

Repetition and Ideology in Nasrallah's Political Speeches

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Abstract

This paper examines the ideological function of lexical repetition in Hassan Nasrallah's speeches. The frequency of repetition in Arabic has long been explored in terms of its various formalistic approaches. However, little or no focus has been placed on the relationship between repetition and ideology. This paper argues that repetition is deliberately used to reinforce Nasrallah's different political strategies, which have been devised to address various Lebanese groups and factions. The paper also argues that the speaker has used different discourse registers to address various audiences. The prevalence of lexical repetition has been deliberately employed in Nasrallah's speeches to promote his ideological and political stance.

Keywords: Nasrallah; Arabic discourse; ideology; repetition; political speeches.

Repetition in Arabic: background

The stylistic features of repetition in Arabic can be traced back to the pre-Islamic oratory era (Holes 1995), which esteemed eloquence and stylistic creativity in both speaking and writing. Such a style of writing is highly valued in Arabic literary culture, and it demonstrates that the writer is *fasih*, an eloquent writer. Repetition can be defined as 'multiple instances of an idea or word, and the greater the number of repetition the more we notice it' (Reynolds 1995: 185). According to Reynolds, it is this 'quantity of occurrences' that attracts the attention and emphasises the meaning. Repetition can take various forms, but in this paper the focus is on lexical repetition, which is often seen as generating lexical cohesion (Halliday 1994). According to Halliday and Hassan (1976), lexical repetition contributes to the creation of a cohesive text, whereby lexical items across sentences and paragraphs form a cohesive link that helps readers to follow meanings.

While repetition in English can be used to emphasise meaning (Rieschild 2006), repetition in Arabic is more often considered part of the Arabic language structure (Johnstone 1991). In his analysis of lexical strings in English and Arabic, Williams (1989) concluded that Arabic uses lexical strings as a cohesive device more than English. It is not used for ornamental purposes, but considered 'essential to the cohesion of the text' (Williams 1989: 164). The repetition of lexical items, such as synonyms and antonyms, not only creates a cohesive link between different segments of the text, but serves as an indication of the writer's creativity and is a feature of 'elevated' discourse (Beeston 1983; Holes 1995b; Al-Khafaji 2005).

Hoey defined lexical repetition as happening when ‘two lexical items share a lexical morpheme, but are not formally identical (...), or when they are formally identical, but have a different grammatical function’ (1991: 55). This type of repetition occurs either in the form of synonyms or through the addition of morphemes (Al-Khafaji 2005).

Whilst repetition can be a prevalent stylistic feature of a language, it can also be used to serve other functions and purposes. The following section deals with the function and purpose of repetition.

Function of repetition in Arabic

Apart from the grammatical function of repetition, which has been fully researched, repetition can have a persuasive and emotional impact on the audience (Mazraani 1993: 265–267; Johnstone 1994: 6). For Tannen, repetition is ‘a fundamental, pervasive, and infinitely useful linguistic strategy’ (1989: 44). However, the power of persuasion can also be displayed through the character of the speaker and the way he/she conducts himself/herself. According to Wodak, the speaker ‘performs traits that have normative (cultural, traditional) meanings’ (2009: 8). Part of these traits is the display of belief, which can be considered as ‘a necessary ingredient for the staging of politics’ (2009: 8).

In the same vein, Johnstone (1991) has looked at persuasion strategies in Arabic texts and concluded that repetition plays a salient role in persuading the Arab audience of one’s argument. Their conclusion was that repetition stems from the Arab perception that the persuasion strategy rests on established truth (Suchan 2010). The power of persuasion also resides in displaying an emotional argument that can penetrate the Arab audience and influence their emotions (Mazraani 1993; Johnstone 1994). According to Al-Khafaji, repetition ‘can have didactic, playful, emotional, artistic, ritualistic, textual and rhetorical functions’ (2005: 6). Similarly, Hoey argues that part of the function of repetition in language is ‘its informational value in providing a framework for interpreting what is changed or “new” by repeating what has already been said, in a process that he calls ‘repetition and replacement’ (1991: 20). Although this paper examines some of these functions, the central focus is on how lexical repetition is used ideologically in Nasrallah’s speeches to maximise the emotional impact on the audience, and hence win over their hearts and minds.

