

**The use of pronominal and nominal forms of address in Greek political debates:
the case of the talk show “Στον Ενικό”**

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Abstract

The Greek political talk show *Στον Ενικό* [in the singular] invites its participants to a less formal and strictly organised political debate. However, how pronominal and nominal forms of address are used indicates an environment of conventions. Taking into account a number of biological, psychological and sociological factors when selecting pronouns in political discourse, this chapter discusses the emphatic use of pronouns, inclusion and exclusion practices, politeness conventions, as well as the age- and sex-related use of pronouns along with their purposeful use to reflect emotional responses.

Keywords: political discourse, Greek pronouns, honorifics, gendered politeness

1. Introduction

In 2016, a political talk show run by a well-known journalist was aired for the first time on one of the major Greek TV channels, using the meta-linguistic title *Στον Ενικό* [in the singular]. In the tumultuous years of the Greek crisis, the show proved to be a very successful one and eventually a website was set up as *enikos.gr*, which not only made reference to the programme and used a cross-linguistic pun, but also bears the subtitle *Εδώ μιλάμε στον ενικό* [here we speak in the singular]. As the title suggests, the idea was that the participants would be in an informal and relaxed environment. Nonetheless, watching the programme, one realises that despite the host's intentions and sometimes efforts, the use of rather formal forms of address tends to be the norm.

Taking as a starting point that status/power and distance/solidarity are the main determining factors in the speaker's choice among pronoun forms (Brown & Gilman 1960, Brown & Ford

1964), this chapter will analyse the use of pronominal and nominal forms of address in the above-mentioned programme. This will build on the work of previous scholars, with the examples drawn from the show serving to validate and extend established theories. The emphasis on age- and sex-related use of pronouns, as well as their strategic deployment to express emotional responses, highlights the intricate ways in which political actors manipulate language in live debate, which offers deeper insights into the nuances of political communication in Greek media.

To better understand and identify the predominant patterns for political discourse in the Greek language, 68 episodes of *Στον Επικό* were randomly selected and consistently watched. The primary aim was to systematically observe all participants and their linguistic tendencies within a political discourse context. Discussion topics were different for every episode, yet how participants reacted linguistically to each other is a direct reflection of shared pronominal practices. Collecting data through observation enabled classification of the factors affecting the Greek political pronoun choice into six broad areas: i) emphatic use of pronouns, ii) inclusive and exclusive forms, iii) conventional politeness, iv) age-related pronominal choices, v) gendered politeness and vi) the impact of affect. Following the delineation of the dominant categories, focus is shifted to further elaborate on those using indicative examples extracted from all episodes. Multiple examples could fit into each category, but the choice was made on the basis of which are the ones that could reflect linguistically in the best way possible the category under discussion.

Factors affecting pronoun choice can usually be classified as biological, psychological, and sociological (Sifianou 1995, Holmes 1995). In our case biological factors include age and gender, psychological factors include media exposure and/or emotional responses to specific interactions, while sociological factors include status differential (e.g. politicians vs journalists vs public) and/or political affiliation. A preliminary exploration of our corpus reveals that status differential supersedes biological factors.

Moreover, speakers make use of grammatical affordances and other discursive strategies to express either positive politeness manifesting their need to be sociable, or negative politeness to show their need to be free of social impositions (Brown & Levinson 1987).

Nonetheless, the general use of the second-person plural forms in the particular setting, in most cases can be seen as “politic” behaviour (Watts 1992) on the part of the speakers in an attempt to maintain equilibrium and conflict-free relationships. In any case, the frequent shift from second-person plural forms to second-person singular forms and vice versa in our corpus frequently results to the disturbance of equilibrium and the (un)intentional creation of friction and conflict.

