



Linguistic Devices of Identity Representation in English Political Discourse with a Focus on Personal Pronouns: Power and Solidarity

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Abstract

The present study was aimed at exploring the use of pronominal reference for identity representation in terms of power and solidarity in English political discourse. The investigation was based on a corpus of four political interviews and debates amounting 26,500 words. The analysis was both qualitative and quantitative. In the qualitative analysis, a discourse-analytic approach was used to find out the pronouns, their references and their identity load, and in the quantitative analysis, the distribution of different representations of identity were calculated. A nonparametric test, that is, Chi-Square was run in SPSS as the statistical operation needed for the current study. The analysis showed that most of the personal pronouns represented identity in the form of solidarity. The results also showed that political figures use *I*-pronoun and its variants to represent their identity in terms of power. The representation of identity in terms of power was also found to be correlated with the use of certain terms such as *veto* and active voice constructions. Furthermore, the results showed that when making claims, instead of giving pronominal reference to self, political figures use first-person plurals. In order to show solidarity, the speakers may also make use of discursal proximity. Considering the important role that discourses play in constructing reality, it is important for CDA researchers to reveal sources of power, inequality and prejudice in discourses and interpret their hidden meanings. Pronominal choice and academic voice as linguistic constructions that are ideologically loaded need to be brought into the spotlight.

Keywords: identity representation, power, solidarity, English political discourse, personal pronouns

Introduction

In recent years, scholars working in a remarkable array of social science and humanities disciplines have taken an intense interest in questions concerning identity. The common definition of identity is focusing upon the individual's perception of self in relation to others, which is the relationships among multi-ethnicity, cultural diversity and identity (Stets & Burke, 2000). Although the concept of identity is found at the center of lively debates in every major subfield, its main centrality is in social science and humanities where scholars take identities as things to be explained. The notion of identity is completely related to social class and inequality. Within political science, as a subfield of social science, inequality is very remarkable which implies power and dominance. In a political context, identity can also be manifested by showing opposition towards other people of the society. On the other hand, the identity taken by politician can imply solidarity and togetherness as well. Despite the simplicity of the concept of identity, political scientists remain laggards when it comes to work on identities. How this inequality and power is manifested, what identities politicians take to show their power and what linguistic devices are used to represent identity has become the subject of many research studies (Behnam & Moghtadi, 2008; Benoit & Benoit-Bryan, 2014; Bramley, 2001; Fairclough, Wodak, & van Dijk, 1997; Jibrin, 2003; Kaewrungruang & Yaoharee, 2018; Sharndama, 2016).

Considering the fact that a political talk is different from an ordinary talk, it is worth noting that politicians' debates and arguments are suitable contexts for their identities to be represented. Taking this issue into account, it seems useful to consider different types of argumentations, namely Rogerian, Toulmin and Classic types. Rogerian arguments rely more on ethos, appeals and moral reasoning to defend their claims through concession of a valid point from another position; it allows two parties to understand and find a middle ground. Toulmin arguments, on the other hand, use empirical data and evidence to support claims through logical reasoning. The third type, a Classical argument, is the basic form of persuasive argument which has at least five parts: the introduction, narration, confirmation, refutation, and conclusion. The parts of a classical argument are arranged logically

In their study, Qadeer and Shehzad (2018) presented a critical view of the speech delivered by the prime minister of Pakistan, Yousuf Raza Gillani. They found out that the pronouns 'we' and 'our' were constantly used to shift the responsibility on Al-Qaida whereas 'I' was used for authority in order to digress the discussion from the topic. The pronouns and the vocabulary together established the in-group or out-group category. The solidarity was shown towards the masses to get their support and defense was shown towards the allies who were accusing the government of fraud and nefarious ploy. Mystification was performed at a number of places to hide truth and claim the truth alternatively.

On the other hand, Makutis (2016), who was working on first person pronouns in political speeches, chose 25 speeches taken from United Nation's meetings about the situation in Ukraine. Five speeches were selected for each five countries, namely Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Russian Federation and France. The aim of the study was to find out which country used personal pronouns most frequently as well as to find out which semantic referents and which pragmatic functions were the most common among the five countries. The results revealed that all the countries used pronoun 'we' most frequently. The most common semantic referents of 'I' were 'I' as a politician and 'I' as a person. The most common referent of 'we' was 'we' (exclusive) – 'I and the government'. The main reason for the use of those referents was to share the load of responsibility and to avoid subjectivity.

Investigating the use of personal pronouns in political speeches made by Donald Trump and Hilary Clinton in the 2016 US Presidential Election Debates, Kaewrungruang and Yaoharee (2018) found that the occurrences of the pronouns 'we' and 'I' in the speeches of both participants differed and that the uses of each pronoun in certain contexts also differed significantly. The different pronominal choices in different contexts in the debates expressed differences in the persuasive strategies and political ideologies of the two candidates.

