



## **Attitudes in Iranian vs. Western Media Coverage of the Iranian Nuclear Issue**

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### **Abstract**

Employing the appraisal framework in discovering the way ideology is crystalized through discourse, the present study attempts to investigate how journalistic ideologies and political positions are manifested through attitudinal terms. Referring to White's (2012) distinction of attitude types, inscribed vs. invoked, based on Martin and White's (2005) appraisal theory, journalistic ideology together with the positivity and negativity they offer with regard to the Iranian nuclear issue was investigated. The study also refers to the selection and omission of certain aspects in this regard by the media. The study reveals an ideological bias towards portraying a negative presentation of Iranian nuclear policy in the western media. Iranian journalists, however, tend to highlight the positive dimension of the Iranian nuclear program.

**Keywords:** Appraisal Framework, Discourse, Journalistic Ideologies, Political Positions, Attitudinal Terms, and Iranian Nuclear Issue

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## **Introduction**

As an inseparable part and parcel of lives of people, media have carried a crucial role in significant matters especially political issues. Following their goals, media, in their different written and spoken modes, inform people through their specialized forms of expression. Thus, ordinary people are media products consumers, as opposed to media managers who are the producers. Since production of texts, especially political news in media, undergoes complex processes, investigating the ways in which media act in order to reach their goals is necessitated. Although, media always claim to be reporting the facts, their objectivity is under question, since all texts, especially news media texts, are ‘in some way subjective due to being conditioned by their author’s own social identity, ideological position and communicative objectives’ (White, 2009, p. 31). According to van Dijk (1995), media endeavor to convey their ideologies to their readers in order to gain their support in favor of the elite so that they can follow their programs and achieve their goals. Needless to say that this is accomplished through the way language, whether verbal or nonverbal, is exploited by them.

As there is a strong rivalry today among different powers in the world in reaching their goals, they normally require their nations’ support which can be achieved through specific employment of language and discourse strategies in media as a result of which their stance can be revealed. According to Perrin (2012), ‘selection of certain topics, topical aspects, sources, quotes, and the omission of others’ is a strategy by media which manifests their stance. He further points out that even though ‘the selected variants appear in the text product, the omissions do not’ (p. 136) which can be inferred through comparative, cross contextual analyses. In other words, having knowledge of the journalists’ ideologists and the special political line of vision of the institutions in which they work, one can be led to some interpretations as to the inclusion or exclusion of certain actors or concepts.

Another linguistic strategy by media is the employment of special ‘attitudinal terms and axiological positions’ (White, 2012) through which they try to arouse people’s feelings to be gravitated towards their planned targets. Therefore, evaluation of the resources and textual choices employed by them for the representation of their attitudes towards their utterances and interactions is necessitated (Thompson & Hunston, 2006). Hence, divulging the way in which they attempt to persuade their target audiences through attitudinal terminology appears of great significance.

The Iranian nuclear issue and the negotiations in this regard between the Iranian and the western negotiating teams has for the past ten years been hot news in the media; however, when president Rohani took office and promised he would adopt a moderate position in his stance towards different issues, for instance, the nuclear issue, the two sides became hopeful to be able to reach an agreement.

Nevertheless, both sides began to come up with accusations against each other regarding their commitments in reaching the agreement. The Iranian media, on the one hand, talked about untrustworthiness of the western countries and the cases in which they had broken their promises, and the western media, on the other hand, charged Iran with the intention to produce atomic bombs. Consequently, these political situations made the scene ready for both sides to build their rhetoric based on these accusations and explore them through the proper application of discourse markers.

There have been some discourse analysis studies, dealing with ideological representations on the Iranian nuclear issue in the media, stipulating that linguistic tools are among the most important devices through which ideological tendencies are presented in the media. Behnan and Mahmoudi (2013), for instance, demonstrated how an organization such as IAEA with a technical body through politicized linguistic elements of negation and repetition as well as intertextual features of argumentation and persuasion directs the readers' impression of the IAEA reports on the Iranian nuclear issue and consequently revises and constructs their ideologies. In another study, Izadi and Shaghaye-Biria (2007) revealed how three elite American newspapers, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *The Wall Street Journal* selectively framed the issues surrounding the Iranian nuclear dispute by employing linguistic, stylistic, and argumentative maneuvers. They stressed the uniformity of the newspapers' ideological position in challenging the Iranian nuclear issue despite their different political line of vision in other areas. They found that it is due to the Islamic nature of the Iranian government that westerners regard it as a threat and do not trust it with sensitive nuclear technology. As another example, Shojaei, Youssefi, and Shams Hosseini (2013), clarifying how linguistic tools can carry ideological traits in their discursual properties, showed that newspapers play particularly important roles in representing and interpreting news stories. Analyzing some excerpts from some US and UK newspapers, they found that the language of western newspapers is highly ideological while representing the news of conflicting ideas between Iran and western countries. Finally, Talebinejad and Shahi (2014) investigated the translation of rival names and labeling in Iranian state-run news agencies. They maintained that some names or labels adopted by the English news agencies were substituted with the names endorsed by the institutions in which the translators worked. They demonstrated that name substitution took place when Iran's national and international interests were conflicting with those of the West suggesting the translations to be ideologically driven.

