An Analysis of the Management and Monitoring of Political Discourse in the Second Round of the Debates of the 14th Presidential Election of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 2024

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ABSTRACT

Discourse is a complex, creative, and intertwined process in which an individual always interacts with others. Discussions about the nature of political discourse are mostly related to the texts and speeches of professional politicians and political institutions such as leaders, presidents, prime ministers, ministers, representatives of parliaments, or political parties. All political activities, such as legislation, decision-making, meetings, and conversations, are mainly discursive. Professional language users combine various linguistic elements such as prepositions, conjunctions, adverbs, short sentences, and verbs, which results in the emergence of discourse figures. Discourse figures are metalinguistic elements and are among the most effective, complex, and widely used variables in creating, understanding, and managing discourse. This research aims to take an initial step in discovering and introducing the discourse management system in politics and governance based on the cognitive discourse theory of coherence, and to introduce the management model in this field and its characteristics. The study corpus is derived from two debates in the second round of the 14th presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which contains 16,314 words. The study's results led to the discovery of a rectangular pattern in political discourse, whose sides display the discursive relations of elaboration, contrast, inference, and sequence. The characteristics and properties of the results were examined and analyzed. Various implications in research, education, and scientific fields were also discussed and examined.

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1

1. Introduction

Discourse is a complex, creative, and intertwined process involving various variables, in which individuals are always engaged in interaction with others. Political discourse pertains to the texts and speech of professional politicians and political institutions such as leaders, presidents, prime ministers, ministers, members of parliament, or political parties. All political activities—such as legislation, decision-making, meetings, and dialogues—are largely discursive in nature (van Dijk, 2008). In his book *Discourse and Power*, van Dijk asserts that political discourse is related to the redistribution of political power through the use of power or authority within the domain of politics. The subject of political discourse includes the discussion of the texts or speeches of professional politicians such as leaders, presidents, prime ministers, cabinet members, and parties at local, national, and international levels. Within the field of political discourse, researchers analyze the creative use of language in political contexts. From the perspective of scholars, political discourse is a social and discursive phenomenon—an activity through which individuals define, maintain, and modify the general rules of their lives (van Dijk, 2008; Alem, 2008).

Management is defined as the process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling human, financial, and physical resources to achieve specific goals based on a value system. This process includes strategic decision-making, optimal resource

utilization, and monitoring the performance of an organization or team. Management also involves communication processes, motivation, and directing resources to achieve the best possible outcomes. In this process, the manager strives to ensure effective, logical, accurate, and coordinated use of diverse resources. The responsibilities of a manager include setting long-term and short-term goals, developing strategies to achieve them, optimal resource allocation, designing the organizational structure, defining roles and responsibilities, motivating, guiding, and supporting individuals, and establishing effective communication within the organization (Kessler, 2013).

What is Discourse Monitoring? The flexible, creative, and professional use of language in social interactions—at both macro and micro levels—constitutes the discourse management system. Macro-level strategies include language production, design, distribution, and usage, while micro-level strategies involve guiding the audience, creating coherence, and connecting various dimensions of discourse (Mohammadi, 2015). Various tools contribute to the effective monitoring and management of discourse, among which one of the most efficient, complex, ambiguous, and frequently used elements is the discourse marker (Faghih Malek Marzian, 2008). Furthermore, a review of previous studies shows that discourse markers are discourse-oriented tools, elements, and resources that play an effective role in the creation of discourse.

Discourse markers are also essential in engineering the structure of discourse, defining the boundaries of speech, managing the flow of conversation, and revealing relationships between different discourse units (Anderson, 1998).

