

GENDERED BASED VERBAL EXCLUSION IN AMERICAN POLITICAL DEBATES

Ali. Abdulkareem. Mukheef¹, Husain. H. Ma'yuuf²

¹Department of English language, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon, Iraq,

²Department of English language, College of Education for Human Sciences, University of Babylon, Iraq,

hum394.ali.abdulkarim@uobabylon.edu.iq¹

hum.hussain.hameed@uobabylon.edu.iq²

Abstract

Verbal exclusion encompasses a variety of linguistic acts that strengthen social inequalities and power relations. It represents acts such as name-calling, stereotyping, insult speech, and linguistic discrimination to assert dominance or maintain social hierarchies. The current study is concerned with the identification and analysis of Gendered based verbal exclusion in American political debates on Socio-pragmatic level. The study aims to determine the function played by gender in verbal exclusion, the uses of verbal exclusion, which maxim of Grice is most violated in employing verbal exclusion to create implicature, and what type of verbal exclusion is widely used by American politicians. The exclusion is carried out on data consists of four texts of American debates during being president from 2010 to 2024. The research finds that men politicians exclude women politicians because of their gender. Verbal exclusion is used mainly to perform the function of identity construction. The maxim of quality is mainly flouted in constructing verbal exclusion. Lexical exclusion is mainly used by American politicians.

Key words: Verbal exclusion, Gender, Implicature, Functions.

Introduction

Politicians use a range of strategies and devices that are intended to persuade their audience or appeal for their support. Verbal exclusion is one of those strategies that are largely based on the use of particular expressions like name-calling, stereotyping, pejorative language, and linguistic discrimination, the aim of which is to confirm dominance or maintain social hierarchies. (Galindo, 2003). Language is a vehicle whereby individuals or collectivities confirm superiority or consolidate marginalization on the basis of perceived differences. Therefore, to understand what is referred to as verbal exclusion one has to possess a sense of context. This current research was limited to consider the role of gender in the application of verbal exclusion during American political debates. Verbal exclusion is the act of deliberately employing language to exclude, silence, or marginalize individuals or groups based on social identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, or socioeconomic status. Men politician. The data for analysis thus is American political debates between 2010 and 2024.

This study is limited to investigate verbal exclusion on socio-pragmatic level and tries to answer the following questions: (1) how does gender impact the application of verbal exclusion in American political discourse? (2) what are the most common functions of verbal exclusion in American political discourse? (3) which maxim of Grice is most breached in generating verbal exclusion? (4) What is the most common type of verbal exclusion used by American politicians?(5) what are most common speech acts that are used to express verbal exclusion?(6) which type of deixis that is most used in verbal exclusion production?(7) which impolite strategies is most commonly used in verbal exclusion production?

The study aims to: (1) Identify the part played by gender in verbal exclusion. (2) Identify the applications of verbal exclusion in American political rhetoric. (3) Identify which of Grice's maxims is mainly infringed upon to produce verbal exclusion. (4) Say which type of verbal

exclusion is most utilized by American politicians. (5) showing the most common speech used to create verbal exclusion. (6) showing which type of deixis used to create verbal exclusion most often. (7) describing which strategies of impoliteness used to create verbal exclusion.

According to this, the study presumed that: (1) men politicians exclude women because they are women. (2) verbal exclusion is used mainly to serve identity construction function. (3) Quality maxim is the most common maxim that is mainly flouted by politicians in verbal exclusion production. (4) lexical exclusion is mainly used by American politicians more than other types. (5) representative and expressive speech acts are often used in verbal exclusion production. (6) personal and social deixis are mainly used in creating verbal exclusion. (7) verbal exclusion is always conveyed by the means of rude language and insulting words.

To achieve the above objectives the following procedure will be followed: (1) Browsing through the literature of verbal exclusion and its types and applications. (2) Examining the data which is found in four texts which are from American political debates between 2010 and 2024 based on a model developed by the present study.

Literature Review

Gender

Gender, as a social construct, differs from the biological aspect of sex. While sex refers to physiological and genetic characteristics, gender is defined by societal norms and roles that individuals perform in their interactions. Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) emphasize that gender is treated as the accomplishment and product of social interaction. It emerges dynamically through these interactions, and language serves as a key resource in expressing gender identity.

Rocheftort via Siahaan (2008) notes that women and men often use language differently, reflecting broader social attitudes and roles. For instance, Trudgill (2000) observes that language differentiation arises because society lays down different social roles for men and women and expects different behavior patterns from them. Language simply reflects these social facts.

