

Political Discourse in Iraq after 2003

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Abstract--- *On the 9th of April 2003, a totally radical change happened in the Iraqi society; a change from Authoritarian dictatorship to complete western kind of democracy. The majority of Iraqis were very eager to that change after long years of poverty, horrible death, wars, and suppression. But the fact that the Iraqi people consists of different nationalities and religions and different doctrines led to the emergence of a variety of intellectual trends and multiple affiliations which have had a great impact on the diversity of Iraqi political discourse. This article attempts to shed light on the political discourse of three political and religious sections that have a great influence in guiding the Iraqi public, and then make a comparison between them. We will address the Shiite side as a model for the speech of Mr. Muqtada al-Sadr, who represents the majority of the poor and uneducated people, and the speech of Mr. Noori al-Maliki, due to the fact that he was elected twice as the Iraqi prime minister. On the Sunni side, we will take the example of the speech of Dr. Adnan al-Dulaimi, who won the majority of Sunni seats in the Iraqi parliament in its first session. From the Kurdish side we will address the speech of Mr. Massoud Barzani, the president of the Kurdistan region since 2003 till the present time. The article analyzes the vocabularies and the tones of the selected speeches. The sources on which this article is based are television statements, YouTube, and tweets written by politicians on Twitter.*

Keywords--- *Religious Speeches, Struggle, Political Movement, Political Process.*

I. INTRODUCTION

Duhaime's Law Dictionary defines political speech as "Expressions which comment on government action rather than the private conduct of an individual". In addition to providing a more general understanding of how speeches are organized, a literary linguistic analysis of the features used in political speeches can illuminate the effects of these strategies and techniques on anyone. There are different types of Iraqi political speech after 2003. These types vary on a scale from a very forgiving, tolerant, national speech at one end to a violent terrorist type at the other. Dijk, (1995: 243) states that the legitimate status of a political power is based on the democratic choice of the people in our time. Therefore, the most important addresses of the public political discourse are a large number of voters, and the candidate for an elected position seeks to formulate his program and shape his image in such a way as to effectively take into account the preferences of different constituencies. Nevertheless, the verbal implementation of direct and indirect influence on voters in the pragmalinguistic plan is characterized by the generality of communicative strategies. In Iraq, some of these strategies are in harmony with the general public attitude and some try to guide the thought of the public into a specific direction according to a prior belief, mostly religious, in the minds of the public.

Chilton (2004: 3) says that "...politics varies according to one's situation and purposes.... If one considers the definitions, implicit and explicit, found both in the traditional study of politics and in discourse studies of politics, there are two broad strands. On the one hand, politics is viewed as a struggle for power, between those who seek to

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assert and maintain their power and those who seek to resist it. Some states are conspicuously based on struggles for power; whether democracies are essentially so constituted is disputable. On the other hand, politics is viewed as cooperation, as the practices and institutions that a society has for resolving clashes of interest over money, influence, liberty, and the like”.

Cross-cutting these two orientations is another distinction, this time between ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels. At the micro level there are conflicts of interest, struggles for dominance and efforts at co-operation between individuals, between genders, and between social groups of various kinds. As Jones et al. (1994: 5) put it, “[a]t the micro level we use a variety of techniques to get our own way: persuasion, rational argument, irrational strategies, threats, entreaties, bribes, manipulation – anything we think will work”.

Jones et al. (Ibid) states that at the macro extreme, there are the political institutions of the state, which in one of the views of politics serve to resolve conflicts of interests, and which in the other view serve to assert the power of a dominant individual (a tyrant) or group (say, the capital-owning bourgeoisie, as in the traditional Marxist perspective). Such state institutions in a democracy are enshrined in constitutions, in civil and criminal legal codes, and (as in the case of Britain) in precedent practice. Associated with these state institutions, are parties and professional politicians, with more or less stable practices; other social formations – interest groups, social movements – may play upon the same stage.

What is strikingly absent from conventional studies of politics is attention to the fact that the micro-level behaviors mentioned above are actually kinds of linguistic action – that is, discourse. Equally, the macro-level institutions are types of discourse with specific characteristics – for example, parliamentary debates, and broadcast interviews. And constitutions and laws are also discourse – written discourse, or text, of a highly specific type. This omission is all the more striking as students of politics often make statements like the following: (Politics involves reconciling differences through discussion and persuasion. Communication is therefore central to politics).

(Hague et al. 1998: 3–4)

Politics in Iraq sways between these two aspects; struggle for power and cooperation. Available data reveal that struggle is the dominate aspects on the political Iraqi scene.

