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Analysing Conceptual Metaphors in Political Language

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The past two decades have seen an increase in the number of women serving in high-level political positions in countries throughout the world. Yet, to date, there has been no contrastive examination of the metaphorical language men and women use in the political arena. This is particularly relevant in light of research that argues that men and women use conversation rituals differently in the workplace: women to engage, men to win (Tannen 1994/2001; Holmes and Stubbe 2003), and that business media discourse involves WAR metaphors, which are regarded as a 'masculinizing force on both discourse as well as on related social practices' (Koller 2004: 172). If men and women are using language differently in the workplace, and the language of business has inherently masculine metaphors, what type of conceptual metaphors do women use when they participate in political office? Do they adopt the conceptual metaphors used by the majority (i.e. the men) as seems to happen in much of business discourse, or do they highlight their differences with their male colleagues by using conceptual metaphors that reflect their own perspectives on life and on the political situations as they see it? Or, as Cameron (2007) and Koller and Semino (this volume) suggest, do men and women exhibit certain patterns of linguistic behaviour which may make them appear as either masculine or feminine?

The first eight chapters in this volume examine linguistic data (cf. Charteris-Black 2004, 2005) from five countries (Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Ireland and the United States) to determine to what extent the conceptual metaphors used by women with political power differ from, or remain the same as, those of men. These eight chapters have been divided into two sections: the five chapters in Part I examine the conceptual metaphors that politicians themselves use when speaking to their

colleagues and their constituents; the three chapters in Part II look at the conceptual metaphors used by men and women in political debates in Great Britain, Germany and the United States. Part III discusses data that talk about women: how women are politicised in beauty advertisements in Singapore, how a leading US female senator is viewed by the pundits, and how women are portrayed in policy statements that have to do with women's rights in the Netherlands and Spain. All authors base their analyses on linguistic data that they collected for the purpose of the study. While the studies in the first two parts take both a quantitative and qualitative approach to the data presented, the studies in the last part are primarily qualitatively based.

In 'Metaphor, Politics and Gender: a Case Study from Germany', Koller and Semino work with a corpus of interviews and speeches given by the current and former German chancellors, Angela Merkel and Gerhard Schröder, and examine the number of metaphor tokens, metaphor types, as well as metaphoric type-token ratio and metaphor density per 1000 words, in addition to qualitative analyses of the metaphors used. Koller and Semino demonstrate through these analyses that Merkel uses metaphor in a formulaic manner, and that Schröder has a more pronounced use of WAR metaphors. In the conclusion, they argue against a monocausal explanation of gender-driven language use, noting that political party and other contextual information may also influence their results. In 'Metaphor, Politics and Gender: a Case Study from Italy', Semino and Koller run similar analyses on the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, and on Emma Bonino, a prominent parliament member and former European commissioner for health and consumer protection. Semino and Koller point out that the differences in the metaphors used can be attributed to a range of factors, including: political orientation, goals, topics discussed, institutional roles and national audiences, as well as in the ways each politician strategically uses language associated with masculinity and femininity to reach his or her respective goals.

In 'Gender versus Politics: When Conceptual Models Collide', Ahrens and Lee take a different approach to the issue of metaphor analysis. They look at the lexemes associated with the two overarching conceptual metaphors of the two major US political parties to determine if male or female senators use lexemes associated with one metaphor model more than the other. They find that gender does not drive either lexical choice or collocation patterns in speeches that occur on the US Senate floor. The chapter '*Non una donna in politica, ma una donna politica:* Women's Political Language in an Italian Context', by Gill Philip, also takes an innovative approach to metaphor analysis. She looks at the speeches, press interviews and press releases of five Italian women ministers from mid-2006 to mid-2007. She then extracts the low-frequency content words, groups those words into semantically related categories, and determines whether these groupings fit the criteria for metaphorical source domains. Once this has been done, consistent mappings which indicate the presence of metaphor themes are identified. Philip finds that in the few instances when feminine themes occur, they are related either to the ministerial remit or the influence of journalists. She thus concludes that the metaphors used by female political leaders in Italy do not differ greatly from those of male politicians.

In contrast to the previous four chapters, Hidalgo Tenorio, in her chapter 'The Metaphorical Construction of Ireland', provides evidence that the Irish president, Mary McAleese, uses metaphorical expressions twice as often as the Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern. In addition, Hidalgo Tenorio argues that the five key domains are different for these two politicians, with Ahern focusing on information-oriented language and McAleese using people-oriented language. Although Hidalgo Tenorio acknowledges the influence of background, party loyalty and political role, she does see a clear influence of gender coming through in the choice of metaphors and language chosen by McAleese.

