

Re-vealing the hidden role of gender in the language of military and sports leadership

Re-velando el papel encubierto del género en el lenguaje del liderazgo militar y deportivo

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Abstract

Language is used with different purposes, such as motivating and inspiring spirits. These are the main purposes of the language of leadership which, in military and sports contexts, is found in military harangues and locker-room talks. Previous studies show that mere presence of metaphors based on war and sports is an additional barrier for women who want to use the language of leadership in environments such as business (Koller, 2004). This leads to the following question: if war and sports metaphors are a problem for women in business, how difficult is it for women to communicate leadership in war and in sports? In order to find an answer to this question, I have focused my work on the study of gendered-conceptualizations found in military and sports harangues in English language. Therefore, the main aims of my work are to de-naturalise the conceptualizations that appear in the different samples, and to reveal the hidden role of gender, to reformulate the idea of leadership. In order to carry out this work, I have gathered a corpus based on different speeches to analyse, and I have identified the most common gendered conceptualizations and conceptual metaphors that appear in these speeches. Finally, I have interpreted the tentative results under a Cognitive Linguistics scope. After analysing the collected samples and obtaining these tentative results, I have revealed the hidden influence of gender in the language of leadership. Through conceptual metaphors such as *men defend women* or the conceptualization of leaders as *men*, among others, masculinities are built in a hegemonic way in which women cannot behave as natural leaders.

Keywords: Harangue, military harangue, locker-room talk, conceptual metaphor, conceptualization, feminine leadership.

Resumen

El lenguaje se utiliza con diversos fines. Entre estos se encuentra la finalidad de motivar e infundir ánimos, objetivo principal del lenguaje del liderazgo que, en los ámbitos militar y deportivo, toma forma mediante discursos como las arengas militares y las charlas de vestuario. Estudios anteriores han revelado que la mera presencia de metáforas basadas en la guerra y en los deportes supone un obstáculo para las mujeres a la hora de utilizar el lenguaje del liderazgo en ámbitos como el de los negocios (Koller, 2004). Esto conlleva la siguiente pregunta: si las metáforas basadas en la guerra y en los deportes suponen un problema para las mujeres, ¿cómo de complicado será para ellas comunicar en las arengas militares y deportivas? Tratando de responder a esta pregunta, he enfocado mi trabajo al estudio de las conceptualizaciones relacionadas con el género utilizadas en las arengas militares y deportivas en lengua inglesa. Los objetivos principales de mi trabajo son, por tanto, des-naturalizar las metáforas empleadas y re-velar el papel encubierto del género, replanteando así la noción de liderazgo. La metodología empleada para llevar a cabo dicho estudio consiste en la obtención de un corpus de muestras de discurso en lengua inglesa para analizar; la extracción de las principales conceptualizaciones relacionadas con el género encontradas en los discursos; y la interpretación de las mismas bajo una perspectiva lingüístico-cognitiva. Tras el análisis, la obtención de resultados provisionales revela la influencia escondida del género en el lenguaje del liderazgo. Mediante el uso de metáforas conceptuales como los hombres defienden a las mujeres, o la conceptualización del líder como hombre se construyen unas masculinidades muy hegemónicas en las que no hay cabida para la socialización de las mujeres como líderes naturales.

Palabras clave: Arenga, arenga militar, charla de vestuario, metáfora conceptual, conceptualización, liderazgo femenino.

INTRODUCTION

Language is not an arbitrary process; actually, language is always used with specific purposes. In some cases, language is used to transfer information, whereas in other cases, the purpose of using the linguistic resources speakers have is to inspire spirits, motivation, and energy. This is the case of harangues, a type of discourse typical from the language of leadership.

In my work, a linguistic analysis based on the Cognitive Linguistics approach to conceptual metaphors and conceptualizations, I have looked at the language used in military harangues and in locker-room talks. A harangue is a speech, variable in length, which main function is to inspire and motivate the audience. Trough it, the orator tries to persuade the receivers of the speech in acting in a specific way in order to face a complex situation. These speeches are typical from military or sports contexts, although they can also be found in business contexts (Leroux Gravatt, 2007).

