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The University of Southern Mississippi

POWER OF SPEECH STYLES: A RELATIONAL FRAMING PERSPECTIVE

by

Michael Lewis King

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

May 2013

ABSTRACT

POWER OF SPEECH STYLES: A RELATIONAL FRAMING PERSPECTIVE

by Michael Lewis King

May 2013

This study advances understanding of powerful and powerless language effects by incorporating a relational framing perspective. Relational framing theory (RFT) suggests that when messages are interpreted using a dominance frame, issues regarding persuasion, influence, and control become salient. When exchanges are framed by affiliation, however, issues of liking, attraction, and regard become salient. Power of speech style researchers have instantiated dominance-framed interactions in their experiments primarily, thus leaving affiliation-framed interactions largely ignored. Addressing this gap, this study considered the effects of relational framing differences on participants' evaluation of speech style variations. Consistent with previous literature and in partial support for the RFT derived hypotheses, this study found that when the exchange was framed by domination, powerless language negatively affected speakers' superiority, general control, dynamism, and control over outcome. However, effects were much less apparent when exchanges were framed more by affiliation than domination. These findings warrant further investigation concerning when exactly powerless and powerful language effects exist in day-to-day interactions.

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The University of Southern Mississippi

POWER OF SPEECH STYLES: A RELATIONAL FRAMING PERSPECTIVE

by

Michael Lewis King

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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May 2013

DEDICATION

I dedicate this document and the education it represents to my parents. Without their unwavering support of my life's pursuits, their unrestrained commitment toward my educational endeavors, and their unending love for family, my dream of earning a Ph.D. would not have materialized. Thank you so much, Mom and Dad.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Educators frequently encourage students to speak confidently, or suffer damaging effects on their projected image (e.g., Hamilton, 2010; Lucas, 2010; Perloff, 2008). Support for claims like this is derived in part from decades of research investigating components of language termed *powerless language* (Erickson, Lind, Johnson, & O’Barr, 1978), which have been found to negatively affect message recipients’ perception of speakers and their messages. Overtime, however, this body of research—also referred to as power of speech style research—has presented potential caveats to this overarching claim. This report addresses these caveats, and more importantly, proposes a theoretical framework that explains both the harmful and advantageous effects of power of speech style variation.

Power of speech style research began after Lakoff (1973, 1975) argued that “women’s language . . . submerges a woman’s personal identity, by denying her the means of expressing herself strongly, on the one hand, and encouraging expressions that suggest triviality in subject-matter and uncertainty about it” (1973, p. 48). Erickson, Lind, Johnson, and O’Barr (1978) and O’Barr (1982) enumerated a set of what Lakoff would have considered components of woman’s language. These language components included tag questions (“That sandwich looks good, *doesn’t it?*”), hesitations (“*um... I... ah, disagree*”), intensifiers (“It looks *really really* good”), hedges (“*Maybe, but I don’t think* I could eat it”), hypercorrect grammar (i.e., unnaturally formal enunciation), deictic phrases (“that person, *over there*, has one”), and polite forms (I’d *really* appreciate a bite). After reviewing 150 hours of courtroom dialogue (e.g., expert and layperson

witness testimony), however, O’Barr and associates found these components of language were “neither characteristic of all women nor limited only to women” (O’Barr, 1982, p. 69). Instead, they found that low status speakers used these components at much higher rates than did high status speakers and therefore were an issue of “social powerlessness,” not sex (O’Barr, 1982, p. 70). Although the O’Barr cadre disagreed with Lakoff’s specific claim about so-called women’s language, they did find empirical support that these components reduced ratings of speaker credibility and trustworthiness. Language free of these components—labeled the *powerful* style (Erickson et al., 1978)—however, produced relatively favorable impressions on these variables, and has been described as “fluent, terse, and direct” (Bradac, Wiemann, & Schaefer, 1994, p. 101).

O’Barr’s (1982) research spurred further investigation into the nuances of these language components. Their effects have been studied in a variety of contexts including courtrooms, classrooms, and boardrooms, and results have consistently showed that various combinations negatively affect a speaker’s credibility, power, and persuasiveness (Bradac & Street, 1989/1990; Bradac & Giles, 2005). While most of the research has produced highly consistent results, some potentially contradictory findings have emerged. Most recently, in a study that varied the level of expected employee interaction, Fragale (2006) found that in situations where high levels of interaction were expected, many of the components Erickson et al. (1978) studied were associated with higher ascribed status than language without these components. One difference between Fragale’s study and the preceding speech style research is relational context. While Fragale assessed these speech styles in both highly interdependent and highly affiliative environments, most

studies have employed relatively low interdependent and dominant environments (e.g., courtrooms).