The battle for power presupposes the nearness of a care group, expertly prepared guides and aides who build up the idea of legislative issues and direct their open activities, for every member in this battle. The explicitness of this heading is that the principle character’s conduct is normal to the best degree and looks unconstrained. The addressees of political discourse in this regard are professionals, usual representatives of other political forces, who demonstrate an arsenal of techniques and methods of influencing a wide audience. There is a certain similarity between advertising and political discourse because these types of communicative interaction are built on certain models that make up the technology of impact on the public. This specialization of the recipients of political discourse does not exclude the existence of other types of addresses, but it is important to emphasize that the basis for identifying the corresponding types is their dominant function in institutional discourse.

Let’s turn now to take examples of the speeches of the politicians mentioned in the abstract of this article, and then shed light on the style, tone, vocabulary, and the social background and attitude of the speakers.

II. MUQTADA AL-SADR

Muqtada al-Sadr is followed by the majority of poor uneducated Shiites. He is the son of the Shiite Marji' (Supreme cleric) the late Mohammad Sadiq al-Sadr and the leader of The Sadrist movement. His speeches reveal instability of situation and of political views. He used to glorify himself and his family every time he speaks. In the following speech he condemns the other Shiites Marji's and criticizes citizens for being interested in the political side of a previous speech of his. He doesn't forget to glorify his father describing him as the only way to Allah (Almighty God). The swearwords or abusing utterances he uses are not to be used in a sacred place (the mosque he is sitting in). The speech was delivered in al-Kufa mosque and it is now on YouTube under the link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-XflaQwtTfA>). Words written in bold are those which he says in a deep concentrating slow tone. The translation is mine.

A week or two ago, I, **myself**, led the congregation in a Friday Prayer. The speech was 95% religious. But the introduction, or **before the beginning as I call it, (and you know what I call it)** was somehow political. Perhaps I wrote it (in the lost time). It was completely not among my interests or my priorities. What did the society do? People threw the two religious speeches in the garbage (here he uses a slang Iraqi word) and concentrated only on the political introduction, Turkey and Turkey and I don't know what else (He says the underlined phrase mockingly). What did **the martyr of Friday say?** (The martyr of Friday is his father). He said "there is a benefit in saying my name". There's a benefit in saying his name (He repeats this three times). Can you say no? (Says it loudly) Is there anyone who does not agree? (No one speaks). You mount the pulpit week after week, day after day, hour after hour, without mentioning his name! Such a leader of the Friday Prayer is to be thrown in garbage. What is the **wire** that connects us with Allah? It is **Mohammad al-Sadr** (his father). If the wire is pulled out, what will happen in this case? Confusion; there will be no use of TV. Connect the wire and your broadcast will be seen to people. **I don't know whether you understand or not.** At the beginning of every Friday Prayer you must mention a religious question according to the fatwa of the Friday martyr, and you mustn't accumulate the rubbish said by any other Marji' (supreme cleric)

Analysis

From the very first beginning, the reader finds out that what signals the foreground of the speaker is his will to attach great importance to himself. This is very clear from his way of saying the expressions that refer to himself and to his father with deep slow concentrating tone, and also from the use of the reflexive (myself) directly after the first person pronoun (I). this is clear also from his trying to give the (introduction of the Friday speech) another name invented by him (**before the beginning**) and saying this new name in a low deep concentrating tone that makes the listeners feel that the new invented name is more important than the ordinary one. The same thing happens when he is in the middle of his speech referring to his father as (**the martyr of Friday**) and when he is about to finish his speech. We find this when he says his father's name (**Mohammad al-Sadr**) and when he refers to him (his father) metaphorically as a **wire**. At nearly the end of the speech he gives himself an intellectual superiority above his audience when he doubts their understanding to what he has already said. Again, he expresses his doubts about their ability to understand in a slow deep concentrating tone when he says: "**I don't know whether you understand or not**".

In the third sentence in the speech the speaker says that the small political part at the introduction of the Friday speech was not among his priorities and he wrote it in a hurry, foregrounding to his audience that he is far from indulging in politics. The Iraqis know very well that he is the leader of a very big political movement, and he has representatives in the parliament and ministers in the government. But these words are specifically addressed to his followers (his audience among them) to give the impression that he is devoted to religion more than any other thing else. This becomes very clear when he mocks the citizens' interest in the political situation in Turkey at a time the Turkish forces invaded the North of Iraq. After accusing his followers (his audience) of being unable to understand, he soon comes to contradict this religious devotion when he, at the end of the speech, condemns the Shiites Marji's, other than his father, and describes their Fatwas as rubbish. The word (garbage) is used by the speaker twice in the speech. He uses it in the Iraqi slang dialect (شيله وذبه بالزباله). The first time he uses this word to describe how the society neglected the religious part of a previous Friday speech of his. The second time he uses it when he says the leader of the congregation of Friday Prayer who doesn't mention the name of Mohammad al-Sadr is to be thrown in garbage. A point is to be mentioned here, that the discourse in the speech has changed suddenly from talking about religion and politics to talk about the late Mohammad al-Sadr.