The main reason to carry out this study is that, typically, scholars who have discussed and studied harangues have done so in terms of historiography, trying to define their role in the historical events and debating whether some of the samples found in literature can be considered realistic or fictional (Leroux Gravatt, 2007). Therefore, the linguistic side of these speeches remains almost unknown.

Objectives

The objective of this work is to identify some common conceptual metaphors and conceptualizations that appear in military harangues and locker-room talks. After identifying these patterns of thought, I can analyse whether the gendered-language used can be an obstacle for women who want to communicate leadership in such highly masculinised contexts.

In order to carry out this work, I have considered the language of military harangues and the language of locker-room talks as two speech subgenres within the language of leadership, adopting the genre linguistic perspective (Biber and Conrad, 2009).

METHODOLOGY

For the purpose of achieving the afore-mentioned objectives, I have used various theoretical frameworks. The first one is Discourse Analysis, defined by scholars as the study of language-usage 'beyond the sentence', i.e. it is a discipline in which language is studied as a whole, without being divided into smaller units (Tannen, n.d.). In Discourse Analysis, different disciplines can be combined in order to obtain more detailed findings. For my analysis, I have applied a genre perspective (Biber and Conrad, 2009), combined with other linguistic theories.

Regarding the analysis, the first step I have followed was the selection of a sample of different harangues I was going to analyze. I have chosen various actual military harangues and locker-room talks, as well as cinematographic samples of military harangues. These cinematographic speeches, in spite of being fictitious, bear a great resemblance with actual speeches transcribed in literary pieces.

Finally, I have identified the most common gendered conceptualizations and conceptual metaphors that appear in these subgenres. Due to the high masculinisation of the army and sports, I have studied whether these gendered conceptualizations can constitute a problem to women who want to be leaders in those domains.

The Notion of Genre

The genre perspective is a linguistic approach in which the functions and situational contexts of a text variety are described (Biber and Conrad, 2009).

In spite of sharing some similarities with the register perspective, in which the linguistic features common in a text variety are analysed in combination with the communicative purposes and situational context of texts, there are some characteristics which differentiate the two perspectives. The focus of the genre perspective is to analyse the linguistic characteristics used to structure complete texts, including once-occurring features, whereas the register perspective focuses on frequent linguistic characteristics found in representative text excerpts from the variety. This is the reason why the studies based on the genre perspective are based on analysis of complete texts. As a result, the linguistic characteristics of the variety are conventionally associated with the genre, conforming "to the culturally expected way of constructing texts belonging to the variety" (Biber and Conrad, 2009: 16).

The application of this linguistic perspective to my work has allowed me to study both types of texts, military harangues and locker-room talks, in isolation as two different speech subgenres, due to their context-specificity, and combined as part of a speech genre, the language of leadership.

Conceptual Metaphors: a Cognitive Linguistics Perspective

Cognitive Linguistics is a flexible framework of linguistics, since it is a cluster of many overlapping approaches, rather than a single well-defined theory of language. As an approach to the analysis of natural language, Cognitive Linguistics focuses on language as an instrument for organizing, processing and conveying information (Geeraerts and Cuyckens, 2007). Dirk Geeraerts, a cognitive linguist, stated that each theoretical framework can be considered as an isolated island, whereas Cognitive Linguistics takes the form of an archipelago. Therefore, Cognitive linguistics is "a conglomerate of more or less extensive, more or less active centres of linguistic research that are closely knit together by a shared perspective, but that are not (yet) brought together under the common rule of a well-defined theory" (2006: 2).

Cognitive Linguistics rejects the classical view on metaphors as figures of speech used deliberately, with a literary or rhetorical purpose. Conceptual metaphors are considered as a property of concepts rather than a linguistic effect; they are seen as patterns of thought which function is to better understand certain concepts. Another characteristic of metaphors, from a cognitive perspective, is that they are used effortlessly in everyday language, since speakers of a language think in metaphorical terms; these underlying conceptual associations, the patterns of thought, result in

linguistic metaphorical expressions (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980).