Unsurprisingly, the environment can affect message evaluation and evaluations of speech style variation in particular. Considering social dimensions of our environment, such as levels of interdependence, allows researchers to identify the effects individualistic and group oriented settings have on message evaluation (Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982). Specifically, these contextual changes are likely to alter the attitudes that communication researchers attempt to measure (Bradac & Giles, 2005; Giles & Ryan, 1982). For example, people evaluating messages in a dominance-laden environment are likely to recognize high levels of speaker confidence, competence, and expertise, while those in solidarity-laden environments are likely to recognize high levels of benevolence, likeableness, attractiveness, and similarity (Giles & Ryan, 1982). The speech style research reviewed in this document and the social contexts in which they were studied provide insight into a potential theoretical explanation into the variation of message evaluation.

Scholars have argued that factors relevant to message production and evaluation change when the relative importance of dominance and solidarity are altered (Dillard, Solomon, & Palmer, 1999; Dillard, Solomon, & Samp, 1996; Ryan, Giles, & Sebastian, 1982). These dimensions have long been regarded as “fundamental to the analysis of all social life” (Brown & Gilman, 1960, p. 253). In their classic essay, *The Pronouns of Power and Solidarity*, Brown and Gilman (1960) identified the emergence of these dimensions in language by investigating the etymology of the Latin forms of address, *tu* and *vos*. They argued that in situations where power dominates the exchange, the lower

status individual will use *vos* (i.e., the formal address) while the higher status individual will use *tu* (i.e., informal address). In interactions where solidarity dominates the exchange, interactants will display reciprocal uses of *tu* or *vos*. The sentiments of these forms are still found in the English language today. For example, while a university student is expected to refer to the professor with the prefix doctor, the professor may address the student by his or her first name.

By articulating the differences between the dimensions of power and solidarity, this dissertation provides a relational understanding of speech style evaluation. When the dimensions of power and solidarity are used to define social contexts, evaluators' perceptions of the environment become paramount, as they serve as a point of reference when decoding messages (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999). In other words, message evaluation depends on whether interlocutors perceive the interaction to be characterized by dominance or solidarity. Previous power of speech style research has been largely studied in environments defined by dominance, not solidarity. Therefore, the study presented in this document extends the study of speech evaluation in response to messages free of, and containing, for example, hedges, hesitations, and tag questions in contexts defined by either dominance or solidarity. Providing a theoretical foundation for these claims is a theory of relational framing as conceptualized by James Dillard and his colleagues.

The authors of relational framing theory (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999) argue that people interpret messages, especially ambiguous messages, using the guidance of either a dominance-submission frame or an affiliation-disaffiliation frame. These frames—conceptually similar to the dimensions of status and solidarity—direct attention to

relevant aspects of a message. For example, if a speaker is pointing vigorously at his partner, as Solomon and McLaren (2008) explained, observers viewing the exchange through a dominance frame may perceive a threatening action. If this exchange were viewed through an affiliation frame, however, observers may interpret the same gesture as one of inclusion or liking. Because components of powerless language may have multiple meanings (Holmes, 1984a), a relational framing perspective may best explain why these components affect message evaluation as they do.

Using relational framing theory, the study presented in this document tests the assertion that a communicator's framing of an exchange affects how he or she evaluates messages free of, or containing, for example, hedges, hesitations, and tag questions. Although Fragale (2006) suggested her research indicated that the terms powerful and powerless language are "misnomers" (p. 257), she nevertheless used the terms to remain consistent with the preceding literature. Perhaps a different adjective would better describe these components collectively, but as did Fragale, the following research report will also use the traditional terms of powerful and powerless language.

