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Manipulation of Realities through Euphemistic and Derogatory Terms and Phrases in Political Texts: Obama's actions regarding American Gulf Oil Spill

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CDA, Gulf oil spill, political media discourse, euphemization, derogation, discursive features

Abstract

This study of political media discourse, following Van Dijk's multi-disciplinary (2006) framework, takes a closer look at the manipulation of realities in texts through discursive strategies of euphemization and derogation (praising and criticizing). Taking a critical discourse analysis (CDA) perspective, this paper analyzed textual data from sixteen opinion articles and editorials published in four American newspapers (*The Washington Post*, *The Washington Times*, *The New York Post*, and *The New York Times)* concerning the actions taken by the US President, Barack Obama, to control the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill. The findings revealed that these opinion articles and editorials represent the same social actors and events differently by choosing such discursive features as euphemistic and derogatory terms, phrases and strategies. Moreover, the critical text analysis revealed that the political approach of each newspaper is materialized and can be traced in the language it produces. In other words, depending on the political party it is supporting, each newspaper manipulates its readers to either praise or criticize the actions taken by president Obama concerning the Gulf oil spill. It seems that *The Washington times* and *The New York Post* support the opposing political party and mostly criticize the president of their country, while most of the actions taken by the president concerning this issue are approved by *The New York Times*. As for *The Washington Post*, it criticizes some actions of the president, but not as much as *The Washington times* and *The New York Post*.

دستکاری واقعیت ها از طریق اصطلاحات و عبارات خوشایند و تحقیرآمیز در متون سیاسی: اقدامات اوباما در مورد نشت نفت آمریکا در خلیج فارس

این مطالعه از گفتمان رسانه های سیاسی، با پیروی از چارچوب چند رشته ای ون دایک (2006)، نگاهی دقیق تر به دستکاری واقعیت ها در متون از طریق راهبردهای گفتمانی تعبیر و تقبیح (تمجید و انتقاد) دارد. این مقاله با در نظر گرفتن دیدگاه تحلیل گفتمان انتقادی(CDA) ، داده های متنی شانزده مقاله نظری و سرمقاله منتشر شده در چهار روزنامه آمریکایی (واشنگتن پست، واشنگتن تایمز، نیویورک پست و نیویورک تایمز) را در رابطه با اقدامات انجام شده توسط باراک اوباما، رئیس جمهور ایالات متحده، برای کنترل نشت نفت خلیج مکزیک را تجزیه و تحلیل کرد. یافته‌ها نشان داد که این مقالات نظری و سرمقاله‌ها با انتخاب ویژگی‌های گفتمانی مانند اصطلاحات، عبارات و راهبردهای خوشایند و تحقیرآمیز، بازیگران و رویدادهای اجتماعی یکسان را به طور متفاوت نشان می‌دهند. علاوه بر این، تحلیل متن انتقادی نشان داد که رویکرد سیاسی هر روزنامه عینیت یافته و با زبانی که تولید می کند قابل ردیابی است. به عبارت دیگر، بسته به حزب سیاسی که از آن حمایت می کند، هر روزنامه خوانندگان خود را دستکاری می کند تا اقدامات انجام شده توسط پرزیدنت اوباما در مورد نشت نفت در خلیج فارس را ستایش یا انتقاد کند. به نظر می رسد واشنگتن تایمز و نیویورک پست از حزب سیاسی مخالف حمایت می کنند و بیشتر از رئیس جمهور کشورشان انتقاد می کنند، در حالی که اکثر اقدامات رئیس جمهور در این زمینه مورد تایید نیویورک تایمز است. در مورد واشنگتن پست، برخی اقدامات رئیس جمهور را مورد انتقاد قرار می دهد، اما نه به اندازه واشنگتن تایمز و نیویورک پست.

Introduction

One of the most disturbing and environmental polluting events of the year 2010 happened on April 20. An explosion ripped through British Petroleum Deepwater Horizon drilling rig, about 40 miles off the coast of Louisiana, USA. At the time of explosion, eleven workers lost their lives and seventeen others were injured. And soon, nearly a mile beneath the surface of the ocean, oil began spewing into the water. Ever since the occurrence of that disaster, the US President Barack Obama has taken necessary measures to tackle this challenge. The actions taken to control this oil spill have drawn the interest of many journalists in America. However, these actions have had different representations and evaluations in the printed political media.

