LINGUISTIC MARKERS EXPRESSING POLITENESS STRATEGIES IN BRITISH AND AMERICAN POLITICAL SPEECHES: A CORPUS-BASED APPROACH

DẤU HIỆU NGÔN NGỮ BIỂU HIỆN CHIẾN LƯỢC LỊCH SỰ TRONG PHÁT BIỂU CHÍNH TRỊ ANH VÀ MỸ: HƯỚNG TIẾP CẬN KHỐI LIỆU

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Abstract - This paper is aimed at investigating the use of linguistic markers expressing politeness strategies in the discourse of British and American political speeches under the umbrella of corpus-based analysis. Markers of positive and negative politeness strategies used in British and American politicians' speeches were collected for a comparative analysis. The results of this research show that most politeness markers occurring in these political speeches are in language structures with modal lexical verbs, modal adjectives and modal adverbs. Linguistic markers expressing positive politeness strategies occurred with higher frequencies in the American politician corpus while more linguistic markers expressing negative politeness strategies were found in the British politician corpus. Therefore, it can be claimed that American politicians appear to be more positive in expressing politeness strategies, whereas British politicians use more expressions of negative politeness strategies in their speech delivery.

Key words - politeness; modal; corpus; positive; negative.

Tóm tắt - Bài viết tìm hiểu việc sử dụng các dấu hiệu ngôn ngữ biểu hiện chiến lược lịch sự trong diễn ngôn chính trị Anh và Mỹ bằng phương pháp phân tích khối liệu. Các dấu hiệu biểu hiện chiến lược lịch sự dương tính và âm tính trong phát biểu chính trị Anh và Mỹ được thu thập để phân tích so sánh. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy các dấu hiệu lịch sự trong các phát biểu chính trị này được thể hiện qua các cấu trúc ngôn ngữ chứa đựng các động từ, tính từ và trạng từ tình thái. Các dấu hiệu ngôn ngữ biểu hiện chiến lược lịch sự dương tính xuất hiện nhiều trong khối liệu diễn ngôn chính trị Mỹ hơn, trong khi đó các dấu hiệu ngôn ngữ biểu hiện chiến lược lịch sự âm tính được sử dụng với tần suất cao hơn trong khối liệu diễn ngôn chính trị Anh. Như vậy, có thể nhận định rằng các chính trị gia Mỹ có xu hướng sử dụng chiến lược lịch sự dương tính, ngược lại các chính trị gia Anh thiên về chiến lược lịch sự âm tính.

Từ khóa - lịch sự; tình thái; khối liệu; dương tính; âm tính.

1. Introduction

The art of rhetoric is a long-life science and political speech delivering has been studied from different angles for a long time. The main goal of speech delivery is to convince the hearers of the orator's opinions by choosing appropriate linguistic devices. To make successful speeches in general and political speeches in particular, the speaker has to make use of strategies to show his/her politeness and persuade hearers. Therefore, linguistic markers expressing politeness play an important role in the communicative process, especially in speech delivering. Haugh (2004: 127) suggests that "politeness involves speakers' showing what they think about themselves and others, and addressees' perceptions of those evaluations".

This domain has been concerned in ongoing research by a large number of linguists, pragmatists and discourse analysts. Furthermore, the issue of politeness in speech delivering has become central to the discussions of human interaction. It is also a matter of concern in situations when politicians with various ideologies and characters gather to negotiate with each other or to deliver speeches to the publicity. In reality, people find it necessary to use politeness expressions in their speeches to raise the importance of the message and show their concerns about hearers' needs. It can be seen that the expression of politeness is one of the important aspects of communication in which speakers dress up their language to make it more persuasive, and to show their attitude towards the contents of their speeches.

Therefore, linguistic markers expressing politeness strategies can be seen as important tools used for projecting honesty, modesty and proper caution in self-reports and for politically creating space in areas heavily populated by other researchers (see Swales, 1990). These are identified as politeness markers (PMs) used to indicate the speaker's attitude towards the content of the proposition uttered (see Hyland, 1996) and to allow the speaker the greatest liberation in performing actions and addressing sensitive issues politely.

Actually, linguistic devices expressing indirectness, vagueness and modality in interaction are central to a range of domestic studies written in English and Vietnamese. In other words, modality and politeness are the two broad areas of research. However, these two domains have been discussed separately in the literature. Therefore, researches on specific linguistic expressions used to indicate the speaker's politeness strategies in speech delivering is necessary. To achieve such an objective, this paper reflects the semantic and pragmatic perspectives of Palmer's (1990) modality theory into Brown and Levinson's (1987) politeness strategies through the analysis of PMs collected from speeches made by American and British politicians.

