

Investigating the Identity of Iran and Iraq War's Photographers from Discourse Analysis Perspective in the Period before the Liberation of Khorramshahr

Abolfazl Ghasemi^{1*}, Rozita Sepehrnia², Farhad Solaimani³

¹ Master Student, Islamic Azad University, Rudehen Branch, Rudehen, Resident of Gorgan, Iran.

² Ph.D. of Sociology, Faculty member of the Islamic Azad University of Rudehen, Social Sciences Department, Rudehen, Tehran, Iran.

³ Ph.D. of Photography, Faculty Member of the Art University, Art and Photography Department, Tehran, Iran.

*Corresponding Author

Abstract: *The present study aims at construction of the identity of Iran and Iraq war's photographers after the Islamic Revolution in 1978 based on discourse analysis in respect to the discourse governing the beginning of the war and affectability of the photographers from the dominant discourse. The governing discourse and war photography have been taken into account as a social issue forming the discourse. In order to scientifically investigate the subject, the effect of the governing discourse was researched amongst the numerous works by the photographers during the time period from 1980 to 1982 (before the liberation of Khorramshahr) and a proper analysis was presented. As the study's theoretical framework, the sociological notions by Michel Foucault, Norman Fairclough and Gilles Deleuze on discourse and power were selected; moreover, the ideas and articles on war and articles on photography were also taken into consideration. As for the validity of the results, as well, discussions have been put forth considering the study's qualitative nature. In this regard, five photographers who had been present during eight years of war were selected and 14 photographic works by each of them were chosen as the sample size. The study participants were subjected to deep interviews. Based on what was analyzed in the interviews and photographs, the discourse governing the region was found also prevalent in the other discourses and, despite the fact that some of the photographs have not been offered and recorded, the identity of the photographers was constructed and the photographs were subsequently found having been recorded based on the ideological and patriotic discourse governing the region to prevent the weakening of the spirits of the forces behind the frontlines. In line with the scientific study of such social issues, there are solutions presented in the current research paper for further research.*

Keywords: *Discourse Analysis, System's Discourse, Ideological Discourse, War, Photography*

INTRODUCTION

Discourse is not only related to what can be said or thought but it is also connected with the idea that which person, at what time and with what imperativeness can talk. Discourse embodies the social meaning and communications. Foucault points out that his reliance on discourse in a manner independent from the language and thought does not mean that nothing could be done against its domination. Discourses are actions that systematically shape subjects that can per se speak ... Discourses do not speak about subjects

and do not determine their identities rather they construct the subjects and conceal their intervention in such a process of constructiveness.

The pictorial language is also no exception to this and the visual concepts carry pictorial discourse that, as stated by some, constructs subjects that are transferable to the addressees. In other words, emotions find their way from inside a 2D picture into the perceptions of the observers.

The images of the war between Iran and Iraq are replete with concepts. And, at that time, Iranians and non-Iranians could perceive the incidents via looking at them and there were also many of the Iranian people who sympathized with the Iranian soldiers upon watching the images and perceiving their concepts. The current research paper tries recording and deciphering the keys of the concepts through the language of the photos taken by the photographers attending the war at that time in different places.

Resultantly, discourse analysis is like the exploration and survey of a map that can guide us in stepping on and finishing the intended future path. It is necessary to investigate the idea as to how many of the slogans and to what extent have been actualized? But, the main point in learning about this issue is that what necessity has caused the formation of the existing slogans and what factors have caused their non-actualization? Attainment of these points necessitates performing of discourse analysis not only for the aforementioned two periods but also for the entire span of time.

It is true that many years have elapsed since the end of war but the Iranian photographers' approach in depiction of the war should be applied as a set of instructions for the today's artists who want to prove active presence in the area of documentary photography. The grounds should be set in the field of war photography so that the entire layers of art of war can be revealed. We should not appear remorseful before the future generations who want to be aware of the yesterday. There are many things that can be done in the area of research on art of war and the findings can be transferred to the future generations.

The present study aims at the two abovementioned periods of time. Furthermore, the current study can clarify various aspects of the war between Iran and Iraq; it can be also figured out that what accomplishments have been made by each of these discourses in this regard? Or, the accomplishments of the photographic works enable the insight over the dark and light angles of the war from the perspective of discourse analysis.