This document presents a study assessing relational framing theory's ability to predict evaluations of power of speech style variation. Discussed first within the review of literature is a representative sample of power of speech style research, the organization of which was inspired, in part, by Parton (1997). Following that review, the foundations and assumptions of relational framing theory are established and its relationship with power of speech style evaluation is presented. Lastly, the chapter concludes with a rationale and three hypotheses.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Power of Speech Style Seminal Works

In trendsetting research investigating courtroom communication, Erickson et al. (1978) identified components of powerless language. Although Lakoff (1973) used the phrase “woman’s language” (p. 45) to describe the use of these components, Erickson et al. (1973) posited that powerless language was an issue of status and social power rather than sex. This claim was supported after an analysis of 150 hours of courtroom testimony revealed use of a powerless speech style “appeared to vary with the social power and status of the speakers” (p. 267). Compared to high status speakers, low status speakers frequently used intensifiers, hedges, hesitations, gestures, hyper-formal grammar, rising intonations during declarative statements, and polite forms—components of a powerless speaking style. Alternatively, the language of high status speakers was relatively free of such markers.

One goal motivating Erickson et al.’s (1978) research was to better understand the effects of powerless language as it related to the sex of the speaker and hearer. Also under investigation were possible differences in mode of testimony. Using an original court transcript of a powerlessly speaking female witness, the researchers produced an audio recording of a male and female actor reading both the original message and an identical message with the powerless components removed. Finally, a written version of this message, also manipulating sex, was created. Respondents then read a courtroom transcript or listened to an audio recording of witness testimony. The testimony concerned an automobile accident between a car and an ambulance en route to the

hospital with a patient in critical condition. The patient died and his family sued those involved with the ambulance service. After exposure to either the written or audio-recorded stimulus message, participants completed a series of 11-interval semantic differential items interpreted as measuring attractiveness (i.e., strength, activeness, likability, intelligence, and power), credibility (i.e., believability, convincingness, trustworthiness, competency), and gender (i.e., femininity-masculinity).

Results indicated that speakers using powerful language were found more credible and attractive than those using powerless speech forms. Differences for credibility in the high and low power conditions were greater when the sex of the witness and the participant were the same. Females were rated more attractive in the audio condition than in the written condition. Ratings of masculinity co-varied with sex of the witness but not power of speech style, thus contradicting Lakoff's (1973) claim that powerless language is inherently women's language. A complex set of differences was found when participants indicated how much they would charge in punitive damages. Generally, for all combinations—except for mode of presentation and sex of the witness—the use of powerful language yielded more punitive damages than powerless language. In other words, these findings indicated that speech style affected message evaluation, with written and audio stimuli producing similar results.

Erickson et al. (1978) set the stage for future empirical studies of powerless language. Much of the subsequent research investigated powerless language within courtroom contexts, used written versus audio stimuli, and investigated sex roles and differences produced by power of speech styles.

Similar to Erickson et al.'s (1978) interest in perception of witnesses, Bradac, Hemphill, and Tardy (1981) also measured participants' perceptions of defendants and plaintiffs using either powerful or powerless language. In two similar studies they tested the *just world* and *balance* hypotheses. The just world hypothesis suggests that the only reason competent (i.e., powerful) people have negative experiences is because they bring it on themselves. Therefore, referencing previous links found between powerful language use and credibility (e.g., Erickson et al., 1978), these researchers hypothesized that victims using powerful language would be found more blameworthy than those using powerless language. Alternatively, because powerless language also reduces perceived levels of attractiveness (Erickson et al., 1978), Bradac et al. (1981) tested the balance hypothesis. This hypothesis suggests that attractive defendants will be found less culpable, thus defendants using powerful language will be considered less blameworthy.

Participants in the Bradac et al. (1981) study read a courtroom transcript of a witness, presented as either a plaintiff or defendant, responding to a lawyer's questions regarding a bar fight that resulted in an injury. In addition to role manipulation, the witness' statements were manipulated to display either powerful or powerless language. Like Erickson et al.'s (1978) study the powerless message condition included a variety of powerless language components, while the powerful condition displayed none. After reading the stimulus message, respondents completed a series of 9-interval scales measuring participants' evaluations of fault. Additional scales assessed the seriousness of the transgression and whether the motivation to commit the crime was internal (i.e., predisposition to violence) or external (i.e., due to alcohol). While study one presented only plaintiff or defendant testimony, study two participants read both testimonies, which

always differed in high versus low power language use. This juxtaposition provided participants the opportunity to compare high and low power levels.