This complex, systematic, and creative process of discourse monitoring occurs through cognitive processes such as the creation, interpretation, and understanding of discourse; discovering interactions between the present discourse and the complex, expansive, and intertwined context of prior discourse; linking it to subsequent discourse; and understanding the audience's attitude toward the discourse topic (Schiffrin, 1987; Matei, 2010; Fraser, 2013). Phrases and words such as *however*, *furthermore*, *then*, *because*, *in fact*, *first*, etc., are examples of discourse markers. The creation and comprehension of discourse represent the dual dimensions of human discourse. The analysis of this management system is conducted based on the **coherence theory**, which examines how conceptual, discursive, and pragmatic connections are formed between sentences, phrases, and ideas. In other words, discourse creation and comprehension are achieved only through the understanding of conceptual, discursive, and pragmatic relationships within the text—so that the speaker/writer can effectively convey the message, and the audience can coherently and integrally understand the meaning (Schiffrin, 2006; Redeker, 1990).

In discourse monitoring and management analysis, researchers focus on the system of discourse creation in spoken or written language, particularly the use of discourse markers (Mohammadi, 2015). The lack of research on the analysis of discourse management in the 14th presidential election—and even in other Iranian elections—encouraged the present researchers to address this scientific and research gap. In this study, the researchers analyzed the system of discourse monitoring and management in the 14th Presidential Election of the Islamic Republic of Iran, aiming to discover a discourse management model in the realm of politics and governance. Discourse markers are central to discourse management. They are meta-analytical (Aijmer, 2002), meta-interpretive (Frank-Job, 2006), and metadiscursive (Hyland, 2005) elements, and their creative, professional, and flexible use in speech and writing forms a discourse-based system within the text. That is, discourse markers function to establish relationships between discursive activities.

In political systems governed by democracy or those that hold elections, elections serve as political arenas where professional politicians seek to promote their discourse in order to win elections. Thus, during election periods, political discourse plays a crucial role in attracting the masses and the general public. Political discourse management facilitates audience engagement, draws attention to the presented points, motivates electoral participation, and ultimately encourages the acceptance of the candidates' viewpoints.

544

This descriptive and qualitative study aims to analyze the frequency distribution, usage, and functions of discourse markers in the second round of debates during the 14th Presidential Election of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The research questions are as follows:

1. What is the role of discourse markers in the debates of the 14th presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran?

2. Which discourse markers are used in managing political discourse?

3. What is the percentage distribution of the use of discourse markers in this political corpus?

4. Which discourse markers are the most frequently used in political discourse monitoring?

Based on the review of prior research, the researchers hypothesize that various types of discourse markers are used in diverse forms, with differing frequency distributions and distinct roles in the domain of discourse management. To achieve this goal, the researchers discovered, classified, introduced, and analyzed the frequency distribution of discourse markers used in the second-round debates of the 14th presidential election of Iran. So far, no study has reported the analysis of Iranian presidential election debates in terms of discourse marker usage by presidential candidates. Furthermore, presidential election campaigns are important because they encompass discussions on politics, economics, and social issues, during which candidates

present their views and use reasoning to persuade and attract voters (Sartika, 2021, cited in Rahro et al., 2024, p. 1).

2. Literature Review

The system of usage and functions of discourse markers has been analyzed across various fields. For example, Iner (2010) studied judicial discourse; Marcus (2009) focused on Old English texts; Clark (2005) explored the discourse of non-native English speakers; Hellermann and Vergun (2007) examined the discourse of both native and non-native English speakers; Watts (1989) analyzed native speakers' understanding in family conversations; Finnell (1989) studied polite disagreement in discourse; Hassan and Mohsen (2011) looked into foreign language learning environments in Iraq; Jucker (1997) focused on written texts; Fuller (2003) examined spoken language; and researchers like Mohammadi (2020), Bojari (2019), Gandomkar (2018), Gholamzadeh (2020), and Nadi (2020) explored educational, research, political, and literary discourse in Persian, Arabic, and English languages.

Iner (2010) analyzed the use of discourse markers in conflictual environments such as courtrooms. To achieve this, she recorded courtroom conversations and observed the language usage system, compiling a corpus of over 90,000 words. Her findings showed that discourse markers had multiple and creative functions in such environments. Marcus (2009) conducted a historical analysis of discourse markers in Old English written texts, concluding that these

markers were creative elements in discourse management. In such contexts, discourse markers held around 30 different meanings and played different roles depending on the context.