2. Emphatic Use of Pronouns

Political pronouns, as van Dijk (1997: 34) points out, "are typical deictics for political contexts and their categories," meaning that they serve as linguistic markers that help to position speakers within the political landscape. Tyrkkö (2016: online) reinforces this notion by emphasizing the deliberate use of personal pronouns as a "highly salient characteristic of political speaking," particularly in the context of managing group identity and fostering a sense of solidarity or belonging. The strategic deployment of plural personal pronouns such as *εμείς* [we] and *εμάς/μας* [us] by politicians is a rhetorical tool designed to "highlight the qualities or positive aspects of theirs or their in-group members" (van Dijk 1997). By employing these pronouns, politicians signal inclusion, aligning themselves with their supporters and emphasizing a shared sense of purpose or values within the in-group.

Within the specific context of the political talk show *Στον Ενικό*, which serves as the focal point of our analysis, this use of plural pronouns is not limited to politicians but

extends to other participants in the discourse. Politicians on the show frequently use plural pronouns to stress party membership and unity, reinforcing the notion that their views are not individual opinions but representative of a larger political collective. This use of pronouns serves to strengthen the bond between the speaker and their political base, fostering group identity. Simultaneously, panel journalists on the show adopt similar pronoun strategies, albeit with a broader scope. Their use of plural pronouns emphasizes collective experiences and concerns, positioning the citizens and the nation as a unified entity affected by political issues, transcending party lines. This inclusive pronoun usage by journalists aims to resonate with a wider audience, encouraging a sense of national solidarity that invites viewers to consider the larger implications of political decisions for the country as a whole, regardless of ideological differences.

The example shown in Table (5.1) reflects the emphatic use of pronouns as a means for party association and inclusion. During the episode, the programme's host interviews Giorgos Katrougalos, Greece's then minister of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity. In an attempt to defend the government's stance towards the Greek pension insurance scheme, the minister consistently uses the first person plural possessive pronoun *μας* [ours] as he refers to actions and results concerning the political party involved and its members. Ho (2013: 62) suggests that the pronominal system as a tool in political discourse reveals the political agents' willingness to commit themselves to future responsibilities as long as these involve others who also make this commitment and/or their disassociation from political responsibility.

Table 5.1. Use of Possessive Pronouns to Indicate Inclusion

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
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Το νομοσχέδιο μας , υπακούει στις δύο βασικές αρχές της αριστεράς: την ισότητα και την ολική δικαιοσύνη.	Our bill complies with the two basic principles of the left-wing ideology: equality and total justice.
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INTERLOCUTORS: G Katrougalos, N Chatzinikolaou

EPISODE 51 (February 1st, 2016)

The use of the first person plural *we* is not restricted to an inclusive approach with reference to a political party's group membership. As it provides a wide referential range and flexibility, this particular pronoun can extend to larger groups of identity membership, such as a country (Pavlidou 2014: 5). The sentences presented in Table (5.2) are extracted from two different episodes, both indicating the construction of a collective national identity as regards crucial state issues. The first person plural *εμείς* [we] is used to convert all problems and the steps taken for their resolution into collective. In the first instance, the host interviews the then prime minister of Greece, Alexis Tsipras. Emphasis is given on the refugee crisis and the lack of timely preparedness, which is introduced by the host as a collective trait that involves from political agents to state mechanisms and citizens themselves. In the second instance, journalist and political analyst Giannis Sarantakos discusses with the then minister of National Defence, Panos Kammenos, about the NATO operations in Greece with reference to Turkey's stance. Panel journalists use such pronouns for referring not only to the party represented by the interviewee, but also for including party members that represent different political parties in the Parliament (Ranjha and Islam 2018: 199).

Table 5.2. Use of Personal Pronouns for Collective Identity Reference

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
- Μήπως εμείς ήμασταν ανέτοιμοι;	- Were we unready?
- Εμείς πώς αντιδρούμε;	- How do we react?

INTERLOCUTORS: A Tsipras, N Chatzinikolaou; G Sarantakos, P Kammenos

EPISODES: 55 (February 29th, 2016); 53 (February 15th, 2016)

3. Inclusion and Exclusion Practices in Political Discourse

Language, particularly in relation to political discourse, often serves as a means for identification purposes: it serves the purpose of delineating inclusion and exclusion of participants as regards to situated identities (Adetunji 2006: 178). As Zimmerman (1998: 90) points out, “the concept of identity can be specified as an independent variable, which accounts for the use of particular linguistic or discourse devices”. These means are intrinsically linked to the identities which the interlocutors wish to be associated with or which are allocated to them (Vertommen 2013: 363). Pronominal choice in contemporary panel debates is a means by which politicians “mark the social relationship between the speaker and his addressee(s), or between the speaker and people or entities referred to” (Vertommen 2013: 363).