Consistent results were found in each study's pilot tests. The first pilot test showed on a 9-interval scale that language free of powerless components was perceived as more powerful, stronger, active, competent, and attractive than language containing powerless components. Study two's pilot test yielded similar results. Neither test supported a link between power of speech styles and attribution of masculinity or femininity. Inconsistent results emerged during the analyses of the proposed just world and balance hypotheses, which were not supported. Specifically, although both Bradac et al. (1981) studies found a significant main effect for speaker role—respondents rated the plaintiff less blameworthy than the defendant—only study one yielded a main effect for power of speech style. This effect indicated that regardless of role, respondents rated the powerful speaker more blameworthy than a powerless speaker. However, when respondents read the defendant and plaintiff testimonies, the effect was not replicated. Thus, the data indicated that blameworthiness was based on the speaker's role rather than his power of speech style. Explaining these inconsistent findings, authors reasoned that the design in study one might have unfairly influenced respondents by presenting only one testimony.

Bradac et al. (1981) contributed to power of speech style scholarship in several ways. First, the pilot tests further supported effects of speech style variation found in previous research, especially for ratings of power, competency, strength, activeness, and, in test one only, attractiveness. Second, due to other non-significant results, arguments that speech styles are sex related variables were further attenuated. Finally, based on the

possibility that powerless components may uniquely contribute to different evaluations, they suggested that future research should consider their individual effects.

Following Bradac et al.'s (1981) suggestion to study specific powerless language components, Wright and Hosman (1983) measured the effects of hedges and intensifiers on witness testimony. These two language components were singled out due to their competing nature: intensifiers add force to a statement while hedges reduce force. Further motivating this research was the possibility that sex differences might interact with powerless components to produce different evaluations. These possibilities led the researchers to ask how participants' sex, witnesses' sex, and use of hedges and intensifiers affected participants' evaluations of speakers' power, credibility, and blameworthiness.

To explore these proposed questions, Wright and Hosman (1983) instructed an equal number of male and female undergraduates to read one version of the prepared courtroom transcript. The transcripts presented either a male or female witness in one of four power of speaking style conditions (high/low hedges/intensifiers). Next, participants completed several semantic differential scales (similar to Erickson et al., 1978), which a principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation was interpreted as measuring attractiveness (i.e., powerful, active, dominate, and strong), credibility, and blameworthiness.

Several results of the study are noteworthy. First, witnesses who hedged their statements were viewed as less attractive than those not using hedges. However, hedging female witnesses were considered less credible than hedging males. Also, when women intensified their statements, they were evaluated as more attractive than men who used

intensifiers. Similar to previous research (i.e., Bradac et al., 1981), power of speech style was not related to a difference in ratings of blameworthiness. Finally, participants' sex had no effect on message evaluation, indicating that speakers' sex affected message evaluation but evaluators' sex did not.

In summary, as Bradac et al. (1981) suspected, individual power of speech style components produced distinct results. Intensifiers, however, produced results that caused the authors to question its status as a powerless component. Finally, the clear differences produced by the sex of the speaker indicated the need to include sex as a variable of interest in future studies of power of speech styles. Addressing the apparent paradox in evaluations of a female's use of powerful language, they noted, "gains in credibility appeared to be offset by losses in attractiveness" (Wright & Hosman, 1983, p. 151).

Wright and Hosman's (1983) study verified powerless components' ability to produce independent and differentiated effects. Adding to this understanding, Bradac and Mulac (1984) analyzed powerless components on a molecular level. In other words, they investigated the effects of individual powerless language components. In their first study, Bradac and Mulac assessed each component's effect on effectiveness and powerfulness ratings of speakers in an interviewing context. In their second study, researchers measured each component's effect on speakers' goals to be perceived as sociable and authoritative in an interviewing context. Independent variables included the presence and absence of each component (i.e., hedges, tags, intensifiers, polite forms, hesitations, and deictic phrases), sex of the speaker, and for study two only, intention (i.e., sociable or authoritative). Finally, based on inconclusive results in the literature,

Bradac and Mulac (1984) further investigated the effect that speakers' sex may have on listeners' message evaluation.

