afford to turn away from this effort- not when rockets are fired at innocent Israelis…"

Moreover, both presidents have tried to magnify their role in the world scene, outline the dangers and threats, and count the national and international concerns through emotional provoking expressions. Iran's president explained "the role of his country in the stability and security of the Middle East" or "nuclear negotiation as a historic and exceptional opportunity for the world especially western countries". He warned against "violence and extremism" spread all over the world. Then he presented his astonishment that "the murderous groups call themselves an Islamic group". He mentioned "the oppressive sanctions against Iran" and talked about his people who "have been subjected to pressures as a result of continued sanctions" and why they "cannot place trust in any security cooperation between their governments with those who have imposed sanctions". According to Rouhani, "independence, development, and national pride" were at the apex of the concerns and values of the Iranians and "Iran would continue his peaceful nuclear program".

Obama insisted that "America is and will continue to be a Pacific power, promoting peace, stability…" and they "will do their parts in eradiating extreme poverty by 2030 and reductions in carbon emissions." He addressed "the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics" and "the cycle of conflict". As international concerns he pointed "a pervasive unease in our world" like, "an overwhelming outbreak of Ebola", "Russian aggression in Europe", and "the brutality of terrorists in Syria and Iraq". He cleared his country's role in "investment in the clean energy" and "actions against terrorism". He then mentioned problems within their own borders, like what happened in Missouri where "a young man was killed and a community is divided" and also accountabilities of his country like "free press and independent judiciary" or "a place for people of every race and religion".

4.3 Being Objective While Following their Objects

A politician often seeks to take advantage of current situation to mention and point some

critical issues and provide his ideology and feelings explicitly or implicitly.

To consider authorial and non-authorial affectual positioning, in Rouhani's speech the frequency of applying 1st person to indicate his emotional positioning towards feelings was about 27 cases while this number for non-authorial was 55. Obama conveyed his attitudinal positioning through authorial affect 51 times and the frequency of non-authorial affect (through 2nd and 3rd persons) was 71. The comparison revealed that both presidents preferred to indicate their emotional positioning more through 2nd and 3rd person (non-authorial affect) rather than 1st person. They preferred not to include their emotions and evaluations but to describe those of others. Attributed evaluators acted as surrogates for the speakers. Figure 4.1 and 4.2 graphically display these results.
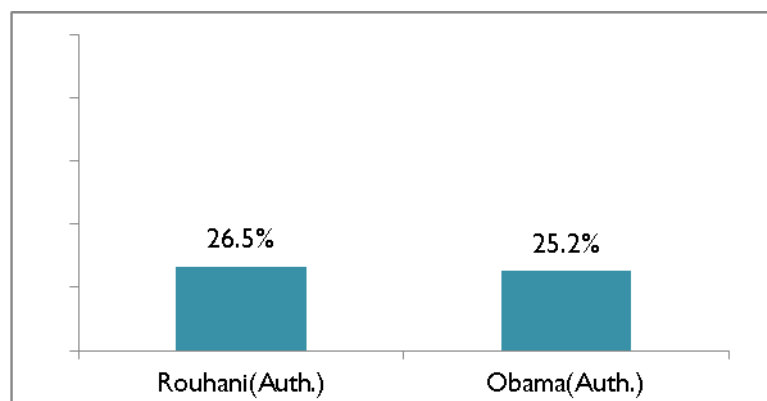

Figure 4.1. Frequency of authorial affect in Rouhani's and Obama's speeches at UN assembly in 2014
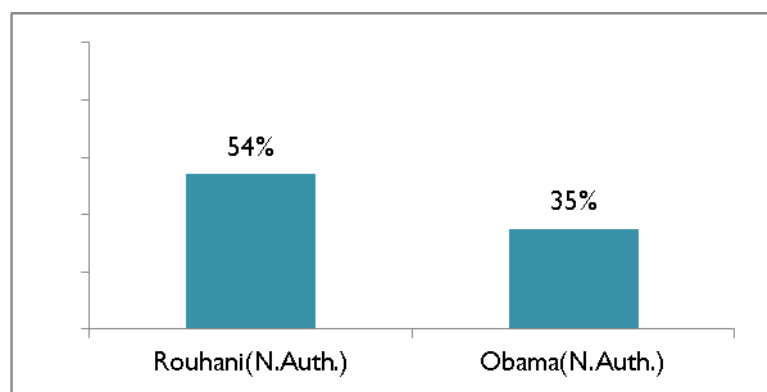