Study Theoretical Foundation:

Discourse:

Discourse is in search of regulations determining which predicates have been accepted in a given historical period as meaningful and truthful ones (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2010, p.35). Discourse looks for the idea as to which predicates drive the others into the margins and form relationships and collections about those predicates. "In other words, such an analysis seeks describing of the scattering system instead of reprocessing of the method of proof continuum (the way it is often working in the history of science and philosophy) as well as in lieu of creating diagrams and tables for the differences (as done by the linguists). When the scattering system of such a type is proved based on a certain number of predicates and the organization (as the order and adjacency or the positions and the channels of actions and change) between the different subjects and forms is expressed and the intellectual imaginations and options are discerned, it can be commonly stated that a discourse configuration has been met" (Foucault, 2010, p.64).

The expression "discourse analysis" was first used in 1952 in an article by the famous English linguist, Zellig Harris, who has expressed in this formalist theoretical article that discourse analysis is solely a formalist (and structural) approach to sentence and text. After Harris, many of the linguists realized discourse analysis as the opposite point to the text analysis.

Discourse is a new technique and method in the study of the texts, media and cultures. In this method, the researcher seeks exhibiting the relationship between the author, text and reader and making it clear that which social, cultural, political and other factors and grounds exert effects on discourse production. In this method, the analyst goes beyond the context (form and structure) and enters the text's situational texture

(ideological conditions and dimensions) and begins analysis. In fact, discourse analysis tries being an indicator of the hidden meanings in the author's mind.

But, according to the previously mentioned presumptions, the most important goals of discourse are:

- 1) Showing the relationship between the writer, the text and the reader (observer);
- 2) Illuminating the deep and complex structure of text production, i.e. the discourse production course. Demonstration of the effect of the text's context (language units, the related immediate environment and the entire lingual system) and the situational context (social, cultural, political, historical and cognitive factors) on the discourse
- 3) Displaying the special situations and grounds producing the discourse (discourse generation grounds)
- 4) Depiction of the meaning's instability: meaning is always changing; it is never complete and it is also never perceived completely
- 5) Revealing the relationship between text and ideology: from the very beginning of its emergence, discourse analysis has always been intending to show that no texts or speeches or writings are impartial rather they are dependent on certain situations. This might take place completely unconsciously and unintentionally.
- 6) The primary goal of discourse analysis is providing a novel technique and method for the study of the texts, media, cultures, sciences, politics, society and so forth. The intellectual basics of this method are the very postmodern presumptions.

Discourse Analysis:

"Discourse analysis is not a unitary approach but a set of interdisciplinary approaches (Jorgensen and Phillips, 2010, p.18)". In a book titled "critical discourse analysis", Yule and Brown define discourse analysis in the following words: "discourse analysis is breaking the language down into its constituents in application in which case it cannot be limited to the description of the language forms independent from the goals and functions for the dealing with which the aforesaid forms have come about in the human affairs" (Fairclough, 2000, p. 9).

It is also stated by Schiffrin and Stubbs that "discourse analysis tries studying the trans-sentence system and arrangements of the language elements so as to investigate the lingual units like conversational exchanges or written texts (Fairclough, 2000, p. 9).

In the ideas by Michel Foucault (who can be called the founder of discourse analysis), the emphasis is on the idea as to whether there is an interaction between text and context or not? It is also examined if there is an interactive and dialectic relationship between "discourse, power, cognizance and truth" or not? The most important accomplishment by Foucault is known as the analysis of the power-cognizance relationships. "Amongst the discourses posited by the various theoreticians, the one by Schiffrin speaks of two patterns, i.e. constructivism and functionalism (role-orientation), in discourse analysis. He believes that each of these perspectives make different assumptions available regarding the nature of language and the goals of linguistics" (Soltani, 2008, p.28).

Various Perspectives Regarding Discourse Analysis:

1. Norman Fairclough's Approach:

In Fairclough's ideas, language is considered as a social action. In fact, Fairclough realizes language "as a social action" featuring a different "function". That is because language, as a social action, is interlaced with the other social actions. But, the functional perspective leaves language as a separate and different domain. It is always seeking to show that "language is in itself always a social action" and "governed by the more expanded ideological and social conditions of the society".

Fairclough's applied objective in the critical study of language is assisting the enhancement of consciousness about the profitable relationships through concentration on language". It is noteworthy

that although Fairclough's application of such concepts as discourse, power and ideology is very much aligned with that of the other critical discourse analysts, it has certain specific differences.