In Greek, verbal endings always reflect the subject pronoun of a verb. Consequently, using subject pronouns within a sentence is not considered critical for decoding the communicative purposes of the discussants. Depending on their pronominal choices, even if these are only reflected in verb conjugation, politicians adopt inclusion or linguistic exclusion, as their approach. The former reflects the phenomenon of social

deixis, which includes those aspects of language structure that “mark the social identity of the speaker or addressee and the social relationship that holds between them” (Sifianou 1992: 56) and “encode the social identities of participants” (Levinson 1983: 89). Conversely, the latter represents the person’s deixis, within the framework of which the speaker or the addressee and their participatory roles remain a basic point of reference. Such approaches manage to establish and maintain individual and group identities respectively.

The example sentence shown in Table (5.3) constitutes a typical example of social deixis and, thus, inclusion through the use of pronouns in political discourse. For the purpose of a constructed display of group membership, both government and opposition party members make extensive use of the first person plural pronoun *εμείς* [we] and its other forms, such as the possessive determiner *μας* [our(s)]. In this episode, Greece’s then minister of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity, Giorgos Katrougalos, is interviewed by the programme’s host, journalist Nikos Chatzinikolaou, together with a panel of three other journalists. Emphasis is given on the Greek pension insurance scheme, and, where the minister, consistently adopts an inclusive approach as to refer to the goals set by the government and the obstacles impeding their achievement. All the steps taken are described as a collective effort with all party members involved. The government party is presented as a single entity, whereas the minister acts as a party representative.

Table 5.3. Inclusion through social deixis

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Είχαμε την αισιοδοξία να πιστεύουμε ότι η δημοκρατία στην Ευρώπη θα	We were optimistic to believe that democracy would work in Europe as it

λειτουργούσε, όπως λειτούργησε στην Ελλάδα, και ότι θα μας επέτρεπαν να έχουμε μια εναλλακτική πολιτική διαφορετική από τις πολιτικές λιτότητας που επικρατούσαν και επικρατούν στην ήπειρό μας.	had worked in Greece, and that they would allow us to have an alternative policy different to the austerity policies that were and are still prevailing in our continent.
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INTERLOCUTORS: G Katrougalos, N Chatzinikolaou

EPISODE 51 (February 1st, 2016)

On the other hand, the example sentence shown in Table (5.4) relates to the notion of deixis, within the boundaries of which in political discourse party members dissociate themselves and act primarily as individual entities within a party. They represent their individual beliefs and actions within the party boundaries instead of representing collective beliefs and actions of the party itself. The practice of social deixis is developed through an extensive use of the first person singular pronoun *εγώ* [I] and its equivalents, in combination with constant references to personal values and accomplishments, which demonstrate exclusion from the collective identity of a political party. In this episode Evangelos Meimarakis, former leader of Nea Dimokratia, the Greek conservative political party, is invited by the host to talk about the recently held leadership Nea Dimokratia is done on a highly self-centered basis by focusing on initiatives that he took and ideas he supported.

Table 5.4. Exclusion through person deixis

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION

Θα κάνω αυτό που έκανα σε όλη μου τη ζωή: να βοηθάω τον εκλεγμένο αρχηγό για το καλό του κόμματος – ουδέποτε έφυγα και ούτε σκοπεύω να κάνω κάτι τέτοιο τώρα.	I will do what I have been doing all my life: I will help the elected leader for the good of the party; I have never left and I do not intend to do it now.
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INTERLOCUTORS: E Meimarakis, N Chatzinikolaou

EPISODE 48 (January 12th, 2016)

Overall, the practice of social deixis is most favoured among politicians, since an entity with a collective identity has also collective responsibilities. Nonetheless, a new tendency seems to emerge towards person deixis, revealing a new political era, where party members are willing to bear the weight of responsibility as individuals, using more direct forms of discourse in contrast to the vagueness and distance of inclusive discourse practices. Furthermore, such an approach fulfils the requirement of the political talk show, as implied by its name. Not only are interviewees required to speak in singular and avoid formal and/or distant ways of address, but they are also encouraged to abandon politically inclusive discourse and present themselves as individual entities rather than political party representatives.