Conceptual metaphors are a key issue in this paper, since I have attempted to identify some metaphors and images that appear in the language used by military and sports leaders. Following the Cognitive Linguistics approach to the study of metaphors, more issues beyond the linguistic effects can be analysed. In the case of this paper, patterns of thought can be analysed through the study of conceptual metaphors in order to find whether the metaphors and conceptualisations used are a handicap for feminine leadership.

In order to find a theoretical base for my analysis, I have looked at previous works on conceptual metaphors and gender in discourse. Veronika Koller, whose research focuses on cognitive semantics and critical discourse analysis, has studied how these phenomena influence business media discourse. One of the main results she found out in her work is that most of the metaphors used in business media discourse are based on war and on sports. She has found examples of war metaphors such as "Within the past few days, war has been declared between the two most significant storage companies...", "Battling for market share in a slowing industry...", and "Tide - surprise! - has already launched a counteroffensive..." among many others. In relation to sports metaphors, she has obtained different examples, for instance: "We have a big challenge catching up", "...that the global e-commerce players...", or "They have teamed up with Pacific Century CyberWorks..." among others (2004: 98-104).

These war and sports based metaphors impede feminine leadership in business due to the gender associations these contexts have. My research question arises from this idea: if a conceptualization based on war or sports is a problem for women communication, how difficult is it for women to communicate leadership in war and sports contexts?

MILITARY HARANGUES: A DEFINITION

As Leroux Gravatt stated, military harangues are a way of motivating soldiers before a battle (2007). In such a critical situation, when people are not in good spirits, a motivating leader is necessary. Typically, this motivation comes from the harangue. When it comes to the name of these speeches, there is some debate. Nowadays, according to Yellin, who studied the rhetoric of combat leadership, the term harangue can sound "dated and stiff, if not haughty" (2008: 1). Some scholars prefer the term exhortation, although it has to be qualified in order to avoid religious resonances. It has also been named as pep talk, which is shorter, and therefore, preferred by a culture not used to more-than-two-syllables words (Yellin, 2008). However, I prefer the term military harangue, due to its similarity with the Spanish term arenga militar because Spanish is, from my point of view, one of the most representative languages in this type of discourse.

This speech subgenre involves different interlocutors: the orator, who is usually a military leader; and the audience, who are those men or women under the leader, the troops. Harangues take place right before combat, which is the main reason why the commander tries to affect the troop's attitude and performance, dissuading them from being cowards or

from surrendering (Leroux Gravatt, 2007). In relation to this, Quintilian said that oratory is able to revive "the courage of a panic-stricken army" and to persuade "the soldier faced by all perils of war than glory is a fairer thing than life itself" (c. 95 A.C.: 321).

Much has been studied in relation to the ideal commander. Onasander asserted that being "a ready speaker" was crucial for being a good leader. The military leader has to know "how to say the right word and how to show the right expression", since nobody would "choose a general who lacks the ability to make an effective speech" or one who does not seem to be fully convinced of his fearlessness. His rationale:

"If a general is drawing up his men before battle, the encouragement of his words makes them despise the danger and covet the honour; and a trumpet-call resounding in the ears does not so effectively awaken the soul to the conflict of battle as a speech that urges to strenuous valor rouses the martial spirit to confront danger" (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 13).

The relationship among the participants, in this case a hierarchical relationship, influences the linguistic choices of the interventions. Since military harangues are speeches given by military leaders to soldiers, the speakers are in power positions towards the audience. Context also affects language-usage; in the case of military harangues, the moment in which the interaction occurs conditions the purpose of the communication, and in turn, the linguistic choices

