

# Power and Solidarity within COVID-19

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القوة والتضامن واستخدامها خلال فترة

كورونا

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Forms which indicate power establish who has authority and how great that authority is and those which indicate solidarity establish the degree of intimacy in the relationship. It is widely believed that speech has great influence on the social life of individuals and whole communities. Thus, a lot of research effort has been devoted to analyzing what people say in their daily interactions and the linguistic choices they make to achieve communicative goals. While engaging in conversations, speakers consciously or unconsciously demonstrate their identities, their belonging to a certain culture or social community and their desire to come close or distance themselves from their addressees.

**Section One** presents the introduction, problem, aims, and hypothesis of the study.

**Section Two** presents an overview about power and solidarity.

**Section Three** presents the connection between power and solidarity and COVID-19.

**Section Four** presents the main conclusions.

## المستخلص

تحدد الأشكال التي تشير إلى القوة من لديه السلطة ومدى عظمة تلك السلطة وتلك التي تشير إلى التضامن ، وهي تحدد درجة الألفة في العلاقة ، ويعتقد على نطاق واسع أن الخطاب له تأثير كبير على الحياة الاجتماعية للأفراد والمجتمعات بأكملها . وبالتالي ، تم تكريس الكثير من الجهود البحثية لتحليل ما يقوله الناس في تفاعلاتهم اليومية والخيارات اللغوية التي يتخذونها لتحقيق أهداف التواصل . أثناء الانخراط في المحادثات ، يُظهر المتحدثون بوعي أو بغير وعي هوياتهم ، وانتمائهم إلى ثقافة معينة أو مجتمع معين ورغبتهم في الاقتراب أو الابتعاد عن الذين يخاطبونهم .

يعرض القسم الأول مقدمة الدراسة ومشكلتها وأهدافها وفرضيتها .

يقدم القسم الثاني لمحة عامة عن القوة والتضامن .

يقدم القسم الثالث العلاقة بين القوة والتضامن وكورونا .

يقدم القسم الرابع الاستنتاجات الرئيسية .

## Section one

### 1.introduction

#### 1.1 problem of the study

This study presents the two concepts power and solidarity and a theoretical background about them. Also, it tries to show the role of power and solidarity during the period of COVID-19.

#### 1.2 Aims of the study

The study aims at:

- 1.Presenting an overview about power and solidarity.
- 2.Showing how society apply power and solidarity within COVID-19.

#### 3.Hypotheses of the study

It is hypothesized that:

1. speech has great influence on the social life of individuals and whole communities.
2. A lot of research effort has been devoted to analyzing what people say in their daily interactions and the linguistic choices they make to achieve communicative goals

#### 4.procedures

The main procedures of the study are:

- 1.A literature review of power and solidarity.
- 2.Analyze the situation of COVID-19 by applying power and solidarity.
- 3.Showing the conclusions of the study.

#### 5.limits

The study limited itself to the concept of power and solidarity which is presented in the following sections.

#### 6.value of the study

This study is of value to those who are interested in sociolinguistics.

## Section Two

### 2.The concept of power and solidarity

#### 2.1 Power

The definitions of power from different views are presented as follows:

- a) Power is a relationship between at least two persons and it is nonreciprocal in the sense that both cannot have power in the same area of behavior (Brown and Gilman, 1960)
- b) Power is self-explanatory (Hudson,1980)
- c) Power is the degree to which one interlocutor is able to control the behavior of the other (Polly Sterling, 2000)

## 2.2 Solidarity

Solidarity is a relationship which is based on similarity or even sameness of salient characteristics in two (or more) persons. "attended the same school or have the same parents or practice the same profession". Such relationships are reciprocal, i.e. they obtain equally for both individuals. The varying aspect of the solidarity dimension is its intensity, or degree of solidarity, ranging from close intimacy to distant reserve. The former type of relationship is likely to be marked by mutual exchange of first names, while the latter by reciprocal use of titles and last names. Solidarity concerns the social distance between the characteristics they shared (Hudson, 1980). How much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, region of origin, race, occupation, interest, etc.). Solidarity forms express intimacy and familiarity. Solidarity can be achieved in interactions where interlocutors share some common attribute for instance, attendance at the same school, work in the same profession, membership in the same family, etc. The solidary relationship is symmetrical in that if Speaker A has the same parents (or attended the same school, etc.) as Speaker B, then B has the same parents as A. It is important to note that not every shared personal attribute creates solidarity. For example, two people who have the same color eyes or same shoe size will not automatically have an intimate relationship. But should they share political membership, religion, birthplace or other common attributes "that make for like-mindedness or similar behavior dispositions," the likelihood of a solidary relationship increases. (ibid)

## 2.3 Linguistics Signal of Power and Solidarity

Linguistics signal which shows power-solidarity relation reflected in some items such as noun phrases, verb form, and vocabulary level.