4. Convention and Politeness

An important aspect of politeness is its non-obligatory nature; people will normally not behave politely, unless there is a reason to be polite Leech (2014: 5). Sometimes the reason is somewhat vague, such as following convention. Indeed, social interaction is specifically regulated by certain routines (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 140).

As a convention, politeness is expected in different types of social interaction and involves specific forms of recurrent schematic behaviour, “which follow patterns associated with understandings of politeness” (Kádár and Haugh 2013: 140).

Although politeness constitutes a universal trait of human behaviour, communities use different ways to implement politeness linguistically (Kasper 2009: 162). Whereas Fraser (1990: 220) acknowledges such a social norm view of politeness, according to which “each society has a particular set of social norms consisting of more or less explicit rules that prescribe a certain behaviour, a state of affairs, or a way of thinking in a context”, he also presented a global perspective on politeness and conceptualised its notion in terms of a conversational contract. His view of politeness is based on an implicit understanding of the rights and obligations of two interactive interlocutors towards each other. Within the context of this theory, discussants know what to say and what is the most appropriate way to address their interlocutor depending on established social parameters, e.g. the status and/or role of each participant (Félix-Brasdefer 2008: 21). Hence, the use of honorifics fulfils the conventions set by the conversational contract and its terms.

A typical example of how honorifics are conventionally used as markers of politeness is shown in Table (5.5). Discussants include the programme’s host, Nikos Chatzinikolaou, and Fofi Gennimata. The latter is the former leader of centre-left PASOK, transformed into the new political alliance Movement of Change, which includes the old PASOK and a number of smaller political parties with commonly shared socialist beliefs. During the interview, Gennimata consistently uses honorifics to refer to political allies and rivals. In the example given below, the two interlocutors discuss the decisions and steps taken by the governing party and how Greece’s

European partners react to them, with Gennimata constantly using the honorifics *κύριος/κυρία* [Mr/Mrs] when referring to other politicians.

Table 5.5. Conventional Use of Honorifics

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Το τελευταίο διάστημα ο κύριος Τσίπρας ακούει πάρα πολύ καλά λόγια, κυρίως από τον κύριο Σόιμπλε και την κυρία Μέρκελ.	Lately, Mr Tsipras hears very good words, especially from Mr Schäuble and Mrs Merkel.

INTERLOCUTORS: F Gennimata, N Chatzinikolaou

EPISODE 57 (March 21st, 2016)

Using honorifics for addressing or referring to political party members is not the norm. In the example shown in Table (5.6) below the use of honorifics does not indicate the respect of the discussant to the person they are referring to, as it is usually the case with their use as markers of politeness. During this particular episode, Nikos Chatzinikolaou interviews Adonis Georgiadis, a member of the Greek parliament and candidate for the 2016 leadership election of Nea Dimokratia, the Greek conservative political party. The focus of the discussion are the administrative issues that arose during the preparations for the leadership election. Georgiadis refers to the responsibilities of the then Nea Dimokratia leader, Evangelos Meimarakis, who was also a candidate, as regards the challenges encountered. Contrary to Gennimata, Georgiadis makes derisive use of the honorific *κύριος* [Mr], despite his compliance with conventions.

Table 5.6. Derisive Use of Honorifics

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Πρέπει να καταλάβει ο κύριος Μείμαράκης ότι ένας πρόεδρος κόμματος δεν λειτουργεί ως ταύρος σε υαλοπωλείο.	Mr Meimarakis must understand that a party leader does not act like a bull in a china shop.

