Breakout Session 1:
Journalism, Media and Blogs

1) Ehsan BAKHSHANDEH with Mahmoud AHMADI-AFZADI
Media Development in Iran; Impacts of the 1979 Revolution

Abstract
The post-revolution Iran has already entered into a new stage. Three decades have passed since one of the bloodiest revolutions of the 20th century which had great social and cultural impacts not only on the Iranian nation, but also on other Muslim countries in the Middle East.

During the past 30 years, Iranian officials have highlighted the social and cultural implications of the 1979 revolution. In fact, in the early years after the revolution, a Supreme Council of Cultural Revolution was appointed by the late founder of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Khomeini to ‘preserve’ the revolutionary values and principles and help ‘export the revolution’.

Nobody can deny the role of the 1979 Islamic Revolution in raising the awareness of the Iranian nation in social, cultural and political aspects. Thirty years have elapsed and the nation still seems to be abiding by the principles and values of the 1979 Islamic Revolution, albeit in its modern version. The role of the media in helping protect those values should not be overshadowed by tough government policies to preserve Khomeini’s revolution.

During the past three decades, different sections of the Iranian media particularly the radio and television have been keeping up with their rivals in the developed countries at least in the area of technology. Many satellite news channels in several languages including the Arabic and English have been set up during the past decade while the Persian language has pushed its way into the top 10 languages in use in the blogosphere, indicating that blogging continues to play a critical role in debates among Iranian bloggers.

Despite the advancement of media technologies in Iran and the extensive use of multimedia in news websites around the world, Iranian press have been unable to adapt themselves to the state-of-the-art technology while facing strict regulations by the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance.

The present paper aims to provide a detailed overview of the development of the print and electronic news media in Iran in the past 30 years after the Islamic Revolution. It also tries to study the pitfalls and strengths of the press system with reference to researches undertaken in Iran since 1979.

Key Words
Revolution, media, press, weblogs, communication, news, culture

Biography: Ehsan BAKHSHANDEH
International scholar at the Department of Politics and International Relations, Royal Holloway University of London. He was graduated from Allameh Tabatabaei University in Tehran as a top researcher. In 2004, he was selected as the Exemplary University Student of Iran in a tight nationwide competition. He has also presented articles in several international conferences and authored some journal papers for "Translation Studies Quarterly" on Development Communication, Culture and Translation and Journalistic Transcreation. He has pursued a five-year career in both the broadcast and print journalism in major Iranian media including the English-language daily "Iran Daily" and the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting.
**Biography: Mahmoud AHMADI-AFZADI**
Former principal of the School of Media Studies in Tehran. He is currently an affiliate researcher with the University of British Columbia in Canada. He is also the former director of news in the Iranian television. He is very well-known in Iran for his presentation in a TV series during presidential campaigns in Iran before the 2005 elections. He has excellent knowledge in TV journalism and news production.

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**2) Golnaz NANBAKHSH**
Changing language use and politeness: Evidence from Iranian family discourse and reality TV

**Abstract**
This work addresses the socio-cultural impact of the 1979 Iranian revolution on politeness and language use in Iranian contemporary society. Since the revolution, public ideologies about politeness and address forms have been radically reframed in egalitarian terms. This research aims to shed light on to what extent these macro-social ideologies are reflected in the micro-sociolinguistic behaviour of individuals.

Previous literature on Persian address forms (Keshavarz 1988) only focused on address terms which were influenced by the Islamic ideology of the early 1979 Iranian revolution. These include excessive use of kinship terms such as *baraadar* ‘brother’ and *xaahar* ‘sister’ in public domains which clearly illuminated the Islamic ideology. However, this study demonstrates how new address forms are being used in the contemporary Persian language. The domains of observed change are in society and family dynamics that show accelerated changes in the use of address terms which may be due to solidarity, the influence of media discourse or the gradual change of social norm or perspective of politeness in families (e.g. child and parent relationship).