Clark (2005) studied patterns in the use of a specific discourse marker in conversations of English language learners. Her findings indicated a low frequency of discourse marker use among these learners, which she attributed to educational factors. She found that the main purposes of using discourse markers were to provide time for thought, help the listener discern the speaker's intent, indicate turn-taking, and demonstrate cohesion in discourse. Watts (1989) examined how native speakers understood discourse markers in family conversations and found that placing a discourse marker at the beginning of a sentence highlighted the importance of that discourse unit.

By examining the philosophy of using discourse markers at the beginning of a discourse unit, Finnell (1989) concluded that this placement indicates polite disagreement with the listener's opinion. He asserted that using discourse markers in speech reflects a polite strategy in human interaction. Hellermann and Vergun (2007) analyzed the differences in discourse marker use between native and non-native English speakers. Quantitatively, non-native speakers used fewer discourse markers. They attributed these differences to language proficiency levels, opportunities to use the target language in various social and out-of-class settings, and

teachers' abilities to utilize discourse markers.

Jucker's (1997) study, based on relevance theory, demonstrated that discourse markers serve multiple functions. These include compensating for insufficient language proficiency, mitigating face-threatening acts, providing time to think, and serving as tools to manage discourse challenges.

Hassan and Mohsen (2011) analyzed the use and function of discourse markers in conversations of Iraqi university students. Their findings showed that these students used fewer discourse markers in classroom discussions, attributing this to the lack of emphasis on discourse markers in Iraq's foreign language education system. Fuller (2003) examined the speaker's role in using discourse markers and found that individuals use them based on their roles and relationships with others, and these relationships assign new roles to the markers.

Mohammadi (2020), in his analysis of discourse creation in various texts, concluded that discourse cohesion was achieved through the combination and collocation of discourse markers. He showed that for forming four types of discourse relationships—reasoning and inference, contrast, elaboration and extension, and hierarchical relationships—discourse markers were combined to create a scientific discourse system in Persian, Arabic, and English languages. Bojari (2019), in a literary research project, analyzed discourse management in

American and British stories and found that cohesion was established using sequential, contrastive, elaborative, and inferential discourse markers.

Gandomkar's (2018) study also showed that cohesive relationships in discourse were formed using elaborative, sequential, contrastive, and inferential discourse markers. Gholamzadeh's (2020) analysis of the political texts in the 2016 Trump-Clinton presidential debate demonstrated that political discourse management relied on contrastive, elaborative, sequential, and inferential discourse markers. Nadi's (2020) study on educational discourse among postgraduate instructors and students showed that Iranian professors and students used sequential, contrastive, elaborative, and inferential markers to maintain cohesion in their speech and to manage and monitor their discourse.

The review of previous studies indicates that research in this area encompasses diverse dimensions. However, there has yet to be a study using the coherence theory approach to investigate discourse management and monitoring in the Iranian presidential elections. This research aims to fill that scholarly and scientific gap.

3. Methodology

This study adopts a descriptive, quantitative, and qualitative approach to examine and analyze the discourse monitoring system in the debates of the 14th presidential election of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The aim of qualitative and descriptive studies is to investigate and analyze naturally occurring phenomena without the researcher's interference in monitoring or execution. The researcher begins the study with specific questions in mind and collects data to answer those questions.

The theoretical foundation of the present research is based on the coherence theory within the domain of discourse analysis. This theory (Schiffrin, 2006; Redeker, 1990) is founded on the following assumptions:

1. Texts possess coherence.

2. Various coherence relations exist within texts.

3. It is the reader's or listener's task to discover these coherence relations.

4. Discourse markers are central to the establishment of coherence within texts.

This descriptive and qualitative study analyzed the use of discourse markers in political discourse with the aim of identifying a practical pattern of discourse monitoring in the creation of discourse during presidential election debates. To achieve this goal, two debates held in the second round of the presidential election—between the two final candidates (Pezeshkian and Jalili)—were selected as the corpus for this study (a total of 16,314 words), after being recorded and transcribed.