In Fairclough's mind, "discourse has been applied in three forms" (Soltani, 2008, p.61).

- 1) The most abstract form of discourse is social deed; for example, when it is stated that discourse is both constructive and constructed
- 2) Discourse refers to a sort of language applied in a specific area such as political or scientific discourse
- 3) Discourse as a verbal method that grants meanings to the experiences from certain angles such as feministic discourse, Marxist discourse and so forth

Fairclough finds "ideology" as semantic constructs that play roles in the production, reproduction and change of the unequal power relations. Resultantly, meaning is of a great importance in the understanding of ideology because meaning is at the service of power. This way, ideology is interlaced through meaning with discourse and language as instruments of meaning production; discourses become ideological and the ideological discourses take part in the preservation and change of the unequal power relations (Soltani, 2008, p.62).

2. Gilles Deleuze's Attitudes:

The ideas by Deleuze can be considered as incorporating the following aspects:

Image-Motion

Image-perception by Deleuze is an image-motion that is made related to the first aspect of pause; the selective recording of the incoming moves; a framing by means of which some of the elements are discarded and some others are seen. In general, image-perception is minus the properties filtered through perception. But, Deleuze reminds that it comes to the discussion about the inseparability of the perception and action, a second type of the image-motion's possibility is also reminded. He figured out that our perception of the outside world is delicately influenced by the future that has been delineated (Deleuze, 2011, p.65).

In a description of image-effect, Deleuze uses two analyses: one about the qualities in creative change and the other about the actions and reactions in matter and memory. In the creative change, he shows how the essential topics of language, adjective, verb and noun, appear in their natural forms when speaking about the cosmic whole-moving currents.

Perception:

Perception is an instrument by way of which live images receive motions; it is always interwoven with action because any perception is a sensory knowledge worker, i.e. an instrument for transferring the external movements through emotions to the next motive action. Our nervous system does not shape the representations but receives the excitements and gives options for the future actions and perception is solely a means of advancing such an action.

Motion Theory:

The most important hypothesis proposed by Deleuze regarding motion in creative change can be expressed in a primitive formula as described in the following words: "instant is an immobile cross-section of duration and the motion is also a mobile cross-section of duration, i.e. it is a part of the whole" (Deleuze, 2011, p.18). Motion is usually realized as "a transitional motion in place" (Deleuze, 2011, p.18), i.e. change in the status of the things in place.

Image-Time:

The image-time approach confirms that "like sound in music and color in painting, time is a basis for the principles of depiction" (Deleuze, 2011, p.60). In fact, if time is envisioned as the fundamental element of image, it is not weird to see that thought has been inspiring in Deleuze's discoveries about image. This is based on the theory of consciousness and deploys time and place against one another and it is also based on cosmology that arranges life and matter against one another.

3. Pierre Bourdieu's Attitudes:

Media and Image:

It is difficult to speak of media and image from the perspective of Bourdieu. Knowing that we are, in this period, advancing on a network in a perhaps extremely hasty pace of the other media and the world's gridding and heightening of the networking behaviors that are uncertain and based on vague definitions, do we have to move towards the discussions about the new methods of mutual action and information exchange and hegemonies resulting from production and distribution, "incorrect information, "misleading information" or "lack of awareness"? Should we view the discussion on classic mechanisms as an issue belonging to the prior times? As we see it, the answer to this question is both yes and no. It is yes because the new world has made us encounter a vast collection of interactive and communicative issues that places an actor in front of constant choices between self-awareness/unawareness, knowledgeability/illiteracy and so on as well as their phasic and unclear spectra and their social and cultural counterparts. But, the answer is also negative because the prior forms not only remain in the same previous forms for long spans of time but we are also faced in the new forms more with mechanism corresponding to the novel conditions arising from social manipulation till the time that intact phenomena are invented.

Implicit Discourse and its Effects:

To obtain a description even more precise than the one happening on the scene of an image as well as for perceiving the mechanisms explaining the journalists' performances, we are obliged to make use of a somewhat specialized concept; I mean journalistic field. The journalism field is a microcosm having its own special rules and defined by means of its attracting or repelling relationships in contrast to the other microcosms. If it is stated that such a world is autonomous and has its own specific regulations, it does not mean that the things occurring in it cannot be directly perceived through the external factors. This was the objective presumption that was employed for explicating the journalistic events based on certain factors. For instance, we cannot explain the things occurring in the media solely based on the reality that we own this dependent media. Of course, it is clear that the explanation disregarding such a reality would be imperfect. But, [on the contrary], the exposition that only takes such a reality into account would be imperfect and flaw becomes intense under such conditions when it pretends to be perfect. Thus, we are faced with a sort of superficial materialism that is interlaced somewhat with Marxism and engages in divulging without explaining anything.