Following on Fairclough (1992), discourse in this paper is considered to be a mode of political and ideological practice. According to Fairclough, discourse as a social practice shapes and is shaped by the world around us. He believes that ideology is located in the structure of discourse, or what he refers to as ‘order of discourse’, meaning that ideology can be linked to past and present events. Ideology, however, does not only constitute part of the ‘order of discourse’, but it can also be present in the form and structure of the text. Discourse can, at times, be ‘ideologically invested’ (Fairclough 1992: 89). This means that both the structure of sentences and the components constituting them can be packed with ideological meaning. Language as a social practice can be manipulated to express the speaker’s or writer’s own beliefs and ideologies. Such ideologies find their way into the text through the

way sentences are structured and words are selected. Since ideologies are constructions of social relations and social identities (1992), this paper examines how language shapes and is shaped by ideologies.

Data analysis

This study analyses two major speeches delivered by Nasrallah during the 2006 conflict between Hizbollah and Israel. The 34-day conflict commenced on 12 July 2006 and ended on 16 August with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, safeguarded by a multinational force. The two speeches were taken from Hizbollah's official website. The speeches were chosen because they were addressed to the Lebanese people. The first speech was delivered on 29 July 2006, during the conflict, and the second speech on 22 September 2006, after the conflict.

In considering the functional use of lexical repetition, the analysis will not be confined to the frequency of repetition in Nasrallah's speeches only, but will also look closely at the function, genre and purpose of this repetition. To this end, this paper seeks to examine the ideological motives behind the use of repetition. In doing so, it will draw on Fairclough's (1992) framework in order to explain the relationship between repetition and ideology in Nasrallah's speeches.

While examining these speeches, the main focus will be on the use of repetition to reinforce Nasrallah's political strategies outlined in the following sections. These strategies vary from one speech to another, but all promote Nasrallah as a leader who has authority and the ability to bring about change.

Repetition and the strategy of persuasion, praise and hope

In his second post-conflict 22 September speech to the nation, titled the 'divine victory' speech, Nasrallah's discourse was full of praise for the Lebanese people in general and Hizbollah fighters in particular. Repetition was used to emphasise his praise, as is shown in the following extracts:

(1a)

أنكم شعب عظيم، وأنكم شعب أبي، وأنكم شعب وفي، وأنكم شعب شجاع

You are a great people, and you are a proud people, and you are a loyal people and you are a courageous people. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The speaker's strategy of glorifying the Lebanese people is reinforced by the repetition of the phrase أنكم شعب (you are a...people), followed by positive attributes, which is intended to motivate and rally the Lebanese people behind the speaker. The speaker in this example has created a frame, أنكم شعب, to which positive attributes are inserted in subsequent sentences

and clauses. This paradigm enables the speaker to appeal to the entire Lebanese society for unity, thus employing a broader discourse register.

Of similar interest in Nasrallah's praise of the nation is the use of the superlative to describe the Lebanese people:

(1b)

يا أشرف الناس وأكرم الناس وأطهر الناس

Oh most honourable people, the most generous people and the most righteous people.

(Speech: 29 July 2006)

In order to convey his highest praise for the Lebanese people, the speaker here has created a format or a paradigm whereby the noun is preceded by a superlative. His praise of the Lebanese people, as clearly demonstrated in the use of superlatives, can be seen as designed to soothe those rebellious voices that were critical of Hizbollah's action during the conflict.

However, when the speaker addresses Hizbollah followers, he uses an entirely different discourse register, which imposes a different use of lexis:

(2)

إلا بنصر من الله وعون من الله وتأيد من الله سبحانه وتعالى

(A victory could not have been achieved) without God's help, without God's aid, without God's support. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The repetition of the lexical phrase من الله (from God) is used in reference to the role of Hizbollah's resistance in inflicting 'defeat' on the Israeli army. The speaker repeatedly attributes the 'victory' to divine support and assistance: 'support, help and victory from God'. By repeating the above lexical phrase, the speaker seeks to link his religious belief to the outcome of the conflict, suggesting that a strong faith guaranteed a victory over the 'enemy'.