Schaffner (1997) also analyzed the use of pronouns in the 1994 speech given by the British Prime Minister, John Major, at the 11th Conservative Party Congress in England. The study was an attempt to see how the

politician used the pronouns 'I' and 'we' to show his identity and perform the political strategies of coercion, resistance, dissimulation, and legitimization. The speaker in the speech was found to develop some relationships which were social and political. The speaker developed the relationships in terms of roles as addresser, addressee, and observers by the use of the pronouns 'I' and 'we'. The pronoun 'I' was found to be dominant especially in sentences where it gave to Major the role of a leader and a man of action, or a truthful narrator. Altogether, the study showed that choice of pronouns defines the roles of the participants and indicates the political strategies of the politicians.

Kuo (2002) explored the use of the second-person singular pronoun "*ni*" (you) in two televised Taipei mayoral debates from 1998 by three Taiwanese politicians. The study was an attempt to see how the use of *ni* reflects the politician's attitudes and relations toward other participants. The analysis pointed to very different primary functions for the use of the pronoun *ni* in the two debates. In the first debate, Kuo found most of the occurrences of *ni* used to either address the audience/voters or refer to an indefinite person, thereby, establishing solidarity with the audience. In the second debate which occurred four days before the Election Day, on the other hand, most of the occurrences of *ni* were related to addressing the opponents of the debates directly to challenge or attack them.

Green (2008) investigated the use of specific discursive strategies, that is, shift of focus through pronoun choice, the strengthening of rhetoric through lexicon and pronoun pairings, and altering the structural organization of the addresses over time to convey the ongoing tale of the political and economic situation in Malawi, in four United Nations General Assembly speeches given by the president of Malawi, Dr. Bingu wa Mutharika, from 2004 to 2007. The study showed that the politician used specific pronouns in order to "shift focus and responsibility towards and away from him on different occasions for different means" (p. 13). Additionally, Green (2008) found that the lexical collocations of the pronouns were used to strengthen the weight of rhetoric. Finally, Green found alteration of the above discursive strategies correlated with "the changing political and economic climate of Malawi and with the exercise of authority and responsibility for Malawian concerns by the president" (p. 13).

In another CDA study of the use of figures of speech, Behnam and Moghtadi (2008) showed how political elites can contribute to power enactment through using language. Their study was based on Fairclough's (1989) three-dimensional framework and van Dijk's (2006) model. They revealed that while there are differences in the type and degree of speech figures employed by individual political elites, there is one striking pattern which is common among all speeches and that is the frequent use of figures of Grammar, Repetition and Rhetoric. In other words, they showed the positive representation of power in political speech of elites by using figures of speech.

The present study was an attempt to investigate how politicians show their power and solidarity through the use of personal pronouns in their political talks and debates of American presidential candidates. Additionally, the paper focused on the linguistic expressions, other than pronominal choice, which are mainly used to represent identity. Hence, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

RQ1: How and to what extent do personal pronouns (*I, you, we, they*, their object pronouns and possessive adjectives) represent identity in terms of power and dominance in English political discourse?

RQ2: How and to what extent personal pronouns (*I, you, we, they*, their object pronouns and possessive adjectives) represent identity in terms of solidarity in English political discourse?

RQ3: Are there any significant differences among different representations of identity (power and solidarity) via personal pronouns (*I, you, we, they*, their object pronouns and possessive adjectives) in English political discourse?

RQ4: What other elements are used in English political discourse which represents identity?

Method

Corpus

This investigation was based on a corpus of four political interviews and debates. The interviews and debates were gathered from the U.S. presidential election debates in 2012. President Barack Obama as the Democratic Party's candidate, the former governor Mitt Romney as the Republican Party's candidate, the Governor Gary Johnson who was the Libertarian Party candidate, and Dr. Jill Stein as the Green Party's candidate took part in the debates. The events were 'a Fox News Sunday exclusive with Mitt and Ann Romney', 'Election 2012: President Barack Obama's Interview With Glamour Magazine', 'the IVN Presidential debate' with Gov. Gary Johnson and Dr Jill Stein, and 'R-Mass., Participate in a Candidates Debate' with President Barack Obama and Former Gov. Gary Johnson. The debate between Obama and Romney was from the Lynn University Campaign on October 22, 2012. This debate amounted to 12,350 words totally. Johnson-Stein's debate was hosted by IVN on Google Plus Hangouts, October 18, 2012. This debate included 9,525 words in total. Obama's interview was with Glamour Magazine and Romney's interview was hosted by Fox News. Glamour's interview with Obama included 2,056 words and Fox News' interview with Romney totaled 2,548 words.

The transcripts of the four political talks were investigated in the analysis only, as their audio or video recordings were not available. All the transcripts were taken from the 2012 presidential election website, www.2012election.procon.org. Table 1 shows the description of the data.