Gender roles are deeply embedded in cultural scripts that dictate how men and women should interact. These roles influence behavior and the language used in cross-gender interactions. Juschka (2001) highlights that understanding cross-gender communication involves recognizing the social power dynamics and dominance differences that shape these interactions.

Judith Lorber (1994) describes gender as a human production that begins at birth and continues throughout life. It involves naming, dressing, and treating individuals according to societal expectations of their sex. This gendering extends to the workplace and other social institutions, where men and women often perform different roles based on societal norms.

The Concept of Verbal Exclusion and Definitions

Verbal exclusion refers to the purposeful employment of language in excluding, silencing, or excluding people or groups on account of their social identities such as race, ethnicity, gender, and socioeconomic status. The essay addresses verbal exclusion as a socio-pragmatic phenomenon in examining its mechanisms, social impact on social interactions, and implications in contemporary settings with evidence from scholarly documentation.

Verbal exclusion is a type of linguistic practice that performs social inequalities and power relations. It includes behaviors such as name-calling, stereotyping, insults, and linguistic discrimination that are aimed at asserting superiority or acquiring social hierarchies (Galindo, 2003). Language is employed as a tool wherein individuals or groups convey superiority or validate marginality on the basis of perceived distinctions. Exclusion via language operates through a range of mechanisms, including linguistic markers of social identity and

microaggressions. Fine and Weaver (2019) describe how microinsults and microinvalidations involve subtle language that sends insulting messages ignoring the experiences or identities of marginalized groups. These communicative acts can occur in everyday interactions, workplaces, media representation, and schools and reinforce stereotypes and inequalities.

Verbal exclusion is enmeshed with power dynamics and social inequality. Foucault (1972) examines how language is a medium of power, producing discourses that script norms and exclude variations from these norms. Exclusionary and reductionist language practices reinforce structural discrimination and inequality of access to opportunity, resources, and social legitimation (Bourdieu, 1991).

Functions of Verbal Exclusion

1. **Social Hierarchization:** Verbal exclusion is also one of the principal aims, since it serves to establish and consolidate social hierarchies. According to Bourdieu (1991), language use reflects and reinforces social stratification. For example, in educational settings, technical jargon can exclude those not accustomed to the domain, thereby reinforcing the rift between experts and novices.
2. **Ingroup vs. Outgroup Differences:** Exclusion by the use of words also helps to demarcate ingroups and outgroups. One may observe this in "in-group" jargon or special language, a sign of membership and affiliation. As Giles and Smith (1979) have argued, the use of insider or special language can help reinforce group cohesion at the same time as it excludes the outsider.
3. **Power and Control:** Language can also be used as a tool for exercising power and control over people. Foucault's (1977) work on discourse and power highlights how language is used to marginalize and control people or groups by determining what constitutes acceptable forms of expression and conduct.
4. **Identity Construction:** Language contributes to the construction and assertion of identities, potentially creating exclusionary processes. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) discuss how identity is negotiated in language, observing that the construction of "otherness" using verbal cues operates to keep social boundaries in place.

Types of Verbal Exclusion

1. **Lexical Exclusion:** It is defined by the usage of some words or jargon that are unknown or inaccessible to in-group members. For instance, expert vocabulary in professional fields is utilized to exclude individuals who lack the necessary background knowledge (Swales, 1990).
2. **Syntactic Exclusion:** This is the application of complex sentence structures or grammatical structures to drive away those who do not possess the requisite linguistic capability. For example, legal jargon tends to adopt complex syntactic structures that are obtuse to non-experts (Tiersma, 1999).
3. **Pragmatic Exclusion:** Pragmatic exclusion refers to the employment of language in a way that an assumption is made regarding common knowledge or social convention, and the outsider of the in-group is excluded from the conversation. It includes indirect speech acts or culturally established allusions, which may be unavailable to outsiders (Searle, 1969).
4. **Discourse Exclusion:** It is based on the broader discursive practice and conventions that determine what is regarded as acceptable or normal. For instance, the framing of certain issues by the media can shut out other perspectives and uphold the prevailing perception (Van Dijk, 1993).

The Model of Analysis

The present study develops a model to analyse verbal exclusion socio-pragmatically which basically depends on the influence of gender on the use of verbal exclusion (sociolinguistic level). While the pragmatic level is limited to Grice's (1975) maxims violation and producing implicature, Searle's classification of speech acts (1979), Lakoff's politeness (1973), Culpeper impoliteness (2016), and Levinson's classification of deixis (1983). To these two dimensions the present study adds the types, and the function of verbal exclusion. Figure (1) shows the model of analysis.