Next, the corpus was examined, and the four categories of discourse markers (sequential, contrastive, elaborative, and inferential) along with the sentences in which they were used were identified and extracted (see Tables 1 through 8). To ensure the accuracy of the extracted

discourse markers, the corpus was independently reviewed by the researchers. Minor disagreements were resolved through collaborative reanalysis of the discourse markers. Additionally, the final list of extracted discourse markers was reviewed again by two university lecturers who specialize in discourse analysis and pragmatics. There was no disagreement between the evaluators and the researchers regarding the extracted discourse markers. The discourse markers were then categorized into different types based on their frequency of occurrence. Data interpretation was carried out by comparing the findings with previous research and using descriptive statistics.

4. Findings and Discussion

Table 1 – Frequency Distribution of Discourse Markers in the Second Round of the Presidential Debates of the Islamic Republic of Iran

Discourse Marker Type	Pezeshkian	%	Jalili	%
Sequential	69	16	69	17
Contrastive	32	7	35	8
Elaborative	280	64	249	61
Inferential	58	13	54	13
Total	439	100	407	100

Total corpus: 16,314 words

According to Table 1, four categories of discourse markers were used in this corpus to manage political discourse during the Iranian presidential election debates. These markers play roles such as establishing logical reasoning and inferential connections, forming hierarchical relationships, expanding and increasing discourse units in speech, and expressing contradictions and contrasts in the text (answer to the first question). That is, they play an important role in connecting discourse units and help the speaker/writer to maintain a smooth and coherent flow in speech and writing. They also assist the listener in interpreting the speaker's intentions.

Additionally, in the second-round debates, elaborative, sequential, inferential, and contrastive discourse markers were used to create the aforementioned four logical relations (answer to the second question). This finding is consistent with various studies conducted by researchers in different languages and contexts. For instance, in Mohammadi's study (2021) on the analysis of Qur'anic texts, a similar pattern in discourse management was discovered. Similar results were found in studies of literary texts (Bujari, 2019), research texts (Gandomkar, 2018), political texts (Gholamzadeh, 2020), educational texts (Nadi, 2020; Ying, 2007; Nejad Ansari & Mohammadi, 2014), and critical texts (Mohammadi & Dehghan, 2021).

These studies, conducted in English, Chinese, Arabic, and Persian, demonstrate the presence of significant universal elements in the usage, production, comprehension, and management of discourse across languages with diverse cultural, religious, economic, social, and political backgrounds. This suggests that such universality exists regardless of text type, culture, language, or literary tradition. Furthermore, discourse markers illustrate a variety of logical, inferential, hierarchical, contrastive, elaborative, and descriptive relationships that form the foundations of discourse creation, understanding, and dissemination.

A total of 846 discourse markers were used in this corpus, representing 5% of the total word count (answer to the third question). While the corpus contains over 16,000 words, 846 discourse markers were identified, equaling 5% of the frequency distribution (Table 1). However, in the study by Nejad Ansari and Mohammadi (2014), focusing on English language education in Iran, this frequency reached 8%, nearly double that of the current study. In Castro's (2009) study, the frequency reached 19%, more than double that of the Nejad Ansari and Mohammadi study. Castro's corpus was based on the use of English in a functional, real-life context by native speakers, showing that language usage in educational and academic settings significantly differs from that in political settings where conflicting interests are prevalent.

This variation may be due to differences in language use contexts, which influence the use of specific linguistic elements. The context in Nejad Ansari and Mohammadi's (2014) study was academic, where instructors and students needed to use many discourse markers to support various points. In contrast, in political contexts like Gholamzadeh's (2020) analysis of the 2016 U.S. presidential debate, professional language users (e.g., presidential candidates) often assume many points to be self-evident, leaving interpretation to the audience. It is then the audience's responsibility to decode the implicit aspects of language used in advanced political texts like election debates and make informed decisions.