Employing the appraisal system, the study of the different types of attitudinal terminology used by some of the Iranian and Western media is specifically chosen for the present paper. This is due to the fact that, although a great deal of studies have been conducted on different types of attitudinal terminology, little research, if

any, has investigated, compared and contrasted the attitudinal terms used by the Iranian and Western media regarding the Iranian nuclear issue employing the appraisal system.

### **Theoretical Background**

As an extension of Halliday's (1994) systemic functional linguistics, appraisal theory was introduced by James Martin at the beginning of the 1990s as an approach for dealing with evaluative resources and negotiation of interpersonal meanings (Liu, 2010). The approach is now used worldwide, particularly in language education, and for purposes of discourse analysis (Donnel, 2011).

Martin and White (2005, p. 33) define Appraisal as 'an interpersonal system at the level of discourse semantics'. In the same token, Jalilifar and Savaedi (2012, p. 61) define appraisal 'as a system of interpersonal meanings for negotiating our social relationships by telling our listeners and readers how we feel about things and people'. Naturally, when exposing our readers or listeners to our feelings, we try to align them with our ideas and feelings and in this respect, we expect them to be of the same ideas as ours. In other words, we express our attitudes and ideologies and implicitly expect our readers or listeners to have the same viewpoint.

Read and Carrol (2012) define appraisal theory as a means to analyze emotion and opinion. Also, Liu (2010, p. 133) refers to appraisal as an analytic tool for examining 'evaluative lexis expressing the speaker's or writer's opinion on, very broadly, the good/ bad parameters'. According to Jalilifar and Savaedi (2012), much can be reflected through the appraisal elements regarding the cultural context within which a linguistic exchange takes place, and hence, the addresser and addressee's expectations and perceptions of each other can be revealed through analysis of such elements in a cross cultural study.

According to Martin and White (2005), the appraisal framework provides systematic taxonomies of what the key types of evaluative meanings are and explains how users of English convey attitude, with its positive and negative assessments, and engagement (assessment of the evaluations of other people). However, engagement is not the concern of this study.

The appraisal literature distinguishes between inscribed and invoked attitude (Table1). In the inscribed attitude, there is explicitly attitudinal lexis such as *corruptly*, *skillfully*. According to Hyland (2005, p. 180), 'By signaling an assumption of shared attitudes, values and reactions to materials, writers [using such terms] both express a position and pull readers into a conspiracy of agreement so that it can often be difficult to dispute these judgments'. In the invoked attitude, on the other hand, there is implicitly attitudinal value in lexis such as *hide* and *international community* which works 'through implication and association' (White, 2012, p. 59).

**Table 1.** Types of Attitudinal Terms (adopted from White, 2012)

<b>Attitude</b>	a) inscribed (either positive or negative) e.g. skillfully, corruptly
	b) invoked (either positive or negative) e.g. international community, hide

In order to decipher the invoked attitude involved, the reader has to use his world knowledge to realize the hidden meanings of such words with different connotations normally constrained by their co-textual context. It needs to be mentioned that through analyses of attitudinal invocations, the underlying ideology informing a text can be revealed (White, 2009).

The appraisal framework further divides the invoked attitude into subcategories of *provoked* and *evoked* attitudes (White, 1998) (Table 2). In the *provoked* subcategory, the term involving the evaluative meanings do not explicitly display attitude. For example, *Even though he tried to make a change, things remained the same*. In this example, there is no explicit evaluation of any type but depending on the co-textual context and the ideological and interpretive positions the reader brings to the text, it provides the opportunity for an attitudinal assessment to be made.

**Table 2.** Types of Invoked Attitudinal Terms (adopted from White, 1998)

<b>Invoked attitude</b>	a) provoked e.g. extremely
	b) evoked e.g. He was elected president with 500000 fewer votes than his opponent

In the evoked subcategory, on the other hand, ‘meaning appears to be entirely factual’ which afford the opportunity for an attitudinal assessment (White, 2012, p. 59). For example, *the leader attended the graveyard on the martyrdom anniversary of the parliament deputies*. Here, there seems to be no attitude on the part of the writer but simply reporting the news; however, it is implicitly referring to the ideologically driven act of the leader which is culturally conditioned.

According to White (2012), quoted source descriptors can also invoke an attitudinal assessment of the material being attributed to that source (Table 3). In other words, the naming and designation of the source could activate either *evoked* or *provoked* attitudinal assessments. Descriptors which simply name a source without any accompanying modification can be labeled *evoked* (e.g. *Nelson Mandela, The Pope*). On the other hand, descriptors which cause a favoring of an attributed proposition through an explicit evaluation of the source are termed *provoked descriptors* (e.g. *Leading* scientists hold that...).

**Table 3.** Types of Attitude in Source Descriptors (adopted from White, 2012)

<b>Source Descriptors</b>	a) provoked e.g. leading scientists
	b) evoked e.g. The Pope

## Methodology

### Materials

To accomplish the aims of the study, the researchers downloaded a number of news reports from four English speaking Iranian and four English speaking Western media and selected some extracts (approximately 3500 words) from them regarding the Iranian nuclear issue for analysis. They were from March 19 to December 18, 2014.