INTERLOCUTORS: A Georgiadis, N Chatzinikolaou

EPISODE 44 (November 23rd, 2015)

Taking the above somewhat conflicting uses of honorifics into account, following established conventions as a politeness strategy does not always imply their application in its true sense. Solely using honorifics cannot express the respect and politeness required by Fraser’s conversational contract. It should also be remembered, that linguistic choices are inextricably linked to non-linguistic factors, such as the interlocutors’ tone of voice, manner and ways of expression.

5. Age and Politeness

For Brown and Levinson politeness serves both to reflect and regulate social distance, which they define as “a symmetric social dimension of similarity/difference” (1987: 76). Duszak and Okulska (2011: 4) consider age as a hidden dimension within this social interaction. Kouletaki (2005: 246) also places age among a subset of factors, which have an impact on the choice of politeness strategies. Attitudes towards the use of politeness markers vary with age; for instance, politeness is most expected when the young address the old (Wardhaugh and Fuller 2015: 259). Age difference may lead to an increase in social distance (Terkourafi 2005:

105), whereas age proximity can have the opposite effect. The relative ages of speaker and addressee lead to same-age interlocutors exchanging more second-person singular pronouns, a result attributed to the low distance and greater degree of similarity in same-age relationships. On the other hand, different-age interlocutors tend to exchange more second-person plural pronouns because of social distance (Terkourafi 2005: 105).

The example shown in Table (5.7) demonstrates the atmosphere of familiarity, which leads to a lower use of politeness strategies and higher degree of more personal linguistic approaches. During the relevant episode, the programme's host interviews Stavros Theodorakis, leader of centrist party The River and former journalist. The host is accompanied by a number of fellow journalists, Dimitris Takis being one of them. The latter discusses with Theodorakis the potential of cooperation among Greek political parties. On a reference to an article published by journalist and programme's host regarding the same topic, Takis refers to his colleague by his first name, *Νίκος* [Nikos] using also the third-person singular possessive pronoun *του* [his]. The low degree of social distance within this context does not result only from their similar age, but also from being colleagues and any previous collegiality. The use of a more personal linguistic approach is common practice followed by the journalists-guests on the television programme when communicating with the host, something observed on a number of episodes.

Table 5.7. Low Degree of Social Distance

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Είναι αυτό που έγραψε ο Νίκος την Κυριακή στο κείμενο του : τα κόμματα του ευρωπαϊκού τόξου θα πρέπει να συνεργαστούν.	It is what Nikos wrote on Sunday in his article: the parties with a European perspective should cooperate.

INTERLOCUTORS: S Theodorakis, D Takis

EPISODE 66 (June 6th, 2016)

Unlike journalists, political interviewees do not create an atmosphere of familiarity during their discussion with the host. The reason is that social distance is not based solely on age difference. Hence, a low degree on the age distance scale does not preclude the use of politeness markers (Danblon et al. 2005: 54). During the same episode, the interviewee is of nearly the same age as the interviewer. Apart from their age, they do not have anything else in common that could shorten the social distance between them. As a consequence, the party leader refers to the host's article using honorific language, i.e. *ο κύριος Χατζηνικολάου* [Mr Chatzinikolaou], instead of a personal and direct approach, as shown in the previous example. As a general note, party members and other political interviewees tend to maintain a distancing language during their discussion with the host; yet, their choices remain conventionally polite.

Table 5.8. High Degree of Social Distance

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Διάβασα τι έγραψε ο κύριος Χατζηνικολάου στο άρθρο του.	I read what Mr Chatzinikolaou wrote in his article.

INTERLOCUTORS: S Theodorakis, D Takis

EPISODE 66 (June 6th, 2016)

6. Gendered Politeness: How Male and Female Interlocutors Address Each

Other

Women's speech entails a greater degree of politeness compared to that of men's (Lakoff 1975; Brown 1980). By the same token, Holmes (1995: 6) argues that, generally, "women are much more likely than men to express [...] politeness or friendliness in the way they use language". Such an assumption may suggest that not only is women's speech less powerful because it is more polite, but that the subsequent greater degree of aggressiveness on the part of males implies possible emotional differences between the sexes that are biologically based (Philips 1987: 10). The conclusions drawn from the tv-show under discussion suggest an alternative approach, whose main aspects are briefly outlined below.

