

SYNTACTIC PECULIARITIES IN THE DISCOURSE OF MALE AND FEMALE POLITICIANS*

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The article is devoted to the study of the peculiarities of text building within the framework of political discourse. Specific grammar constructions illustrate strategies and implications which a particular politician tends to convey to his audience. Thus, the article aims to reveal syntactic peculiarities in female and male politicians' speeches, as well as to find gender differences in them. The investigation of the speeches of two outstanding political leaders, Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, will help to bring out the differences in the discourse of the politicians.

Key words: political discourse, male and female speech, syntactic peculiarities, Hillary Clinton, Barack Obama.

Introduction

Nowadays political discourse has become a subject of study by specialists of different spheres. The focus of our interest are political campaigns, as politicians succeed to manipulate people's choice and wishes especially during the election campaigns. Many scholars investigating political discourse claim that the choice of grammatical forms is of great importance. Important is not only the choice of active and passive voice which enables to stress or disguise the doer of the action and review the political situation towards the actors, but also the use of the linguistic units on the syntactic level which help to distinguish certain constructions and patterns that the politicians use.

The Analysis of Political Speeches on the Syntactic Level

O. Jespersen was the first who noticed the differences on the syntactic level in political discourse. He assumed, that male politicians use hypotaxis¹, which is defined as a grammatical arrangement of constructs that work in the same way, but they play unequal role in a sentence, whereas female politicians use parataxis² which can be defined as a rhetorical term. In this case phrases and clauses are placed one after another independently, without coordinating or subordinating them through the use of conjunctions. The scholar states: *If we compare sentences, composed by men and women, we will discover many examples when men use various complex structures which penetrate one into another, and women use sentences which supplement one another* (Jespersen 1964:251). Thus, we will investigate the discourse of politicians according to the following parameters:

1. The type of syntactic conjunction in the sentence.
2. Types of sentences according to the aim of utterance.

* Հոդվածն ընդունվել է տպագրության 17.10.2016:

Politicians strive to confirm their stance by sequentially and logically composed sentences with reason and consequence bonds. This point is stated with the help of compound sentences, where the pronoun *I* is put in the first place, that is, politicians highlight their own opinion and want to stress that they are fully responsible for their words. The following are examples from the speeches of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama:

***I believe** you should have the right to earn paid sick days.*

***I believe** you should receive your work schedule with enough notice to arrange childcare or take college courses to get ahead.*

***I believe** you should look forward to retirement with confidence, not anxiety. (<http://time.com/3920332/transcript-full-text-hillary-clinton-campaign-launch/>)*

*Listeners to my regular podcasts or those who followed my campaign, **I think**, are aware of the fact that I have been deeply skeptical about the administration's policy towards Iraq and the initial invasion.*

***I think** everybody is very proud of the work that they're doing and understandably so.*

***I think** generally it emphasizes, in my mind at least, how our foreign policy has to be tough but it has to also be smart...*

(obamaspeeches.com)

These examples are of certain value, because in them the effect of confidence is strengthened due to the use of the stylistic device of repetition: in the example of Hillary Clinton – *I believe*, and *I think* in that of Barack Obama.

In the discourse of Barack Obama we can see complex sentences with a subordinate conjunction.

*So the question is **whether** all of us – **as** citizens, and **as** parents — are willing to do what's necessary to give every child a chance to succeed...*

***Because** we rallied the world, nuclear materials are being locked down on every continent so they never fall into the hands of terrorists.*

(whitehouse.gov)

These examples show that male speech is built on consequence and reason, i.e. one part of the sentence is dominant, the other is subordinate. It may be explained by the wish of men to dominate. Whereas in women speech we find more compound sentences with coordinating conjunctions, which explains women's nature to cooperate and find peaceful solutions:

*Let us do the hard work necessary to keep building our friendship **and** reach out to the next generation of Americans **and** Israelis **so** the bonds between our nations grow even deeper **and** stronger. We are*

*stronger together, **and** if we face the future side by side, I know for both Israel **and** America, our best days are still ahead.*

(time.com)

Another important aspect of syntactic construction is the use of parenthesis. In this instance we see the use of parenthesis, which regulates the perception of the text. Such texts represent the speaker's emotionality, stress the importance of key arguments and highlight the effectiveness of communication.

***You know**, I've been involved in politics and public life in one way or another for four decades.*

*Although we weren't able to shatter that highest, hardest glass ceiling this time, **thanks to you**, it's got about 18 million cracks in it.*

*But I am a woman, **like millions of women**, I know there are still barriers and biases out there, often unconscious.*

(presidency.ucsb.edu)

In Clinton's speeches we see the expressiveness of sentences which highlight the emotional nature of the politician. The use of hedges, words of gratitude, words concerning human problems highlight women's nature to address social and psychological issues.