Discourse Analysis Methods:

In fact, discourse analysis is not only an analysis of the speeches but also the investigation of such other data as interviews and/or various media reports. During the recent years, there has been brought about a new approach to discourse analysis which is termed "critical discourse analysis" or, occasionally, "Foucauldian Analysis" hence surely drawn on Foucault's thoughts.

According to the fact that the present study is a qualitative research and its investigations are based on discourse analysis, it has to be enumerated amongst applied and practical researches. In terms of the implementation path, the study adopts a discourse analysis approach to discover the relations and patterns governing the phenomena considering the dominant theories and notions hence the present study is a hypothesizer not a hypothesis-testing research and no manipulation has been carried out considering that the examined works have been previously recorded. The study sample volume is comprised of the photos taken by the photographers during Iran and Iraq war. A total of 14 photos were randomly selected from each photographer for the period of time before Khorramshahr's liberation. The photos were subsequently classified into certain categories.

In the meantime, the photographers were subjected to deep interviews. Considering their not being experts in sociology, the questions were relatively plain and in line with the study's main topic so that the study's validity can be increased through exercising precision in the expressing of the related discussions from the

mouth of the photographers who have recorded the most effective images of the imposed war and the study results can be attained in a simple and easy way.

Data Collection and Analysis:

The photos from the Period before Khorramshahr's Liberation (the years between 1980 and 1982)



Image 1: The members of Abadan's Construction Jihad at the time of attack at Iran (Arshadi, 1980, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 2: The explosion in Abadan refinery (Arshadi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 3: Khorramshahr's siege (Arshadi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 4: Khorramshahr's liberation (Arshadi, 1982, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 5: Abadan's church and the yard of Adab School (Arshadi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 6: The father of the first martyr of Abadan's Construction Jihad members (Arshadi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 7: Samen Al-A'emmeh Operation Photographer (Arshadi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 8: The clashes in Khorramshahr (Sadeghi, 1980, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 9: Khorramshahr's liberation (Sadeghi, 1982, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 10: Susangerd (Sadeghi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)

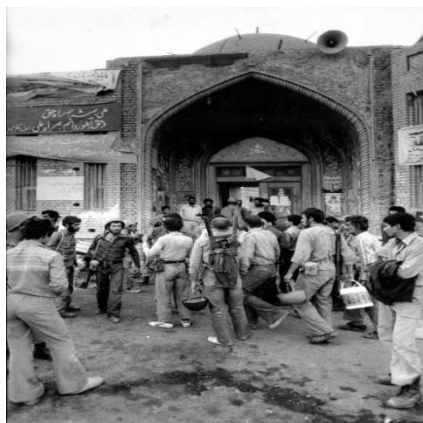


Image 11: Khorramshahr (Sadeghi, 1982, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 12: Bostan (Sadeghi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 13: Bazideraz (Sadeghi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)

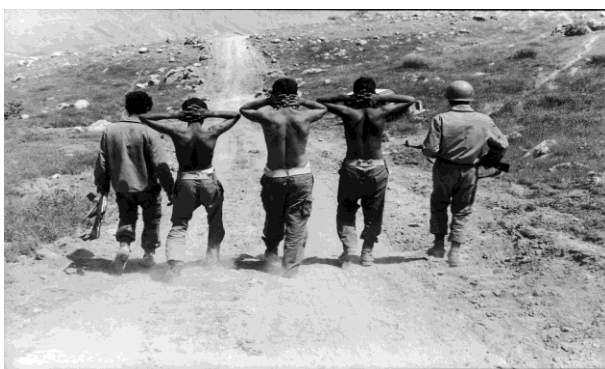


Image 14: Bazideraz (Sadeghi, 1981, personal archive of the photographer)



Image 15: Fat-h Al-Mobin 3 Operation (Fereyduni, 1982, photographer's personal archive)



Image 16: Fat-h Al-Mobin 2 Operation (Fereyduni, 1982, photographer's personal archive)



Image 17: Fat-h Al-Mobin Operation (Fereyduni, 1982, photographer's personal archive)