Military harangues are important before a battle, although speeches do not compel men to fight well. Xenophon stated "There is no exhortation so noble that it will in a single day make good those who are not good when they hear it. It could not make good bowmen, unless they had previously practiced with care, nor spearmen, nor knights" (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 7). Actually, the leader's voice is used to cut through the fear and remind the soldier of what is required, as the danger and fear may make the soldier forget his or her training (Marshall, 1947). This idea of morale is crucial in battle leadership. US Army's basic leadership text defines morale as an emotional state of a military unit that "holds the team together and keeps it going in the face of the terrifying and dispiriting things that occur in war" (U.S. Army, 2006: 7-8). It has been considered by some as "the greatest single factor in successful war" (Eisenhower, 1948: 210) because, as the Admiral Ernest King, Chief of Naval Operations, told the 1942 graduating class at Annapolis, "machines are nothing without men" and "men are nothing without morale" (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 10). Xenophon pointed out that "it is not numbers or strength that bring the victories in war [...] it is when one side goes against the enemy with the gods' gift of stronger morale that their adversaries, as a rule, cannot withstand with them" (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 10). Combat morale is an issue that has been widely studied. A French colonel, named Ardant Du Picq, explained in his works that succeeding in battle depends on morale, considering human heart as the determinant factor at battle organization, tactics, and discipline (1958).

As afore-mentioned, battle exhortation adds confidence to troops when it is needed. In most cases, "troops are not be led into battle unless confident of success" (Tsouras, 1992: 50). The commander's task is "to point out to them the cowardice and mistakes of their opponents"

and to "say anything by which the soldiers' minds may be provoked to hatred of their adversaries by arousing anger and indignation" (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 13-14). Actually, the aim of these speeches is to provide troops with reasons 'of substance' to hazard life and limb. The exhortation encourages men to fight imminently. In response to that exhortation, troops advance with fury (Yellin, 2008).

LOCKER-ROOM TALKS: A DEFINITION

Sports harangues are slightly different from military ones. When I started working on this subgenre of language, I realized that this term does not only refer to these speeches that occur right before a game, but also at time-outs, half-times, and after the game in order support athletes and revive their willing. However, as I have been working with both subgenres, military and sports harangues, the samples chosen for the analysis take place at the moment right before the game. These speeches normally take place in the locker-room, before entering the arena; that is the reason why they are known as *locker-room talks*.

Locker-room talks are usually conceptualized as men talks because locker-room "consists more specifically of both a place and a value associated with male power and identity, masculinities, competition, solidarity", among others (Gregory, 2009: 326). Thus, metaphorically speaking, locker-rooms are a safe place in which men can discuss "their ideas about their valued, motivations, fears, desires, [...] sexuality, career and family on a personal level" (Gregory, 2009: 326-327).

In order to understand the importance of locker-rooms, it is important to bear in mind the important role of organized competitive sports in men's culture. As Miracle and Rees point out, men consider sports as a way to develop different personal qualities such as teamwork, moral character, self-restraint, and a sense of fair-play (1994). Besides, there are plenty of benefits attributable to athletic participation and which may influence this participation: elevated self-esteem, higher school and university attendance, greater educational aspirations, among others (Carlson et al., 2005).

The conceptualization of locker-rooms as a *place* for masculine interaction is related to the idea that men have about sports. Sport is also a way to do gender and assert masculinity (West and Zimmerman, 1987). Due to this conceptualization of sport as an arena in which the enactment and perpetuation of men-bonding can take place (Messner, 1981), "men's locker room is enshrined in sports mythology as a bastion of privilege and a center of fraternal bonding" (Curry, 1991: 1). In this male territory, the expected hierarchical structure can be supplemented, undermined, or contradicted (Marshall, 1984).

In locker-room talks, there are different factors influencing the language-usage. First of all, the context in which the interaction takes place: it occurs in the moment right before a game, so that the language is used to encourage players. As another factor involved in the language used, it is important to look at the participants and the existing relationship among them. In the case of locker-room talks, the participants involved are the coach, who is the speaker, and the team, who is composed by the players. Although it is a hierarchical relationship, it is not as distant as in the case

of military harangues, since the hierarchy and power-division is not as strict.

MATERIALS

Selecting an appropriate corpus of study has not been an easy duty. Since the contexts in which these speeches occur are not easily accessible ones, it is difficult to obtain spontaneous and natural samples of discourse. I decided to use cinematographic and chronicled samples in the case of military harangues. It is true that most cinematographic speeches are written based on chronicled samples, but some others are actual chronicled ones, which is the reason why I decided to use both types. In spite of this, the resulting corpus is not very large; although the results might not suffer a great variation with a larger compilation of samples.