To study individual powerless components, four message sets were created. Each set contained seven pairs of statements—each displaying two examples of a single powerless component. The final set exemplified a powerfully stated message. An example of how hesitations were presented included the statement, “My father . . . uh . . . is in business. He works with . . . uh . . . an insurance company. Uh . . . he is an underwriter” (Bradac & Mulac, 1984, p. 309). Hedges, however, were presented using statements such as, “And, well, I work effectively with numbers. I kind of enjoy math. I was sort of good in high school algebra” (Bradac & Mulac, 1984, p. 308). Although corresponding message pairs were unique across the four sets, each “were identical in terms of theoretically relevant features” (Bradac & Mulac, 1984, p. 309). This approach would expand the generalizability of the results across various messages (Jackson & Jacobs, 1983). For example, a significant result found in two versions of the intensifier condition might signify that the result was not due to uncontrolled idiosyncrasies of a single message. These same message sets were used in both studies. This strategy would further support findings because replication of significant effects would show it was not a function of the sample population used in a single study (Bradac, 1983). The first study asked participants to evaluate the power and effectiveness of each powerless message variation, purportedly from a job interview segment. Study two participants, on the other hand, were informed that the interviewee desired to be perceived as sociable or authoritative. Participants then measured the relative success of each statement in achieving either goal.

Bradac and Mulac (1984) identified a strong and consistent ordering of individual speech style components. Results from study one indicated that respondents rated components identically on power and effectiveness evaluations. Hesitations (rated lowest) along with tag questions and hedges were all perceived as less powerful and effective than deictic messages (e.g., “that person over there”) and intensifiers, which established the center of rating, and polite (e.g., “thank you for the glass of water”) and powerful messages were rated most powerful. Similarly, study two also showed similar statistically significant differences between clusters of message types. Speakers wishing to be viewed as authoritative were unsuccessful when they used hedges, tag questions, or hesitations, but they were successful when they spoke powerfully. Alternatively, speakers wanting to appear social were most effective when they used polite messages.

In general, messages free of powerless components “were judged relatively powerful, effective, and likely to fulfill the communicator’s intentions” (Bradac & Mulac, 1984, p. 315). On the other hand, use of hesitations and tag questions were viewed negatively regardless of a speaker’s intention. When the interviewee had a sociable intent, however, ratings of hesitations and tag questions clustered around neutral and significantly more effective than when used with an authoritarian intent. To explain these results, Bradac and Mulac (1984) simply recognized the important role that the speaker’s intent, as perceived by the message reviewer, plays in power of speech style effects. They did not offer further theoretical explanations for this effect.

Two major findings included, first, the clear gradation between powerless language components, and second, that polite forms and intensifiers may not be powerless. Addressing the latter finding, Bradac and Mulac (1984) suggested, “it may be

that the effect of the individual sub-variables is altered radically by the presence of the others” (p. 315). Hosman and Wright (1987) and Hosman (1989) pursued this possibility in their investigations of powerless language.

Hosman and Wright (1987) studied individual powerless language components by seeking to “determine whether the contributions [of powerless language components] are equal, additive, or contradictory” (p. 175). These researchers investigated the interactive effects of hedges and hesitations on perceptions of personality characteristics. These components were selected due to their high frequency of occurrence in witness testimony (Erickson et al., 1978), their influence on speaker evaluation (Bradac & Mulac, 1984), and their effect on statement certainty (i.e., both components weaken a statement’s force, signal uncertainty). Also, responding to the mixed effects produced in prior research, these researchers included respondent sex and guilt as additional independent and dependent variables, respectively.

Those participating in Hosman and Wright’s (1987) study read one of four versions of a contrived oral testimony concerning the possible guilt of a defendant involved in a car accident that resulted in personal injury. Each version displayed different combinations of the components under study. The authors then administered a questionnaire similar to those used in previous research. A principal components factor analysis of their data produced a three-factor solution, which was interpreted as measuring authoritativeness (e.g., powerful and bright), character (e.g., trustworthy and believable), and social attractiveness (i.e., good and likeable). Guilt was assessed with a two-item guilt measure, which indicated both the respondent’s perception of guilt as well as his or her certainty in that assessment.

The study indicated that the use of hesitations resulted in a lower evaluation of character and a stronger perception of guilt than messages without hesitations. The use of hedges resulted in stronger attributions of guilt than messages without hedges. The data indicated that participant sex did not have an effect on the dependent variables. Further, the importance of considering various combinations of hedges and hesitations was well supported. Specifically, an interaction of hedges and hesitations was responsible for differences in ratings on authoritativeness and attractiveness, with the use of no hedges or hesitations resulting in the highest evaluation on these variables. These results further indicated the individuating effects of powerless language components and, therefore, justified further investigation of their interactive potential.