Moreover, in election debates, the issue of conflicting interests heavily influences language use and sensitivity to context. The main goal becomes persuading the audience to adopt the views of an individual, group, or party. This issue was also addressed in the study by Mirzaei and Rabani Khorasgani (2015), who demonstrated the conflict between conservative and reformist discourses in the 10th Iranian presidential election. However, in educational and academic contexts like Castro's (2009) study, conflicting interests are not present, so language is used more explicitly, and users try to avoid using implicit discourse creation strategies.

The most frequently used discourse markers in the second round of the 14th presidential election debate were

elaborative markers—64% for Pezeshkian and 61% for Jalili—which accounted for the highest frequency among both candidates (answer to the fourth question). These markers serve dual purposes: descriptive (e.g., "for example," "on this side," "that is" – Table 2) and additive (e.g., "and," "also" – Table 3).

This finding has also been reported in studies across different languages. Researchers have offered various explanations for the widespread use of elaborative discourse markers. Jalilifar (2008) suggests that these elements are easier to learn than others. Another researcher, Martinez (2004), believes that these markers are prioritized in language learning. Fraser (1999) argues that elaborative markers clearly demonstrate the relationship between different discourse units. Other researchers, such as Hellermann and Vergun (2007), state that these markers are not semantically complex. Yet, another group of scholars argues that elaborative discourse markers are among the most effective, complex, creative, important, and efficient elements for creating dynamic and functional discourse relationships. They are also highly sensitive to language use context (Sayadkouh & Raeisi, 2017; Faghih Malek Marzban, 2008; Mohammadi & Dehghan, 2021).

Table 2 – Elaborative Descriptive Discourse Markers

No.	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Pezeshkian	*and*	...and a group of people we bring in as experts and then call them experts
2	Jalili	*and*	Your capital market must be a platform that people trust and come to work in
3	Pezeshkian	*on the other hand*	And on the other hand, we must empower producers, the Chamber of Commerce, and everyone involved in production.
4	Pezeshkian	*that is*	That is, we must have exports, we must have foreign investment
5	Jalili	*that is*	That is, if we talk about 8% growth, 8% growth is a necessity today
6	Pezeshkian	*even / just now*	The decree we passed has just now, at best, turned into used cars
7	Pezeshkian	*either–or*	Either it's from Chinese resources, or if it's not from Chinese finance, at what rate is it?
8	Jalili	*either*	Does the funding go in that direction or not?
9	Pezeshkian	*also – completely*	Eliminating corruption roots and also confronting corrupt individuals is completely necessary
10	Pezeshkian	*in addition to that*	In addition to that, controlling fuel consumption and educating the public is part of this effort

No.	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
11	Jalili	*besides*	Besides, it is also mentioned in the law
12	Pezeshkian	*for example*	...they, for example, make this claim. I had calculated it and you could easily give each person ten million tomans
13	Jalili	*for example*	Some of the examples we mentioned here or in other meetings, like for example, due to lack of metering, suddenly seven billion dollars of your oil and gas resources are gone

Table 3 – Elaborative Additive Discourse Markers

No.	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Pezeshkian	*and*	Those who are elite, and experts, and academics
2	Jalili	*at all*	And that government had no belief in planning at all, because it didn't show up at all
3	Pezeshkian	*otherwise*	Otherwise, we'll just appoint some people, our friends, our party, our faction
4	Jalili	*otherwise*	Otherwise, you solve this and another issue will emerge
5	Pezeshkian	*both–and*	They don't do anything at all, have no effectiveness, yet receive exceptional salaries
6	Jalili	*both*	Inflation is a problem where both the issue is clear and the solutions are well-known. Many countries have successfully controlled inflation
7	Jalili	*and*	And the fact is, inflation *can* be controlled