The examples demonstrated in the following tables (5.9), (5.10) are extracted from a single episode in order to highlight subtle differences in the way of addressing discussion participants on the basis of gender difference. During the relevant episode, the programme's host interviews Vasilis Leventis, Centrists' Union party leader. In accordance with the normal practice in such cases, the host is required to introduce and welcome both the interviewee(s) and each of the fellow journalists participating in the discussion at the beginning of the broadcast. A panel of journalists accompanies the programme's host and consists of both male and female journalists.

It is at this time deemed appropriate to make mention of the gender disproportion within the framework of the political tv-show. There is a gap observed between the number of men and women participants, given the fact that men outnumber women in the overall number of episodes. Consequently, there are episodes during which the panel of journalists is exclusively comprised of male professionals. Other episodes are restricted to a one-on-one discussion between the host and the interviewee, for the duration of which no journalists are invited, thus decreasing even further the

possibilities of a female presence. This is a result of the massive male involvement in politics and political journalism opposed to female involvement.

Within the context of this particular episode, the presence of both male and female panel members is capable of reflecting an additional perspective as regards the notion of politeness with reference to sex difference. When introducing and welcoming Katia Makri, fellow female journalist, the host makes use of the first-person possessive pronoun (Table 5.9). Despite earlier standpoints about women's' greater degree of politeness, men's attitude towards women interlocutors indicate a stronger tendency for politeness strategies. This takes place through an extensive use of the first-person possessive pronoun *μου* [my] by male interlocutors when addressing female ones. The marking of politeness here is to be found in the system of possessive pronouns, which do not emphasise possession, but rather closeness and/or softness, and it follows the conventions that are valid in the system of personal pronouns (Haarmann 1990: 120).

Table 5.9. Possessive Language for Addressing Female Journalist

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Κάτια μου , καλώς όρισες!	Welcome, my dear Katia!

INTERLOCUTORS: N Chatzinikolaou, K Makri

EPISODE 65 (May 30th, 2016)

The example sentence shown in Table (5.10) demonstrates the way the programme's host chooses to introduce and welcome a fellow male journalist, Konstantinos Bogdanos, during the exact same episode. He only uses the Greek welcome equivalent together with the journalist's first name. In contrast to the previous

example, he makes use of non-possessive language. However, the practice of using possessive language is also observed among male participants throughout the episodes, although more rarely. Such practice is intensively used towards female interlocutors and is therefore indicative of a differentiated politeness approach concerning sex difference. The absence of possessive pronouns when addressing male discussants does not correspond to a lower degree of politeness, but it may pinpoint a tendency on the part of male participants to approach female ones in a more gentle way. On the other hand, female discussants seem to retain a consistent and non-differentiated politeness strategy for addressing interlocutors of both the same and the opposite sex.

Table 5.10. Non-Possessive Language for Addressing Male Journalist

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Κωνσταντίνε , καλώς όρισες!	Welcome, Konstantinos !

INTERLOCUTORS: N Chatzinikolaou, K Bogdanos

EPISODE 65 (May 30th, 2016)

7. Politeness and the Concept of Affect

People tend to associate impoliteness with true emotions, especially negative ones (Culpeper and Hardaker 2017: 205). The display of negative emotions, such as contempt or anger has nothing in itself to do with impoliteness (Culpeper 2011: 60). Nonetheless, displaying great contempt for and anger at someone publicly may be associated with evoking impoliteness attitude schemata (Culpeper 2011: 60).

Especially face-to-face conversations “allow for the manifestation of feelings beyond the scope of discourse per se, especially with facial expressions and gestures, thus extending the realm of relevant signs and insult-diverting tools” (Richet 2013: 229).