It is also used to express the speaker's satisfaction with the achievement of his fighters:

(3)

كيف يمكن لعقل بشري أن يتصور أن بضعة آلاف من أبنائكم المقاومين (...) أن بضعة آلاف من أبنائكم المقاومين اللبنانيين

How can the human mind imagine that a few thousand of your (Lebanese) resistance sons, a few thousand of your Lebanese resistance sons ... (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The repetition of the phrase بضعة آلاف من أبنائكم (a few thousand of your sons) is intended to persuade the Lebanese people that the victory is theirs. It is 'their sons' who have resisted the Israeli military. This inclusive repetitive phrase reflects Nasrallah's belief that Hizbollah is the party representing and defending the interests of the Lebanese people. The repetition here

can also be interpreted as a response to those who have blamed Hizbollah for instigating the conflict.

However, the most interesting feature of the speaker's repetition in this context is the implicit analogy he draws between the achievement of his small number of fighters and those of the Prophet Mohammed in the battle of Badr, when, according to Muslim historians and narratives, a small number of 'believers' defeated a large army of 'unbelievers'. Muslims attributed this victory to divine intervention. This intertextuality of discourse, which is conveyed through reference to similar events (Wodak 2009), is designed to motivate and rally the Lebanese public behind Nasrallah's leadership. According to Reisigl, political communication is 'characterised by a great typological variety with multiple temporal relations to past, present and future by a mathematical ephemerality and by a procedural embedding into a complex network of discursive, interdiscursive and intertextual relations and sequences' (2008: 258).

The use of the second-person plural pronoun 'your' in (3) is also revealing in this context. The speaker uses this pronoun to convey the message that the resistance belongs to the whole Lebanese nation, thus extending the reach of the resistance and giving it a national legitimacy.

Switching from one genre of discourse to another is used by Nasrallah to persuade different sections of his audience. This is part of his unification strategy, which aims to bring all Lebanese factions and groups together. The speaker appears well aware of the impact of words in reinforcing his authority and status among the Arab and Muslim public. This is reflected in his repetition of the first-person plural pronoun, as demonstrated in the following example:

(4)

لسنا مقاومة عشوائية، لسنا مقاومة سفسطائية ولسنا مقاومة مشدودة إلى الأرض لا ترى إلا التراب، ولسنا مقاومة فوضى.
المقاومة التقية المتوكلة العاشقة العارفة، هي المقاومة أيضاً، العالمة العاقلة المخططة المدربة المجهزة

We are not a spontaneous resistance, we are not a sophistic resistance, we are not a resistance pulled to the ground that sees before it nothing but soil, we are not a resistance of chaos. The pious, God-reliant, loving, and knowledgeable resistance is also the conscious, wise, trained, and equipped resistance that has plans. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

By repeating the first-person bound plural pronoun -na (we), Nasrallah aims to persuade the Lebanese people that Hizbollah and his leadership are a strong and well-organised resistance. 'We', in this context, is inclusive of the resistance and Hizbollah followers, but exclusive of the Lebanese people and the external audience.

The emphasis on the resistance is also visible here, especially when Nasrallah switches abruptly from 'we' to the 'resistance'. The speaker uses 'we' when he refers to issues related to management, organisation and long-term vision, but refers to the resistance when speaking

about training and equipment. The message the speaker tries to convey here is that Hizbollah has a leadership that is strong and that has a vision for the future. The repetition of the word ‘resistance’, followed by positive attributes, is equally designed to persuade the audience of the wisdom of Hizbollah’s action, and refute those sceptics who laid the blame on Hizbollah for causing the conflict in the first place. It is apparent here that repetition is used to serve two main functions. The first is to persuade and the second is to warn. The impetus behind repetition of this kind is to portray the speaker as a knowledgeable, powerful, strong and confident leader. To convey these attributes, the speaker has adopted a ‘musical interplay’ between the sound and sense levels of discourse (Wang 2005: 532). The assonance in the second sentence is used to emphasize the strength of Hizbollah as a resistance movement.

Whilst a positive register is adopted when referring to the Lebanese people and Hizbollah, a repetitive negative register is used in addressing those who opposed Hizbollah. Two examples are worth noting in Nasrallah’s speeches: ‘positive self- and other-presentation (recognition, emphasis on the exemplariness) and negative self- and other-presentation (including admonition, warning)’ (Reisigl 2008: 258). Strong negative attributes are used to undermine Hizbollah’s opponents, as the following example shows:

(5)

ايها الاخوة والاخوات، ايها الاحبة والاعزاء في اليوم الثامن عشر من ايام العدوان الصهيوني الهمجي على لبنان. العدوان الصهيوني الاميركي الهمجي على لبنان

Dear brothers and sisters, dear beloved ones on the 18th day of the barbaric Zionist aggression on Lebanon, the barbaric American Zionist aggression on Lebanon..... (Speech: 29 July 2006)

By attacking the enemy’s action and labeling it barbaric, the speaker seeks to persuade the audience through the paradigm of ‘them’ against ‘us’. This paradigm has been used by different political leaders during times of conflict to rally their nations and supporters behind them (van Dijk 1991).