2. Objectives and Methodology

2.1. The objectives of this research are to unfold the semantic dimensions of modality expressions and categorize such expressions in specific politeness strategies. Samples of American and British political speeches are selected as the data source of this study and used to build the research corpora in order to provide authentic data of native English for analysis of linguistic expressions denoting politeness strategies. This is also the reason for a corpus-based method to be employed to

collect linguistic expressions in the political speeches and categorize specific politeness strategies. The building of the research corpora is presented as follows.

2.2. Principal tasks in corpus design

A corpus is obviously the key component in any corpus-based research. The initial issue in any corpus-based study is corpus design which determines the effect of research. Although there has been a range of corpora in different levels of text types, size and style, it would be misleading to treat corpora as the overall storage of any potentiality for linguistic research and then just use the appropriate software and sort out questions of study from corpora. In fact, basic principles have to be considered, careful collections and planning for the organisation of a corpus have to be undertaken before it is designed. Aston and Burnard (1998: 21) indicate two groups of criteria to be considered: "on the one hand the size of a corpus and of its component parts and on the other the material actually selected for inclusion". Hunston (2002: 25-31) also proposes four principal issues in corpus design as *size*, *content*, *balance and representativeness*, and *permanence*.

Basic tasks in conducting corpus-based research are the three stages in priority: corpus development, corpus tool development, and development of corpus annotations (see Leech 1991). Kennedy (1998) also suggest that the key points in any corpus design are in the researcher's determinations of what texts to be included in the corpus to achieve data for analysis; what comparison is intended to make between corpora for what purposes to be obtained. There must be careful planning in selecting texts which promise the potentiality of the research efficiency to ensure its appropriateness in terms of variables, e.g., genre, style, authorship, topic, etc.

2.3. Building the research corpora and process of data collection for analysis

Typical in building the research corpora and process of data collection for corpus-based analysis are in Biber et al. (1998), Keck and Biber (2004), Baker (2006). On the basis of prior studies on data collection, the steps of collecting British and American political speeches and building the research corpora are undertaken as follows.

Table 1. *Data on the corpus of American political speeches (The APC)*

Politi-cians	Date range	Spee-ches	% of corpus	No. of words	% of Words
AP01	2001-2004	14	24.13%	45,097	23.6%
AP02	1993-1998	09	15.53%	50,899	26.6%
AP03	2005-2009	21	36.21%	42,249	25.2%
AP04	1981-1992	14	24.13%	47,071	24.6%
Total		58	100%	191,316	100%

Firstly, British and American political speeches are selected as a data source to serve the purpose of investigating expressions that politicians use to express politeness in their speech delivering. The selected political speeches are compiled into two research corpora. One is built from speeches made by American politicians (Table 1) and the other is from speeches delivered by British politicians (Table 2). These two research corpora provide data of politeness markers for quantitative analysis while qualitative analysis is used on the analysis of selected utterances as illustration. Then the major politeness strategies that British and American politicians use are identified and analyzed.

Table 2. *Data on the corpus of British political speeches (The BPC)*

Politi-cians	Date Range	Spee-ches	% of Corpus	No. of words	% of Words
BP01	1999-2005	11	25.00%	52,564	26.6%
BP02	2005-2010	07	15.91%	43,086	21.8%
BP03	2010-2011	10	22.73%	46,532	23.6%
BP04	1975-1989	16	36.36%	55,297	28.0%
Total		44	100%	197,479	100%

In Table 1, the APC consists of 58 speeches delivered by four American politicians in the period from 1981 to 2009, in the size of 191,316 words. The highest proportion of speeches contributing to the compilation of this corpus is from those made by politician AP03, accounting for 21 speeches, at 36.21% of corpus and 25.20% of total words. The amount of speeches delivered by politician AP02 is the fewest in this corpus, with 09 speeches, at 15.53% of corpus but at 26.60% of total words. The amounts of speeches made by politicians AP01 and AP04 collected for this corpus are 14 each, at 24.13% of the corpus, 23.60% and 24.60% of total words, respectively.

Table 2 shows details of the BPC compiled from 44 speeches delivered by 4 British politicians in the period from 1975 to 2011, in the size of 197,479 words. Politician BP04 contributes the highest proportion of the BPC, accounting for 16 speeches, at 36.36% of the corpus and 28.00% of total words. The number of speeches made by politician BP01 follows, accounting for 11, at 25.00% of the corpus and 26.60% of total words. The speeches made by politician BP03 are 10, at 22.73% of the corpus and 23.60% of total words. The amount of speeches delivered by politician BP02 is the fewest in this corpus, with 07 speeches, at 15.91% of corpus and 21.80% of the total words.

