Media Stylistics Linguistic Representation, Realization, and Perception

Hussein Huwail Ghayadh*

University of Thi-Qar/Faculty of Basic Education

Article Info	Abstract
	Communication can be accomplished through the processes of encoding (developing and sending messages) and decoding (turning messages into thoughts). Communication generally manifests itself within the perspective of some social situation which is responsible for setting the context for the conveyed interlocutors' intentions. This paper looks at how the messages are encoded by the interviewee, how his linguistic choices are stylistically constructed, and how his arguments are logically arranged. Not only the interviewee's task, but this paper also detects how the audience perceives the intentions, how they match the linguistic choices with their referents (semantic or pragmatic referents). It also takes into account the interviewer's role particularly in using certain loaded questions as strategic maneuvering to harmonize and accommodate aiming for effectiveness. It is hypothesized that media discourse can be analyzed according to the criteria of stylistic approaches. The data of analysis is an extract from a political interview. The findings indicate that the application of stylistic approaches of analysis reveals to what extent that stylistic analysis is effective in revealing the hidden meanings of linguistic structures (choices).

1.Introduction

Media, as communication channels that connect people regardless of their geographical locations, is a mechanism or a means of expression at the expense of which every single sense (message) is transferred taking advantage of a language in an effective manner. Along with this, media discourse, whether spoken or written and as it is a multidisciplinary field (mixes many sectors of study or academic concerns), applies to interactions in which the discourse is aimed, directed, and sent to absent and unidentified viewers to whom the interview is held for their benefit. Because it is a multidisciplinary field, it is possible to be studied through different linguistic approaches such as stylistic and discoursal ones. In discourse media, the implications of different perspectives such as racial, ideological, moral, intellectual, etc. are clear bearing in mind that media discourse plays a vital role in shaping individuals' realities, realities which are embodied in broadcast (television) and printed media (newspaper). The idea as such concerned with the importance of media discourse and to what extent it plays a crucial role in people's life identified and

E-mail : huwailhussein@utq.edu.iq : الناشر الرئيسي*

confirmed by Macarro (2002: 13) when he argued, because of the individuals' exposure to the media, to what extent that people's viewpoints are shaped, reinforced, and altered.

Media discourse became an international interest, so it was developed within sociolinguistics and conversation analysis, particularly critical linguistics, to study social and cultural interaction (see Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974; Heritage, 1985; Titscher, Wodak, Meyer, & Vetter, 2000). TV interviews are part of media discourse, particularly discourse of interaction (spoken media discourse), where, in general, two persons, interviewer and an interviewee, are interacting and unknown and unidentified viewers are listening, providing certain information taking into account that the provided information is communicated to the public directly or later. Buckland (1991, p. 351) categorized "information", whether it is encoded into a sequence of linguistic marks or conveyed through signals, into three categories based on its use: (1) information as "process" includes the change of a person's knowledge, i.e. becoming informed; (2) information as "knowledge" encompasses connecting the information with the knowledge it informs keeping in mind that information and knowledge are strongly interrelated, the transferred information is accepted and realized as knowledge; (3) and information as a "thing" involves informative tangible data, texts, documents, etc. The productive and beneficial interview enhances the realized and sensed communication intentions of the people involved, in this case, interviews, as they are a valuable process to comprehend the world of others, achieve their objectives.

The political interview, as it is a sequence of question-answer techniques, can be characterized as sub-genres of the widely extended category of broadcast interviews. It is one component of institutional contexts, or it is possible to describe it as a kind of formal interview marked by important political persons activated in politics. The political interview is an independent genre. Based on the definition of genre stated by Swales (1990, p. 113), the political interview can be considered as an identifiable communicative event that highlights a variety of communicative functions realized and reciprocally perceived by professional or even nonprofessional public in which it commonly takes place. Commonly political interviews are highly designed, integrated, and institutionalized with restrictions. It is highly conventionalized whether socially conventionalized or follow certain media conventions such as the responsibility of the interviewee to be clear and speaks to the point, the role of the interviewer is starting and ending, introducing the interviewee, explaining the political matters that intend to discuss, and more importantly, the interviewer should be open-minded and unbiased and able to bring to mind a pleasant and sociable environment. In this regard, different studies focused on political interviews, to name but a few, Sandra Harris (1991) paid more attention to the politician's evasiveness in political interviews and how politicians are more evasive and different in their evasiveness from non-politicians. Rama-Martínez (2003) found that political interviews are categorized as motivated (focused) information, while chat and talk shows are alternating between motivating information and motivated entertainment.