Hosman (1989) expanded on the findings from Hosman and Wright (1987) by studying the evaluative consequences of combinations of hedges, hesitations, and intensifiers. These specific components were selected for several reasons. First, they appeared most frequently in the Erickson et al. (1978) study. Second, Bradac and Mulac (1984) found these components were rated significantly different from each other on continuums of power and effectiveness. Finally, each component has been shown to individually influence speaker evaluations (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman & Wright, 1987; Wright & Hosman, 1983). Study one identified the components' interactive effects and compared each powerless combination against a prototypically powerless message (i.e., a message containing many and various powerless language components).

The first research question asked how hedges, hesitations, and intensifiers functioned together. Previous results have suggested they “may interact in novel ways to affect evaluative consequences” (Hosman, 1989, p. 385). The second research question

addressed the possible simplification of the power of speech style construct. In other words, interactive effects could reveal extraneous components that produce comparatively small effects. Finally, Hosman (1989) attempted to replicate Erickson et al.'s (1978) finding that participant sex affected message evaluation. The message stimuli included nine versions of seven defendant responses (purportedly transcribed courtroom testimony) to a lawyer's questions regarding an auto accident. Of these versions, one had no powerless language, another version was the prototypical powerless message, and the rest displayed each possible combination of the three selected components.

Participants were randomly assigned one version of the defendant's responses. After the messages were read, respondents completed a 21-item questionnaire assembled using scales from previous power of language style research. A principal components factor analysis of this data displayed a three-factor solution, which was interpreted as measuring authoritativeness (e.g., powerful, competent, and confident), sociability (e.g., likeable and good-natured), and character (i.e., trustworthy and honest). Research question one required that these dependent measures be assessed in a 2 (high/low hedges) \times 2 (high/low hesitation) \times 2 (high/low intensifiers) \times 2 (subject sex) factorial design. The last question required a one-way ANOVA to compare eight message versions against a message including all powerless components.

The data indicated that a mix of hedges and hesitations produced an interactive effect on authoritativeness and a triple interaction between all three components on sociability. Hedges consistently and negatively affected the speaker's authoritativeness,

and hesitations negatively affected both authoritativeness and sociability. Finally, hedges reduced evaluations of character.

The negative effects of powerless language did not intensify as additional components were added to the message, however. In fact, intensifiers were found not to contribute to the powerlessness of a message at all, thus indicating a miscategorization as a powerless component. Also supporting this claim was the result of research question two. Rated similarly to each other, the powerful message condition and the high intensifier, low hedges, and low hesitation condition were evaluated as more authoritative than all other tested message combinations.

Hosman (1989) incorporated new messages in his second study. Of interest was the impact of speaker status and perceived speaker similarity on a respondent's evaluation of messages. To assess these issues, participants read randomly assigned messages, which replicated the length and frequency of messages used in study one. Respondents were informed that the defendant in the message was either of high status (i.e., well respected businessman) or low status (i.e., high school dropout on welfare). Other than the addition of homophily scales, designed to indicate perceived similarity, respondents completed scales similar to those used in study one. Accordingly, a factor analysis conducted on the new data revealed the same dimensions as in study one, but with the addition of a similarity dimension.

Results indicated that low levels of hedges and hesitations produced higher ratings of authoritativeness than high levels of the same components. Measurements on the sociability scale indicated a significant triple interaction involving speaker status and the use of hesitations and intensifiers. Generally, the data indicated that low status

speakers that avoided high levels of intensifiers and hesitations were perceived more sociable than if they were to use any other combination of the components studied. Hedges, however, did not play a distinctive role in one's perception of sociability or character. Finally, respondents more closely identified with speakers using low levels of hesitations than those using high levels.

Ultimately, Hosman (1989) recognized that the lack of consistent interaction effects between studies one and two may indicate extraneous effects due to idiosyncratic differences between the studies' messages. Regardless of that limitation, the study contributed to the understanding of powerless language in several ways. First, both studies showed that hedges and hesitations negatively affected evaluations of sociability and authoritativeness. Although hedges and hesitations did not produce consistent interactive effects, intensifiers did, which further questioned its position as a powerless component. Next, the study provided sufficient evidence that adding additional powerless components to a message does not increase the message's powerlessness. Lastly, respondent sex did not affect evaluations of sociability, authority, or character.