Table 1
The Description of the Data

Description	Raw data
Number of debates/interviews	4
Total number of words	26,500
Total number of personal pronouns	2,460
Total number of identity-loaded pronouns	1,134

As Table 1 shows, the whole corpus totaled 26,500 words. Additionally, 2,460 examples of pronominal reference were found in the entire corpus,

from which 1,134 cases were loaded with the identity of the participants in the political talks.

Procedure

The investigation of the present study involved a combination of corpus linguistics and discourse analysis. In the corpus linguistics analysis, a corpus-driven approach was followed in order to derive authentic examples of the use of personal pronouns and other linguistic expressions for the purpose of identity representation from the entire corpus. A discourse analytic approach was followed in order to ensure that the retrieved cases of pronominal reference are identity-loaded.

As a requirement for corpus-driven studies, the researcher needs to ensure that s/he enters the research context without any bias or prejudice (Tognini-Bonelli, 2001). A discourse analytic corpus-driven analysis involves a mixed-methods approach (Partington, Duguid, & Taylor, 2013). Hence, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed in the present investigation.

In order to find examples of the use of personal pronouns in the corpus, first, all the personal pronouns along with their variants were used as lexemes. These included subject personal pronouns including *I*, *we*, *you*, and *they*; object personal pronouns including *me*, *us*, *you*, and *them*; possessive adjectives including *my*, *our*, *your*, and *their*. Next, the lexemes were given to a concordance tool. WordSmith (Scott, 2015) was used to produce concordances for the lexemes from the whole corpus. WordSmith produced a total of 2,460 concordances for personal pronouns. Subsequently, in a discourse-analytic approach which was a qualitative analysis, all the concordances along with their co-texts were carefully read and examined to see if they represented the identity of the participants in the talks. In order to avoid any subjectivity on our part in analyzing concordances, an expert in discourse analysis was also recruited to analyze them. All the concordances were analyzed independently. Later, attempts were made to reach full agreement in cases where it was not clear whether the pronominal reference was identity-loaded or not. This phase of the investigation sifted out 1,326 cases of pronominal choice as examples of the use of personal pronouns that were not loaded with the identity of the participants in the talks.

Consequently, a total of 1,134 uses of personal pronouns were found that represented the identity of the participants in the political talks in one way or another. Later, in another discourse analytic approach which was also a qualitative analysis, these cases of pronominal reference were investigated manually to see in what way, that is, power and solidarity, represented the identity of the participants in the talks. Next, in a quantitative analysis, the frequency of different representations of identity was calculated. Finally, a nonparametric test, that is, Chi-Square, was run to investigate whether the difference among the different representations of identity was statistically significant.

In order to derive linguistic expressions, other than pronominal reference, that represented identity in English political discourse, a corpus-driven approach was followed as well. The entire corpus was read manually independently in order to see which linguistic expressions other than pronominal reference are used to represent identity. Next, in another discourse analytic approach, all these examples were further investigated to see if they represent identity in terms of power and solidarity.

Design

Since the purpose of the study was to see how pronominal reference and the use of other linguistic expressions represent identity in terms of power and solidarity, the study was mostly descriptive and qualitative in nature. Yet, a corpus-driven approach comprising both qualitative and quantitative data analyses was followed in the current study and a mixed-method was used. It is worth noting that the qualitative analysis of the data, like any other mixed-methods, was inspired by the quantitative analysis.

Results

Power and personal pronouns

The first research question sought to answer the extent to which personal pronouns represent identity in terms of power and dominance in English political discourse. Critical discourse analysis of the concordances with *I*, *we*, *you*, *they*, *me*, *us*, *them*, *my*, *our*, *your*, and *their* led to 1134 cases of identity representation. Table 2 presents the results of analyses of sentences with pronominal reference that were found to represent identity in terms of power and dominance.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Identity Representation in Terms of Power through Pronominal Choice

Identity representation	Frequency	Percentage
Power and dominance	15	1.5
Total	1134	100

As Table 2 shows, of all the pronominal choices that were found to reflect the identity of the speaker, only 1.5% were found to be related to power and dominance. This very infrequent representation of identity in the form of power and dominance may make sense, given the nature of the data of this study. The data of this study are debates between political figures who have been nominated for presidency. The interlocutors are thus equal in terms of power and a hierarchical relationship is missing between them. Most of the very few instances of identity representation in the form of power and dominance are related to Barack Obama who was the president of the U.S. during the debates. Excerpts (1) to (3) include examples of the use of personal pronouns that are used to show power and dominance and each excerpt is investigated separately.