In general, the size and synchronic range of these transcribed speeches are approximately equal in percentage of words. Therefore, they are expected to be relevant for collecting data and analysing the politeness markers that the British and American politicians perform in their speech delivery.

It is honestly recognised that the research corpora are not all-sided for the genre of political speeches in terms of variaties. Actually, samples of political speeches for this genre could be collected from more varieties of English other than only those made by British and American politicians.

However, speeches delivered by non-native English speakers would make this genre of speeches more complicated and thus cause the research corpora less representative.

Political speeches collected were examined carefully to provide texts for the compilation of the two research corpora. Then, the software package of Wordsmith version 5.0 was used to identify politeness markers and provide statistical data for analysis. Quantitative analysis shows the difference in frequency use of politeness markers between the corpora of British and American political speeches. Qualitative investigation into selected utterances provides illustrations of politeness markers as well as indicates the major differences between British politicians (BPs) and American politicians (APs) in using politeness markers in their speech delivery.

2.4. Results and Discussion

Politeness expressions found in the research corpora are categorized and analyzed in terms of politeness strategies. In the following sections, positive politeness and negative politeness are defined and specific politeness strategies are categorized and analyzed. Then a comparative analysis of politeness markers used in the two research corpora of British and American political speeches is presented.

2.5. Positive politeness strategies

Positive politeness, as Brown and Levinson (1987: 70) define, "is oriented towards the positive face of the hearer, the positive self-image that he claims for himself. Positive politeness is approach-based; it "anoints" the face of the addressee by indicating that in some respect the speaker wants the hearer's wants (e.g., by treating him as a member of an in-group, a friend, a person whose wants and personality traits are known and liked)". Positive politeness strategies in delivering speeches are identified through linguistic markers displaying the speaker's responsibility for maintaining or protecting the addressee's positive face. Such linguistic markers, seen from the angle of positive politeness, are politeness markers added to the proposition to indicate the speaker's attendance to hearers' desires. In other words, PMs identified as indicators of positive politeness strategies are those conveying the speaker's message of closeness and intimateness to hearers. PMs found from the research corpora are categorized and analyzed into categories, each with examples illustrated as follows.

2.5.1. Expressing encouragement

Patterns of PMs such as *you can* and *please* followed by *action verbs* are found frequently used in the research corpora to express the speaker's encouragement and consultancy for hearers to perform the act suggested in the utterance as shown in the following examples.

(1) If there is anything you know, I Ashley Pearson age 10 can do to help anyone, ***please*** send me a letter... [APB14]

(2) But we also believe that we have a larger responsibility to one another as Americans - that America is a place - where ***you can*** make it if you try. [BPO19]

2.5.2. Expressing optimism

Observations of patterns occurring in the research corpora such as *I am hopeful/ optimistic/ confident/*

certain/ sure that... show that these PMs are frequently used to indicate the speaker's optimism in the events uttered. These PMs involve the speaker's concern for hearers' needs to be met and satisfy the hearers' desire to be approved. With PMs expressing optimism, the speaker also claims his common point of view with hearers and shows that hearers' needs will certainly be met as in the following extracts:

(3) ***I'm sure*** this will be the start of a very strong and positive partnership based on results and practical actions in the interests of our countries. [BPCA02]

(4) ***I am confident that*** the economic program we've put into operation will protect the needy while it triggers a recovery that will benefit all Americans. [APR02]

2.5.3. Expressing solidarity with hearers

The patterns found most frequently-used in the research corpora to convey the sense of solidarity involving both the speaker and hearers in performing the event uttered is *"let's"* as illustrated below.

(5) ***Let's*** set high standards for ***our*** schools and give them the resources they need to succeed. ***Let's*** recruit a new army of teachers... ***Let's*** make college more affordable, and ***let's*** invest in scientific research, and ***let's*** lay down broadband lines through the heart of inner cities and rural towns all across America. [APO07]

(6) Labour's tattered flag is there for all to see. Limp in the stale breeze of sixties ideology. But ***let's*** be fair. Labour wouldn't neglect education. They've promised ***us*** action. [BPTH16]

2.5.4. Expressing strong commitment

Patterns *I will, we will* are characterized as PMs of positive politeness as they express the high certainty scale in the speaker's commitment to the content of the act uttered such as making a promise, a plan or an arrangement and also involvement with the hearers in co-operating with the speaker as in examples below.