In addition to that, I would like to highlight the lack of speeches uttered by women. I have only used two samples because the highly masculinised nature of these contexts leads to a lack of feminine patterns of behaviour. In order to solve this problem, I have looked at the different gender-related conceptualizations and conceptual metaphors used by men in these speeches.

In order to study the discourse of military harangues more in depth, I have selected different well-known harangues in cinematography: William Wallace's harangue in Braveheart (Gibson, 1995), Aragorn's final speech in the third part of The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (Jackson, 2003), the final speech in 300 (Synder, 2007), a harangue uttered by Elizabeth in The Pirates of the Caribbean: At the World's End (Verbinski, 2007), Achilles haranguing the Myrmidons and Hector haranguing his men in Troy (Petersen, 2004), and a Tyrion Lannister's speech in "Blackwater", an episode of the TV series Game of Thrones (Marshall, 2012). It is important to bear in mind that these harangues are not actual speeches, but rhetorical recreations of what harangues are supposed to be like. There has been a wide debate among scholars on the veracity (or not) of these speeches; however, they constitute a good basis in order to analyze and to study what language of leadership is, since they could be used as a pattern of behaviour.

Apart from cinematographic samples, there are chronicled harangues. However, there is some skepticism regarding this type of texts too, due to different reasons. First of all, these speeches are not direct transcripts, but, in most cases, reports made by others than the orators who were not even eyewitnesses in some cases (Yellin, 2008). In some cases, it is a historian account, since the use of speeches was a common historical method to record issues during antiquity. Besides, it was an expected method by an audience who was used to oration (Burgess, 1902). In spite of this, due to the fact that historical narratives have proven trustworthy in most cases, historical speeches are said to be trustworthy too (Pritchett, 1994). Taking this into account, I have broadened the scope of my analysis with the incorporation of some chronicled samples. Most of these chronicled samples were found in Yellin's Battle Exhortation: The Rhetoric of Combat Leadership (2008). In his work, Keith Yellin talks about some military harangues and the way in which rhetoric is used by military commanders. Therefore, even though some of the analysed samples have been taken from his work, my analysis

on conceptual metaphors is not based on his previous study.

The analysed samples are the following ones: Agamemnon leading Greeks at the battle of Troy, chronicled in Richmond Lattimore's translation of Homer's Iliad in 1951 (as cited in Yellin, 2008: 7); Queen Elizabeth I, quoted Anne Somerset's Elizabeth I, addressing English troops before Spain's expected invasion (Somerset, 1992); Major General James Mattis addressing the First Marine Division during US' second war with Iraq, haranguing through a written message Marines in their return to Iraq (Kusnetz, 2003: 103); a Major General James Mattis' embossed letter Marines' families which was posted on the website of the Key Volunteer Network of Eleventh Marines (Yellin, 2008: 9-10); a Regimental Commander trying to get his unit across the Elbe (Marshall, 1947); a Platoon Sergeant reviving his platoon under fire in the Pacific (Marshall, 1947); First Sergeant Dan Daley at Belleau Wood (Yellin, 2008: 37); Brigadier General Norman Cota at Omaha Beach (Yellin, 2008: 37); a Squad leader addressing Task Force Ranger in Mogadishu (Yellin, 2008: 37); the Brasidas being addressed by his commander by imitating Leonidas and by reciting Tyrtaeus, chronicled in a Spartan war song (Rutherford, 2001); and George Patton addressing his troops (Speeches that Changed the World, 2010).