The news reports of the four Iranian media examined in this study included: *Press TV*, *Tehran Times*, *Fars News Agency*, and *IRDIPLOMACY*, illustrated in table 4.

**Table 4.** The selected news reports from the Iranian media

Media	Press TV	Tehran Times	Fars News Agency	IRDIPLOMACY
<b>Total number of news reports</b>	14	9	8	9

The above media were selected because they were of the most famous and influential in Iran and also outside Iran, especially that they were all state-run and represented the Iranian government. They may have some different viewpoints and perspectives regarding the Iranian nuclear program; however, since the nuclear program in Iran is a national issue, they produce the same voice.

The news reports of the four Western media examined in this study include: *The New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *The Jerusalem Post* and *The Guardian*, illustrated in table 5.

**Table 5.** The Selected news reports

Media	The New York Times	Washington Post	The Jerusalem Post	The Guardian
<b>Total number of news reports</b>	10	11	10	8

The above media were selected because they include some of the largest news agencies in the United States, as well as those widely covering foreign policy issues in the United States, Britain, and Israel, as a follower of Western policies in the Middle East. Each of the papers also represents a distinct political and ideological perspective, including perspectives that favor international intervention in Iran and those that are of the idea to adhere to the international institutions to address the

dispute. However, the point in which they are all united is that Iran should be stopped from making nuclear progress.

The researchers' criterion for selecting the extracts was that they needed to be covering the same issues from both sides, so that they were comparable and the results could be generalizable.

The writers of the selected texts were mainly journalists or correspondents, i.e. they were not representatives of governments, MPs, government spokesmen, or officials of any government administrations.

### **Instrument**

In this study, the researchers applied White's (2012) dichotomy between attitudes (inscribed versus invoked), based on the appraisal theory by Martin and White (2005), which provides important theoretical bases for a comprehensive study of evaluative stance.

Attempt was made to identify the inscriptively and invocatively attitudinal terms in the texts in order to recognize the difference between the Iranian and the Western media to see how they run discourse to dominate their ideological positions in the minds of masses. To avoid complications, the subcategories of inscribed attitude (affect, judgment, appreciation) were not focused on, though much of the evaluative work done by texts would simply be missed out. However, the subcategories of invoked attitude, that is, evoked and provoked were tried to be identified as they are not explicitly passed in the words of the journalist authors.

### **Procedure**

Staying alert on the release of the news on the nuclear negotiations, the researchers tried to download the related news reports through Google web search engine. In this regard, attempt was made for the corpus to include a similar proportion of Western and Iranian sides, so it would be balanced and representative of both sides news discourse about Iran's nuclear program. As a consequence, the validity of the very general conclusions the researchers arrive at can be confirmed.

When the corpus was accumulated, the researchers randomly extracted the related parts from the texts for analysis. In this regard, the selected extracts were juxtaposed in a way that they were thematically parallel so that the Iranian and the Western media could be compared and contrasted. Some examples in this respect are *demanding sanctions relief, expressing Iran's right to nuclear energy, extension of the talks, uranium enrichment, etc.*

The selected extracts, covering the nuclear issues, ranged from two to six clauses. As is common, political texts normally cover several issues at the same

time; naturally, analyzing them all at the same time may create complexities as far as discourse analysis is concerned and, therefore, the other issues were excluded.

Identifying the attitudinal terms, the researchers analyzed and interpreted them according to White's (2012) dichotomy (inscribed and invoked) which constituted the qualitative part of the paper.

Whereas the dominant approach in this study was qualitative, there were, nonetheless, quantitative aspects to the study in terms of quantifying the number of inscribed and invoked attitudinal terms as well as the positive or negative views these terms created for their readers (section 5).

### **Qualitative Analysis**

In this section, following Martin and White's (2005) appraisal framework, we will demonstrate how it can be used to inform our interpretation of evaluation in texts. In particular, we are concerned here with the cases of inscribed/invoked categories (quantified in section five) the journalists employed in order to impinge on the potential readers' minds. In order to accomplish this, the researchers' interpretations of the investigated extracts ideologically charged are presented. However, according to Martin and White (2005), this places limits on what we can exemplify as far as the texture of appraisal in discourse is concerned; nevertheless, it allows us to analyze meticulously at the level of detail we need to interpret the materialization of evaluation.

In some cases, due to the blurred distinction between the types of attitude, the researchers can be found fault with. This is especially true distinguishing between the provoked and evoked types of invoked attitudinal terms. In addition, although the researchers tried to adhere to impartiality in their interpretations, their subjectivity might be noticed by the readers. After all, according to Watson (1994) and van Dijk (1995), research is not value free since researchers inevitably influence their findings. Therefore, the researchers are open to criticism regarding their interpretations provided for the media extracts in the following.