The main concern of the present study is to textually analyze the manipulation of realities in political texts using Van Dijk's (2006) framework by focusing on the euphemistic (praising) and derogatory (criticizing) terms and phrases. In addition, from a critical perspective this study aims to demonstrate how the different ideological points of view and political approaches of journalists lead them to have very different linguistic choices in the treatment of the same event. In other words, this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. How can manipulation of realities be detected through euphemistic and derogatory terms and phrases in political texts?

2. How are different social approaches manifested in the discourse of the printed media ?

By studying the forms of language, we can explore the social processes and then the ideology embedded in them; thus, the more practical objective of this study is consciousness-raising through focusing on language. It is to be noted, however, that by scrutinizing the words and phrases in printed political texts, we do not aim to show that there is an intrigue on the part of the news writers to deceive and betray the public.

Literature Review

The analysis done in this study has a critical perspective nature which conceives language as a social practice construed by, and at the same time construing, the society. This conceptualization of the relationship between language and the society allows us to explore the political sphere through its realizations in language. This study takes manipulation of social realities as the "exercise of a form of illegitimate influence by means of discourse," (Van Dijk, 2006: 360). Put differently, the manipulator by using discourse makes others believe the things that are in the interest of the manipulator, and against the best interest of the manipulated (Chouliaraki, 2005;

Van Dijk, 2006). Manipulation usually occurs when the recipients are unable to understand the real intentions or to see the full consequences of the beliefs or actions advocated by the manipulator. This may be the case especially when the recipients lack the specific knowledge that might be used to resist manipulation (Wodak, 1987). Therefore, the same recipients may be more or less mainipulable in different circumstances.

Indeed, to explain how texts can be socially manipulative presupposes an account that relates textual structures to social cognitions, and social cognitions to social structures. The multi-disciplinary framework or model developed by Van Dijk (2001) suggests this kind of relation. Manipulation of social realities in this study is viewed under this socio-cognitive approach, which links discourse, cognition and society (Figure 1). For Van Dijk, micro-level notions such as discourse and macro-level notions such as social relations are mediated by cognition.

Figure 1

Discursive-cognitive-social structures triangle

cognition

(micro-level) discourse   society (macro-level)
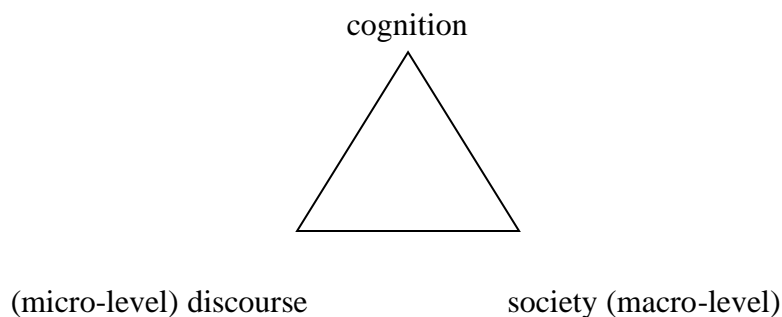
In other words, manipulation is known to be a social, cognitive and discursive phenomenon (Van Dijk, 2006). It is social because it involves interaction and power abuse between groups and social actors; it is cognitive because it implies the manipulation of the minds of the participants, and it is discursive because it is being exercised through text, talk and visual images.

For Van Dijk (2006), socially, manipulation involves power and domination. By power, it is meant the kind of control that some social actors or groups exercise over others. The occurrence of this type of manipulative control requires some social conditions in terms of group membership, institutional position, profession, material or symbolic resources that define the power groups and membership. Thus, what journalists produce cannot be free from being manipulative; they can manipulate the recipient of media discourse because of their institutional position in societies and their access to mass media and public discourse.

Cognitively, for manipulators, it is essential that the recipients form the mental model the manipulators want them to form. Put differently, the targets of manipulation are made to believe that some actions or policies are in their own interests, whereas in fact they are in the interests of the manipulators and their associates. Newspapers depending on their political approach, sometimes by blaming the victim discursively influence the mental models of recipients (Van Dijk, 2006).