In the case of locker-room talks, the discourses are transcribed from real recordings. Therefore, the veracity skepticism is no longer a problem. However, the lack of feminine speeches is still present. In order to carry out the analysis of these talks, I have used the following samples which were transcribed in "The Greatest Motivational Speeches in Sports History" published in Complex Staff (2014): a speech delivered by Tim Tebow in January 2009; Vince Lombardi addressing the Green Bay Packers in 1968; Boston Red Sox fans being addressed by David Ortiz in 2013; Jim Telfer addressing British & Irish Lions in 1997; Coach Flowers haranguing Leland High School JV Football Team; and Georgia Tech football team being addressed by Derrick Moore in 2007. Apart from those, I analyzed samples which were transcribed in USA TODAY Sports, in the article "What are the best locker room speeches of all time?" (2012): Tim Tebow's National Championship halftime speech delivered in 2008, Bill Stewart talking to West Virginia Mountaineers in 2008, and Knut Rockne speaking to Notre Dame in 1928. Finally, Coach Scott Quinell's speech to the School of Harc Knocks, which was transcribed in the article "The 17 Most Inspiring Sports Speeches You've Ever Heard" published by A Plus (2015).

ANALYSIS OF CONCEPTUAL METAPHORS AND CONCEPTUALIZATIONS

In order to find an answer for the question I asked myself, if war and sports metaphors are a problem for women in business, how difficult is it for women to communicate leadership in war and in sports?, I have tried to de-naturalise some of the gendered conceptual metaphors and the conceptualizations that appeared in the analyzed samples.

The main conceptual metaphor I have found in military harangues is *men defend women*. In a highest level of abstraction, this could be understood as *people defend other people*. However, if the *other people* is

always conceptualized as women, then we can consider it as a gendered-conceptual metaphor. This metaphor appears in different sentences, for example:

- "Troy is mother to us all, fight for her."
- "If he gets in, it will be your women he rapes."
- "But a real man will never let his fear of death overpower his honour, his sense of duty to his country and his innate manhood."

In these samples, the way in which countries are conceptualized as *women* is noticeable. Through this conceptualization, the perception of women as feeble creatures in need of defence is incremented.

An example that really caught my attention is a sentence uttered by Queen Elizabeth I in which she says: "I know I have the body but of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart and stomach of a king". It is a particularly shocking utterance because she is somehow apologizing for not being a man, because women are not understood as leaders. Therefore, leaders appear conceptualized as men.

In the case of sports harangues, women are conceptualized as *cowards* through the usage of feminine characteristics to ridicule men. This is noticeable for example, when Bill Stewart refers to the opponent as a 'dandy' in his speech to West Virginia Mountaineers: "We got a great opportunity. We got a dandy out there waiting for us."

Moreover, in the speeches both leaders and soldiers are conceptualized as men, and women are not included in these groups. This is noticeable in different examples:

- "A real man will never let his fear of death overpower his honour."
 - "Be men now, dear friends."
- "...since more come through alive when men consider each other, and there is no glory when they give way, nor warcraft either."
- "You, my fine young men, are going to prove the enemy wrong—dead wrong."
- "Third, you are here because you are real men and all real men like to fight."

Apart from that, another problem for feminine-leadership is the sense of brotherhood present in those speeches:

- "Never, ever, ever bail out on your brother. "
- "(It's) about your brothers, bleed and sweat together."
- "Sons of Gondor, of Rohan, my brothers, I see in your eyes the same fear that would take the heart of me."
 - "And so my king died... and my brothers died."
 - "Myrmidons! My brothers of the sword!"

The players of a team and the soldiers of an army are conceptualized as *brothers*, in several occasions, but there is never allusion to sisterhood, or a general term such as 'siblings'.

In addition to the afore-mentioned conceptual metaphors and conceptualizations, there is an extensive usage of the third-person-singular, masculine pronoun *hehis-him*.

CONCLUSIONS

I have revealed some conceptual metaphors that may make it more difficult for women to communicate leadership

in these environments. Through this brief analysis, the hidden influence of gender in the language of leadership is noticeable. Moreover, these contexts build masculinities in a hegemonic way in which women cannot behave as natural leaders.

Apart from that, it is very interesting the way in which the available locker-room talks that we can find on the internet are from football or basketball, among other similar sports. In these conceptualizations in which only 'men sports' such as football or basketball are considered valuable sports, women are marginalized, and this marginalization results in a men's glorification (Koller, 2004).

For further studies, I would like to expand this work by increasing the number of analysed samples to compile a more extended corpus. In addition, a comparative analysis with other languages, such as Spanish, would be very interesting, because it might disclose different conceptualizations in the two cultures.

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