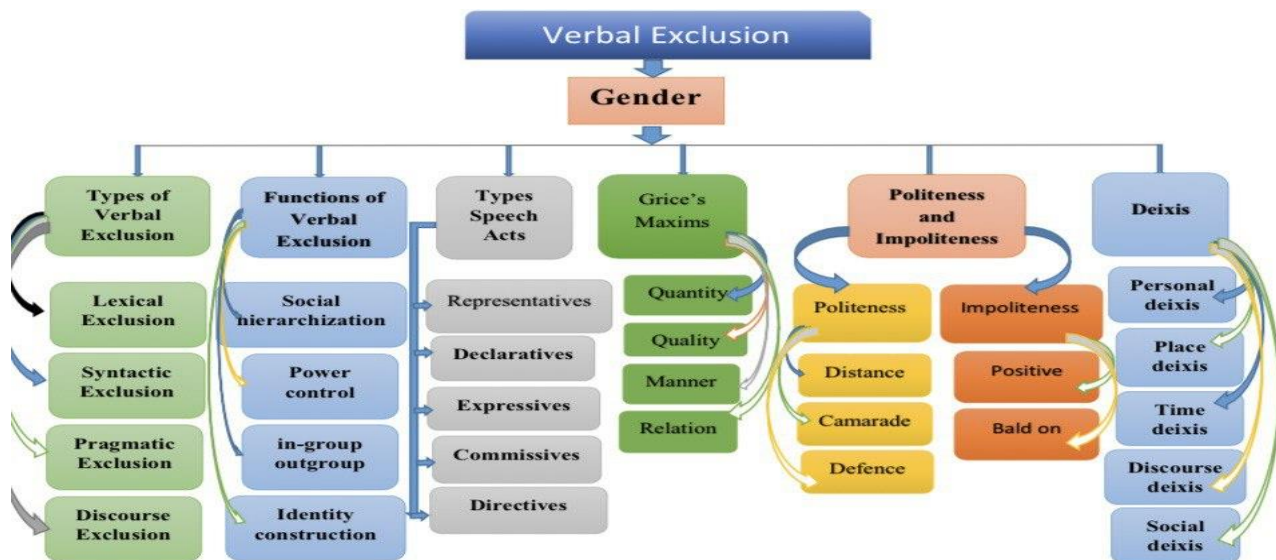


Figure (1) show the socio-pragmatic Model to analyze verbal exclusion

Data Analysis and Findings

It is important to be mentioned that because of the limits of this study four situations that includes exclusionary expressions are tackled to test the workability of the model developed by the present study.

Excerpt 1

1. "Nasty Woman" - Donald Trump (Republican) vs. Hillary Clinton (Democrat) (2016)

Context: The third and final presidential debate, held on October 19, 2016, at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas.

Hillary Clinton was outlining her plans to expand Social Security and Medicare: "My Social Security payroll contribution will go up, as will Donald's, assuming he can't figure out how to get out of it."

"Such a nasty woman." "But whether we like it or not, that's what it is."

The moderator, Chris Wallace, attempted to move on to the next topic. Clinton ignored the comment and continued discussing her policy proposals.

Analysis

1. Gender and Language:

The term "folks" is gender-neutral and inclusive. However, the phrase "Such a nasty woman" directly references gender, potentially reinforcing negative stereotypes about women and

invoking traditional gender roles and biases. This highlights how language reflects societal attitudes toward gender.

2. Types of Verbal Exclusion

1.Lexical Exclusion:

The language used is simple and straightforward, making it accessible to a broad audience. However, the phrase “Such a nasty woman” might exclude individuals who find the language offensive or derogatory.

3.Functions of Verbal Exclusion

1.Social Hierarchization:

The statement can reinforce social hierarchies by trivializing previous comments and diminishing the contributions or concerns of others, maintaining the speaker’s authority. “Such a nasty woman” explicitly targets an individual, reinforcing a hierarchy where the speaker holds power over the target.

4.Pragmatic Strategies and Speech Acts

1.Speech Acts:

Expressive Speech Act: “Such a nasty woman” expresses the speaker’s negative evaluation of the target, conveying an emotional reaction.

2.Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims

Grice’s Maxims:

Maxim of Quantity: The speaker provides enough information to convey their point succinctly.

Maxim of Quality: The statement “It’s just words” might downplay the significance of previous statements, which could be interpreted differently by the audience. The derogatory statement might violate the maxim of quality by being an exaggerated or unjustified characterization.