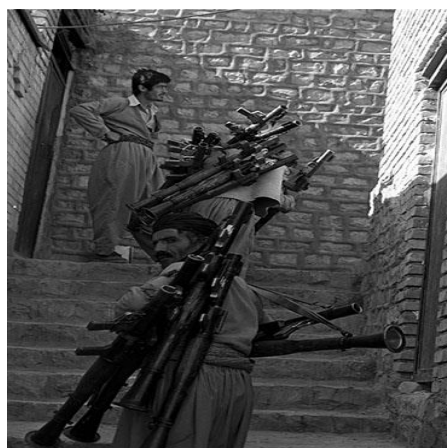


Image 18: The war spoils (Fereyduni, 1981, photographer's personal archive)

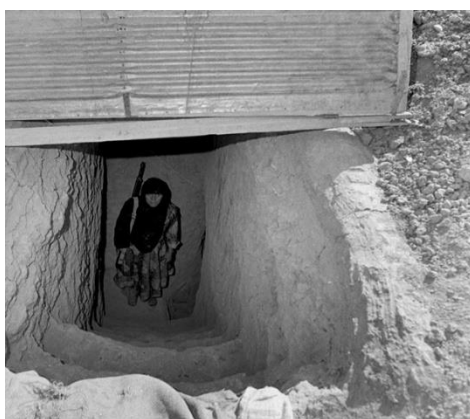


Image 19: Barrack building in houses in Mehran (Fereyduni, 1980, photographer's personal archive)



Image 20: The war refugees (Fereyduni, 1980, photographer's personal archive)



Image 21: Chamran and Fereyduni's memorial photo (Fereyduni, 1980, photographer's personal archive)



Image 22: The injured ones in Naderi Hotel (Mohammadifar, 1979, photographer's personal archive)



Image 23: Susangerd's war-stricken people (Mohammadifar, 1981, photographer's personal archive)



Image 24: Shahid Chamran (Mohammadifar, 1981, photographer's personal archive)



Image 25: The truck used for carrying ice-cream in Khorramshahr (Mo'ayyedi, 1982, photographer's personal archive)

Findings:

Discourses in the Photographical Works from the Period of Time before Khorramshahr's Liberation (1980-1982)

1. Political-Power Micro Discourse:

Considering the photographical works taken in the beginning of the war between Iran and Iraq, the subjects' scattering and encouragement of the nonmilitary people is well evident. The encouragements turned the nonmilitary people with civilian clothes into armed forces establishing defensive positions against the invaders. The power-political micro-discourse has worked as if it has not been present but it is not so; it practically moves along with the national and ideological defense of the people and allows them to be armed and hold lines at the side of the soldiers so as to help them in defense.

The photos from this period illustrate objects of invasion and peak of defense by the nonmilitary people and military forces. This is completely vivid in the photos taken from the basements of the houses, Kurds with RPGs, refugees' camps and tying bandage to the head of a kid in a hotel. In photos taking from the martyrs and injured persons such as in the photo portraying a father at the side of his martyred son (the first martyr of Abadan's Construction Jihad Members), identification of the martyrs' identities, inquired ones in Abadan and many others, it is discerned that the power-political micro-discourse has not caused limitations in the war region on the recording of the photos and the photographers could attend the frontline like the Basij (mobilization) forces and take photos to be displayed behind the frontlines.

2. Cultural-Ideological Micro-Discourse:

Looking at the works from this period, the accentuated and governing presence of the cultural-ideological discourse can be discerned. The beliefs and altruism glitters in these images that express

how they have been present in the scene and how their photos have been taken by the photographers and exposed to the vision of the others. It has to be noted that if the photographer is away from such objective effects, he cannot perceive and depict the individuals' purity and beliefs in the battlefield. So, we have to understand that the images are per se objects present in the region and taken from the grounds of these same discourses.

In verifying this issue, it has to be pointed out that these photos endeavored to record an epoch of Iran's history and showing the individuals who willingly proved an active presence in the war zone at the cost of losing their life. These photos are exhibiting instants of the roaring and people-driven presence of the Iranian nation.