III. NOORI AL-MALIKI

Nouri Kamil Mohammed Hasan al-Maliki, born 20 June 1950, also known as Jawad al-Maliki or Abu Esraa, is an Iraqi politician who was Prime Minister of Iraq from 2006 to 2014. He is secretary-general of the Islamic Dawa Party and a Vice President of Iraq.

Al-Maliki began his political career as a Shia dissident under Saddam Hussein's regime in the late 1970s and rose to prominence after he fled a death sentence into exile for 24 years. During his time abroad, he became a senior leader of the Islamic Dawa Party, coordinated the activities of anti-Saddam guerrillas and built relationships with Iranian and Syrian officials whose help he sought in overthrowing Saddam. Al-Maliki worked closely with United States and coalition forces in Iraq following their departure by the end of 2011. The following speech was delivered by him on the 11th of August 2014, and was broadcasted by al-Iraqia TV. The speech is now on You Tube under the link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xYv85KUrIVw>). The translation is mine.

In the name of Allah, The Compassionate, the Merciful

“Allah is with those who are righteous and those who are virtuous”. True are the words of Allah.

Citizens of the Great Iraq

Peace be upon you.

The political process has faced dangerous challenges and crises that almost led to the collapse of the whole political system, and to bring back the reign of dictatorship and repression. But by the help of Allah and the sincere Iraqis we were able to defeat the evils plans. I previously drew attention not to overcome the constitution that the Iraqis voted on it in a great electoral epic. I also warned not to overcome the results of the elections since they represent the choices of the citizens who participated in the parliament elections to choose their representatives in the executive branch legislative authorities. According to my national, religious, and moral responsibility, and according to my field knowledge of the political, economic, social and security situations I warned the Presidency of

the Council of Representatives and the Presidency of the Republic and the Federal Court to the seriousness of any violation of the Constitution in this difficult and sensitive stage experienced by the country, that the security situation will get worse and there will be events of bad consequences and damage to the highest interests of the Iraqi people.

Today we face a challenge that is more dangerous than all the challenges and crises that we have faced. The President of the Republic has violated the Constitution twice: the first when he extended the mandate of the candidate of the largest parliamentary bloc, which ended last Thursday. And the second when the President deliberately not to mandate the candidate of the rule of law, the largest parliamentary bloc, which was determined in the first session of the House of Representatives in accordance with the decision of the Federal Court. Today I will file a complaint with the Federal Court against the President of the Republic for explicit constitutional violation for the sake of political plans and sectarian interests at the expense of the supreme interests of the Iraqi people. I call for the speaker of the House of Representatives so that the legislative authority fulfills its duty to interrogate the President of the Republic for his explicit violation of the constitution.

Analysis

From the beginning to the end of the speech, the speaker keeps the same calm tone. This can be taken as a reference to the unity of the subject and the coherence of the discourse. The Quranic verse at the beginning of the speech can be taken as a foreground for the whole subject. Those who are righteous and those who are virtuous never violate laws. The speech talks about the violation of the Constitution which is the highest law in the country. “Allah is with those who are righteous and those who are virtuous” can be taken as a warning or a reminder for those who violated laws change their opinion and to behave according to the text of the Constitution. Then the speech begins with a short introduction mentioning the dangers that the political process has faced.

Immediately after that, he reminds the politicians of his previous warnings against the violation of Constitution and that he has drawn the attention of the authorities to these violations. All these are a good introduction to the main subject of the speech. The word (violation) is repeated three times, and the verb (violated) is mentioned once. In the case of the word (violation), it is a reference to a general situation that it has become an ordinary matter in Iraq, while the verb (violated) refers to a specific situation that is the central aim of the speech. According to what the speaker sees, it is the duty of the Legislative Authority and the Supreme Court to stop this violation of the Constitution.

IV. MASOUD BARZANI

Masoud Barzani (born 16 August 1946) is a Kurdish politician who had been President of the Iraqi Kurdistan Region since 2005. However, Barzani’s post sparked controversy, as his mandate expired 19 August 2015. He is also leader of the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) since 1979.

Masoud Barzani succeeded his father, the Kurdish nationalist leader Mustafa Barzani, as the leader of the KDP in 1979. Working closely with his brother Idris Barzani until Idris's death, Barzani and various other Kurdish groups fought the forces of the Iraqi government in Baghdad during the Iran–Iraq War. For much of this time, the Kurdish leadership was exiled to Iran.

Barzani was born in Iranian Kurdistan, during the short-lived Republic of Mahabad. The following speech was delivered on September 22, 2017 from Erbil, and broadcasted by Kurd TV channel. It is now on You Tube under the link (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EB1zmjjrF4>). Translation from Arabic is mine.