Maxim of Relation: The statement is relevant to the ongoing discourse, focusing on the speaker’s perspective.

Maxim of Manner: The language is clear and straightforward, avoiding ambiguity.

3.Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies

1.Politeness Strategies:

There is a complete lack of politeness in “Such a nasty woman,” which is a direct attack and violates norms of respectful communication.

2.Impoliteness Strategies:

“Such a nasty woman” is an example of bald-on-record impoliteness, directly offending the target without any mitigation.

4.Deixis

1.Person Deixis:

“Such a nasty woman” uses third-person deixis to single out the target.

2.Social Deixis:

The informal address “folks” indicates a social relationship where the speaker positions themselves as relatable and approachable, establishing a sense of equality with the audience. “Such a nasty woman” indicates a negative social relationship, emphasizing distance and conflict.

Excerpt 2

Donald Trump (Republican) vs. Elizabeth Warren (Democrat) (2017)

Context: Trump used the term “Pocahontas” to mock Warren’s claims of Native American heritage during a White House event.

Preceding: Trump was addressing a group of Native American veterans: "We have some great Native American veterans with us."

Excerpt: "Pocahontas, that's another beauty." (Donald Trump, 2017)

Following: The comment was widely criticized by Native American groups and political commentators: "The president's comment was offensive and inappropriate."

Analysis

1. Gender

Gender roles influence language use, reflecting societal expectations. The phrase "that's another beauty" objectifies and diminishes women by focusing on their appearance rather than their contributions. This reinforces traditional gender roles that undervalue women, perpetuating stereotypes that reduce women to their physical attributes, thereby contributing to gender inequality in communication.

2. Types of Verbal Exclusion

Lexical exclusion: Using "Pocahontas" in a dismissive manner marginalizes Native American voices by framing their ethnic identity in a derogatory way. This contributes to the broader societal exclusion of their perspectives.

3. Functions of Verbal Exclusion

Identity Construction: By derogatorily referring to Warren as "Pocahontas," Trump constructs a negative identity for her, affecting public perception of her ethnic claims and political stance. This maintains social boundaries and reinforces in-group versus out-group distinctions.

4. Pragmatic Strategies

- 1. Speech Acts:** The comment can be seen as a representative speech act, where Trump asserts a belief that belittles Warren's ethnic identity and, by extension, disrespects Native American heritage.
- 2. The Co-operative Principle (CP) and its Maxims:** The comment violates the maxims of quality (providing misleading information) and relation (irrelevant in the context of honoring veterans). This disrupts effective and cooperative communication. This derogatory nickname mocks Warren's heritage and trivializes serious cultural issues, contributing to verbal exclusion and racial insensitivity.
- 3. Politeness:** The comment lacks politeness, imposing negative views on the hearer, offering no options, and failing to create a friendly atmosphere. Instead, it employs impoliteness strategies by mocking and diminishing another individual.
- 4. Deixis**
 - 1. Person Deixis:** Refers to an individual (Senator Warren) while also implicating a broader ethnic group through the term "Pocahontas."
 - 2. Social Deixis:** Indicates a social relationship where Trump positions himself as superior, dismissing Warren's claims and disrespecting Native American heritage.

Excerpts 3

Rush Limbaugh (Republican Commentator) vs. Michelle Obama (Democrat) (2011)

Context: Limbaugh made a derogatory comment during his radio show about Michelle Obama's public health campaign.

Preceding: Limbaugh was discussing government spending on public health: "Why are we spending so much money on these initiatives?"

Excerpt: "It's time to get Aunt Jemima off the pancake box and Michelle Obama off the public stage." (Rush Limbaugh, 2011)

Social Variables

1. Gender and Language:

The statement also targets Michelle Obama specifically, who is a prominent Black woman, bringing gender into the mix of the derogatory comment.

2. Types of Verbal Exclusion

Lexical Exclusion: The language is highly offensive and exclusionary, using derogatory terms that alienate and marginalize Michelle Obama and, by extension, the communities she represents.

3. Functions of Verbal Exclusion

Social Hierarchization:

The statement reinforces social hierarchies by using racial and gender stereotypes to demean Michelle Obama, thereby maintaining and perpetuating racist and sexist hierarchies.

4. Pragmatic Strategies and Speech Acts

1. Speech Acts:

Expressive Speech Act: "It's time to get Aunt Jemima off the pancake box and Michelle Obama off the public stage." expresses Limbaugh's negative evaluation and offensive stance.

