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**Predication and Intensification in Religious Speech Discourse: A
Case of Critical Discourse Analysis**

Sara Mansouri

English Department, Najafabad Branch, Islamic Azad University,
Najafabad, Iran
sara-mansouri@phu.ac.ir

Abstract

Motivated by critical discourse analysis, not only considering discourse as a lingua-franca specialized for a specific community under its particular social meanings and values but also assuming it as an ideological and historical performer, this paper aimed to investigate critically the layers and dimensions of discourse in a neglected area, religious speech. That is, this study was conducted to analyze extra-linguistic social variables, socio-political, intertextual and historical context of a religious speech. To gain this purpose, the religious speech of an influential native Persian lecturer is critically examined based on Wodak's Discourse-Historical Approach, which clearly represents the criteria of content establishment, discourse strategies and linguistic means examination. Meticulous qualitative scrutiny revealed that the religious speaker successfully employs historical background explanation, text linking to the wider social and political discourse and topic overlaps to persuade hearers. It also indicated that the religious speaker utilizes informal but polite language with lots of colloquial words, social actors, characterization of objects, phenomena, event, processes and actions both positively and negatively to discuss the main topic. This study also obviously exemplifies that the most frequent types of topos, tools of argumentation discourse strategy employed by the religious speakers, are those of advantage, justice, responsibility, reality, law/ right, and burden. The last but not the least, this research indicated that the most pervasive and dominant device of argumentation in this genre is the topo of history which is used in overlap with political topics. The analysis of the speech for intensification elements, which helps the orator to establish its authority, indicated that there are no indicators of diminutives, hesitation or vague elements in the investigated speech.

Keywords: Critical Discourse Analysis, Predication, Religious Speech, Intensification, Discourse-Historical Approach