Figure 4.2. Frequency of non-authorial affect in Rouhani's and Obama's speeches at UN assembly in 2014

As the figures show, president Rouhani and president Obama indicated their assessment mostly in indirect ways and tried to show their reported sources as justified and acceptable as possible. In fact, they have tried to show their objectivity in emotional assessment while seeking ways to satisfy and convince their audiences. When they became successful to

position the feelings of their listeners positively or negatively towards different people or events then the audiences would be ready to decide and react. They may blame or praise. These reactions would be determined by the reported sources applied by the speakers and their aims and objectives. That is to say, when the orators indicated positive affectual assessments by having some reported sources respond with positive emotions to the phenomenon under consideration, they expected to provoke the praiseworthy reactions of their audiences, or, alternatively, when the speakers indicated negative assessments by having some reported sources respond with negative emotions, they indirectly tried to create such feelings in their audiences that the target people or the events were blameworthy. In political discourse such indirect attitudinal positioning and assessment works as an emergency exit for politicians that they resort to when blamed for their reactions and feelings. They can defend their objectivity by just reporting others' experiences.

The differences between two speeches showed that Rouhani, more than Obama, preferred to mention his direct and subjective emotional assessment. Authorial affect in Rouhani's speech was 26.5% while it was 25.2% in Obama's. The difference is quite slight, but such emotional evaluation resides entirely in the individual subjectivity of the speaker. Through such personalized and individualized mode of assessment, the speaker strongly foregrounds his subjective presence in the communication process.

The frequency of non-authorial affect in Rouhani's speech (54%) was more than Obama's (35%). Through non-authorial affect, Rouhani has tried to act as a reporter of others feelings and attitudes. He hoped that when the audiences were emotionally disposed to what was reported, it would lead to establishment of an emphatic connection between them. So they would be open to more and broader emotional and ideological comments of the orator. This kind of expression of evaluation would flatten the way constructed by speaker to reach his objectives.

5. Conclusion

In this study, the evaluative potential of political speeches of Iranian and American presidents was examined. This study sits at the intersection of linguistics and politics which aim at exploring the linguistics of politics to uncover the linguistic choices and strategies of political speakers (Jalilifar & Savaedi, 2012).

Despite the fact that Iran and America are typically known to oppose each other in political views, the analysis of speeches of Iranian and American presidents demonstrates that both presidents act similarly with regard to the strategic use of mechanisms for affectual positioning in their speeches. Although discrepancies between them exist, both politicians tend to follow a similar strategy in general: both aim at setting and positioning the feelings of their audiences towards different issues, both take advantage of the potential of non-authorial affectual positioning more followed by attempts to invite the audience to accompany them.

Both speakers were aware of this fact that an appropriate and accurate use of language is a key factor in convincing their audiences; hence, the application of creative and trustful linguistic resources was a crucial element in their speeches. They both indicated their

concerns of their countries and also the world and tried to provide and outline their solutions to national and international crises including political, economic, and religious.

Rouhani won the presidential campaign while "saving the economy" and "interacting with the world," were his central campaign pledges. To achieve this objective, Rouhani needed to ease outside pressure on Iran, which meant reaching a deal with the world.   From the first year of his presidency he has followed such a peace-seeking policy to mention and magnify his country's positive and constructive role in the world especially in the Middle East. His political and also friendly voice and words have always attracted the attention of western societies. Additionally, the perception of positive signals in his speech at UN assembly in 2014 has raised the international community's expectations and given hopes for a new era in relations with Iran.

In both speeches, the flexible nature of the different emotional markers let the speakers frame them to the current social, economic, political situation of the world. One applied them to mention the threats and horrors all around the globe and the other employed them to make confidence and sympathize with other nations.

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