The second-highest usage of discourse markers in the presidential election debates of the Islamic Republic of Iran pertains to sequential discourse markers, with a frequency distribution of 16% for Pezeshkian and 17% for Jalili. This indicates the importance of presenting the order of discourse units in speech for the presidential candidates. They monitor their discourse in various instances based on the hierarchical sequence of actions (e.g., *first*, *initially*, *then*, *finally* – Table 4) and the timing of actions (e.g., *now*, *at that time*, *whenever*, *when* – Table 5). This section of the study's findings is consistent with those of: Hemmati and Mohammadi (2023) on discourse creation in the translation process, Nejad Ansari and Mohammadi (2015) on educational discourse between professors and students, Mohammadi (2020) on Qur'anic discourse in Arabic, Bojari (2019) on literary texts, Gandomkar (2018) on research texts, Gholamzadeh (2020) on political texts, Nadi (2020) on

543

educational texts, and Mohammadi and
Dehghan (2021) on critical texts.

Table 4 – Sequential Discourse Markers Indicating Hierarchical Order

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Jalili	first (اول)	*The first issue is that if something becomes law and final word, it must be implemented.*
2	Pezeshkian	then (بعد)	*Then no one can stop them.*
3	Jalili	then (بعد)	*If a government or a private bank creates capital, then it raises inflation.*
4	Pezeshkian	first (اول)	*First I said we must put aside our internal divisions.*
5	Jalili	second (دوم)	*The second point is that in plans, usually for growth to be achieved...*
6	Pezeshkian	first (اولین)	*The first thing the government should do is stop ordering banks to print money.*
7	Jalili	first (اولین)	*The first issue that needs to be addressed here is the sovereignty of the rial.*
8	Pezeshkian	firstly (اولاً)	*Firstly, I was part of Mr. Khatami's government, and even then there was no brain drain.*
9	Jalili	firstly/secondly (اولاً- ثانیاً)	*First, resources should not be wasted, and second, they should increase daily.*
10	Jalili	third (سوم)	*The third point is that in our currency market, some of the transactions are legal.*
11	Jalili	initially (ابتدا)	*Initially, your priority should be...*
12	Jalili	third (سوم)	*The third issue, justice, means bringing everyone into the effort.*
13	Jalili	last (آخر)	*The last point is that addressing these issues does not mean ignoring people's livelihoods.*
14	Pezeshkian	ultimately (نهایتاً)	*Ultimately, when we spend money and resources in wealthy areas...*
15	Pezeshkian	previously (قبلاً)	*If our growth is not accurate, relevant indicators were previously discussed in meetings.*

Table 5 – Sequential Discourse Markers Indicating Time of Action

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Jalili	now (الان)	*All these infrastructures are now available in the country.*

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
2	Pezeshkian	back then (آن‌موقع)	*Back then, we insured every patient who couldn't afford it, step by step.*
3	Pezeshkian	now (الان)	*Why didn't the martyr Raisi or Rouhani governments adjust pensions for inflation? Now the retirees are demanding it from us.*
4	Jalili	back then (آن‌موقع)	*Back then, much of the inflation was controlled — let me give you a few examples.*
5	Jalili	when (وقتی)	*When you lack financial discipline, naturally you won't get results.*
6	Jalili	whenever (هر وقت که)	*A major part of the country's inflation in recent years has been due to exchange rate increases — whenever the exchange rate went up.*

The third most frequent use of discourse markers in the fourteenth presidential election debates of the Islamic Republic of Iran pertains to inferential discourse markers, accounting for 13% of the frequency distribution. This reflects the deductive and argumentative system involved in the creation of discourse within this functional and sensitive linguistic context, shaped by various social variables. The discourse analysis of the two presidential candidates shows that 20 different types of discourse markers were used, which reveal the justificatory, argumentative, and defensive stances of the candidates regarding their future plans and actions. These discourse markers serve two main functions:

1. Conclusion markers – such as *generally, as a result, therefore, exactly, certainly, in fact, moreover, definitely, rightly* (see Table 6),

2. Reasoning markers – such as *because, since, as, due to, really, prerequisite* (see Table 7).

This indicates that part of human interaction takes place through the creation of such cohesive structures in discourse. This section of the pragmatics study aligns with reports on the use of inferential and reasoning discourse markers in discourse creation in literary texts (Bojari, 2019), research texts (Gandomkar, 2018), political texts (Gholamzadeh, 2020), educational texts (Nadi, 2020), critical texts (Mohammadi & Dehghan, 2021), translation discourse (Mohammadi & Hemmati, 2023), Quranic texts (Mohammadi, 2020), and educational discourse (Nejad Ansari & Mohammadi, 2015).