**Extract-1** *Zarif said Tehran will not compromise on its peaceful nuclear rights* (Press TV, 14 June 2014).

Here, the quoted source Zarif, to whom the material is being attributed, and Tehran, the Iranian capital, are not accompanied by any modifications; hence, the journalist can be considered to be advancing evoked attitude. Also, the use of the word *peaceful* is made to reassure the other countries of the nuclear activities that Iran is only after scientific progression in order to bring comfort and ease both for itself and other nations. In the same phrase, the word *rights* refers to an



internationally agreed upon prerogative in different scientific fields. These two words are cases of inscribed attitude.

**Extract-2** *We are willing to provide assurances of the exclusively peaceful nature of our nuclear program. (IRIDIPLOMACY, 14 June 2014).*

Here, through the word *willing*, the speaker tries to explicitly express his feeling about the matter, which is a case of inscribed attitude. Then, the word *assurances* also flags an inscribed attitude, since the speaker, using it, tries to explicitly create an atmosphere of trust between the two sides. Finally, the speaker explicitly through *exclusively peaceful* refers to Iran's sole intention of using the nuclear energy for peaceful purposes such as producing electricity, agriculture, medicine, etc.

**Extract-3** *US Secretary of State John Kerry says Iranian negotiators are "strong in their position" as they "fight for" their right to nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. (Press TV, 15 July 2014).*

Here, the use of the modifications, US Secretary of State, in the quoted source descriptor indicates the journalist's evoked attitude. This is implicit since the journalist indirectly tries to show the validity and reliability of his selected quotation. This is obvious since his selected quotations, attributed to the American high ranking official, involves Kerry in praising the Iranian negotiators. The phrase *strong in their position* implicitly connotes a highly reasonable standpoint on the part of the Iranians. The verb *fight for* implicitly connotes an Iranian determination for an achievement declared here as their *right*, a term by itself showing a positively inscribed attitude. Here, the journalist has cunningly attached the terms *right* and *peaceful* purposes to the quoted source remarks in order to pretend a confession by the American official that Iran's activities are peaceful, hence, a case of deviation from journalistic objectivity.

**Extract-4** *Inspectors of the IAEA have repeatedly emphasized that what Iran is doing is peaceful (Press TV, 14 June 2014).*

In this extract, the word *inspector* advances a kind of provocative attitude since it implies officials who visit a place in order to detect something or to see that the rules are obeyed. Then, the word *repeatedly*, a case of inscribed attitude, explicitly refers to the large number of inspection times and the meticulous supervision of the IAEA on Iran's nuclear program. Finally, the verb *emphasize* explicitly directs the readers' minds to the claim of peacefulness of Iran's nuclear activities.

**Extract-5** *The two sides seem to be very interested in coming to an agreement (Tehran Times, 20 March 2014).*

In this extract, the journalist apparently tries to create an atmosphere of hope in the readers. This can be revealed through the inscriptively attitudinal verb *seem* and the intensifier *very* and the inscriptively attitudinal adjective *interested*. In addition, the ideology of the journalist can be revealed in that he favors an agreement between the two sides to come about so that people's living conditions improve.

**Extract-6** *The Iranian foreign minister urged the West to seize the current opportunity to reach a final agreement with Iran (Fars News agency, 19 July 2014).*

Here, the journalist shows his ideology and way of thinking regarding the nuclear issue through the reporting verbs *urge* and *seize*. The verb *urge* is an attitudinal verb in that it implies that the speaker is talking from an upper hand and has more experience. The verb *seize* is also attitudinal since it implies here that Iran has provided the West with an exceptional opportunity which may not be repeated.

**Extract-7** *Iran and the six countries have been discussing ways to sort out their differences and achieve a final deal that would end the decade-old dispute over Iran's nuclear energy program (Tehran Times, 14 July 2014).*

At the beginning, putting Iran on a par with the Western countries which call themselves the international community reveals the writer's evoked attitude. It is evoked since it is factual and there are no terms explicitly showing his attitude. Then the verbs *discuss*, *sort out*, and *achieve* are indicative of the journalist's positively inscribed attitude to assure the readers that the both sides are making efforts in order to improve their bilateral relations through solving the disputes over Iran's nuclear program. Finally, not using an adjective before the word *differences* in order to underestimate it as well as the word *energy* in *Iran's nuclear energy program* to emphasize its peacefulness are cases of evoked attitude.

**Extract-8** *"... of course we have some difficulties, some hurdles so that is why we have to work together and in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect," Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Li Baodong added (Press TV, 14 July 2014).*

Here, the choice of the quotation from the Chinese official as a member in the negotiating team seems to be indicative of a positively inscribed attitude regarding the negotiations, since it includes an explicitly positive stance on the part of the quoted source. To begin with, *of course* and *difficulties* reflect the journalist's

inscribed attitude since they explicitly refer to the state of affairs. Then, the word *hurdle* implies a difficulty which is surmountable. Also, the phrase *in the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect* shows a positively inscribed attitude. Finally, the source descriptor *Chinese Deputy Foreign Minister Li Baodong* invokes an evocative attitude.