- (1) *I will stand with Israel* if they are attacked. And this is the reason why, working with Israel, we have created the strongest military and intelligence cooperation between our two countries in history. In fact, this week we'll be carrying out the largest military exercise with Israel in history, this very week. But to the issue of Iran, as long as *I'm president of the United States* Iran will not get a nuclear weapon. *I made that clear* when I came into office.

Excerpt (1) is taken from R-Mass., Participate in a Candidates Debate event between President Barack Obama and the Former Gov. Mitt Romney. In this part of the debate, Obama talks about his support of Israel and opposition to Iran. As can be seen in this transcript, *I*, *we*, and the variant of *we*, that is, *our* have been used frequently. More importantly, the use of *I* outnumbers that of *we*. As *I*-pronoun is usually used to indicate a private persona, and the speaker takes full responsibility for his/her claims when using *I*, it seems that the speaker is trying to emphasize the importance of his authority here. Using *I*-pronoun is considered an

advantage in occasions where positive news is given or a statement of general agreement is made. It needs to be mentioned that here Obama distances himself from others using *I* when talking about supporting Israel and stopping Iran from getting a nuclear bomb. Given the fact that it is believed that Israel is the closest ally of the U.S. and a nuclear Iran is considered a potential danger to them, the speaker shows his highest level of commitment and places himself above his competitor in this regard (Beard, 2000).

- (2) *We* then organized the strongest coalition and the strongest sanctions against Iran in history, and it is crippling their economy. So their economy is in a shambles. And the reason *we* did this is because a nuclear Iran is a threat to our national security, and it is a threat to Israel's national security. *We* cannot afford to have a nuclear arms race in the most volatile region of the world. Iran is a state sponsor of terrorism. So the work that *we've* done with respect to sanctions now offers Iran a choice. They can take the diplomatic route and end their nuclear program or they will have to face a united world and *a United States president, me, who said we're not going to take any options off the table.*

Excerpt (2) is taken from the previous event as well. Notice the frequent use of *we*-pronoun in this example. In most cases, *we* has been used to show sameness and solidarity. It is used to give a sense of collective action and collectivity in areas where there is full support by others. Here, again the speaker refers to the issue of Iran as a nuclear threat. This issue is typically referred to in the debates and general speeches of the U.S. political figures. Power and dominance of the speaker is reflected in the last part of the final sentence, where the speaker uses a variant of *I*, that is, *me*. Given the fact that a nuclear Iran is publicized in their mass media as the biggest threat to the world, the speaker shows personal involvement and commitment in this regard by using *we*. Hence, by using *me*, the speaker gives himself a personal voice and commitment to an issue on which most American political figures concur. It is important to note that in general, *I*-pronoun is used to give a sense of subjectivity where the speaker wishes to distance himself/herself from others. Here, however, the speaker uses a variant of *I* to indicate his authority in an issue of public interest and agreement.

(3) Well, first of all, I want to underscore the same point the president made which is that if *I'm President of the United States*, when *I'm President of the United States*, we will stand with Israel. And if Israel is attacked, *we have their back, not just diplomatically, not just culturally, but militarily*. That's number one.

Excerpt (3) is also taken from R-Mass. event between the President Barack Obama and the Former Gov. Mitt Romney. Following Obama's full support of Israel in the previous excerpt, the Former Gov. Mitt Romney indicates his support of Israel in this part of the debate. What is important here is the combined use of the first-person singular and plural pronouns *I* and *we*. The combination of these two pronouns creates a sense of both power and collectivity. Power and dominance are shown by the use of *I* along with *president of the united states*. The senses of sameness and collectivity are indicated by the use of the pronoun *we*, where the speaker expresses his institutional identity. The speaker's combined use of *I* and *we* is very smart here. Instead of showing full responsibility and commitment to his own claim, the speaker involves others in the proposition and creates a sense of solidarity and unity on the issue. That is, the speaker makes his persona smaller and shares responsibility with others by including them in the utterance. This way, others also become responsible for controversial issues (e.g., Beard, 2000; Bramley, 2001).

Solidarity and personal pronouns

The second research question sought to answer the extent to which personal pronouns and their variants represent identity in terms of solidarity in English political discourse. Table 3 presents the results of analysis of sentences with personal pronouns that were found to represent identity through solidarity.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Identity Representation in Terms of Solidarity through Pronominal Choice

Identity representation	Frequency	Percentage
Solidarity	813	71.5
Total	1134	100

As Table 3 shows, solidarity and impersonality accounted for most of the personal pronouns. This is important, as more than 71.5% of all the personal references in the corpus of the study were found to represent identity in terms of solidarity or impersonality. Given the nature of the data for this study, that is, presidential candidates' debates, it is important to note that candidates are most likely to show a sense of sameness and collectivity. Nevertheless, the first-person plural pronoun *we* and its variants, that is, *us* and *our*, are semantically complex. *We*-pronoun and its variants are both inclusive and exclusive in meaning. These pronouns can simultaneously mean the inclusion of the speaker and the audience and the exclusion of others. Excerpts (4) to (6) include examples of the use of personal pronouns that are used to indicate solidarity.