Nasrallah combines the strategies of hope and persuasion to maximise the impact of his discourse on his audience, as the following example of his 29 July speech demonstrates:

(6)

ايها اللبنانيون المهم اليوم ان نصمد لننتصر ان شاء الله، ونحن سننتصر ان شاء الله. ما اقرأ وما اسمعه منذ ايام في مسألة الانتصار وتوظيف الانتصار واهداء الانتصار اريد ان اعلق عليه

Dear Lebanese people, if we persevere today we will be victorious. We will, God willing, be victorious. I would like to comment on what I read and what I hear in recent days on the question of victory, how to utilise victory and to whom that victory would be dedicated. (Speech: 29 July 2006)

The speaker’s repetition of the word ‘victory’ five times in two sentences reflects his desire to persuade and raise hope among the Lebanese public that ‘victory’ is imminent. In his analysis

of Churchill's speeches, Charteris-Black concluded that Churchill used the strategy of hope to 'raise morale'. This strategy was delivered through metaphorical concepts such as 'hope is light' (2004: 51). Although Churchill and Nasrallah are completely different leaders with different beliefs and characters, both seem to use the strategy of hope.

Repetition and the strategy of naming and shaming

Whilst Nasrallah adopts a strategy of hope and praise when addressing the Lebanese people, he resorts to the strategy of naming and shaming when referring to his opponents. This strategy is reinforced by 'emphatic spotlighting of negation' (Rieschild 2006: 16), which places great focus on the negative descriptions of his opponents, intended to disparage them and tarnish their reputations.

(7)

أوقفوا الحرب ليس من أجل لبنان ولا من أجل أطفال لبنان ولا من أجل دماء النساء في لبنان ولا من أجل لبنان الجميل،
أوقفوا الحرب فقط من أجل إسرائيل

They stopped the war not for the sake of Lebanon, not for the sake of the children of Lebanon, not for the sake of the blood of women in Lebanon, and not for the sake of beautiful Lebanon. They stopped the war only for the sake of Israel. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The repetition of the phrase لا من أجل (not for the sake of) in the above example is designed to vilify the United States government and the international community for not doing enough initially to stop the war. According to Nasrallah, their decision to call for a ceasefire was taken solely 'to protect Israel' and 'not the Lebanese people'. What is striking here is the insertion of the negative particle *la* before the affirmative phrase *min ajli* to give the whole sentence a negative connotation. By doing so, the speaker seeks to maximise the negativity of the opposition or the enemy's action. The speaker could have used the negative particle *la* to express his negative views, but this would not have achieved the same impact as *la min ajli*, which is used in different parallel structures. The speaker could have used *aw* (or) instead of *la*, but this would not have achieved the same degree of negativity.

The same strategy is used when the speaker refers to the Arab governments' lack of support for Hizbollah's resistance. He associates them with passivity, and uses the same negated phrase *la + min ajli*, as the following extract shows:

(8)

لن تقاتلوا لا من أجل لبنان ولا من أجل غزة ولا من أجل الضفة الغربية ولا حتى من أجل القدس

You will not fight, not for the sake of Lebanon, nor for the sake of Gaza, nor for the sake of the West Bank, nor even for the sake of Jerusalem. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The repetition here serves two main functions. First, it has a disparaging function in associating Arab governments with passivity and negligence in major Arab causes, such as the Palestinian cause. Second, the same repetition is designed to reinforce the speaker's status as a 'real fighter' and a leader who can defend Arab and Muslim causes. What is interesting here is the speaker's double use of negative particles to magnify the negativity and passivity of Arab leaders. He negates the verb *tuqatilu* (you fight) by the negation particle *lan* (not), and then inserts another negation particle to the phrase *min ajli*. This is rare in Arabic sentence structure. Although the speaker has not broken Arabic grammatical rules here, the repetition of the negative particles does maximise the negative impact of the sentence. It serves to tarnish the opposition's reputation and present the speaker as the defender of Arab and Muslim causes.