**Extract-9** *The senior French official, Nadal, went on to say that the agreement with Iran “must reassure the international community on the finality of Iran’s nuclear program.” (Tehran Times, 28 June 2014).*

The source descriptor *The senior French official, Nadal*, which includes the explicitly attitudinal term *senior*, is an implication of the certainty with respect to the truth value of the presented proposition. In fact, quoting him, the journalist is trying to validate the ideology he is conveying to the readers. The verb phrase *must reassure ...* on the part of the quoted source involves explicitly negative value position regarding Iran’s commitment to the agreement. Finally, *international community* reveals his provoked attitude through which the journalist considers Iran as opposing the world.

**Extract-10** *The western countries, especially the US, have sought excessive demands from Iran in their talks in Vienna. Although they have not conceded any privileges to Iran, they are demanding Iran to take new measures in their favor. They have taken the Iran-world powers’ talks hostage to make Iran stop some of its nuclear activities (Fars News Agency, 17 May 2014).*

Here, the journalist is highly critical of the West in its negotiations with Iran. The phrase *especially the U.S.*, marking the U.S. out, advances a provoked attitudinal position towards the U.S. Also, the phrases *excessive demands from Iran*, *not conceded any privileges*, and *making Iran stop some of its nuclear programs* involve evaluative meanings which are explicitly attitudinal. As a matter of fact, they propose West’s unfair treatment of Iran, since Iran claims it has already followed the NPT’s regulations, especially under meticulous inspections of IAEA. Also, the last sentence *taken ... hostage* is highly negatively attitudinal towards the West which is a metaphor and a case of provoked attitude.

**Extract-11** *The International community has been negotiating with Iran over its illicit nuclear programme not for six months but for 11 years (Washington Post, 21 July 2014).*

The above extract can be interpreted as negatively disposed towards Iran and its nuclear activities. First of all, the countries negotiating with Iran (5+1) include

China, Russia, France, England, Germany, and the U.S which, although have an important role in different events in the world, cannot be called the *international community*. Therefore, using this phrase, the journalist has indirectly tried to produce the potential for Iran to be considered an unruly country not abiding by the international regulations. This negative attitude becomes clear for everyone through the adjective phrase *illicit nuclear program*. However, the journalist has neither introduced the countries he calls the international community, nor has he provided the reason why Iran's nuclear program is illicit. Second, referring to the duration of the negotiations, the journalist seems to be implying that the Iranian nuclear program is seriously against the international rules and Iran resistingly has not been cooperating with the IAEA. Finally, the journalist has not made the smallest mention of the steps Iran has taken so far to remove any suspicions as to its nuclear activities.

**Extract-12** *Many governments are convinced the program is military in nature, and accuse Tehran of violating the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty over an eighteen year period (Jerusalem Post, 15 July 2014).*

The above extract is fully negatively attitudinal and critical of Tehran. In fact, this is clear in the terminology used as well as the propositions presented. First, using quantification in *many governments are convinced ...*, implies that the attributed proposition is associated with a significantly large number of governments without referring to the exact number. The verb *are convinced* also implies that the governments have been presented with a lot of compelling evidence that the program is military. Second, by means of the inscriptively attitudinal verbs *accuse* and *violate*, a negative picture of Iran has been drawn. Finally, by referring to the time period at the end, it is implicitly claimed that the governments have been awaiting Iran to stop violating the international rules which Iran has refused.

**Extract-13** *The mooted accord is aimed at eradicating fears that Iran might develop nuclear weapons under the guise of its civilian program after a decade of rising tensions and threats of war (The Guardian, 15 July 2014).*

The above extract reveals its negative disposition towards Iran through the terminologies which advance a negative value position. The author tries to create an atmosphere in which he can align the readers' minds with himself, although this is performed using the modal verb *might* to offer an uncertain stance. The explicitly attitudinal verb phrases *eradicating fears* and *developing nuclear weapons under the guise of civilian program* try to drive the readers' minds to the idea that Iran is dangerous. Also, the fact of a decade of rising tension and threats of war is implicitly attributed to Iran without any reasonable justification.

**Extract-14** *A history of hiding sensitive nuclear work from UN inspectors has kept international suspicions about Iran's nuclear program high and heightened the risk of a new Middle East war should diplomacy fail to yield a long-term settlement (Washington Post, 15 July 2014).*

This extract includes a number of attitudinal invocations by which a value position critical of Iran is favored. *Hiding* something implies doing something illegal, especially when it is sensitive and for a history. *High international suspicions* implies that many countries in the world have evidence that Iran has deviated from the international rules. This proposition is made without reference to the IAEA inspection reports of the Iranian nuclear activities. Also, the responsibility of a potential war in the phrase *heightened the risk of a new Middle East war* is put on Iran's shoulder through implication. This is clear in *should diplomacy fail* since the Western countries claim to believe in diplomacy and human rights in their rhetoric.

**Extract-15** *The Arak research reactor remains a concern since byproducts could be used to create nuclear weapons (New York Times, 29 May 2014).*

In this extract, *the Arak research reactor* is a case of evocative attitude since it refers to the place where IAEA inspections have been conducted and implicitly tries to associate it with illicit nuclear activities. Then, the word *concern* and the phrase *nuclear weapons* are terminologies with inscribed attitude used to direct the readers' minds towards Iran's attempts to produce different types of nuclear bombs, arousing their hatred and suspicion about Iran and implicitly introducing Iran as a rebellious country and a threat to the world's peace. The reporting verb *remains* implicitly refers to the Western countries' failed attempts to solve the problem. Use of the modal verb *could* shows that the writer has no clear idea about the matter and is implicitly trying to divert the readers' minds to his favored direction.

