

A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF GENDER DIFFERENCES IN USING THE SPEECH ACT OF APOLOGY IN POLITICAL TEXTS

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Abstract: According to Hudson (1996: 120) the relationship between speakers and hearers in a social community can be seen as reflected by linguistic items that every language seems to have. Among some social characteristics, sex seems to be "the commonest characteristics to be reflected by linguistic items" (ibid: 121). However, as cited in McGinty (2001:146), Lakoff (1973) points out that women's marginality and powerlessness can be seen clearly by their speech. This however shows that women differ in their speech from men. Trudgill (1974: 91-2) considers that female English speakers use forms correctly and better than those used by male speakers. Holmes (1995) as cited in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 136) stresses that women seem to be more linguistically polite than men. We hypothesize that at least in political field both men and women practice the same linguistic form of apologizing. Political actors appear to share the same power and they are equal in the form of apologizing. For the purpose of our study, six expressed apologies by Hillary Clinton, Theresa May, Condoleezza Rice, Clinton, Bush, Obama have been selected.

Keywords: political apology, political texts, gender, pragmatic analysis

1. Introduction

Any language has functions and the way people use the language to communicate their views of relationships and behaviors to some other people is the social function of language (Hudson, 1996: 230). In any social community, language can be practiced by all members of that society. As far as we have speakers, language seems to be the means for kids, young, old persons either males or females (Graddol and Swann, 1989: 42ff). But do those people differ in their use of language? More clearly, as related to our study, do men and women differ in the use of language?

Many of the studies in sociolinguistics show that there is a prominent difference in using language between men and women. Hudson (1996: 121) for example, explains some different uses of language used by men and women. According to him, in Louisiana the spoken Koasati language shows differences in the morphological verb forms used by both male and female. Along with this another sex-marker discussed by him (ibid) concerns the modern Island Carib. In this Island there seem quite different aspects used by men and women in their common language. Shibatani (1990: 124, 371ff) points out another difference in Japanese language's users. Since the end of the feudal period, differences remain distinctly clear in gender's use of language (ibid: 371ff).

According to these results and some others which show certain distinct way of using language by males and females, Hudson states some other differences taking into account Tannen's two books (1986, 1990) as a model for stating the differences between language's speakers. However, the two books focus on the middle class of America.

Hudson makes it clear that the two books show some differences in behavior. He (1996: 141-43) tries to list them as (1) women are mostly concerned with solidarity rather than power which is the concern of men. (2) For McCormick, for female speakers they tend to reduce the large number of conversational group into small group of conversation (1994b: 1357). (3) According to Tannen (1990: 43) sex differences are related not only to adults but to small girls and boys in single-sex groups of talking. However, when playing in single-sex groups children appear to have opulent chances to develop their different patterns. (4) Men's style gives them a good opportunity to appear better for public speaking, giving their inquiries inside classroom, talking in meeting with members, whereas, we can see the style of women as 'private' as it was prepared for establishing concord. (5) Men tend to put less effort than women in order to keep holding a conversation. In contrast to women who use some supportive feedback to keep their conversation going on. (6) the difference between male and female extends to the subject matter of things they talk about. This is clear in the pronoun they use while talking such as *we* and *you* rather than *I* which is the preferred pronoun by men. Adding to these points Hudson (1996: 193) and Trudgill (1974: 91-2) mark that the standard used by women is a high-prestige standard.

Taking into consideration sex differences, some others point out their own remarks regarding men and women use of language. Trudgill (1983) for example comments saying that these differences refer to different social attitudes towards the behavior of both men and women. McGinty (2001: 143) asserts that the differences of language can be taught because these differences are cultural differences, since our lives and our different experiences make us differ from each other when we talk. "Nonstandard variants and low status " tend to be used by men rather than "high status and standard variants" which is the peculiarity of women (Yu-jing, 2007: 6).

Concerning on some social behaviors and practicing politeness between each other, males seem to be linguistically less polite than females. Holmes (1995), as cited in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003: 136) claims that the above stated fact helps to look at women as practicing the social behaviors correctly. Within the same circle, Trudgill asserts that most of sociological studies have shown that in English speaking society, women are "more status conscious" than men (1974: 94).