The foundational power of speech style research reviewed here provides a firm base on which current and future speech style scholarship sits. Offering substantial support is the identification of specific components rated lowly on several speech evaluation dimensions. Although early research (e.g., Erickson et al., 1978) presented powerless components as isomorphic entities, later research has indicated that intensifying (Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman, 1989; Hosman & Wright, 1987; Wright & Hosman, 1983) and polite messages (e.g., "please," "thank you, sir;" Bradac & Mulac,

1984) are not powerless. Rather, these components may be regarded as powerful in situations where one intends to be sociable or authoritative.

Despite the earlier conflation of these components, power of speech style research has produced consistently differentiated ratings of powerful versus powerless language. Although no study in this review found powerless language to produce more favorable speaker ratings than powerful language, Bradac and Mulac (1984) found that powerless components were more effective when speakers had sociable intentions, compared to speakers having authoritative intentions. Despite that small exception, powerful language was found to be consistently more credible (Erickson et al., 1978), authoritative (Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Erickson et al., 1978; Hosman, 1989; Hosman & Wright, 1987; Wright & Hosman, 1983), sociable (Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman, 1989), and indicative of better character (Hosman, 1989).

Additionally, the foundational research reviewed here spurred the use of similar methodological approaches (i.e., experimental design). While other scholars have employed alternative methods to investigate powerless language components (e.g., Holmes, 1984a, 1984b), the methodological tradition started within the scholarship reviewed here is still practiced today (Bradac, Cargile, & Hallett, 2001; Hosman & Siltanen, 2011). Such consistency provides an improved plane on which results of multiple studies can be accurately compared. To sum, the articles reviewed in this section have established a paradigm for the study of powerless language components. The following sections review research from this paradigm.

Power of Speech Styles: Contemporary Research

Additional areas where power of speech style research have been conducted include persuasion (e.g., Gibbons, Busch, & Bradac, 1991; Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999; Hosman, Huebner, & Siltanen, 2002), attributions and effects of control (Blankenship & Craig, 2007; Hosman, 1997; Hosman & Siltanen, 1994, 2006), speaker status (Haleta, 1996; Johnson & Vinson, 1987; Smith, Siltanen, & Hosman, 1998), and organizational contexts (Fragale, 2006; Parton, Siltanen, Hosman, & Langenderfer, 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). The following pages review this research in the mentioned contexts, beginning with the effect that power of speech styles has on persuasive attempts.

Persuasion

Early power of speech style research clearly exhibited the strong effect powerless language has on evaluations of a speaker's authoritativeness, competence, and sociability. Moving beyond message evaluation, Gibbons et al. (1991) recognized the likelihood that power of speech style might also affect message processing during persuasive attempts. Guided by Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model, Gibbons et al. (1991) produced three sets of hypotheses, which reasoned that under specific conditions power of speech style might serve as a peripheral cue, an argument quality cue, or a distractor.

To help answer these questions, researchers employed a common ELM methodological design. Gibbons et al. (1991) presented participants with a written statement that supported the institution of college comprehensive exams and then asked them to complete a series of scales. In this study, three independent variables were manipulated and arranged in a 2 (high/low message relevance) \times 2 (high/low quality

argument) \times 2 (high/low power speech style) full factorial model. Dependent variables were measured with semantic differential scales. A factor analysis displayed three dimensions, which were labeled competence/control, persuasion, and sociability. Also included as a dependent measure was an open-ended cognitive response question asking participants to “list any and all thoughts [they] had while reading the [stimulus]” (Gibbons et al., 1991, p. 123). Coders identified and sorted these responses into positive and negative comment categories.

As previous research would suggest, Gibbons et al.’s (1991) results indicated that powerful language resulted in higher ratings of competence/control than produced by low power language. In the weak argument message condition, powerful language lowered rankings of sociability compared to rankings in the low power condition. While the competence/control finding is not surprising, the effect found on sociability is. To explain this finding the authors posited that in the weak argument condition respondents might have found the high power message to be deceptive or contrived.