The analyses of 10 hours of recorded spontaneous speech from 20 family dinner time conversations and 10 hours of recorded talk from 8 episodes of Iranian Reality TV programme collected during field work in Iran in 2007 shows that these changes of address term usage are due to changes in how social solidarity is marked in the post-79 generation. Also, it illuminates the Iranian 1979 revolution with an egalitarian ideology of equality in society has yielded to socio-cultural changes in language use in family domain. The analyses show how ideological perspective of equality has narrowed the gap between social hierarchy in society yielding to use of new address terms and titles among the post 1979 generation. The interviews examined signs of change of father dominance to child dominance in the contemporary Iranian society among some communities of practice. The old generation seemed to favour the use of hierarchical address terms however the middle aged and post 1979 Iranian revolution favoured the intimate forms of address.

It is rare to be able to study changes in language and cultural norms of such magnitude as those following the Iranian revolution. This study will have a great social importance in Iran; it will demonstrate the transforming nature of language and society along time. Thus, it opens a new horizon in the study of linguistic politeness and language in Iran.

**Biography**
My research focuses on the use of Persian address forms (kinship terms, pronominal address forms) in Iranian public domain and family dynamics.

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Linguistics and English Language
Education
(1998-2002) B.A English Language and Literature, Tabriz University
(2006-Present) PhD student in Linguistics (Sociolinguistics), Edinburgh University

Professional Background
(2004-present) Persian language Instructor, Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Edinburgh University

Research Interests
Persian Studies, Sociolinguistics, Language, gender and identity, Language variation, use and bilingualism, Language attitudes and awareness.

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3) Mehdi MONTAZER GHAEM
Broadcasting In Iran – challenges of qualitative development

Abstract
Broadcasting system in Iran has, before and after the Islamic Revolution of 1979, has always been at the focal point of policy negotiations. Although state-owned and run, it has been considered as (one of) the most crucial apparatuses for the dissemination of formal ideology. After the end of Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), along with other sectors of society, there grow a demand for "broadcasting development. The IRIB during the coming years witnessed an unprecedented, ever-increasing competition from VCRs, direct broadcasting satellites (from 1993 onwards), the Internet, and alike. In the coming years, demands for its development have been voiced, almost unanimously, though in differing directions, from all sectors of the society as well as political and clerical elite.

Quantitative development has resulted in inauguration of several nationally accessible television and radio channels. In addition, all provinces have developed their stations that provide content produced locally (amounting to 29 television channels and more than 30 radio stations nationwide). However, qualitative development, subject to varying interpretations of policy-makers as well as key influential figures and the public, has proved less than satisfactory. Production of almost all content genres (news, tele-films and serials, discussion programs, etc.) shows a profound and ongoing struggle for the mainstream position regarding norms, expectations, ideology, and alike. Using various case studies, this article focuses on the politics of production of qualitative content (for radio and specially television). Here, a general picture of ideals and ideas of all parties involved (IRIB professionals and managers, the public, governmental bodies and figures, and top-ranking clergy) is portrayed.

Biography

4) Edmund HERZIG
The Iranian Student News Agency (ISNA) and the Role of Students in Opening Up a New Era for News Agencies in Iran

Abstract
During the era of the reform movement, symbolized by President Mohammad Khatami, the Iranian media environment witnessed the emergence of several news agencies. The Iranian Student News agency was the first among them, and soon after its establishment in 1999 it became one of the major sources of news, information, and content in Iranian media, expanding poly-vocalism and finding broad recognition among Iranian media professionals and users.

In fact, for the first time in Iranian media history, young people (students) opened up an alternative news source to the main stream. Within the framework of a semi participatory media organization, they challenged the monopoly of the more-than-sixty-year-old state news agency, IRNA. This unique phenomenon has not hitherto been the subject of serious study.

ISNA can be understood in several ways:
1) as an instance of a global movement towards open and participatory journalism;
2) as the embodiment of the Iranian reform movement of 1997-2005;
3) as an outgrowth of the Iranian student movement and an alternative form of civic participation for students.

Thanks in large part to its unique ‘student’ character ISNA was able to achieve several influential innovations, ranging from enabling the university community to have a specific medium operating on the national level, breaking the monopoly of official news sources, creating a role model for other new news agencies, changing the news market, giving a start to a new generation of journalists, removing false redlines and creating a hybrid of the traditional and participatory media.