Since social–political manipulation involves domination (power abuse), Van Dijk (2006) claims that such manipulation is ideological which involves ideologies, ideological attitudes and ideological discourse structures. Power and ideologies have been found effective in shaping discourse at all levels and in all situations of speaking and writing (Diamond, 1996; Fairclough, 2001; Foucault, 1982). Discursively, thus, manipulation generally involves the usual forms and formats of ideological discourse, such as emphasizing "Our" good things (euphemistic strategies), and emphasizing "Their" bad things (derogatory strategies). In order to analyze this strategy of polarization, Van Dijk's (2006: 373) "ideological square" is used, which can be applied to the structures at various levels of discourse as follows:

- Overall interaction strategies (Positive self-presentation/ Negative other-presentation)
- Macro speech act implying Our 'good' acts and Their 'bad' acts (Accusation, defense)
- Semantic macrostructures ((De-)emphasize negative/positive topics about Us/Them)
- Local speech acts implementing and sustaining the global ones, e.g. statements that prove accusations.
- Local meanings Our/Their positive/negative actions (Give many/few details; be general/specific; be vague/precise; be explicit/implicit; etc.)
- Lexicon (Select positive words for Us, negative words for Them)
- Local syntax (Active vs. passive sentences, nominalizations: (de)emphasize Our/Their positive/negative agency, responsibility)
- Rhetorical figures (Hyperboles vs. euphemisms for positive/negative meanings; Metonymies and metaphors emphasizing Our/Their positive/negative properties)
- Expressions: sounds and visuals (Emphasize (loud, etc.; large, bold, etc.) positive/negative meanings; Order (first, last; top, bottom, etc.) positive/negative meanings).

It is worthy of attention that all discourse featuring the usual ideological polarization patterns cannot simply be claimed to be manipulative. Indeed, there may be social–political discourse that is persuasive but not manipulative, such as persuasive parliamentary debates or a discussion in a newspaper or on television. The difference between a persuasive and manipulative discourse is that in persuasion the interlocutors are free to believe or act as they please, depending on whether or not they accept the arguments of the persuader, whereas in manipulation recipients are typically assigned a more passive role. This inability on the part of the recipients to understand the real intentions of the manipulators in manipulative discourse is caused when the recipients lack the relevant knowledge that enables them to resist manipulation. Another reason that some discourse is sometimes manipulative is that it is produced by member of "symbolic elites", such as politicians, journalists, scholars, writers, teachers, etc. (Van Dijk, 1996).

Although fascinating and pertinent, the distinction between persuasion and manipulation is not scrutinized here and is beyond the scope of the present study. The focus of the analysis here is on the latter term, that is, on the manipulation of realities through discursive means in different political texts. In other words, how social actors and events are represented differently in different newspapers. Ideologies and attitudes are inscribed in texts and control the structures of texts in media discourse. Thus, this study tries to display how groups with different social approaches manipulate social realities and evaluate them in order to secure their own group's interests.

Hodge and Kress (1993) claim that two broad discursive strategies are used in ideological struggles: (1) the manipulation of reality and (2) the manipulation of the orientation to reality. The ways in which the events and participants are represented (construction of reality) and the evaluation of the participants in these events (orientation to reality) are explored in the present paper. Actually, in the analysis done here, the evaluation of social actors is based on the system of Appraisal developed by Martin and Rose (2003). According to Martin and Rose (2003) the system of Appraisal is a framework for mapping attitudes as they are construed in a text, the different lexico-grammatical items the writers use to position themselves in relation to the events and the participants. This system focuses on terms and phrases that construct attitudinal orientations in terms of "judgment" and "affect". Judgment is emphasized when commenting on the behavior of social actors in social or moral terms, whereas the system of affect involves encoding feelings which are a reaction to behavior, texts or phenomena (Martin, 2000). This study, therefore, does not aim to evaluate the behavior of the social actors; rather, it attends to the tendency of each

newspaper towards the actions taken by the social actors. Thus, the analysis is based on the "affect" dimension of this system.

Method

Materials

One of the aims of this study is to make overt the different ways in which language is used to construct an explanation of the events and its participants. The structure and process of this discursive formation emerges from analyzing texts which are representative of the same genre but belong to different ideological positions. Thus, the study presents a critical discourse analysis on 16 opinion articles and editorials published in four American newspapers; namely, *The New York Post*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* from June 15, 2010 to June 25, 2010. All these political texts concern the actions taken by the US Ex-president, Barack Obama, on the Gulf of Mexico Oil Spill after Obama's first oval office address regarding this issue (except for one editorial in *The Washington Times* which was posted on May 25, since there was not enough editorials in that newspaper about this theme).

The reason for selecting editorial genre is that only in these types of news material the opinion of the editors of the newspapers (institutional not personal opinion) on the current issues are expressed even if they are signed by a particular author. In fact, the dominant ideology and the social approach of each specific newspaper are manifested in these types of media discourse. They represent the opinions of the group or of several interest groups to which the newspaper has allegiance. Concerning newspaper selection, according to Fowler (1991), for the ideology to be (re)presented or formulated in media, two factors should be considered, i.e. size of publication and the number of people who read the printed media in a day or in a week. Thus, all the four above-mentioned newspapers were randomly selected from among the newspapers that have vast circulation and are published daily in the United States.