Whilst repetition of negation in the above extracts is designed to portray the opposition and the enemy in a bad light, repetition of negation is also used by Nasrallah to defend his allies and supporters, as is shown in the following extract:

(9)

أنا أكتفي اليوم بالقول أنهما يعني إيران وسوريا، إنهما لم يجرأ أحدا على لبنان ولم يساهما في تقديم أي غطاء لهذه الحرب وإنهما لم يسالوما يوما على المقاومة، في لبنان وفي فلسطين لا في الماضي ولا اليوم ولا في المستقبل

Today I will confine myself to saying that they, that is Iran and Syria, did not spark this war, they did not help to provide any cover for this war, and they never haggled at the expense of the resistance in Lebanon and Palestine, neither in the past, nor today, nor will they in the future. (Speech: 29 July 2006)

As extracts (8) and (9) show, repetition is used to serve two functions. First, it is used to reinforce a negative image, and this occurs when the speaker refers to the opposition or enemy. Second, it is used to negate a negative attribution to defend allies and supporters. Nasrallah's use of negation in extract (9) is intended to refute and deny the accusation of the alleged involvement of Syria and Iran in the conflict.

Repetition and the unification strategy

Aware of the sectarian divide regarding Hizbollah's conduct in the conflict, Nasrallah adopts in his discourse a unification strategy designed to rally the Lebanese people behind him. This strategy is seen in the extensive repetition of prepositions attached to cities and towns as seen in the example below. Similarly, the use of prepositional phrases creates a poetic style that can be said to have an immediate emotional impact on the recipients, as the following examples show:

(10a)

من الجنوب المقاوم المقاتل إلى البقاع الصامد إلى الشمال الوفي إلى الجبل الأبي إلى بيروت العروبة إلى ضاحية العزة والكرامة، (...) وأولئك الذين استقبلوهم واحتضنهم وكرمهم من صيدا إلى جبل لبنان الشمالي إلى جبل لبنان الجنوبي إلى بيروت إلى الشمال إلى البقاع، سيكون هذا الانتصار حافزا لاعادة لبنان أجمل مما كان

(You are all welcome) from the fighting and resisting south, to the steadfast Beqaa, to the loyal north, to the proud mountain, to the Beirut of Arabism, to the [southern] suburb of loftiness and dignity. (...) And those who received them, embraced them and honored them, from Sayda to the north of Jabal Lubnan, to the south of Jabal Lubnan, to Beirut, to the north, to the Beqaa, this victory will be an incentive to rebuild Lebanon and make it more beautiful than it was. (Speech: 29 July 2006)

(10b)

من مخيمات اللاجئين الفلسطينيين في لبنان، أهلاً بكم جميعاً من سوريا من إيران من الكويت من البحرين من كل بلد جاءنا
محتفياً محتفلاً

You are all welcome – from the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon; you are all welcome – from Syria, Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, and every country that came to us to celebrate and rejoice (Speech: 22 September 2006).

As demonstrated in the above examples, the repetition of prepositions has allowed the speaker to move from a very narrow discourse to a broader one. The use of the prepositions *min* (from) and *ila* (to) in extracts (10a) and (10b) allows Nasrallah to focus on particular groups and regions inside and outside Lebanon, as well as nations. By attaching the preposition to the names of provinces, towns, cities and countries, he seeks to highlight the diversity and polarity of his audience. What is interesting in the above extracts is his reference to supporters from different countries. The speaker tries not only to project himself as the national leader who cares about every citizen, but seeks to portray himself as a leader of the Arab and Muslim worlds. By naming those towns, cities and provinces within Lebanon, he is trying to demonstrate his connection to all parts of the country. In extract (10a), the speaker showers the people of these provinces and cities with praise for their generosity and patriotism. The intensive repetition of prepositions and the transition from a specific discourse to a broader one reveal that prepositions have been used in this context to convey his affiliation to those places.