- (4) Only two were overturned so it made a difference when it came to billions of dollars worth of spending, made a difference when it came to government *telling us what we should or shouldn't do in the bedroom*. So how would it have worked had I been President of the United States after 9/11? I would have never established TSA. I would have never signed the National Defense Authorization Act allowing for *you and I as U.S. citizens* to be arrested and detained without being charged. I think this is why *we have fought wars*. So *our civil liberties* are being eroded.

Excerpt (4) is taken from the IVN Presidential debate. At the beginning of the excerpt, the speaker, Gary Johnson, forms a binary opposition between the government and others. Here, others include the speaker and all the other members of the society who are considered as citizens living their ordinary lives, whereas the government is distant and detached from the people. This binary opposition implicitly creates a bond between the people and the competitors. This is very important, as can be seen the first-person plural pronoun *we* and its variants, i.e. *us* and *our*, are used later. A sense of sameness and solidarity is indicated by the speaker's frequent use of *we* and its other forms. Hence, *We*-pronoun and its variants are both inclusive and exclusive in semantic meaning here. That is, *we* includes the reader and the audience. It also excludes the government. This is important, given the fact that the speaker himself is a governor. Later in the excerpt, the speaker again creates a group identity by the use of '*you and I as U.S. citizens*'.

What is important here is the discursual proximity of *you* and *I*, followed by *U.S. citizens*. The closeness of these two pronouns creates an intimate tone and a group identity. The expression '*you and I as U.S. citizens*' forms an implicit opposition between the speakers and the government. This is indicated by the expression '*U. S. citizens*'. At the end of the excerpt, the speaker also creates a feeling of bond and unity. Though, the speaker might have never been in a battle, there are people in the community who have done so. Hence, by including them using *we* and *our*, involves them in the discourse and creates an impersonal identity for himself by obscuring his own position.

(5) So I am promising to submit a balanced budget to congress in the year 2013. That would be a 1.4 trillion dollar reduction in federal spending and to do that you got to start off talking about Medicaid, Medicare, military spending. The debate a couple of weeks ago between Obama and Romney was all about who's going to spend more money on Medicare when Medicare is a program that *you and I are paying 30 dollars into* and getting a 100-dollar benefit. By extension *we're paying in 30,000 dollars, we're getting 100,000-dollar benefit*. It's absolutely unsustainable I am proposing to eliminate income tax, corporate tax, abolish the IRS, and replace all of that with one federal consumption tax. In this case I am embracing the Fair Tax, which I think is the answer to American exports. It ends up being cost neutral over a very short amount of time.

Excerpt (5) is also taken from the IVN Presidential debate. In the middle of the excerpt, the speaker, Gary Johnson, puts *you* and *I* near each other to indicate sameness. This way, the speaker who is a governor is considered a simple member of the society. *You* is used here to create what Fairclough (1989) sees as 'synthetic personalization'. In other words, *you* is used to create an intimate feeling between the speaker and the hearer. The use of *you* in political speeches is also a sign of sympathy on the part of the speaker. Later, *you and I* is replaced by *we*. The use of *you and I* and *we* by the speaker is an attempt to decrease the distance between the speaker as a political figure and people as ordinary citizens. An impersonal identity thus

is portrayed of the speaker. More importantly, the use of these pronouns creates an implicit binary opposition between them and the government. What creates a strong sense of sameness and collectivity between the speaker and the audience here is this inherent binary opposition with the government.

- (6) There's no reason in the world to try to squeeze three hundred diverse people into two pigeon holes which are both bought and paid for by the same corporate interests *that are driving us into climate change, that are driving us into these healthcare boondoggles like Obamacare or Romneycare* whichever you call it, that really deliver goods for the health insurance and the pharmaceutical companies, but not for *the everyday people*.

Excerpt (6) is also taken from the IVN Presidential debate. Here, Dr. Jill Stein is the speaker. Among the personal pronouns that have been used in this excerpt, only *us* which is a variant of *we*, has a pragmatic meaning relevant to the present study. The use of *us* in this excerpt gives a sense of collectivity and collective identity. The speaker considers himself and other people in the society the same. This sameness and solidarity inherently creates a separation between them and the government. This opposition with the government which is part of the talks of most presidential candidates makes the bond between the candidates and people stronger than usual. The opposition between people (the speaker included) and the government is strengthened by the speaker's use of the expression '*boondoggles like Obamacare or Romneycare*'. The pronoun *you* is used afterwards to convey "conventional wisdom" (Allen, 2007). Here, the speaker involves the audience to earn their approval of what she has been talking about. Use of the phrase '*everyday people*' with earlier use of *us*-pronoun conveys that the speaker and the other people are all ordinary people the government (Obama) does not think of serving their needs.