### a. Noun phrases

The sensitive items include ordinary noun phrases, built round common noun, when used as vocatives. For instance, according to Mitchell (1975) there is a widespread practice, possibly typical of Muslim communities, whereby the older generations affectionately address the younger with the term that is properly reciprocated to them by the younger". Thus in Barbar (spoken in North Africa) a mother might call her children yamma. In English the sensitive items are personal names, and in French they include the pronoun 'you'. Brown and Gilman (1960) describe covariation between the pronoun used and the objective relationship existing between speaker and addressee -semantic evolution of the pronouns of address in certain European languages. For instance he described pronoun usage followed the rule of nonreciprocal T-V between persons of unequal power and the rule of mutual V or T (according to social-class membership) between person of roughly equivalent power in French, English, Italian, Spanish and German.

### b. Verb form

Verbs are signals of power and solidarity in some languages such as in Japanese, Korean, and Persian. In Korean there are no less than six distinct suffixes which reflect different power-solidarity relation between speaker and addressee, and a verb must have one of these suffixes attached to it (Martin 1964). The six suffixes fall into two groups, three reflecting different degrees positive solidarity ('plain', 'intimate', 'and 'familiar and three reflecting different power relations between people with low solidarity ('polite', 'authoritative', and deferential).

### c. Vocabulary level

A good example of this found in Javanese (Geertz, 1960), which offers a range of alternative forms, listed in lexicon, for each of a large number of meanings.

<https://meldamalipa13.blogspot.com/2012/08/pronouns-of-power-solidarity.html>

## 2.4 The relationship between Power and solidarity

Speech may also reflect the social relations between the speaker and addressee, most particularly the power and solidarity manifested in that relationship.

'Power' is self-explanatory, but 'solidarity' is harder to define. It concerns the social distance between people how much experience they have shared, how many social characteristics they share (religion, sex, age, region of origin, race, occupation, interests, etc.), how far they are prepared to share intimacies, and other factors. For

the English speaker, the clearest linguistic markers of social relations are personal names, such as John and Mr Brown. Each person has a number of different names by which he may be addressed, including first and family names, and possibly a title (such as Mr or Professor).

Let us consider just two possible combinations: the first name on its own (e.g. John), and the title followed by the family name (e.g. Mr Brown). How does one decide whether to address John Brown as John or as Mr. Brown). John is used if there is high solidarity between the speaker and John Brown, and John Brown has less power than the speaker - in other words, if John Brown is a close subordinate. A clear example is when John Brown is the speaker's son. On the other hand, Mr Brown is used if there is low solidarity and John Brown has more power than the speaker - if he is a distant superior, such as a company boss or a headmaster whom the speaker knows only from a distance. It seems unlikely that there would be any disagreement among English speakers as to the names appropriate to these two situations. There is less agreement, and less certainty, over the names to be used in intermediate situations. What does one call a close superior, for instance." Students joining a department in a British university, for example, generally start by calling the head of the department (i.e. departmental chairman) Professor A', since he is a distant superior, but they may gradually get to know him better through classes and perhaps less formal contacts, until they feel they know him quite well. The question then arises whether, and when, they should start to call him by his first name. In some departments the problem is resolved immediately by the head of department announcing on the first day that everyone is to call him by his first name, but elsewhere it is left to each student to judge when solidarity between him and the head has increased to a point where he feels entitled to use the latter's first name, and different students can have very different 'thresholds' indeed - for some it takes three years, for others only two or three days. Clearly, the explanations for these individual differences are complex, involving matters of personality as well as knowledge of the norms, but such differences should not obscure the fact that everyone agrees there is a point on the solidarity scale where it will become right to use a first name. One of the advantages of showing power and solidarity in this way is that such problems may be avoided simply by not using any name to address the person concerned. However, other languages have other devices for signalling power and solidarity which in this respect are less accommodating. (hudson, 1986:122-125)