In their everyday speech, men and women practice different kinds of acts ranging from asking questions, commanding, requesting, giving advice, thanking, condoling, estimating, apologizing, etc. Related to our study, some scholars have approved that men and women differ in their way of apologizing and even in the way they express their psychological state toward the state of affairs to approve their apologies. McGinty points out that "women are tentative and apologetic, men are bold" (2001: 142). However, commenting on gender differences of apologizing, Holmes (1989: 208) states that there is a possible reason for sex differences in apologizing. The reason according to her seems to be because men try to look at apologies as self-oriented face threatening acts. The speech act of apologizing considered being as speaker's face damaging act, therefore, males speakers try to avoid using such acts. In other words, men avoid using apology. Contrary to men, women may perceive such acts as 'other-oriented' and thus as ways to facilitate the harmony in any social community (ibid). On the other side, Holmes

(ibid: 209) points out that men use apologies only when they feel there would be greater offence to be caused if they did not apologize.

Having all these theoretical observations in mind, the aim of this study is to show that at least in political field, both men and women use the same forms of apologizing, having the same power of practicing their authority.

2. Political Texts

When we talk about political text we talk about a special use of language that specifies the text as political. There are three kinds of meanings given to the language being organized and constructed (Halliday, 1978: 22). Among the three meanings, the third type of language's meaning seems to be concerned with creating text (and in our case of concern, political text) namely the one by which experiential and social reality are respectively presented and enacted (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002: 50).

A political text, as Van Dijk (1997: 12) defines, refers to the text which can be defined by its actors or authors. In other words, it can be defined by its politicians. Most of the studies try to seek the texts and the talk of those professional politicians or political institutions. These texts can be seen as confined by presidents, prime ministers and other members of government, parliament or political parties at both local, national and also international levels.

Within text production one can face some social representations such as beliefs, attitudes and ideologies. These general social beliefs are directly presented in discourse (Van Dijk, 1998a: 17). Van Dijk (1997: 20) points out that the social form and the political action formulate the text of politicians. In other words, political text seems to be both a social form and a political action. He goes further to describe the importance of political text by saying that political text production represents more than perceiving political discourse in a specific context (ibid).

As a result, the production of political texts can be done with some personal beliefs and experience (personal beliefs presented in their episodic memory) and some other share political representation of reality (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002: 204-9). Texts about immigrants and Muslims for example, the one expressed by Donald Trump are representative examples. These texts represent a reflection and derived from Trump's personal beliefs and his shared racist attitudes or ideologies of a larger group. But strikingly, Chilton and Schaffner (2002: 212) allege that political texts are only the "tip of the iceberg". In other words, they are importantly sharing a small part of information which is relevant in the current context.

Almost all the trends of political discourse studies on the national and international level might be about the talks of political actors and their texts (van Dijk, 1997: 12). That helps us to simply conclude; a political text refers to the sum of politician's production of text. However, this production is coupled by both the participants and actions which they constitute the context of text production. And this context encounters with some other factors like goals, intentions, occasions, and functions to state written or spoken political form.

Van Dijk (Ibid: 14) refers to an important fact that political text and context are integrated with each other. He adds that each one defines the other in the sense to specify specific political aims and goals. The construction and production of text may be specified by the context. What specifies a text as a political one therefore is the context in which its members are politicians (Chilton and Schaffner, 2002: 16).

In fact, a cluster of different political texts can construct political discourse, and according to Chilton and Schaffner (1997: 214), these texts can be divided into two categories:

1. Texts that discuss political ideas, beliefs and practices of society or some part of it (text producers need not to be solely politicians).
2. Texts which are crucial in giving rise to a political or ideological community, group, or party.

From this perspective, finer distinctions are drawn: a) Inner-state discourse (domestic) and inter-state discourse (foreign policy and diplomacy). b) internal-political discourse (politicians talking, planning and deciding among themselves) and external-political discourse (politicians communicating with the public).