In Obama's speech we see the address to more factual problems and in more exact words which confirm his accuracy, and not the emotional side:

***Of course**, the answer to the slavery question was already embedded within our Constitution – a Constitution that had at its very core the ideal of equal citizenship under the law...*

***Instead**, they expressed a profoundly distorted view of this country – a view that sees white racism as endemic...*

***In fact**, a similar anger exists within segments of the white community.*

***On one end of the spectrum**, we've heard the implication that my candidacy is somehow an exercise in affirmative action...*

***On the other end**, we've heard my former pastor, Reverend Jeremiah Wright, use incendiary language to express views that have the potential not only to widen the racial divide [...].*

(obamaspeeches.com)

Obama illustrates his intention to construct his speech logically. The words *in fact*, *of course*, *on the one spectrum* show the firm attitude of the speaker. Here we see how logically composed speech confirms the confident nature of a male politician. Of course we may come across these words also in female speeches, but we look at this from the point of their occurrence frequency.

The expression of emotions directly depends on the use of exclamatory sentences. Baryshnikova claims that *in the past we used to put exclamatory sentences in the same line with declarative, imperative and interrogative*

sentences, proceeding from the idea that declarative sentences express an idea, imperative – will, interrogative – information request, and exclamatory – feelings. Modern linguistics does not put exclamatory sentences in the same line with other types of sentences. Theoretically any kind of emotion can be expressed via different means: emotive declarative sentences may express different feelings and reactions (surprise, impatience, etc.), as well as high level of evaluative admiration, indignation, emotive imperative and interrogative sentences express persistence, emotional appeal and so on. Consequently, each of these communicative types may be used as an exclamation, if some emotion is implied. Exclamatory version of the given sentence may emotionally be more loaded and can express a wide range of emotions (Барышникова 1995:161).

While delivering a speech, the emotive overtone is achieved with the help of imperative and interrogative sentences. The latter are often expressed in the form of rhetorical questions which will further be analyzed as stylistic-syntactic devices.

It is noteworthy, that imperative sentences in political discourse having an appeal for action are always emotional. From this perspective we can claim that there is no difference in the speeches of men and women as the use of exclamatory sentences is an obligatory condition for election campaigns.

Barack Obama:

Compare my plan to Governor Romney's plan.

Keep believing in me... ***make*** some phone calls with me, ***vote*** for me, we'll win Hillsborough County again. We'll win Florida again.

(<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=102400>)

Hillary Clinton:

Ask many of these candidates about climate change, one of the defining threats of our time, and they'll say: "I'm not a scientist."

Help me build this campaign and ***make*** it your own.

Talk to your friends, your family, your neighbors. ***Go to*** hillaryclinton.com and ***sign up*** to make calls and knock on doors.

(time.com)

Here we see that both politicians use imperative sentences to involve people in their campaign. This is an obvious strategy which is widely used both by men and women. In this case this coincidence is natural, because the professional approach demands certain similar structures in the speeches of politicians.

Men usually express their ideas logically and clearly. They try to avoid shady expressions and be more plain-spoken. Mysteries are typical of women, they seek to use some disguised strategies in order to generate interest and be shady. It is not an exception in the political field. This strategy is realized with the help of rhetorical questions which attract people's attention and emphasize the main issues of the speech.

Hillary Clinton

So where do these clients go to receive the services they need?

What is the proper role of government in making decisions? How is it

possible that women who have been victimized by violence can be again victimized by ideology? How can we reduce the number of unwanted pregnancies if we lose this opportunity to help women who may have had an unwanted pregnancy physically forced upon them?
(beliefnet.com)

Barack Obama

But the Republicans in the Senate refuse to confirm him for the job; they refuse to let him do his job. Why? Does anybody here think that the problem that led to our financial crisis was too much oversight of mortgage lenders or debt collectors?

(articles.latimes.com)

In both examples we see that the politicians address social issues which are of paramount importance for ordinary citizens. Such questions raise hope in people that political leaders share their concern and are ready to solve problems. This strategy helps to merge with the audience and have a direct influence on them.

Another widely used syntactic peculiarity is inversion. Politicians seek to use this method in order to highlight the information focus of their sentences and some key words. The best speeches are those which are delivered in a good way. There are cases when the speech is constructed well but some politicians fail to deliver it properly. Thus, the way of representation is the main point in political rhetoric. Let us look into some examples:

Barack Obama

Of all the responsibilities of the presidency, the one that I weigh most heavily is my duty as Commander-in-Chief to our splendid service-men and women.