2. Media and Stylistics

The linguistic study of media emerged early in the twentieth century, particularly in the 1920s, after the invention of the radio and then television. The reason behind the emergence of media study because the media affects different aspects of human life. Many studies focused on various media perspectives, to name but a few, Chase (1938) clarified the meaning of words (semantic implications) and their impact on communication. In (1957), Osgood and et al. published a book, The

Measurement of Meaning, part of whch is about the relationship between semantics and communication. In recent years, Biber's stylistic corpus-based study (2003), focused on the linguistic structure of newspapers; O'Keeffe's book (2006), Investigating Media Discourse, concentrated on spoken interaction such as political interviews, chat shows, etc.; Durant's book (2010), Meaning in the Media: Discourse, Controversy, and Debate, studied the communicative behavior such as false advertising, deception, Offensiveness, and other communicative actions.

To begin with, it is necessary to realize to what extent there is an actual relationship between stylistics and media. From a media perspective, the target is the audience. Most of the time audience is considered as part of the discourse mechanism whom the media is planning to reach a considerable time, the audience were recognized as passive consumers. A passive audience is highly possible to receive the knowledge encoded in a media product with no objection and are therefore more probably and conceivably to be directly influenced and dominated by the encoded knowledge. Morley (1993, p. 13) argued an opposite view stating that people are not passive consumers, it was detected that this claim of consumers' passiveness was not completely correct for the reason that, people are active in "all kinds of ways-making critical/oppositional readings of dominant cultural forms, perceiving ideological messages selectively/subversively, and so on. So it seems we needn't worry, the passively consuming audience is a thing of the past." What makes Morley's viewpoint is more acceptable the fact that the broadcast message or the encoded message is a combination of two dimensions aural and visual, thus it is a complex one. Linguistic choices that carry the encoded message are open with wider associative meanings (not fixed), i.e. rules of message structure are not completely decisive,

meaning is fluid, and this requires too much efforts on the part of the audience to interpret and realize the hidden meanings through the analysis of meaning (semantics) and the analysis of use (pragmatics). Morley's attitude towards the active role of the audience was not the first. Before that, several studies have investigated the role of the audience (e.g. Newcomb, 1984; Ang, 1990; Liebes & Katz, 1989; Budd et al, 1990). In this context, Budd et al. (1990), pointed out that "we don't need to worry about people watching several hours of TV a day, consuming its images, ads, and values. People are already critical, active viewers and listeners, not cultural dopes manipulated by the media" (p. 170), in agreement with this, Ang (1990, p. 247) confirmed the idea of active and powerful recipients in using and perceiving media. The audience looks for ideological coded messages taking into consideration Verons' attitude (1971, p. 61) that ideology can be offered in different coded messages as a particular level of signification. Matching the signs with things and with their referents (denotation and beyond denotation), which is the task of recipients following the deep sequence of meaning, is a mental or intellectual grasp to realize and understand the encoded message.