3. Political Apology

Within all cultures in daily routine one can face the act of apologizing. Apology has been defined by researchers like Hickson (1986), Taft (2000) and Weyeneth (2001) as an expression of regret, sorrow, repentance whether written or spoken for a wrong committed act. One can realize that practicing the act of apology seems to be the same in both private circumstances or in public one. In both circumstances, when a wrong act is committed, then an apology can be demanded. According to Sanz (2012: 15) apologies in political field refer to these apologies given by appropriate politician to present political content. Within political apology one can perceive that the doer of the offence seems to be a politician while the offended may not be a political actor. Besides the national apologies we may face international one.

Being in the same circle, political international apology as Thompson defines refers to "an official apology given by a representative of a state, corporation, or other organized group to victims, of injustices committed by the group's officials or members" (2005: 1). Scholars like Werwoerd and Govier assert that for political apologies the central power lies in its ability to provide offended people with the acknowledgement of their dignity.

Thompson (2005: 2) points out that in political apologies there seem to be some points which raise skepticism. As Thompson claims there are three genuine points that have to be carried out while apologizing: 1- the apologizer has to prove or acknowledge his/her offence. 2- remorse from the side of the wrong doer action has to be done for his/her offence. 3- the wrong committed act to victims will be avoided. Therefore, these points within political apologies may raise skepticism because sometimes there are representatives for apologizers and then the first point stated by Thompson will be impossible namely the acknowledgment for wrong acts.

By applying apologies to states or some other complex organizations, indubitably some difficulties will arise because members of states cannot think likely or to have the same heart, therefore they cannot offer repentance and remorse to victims for the offence committed. However, by doing so, it seems hard to believe they try to avoid doing such actions in future (ibid: 4). However, all apologies are compensative acts. Apologies in political field help to establish harmony and justice between governments, parties, states, and also persons.

An important fact has to be mentioned that an apology which can be determined by a political body may not constitute a political apology. For example, the bureaucratic apparatus of

governments is made up of state institutions; however their character is, in principle, administrative and not political. For an utterance to be considered as a political apology it must meet two specific requirements; it must be political content-wise and it must be formulated by a political agent. Political apology then is political for two reasons: the first, political apology involves political agents and, the second, political apology involves political issues (Chilton and Schaffner, 1997:214).

In order for apologies in political discourse to be a part of a large peace building process, they have to be used in conjunction with other techniques. A state apology is necessarily relegated by proxy through individuals, and for a successful state apology Negash offers four requisites for apologizing by proxy which are acknowledgement, accountability, truth telling and remorse (Negash, 2006: 9).

Along with historical or past wrongs, there are numerous cases of refusals to apologize on the part of the accused, despite repeated requests to do so, such as the Soviets and subsequent Russian leaders who never apologized for the massacre of thousands of Polish officers in the forest of Katyn in 1940; the Israelis' refusal to apologize in 1968 after the Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad demanded it for their aggression the year before (Marrus, 2006: 5).

4. Sample analysis of political apology

Before embarking for the analysis we have to remember that our study is a pragmatic analysis therefore it's worth mentioning some lines about pragmatics. Levinson (1983: 7, 9, 12) has given a vast explanation for the term pragmatics and in his book *Pragmatics* he tries to put down some definitions to specify the term. Among such definitions we can state the following to shed light on the term as follows:

- 1- "Pragmatics is the study of all those aspects of meaning not captured in a semantic theory";
- 2- "Pragmatics is the study of language from a functional perspective, that is, it attempts to explain facets of linguistic structure by reference to non-linguistic pressures and causes".
- 3- "Pragmatics has as its topic those aspects of the meaning of utterances which cannot be accounted for by straightforward reference to the truth conditions of the sentences uttered."
- 4- "Pragmatics = Meaning-Truth Conditions." (ibid)

As a general fact, almost all scholars and linguists agree that within linguistics field, in order to know what an utterance means we need to make reference to what is assumed by both speaker and hearer and to a large extent to make inferences to the context in which an utterance is used. the study of pragmatics helps us to study the relation between the context (context offers a better way of understanding language) of using such language and the language itself (Levinson, 1983:21).

