



HIS, HERS, AND THEIR RHETORIC: THE POLITICS OF LANGUAGE IN THE U.S.

By Sara Arub Yaseen V00714896

Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) yaseensa@mymail.vcu.edu

RESEARCH QUESTION & HYPOTHESIS

- **What impact does feminine rhetoric have on male presidential candidates' discourse in the United States before and after the women's suffrage movement?**
- Independent Variable (IV): feminine rhetoric; Dependent Variable (DV): male presidential candidates' discourse
- Hypothesis: After women received the right to vote, male presidential candidates have increasingly utilized feminine rhetoric within their own discourse in the United States of America
- This hypothesis challenges literature which suggests that feminine rhetoric is non-conductive in the political arena (election to public office, passing legislation, etc.), and practically non-existent within the predominately male sphere of politics.
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- Instead, this hypothesis suggests that due to the advent of women's suffrage (enfranchisement of women), male presidential nominees use feminine rhetoric within their own male political discourse (speeches, debates, interviews) in order to be inclusive to women (pandering to the female sex to obtain their vote).

OPERATIONALIZED VARIABLES

- Women's suffrage: complete enfranchisement of women, right to vote, 19th Amendment in 1920
- Male presidential nominees: must be Democratic or Republican only
- Feminine rhetoric: language that is intimate and unifying
- Masculine rhetoric: language that is commanding and instrumental
- Male political discourse: speeches, debates, interviews
- Inclusivity to women: pandering to the female sex to obtain their vote
- **It is important to keep in mind that feminine and masculine rhetoric and language are social constructs in political and social science**

MALE & FEMALE RHETORIC

- MALE RHETORIC:²
- Use communication to assert yourself and your ideas; use talk to achieve something.
- Use communication to attract and maintain an audience.
- Use communication to compete with others for the "talk stage," so that they don't gain more attention than you; learn to wrest the focus from others and onto yourself.
- FEMALE RHETORIC:³
- Use collaborative, cooperative talk to create and maintain relationships. The process of communication, not its content, is the heart of relationships.
- Avoid criticizing, outdoing, or putting others down; if criticism is necessary, make it gentle: never exclude others.
- Pay attention to others and to relationships; interpret and respond to others' feelings sensitively.

² Kathleen Verderber *Voices A Selection of Multicultural Readings*, Larner, Lindsay R. "The Role of Feminine Rhetoric in Male Presidential Discourse: Achieving Speech Purpose."

³ Jennifer Richards, *Rhetoric, women and politics*, Marcus Åhagen & Johan Nilsson "Gendered rhetoric in the General Assembly"

STRATIFIED RANDOM SAMPLING

- 1856-1916: before women obtained the right to vote (1-16 or 0-15) $N=16$, $n=8$
- 1920-2012: after women obtained the right to vote (1-24 or 0-23) $N=24$, $n=12$
- After I subdivide the population into before suffrage and after suffrage strata, then I would use a random number generator (RNG) to determine which presidential elections will be in the sample (D'Arcy P. Mays III)
- Once the election years are determined, I will take a look at each presidential candidates' male political discourse within the selected election year, and facilitate a simple random sample (label discourse, RNG, etc.)
- Democratic and Republican (major, two-party) male candidates in general presidential elections only, 40 participants, to assess change over time
- In brief, I would use stratified random sampling because my research question requires that I group my subjects into strata; it's not enough to just do a simple random sample because some parts of the population could be overrepresented/underrepresented (Earl Babbie)

STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

- PROS:
- Best represents the entire population being studied (discourse used by male candidates) (D'Arcy P. Mays III)
- Reduces sample selection bias because each subgroup under stratification receives equal representation within the sample (Johnson and Reynolds)
- Ensures segments of the population (male political discourse used before and after women's enfranchisement) are not being overrepresented or underrepresented (Earl Babbie)
- CONS:
- Cannot be used to help answer every research question (Van Evera)
- Must have clearly defined subgroups (Van Evera)

CONTENT ANALYSIS

- Research that does not collect data from people; it is observable content (Stoker)
- Content analysis: Study of recorded human communications (administrative records and documents) and underlying meaning of the content (context) (Stoker)
- Binaries & coding scheme for feminine and masculine rhetoric: these will be established based on operationalized variables (Stoker)
- For example, one study assessed gendered rhetoric in all 57 American presidential inaugural addresses through content analysis by establishing binaries for the words he and she, him and her, his and hers, man and woman, and men and women
- Conceptual analysis: analyzing the existence and frequency of feminine rhetoric in male discourse (i.e. counting the number of feminine rhetoric in male discourse)
- In short, because I will be evaluating male politicians' discourse it would be helpful to look at recorded human communications such as speeches, interviews, and debates to analyze their content for feminine rhetoric, as well as ascertain the purpose of the source in using feminine rhetoric (Stoker)

STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

- PROS:
- Unobtrusive because my subjects are not living (Stoker)
- Low cost because I don't have to go out and interview people (Stoker)
- Allows for quantitative/qualitative research (frequency of feminine rhetoric/descriptive observational study) (Stoker)
- CONS:
- Meticulous & time consuming (Stoker)
- Coding error/relational analysis (no two political & social scientists code alike, feminine vs. masculine rhetoric, repeated trials to ensure consistency)
- May not take context into consideration i.e. going to war, war-like rhetoric

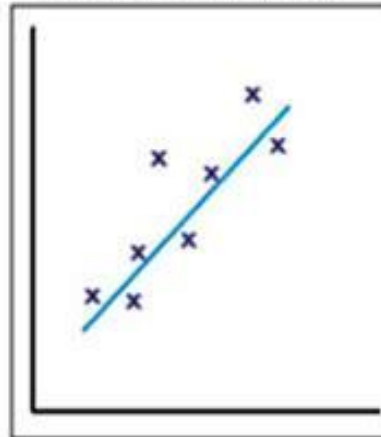
CORRELATIONAL STUDY

- A correlational study is a quantitative research method that investigates the relationship between two variables and how they interact with one another (Earl Babble, D'Arcy P. Mays III)
- Correlational study can also be used to determine the efficacy of female rhetoric in getting candidates elected (if there is a relationship present) (Earl Babble)
- Women's suffrage = critical event analysis (Van Evera, Stoker, Johnson and Reynolds)
- The way I structured my research question indicates change over time, so I want to see the relationship between the frequency of feminine rhetoric on male presidential candidates' discourse before and after women's suffrage

GRAPHS

Year	Presidential Candidates	Frequency of feminine rhetoric in discourse	Percentage of women's vote
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %
	(D) (R)	# #	% %

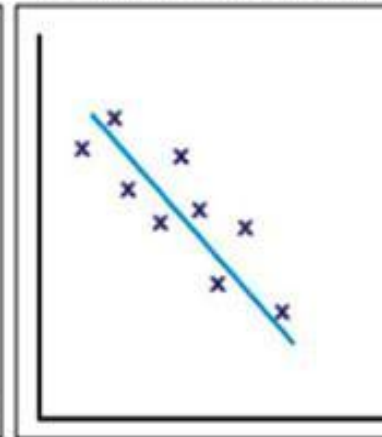
Positive correlation



The points lie close to a straight line, which has a positive gradient.

This shows that as one variable **increases** the other **increases**.

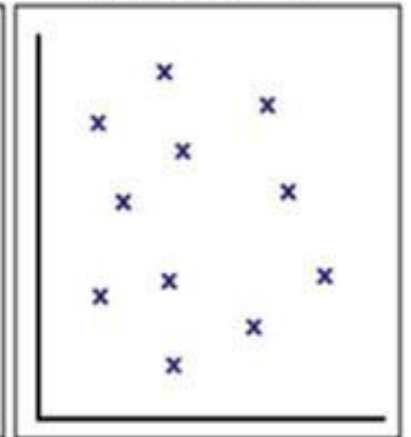
Negative correlation



The points lie close to a straight line, which has a negative gradient.

This shows that as one variable **increases**, the other **decreases**.

No correlation



There is no pattern to the points.

This shows that there is **no connection** between the two variables.

STRENGTHS & LIMITATIONS

- PROS:
- Explores research questions in a way that cannot be examined through experiments (i.e. collect more data because of variable non-manipulation)
- Results tend to be more applicable to everyday life since they are observed in a natural environment instead of a laboratory setting (Johnson and Reynolds)
- CONS:
- Correlation does not mean causation (no cause and effect) (Earl Babbie)
- It cannot provide a conclusive reason as to why there is or is not a relationship present (Stoker, Earl Babbie, D'Arcy P. Mays III, Van Evera)
- A correlation does not reveal which variable influences the other

CONCLUSION

- In conclusion, stratified random sampling, content analysis, and correlational study are the research methods that I chose to help me answer my own research question
- They are the best fit because they are reinforced through the methodology books
- Both quantitative and qualitative methods worked well together
- My research question was not designed to be experimental so it would be impractical to use experimental or quasi-experimental methods
- Focus on the information out there already instead of creating new data to work with

WORKS CITED PAGE

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