During the episode referred to below, the political tv-show hosts Nikos Filis, the then Greek minister of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and Nikos Koumoutsakos, Nea Dimokratia’s spokesperson. As a matter of course, a number of journalists are actively involved in the discussion as well, although their participation is not evident in the examples extracted. One of the main points of interest is Eurogroup discussions on the sustainability of the Greek public debt and its relief plan. The two interviewees frequently enter into intense dialogues with the objective to disprove each other’s claims. Their crosstalks are characterised by a raised tone of voice, aggressive gestures and constant interruptions. As demonstrated by the example sentences in Tables (5.11) and (5.12), both interlocutors consistently use the second person formal plural pronoun *εσείς* [you], with its presence being evident through verbal conjunction. Despite continuous use of conventional politeness strategies, these are contradicted by extralinguistic factors; these include their style of speech and body language.

Apart from extralinguistic factors, like facial expressions and interruptive discussion practices, the linguistic content itself constitutes an additional invalidating factor for the use of conventional politeness strategies in political discourse. Tables (5.11) and (5.12) show typical examples of this contradictory approach followed by political party members. Both example sentences are extracted from the same episode and highlight the parallel use of plural pronouns of polite address and offensive language content. In Table (5.11) the minister encourages Nea Dimokratia’s spokesperson not to make a fool of himself by making commitments his party is not going to fulfil; this

sort of advice is at the same time linked to the use of formal personal pronouns that comply with established politeness strategies.

Moreover, the same applies to the incident presented in Table (5.12), during which the latter uses imperative language towards his interlocutor to impose on him his demand for a non-interrupted dialogue. Politeness strategies, be they conventionally established or not, cannot be solely restricted to the use of formal personal pronouns. To achieve courteousness, a combination of attention, conciliation and respect is required in the way interlocutors interact with each other. Politeness does not necessarily presuppose sincerity. Hence, sincere politeness strategies should be distinguished from insincere ones (Xie et al. 2005: 439).

Table 5.11. Parallel Use of Insulting Language Content and Polite Address

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Μην δεσμεύεστε και γελοιοποιείστε!	Do not make commitments because you make fools of yourselves!

INTERLOCUTORS: N Filis, G Koumoutsakos

EPISODE 62 (May 9th, 2016)

Table 5.12. Parallel Use of Imperative Voice and Formal Personal Pronouns

EXAMPLE SENTENCE	BACK TRANSLATION
Δεν θα με ξαναδιακόψετε!	You will not interrupt me again!

INTERLOCUTORS: N Filis, G Koumoutsakos

7. Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to analyse a specific linguistic variable with social parameters, namely how the nominal and pronominal choices affect politeness in political discourse. As illustrated in this chapter, the use of nominal and pronominal forms of address is indeed inextricably linked to the perception of politeness in Greek political discourse and reveals six diverse linguistic patterns. These have been distinguished and analysed in a total of 25 episodes of a political tv-show and relate to: i) inclusion and exclusion practices for creating collective or individual identities; ii) the conventional or derisive use of honorifics; iii) the high and low degree of social distance based on age difference; iv) how sex difference affects ways of address between interlocutors v) the emphatic use of pronouns to indicate association regarding topics of public interest and vi) the impact of emotional affect on applying politeness conventions in political discourse.

Speaking of conventions, generally accepted linguistic practice seems to be required in mass media communication, like the broadcast interviews with a focus on topics of public interest examined above. Most of the interlocutors referred to in this chapter comply with established politeness conventions, such as using formal personal pronouns and honorifics when addressing their interlocutor(s). Despite their consistently following politeness strategies, extralinguistic factors verify whether politeness requirements are successfully fulfilled or not. Interestingly enough, factors like emotional affect, aggressive body language and/or insulting language content

overrule the discussants' willingness to apply linguistic conventions linked to politeness and respect in public life.

Taking the above into consideration, politeness strategies should be classified into sincere and insincere, given the fact that following politeness conventions does not always presuppose sincerity. Hence, sincere politeness strategies should be distinguished from insincere ones based on the linguistic and extralinguistic practices followed by the interlocutor(s). Politeness is not exclusively influenced by the use of certain generally accepted linguistic conventions, such as formal personal pronouns. Language is a social phenomenon and, as such, is dependent on both linguistic and non-linguistic features that strongly interact with each other.

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