(7) Unlike John McCain, ***I will*** stop giving tax breaks to corporations that ship jobs overseas, and ***I will*** start giving them to companies that create good jobs right here in America. ***I will*** eliminate capital gains taxes for the small businesses... [APO11]

(8) No doubt there will be unexpected twists in the road, but with wisdom and resolution we can reach our goal. ***I believe we will*** show the wisdom and you may be certain that ***we will*** show the resolution. [BPTH06]

2.5.5. Hedging on hearers' positive face

Hedging, as a positive politeness strategy, is related to PMs to indicate that the speaker knows what hearers want and is willing to take their wants into account. Expressions like *I believe/ hope/ think/ expect that...* are found in the corpora as weak committers to lower the speaker's commitment to the state of affairs presented as in the following examples.

(9) ***I hope*** we can work together on this. ***I hope*** we can work together as we did last year in enacting the landmark Job Training Partnership Act. [APR04]

(10) *I hope* you see that as a positive programme from a government that really believes in the Big Society... [BPCA02]

2.5.6. Paying attention to hearers

In speech delivery the speaker uses PMs such as *as you know, as you may know, as you probably know* to express his concerns with hearers and attention to hearers' needs or address hearers' desires without violating their face wants.

(11) *As all of you know*, I was just there with a bipartisan congressional group, and I was so proud not only of what our troops were doing, but of the pride they evidenced in what they were doing. [APC05]

(12) It's something, *as you know*, I care passionately about; I would like to be one of the great legacies of this government: building the Big Society. [BPCA02]

2.6. Negative politeness strategies

Negative politeness, as claimed in Brown and Levinson (1987: 70), "is oriented mainly towards partially satisfying (redressing) hearer's negative face, his basic want to maintain claims to territory, self-determination. Negative politeness, thus, is essentially avoidance-based and realizations of negative politeness strategies consist in assurances that the speaker recognizes and respects the addressee's negative-face wants and will not (or will only minimally) interfere with the addressee's freedom of action". Negative politeness strategies are used to reflect the desire for independence in action and freedom from imposition. To express these strategies, the speaker normally employs PMs to hedge on the negative force presented in the utterance in order not to influence hearers' interests. If positive politeness strategies present "solidarity", negative politeness strategies present "deference". Negative politeness strategies are employed in speeches to address hearers' negative face, as claimed in Brown and Levinson's (1987) model, as the face want to be able to act freely and unimpeded by others.

2.6.1. Attenuating the force of an assertion

Observations of the research corpora reveal that PMs used to cover this negative politeness strategy are the semi-modal verbs *seem* and *appear*. These PMs are used when the speakers have to address sensitive issues. They are combined with the proposition to mitigate the imposition on hearers.

(13) Our people *seem* to have lost belief in the balance between production and welfare. This is the balance that we have got to find. [BPTH05]

(14) A civil society demands from each of us good will and respect, fair dealing and forgiveness. Some *seem* to believe that our politics can afford to be petty because, in a time of peace, the stakes of our debates *appear* small. [APB01]

2.6.2. Expressing humility

As observed in the research corpora, the pattern *"let me"* followed by an action verb is found frequently-used to express the speakers' humility. This pattern expresses the speaker's asking for permission when he has to address sensitive issues.

(15) So again, *let me* set out in detail the journey so far, and the plans for a second term. [...] Again, on health, *let me* set out the scale of our plans, for now and for a second term. [BPBL02]

(16) *Let me* begin by saying that we cannot ask Americans to be better citizens if we are not better servants. [APC04]

2.6.3. Hedging on the force of an FTA

In samples of political speeches, patterns with impersonal subjects *"it"* and *"there"* combined with a modal verb form are found. These PMs are used to mitigate the negative effect of FTAs on hearers.

(17) *There will be* no new cuts in benefits from Medicare for beneficiaries. *There will be* cuts in payments to providers: doctors, hospitals, and labs, as a way of controlling health care costs. [APC01]

(18) Above all *it will be* a government that is built on some clear values. Values of freedom, values of fairness, and values of responsibility. [BPCA01]

2.6.4. Expressing a hypothesis

Observations of political speeches reveal that patterns of if clause with hypothetical *would* are found to show the speaker's implication of hedging on the negative effect that may occur in the utterance. Hypothetical *would* is used as a marker of politeness to compensate for the strong sense of a command included in the utterance and turn it into a suggestion as in the following extracts:

(19) The truth of the matter is, *if we take* this crowd and *if we could go* through and ask the heritage, the background of every family represented here, *we would* probably come up with the names of every country on earth, every corner of the world, and every race. [APR13]

(20) And even *if we kept* two-thirds of our trade with the Common Market after we had flounced out - and that is pretty optimistic - *there would be* a million more to join the dole queues. [BPTH07]

2.6.5. Minimizing imposition on hearers through indirectness

Observations of the research corpora show that modal adverbs such as *perhaps, probably,* and *maybe* are mainly used in samples of political speeches to mitigate potential negative force and minimise imposition on hearers as in the following examples.