Stylistics, as it is a conceptual branch of knowledge, may have a goal to construct theories and frameworks adequate and appropriate for explaining certain choices created by people in their practice of the language. In line with this, Nørgaard et al. (2010, p. 1) highlighted that stylistics is the study of the methods and means in which meaning is shaped and established due to language considering the role of analysts (stylisticians) to use linguistic frames, models, or theories as to their analytical keys and principles. From semantic perspectives (semantic perspective is one level of stylistics), the relationship between signs (signifiers), things, and their referents is not fixed, it is changeable according to their

appropriate positions held by their users. In this respect, Macdonell (1986) (cited in Verdonk and Weber, 1995, p. 2) proposed a related viewpoint that realizing a meaning logically follow a dialogic process, i.e. as social practice in which the signs used and their meanings cannot be separated from their appropriate frame of reference (contexts). From a stylistic viewpoint, stylistics takes the language as ground and motive of study, it creates a sense of appropriateness. Different communicative events are governed by different styles taking into account that style is the domain of stylistics. What's more in the field of stylistics, the style under stylistic investigation is varied, sometimes they are verbal styles, others are nonverbal, nonverbal one has been classified by Zhan (2012, p. 1622), as environmental language, paralanguage, object language, and body language, or the style is a mixture of verbal and nonverbal language takes place in the same communicative style. In media, like other genres, the style has a relation with variables taking into account variability of style depends on the needed function, i.e. variability is varied according to different medial styles.

A step further concerning the relationship between media and stylistics, Lambrou and Durant (2014, p. 503) argued that "linguistic analysis of media discourse is often described as 'media stylistics'." Media linguistic analysis can be realized as a process, this process which is not assigned to a particular type of genre, can be seen as Trager and Smith (1951, p. 54) portrayed it, it consists of "the recognition of the recurrences and distributions of similar patterns and sequences". To put it concisely, each utterance is a linguistic choice (stylistic choice) or it has a set of linguistic choices that works as a stimulus for activation of the recipient's repertoire (Schema Theory) to negotiate with the text to understand what the message is. In media, like others fields, word meaning is not fixed, it is changeable. Word

meaning is variable for social, cultural, and even industrial developments keeping in mind the complexity of word meaning is varied from one word to another, for example, the complex and varied meaning of the word media is not the same degree of the word door. With this variability, new implications to each word are added, and here comes the role of the language user is to use one of these implications suitable for one situation or context. In this respect, the role of stylistician comes to specify a particular linguistic choice (semantic viewpoint) and a particular implication (pragmatic viewpoint).

3. Data Analysis

A more reasoned perspective is that stylistics has participated in different ways to text analysis. The following extract is a political interview in the BBC HardTalk programme, the interviewer is Stephen Sackur. This programme covers sensitive political topics. The interviewee is Teodoro Obiang, the president of Equatorial Guinea. The extract under stylistic analysis is just one question and one answer:

Stephen Sackur (Interviewer): "The French government has seized the Paris mansion, the artworks, the cause, and is seeking legal action against your son. Are you prepared to see your son go to Paris and defend himself and his finances in a court of law?"

Teodoro Obiang (Interviewee): "The problem is that the process in Paris is a farce, a political set-up. We have mutual investment protection agreement with them and French companies have invested in Equatorial Guinea. If a citizen from Equatorial Guinea, such as my son, has invested in Paris, France does not have the right to confiscate his wealth, as that is a violation of the signed agreement. They are accusing him of having illegally acquired these but they have not sent a commission to this country to inquire into the person they are accusing. For this

reason, I say this is a political set-up" (BBC HARDtalk, 2015).

It will be realized that the close reading and re-reading of the interview gives rise to several considerations of how certain linguistic choices (stylistic choices) functioned and valued in the text in respect of their normal uses in daily speech, i.e. linguistic choices as to their functions. The process of analysis can be rated as looking at the extract in considerable detail, detecting what the linguistic fragments are, and saying what purpose they accomplish in the context of the interview. We start analysing and commenting on grammatical structures and vocabulary choices, i.e. Very basic and opening analysis of this extract would take the following stylistic hallmarks.

In a general sense, without regard for their pragmatic implications, the direct form of questions is either a closed-ended or open-ended one. Each one of these two types requires certain linguistic conventions to answer. Here the interviewer starts his interview with a question preceded by an introduction The French government has seized . . . . Are you prepared to see . . . Despite its being a closed-ended question that opens with the auxiliary verb 'Are", but according to pragmatic criteria and dimensions, it is illogical to deal with it as Yes/ No questions. Such questions can be categorized as loaded ones, questions require more explanation to show a particular attitude towards a certain issue, i.e. it requires an answer that violates the norms of Yes/ No questions (deviant answer).