Commitment to Constitution preserves Iraq's union. I don't say its unity. I say its union. This means the freedom of coexistence. We thought after 2003 there would be a new chance for all Iraqis to make a new Iraq. The people of Kurdistan have played a major role in this. The destruction of 4500 villages, and the killing of 8,000 Barzanis and 12,000 Phyllis in 1988, and the bombing of Halabja with chemical weapons and all of Kurdistan. We believed that all these tragedies that happened to the people of Kurdistan Has moved the conscience of the world, and we believe that the current Baghdad will compensate the people of Kurdistan.

Unfortunately, we found that the majority of those who rule Baghdad today, not all but most of them but the majority of them were against the implementation of the article 140 of the Constitution. Article 140 of the Constitution is not implemented. They had to send weapons and the budget of the Peshmerga according to the Constitution but they did not send any weapons to the Peshmerga. They have stopped the budget. It is another Anfal committed against the Kurds. There was to be a democratic federal civil state. But I ask everyone, does this state exist today? The existing state is doctrinal. Until this day, the Peshmerga fighters are fighting ISIS. And even when weapons come, we can only handle them with the approval of Baghdad. This is the case with Baghdad. We did not talk about the referendum today, but we talked about it earlier with all the parties and told them to take this matter seriously. They didn't take it seriously. We are tired. We cannot continue this kind of relationship. Many of them thought that this was no more than a pressure sheet. Sometimes they say, this is to get rid of internal crisis. But we are very serious to save our people.

Analysis

The high protesting tone and the first two words reveal the whole subject of the speech. "Commitment to Constitution preserves Iraq's union"; words are chosen carefully. The listener will immediately be aware that there's no commitment to the Constitution and that the union of Iraq is threatened. The utterance that begins with "The destruction of 4500 villages" And ends with "all of Kurdistan" is no more than noun phrases in coordination. The explanation of it is left to the listener according to the previous sentence. In this way the speaker makes the audience think in the same way as he thinks. Despite the fact that the text is translated from an Arabic translation to its original Kurdish text, but the message is very clear. Every word is chosen to make the audience protest against Baghdad and to make them eager for independence. The speaker makes references to the tragedies that the Kurds witnessed under the rule of the dictator. Then, he immediately compares these with what is happening to his people at the time being.

V. ADNAN AL-DULAIMI

Adnan al-Dulaimi (1923- 2017) was a Sunni Iraqi politician who became prominent following the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the fall of the regime of Saddam Hussein. He was very fanatical to his Sunni doctrine and saw Sunnis as more legitimate to govern Iraq than Shiites. His following speech was delivered at a conference held in Turkey under the patronage of Saudi Arabia under the title (Iraq Support Conference). At the beginning of his

speech he objected to the name of the conference asking the audience: why don't you call it "The Sunni Support Conference". The speech was broadcasted by al-Jazeera TV and it is now on You Tube under the link:

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pp8UkRB5GOI&t=442s>). The translation is mine. The expressions that are written in bold are those which are said with a very high tone.

Thank you for inviting us to attend the conference. I hope that we are able to make decisions that make the Sunnis in Iraq feel that their brothers support them. **Why didn't you call this conference (The Sunni Support Conference)?** What is Iraq? Iraq is nothing without Sunnis. **The Sunnis are the real Iraqis. They are the people of the unity of Iraq. They are the title of Iraq. They are the builders of Iraq. Why didn't you call it (The Sunni support Conference)? Are you afraid of being accused that you are sectarians? We are sectarians. Say what you want to say. I swear by Allah, if you don't pay very much attention, Iraq will be lost, and Baghdad will be lost. It is a sectarian war. It is a sectarian struggle. They aim to eliminate Sunnis. Everyone who doesn't see this is mistaken. Such a person has to rethink and consider all the events that happen in Iraq. We are suffering in Iraq. Pay attention you Arab. Pay attention you Muslims. Your brothers in Iraq, especially in Baghdad will be eliminated. They will be trodden under the feet of Shias. It is elimination of the Sunnis in Baghdad. Pay attention.** (One of the attendants begins to shout saying: Iraq will be back). To these shouts al-Dulaimi answers: These words are worthless. We don't need your words. We need your real support. **Where are you?** Baghdad will be lost if you don't stop the Shias. There is a catastrophe **every day**. You have to defend Sunnis. **If you don't wake up and defend them**, they will be trodden under the feet of al-Mahdi army and other armies of Shia.

Analysis

The speech is a furious one. The speaker keeps screaming almost the whole time. The call to "pay attention" is repeated three times in the speech. From the very beginning he calls his Saudi audience to support his and the people of his doctrine against Iraqis who are from another doctrine. The whole speech is no more than repeated sentences.

VI. CONCLUSION

Differences in culture and social backgrounds in the Iraqi society resulted in different styles in the political discourse in Iraq. Speakers do not try to change these facts but instead take them as a background to support their political point of views and to strengthen their situations.

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