Pragmatics can be perceived in narrow sense (in this case the term refers to the some aspects of context. These aspects seem to be formally encoded in language's structure, as in speech acts study, deixis, and presupposition) and can be perceived also in a broad sense (in this case the term pragmatics can be seen as concerned with aspects of meanings that are not

governed in the theory of semantic) (Crystal, 1985: 240). Pragmatics, therefore, has been characterized as the study of the principle and practice of conversational performance which includes all aspects of language usage such as politeness, social apprehension, appropriateness, etc.

However, after all as Mey (2001: 12) asserts we need pragmatics in order to get a reasonable account to understand human language behavior deeply and fully.

What we have done in lines above, we have clarified some concepts needed for our study and also emphasized some patterns of political apology in political texts. We need now to process to pragmatic analysis of political apologies by men and women actors. Our analysis is based on six excerpts from relevant speeches by held by politicians like Hillary Clinton, Theresa May, Condoleezza Rice, Trump, Bush, and Obama.

Table 1: Samples of women political apology

No.	Explanation	Excerpt
(1)	Hillary Clinton on Thursday apologized for her remarks "superpredators" she made in a 1996 to describe kids with no "Conscience, no empathy" who committed crimes. Feb 25, 2016.	"In that speech, I was talking about the impact violent crime and vicious drug cartels were having on communities across the country and the particular danger they posed to children and families". "Looking back, I shouldn't have used those words, and I wouldn't use them today"
(2)	Theresa May Apologizes for resignation of Fiona Woolf, second Chairwoman appointed to child sex abuse inquiry. Nov 03, 2014.	"Almost four months after I announced my intention to establish a panel inquiry it is obviously very disappointing that we do not yet have a panel chairman and for that I want to tell survivors that I am sorry"
(3)	Condoleezza Rice apologizes to Clinton and McCain for breach of passport data. March 21, 2008.	"We are going to do an investigation through the inspector general, who will get to the bottom of it and make certain that nothing more was going on," Rice told reporters. She added that she told Obama "that I myself would be very disturbed if I learned that somebody had looked into my passport file."

Table 2: Samples of men political apology

No.	Explanation	Excerpt
(1)	Clinton apologizes for U.S. role in	"It may have been good for some of

	destroying Haitian democracy (Happy April fool's day) under his presidency. April 01, 2017.	my friends in Petionville, but it has not worked. It was a mistake". "I had to live every day with the consequences of the loss of basic civil and human rights in Haiti because of what I did; nobody else"
(2)	On Thursday, Bush apologized for the "humiliation" of some Iraqi prisoners who suffered at the hands of U.S. troops, May 07, 2004.	"I told him I was sorry for the humiliation suffered by the Iraqi prisoners and the humiliation suffered by their families,"
(3)	Obama apologizes to the world for US on climate is ridiculous. Nov 30, 2015.	"I've come here personally, as the leader of the world's largest economy and the second-largest emitter, to say that the United State of America not only recognizes our role in creating this problem; we embrace our responsibility to do something about it."

In extract (1) Hillary offers an apology for her expression "superpredators" to describe kids with "no conscience, no empathy". The term which Hillary used is considered as being inappropriate because it refers to unsafe youth and mostly this term used to be a racist term to describe African American youth. However, looking closely to Hilary's text, the apology she offers, from a syntactically point of view, it does not consist of any detached verb to refer to her apology. But pragmatically speaking it is an apology. What Hillary gives in her text, seems to be some justifications to her wrong committed act to the offended kids. She offers some excuses such "talking about the impact violent crime and vicious drug cartels". Clearly, Hilary did not mention her offence. In other words, she plays with the syntactic form and instead of mentioning "superpredators" she replaces with "words" in which this considered as a way of minimizing the responsibility. However, this is indirect apology. If we recall Schiffman's claim (1996: 12), then the use of indirect speech is a way of reflecting once power.