The next three chapters all look at debates by politicians. In 'Metaphor and Gender in British Parliamentary Debates', Charteris-Black concludes that male Members of Parliament (MPs) in the British House of Commons use more metaphors than females, especially metaphors having to do with the concepts of health/illness and light/dark. He also notes that female MPs tend to use metaphors to make ethical appeals (although metaphor does not necessarily figure in the rhetoric of all female MPs), while male MPs tend to use metaphor to make an emotional appeal. Experienced female MPs employ metaphor more than inexperienced female MPs – though not as much as experienced male MPs which suggests that metaphor is a rhetorical skill that develops over time as female MPs familiarise themselves with the discourse norms of the House of Commons. In 'Sex Differences in the Usage of Spatial Metaphors: a Case Study of Political Language', Stefanowitsch and Goschler test whether spatial metaphors are used more frequently by men as compared with women parliamentarians in debates in the German Bundestag (the German parliament), based on the assumption that men are better at certain aspects of spatialization than women. However, they do not find evidence to support this hypothesis, as there is no discernible

difference in spatial metaphor use. Adams, in 'Conceptual Metaphors of Family in Political Debates in the USA', also does not find evidence that female candidates differ from male candidates in the way they use family metaphors in debates at the local, state or national level in the United States.

Thus, to sum up the findings from the first two parts, only two out of eight studies conclude that men and women use metaphors differently. In the British parliament, male MPs use more metaphors than female MPs, and they use them differently (Charteris-Black), while the Irish president, Mary McAleese, uses more metaphors than the Irish prime minister, Bertie Ahern (Hidalgo Tenorio). However, the chapters in the third part, which look at how women are discussed by politicians or pundits or viewed by advertisers, paint a somewhat different picture as women are stereotyped by the metaphors that are used to describe them.

In Lazar's chapter on 'Gender, War and Body Politics: a Critical Multimodal Analysis of Metaphor in Advertising', she argues that advertisements for female beauty products are based on a model of political confrontation, with the area of battle being the female body, leading to alienation of the self. In addition, women's 'fight' for beauty also refers to metaphors that relate to securing political rights and challenging the status quo. The irony, of course, is that women are now empowered to 'fight' what is perceived as 'deadly' about their own bodies. Meier and Lombardo, in their chapter 'Power as a Conceptual Metaphor of Gender Inequality? Comparing Dutch and Spanish Politics', examine how 'power' is conceptualised in Dutch and Spanish policy documents having to do with the issue of gender inequality in politics, and how conceptual metaphors are employed to describe 'power'. They find that there is no obvious difference in terms of the conceptualisation of power between Dutch and Spanish policies, even though there are historical differences between the two countries concerning women in politics. In both cases, male power over women emerges as a taboo: it is not explicitly discussed as a problem. The invisible unstated norm of male political power suggests the perpetuation of imbalanced gender relations in political decision-making. Lastly, in Lim's chapter, 'Gendered Metaphors of Women in Power: the Case of Hillary Clinton as Madonna, Unruly Woman, Bitch and Witch', he points out that gendered metaphors have been used to attack Hillary Clinton, especially as she has moved beyond the role of First Lady to the arguably more powerful roles of Senator and Democratic presidential contender.

The chapters in this volume do not paint a uniform picture of gender and metaphor in the political realm. Some men use both femininity and masculinity to their advantage (the Italian prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi, discussed in Semino and Koller, comes to mind), and while some women use femininity and what can be construed as feminine metaphors (such as Mary McAleese discussed in Hidalgo Tenorio's chapter), other women do not (for example, Hazel Blears as discussed in Charteris-Black). Moreover, it can sometimes be difficult to detect differences in how men and women use metaphors (as the chapters by Ahrens and Lee, and Stefanowitsch and Goschler point out). However, the use of metaphor to stereotype women can be seen in the way Hillary Clinton is portrayed by her critics.

Thus, though it is possible to find gendered use of metaphors, it is also possible to find many situations in which there are no discernible differences. In short, it seems that in this modern era, both male and female politicians may choose to use femininity and masculinity when it suits their purpose. Moreover, this ability to make the most of the perceived advantages of either gender's traits can be seen through the variety and range of conceptual metaphors politicians employ as they strive to persuade people of their plans and appeal to constituents for support.

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