**Extract-16** *The ability of the international community to constrain Iran's R&D cannot be guaranteed "with even 90 percent assurance." Iran nuclear deal 'loophole' may allow off-site reactor work. (Jerusalem Post, 14 June 2014).*

In this extract, Israel's serious concern about Iran is obvious and it warns the Western countries that they need to take more serious steps against Iran. The phrase *international community* implies that Iran is a marked out country being punished by the world due to its illegal activities. Also, the word *constrain* bears an implicit or provoked attitude towards Iran. It connotes a rebellious picture of Iran due to its nuclear activities. Apart from that, the word *loophole* which means a way of

escaping from the regulations, associates a lack of conformity to the rules on the Iranian side and is a case of provoked attitude. This association is made implicitly through the modal verb *may*.

**Extract-17** *Iranian scientists “cannot unlearn what they know” about nuclear science and weaponization. (Jerusalem Post, 14 June 2014).*

In this sentence, the word *unlearn* advances a special value position, since the Israeli officials would like the scientists to forget what they know. It would cause the reader a surprised feeling since learning is always a praised concept and desiring somebody to forget what he knows is unbelievable. Therefore, it is a case of provoked attitude since the reader should think the scientists’ knowledge must be a dangerous one to the peace and tranquility of the world and they have to be stopped from any more progression, especially that it is followed by the word *weaponisation* which is a case of inscribed attitude.

**Extract-18** *In a Washington Post tribune, he warned Iran not to “squander a historic opportunity to end Iran’s economic and diplomatic isolation and improve the lives of their people (The Guardian, 3 July 2014).*

The above extract shows the author’s bias and negative disposition towards Iran. The use of the reporting verb *warn* together with the selected quotation indicating disastrous living conditions in Iran, is pretentious of the author’s goodwill and puts the blame on the Iranian government for the failures in the negotiations. The provocatively attitudinal term *historic* implicitly refers to the opportunity provided to be the best ever for Iran. The terms *not squander* and *improve* explicitly advise Iran to accept all the terms and conditions offered in the negotiations. Also, the term *isolation* advances the speaker’s inscribed attitude, since he explicitly considers Iran to be cut from the world.

**Extract-19** *He (Kerry) “will see if progress can be made on the issues where significant gaps remain and assess Iran’s willingness to make a set of critical choices at the negotiating table” (Washington Post, 11 July 2014).*

This extract shows the journalist’s attitudinal positions through the choice of the quotation since it includes phrases such as *significant gaps* and *assesses Iran’s willingness*. The phrase *significant gaps* explicitly asserts a lack of success in the negotiations and the phrase *assess Iran’s willingness*, although inscriptive lexically, implies that it is Iran which is reluctant for the negotiators to come to a good agreement. Apart from that, the quotation includes the modal verbs *will* and *can*

implicitly casting doubt on the progress in the negotiations which, all in all, advance a negative value position towards the Iranian side. Therefore, the writer is trying to align the readers' minds with his negative stance about Iran.

**Extract-20** *Following the foreign ministers' inability to reach a breakthrough yesterday, Kerry is due to hold in-depth discussions with his Iranian counterpart today in an effort to advance the faltering negotiations, ahead of the July 20 deadline (New York Times, 14 July 2014).*

While presenting some negatively valued lexis in an explicit manner, i.e. *inability* and *faltering*, the above extract presents some positively inscribed attitude in favor of the US secretary of states, Kerry. *Holding in-depth discussions* and *advancing the faltering negotiations* by Kerry are the phrases which inscribe positive attitude towards the US official. Naturally, the employment of such lexis reveals the underlying ideological orientation of the American newspaper that, looking down to other countries, it is ultimately the super power of the US which will end the international predicaments. Hence, it can be presumed as a case of evoked attitude due to its factual nature.

**Extract-21** *More than 300 members of Congress recently signed a letter to Mr. Obama laying out steps Iran must take to win sanctions relief — including curbs on missile development and an end to support of terrorist groups. (New York Times, 18 July 2014).*

In the above extract, the journalist, referring to quantification *more than 300*, tries to present the material as associated with significantly large or diverse grouping which is a case of evoked attitude. Also, the phrase *the steps Iran must take to win sanction relief* reveals the journalist's provoked attitude since it implies that the steps are in favor of Iran. As a matter of fact, to observe objectivity, the verb *get rid of* could have been used instead of *win* by the journalist. Finally, Iran is accused of helping terroristic groups, although it is not mentioned which groups and why they are terroristic. Interestingly, this proposition is made together with Iran's *missile development* in order to equate it with terroristic actions. It seems that mentioning these issues during the time when the negotiations are the hottest news is intended to make the readers draw a dangerous picture of Iran in their minds. This matter could be an indication of the journalist's negatively provoked attitude against Iran.