(whitehouse.gov)

This example shows that the object comes in the first place, it is done intentionally in order to stress it and to give an emotional coloring to the speech.

Very often inversion imparts emotional and influential mood to the discourse and changes its official nature, it is one of its main functions. This is the reason why we come across this device in American political discourse especially during Saturday speeches, which is a common weekend address to the nation.

Barack Obama

Rarely does a day go by that I don't hear from folks who are hurting.

(whitehouse.gov)

Hillary Clinton

Only until we can get a little sleep.

(presidency.ucsb)

H. Clinton underlines her hard-working nature via time indication that they can have a rest only after reaching aims and they still need to work more.

In political discourse we come across various examples of the use of syntactic parallelism. It makes the sentences more emphatic. The following examples will help us to determine whether this device is used differently by men and women.

Barack Obama

In the face of war, you believe there can be peace. In the face of despair, you believe there can be hope. In the face of a politics that's shut you out, that's told you to settle, that's divided us for too long, you believe we can be one people, building that more perfect union.

(theguardian.com)

Here we can see that due to the use of parallel constructions the politician wants to highlight his determination, to stress the difficulties which he and his nation can overcome together. It helps to enhance his firm emotions and strengthen his strong image, because he highlights that despite difficult conditions, it is possible to overcome these difficulties with such a strong leader as he is.

Hillary Clinton

If America is going to lead, we need to learn from the women of the world who have blazed new paths and developed new solutions, on everything from economic development to education to environmental protection.

If America is going to lead, we need to stand by the women of Afghanistan after our combat troops come home, we need to speak up for all the women working to realize the promise of the Arab Spring, and do more to save the lives of the hundreds of thousands of mothers who die every year during childbirth from preventable causes and so much more.

We need to empower women here at home to fully participate economically and give equal pay for equal work.

(themothhood.com)

We can see that the same method is used by Hillary Clinton in order to seem stronger and more influential. Speaking about the US authority, she connects her image with the image of the country to increase self-affirmation and strengthen her own position.

Conclusion

Political discourse has a number of peculiarities and is aimed at affecting people's ideas. Many linguists think that political discourse of men and women differs on the syntactic level. Having analyzed the speeches of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton we can conclude that there are little differences in their discourse from the syntactic perspective. The use of emotional parenthetical words is noticeable in Clinton's speech, whereas Obama uses more logical constructions. Other examples show that both politicians use the same syntactic constructions which are acceptable by many political leaders. This phenomenon may be

explained by the fact that political discourse demands certain constructions and every politician regardless of their gender should follow that pattern.

NOTES

1. Hypotaxis is the grammatical arrangement of functionally similar but *unequal* constructs, i.e., constructs playing an unequal role in a sentence (wikipedia.org).
2. Parataxis is a literary technique, in writing or speaking, that favors short, simple sentences, with the use of coordinating rather than subordinating conjunctions (wikipedia.org).

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Շարահյուսական առանձնահատկությունները կին և տղամարդ քաղաքական գործիչների խոսույթում

Քաղաքական խոսույթն ունի որոշակի առանձնահատկություններ և միտված է ազդելու հասարակական կարծիքի վրա: Շատ լեզվաբաններ կարծում են, որ քաղաքական խոսույթի շարահյուսական մակարդակի առանձնահատկությունները ուղղակիորեն առնչվում են այդ խոսույթն արտաբերող գեղդերային անհատի խոսքային բնութագրին: Հետազոտելով Բարաք Օբամայի և Հիլարի Բլինթոնի խոսույթը, գալիս ենք այն եզրահանգման, որ շարահյուսական մակարդակում այդ տարբերություններն ակնհայտ չեն, քանի որ քաղաքական ելույթները պահանջում են հստակ շարահյուսական կառուցվածք՝ անկախ քաղաքական գործիչի սեռից:

Синтаксические особенности в дискурсе мужчин и женщин политиков

Политический дискурс мужчин и женщин политиков имеет своеобразные свойства и направлен на влияние общественного мнения. Многие лингвисты считают, что речи политиков различаются на синтаксическом уровне, исходя из речевых особенностей, присущих мужчинам и женщинам. Проанализировав речи американских политиков Барака Обамы и Хиллари Клинтон, мы пришли к выводу, что политический дискурс на синтаксическом уровне не имеет явных гендерных различий. Оба политических деятеля наравне используют синтаксические конструкции, которые присущи практически всем политическим выступлениям. Это может быть мотивировано тем фактом, что политический дискурс подчиняется определенным конструкциям, которые должны присутствовать в речи политиков вне зависимости от пола.