The micro-discourses of the cultural-ideological discourse can be named defending Islam, defending honor, defending the borders, defending the ideological beliefs, defending the revolution and even defending one's own self. Each of these micro-discourses is indeed illustrative of the internal objects' motion which is in itself the internal object of the external units' motion under such a general title as defense. In this cultural-ideological micro-discourse, it is seen that the people prefer to sacrifice their lives to defend all of their beliefs, the Islamic Revolution, the Islam, honor, borders and their prestige. In the photographic works of this period, as well, strong cultural-ideological micro-discourse is seen in the selection of the subjects. Photographers cannot have the ability to transfer the governing emotions within the format of the images unless they are per se influenced by such objects.

3. Social-Economic Micro-Discourse:

Looking at the photos taken in this period from the perspective of the social-economic micro-discourse, there is nothing seen of the zeal for the economic interests at the cost of remaining, as shown in the photos, under the rain of bullets and shells like objects inside the images. The only tempting landscape is the offering of them in exchange for receiving large sums of money for publication. As stated in the interviews, the photographers have refrained from selling their photos and they have not even been looking for earning income by doing so and their main concern has been attending the war region and recording of the war incidents.

In between, the acquisition of social interests like the organizational positions and fame is deemed important. Looking at the photos of this period from the social-economic micro-discourse perspective, it can be seen that the recording of these images sets a suitable ground for the preservation of the positions and acquiring of the new statuses and positions (but, photographer surpasses this issue and takes photos with a more sublime goal). As an example, when looking at the photo displaying an ice-cream truck attacked by bullets and shells in Khorramshahr, it can be figured out that a photographer has jeopardized his life to be there and get closer to the people to take photos from inside the event thereby to sympathize with the people in their calamity.

A photographer who is taking photos based on the objectives of the social-economic micro-discourse, considers the subject from the perspective of the interests and, in this case, his photo cannot contain people-based objectives. Herein, the photographer is found having been practically influenced to a large extent by the dominant incidents of the region and he has made efforts to record such photos accordingly.

"Photos sometimes narrate a story about an instance in the universe but the photographer has had a vague perception at the instant of pressing the button". A photo is a communicative instruments featuring low autonomy and there are many requirements incurred thereon; requirements like social relations between the photographers, including the requirement to objective collusion based on common interests in regard of the successes in the symbolic field of production, society and common pre-thoughts, shared ideals and/or occasionally harsh competition. The scene's composition is very important because it has to be shown that the audience is faced with a democratic balance.

From the perspective of Michel Foucault, power and power discourse have always been governing the grounds of the discourses hence the other discourses have had to obey them. But, surely with regard

to the war between Iran and Iraq, the people's ideological discourse and their national beliefs have concomitantly reached such a high peak and authority despite the necessity for national coherence of Iran that the power discourse has been overshadowed by it. This has practically been governing in the recording of the valuable works on the war between Iran and Iraq based on the national and ideological discourses. The power discourse is found having entered in the area of offering and multiplication of the works and exerted its influence in the output side depending on the discretions and for the purpose of preserving the people's national unity and coherence behind the frontlines.

Although Foucault emphasized that power-politics discourse governs the other discourses, he does not see Iran's discourse of beliefs as being laid on the foundation of power and he practically finds his theories and notions questioned in respect to the ideological and belief discourses of the Iranian nation. He states that "when Iranians speak of the Islamic government; when they shout out on streets under the rain of bullets; when they reject the factions and politicians' collusions for its sake and, doing so, they take risks, nothing more than the formulas that apply to everything and nothing is passing through their minds and hearts. In my opinion, they think of the reality that is very close to them because they are themselves actors of it and contemplate about a move that plays a perpetual role in the political life of the traditional institutions of the Islamic society (Foucault, 2010, p.65).

References

1. Deleuze, Gilles, (2011), "perception, time and cinema", tr. Mehrdad Parsa, Tehran, Rokhdad-e-Now.
2. Fairclough, Norman, (2000), "critical discourse analysis", tr. Fatemeh Shayesteh Piran et al, Tehran, Ministry of Islamic Guidance and Culture, center for the media research and studies.
3. Foucault, Michel, (2010), "archaeological study of knowledge", tr. Abdolghader Savari, Tehran, Gam-e-Now.
4. Foucault, Michel, (2010), "order of objects", tr. Yahta Emami, Tehran, Sciences and Research Ministry's center of cultural and social studies.
5. Jorgensen, Marian and Phillips, Luis, (2010), "the theory and method in discourse analysis", tr. Hadi Jalili, Tehran, Nay.
6. Soltani, A. A., (2008), "power, discourse and language", Tehran, Nay.