**Extract-22** *World powers suspect Iran seeks atomic weapons, which Iran denies (The Guardian, 19 July 2014).*

In this extract, the inscriptively attitudinal verbs *suspect* and *deny* together with the inscriptively attitudinal phrase *atomic weapons* show a negatively loaded opinion-based orientation towards Iran. This can be a case of evocative attitude since, although factual, it implies that Iran is trying to endanger world peace. Finally, quoting *world powers* is an effort on the part of the journalist to produce an evaluation of high certainty or reliability. In this way, he has tried to organize his utterance in such a way that the alternative positions by the potential readers would not reject his viewpoint, but rather, his ideology would be transferred to them.

### Quantitative Analysis of Results

Considering individual lexical items as the unit of analysis, a word count was run and a quantitative estimate was given. Then the attitudinal expressions in the texts by the Iranian and Western media were identified and calculated. The results are displayed in table 6.

**Table 6.** Number of attitudinal term types in the media of two sides

	<u>Iranian</u>	<u>Western</u>
Inscribed expressions	109	91
Invoked expressions	45	50

As the above table shows both the Iranian and the Western media utilized nearly the same number of attitudinal expressions. To compare the data statistically, Chi square was applied to compare the frequencies. Accordingly, the attitudinal expressions used in the texts written by both sides were statistically similar. ( $P = .465$ ).

Obviously, both sides have used the inscribed type approximately twice as many. This could be due to the default version of language to include explicit terms much more often than implicit ones. Another reason might root from the purpose of intelligibility of the tenor and conveyance of feeling and judgment, hence ideology of the writer, to the public from different walks of life.

However, as the following figure shows there is a considerable difference between the attitudinal expressions used by the Iranian media and those written by the Western media as far as positivity and negativity is concerned. In other words, the Iranian media repeatedly emphasized the Iranian programs to be peaceful and based on the international regulations, while the Western media repeatedly expressed hesitation as to the peacefulness of the Iranian programs.



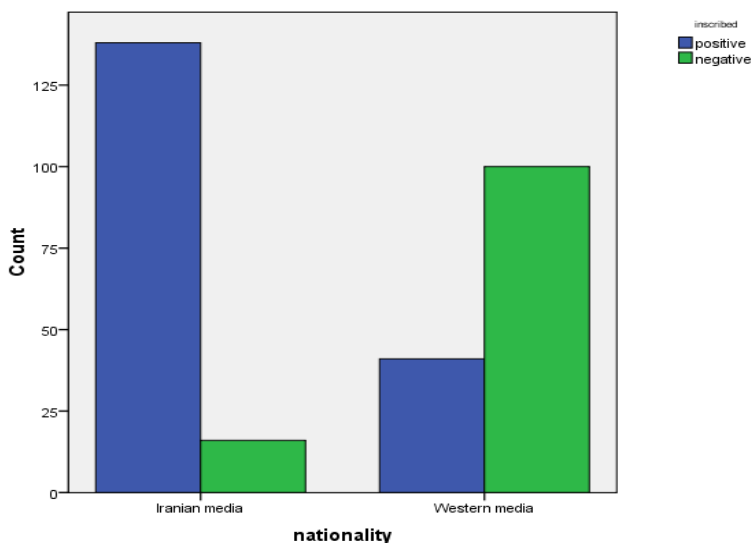


Figure 1. Positivity and negativity in Iranian and Western media

Having a look at table 7, the percentage of both sides in terms of their viewpoint on the (un)peacefulness of the Iranian nuclear program can be identified. For the Iranian media, we have 90% of the terms indicating peacefulness and nearly 10% indicating unpeacefulness. This proportion is reverse for the Western media since their use of terms indicating peacefulness is only 29% whereas their unpeacefulness terms reach 70%.

Table 7. Percentage of terms indicating (un) peacefulness

		inscribed		Total
		positive	negative	
Nationality	Count	139	15	154
	Iranian media Expected Count	94.0	60.0	154.0
	% within nationality	90.3%	9.7%	100.0%
Nationality	Count	41	100	141
	Western media Expected Count	86.0	55.0	141.0
	% within nationality	29.1%	70.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	180	115	295
	Expected Count	180.0	115.0	295.0

**Table 8.** Significance level of difference between Iranian and Western media based on (un)peacefulness

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.158E2 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	113.276	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	126.157	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	115.441	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases <sup>b</sup>	295				

The value of the Continuity Correction in the Chi-Square Tests (Table 8) is 113 with a significance level of .000 in the Asymp Column. The results show that the Iranian and Western media differ significantly in their use of lexicon on the (un)peacefulness of the Iranian nuclear program.

### **Discussion and conclusion**

Approaching attitude as either inscribed or invoked, this study tried to identify and interpret its cases in Iranian and Western media coverage of the Iranian nuclear issue. To do so, mostly the lexical choices used by the Iranian and Western media regarding the Iranian nuclear program, which show their attitudinal and, therefore, their political line of vision were examined.