Difference in identity representation

The third research question sought to explore whether there any significant differences among different representations of identity, that is, power and solidarity, via personal pronouns in English political discourse. Table 5 presents the frequency distribution of identity representation through the use of personal pronouns.

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Identity Representation through Pronominal Choice

Identity representation	Frequency	Percentage
Power	15	1.5
Solidarity	813	71.5
Total	1134	100

As Table 4 shows, altogether, most personal pronouns represented solidarity in one way or another. Representing identity is mainly related to the use of *we* and its other forms. The notion of power and dominance was found to be much less frequent representation of identity. In order to see whether there is a significant difference in the representation of identity in terms of power and solidarity via personal pronouns, a nonparametric test was run through SPSS. Table 5 shows the results of Chi-Square.

Table 5
The Results of Chi-Square test

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2268.000 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	1472.528	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	1133.000	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1134		

As Table 5 shows, the results of Chi-Square test show that difference in the representation of identity in terms of power and solidarity through the use of personal pronouns is significant, $\chi(1) = 2268.000$, $p = .000$. Hence, it is confirmed that statistically there are significant differences among different representations of identity (power and solidarity) via personal pronouns in English political discourse.

Other linguistic expressions for identity representation

It was supposed that there may be other elements that can show identity in terms of power and solidarity. To find them out, the transcripts of the four political debates were read carefully to see what linguistic expressions, other than pronominal reference, are used to represent identity in the form of power, solidarity, and opposition. Excerpts (7) to (15) include examples of these expressions. Each transcript is investigated separately.

- (7) Well I got elected and it was based on what I had to say. I'd like to think, which was, 'Hey smaller government is a good thing. Keep government out of the bedroom. And then, how about a common sense, business approach to state government. Best product, best service, lowest price.' In that context *I vetoed 750 bills* only two were overturned.

Excerpt (7) is extracted from the IVN Presidential debate. In the expression '*I vetoed 750 bills*', Gary Johnson's use of first-person singular pronoun which shows personal involvement and commitment, along with the use of active voice, is an attempt to show the highest level of commitment on the part of the speaker. Considering the fact that vetoing the bills is considered quite an accomplishment by the speaker, his use of '*I*' and active voice altogether conveys the importance of his authority and what he has done. This excerpt is an example of how a speaker represents his/her identity in terms of power through the use of active voice.

- (8) In a zero corporate tax rate environment if the private sector doesn't create tens of millions of jobs, I don't know what it takes to create tens of millions of jobs. Immigration. Immigration *let's not build a fence across the border. Let's make it as easy as possible to let someone who wants to come into this country and work, to get a work visa. [...]* For the 11 million illegal immigrants that are here right now, *let's set up a grace period where we can document those 11 million illegal immigrants. Let's not talk about deporting, breaking up families.* And I get back to no criminals working in this country either. So there's my opening statement.

Excerpt (8) is extracted from the IVN Presidential debate. Here, Gary Johnson is the speaker. What is noticeable in this excerpt is the recurrent use of *let's*. *Let's* includes both first-person and second-person pronouns in its meaning. A look at the sentences in which *let's* has been used shows that the speaker is introducing his plans in case he is elected as president. It is thus important to note that when making claims or introducing plans for the future, the speaker has avoided using first-person pronouns. Given the fact that using first-person subjects shows the highest level of commitment and might bring blame for the speaker, the speaker tends to take a collective identity and share responsibility with the other people by using expressions

that indicate the involvement of both the speaker and listeners. This excerpt is thus an example of expressions that have been used to represent identity in terms of solidarity.

- (9) Look, *I've* got two daughters, and *I've* repeatedly said that I want to empower them to make good decisions. [...] *I think in the minds of most Americans*—men and women—access to contraception should be a no-brainer.

Excerpt (9) is another extract from the 'Election 2012' event where Barack Obama speaks. One of the most important things that Obama and all the other people of the United States have in common is being an American citizen. Hence, by using the expression '*I think in the minds of most Americans*' a feeling of sameness is created and the speaker conveys his appeal to the Americans. The discursal proximity of *I*-pronoun and *Americans* is another attempt on the part of the speaker to represent identity in terms of solidarity.

- (10) That's in *America's* national interest and that will be the case so long as *I'm* president.

Excerpt (10) is also extracted from the R-Mass. event. Here, Obama, the speaker, associates the America's national interest to his own presidency. This link indicates the national identity of the speaker and the fact that he is speaking on behalf of his nation. Hence, a sense of solidarity is produced.

- (11) Now there are some 10,000 centrifuges spinning uranium, preparing to create a nuclear threat to *the United States and to the world*. That's unacceptable for us, and it's essential for a president to show strength from the very beginning, to make it very clear what is acceptable and not acceptable.