In (2) Theresa May offers her apology for the resignation of the second chairwoman (Fiona Woolf) who was appointed to the inquiry of child sex abuse. Pragmatically speaking this is an apology; it is direct apology. But syntactically, she uses a verb of apologizing which has multi-pragmatic function. The use of such form of apologizing in pragmatic study makes the identifying of speech act a very difficult task (Lakoff, 2001, 201). May's utilization of the verb *sorry* instead of *apologize* (which was considered by all scholars as the direct detached verb for apologizing) made her speech to carry more than one function. However, besides being as an apology, Theresa May has placed her apology at the end, but in most of the cases it was preferred that apology comes in the beginning of the speech. In order to be considered as an apology, her form of apologizing was better to be used at the beginning in the first clause. In other words it could be more accurate if she said (*I am sorry that after four months of my announcement, we still do not have a panel chairman. It is really disappointing*).

In (3) Rice offers her apology to Hillary Clinton and McCain for breaching of passport data. After firing of two contract employees and disciplining Obama's third passport for examining, Condoleezza expresses her regrets to Illinois Democrat for reviewing the passport of

Hillary and McCain. She apologizes to them for this inappropriate reviewed of their passport. Syntactically speaking, there is no any detached verb of apologizing or any other form of apology to consider this extract as a direct apology or as apology in general. "I myself would be very disturbed if I learned that someone had looked into my passport" these taken words from Rice's speech can be pragmatically interpreted as an apology for the fact not only Hillary and McCain can be bothered by that action but me myself (Condoleezza) and may be any other one can be bothered for that offence. What we can consider here is that this is indirect way of apologizing.

For men political apologies we start with extract (1) taken from Clinton. In that extract Clinton apologizes for U.S. policies in destroying Haiti's agriculture sector which happened under his presidency. By doing such action this made Haiti dependent on U.S. import for rice and some other things from food staples. Clinton offers to his wrong committed act that happened under his presidency by "it was a mistake". For some actions, politicians aim to refer to their offence by some other words like mistake (instead of mentioning the exact committed act) to reflect their responsibility (Meier, 1998). By given some expressions like "it was a mistake" and "I had to live everyday with the consequence of the loss of basic civil and human rights in Haiti because of what I did" this however, pragmatically makes it as an indirect way of apologizing. But syntactically speaking what Clinton gave has no any detached verb of apology to make his speech as an apology. What he offers is only regret for the action even though he admitted that he did it but he does not give a verb of apology or other forms of apologizing.

The way Bush uses his words in (2) it shows that he apologizes to Iraqi prisoners' humiliation at the hands of U.S. troops. Looking to this extract, the syntactic way Bush uses it was past tens of apologizing ("I was sorry") which stands against sincerity of offering the verb of apology. Besides the lexical word used "sorry" being carrying multiple pragmatic and one of them is to minimize and being away from the responsibility, it was proceeded by another past sentence ("I told him"). These two sentences were stated to Rumsfeld not to the Iraqi victims. However, pragmatically speaking this represents an apology (direct one).

In (3) President Barak Obama offers his apology to the world (for US on climate is ridiculous) for the industrial progress. In Paris agreement Obama gives indirect apology. Therefore, pragmatically what Obama gives is an apology. Some expressions were given by him to make his speech pragmatically as an apology like "the United State of America not only recognizes our role in creating this problem; we embrace our responsibility to do something about it". Partially what was stated by him is to take responsibility for the act committed by United State and admitting the offence done by them even if we look closely, Obama refers to the wrong act by "problem" which is also considered as a way to void or partially minimize the responsibility. Syntactically, there is no any detached verb of apologizing to consider it as an apology.

5. Findings and conclusions

As we have stated from the beginning both men and women in political field practice the same way of apologizing using the same linguistic form for their purposes. Both of them seem to share the same power in political arena.

The present study carries importance. It raised awareness on the similarities between political men and women in the way of apologizing. In both of the excerpts used for men and

women we could realize direct and indirect way of apologizing. Besides the direct way, we have noticed that political actors (whether men or women) use some lexical expressions to express their apology and that can be a manner of looking to the offence they did itself from one side and to the sincerity of offering the verb of apologizing to victims from another side. However, the complexity of the language used (mostly the lexical words and the indirect way of apologizing) can make the decoding difficult to recognize.

Our pragmatic analysis revealed two ways of apologizing by both gender: direct and indirect.

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