Studying the Iranian and the Western media shows that both sides take into account the beneficial use of language in order to align the readers' minds. The analysis provides evidence that the choice of words and grammatical structures is done purposefully and is in line with the policy of the governments.

The employment of the attitudinal terminology in the analyzed extracts supports the view of Martin and White (2005) that writers try to bring about specific assessments leading their potential readers to size up the propositions. Obviously, in order to favor or disfavor an issue, journalists make use of attitudinal terminology in an either inscriptive or invocative way. Naturally, the journalist's ideology is revealed.

The results of this study provide the evidence that both sides have employed inscribed attitude approximately twice as many as invoked type which does not

support Thomson and White (2008, p. 166) mentioning that ‘Due to its implicitness and ambiguity, invoked attitude is utilized because of its ability to attract a wide range of readers who may have diverse ideological positions’.

One reason might be the default nature of lexicon to be explicit except when it is conditioned by the co-text subject to the beliefs, attitudes, and expectations the readers bring to the interpretation of the text. However, considering the extremely bitter relationship between Iran and West, especially the US, one can also conclude that the higher percentage of the negatively inscribed attitude by either side through their pungent remarks signifies their blatant opposition towards each other founded on their respective ideologies. In other words, Iran accuses the West of oppressing the weak nations on the pretext of providing them with democracy while the west accuses Iran of terrorism assistance on the pretext of helping oppressed nations.

Accordingly, the analysis of the data indicated that the categorization of ‘positive self- presentation and negative other-presentation’ (van Dijk, 1993) can be seen plentifully in the Iranian and Western media regarding the Iranian nuclear issue. This was manifested in the attitudinal linguistic devices such as reporting verbs, quotations, and lexical devices used in news reporting. Browsing the Iranian media shows that they chose quotations stipulating Iran’s right to enjoy peaceful nuclear energy based on NPT and also quotations from the western officials or media which acknowledge Iran’s right and the cooperation Iran had made in order to remove the misunderstandings. Naturally, they employed terminology with positive attitude and quotations which justified Iran’s nuclear activities in spite of the accusations made towards Iran. However, they never referred to the fact that every country keeps secret some strategic actions and does not show its true colors, the fact that makes the Western countries dubious about Iran’s nuclear activities.

The Western media, on the other hand, have taken a negatively hesitant tone against a nuclear Iran. This is sometimes even to the point that at the slightest hope of reaching an agreement in the negotiations between Iran and the 5+1 countries, they would put forward other issues such as the violation of human rights in Iran and helping the so-called terroristic organizations.

Employing quotations including negatively attitudinal terminology, the western media accused Iran of violating the international rules or even trying to produce nuclear weapons secretly in order to endanger the international tranquility. However, they never referred to the numerous inspections of the Iranian nuclear activities by the IAEA inspectors and the cooperations Iran claims to have made in this regard. They also never referred to the fact that Iran has the right like other countries to have nuclear power for peaceful purposes. This is in accordance with Perrin’s (2012) mentioning that stance determines the selection or omission of certain topics, topical aspects, and quotes.

All the media investigated in this study are affiliated to and underwritten by their governments, and naturally the positions they take constitute the ideological representation and the political stance of their governments which deviates them from journalistic objectivity (White, 2009). It is also in line with tenets of critical discourse analysis which regards language as a form of social practice, by which, the ideologies in a society are reflected and produced through various linguistic devices (Baker, 2008).

The findings of this research and other similar studies which focused on the discourse of newspapers (e.g. Hodge & Kress, 1979; van Dijk, 1998; Behnam & Mahmoudi, 2013) show that events represented in media differ from the way they take place in reality due to the journalistic practices they go through. They also confirm Fishman's (1980) view that 'news is not simply an incomplete description of the facts, but a specific (re)construction of reality according to the norms and values of some society' (as cited in van Dijk, 1983, p. 28).

### **Implication of the Study**

From a pedagogical point of view, insights provided by the present study can be useful to teachers and learners. The findings of this research are hoped to benefit teachers in their teaching reading (e.g. argumentative texts), writing (patterns of text development), media discourse for EFL learners, media discourse for the students of journalism, media discourse for the students of media management, and in their testing reading comprehension of media discourse. Other areas of benefit to teachers as far as the findings of the study are concerned include Teaching Translation Principles for EFL learners, Teaching Translation of Political Texts for EFL learners, and Teaching simultaneous interpretation courses. Teachers should be reminded that texts are carriers of attitudes and ideologies and, therefore, provide students with the required critical language awareness to understand the ideological orientation of texts so that they can resist the discourse of the dominant groups who try to give them a special worldview.

### **Limitations**

It is necessary to mention that this study just covered news reports not editorials or opinion letters as the latter types require a different approach of analysis because they are different in schemata and genre type.

Also, although the researchers have tried to follow impartiality, due to their cognitive background, they might subconsciously have expressed their undertone supporting Iran's nuclear program. After all, as pointed out by Holmes (1997) and Ruiying and Allison (2004), a degree of subjectivity is unavoidable.

The limitations discussed above indicate that considerably more research is required in order to provide a systematic account of the mechanisms by which writers endeavor to win the acquiescence of the masses for the benefit of the powers.

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