Representative Speech Act: Limbaugh's preceding and following comments assert his opinion on government spending and public health initiatives.

2. Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims

Maxim of Quantity: The speaker provides enough information to convey his derogatory point succinctly.

Maxim of Quality: The statement violates the maxim of quality due to its offensive and inappropriate content.

Maxim of Relation: The statement is relevant to Limbaugh's ongoing discourse about government spending but does so in a highly inappropriate manner.

Maxim of Manner: The language is clear but fails to maintain respectful and appropriate communication.

3. Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies

1. Politeness Strategies:

There is a complete lack of politeness strategies; the statement is deliberately offensive and inflammatory.

2. Impoliteness Strategies:

The comment employs bald-on-record impoliteness, directly insulting Michelle Obama without any mitigation.

4. Deixis

1. Person Deixis:

The use of "Aunt Jemima" and "Michelle Obama" directly references the individuals in derogatory ways, establishing a personal attack.

2. Social Deixis:

The references indicate social relationships and roles, emphasizing racial and gender-based stereotypes to demean Michelle Obama.

Excerpt 4

Donald Trump (Republican) vs. Hillary Clinton (Democrat) (2016)

Context: A campaign rally during the 2016 presidential election.

Preceding: Trump was criticizing Clinton's political career: "Hillary's only achievement is being married to Bill."

Excerpt: "She'd be nothing without Bill." (Donald Trump, 2016)

Following: The crowd cheered, and Trump continued: "And we don't need another four years of Bill and Hillary."

Analysis

1. Gender and Language:

The language directly references gender by suggesting that Hillary Clinton's achievements are solely due to her marriage to Bill Clinton. This perpetuates a gendered narrative that diminishes her individual accomplishments.

2. Types of Verbal Exclusion

Lexical Exclusion: The language is clear but dismissive, using terms that undermine Clinton's achievements and attribute them solely to her husband. This can alienate individuals who recognize her independent accomplishments.

3. Functions of Verbal Exclusion

Identity Construction: The language constructs an identity for Trump as someone who dismisses perceived inadequacies and challenges Clinton's legitimacy. It constructs an identity for Clinton as someone whose achievements are secondary to her husband's.

4. Pragmatic Strategies and Speech Acts

1. Speech Acts:

Representative Speech Act: "She'd be nothing without Bill." asserts Trump's belief that Clinton's achievements are due to her husband.

Expressive Speech Act: The crowd's cheering indicates their agreement and support for Trump's statement.

2. Cooperative Principle and Conversational Maxims

Maxim of Quantity: Trump's statement provides enough information to convey his point succinctly, focusing on his belief about Clinton's achievements.

Maxim of Quality: The statement aims to be reflective of Trump's perception, though it can be subjective and potentially exaggerated.

Maxim of Relation: The statements are relevant to the ongoing discourse about Clinton's qualifications and political career.

Maxim of Manner: The language is clear and straightforward, avoiding ambiguity.

3. Politeness and Impoliteness Strategies

1. Politeness Strategies:

Trump's statement lacks traditional politeness strategies and is instead direct and confrontational.

2. Impoliteness Strategies:

The statement employs bald-on-record impoliteness, directly insulting Clinton's perceived independence and achievements without any mitigation.

4. Deixis

1. Person Deixis:

The use of "she" and "Bill" directly references Hillary Clinton and Bill Clinton, establishing a personal attack and connection.

2. Social Deixis:

The references to Clinton's achievements through Bill Clinton indicate social relationships and roles, emphasizing a gendered narrative.

Conclusions

On the basis of the analysis conducted previously, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. The first hypothesis is verified since in most cases men politicians exclude women politicians and diminish their contributions and achievement and attribute them to their husbands.
2. The produced implicature is generally based on the quality maxim violation. Men politicians do not tell the truth or exaggerate to convince the audience of the inability of women in politics.
3. The analysis reveals that verbal exclusion is always expressed by using impolite expressions especially bold-on record strategy and characterized by the use of offensive words.
4. Men politicians use representative and expressive speech acts mainly in the production of exclusionary expressions. The expressive speech acts are used to evaluate the women and their contribution in political situations. They use assertion speech acts commonly to emphasize the inability of women in politics.
6. Personal and social deixis are commonly used in the production of verbal exclusion because to show to the audience who is the targeted person.
7. Lexical exclusion is mainly used by men politicians to exclude women and it is characterized by the use of words like “nasty”, “nothing” and “Pocahontas”.
8. Finally, verbal exclusion is basically used to express identity construction function.

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