### 2.5 Tu and Vous

Many languages have a distinction corresponding to the tu-vous (T/V) distinction in French, where grammatically there is a 'singular you' tu (T) and a 'plural you' vous (V) but usage requires that you use vous with individuals on certain occasions. The T form is sometimes described as the 'familiar' form and the V form as the 'polite' one. The consequence of this usage was that by medieval times the upper classes apparently began to use V forms with each other to show mutual respect and politeness. However, T forms persisted, so that the upper classes used mutual V, the lower classes used mutual T, and the upper classes addressed the lower classes with T but received V. This latter asymmetrical T/V usage therefore came to symbolize a power relationship. It was extended to such situations as people to animals, master or mistress to servants, parents to children, priest to penitent, officer to soldier, and even God to angels, with, in each case, the first mentioned giving T but receiving V. Symmetrical V usage became 'polite' usage. This polite usage spread downward in society, but not all the way down, so that in certain classes, but never the lowest, it became expected between husband and wife, parents and children, and lovers. Symmetrical T usage was always available to show intimacy, and its use for that purpose also spread to situations in which two people agreed they had strong common interests, i.e., a feeling of solidarity. This mutual T for solidarity gradually came to replace the mutual V of politeness, since solidarity is often more important than politeness in personal relationships. Moreover, the use of the asymmetrical T/V to express power decreased and mutual V was often used in its place, as between officer and soldier. Today we can still find asymmetrical T/V uses, but solidarity has tended to replace power, so that now mutual T is found quite often in relationships which previously had asymmetrical usage, e.g., father and son, and employer and employee. (wardhaugh, 2006:260-261).

## Section Three

### 3. Power and solidarity within COVID-19

Epidemics and pandemics are perennial transnational phenomena, as they always spread over the progressively interrelated world along with the systems of trade and travel. Within COVID-19 pandemic, though, this development was known on an unparalleled scale: the spread of the virus affected almost everyone and led to a "unique shared experience" (Bieber, 2020a, p. 1) because of the nearly simultaneous universal reaction of lockdowns and shutdowns. This makes it differ from other universal phenomena, for instance the economic



calamity or previous epidemics which were limited to one or more areas (e.g., Ebola, SARS, Zika). One of the most prominent structures common to most countries in the early time of the outbreak was the *nation-oriented reactions* (e.g. restrictions of medical and social aid within state borders, closure of borders,), which faced the concept of *global solidarity*. Notably, the concept of solidarity itself has become prominent, both as opposite and related to nationalism, and/or as a feature of new global interrelations.

Norms of solidarity are generally of a horizontal nature (interpersonal and intergroup), but also include a vertical dimension (rulers–ruled). Some authors distinguish between *institutionalized* and *informal solidarity* (Kourachanis et al., 2019, p. 680), the *former* referring to the state as the main carrier of common interests and actions, with the latter pointing to non-state-actors, such as NGO's or family structures. Noting the increasing individualization of postmodern societies, some scholars speak about *solidaristic individualism* (Rothstein, 2017, p. 313) and *hidden solidarities* (Spencer and Pahl, 2006), referring to the rising significance of informal social networks such as friendships. Solidarity suggests that people bond on the base of the same or at least convergent interests and/or emotions.

Solidarity is a feature of group building, both in the sense of community and society. Since individuals are members of more than one group, various types of solidarity interlock, as Bayertz (1999, p. 28) emphasizes. Nation, as an *imagined community* (Anderson 1983), is one of these possible social groups. In this vein, Malešević (2013, p. 14, 2020, p. 1) claims that 'solidarity is attached to nationhood, as for an overwhelming majority of inhabitants of this planet, nationhood is understood to be the principal form of human solidarity'. In contrast, some scholars have argued that *global solidarity* is usually being questioned by the rise and strengthening of nationalism during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the *nation-oriented* responses to the pandemic were a prominent recurrence during the initial crisis management phase. This can be clarified by the fact that responsibility for public health lies with sovereign (nation) states and that 'the nation-state — the institution—is the gravitational constant that determines politics' (Ozkirimli, 2020). This echoes the power of (nation-) states which are, according to Malešević (2020), one of the main causes responsible for the unfolding of the structural power of nationalism.

## Section Four

### 4. Conclusion

The COVID-19 pandemic has prompted a unique global experience, arousing both exclusionary nationalistic and inclusionary responses of solidarity. The main conclusions of this study suggest that leaders have constructed the virus as the main outgroup through the metaphors of the pandemic-as-war and the pandemic-as-movement which have entered the national space. Faced with this threat, these speeches have discursively constructed the nation-as-a-team as the main in-group and prioritized (1) a vertical type of solidarity based on nationhood and according to governmental plans; (2) exclusionary solidarity against rule-breakers; (3) horizontal solidarity that is both intergenerational and among family members, and (4) transnational solidarity. It is not by chance that the world stands as a relevant affiliated group that needs to forcibly collaborate in order to face the main outgroup, the virus itself. A major consensus has been found in constructing the out-group. In contrast, the linguistic and discursive constructions of in-groups and their affiliates display a greater variation, depending upon the prevalent discursive practices and social context within different countries.

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