Connected to this, from a cognitive representation viewpoint, the interviewee's response carries positive cognitive elements (the topic is liked and should be defended) rather than negative ones (the topic is disliked). Along with the idea of positive cognitive elements, examining the interviewee's response, it is possible to discover that between linguistic choices there may exist more than one variety of perceived cognitive

relations, associative cognitive relations rather than dissociative ones. Examples of positive and associative cognitive relations are: "We have mutual investment protection agreement . . . French companies have invested in Equatorial Guinea . . . France does not have the right to confiscate his wealth, as that is a violation of the signed agreement." The mentioned examples as signs (linguistic or stylistic choices) have common meanings that emerged from their semantic meanings or their pragmatic use (appropriateness). These signs, with their common meanings, raise a sense in the audience's realization that the audience agrees such stylistic choices participate in enhancing in interviewee-audience mutual understanding, i.e. there is a valid and reliable judgment of their communicative message. This will bring to mind certain stimulations which make the audience's evaluation of the above linguistic signs such as mutual, investment, protection, agreement, companies, invested, does not confiscate, signed agreement positive.

Also what has been said about cognitive realization, the use of pronouns is governed by the perceived cognitive relations (associative cognitive relations) such as we - Equatorial Guinea people; them – French government; my, his, him – son. Regression back to the antecedent, there is no vagueness over the selection of referent and there is constantly adequate and satisfactory information preceding the pronoun. In conformity with the contextual factors, here one interpretation comes to mind emerged from one expression that offers its sense to a proform (pronoun), this proform is well-matched with the grammatical indications of the anaphoric expression, i.e. the audience's interpretation is far from ambiguity.

What is more, cognitively, some pronouns may not denote basically to identified nouns, but a whole phrase, and in more complex linguistic constructions, to an entire sentence in which a certain sign is embedded. Such a substituted sign

has an evaluative meaning which fluctuates extremely with the interviewee or audience (person producing or receiving), for example, "The French government has seized the Paris mansion, the artworks, the cause, and his seeking legal action against your son." 'This' in, For this reason, I say this is a political set-up, is the pronoun used by the interviewee to substitute the entire interviewer's sentence (concluded argument).

A further step, particularly, one more argumentative stylistic move, the interviewee did his best to make the whole process of argumentation (interviewee's answer) successful and valid particularly when he mentioned believable premises to support his conclusion keeping in mind those premises are not vague. Grammatical substitution based on linguistic choices modification, such as the use of 'this', creates interest and diversity to ideas (rhetorical dimension) and at the same time raises in mind how the interviewee attained the opposite of the interviewer's argument accusation (finance accusation), i.e. he provided good premises for the interviewer and audience to accept his conclusion. A conclusion as such raises a question based on the idea that, argumentatively, to what extent the interviewee's arguments are more productive, valuable, and convincing. Here it is possible to get the benefit of Toulmin's model of analysis.

Toulmin's Model (1958), consists of more than one component: claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier. All of them provide new perspectives of analyzing different genres, one of them is interviews. Linguistic choices awareness, as a stylistic process, whether it belongs to the interviewee or the audience, plays a vital role in conveying persuasive messages. Based on Ketcham's (1917, p. 3) or O'Neill et al. (1917, p. 1) viewpoints, "argumentation is the art of persuading", or "argumentation is the art of influencing others", the process of argumentation leads them (audience) to change their opinions and

to take a particular action, i.e. it affects audience's behaviour to perform certain acts and on their mental states (beliefs) to accept opposite ideas. The selected extract (interviewee's answer) as arguments can be realized, based on Toulmin's framework, as follows:

"The problem is that the process in Paris is a farce, a political set-up [**Claim**]. We have mutual investment protection agreement with them and French companies have invested in Equatorial Guinea [**Ground**]. If a citizen from Equatorial Guinea, such as my son, has invested in Paris, France does not have the right to confiscate his wealth, as that is a violation of the signed agreement [**Warrant**]. They are accusing him of having illegally acquired [**Rebuttal**], these but they have not sent a commission to this country to inquire into the person they are accusing [**Backing**]. For this reason, I say this is a political set-up" [The repeated idea is used instead of **Qualifier**].