Table 6: Inferential Deductive Discourse Markers

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Pezeshkian	*dar natije* (as a result)	*As a result, how are we supposed to bring these experienced and competent individuals into the workforce and make use of them?*

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
2	Jalili	*laza* (therefore)	*Therefore, today the people must be able to choose who can best fulfill this necessity.*
3	Jalili	*kollan* (entirely)	*That is, those who have nothing will be entirely deprived of this subsidy.*
4	Jalili	*albatté* (of course)	*We do have this statistic on average. Death, of course, is a right, we say it comes, but that doesn't remove our responsibility for preventable deaths.*
5	Jalili	*makhsusan* (especially)	*My point is that here the government has a duty, the president has a duty, especially since some of these issues are beyond the responsibility of a single institution.*
6	Pezeshkian	*daghighan* (exactly)	*Some of the issues Mr. Ghalibaf mentioned are exactly those we can address internally through energy control, efficiency, and productivity.*
7	Jalili	*daghighan* (exactly)	*Some may not be able to go there and reveal their inefficiencies. Our point exactly is... Let me give another example.*
8	Pezeshkian	*qate'an – motma'enan* (certainly – surely)	*Certainly, if management is reformed, some cost-related issues can surely be protected against.*
9	Jalili	*hatman* (definitely)	*And if we say we want to review it, this will definitely delay our work.*
10	Pezeshkian	*dar haghighat* (in fact)	*We are, in fact, losing 30–40% practically for free, which can no longer be recovered.*
11	Jalili	*be dorosti* (rightly)	*We say investment—investment has been made, rightly so, your villages now have water, electricity, gas, telephone, roads, and everything.*
12	Jalili	*digar* (anymore / no longer)	*That we fall into a situation again where for four or five years we're just stuck, saying if one issue isn't resolved, then no opportunity can be used anymore.*

Table 7: Inferential Reasoning Discourse Markers

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Jalili	*chera ke* (because)	*If we tie growth only to investment, that's definitely an incomplete view. Because you know growth depends on various factors. Investment is necessary, but not sufficient.*
2	Jalili	*be dalil-e* (due to)	*Suddenly, due to a flaw in certain processes, four billion dollars are lost in the procurement of essential goods.*

543

No	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
3	Pezeshkian	*chon* (because)	*A producer in this country shouldn't be shaking in fear of what might happen tomorrow—because we write laws moment to moment.*
4	Jalili	*chon* (because)	*It really helps with their choice—because what matters is what kind of choice and approach is going to run the country.*
5	Pezeshkian	*baraye in ke* (because / so that)	*The government doesn't have dollars to give. It can't give them—because of that, the used car issue becomes problematic.*
6	Jalili	*vaqean* (truly / really)	*If we truly believe that the country must progress and leap forward, then planning should start at the school level.*
7	Pezeshkian	*lazeme* (necessary/prerequisite)	*The prerequisite for executing the plan is the participation of all, collaboration free from division, and the use of top, non-partisan experts.*
8	Jalili	*lazeme an* (its prerequisite)	*If we say 8% growth is achievable, its prerequisite is recognizing opportunities.*

The fourth most frequent use of discourse markers in managing political discourse, with a frequency distribution of 7% and 8%, pertains to contrastive discourse markers (see Table 7). These discourse markers serve various functions such as: Contradiction (*vali* – row 2, *amma* – rows 3 and 4, *But* – row 5, *Now* – rows 6 and 7), Threat (*But* – row 1), and Reporting (*however* – row 8, *in spite of the fact that* – row 9). The functions of threat, contradiction, and reporting in intercultural and interlingual discourse through the use of contrastive discourse markers have also been reported in: Educational discourse between professors and students (Nejad Ansari & Mohammadi, 2015), Literary texts (Bojari, 2019), Research texts (Gandomkar, 2018), Political texts (Gholamzadeh, 2020), Educational texts (Nadi, 2020), Critical texts (Mohammadi & Dehghan, 2021), and Discourse creation in Quranic texts in Arabic (Mohammadi, 2020).