Data Analysis Procedures

In order to do the textual analysis, initially the genre of the news stories (opinion articles and editorials) was described. Then an analysis was done on how social actors are evaluated and how events are represented. In order to achieve this objective all the ideological laden words and phrases of each text and their presumed ideological effects were analyzed according to the features introduced by Van Dijk (2006) and Martin & Rose (2003). The analysis, with its focus on

evaluation involved finding the euphemistic (praising) and derogatory (criticizing) terms and phrases. The next step was to examine each text to see the prevalence of euphemization or derogation strategies. In the last step of the analysis, each text was critically analyzed by focusing on social actors and discursive strategies (Van Dijk, 1999; Van Leeuwen, 1996; Wodak, 1996).

That is, the analyzed discourse findings were interpreted toward manifesting the relationship between particular social approaches and their influence on the representation of realities.

Analysis and Results

The editorial genre, the focus of this study, is characterized by being one of the widest circulated opinion discourses of society and by representing institutional not personal opinion (Bolívar, 1994; Van Dijk, 1996). The schematic structure of editorials typically consists of a summary of the event, an evaluation, and a pragmatic conclusion (Van Dijk, 1996). This schematic structure represents the ideal realization of the editorial genre, but it is important to remember that the actual instantiation of the genre might vary, mix or omit these components.

In each news story, the schematic structure of editorials and opinion articles was observed. Each story started with a headline, usually containing ideology laden words. The first paragraphs represented the main event of each article, i.e. President Obama's oval office address on the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and his actions towards tackling this issue. Then, in the body of the news which is the main focus of the present study, the news story writer started evaluating (either praising or criticizing) the actions and the actors. All of the news stories ended with a conclusion. The ideological aspects of discourse are explored in the use of euphemistic and derogatory discursive strategies, deployed in the manipulation of reality, i.e. the ways in which the events and participants are represented, and the manipulation of the orientation to reality, i.e. the evaluation of these events and participants, (Martín Rojo, 1995; Van Dijk, 2006; Wodak, 1996, 1997). Based on the above statement, all the euphemistic and derogatory words and phrases of each text were identified and then their presumed effects focusing specifically on the appraisal of the participants and the reconstruction of events were determined.

The appraisal of social actors

In this part, all the euphemistic and derogatory terms that show readers how editors feel about the social actors and their character were identified, and their effects were stated. These evaluative

traces evoke social models or scripts that the readers use when trying to make sense of the text. These elements contribute to the creation of a desired reading position and the manipulation of the readers to either praise or condemn the social actors, which of course can be withstood by readers who have the counter knowledge that enables them to resist manipulation. The social actor who is in the focus of the analysis done in this paper is Mr. Obama. Table 1 summarizes the appraisal of Mr. Obama in each of the newspapers. In order to determine the effect of each of these terms and phrases, Martin and Rose's (2003) categorization (focusing on the "affect" dimension) was used.

The groups of emotions selected to evaluate actors and express the feeling of the writers in reaction to the behavior of the actors are as follows:

● un/happiness (emotions of sadness, anger, happiness, and love);

● in/security (emotion concerned with anxiety, fear, confidence and trust);

● dis/satisfaction (emotion concerned with telos – ennui, displeasure, curiosity, respect) (cited in Achugar, 2004: 300).

Table 1

Appraisal of Obama in the four newspapers

Newspaper	Euphemistic	Derogatory	Affect
New York Post		came up short	Dissatisfaction
		failed to inspire	dissatisfaction
		missed the opportunity	unhappiness
		still doesn't get it	dissatisfaction
		has been too detached	dissatisfaction
		taking a new tack	insecurity(being deceived)
		lack of leadership	dissatisfaction
		tough O	unhappiness
		got it all wrong	dissatisfaction
		didn't mention	dissatisfaction

The New York	was right		Satisfaction
Times	his	was less frank	dissatisfaction
	determination		security
	vowed to		security
	ensure		security
	pledged to	opened the door far to	dissatisfaction
	strengthen	wide	
The Washington Post		didn't lay the proper foundation	Dissatisfaction
		his impotence	dissatisfaction
		ignored challenges	dissatisfaction
		focused on the relatively insignificant	dissatisfaction
The Washington Times		sitting on his own hands	Unhappiness
		poor presidential leadership	dissatisfaction
		failing in two critical responsibilities	dissatisfaction
		incompetence	dissatisfaction

As Table 1 illustrates, *New York Post*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Washington Times* show unhappiness, dissatisfaction and insecurity towards the actions of Mr. Obama. Reversely, *The New York Times* is satisfied with the actions of the president and feels to be secure and sure that he is on the right path in handling this issue. These differences indicate the different ideologies of the newspapers which can be traced in the language they have produced.