It is apparent from extract (10) that the speaker is seeking to promote the achievements of the resistance among this diverse audience. By overstating the wide support for Hizbollah, in both extracts, the speaker attempts to alienate those who had begun to question Hizbollah's decision to engage in a war with Israel. What is striking about extract (10b) is his mention of two countries, Bahrain and Kuwait, both of which have a large Shiite population. In the case of Bahrain, the majority of the population is Shiite. By referring to these countries, Nasrallah reminds his audience of the strong support he enjoys from their Shiite populations.

Repetition and analogy/intertextuality

As mentioned previously, Nasrallah carefully adopts different discourse registers when addressing people of different political orientations. When addressing his followers, and in

order to maximise his influence on them, the Hizbollah leader adopts Qur'anic phrases and sentence structures. Take for instance the following example:

(11)

لنقتل من نشاء ونأسر من نشاء وتقصف كيفما تشاء وتسلب أرضنا ومياهنا

(...) so [Israel] can kill whomever it wants, capture whomever it wants, bomb as it wants, and plunder our land and waters. (Speech: 22 September 2006)

The speaker has not only used a religious lexical register in his speech, but has adopted Qur'anic sentence structures and phrases. The phrase, *man tasha'* (whomever it wants), used above, echoes Q3: 26 which reads: 'Say (O Muhammad SAW): O Allah! Possessor of the kingdom, You give the kingdom to whom You will, and You take the kingdom from whom You will, and You endue with honour whom You will, and You humiliate whom You will' (Hilali and Khan). However, it is worth mentioning that, as a religious leader, this type of register is expected in Nasrallah's speeches.

By choosing the phrase *man tasha'*, which in the Qur'anic verse indicates that God has absolute power, the speaker insinuates that Israel is assuming absolute power, and therefore acting beyond international law. The Israeli government, the speaker seems to suggest, has absolute power to 'kill and strike whenever they like'. Although this analogy might sound odd, it can be said that Nasrallah uses it in this context to convey the message that Israel acts beyond international law, and as a consequence will be punished severely. To persuade his audience of this, he has repeated the phrase *man tasha'* three times in one sentence. This repetition, which has adopted Qur'anic structures, is designed to have a greater persuasive impact on the audience. One can argue here that this analogy has been employed for ideological reasons, and both the semantic and syntactic aspects in Nasrallah's speeches are carefully selected to serve this purpose.

Discussion

The above analysis has shown how repetition has been employed to reinforce and support Nasrallah's ideology and political strategies. One of those strategies is to encourage hope through the persuasive act of repeating positive phrases and semantic pairs, which creates a sense of hope, patriotism and harmony among the audience. Another is the 'unification strategy' through which he refers to the enemies' threat to the Lebanese national interest, underscoring the importance of unity in order to defeat the enemy. To deliver this strategy, he has resorted to the repetition of key concepts and terms that have both emotional and persuasive power.

What is striking about Nasrallah's use of repetition is that it is designed to 'rally the public and create a homogenous public sphere, with the sole aim of taking collective action' (Lahlali 2011: 135). The speaker reminds the audience of the nature of the conflict, and also emphasises his own belief that a 'divine victory' is imminent. Nasrallah's intensive repetition

is used to strengthen his relationship, not only with the community surrounding him, but with the wider Muslim world. The most recurrent strategy in Nasrallah's speech is his association of hope with strong belief, insinuating that a bright future can only be achieved with determination and will. The repetitive phrase, *tawakkal 'ala Allah* (rely on God), in his speeches serves as a reminder to his followers that nothing can be achieved without the reliance on God. One can conclude from the above analysis that the language in Nasrallah's speeches shapes and is shaped by the social, cultural and political factors surrounding him.

In this paper, I have argued that repetition has been employed extensively in Nasrallah's speeches not only to elevate his language style, but also to serve various ideological purposes. It has been used to reinforce his various strategies, and to influence and persuade his audience. The use of different discourse registers in Nasrallah's speeches, combined with extensive use of repetition, shows clearly that language as a means of communication can be carefully employed, not only to demonstrate the stylistic command of the speaker, but also convey his/her views, manifested in his/her attempt to have a lasting impact on the audience and recipients of his/her speech. His religious discourse register can be said to have been used to promote his religious identity with his followers, while his use of the secular discourse register can be interpreted as an attempt to appeal to a wider Lebanese audience. As Fowler (1991: 101) pointed out: 'news is not just a value-free reflection of facts. Anything that is said or written about the world is articulated from a particular ideological position'.

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