More clarification to the interviewee's arguments distribution, investigating the dialectical dimensions in the interviewee's answering the question makes it possible to realize that each argument or component is working whether in isolation or concurrence with the other ones. his Claim, the primary argument supported later by different arguments, is a statement in which he believes. Before this claim, there was a reason (an advanced question) proposed by the interviewer that paved the way to make the interviewee establishes his claim. He starts his argument with a claim, 'the process in Paris is a farce, a political set-up', addressing his interviewer and the audience to accept it as a true (assertion). He seeks to establish his claim over the progression of the argument. This claim, as it is a challenge, requires support bearing in mind that the statement of opinion (claim) conveys little account of argumentative power by itself, it is missing the confirmation on which to construct and establish it

so the interviewer or the audience can start to agree to take it. This is where Ground, as a second step, comes to be important.

The second step or the second component is the data where the interviewee uses basic ground, evidence, or facts on which his claim is based. The data or relevant facts, "mutual investment protection agreement . . . French companies have invested in . . .", is the beginning of actual persuasion. It includes evidence of knowledge and the essential premises on which the additional parts of the argument are constructed. The interviewee's ground is not challenged like his claim, for the reason that if it is challenged, he will need deeper information and further arguments to prove, and this will be problematic. Facts or factual data of mutual investment works as a powerful element of persuasion taking into account that the interviewer or audience accepts it without question or calling for more explanation. This is where a Warrant, as a third step, comes into its own.

The third part is the warrant with regard that it merges the ground to the claim. To make the interviewer and the audience understand his ground, the interviewee explains and gives more information about investment in France. He stated his warrant explicitly (sometimes it can be stated unspoken) for the reason that explicitness makes his warrant does not need more proving and also makes it clear with the view of the fact that he makes assumptions about what the interviewer or the audience already believe (ground), i.e. he legitimizes the claim by viewing the grounds to be appropriate and relevant.

The fourth part is the Rebuttal. He presents the opposing views 'having illegally acquired' as a counter-argument or counter-consideration. Rebuttal, despite its being used as limitations to certain arguments in certain communicative situations, is also used here to extend the argumentative process since saying a rebuttal

means others cannot argue that his words are unnecessary or not effective, i.e. to prevent them doing or saying what they had planned or to prevent their action being effective. Rhetorically speaking, opposing views or critical reactions to the interviewee's claim are relevant, accepted, and adequate to the whole argumentation and they give his argumentation its sense bringing to mind that argumentation is a process while the argument is a product, Figure **1**:
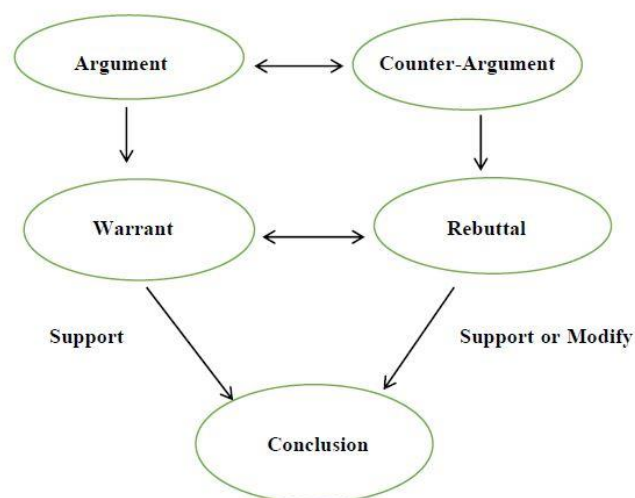

Figure 1. Rebuttal Role

The fifth step is Backing. It gives, as an explicit argument, further support particularly when the warrant is challenged. It is a given argument or sub-argument proposed by the interviewee to establish the power of the warrant, to test its validity, to establish the justificatory ground for it, and to refine the warrant to make it more applicable and more acceptable to the audience. The backing for this warrant is a violation of the signed agreement as a 'Warrant' supported by 'Backing' "they have not sent a commission to this country to inquire into the person they are accusing", bearing in mind the backing, in this case, is documentary support.