Table 8 – Contrastive Discourse Markers

No.	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
1	Jalili	Vali (but)	They said that every day more investment should come and income should increase, *but* if unfortunately there are any leaks, your resources will be wasted.
2	Pezeshkian	Vali (but)	Some people we introduce as experts and then call them experts, *but* they really are not.

No.	Candidate	Discourse Marker	Example
3	Pezeshkian	Amma (however)	According to the development plan law, we must follow it. That has always been my point. *However*, whether this law aligns with available resources is a matter of scientific calculation.
4	Jalili	Amma (however)	Investment is necessary, *however*, what is more important is the management of that investment.
5	Pezeshkian	Magar (wasn't it…)	I don't want to get into those stories, Doctor, *wasn't it* said that the stock market issue would be resolved in three days?
6	Pezeshkian	Hālā (but now)	When we sit among the people, even our own employees don't trust us, *but now* we want to just talk theory? Problems won't be solved with theory alone.
7	Jalili	Hālā (but now)	He says we have 17 people. *But now* you say their population was one-tenth of ours, or 170? No, it was 17,000.
8	Jalili	Bā in ke (despite the fact that)	...This family receives 12 times more subsidy than someone without a car, *despite the fact that* they are wealthier and in a better financial situation.
9	Jalili	In dar hāli ast ke (this is while...)	In what situation does this occur? *This is while* many people with high incomes avoid taxes due to lack of transparency and financial cycle loopholes.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrated that discourse markers possess various textual features and, as a result, establish relationships between discourse units. This means that discourse markers serve as indicative elements, showcasing both linguistic and paralinguistic cues that influence the development of discourse. The type of communicative strategy chosen by a speaker or writer affects the role assigned to discourse markers, and these strategies, in turn, bring about the use of diverse pragmatic functions for such markers. These roles include meta-textual functions based on hierarchical, elaborative, contrastive, inferential, and justificatory relationships, representing a model for managing discourse in political dialogue. Therefore, the outcome of this study was the identification of a preliminary four-dimensional model for monitoring and managing political discourse and speech (Figure 1). This study serves as a starting point for exploring the system of political discourse monitoring. However, the pragmatic, psychological, and sociological dimensions of discourse markers within the broader scope of political discourse in the Islamic Republic of Iran remain unexplored. This study was limited to the second round of the 14th presidential election in Iran and could not address aspects such as similarities and differences within the pattern observed during the debates of this election cycle. To achieve

this, a comprehensive analysis of both candidates' perspectives across all debates and interviews is necessary, which is a task for future researchers.

Figure 1, Political Discourse Monitoring Model

The simple literal meanings and straightforward surface forms of discourse markers have led to a lack of scrutiny by researchers toward these paralinguistic variables. As a result, the academic, educational, and research communities in the country lack a precise understanding of the discourse-related, pragmatic, implicit, and indirect effects of discourse markers in political contexts. These elements are often merely considered as conjunctions or linking words. As stated at the beginning of the article, this study is a preliminary investigation in political discourse and primarily serves to raise awareness. The researchers' goal is to invite scholars from the fields of pragmatics and discourse analysis to engage in exploring the dimensions of discourse monitoring using technological tools and corpus-based research approaches.

To conduct comprehensive studies, the researchers recommend collaborative research using larger corpora to gain a more complete understanding of the characteristics of political discourse monitoring systems in Iran. Furthermore, since these paralinguistic elements have broad pragmatic implications in

introducing cognitive, social, and discourse-based systems of human interaction in politics, analyzing the formation of discourse behavior in professional politicians will have extensive applications in political science education and research, as well as in the development and evolution of pedagogical and research approaches in the field of political media.

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545