The representation of the events

The representation of the events in the four newspapers projects a view of the whole situation and the aspects each newspaper wishes to highlight out of the events. The different euphemistic and derogatory terms and phrases the writers chose to represent the events of Gulf oil spill reflect how

the same action and the same social actors are represented differently, once praised and once blamed. The lexical items and phrases that refer to such events were identified and later categorized according to how they help construct a view of the event from an evaluative perspective using Van Dijk's (2006) framework (See Appendix for samples of the analyzed data extracted from the four newspapers). Table 2 below gives a few examples of the ideologically laden words and their discourse levels. The visuals and text layout of the news texts were not analyzed, since their analysis seemed to be far beyond the objectives of the present study.

Table 2

Examples of the ideologically- laden words and their discourse levels

Level of Text Analysis	Textual feature/ structure	Discursive strategy
Macro speech acts	accusation *"he promoted the fiction that the government is on the top of this"*	implying Their bad act (derogation)
Local speech acts	statements that prove the accusation *"in a mere two weeks 90 percent of oil would be captured"*	sustaining the macro speech acts (derogation)
Local meanings	Be Vague/ precise *"giving faint outlines of agendas"*	Their negative actions (derogation)
Lexicon (micro-level)	selecting negative words for Them *"inability to deal"*	negative Other presentation (derogation)
Rhetorical Figures (micro-level)	Hyperboles *"economy-killer"*	emphasizing Their negative properties (derogation)
	Metaphor *"marshmallows had more substance"*	emphasizing Their negative properties (derogation)

The textual analysis shows that the four newspapers evaluate Mr. Obama's actions differently; for instance, *The New York Times* blames British Petroleum (BP) for this disaster, and claims that it gave false information concerning its abilities before the oil spill and false information about the size of the spill after this event:

There are a lot of reasons, of course, not to trust BP.

The company <u>insisted for years that it was ready to deal with a huge oil spill in the gulf,</u> and it <u>was completely unprepared</u>. After the blowout on the Deepwater Horizon rig, it <u>downplayed the size of the spill</u>, starting with 1,000 barrels a day, then moving to 5,000, then — as its tallies became <u>less and less credible</u> — turning over the job of estimating to <u>government scientists</u>. Their present estimate is as much as 60,000 barrels a day (16/05/2010).

The *Washington Times* has a completely different point of view and explicitly blames Mr. Obama for delaying in taking action to control the disaster, and claims it is because of his incompetence:

Government shares blame for oil disaster: BP shouldn't have to pay for <u>Obama's incompetence</u>

When allocating blame for the crisis in the Gulf, BP executives <u>aren't t</u>he only ones with oil on their hands. The <u>British petroleum</u> giant should be <u>held legally liable for damage </u>caused by the oil leak, but only for costs related to <u>its portion of the responsibility</u>. At every step, <u>government has hampered cleanup efforts, thereby exacerbating the problem. That's not BP's fault</u>.

[....] <u>BP isn't accountable for additional cleanup costs</u> and damages that resulted from <u>government's failure </u>to give a green light to this process. In this dim light, it's obvious why the Obama administration put the thumbscrews to BP executives to get them to agree to a cleanup fund managed by the White House: <u>Government's share of the blame is substantial</u>, and waiting for courts to allocate objective damages - which would be the normal way of proceeding - risked exposing bureaucratic culpability.

<u>Delays and obstructions caused by the federal government are numerous</u>. [.....](22/05 2010)

In order to explore the overall evaluation of these four newspapers concerning the gulf issue, the frequency of all of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases stated in the text were calculated as percentages (Table 3). The aim was to see whether the euphemistic or derogatory strategies have prevalence in each newspaper, or put differently whether each newspaper is manipulating its readers to praise or criticize Mr. Obama for his efforts in dealing with the crisis.