Excerpt (11) is also from the 'R-Mass., Participate in a Candidates Debate' event. The speaker is again Mitt Romney. Similar to the previous excerpt, the discursal proximity of *the United States* and *to the world* indicates that a threat to the U.S. is also a threat to the world, thus giving America an identity representative of the world.

- (12) Well, I don't think I have been mum. What *I've* said is women need to be able to control their health care choices. *Most of these laws now are being made at the state level*. But where we have impact, at

the federal level, we want to make sure that women continue to have full access to health care, including their reproductive rights.

Excerpt (12) is taken from the 'Election 2012: President Barack Obama's Interview With Glamour Magazine'. What is important in this part of the talk is Obama's use of passive voice when talking about laws that seem to lead the negative attention of the listener towards him. By resorting to passive voice, the speaker de-emphasizes his own role. This way, the speaker creates a sense of objectivity which is advantageous to him in cases where he might be blamed. These pronoun-free constructions help the speaker limit his involvement and commitment, and take an impersonal identity.

(13) I would have never established the Department of Homeland Security. I would have never established TSA. I would have left airport security to the airports, to the airlines, to municipalities, to the states. I would have never signed the National Defense Authorization Act allowing for you and I as U.S. citizens to be arrested and detained without being charged. I think this is why we have fought wars. So *our civil liberties are being eroded*.

Excerpt (13) is part of the IVN Presidential debate. What is very important about this excerpt is the use of both active and passive voice structures. A close look at the sentences that have been stated in active voice shows that the speaker has taken full responsibility and commitment when describing them. The sentence that has used passive voice, however, refers to something that no one (including the speaker) seems to take responsibility for, that is, active voice is typically used to create a strong association between the doer and action when this does not bring blame to the speaker. Passive voice, however, is used in occasions where the speaker wishes to distance himself away from a bad thing that might bring him negative attention.

(14) Now that represents the opportunity *we* have to take advantage of. And, you know, Governor Romney, I'm glad that you agree that *we* have been successful in going after Al Qaida, but I have to tell you that, you know, *your* strategy previously has been one that has been all over the map and is not designed to keep *Americans* safe or to build on the opportunities that exist in the Middle East.

Excerpt (14) is taken from the R-Mass. event. Here, a sense of opposition is produced between the listener and *Americans*. What is evident is that both Obama and Romney are American citizens. Obama, however, places the listener in opposition to Americans by referring to his strategy as contrary to the safety of Americans. As a result, a binary opposition between the listener and Americans is produced.

(15) And how do we do that? A group of Arab scholars came together, organized by the U.N., to look at how *we* can help the -- *the world* reject *these* -- *these terrorists*. And the answer they came up with was this: One, more economic development.

In Excerpt (15) which is taken from the R-Mass. event, Obama creates an opposition between the world and terrorists. The word *terrorist* is part of all the political talks of American figures.

Discussion

The results of the study showed that political figures use *I*-pronoun and its variants to represent their identity in terms of power. The analysis of concordances showed that when it comes to giving positive news, making general statements, and when talking about issues that everyone agrees on, the speaker resorts to *I*-pronoun or its other forms (Karapetjana, 2011). By using first-person singular constructions, the speaker shows his/her own private persona, commitment, and full responsibility for what s/he is talking about (Ndambuki & Janks, 2010). In cases, where the issue in question is of public interest and agreement and might not bring blame to the speaker, the speaker distances himself from others and stresses his/her authority by using *I*-pronoun or its other forms (e.g., Beard, 2000; Bramley, 2001; Karapetjana, 2011; Ndambuki & Janks, 2010). Giving a sense of subjectivity is also the result of using *I* and its variants (Pennycook, 1994). The findings of this part of the study are in line with those of Beard (2000) and Karapetjana (2011) who found that using *I*-pronoun shows personal involvement when delivering good news.

The representation of identity in terms of power was also found to be correlated with the use of certain terms such as *veto* and active voice constructions. The results showed that in cases where the speaker wants to

show the highest level of commitment, s/he resorts to the use of first-person singular pronouns in active voice constructions. Using such constructions stresses the semantic role of the speaker. Similar to the results of this study, Ndambuki and Janks (2010) found that active verbs are constantly used to emphasize individual agency of the speaker.

The results also revealed that when making claims, instead of giving pronominal reference to self, the speaker uses first-person plurals. This way, the speaker makes his/her own private persona and subjective perspective less important (Bramley, 2001), involves others in the proposition, and shares responsibility with them (Beard, 2000; Bramley, 2001; Karapetjana, 2011; Ndambuki & Janks, 2010). A sense of solidarity, unity, and sameness is also created as a result. As Wodak and Chilton (2005, p. 30) note, pronouns especially first-person plural pronouns “can be used to induce interpreters to conceptualize group identity, coalitions, parties and the like, either as insiders or as outsiders”. Gyuró (2015) also found that *we*-pronouns are used to show solidarity.