(21) ... and may I just say that every bit of show business instinct that is within me says that *perhaps* it would be better if the entertainment followed the speaker. [APR07]

(22) Pensions is *probably* the biggest current worry for the workforce. Transport *probably* the worst area of public services. [BPBL05]

2.7. Comparative analysis of PMs used in British and American political speeches

This section consists of a comparative analysis of the frequencies of PMs occurring in the research corpora of political speeches. Frequencies of PMs used to express politeness strategies in the APC and BPC are used for comparisons. Table 3 shows the frequency use of PMs in the six positive politeness strategies and Table 4 for those

used in the five negative politeness strategies in the corpora. The figures indicate the raw counts of PMs collected in the research corpora of political speeches.

Table 3. Distribution of PMs as positive politeness strategies

Positive politeness strategies	Politeness markers	The APC	The BPC
1.Paying attention to hearers	You know, As you know	68 7.74%	50 7.84%
2.Making commitment	I will, We will	443 50.39%	382 59.87%
3.Hedging on the positive FTA	I hope/believe/ think that	175 19.91%	140 21.95%
4.Expressing solidarity with hearers	Let's	117 13.32%	18 2.82%
5.Expressing Encouragement	You can, Please	48 5.46%	34 5.33%
6.Expressing Optimism	I am sure/ confident that	28 3.18%	14 2.19%
	Total	879 100%	638 100%

Table 4. Distribution of PMs as negative politeness strategies

Negative politeness strategies	Politeness markers	The APC	The BPC
1. Hedging on the negative FTA	There should be It may be	38 8.14%	91 13.09%
2. Expressing a hypothesis	Hypothetical Would	313 67.02%	429 61.72%
3. Attenuating the force of an assertion	Seem, appear	14 2.99%	23 3.31%
4. Expressing humility	Let me	53 11.36%	120 17.27%
5. Minimizing imposition on hearers through indirectness	Perhaps, maybe, probably	49 10.49%	32 4.61%
Total		467 100%	695 100%

It can be seen that there are no differences in the categories of politeness strategies used in the two research corpora. However, differences are found in the frequencies of PMs in specific categories.

The statistical data, as illustrated in Tables 3 and 4 above, show the significant differences between the APC and the BPC in the use of PMs as positive and negative politeness strategies. It can be seen that the APs use more PMs of positive politeness strategies than the BPs, accounting for 879 instances compared with 638 instances. The frequencies of PMs used as negative politeness strategies in the two research corpora are in the reverse. The BPs use more PMs of negative politeness strategies, with 695 instances, while the APs produce only 467 instances of PMs in politeness strategies.

The datasets show that the APs use more markers of positive politeness than the BPs in all positive politeness strategies. However, in the strategy of *making commitment*, the pattern *"we will"* is used with a higher frequency in the BPC than in the APC, with 330 instances, at 24.76% of total PMs compared with 304 instances, at 22.59% of total PMs, respectively. The APs produce more instances of the pattern *"I will"* in *making commitment* than the BPs, accounting for 139 instances, at 10.33% of total PMs in the APC compared with 52 instances, at 3.9% of total PMs in the BPC.

3. Conclusion

It can be summarized in this research that politeness markers are linguistic expressions including modal adjectives, modal lexical verbs, modal adverbs used to express specific positive and negative politeness strategies. The American politicians and British politicians are strikingly different in frequency use of politeness markers in their speech delivery. The American politicians use higher frequencies of politeness markers that show the speakers' personal preference, opinions as well as closeness to hearers. Conversely, the British politicians employ higher frequencies of politeness markers which indicates their caution in making commitment to maintain a distance with hearers. The analyses of categories of politeness markers used in political speeches reveal that the American politicians are more personal, straightforward and direct in expressing opinions and preference and thus more positive, whereas the British politicians appear to be more tentative, cautious and reserved and thus more negative in expressing their politeness strategies in speech delivery.

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