Table 3

The percentage of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases in each newspaper

Name of Newspaper	Euphemistic terms and phrases	Derogatory terms and phrases
New York Post	11%	89%

New York Times	81%	19%
The Washington Post	38%	62%
The Washington times	10%	90%

The results revealed that *The Washington times* and *The New York Pos*t mostly criticize the president, while most of the actions taken by the president concerning the issue are approved by *The New York Times*. As for *The Washington Post*, it is a bit conservative in criticizing some of the actions of the president, but on the whole it tends to criticize more than to praise but not as much as *The Washington times* and *The New York Post*. Figure 2 below attests to these findings.

Figure 2

The percentage of the euphemistic or derogatory terms and phrases in each newspaper
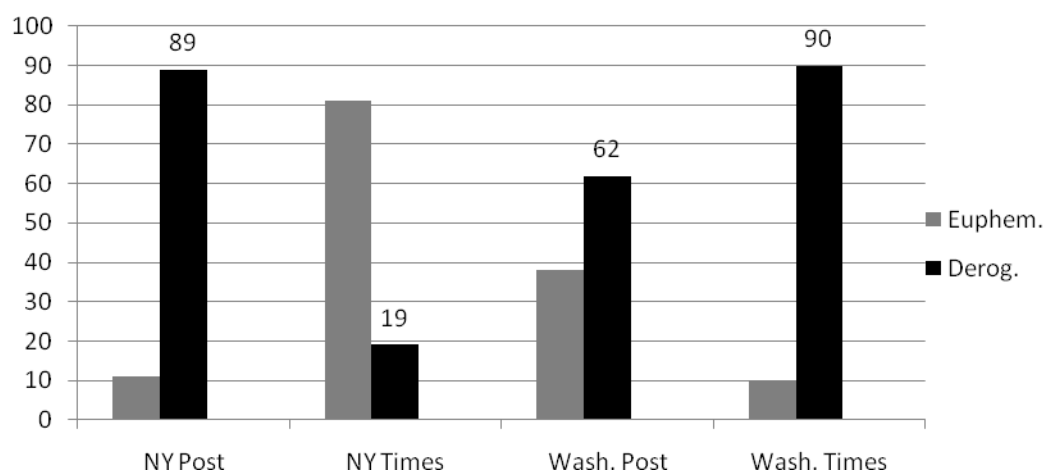
Discussion and conclusion

The results of textual analysis of the randomly chosen news stories in the present study demonstrated that the representations of the same social actors, President Obama and British Petroleum, by different newspapers were significantly different. This can be related to the underlying ideological attitudes or social approaches of the media groups. By the same token, the analyzed media discourse presented facts in a way that would influence the reader's view of the given incidents and would manipulate the readers to some extent to praise or criticize the same

social actors and their actions. This manipulation can be prevented if the relevant knowledge is given to the readers (Van Dijk, 2006).

The findings of this study are in line with the studies that show the media can and sometimes do manipulate the truth in order to put across their own or the government's political agenda (e.g. Atawaneh, 2009; Fitch, 2005; Gandara, 2004; Leudar & Marsland, 2004). The ideologies of the reporting media are reflected in the language they produce, and the same events can be very differently reported, if the reporting media have different ideologies. For example, Vaughan (1995) analyzed the reporting of the 1982 war of Israel against Lebanon in a comparative discourse study of editorials. She found that the four sets of editorials analyzed viewed the situation very differently each promoting their own interests. In another study, Lazar and Lazar (2004) analyzed the speeches of Bush after September 11, 2001. They found that the false stereotype of the Middle Eastern people as "terrorists, murderers and enemies of democracy and civilization" was dominant in his speeches. Achugar (2004) analyzed the editorials of two Uruguay newspapers concerning the events of September 11, 2001 and their aftermath: *El Paı́s* views the US as right in its policy against terrorism, while *La Repuʹblica* believes the US is involved in state terrorism like other terrorist groups.

The findings of this study and those of the above-mentioned studies have shown how discourse can be ideologically positioned and how social positions of different groups of which language producers are members affect their discourse and talk. These finding corroborate the fact that there are relations between social organizations, institutions, groups, roles, situations, power, or political decision making, on the one hand, and discourse structures, on the other hand (Fairclough, 1989, 2001; Kedar, 1987; Kramarae, Schulz and O Barr, 1984; Kress, 1985; Ng and Bradac, 1993; Wodak, 1989). The media can play a significant role in spreading, defending and legitimating ideologies. When there are different political parties with opposing views, the same events can be reported in totally different ways. The group members by employing manipulative discursive strategies express and support their specific social positions.