This paper, based on Fateh’s doctoral thesis, concludes that as well as the national politico-cultural context of the reform movement, the main factors contributing ISNA’s rapid development and success were its semi-voluntary student workforce and its use of the internet to distribute its content. The paper seeks to demonstrate how the credibility and creativity of students - a key social reference group that was playing a decisive role in national life - gave the agency credibility and promoted it as a reliable national news source in the face of competition with IRNA. The research also shows how students were able to balance rights, responsibilities and official boundaries and how the independent nature of students and their semi-voluntary participation, which were the most distinguishing features of ISNA, assisted the relative poly-vocalism and editorial independence of the agency. It also explores the ways in which ISNA’s net based and free access strategy enabled the agency to achieve effective news circulation, which in turn motivated online journalism in the country and turned ISNA into a pathfinder and role model for the next generation of news agencies in Iran.

**Biography**

5) David ARN


**Abstract**

The situation of the historically high addiction rate in Iran didn't change much in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite repressive measures against smugglers and addicts alike, addiction remained worrying and grew especially among the youth. Hence, since the mid 1990s Iran in an astonishing reaction introduced new therapies and harm reduction practices such as needle exchange and methadone programmes.
Concurrently, the Iranian media started to increasingly cover the subject of drug consumption and drug addiction. This is especially true for the first years of the Khātamī administration, during which the press enjoyed a brief period of freedom. It was the emerging reformist newspapers that set the agenda by reporting openly on the devastating effects of drug smuggling and drug consumption on the Iranian society and by demanding adapted official and private strategies to reverse this trend. Interestingly, this new critical form of journalism didn't stop after the conservative crack-down on the reformist press. Quite the contrary, it certainly had an impact on the conservative press – at least concerning the drugs discourse. The reformist press together with the growingly active civil society thus can be seen as a crucial factor for change in the attitude of the Iranian society towards drugs.

One evidence of this change is the fact that unlike at the beginning of the Islamic Revolution drug addiction is not regarded any more as a sign of a personal moral decay. And only in the staunchest radical papers – such as Resālat or Jomhūrī-ye Eslāmī – it is treated as an indicator of "social corruption". Yet, in all the newspapers the solution to the country's drug problem is not looked for in religion. They all agree about the need for new remedies such as modern therapies and especially more rehabilitation facilities to cure addiction. But they also address the underlying causes for addiction, the most important of which they name poverty and unemployment. Very often it is stressed that these two factors together with lacking recreational options and an uncertain future is turning the youth towards drug consumption. In order to prevent their addiction the newspapers discuss the important function themselves, the families or the government can and have to play. And towards the end of the analyzed period they also start to address the growing problem of HIV diffusion by way of needle-sharing.

Today, after almost four years since Aḥmadīnezžād came to power, the official Iranian drug policy still is one of the most progressive in the region. The NGOs in the field of drug prevention and drug therapy – with exceptions – continue to work relatively unhampered. And even if the restrained media is less frequently and less openly debating these problems, the Iranian discourse on drugs and addiction definitively has become more pragmatic and more realistic. Yet, consumption patterns are changing and addiction is rising – especially among the youth and among women. Thus it seems, today it is more the social circumstances that are having an impact on the Islamic Revolution than vice versa.

The content of the paper is drawn from my ongoing PhD thesis provisionally titled "Crime or Illness? The Iranian Media Discourse on Drugs and Drug Policy (1995-2000)".

**Biography**

David Arn, born in 1975, Switzerland; MA in General History (major), and Arabic and Persian Language and Literature (minor), University of Zurich (1995-2003); PhD thesis "Crime or Illness? The Iranian Media Discourse on Drugs and Drug Policy (1995-2000)" (since 2005); graduate fellow at the University Priority Research Programme Asia and Europe, University of Zurich (2006-2009); visiting scholar at Communication and Media Research Institute (CAMRI), University of Westminster (2009-2010).