The sixth step is Qualifier. The qualifier enhances a strong argument to the claim since it helps the audience understand that the interviewee does not restrict his claim using certain linguistic

choices (qualifiers), but he uses a repeated idea I say this is a political set-up instead of qualifiers. Here repetition is more powerful than using specific qualifiers such as probably, many, never, possibly, certainly, and so on. From the point of view of arguments relations, in his argument presentation, the interviewee uses here repetition as a positive reference and as a substitution to the qualifier certainly (indirect qualifier). This positive reference supports the claim explicitly, a direct reference to the degree of force that the interviewee's claim establishes. The force of repetition operates as a persuasive element on the part of the audience and at the same time, it assimilates the rebutting force (Rebuttal) as a counter-argument. This force works as a degree of certainty on which the conclusion is based.

From these procedures of argumentative analysis, one may conclude that Toulmin's model offers us a framework for making a well-constructed claim that is maintained and reinforced with rational evidence and sound reasoning. Dialectically, argumentative analysis of selected one question and answer is sufficiently supported, i.e. it shows to what extent a logical sequence of arguments participates in the interviewee's conclusion through mapping established reasons. Figure **2** illustrates this:
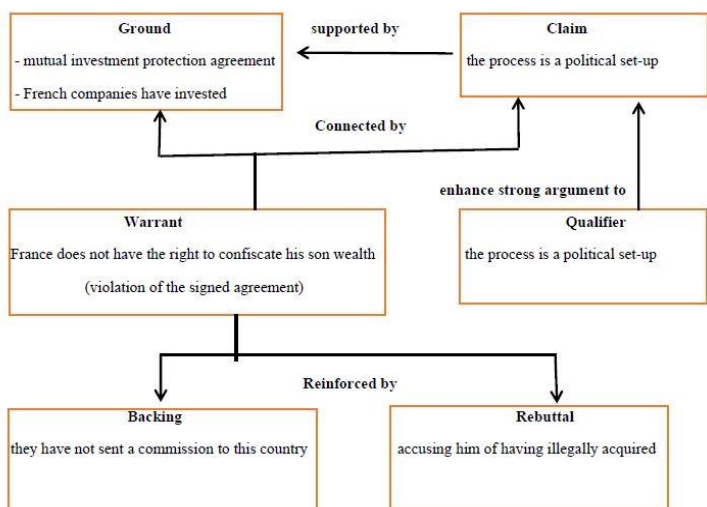
Figure 2. Interviewee's Arguments based on Toulmin's Six Argumentative Components

4. Conclusion

Media stylistic analysis detects how effectively and sufficiently the content of utterances and intentions (messages) of the interlocutors (interviewer and interviewee) transferred, and how, cognitively, the linguistic choices (stylistic choice process) help in figuring out the content. From a media point of view, the target is the audience. Most commonly, the audience is considered as part of the discourse mechanism that the media is planning to address. The target to whom the discourse s addressed, can be realized as passive addressees, passive receivers who receive the product of the media encoded knowledge transferred with no objection and this will affect the audience to be directly influenced and controlled by the encoded information. The audience's role is to match the linguistic choices as signs with their semantic or pragmatic referents by following the deep sequence of meaning as a mental or intellectual process to realize and understand the encoded message. In this interview, as a sample (extract) or as a sub-genre of media discourse, the interviewee accomplishes the audience's needs following certain linguistic (stylistic) choices through arranging logical arguments to make his responses more effective and persuasive.

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