One of the main implications of this study for language teaching is to teach language learners how to examine and judge any texts they read or hear carefully and not to simply accept it because it is produced by a "symbolic elite" (Van Dijk, 1996), and if necessary, by gathering relevant information change their interpretation. Actually, teachers have to encourage their students that when reading a political text, it is better to critically analyze the text and to find the intention of

the writers and also their political approach toward the events they are describing in their writings. Actually, by drawing the attention of students to these discursive structures of discourse and their socio-political effects, teachers can hope to make students conscious of and sensitive to the latent invisible misinformation, manipulation, misdirection and misinterpretation exercised by some writers and speakers.

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Appendix: Samples of analyzed texts extracted from the four newspapers

The New York Post

Text 1: Deepwater Obama

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
don't worry		*	reduction of significance (macro speech act)
Marshmallows have more substance		*	metaphor, comparison, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig)
start an escrow account	*		defending a positive decision (macro speech act)
faint outlines		*	a vague presentation (local meaning)
We were hoping...		*	an expected reaction
criminal dysfunction in the federal government		*	accusation (macro speech act)
Obama's nod to this factor	*		defending a positive decision (local speech act)
clean up	*		management, specific (local meaning)
Nice	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
took so long		*	objection (macro speech act)
another plan		*	similar failures
Yay		*	(slang) disrespect (rhet. fig)
don't need		*	Rejection
Inability		*	negative other presentation
Obama should have said- but didn't.		*	objection (macro speech act)

He (Obama) promoted the fiction.	*	objection (macro speech act)
Yeah, I'm the founder of the Tea Party.	*	ridicule, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig)
came up short	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
failed to inspire	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
missed the opportunity	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)
President Obama still doesn't get it.	*	negative actor presentation (lexicon)

Text 2: Obama's Intentions

| Word or Phrase | Discursive Strategy | | Presumed effect and discourse level |
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
majority polls		*	give details (local meaning)
too detached		*	hyperbole, negative actor presentation (rhet. fig.)
taking a new tack		*	deceiving, (macro speech act)
huffing and puffing		*	(metaphor), comparison, ridicule
Grotesquerie		*	hyperbole, negative meaning (rhet. fig.)
off-base		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
demonizing PB beyond reason		*	victimization, implying their bad acts (macro speech act)
rarely relevant		*	vague (local meaning)
Chicago style		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
Threats		*	vilification, implying their bad acts (lexicon)

Wise	*		positive actor description(lexicon)
safeguard funds	*		positive action(lexicon)
whipping up a mob		*	metaphor, negative other presentation (rhet. fig.)
Revenge		*	vilification, implying their bad acts (lexicon)
driving the company into bankruptcy		*	accusation, (macro speech act)
sound strategy		*	ridicule, sarcasm, (rhet. fig.)
puffing up presidential strategy		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties (rhet. fig.)

The New York Times

Text 1: Editorial: From the Oval Office

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
more energy	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
more dedication	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
short on specifics		*	vague (local meaning)
Right	*		positive actor presentation (lexicon)
less than frank		*	vague (local meaning)
faltering efforts		*	negative other presentation (lexicon)
would order	*		positive actor presentation (local speech act)

Word or Phrase	Euphemistic	derogatory	Presumed effect and discourse level
a fair manner	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Timely	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Obama's determination	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
press it	*		firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Ensure	*		firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Strengthen	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Relentless	*		positive presentation (lexicon)
left to its own devices		*	lack of management
long-stalled	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
Comprehensive	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
necessary first-step	*		significance and impact, positive presentation (lexicon)
tackling the problem	*		management, positive actor presentation (local speech act)
Unless		*	conditional,
takes full charge	*		management, positive presentation (lexicon)

Text 2: Editorial: BP Begins to Ante Up

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	

Word or Phrase	Euphemistic	Derogatory	Presumed effect and discourse level
a good start	*		praising, positive presentation (lexicon)
Stressed	*		firm determination, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
BP's obligation	*		blaming others, (lexicon)
would not pre-empt	*		firm determination, precise (local meaning)
government scientists	*		in-group favoritism, (lexicon)
escrow fund	*		a positive action, (local meaning)
not be able to walk away	*		firm determination, precise (local meaning)
Reassuring	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
Managed	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
won high marks	*		positive actor presentation (local meaning)
keep pressing	*		management, positive actor presentation (lexicon)
the battle is not over		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties (rhet.fig)
not adjudicated		*	mismanagement, negative word, (lexicon)