In order to show solidarity, the speakers also make use of discursal proximity. This strategy involves placing words that create a pragmatic effect of closeness and intimacy close to each other in the discourse. Examples include *you* and *I*, *we* and *America*, and *I* and *Americans*. In line with Gyuró (2015), *you*-pronoun was found to be used as a sign of sympathy for producing an intimate tone between the speaker and the hearer. The speaker’s choice of words is also another attempt to represent identity in terms of solidarity and impersonality. Examples include *let’s*, *America*, *friends*, and *the world*. *Let’s* inherently includes *you* and *I* in meaning.

The results also showed that an impersonal identity is created as a result of using passive voice constructions. In sentences where the speaker wants to lead negative attention away from himself/herself, s/he uses passive voice to de-emphasize his/her own role, create a sense of objectivity, and limit his/her involvement and commitment. Impersonal constructions convey shared responsibility in controversial issues. They are also used “to distance the writer or speaker from the text”, as Reilly et al. (2005, p. 185) notes.

Based on the findings of the study, the use of *we*-pronoun and its variants are semantically complex in meaning. Though these first-person plural

constructions might be used for the purpose of unity and taking a collective identity, they inherently exclude others or opponents from the proposition (Bramley, 2001; Pennycook, 1994). That is, as a result of the frequent use of *we*-pronoun and its other forms, a binary opposition is produced between *us* and *them*. This finding mirrors the results of Gyuró (2015).

The analysis showed that most of the personal pronouns represented identity in the form of solidarity. This is mainly related to the very frequent use of *we*-pronoun and its variants. The frequent use of *we* and its other forms is a sign of what Fairclough (1992) refers to as a process of ‘democratization of discourse’, in which explicit markers of power inequalities are removed from the text. Additionally, power was represented very rarely throughout the political talks. The results of nonparametric test pointed to a statistically significant difference in the representation of identity. The findings are both important and interesting, considering nature of the data in this study. The fact that in the presidential candidates’ talks the purpose is to win the approval of the majority of people through creating a sense of sameness and bond with the ordinary people makes the findings of this study reasonable. Moreover, exerting power and dominance in discourse is mostly relevant to presidential speeches where the speaker has the ultimate power as president. As all the speakers in the debates are equal as presidential candidates, the very rare representation of identity in terms of power seems normal. Not to mention the fact that most of the examples of identity representations that were found in the data in relation to power are Obama’s statements who have been president at the time of election.

Altogether, the results of the study suggest that the speaker’s use of personal pronouns reflects his/her identity in terms of power and solidarity in English political discourse. This can be taken to mean that the political figures’ choice of personal pronouns is affected by their relationship with the listener and audience (Brown & Gilman, 1960). This finding mirrors the findings of Bello (2013) who concluded that politicians do not use personal pronouns “merely as person deixes or simply as anaphoric references”. Rather, they are used “in terms of positioning of self and others within the purview of political interests and associations” (p. 94). This is also in line with Krapivkina’s (2014) conclusion that the choice of personal pronouns in

academic discourse reflects differences in the way authors present themselves. More importantly, the findings showed that political figures take different identities according to their pronominal choice in English political discourse. This finding mirrors Bramley's (2001) conclusion that a politician's pronominal choice reflects his/her individual or collective identity.

The results of this study, though scant, have implications for CDA researchers. Pronominal choice and the use of certain terms were found to reflect the identity of the speaker. This seems to suggest that more attention needs to be paid to the use of personal pronouns in English political discourse. Given the fact that language use can be easily loaded and manipulated with the ideological beliefs of the people who use it, it is important for CDA researchers to critically describe and interpret its hidden meanings. Additionally, considering the important role that discourses play in constructing reality, it is important for CDA researchers to reveal sources of power, inequality, dominance, and prejudice in discourses. Pronominal choice and academic voice as linguistic constructions that are ideologically loaded need to bring into the spotlight. The findings of this study may be included in materials that are taught for making political speeches. Specialized courses aimed at teaching professional political speech writing can also be designed.

Future studies need to ensure that the talks or debates that are included in the analysis originally belong to political figures themselves. Future studies also need to include larger sets of datasets. Analyzing more political talks or debates may lead to richer and more comprehensive findings. Comparative studies investigating the ideological load of pronominal choice in different types of English political discourse such as press interviews and talk shows are also recommended. More research also seems necessary to investigate the ideological load of the use of personal pronouns in the political talks of other languages and cultures. Further research also seems necessary to investigate the relationship between identity representation and aspects of verbal presentation such as pitch, stress, rhythm, and speed.

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Biodata

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