The Washington Post

Text 1: Column: Obama's address: grand setting, weak policies

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	

Word or Phrase	Euphemistic	derogatory	Presumed effect and discourse level
grand setting	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
weak policies		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
Chasm		*	deficiency, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
ambition of its commitments	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
thinness of its policies		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
Decisive	*		firm determination, positive action (lexicon)
gone missing		*	deficiency, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
Limp		*	emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
Weak		*	emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
dramatic setting		*	hyperbole, exaggeration, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
little worth saying		*	insignificant, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
not done much service		*	insignificance, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)

Text 2: Column: A Glimmer of Leadership in Obama's Oval Office Speech

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	**derogatory**	

Term	Col1	Col2	Description
glimmer of leadership		*	sardonic remark,
idiotic advice		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
about right	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
look presidential		*	sardonic remark
pretty stressed		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Serious	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
hardest job on the planet		*	hyperbole, irony, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
better framed	*		positive actor presentation, (lexicon)
take the opportunity	*		positive decision, (local speech act)
he is a leader		*	sardonic remark
Ridiculous		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
"kick some ass" language		*	slang, disrespect, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
macho-challenged		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Right	*		positive action, (lexicon)
Exhausting		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
voracious energy appetite		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
Nightmare		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)

Hashemi Shahraki: Manipulation of Realities through Euphemistic and Derogatory…

	Euphemistic	derogatory	
bipartisan thing	*		a sardonic remark
hit the crescendo	*		hyperbole, emphasizing positive properties (rhet. fig.)
rolled right	*		positive action, (lexicon)
Chiding	*		positive action, (lexicon)
liked him better	*		positive presentation, (lexicon)
not yet the bright beam		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)

The Washington Times

Text 1: Editorial: Obama's 'blame others' approach: Government is partly to blame for this disastrous oil spill

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
blame		*	accusation, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
sit on his hands		*	idiom, objection, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
over a month		*	Idleness
sank into the mire of his own presidency		*	metaphor, emphasizing negative properties, (rhet. fig.)
the blame Bush game		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
increasingly worn		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
increasingly unconvincing		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
other targets		*	other victims

everything's somebody else's fault	*	disclaiming responsibility, emphasizing negative properties, (local speech act)
Obama world	*	exclusion of others, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
bureaucrats never make mistakes	*	false belief, incorruptibility, emphasizing negative properties, (local speech act)
cannot escape	*	inability, negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
failed to discover	*	inability, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
so much for the efficacy of federal regulators	*	irony, disparagement, negative other presentation, (rhet. fig.)
prevented.... from	*	unnecessary control, negative action, (lexicon)
Clearly	*	hyperbole, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
there was a fear	*	horror, emphasizing negative properties, (lexicon)
ill-nuanced admission	*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
blow up	*	awful result, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
carefully concocted defense	*	deceitful action, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
it hasn't messed up	*	negative other presentation (local speech act)
government's own murky role	*	negative other presentation (lexicon)

Hashemi Shahraki: Manipulation of Realities through Euphemistic and Derogatory…

Word or Phrase	Euphemistic	derogatory	Presumed effect and discourse level
imposing penalties		*	cruel action negative other presentation (lexicon)
punishing oil companies		*	blaming others negative other presentation (lexicon)
had nothing to do with the spill		*	exempting,
protect government	*		positive action, (lexicon)
at the expense of truth	*		honesty, positive action, (lexicon)

Text 2: Editorial: Obama's Gulf war: Lackluster response to oil spill exposes poor presidential leadership

Word or Phrase	Discursive Strategy		Presumed effect and discourse level
	Euphemistic	derogatory	
lackluster response		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
poor presidential leadership		*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
approval rating dropped		*	specifics, (local meaning)
more bad news		*	comparison, negative other presentation, (lexicon)
remarkable similarity		*	comparison, emphasize on negative properties, (local speech act)
Eroded		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
failing to perform		*	negative other presentation, (lexicon)
comparable rating		*	specifics, negative other presentation, (lexicon)

slightly worse	*	comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
no comparison	*	dissimilarity, positive presentation (lexicon)
failing in two critical responsibilities	*	negative actor presentation, (macro speech act)
got off to a rocky start	*	having bad luck, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
Obama's administration stood in the way	*	inability, negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
more economic harm	*	comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
defended the policy	*	a positive action, (local speech act)
But	*	contrast, comparison, negative other presentation, (local speech act)
failed as an inspirational leader	*	negative actor presentation, (local speech act)
won't generate	*	negative other presentation, (local speech act)
requisite sense of urgency	*	acting sensibly, precise, (local meaning)
Bellyached	*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)
crumbling presidency intact	*	negative actor presentation, (lexicon)