Despite the logic of the ELM, however, Gibbons et al. (1991) did not find a power of speech style effect on persuasion. In response to this finding, the authors recognized that their study was the first to employ an ELM framework to power of speech style effects on persuasive attempts, and ultimately encouraged others to pursue additional research using different argument prompts. Although no persuasion effect was found, the cognitive response measure produced valuable findings; foremost was the number of comments participants made concerning the style condition manipulations. Few participants made positive comments about the powerful language, but participants wrote many negative comments in response to powerless language. Thus, as the authors

suggested, powerless language may be the marked case, while powerful language is less conspicuous.

Not convinced that power of speech style plays no role in the persuasion process, Holtgraves and Lasky (1999) also conducted an ELM informed persuasion study. In addition to adding both the sex of the respondent and speaker as independent variables, researchers also manipulated argument processing ability by distracting selected participants. Those in the distracted condition were asked to listen to the stimulus message while counting Xs projected onto a screen. The stimulus message argued that a university, not associated with the participant's institution, should require comprehensive exams prior to graduation. Essentially, Holtgraves and Lasky (1999) looked for mediating roles that might help explain the null results produced by Gibbons et al. (1991).

The independent variables were arranged in a 2 (high/low speech power) \times 2 (high/low distraction) \times 2 (participant sex) \times 2 (speaker sex) crossed factorial design. Speaker sex was manipulated by presenting either male or female audio recordings of a stimulus message. Previous research conducted by Sparks, Areni, and Cox (1998) found that audio recordings were more effective than written messages when studying the effects of power of speech style research on persuasive attempts, which motivated the Holtgraves and Lasky's (1999) selected channel.

After listening to the message assigned to their respective condition, participants from Holtgraves and Lasky's (1999) study completed a series of scales. Attitude toward the argument—always the first dependent variable—was measured using four semantic differential scales (e.g., favorable versus unfavorable). The remaining randomized scales

included a 4-item argument quality measure and a 5-item perception of speaker measure (i.e., credibility). Final items ensured that the manipulations were functioning properly. Researchers did not factor analyze dependent measures; instead the prearranged groupings were retained.

Results indicated that all manipulations produced their intended effects. Despite this success, the distraction did not affect message agreement or any speaker evaluative measures. Additionally, neither the sex of the respondent nor the speaker affected the dependent variables. However, the power of speech style condition did produce some effects—powerful messages produced greater agreement and higher ratings of credibility than did powerless messages. Furthermore, even though the message argument quality was not manipulated, respondents believed that powerful speakers exhibited a higher quality argument than speakers using powerless speech. Further still, the cognitive response measure indicated that powerful messages produced more positive thoughts than the powerless message. Finally, researchers found that the power of speech style effect on message agreement was mediated by respondents' evaluations of the both the speaker and the argument.

Holtgraves and Lasky (1999) confirmed previous research that powerless language negatively affected another's perception of a speaker and now argument quality and acceptance. They posited that methodological inconsistencies may have caused differences between their results and Gibbons et al.'s (1991) findings. Such irregularities included differing proportions of powerless markers, message modality, and manipulation of argument quality. However, despite these concerns, additional research (e.g., Hosman et al., 2002) has replicated these results.

Hosman et al. (2002) further investigated power of speech style and argument processing by adding need for cognition to their ELM design. They hypothesized an interaction between power of speech style, argument quality, and participants' need for cognition. The authors presented participants with a written argument proposing an increase in student parking fees. With this message they created a 2 (high/low power message) \times 2 (high/low argument quality) \times 2 (high/low need for cognition) factorial design to analyze attitude toward behavior, message acceptance, control over others, control over self, and sociability.

Results indicated that a participant's need for cognition did not produce an effect on their attitude toward the message. The analysis of variance also failed to display a power of language effect on message agreement. However, a path analysis (more sensitive to smaller effects) indicated that power of speech style and argument quality did have a direct effect on persuasion. They also found that thoughts generated about the speaker mediated some of the effect power of speech style had on attitude toward the message.

Initially, the power of speech style construct failed to produce an effect on persuasive attempts (Gibbons et al., 1991); however, subsequent studies (Blankenship & Holtgraves, 2005; Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999; Hosman et al., 2002; Sparks & Areni, 2008; Sparks et al., 1998) have consistently found such an effect. Additionally, studies that have employed cognitive responses measures (e.g., Gibbons et al., 1991; Hosman et al., 2002) have produced consistent results indicating that the powerless language condition is the marked case (i.e., powerless language components cause message reviews to produce many thoughts compared to powerful language). Scholars have

further investigated the effects power of speech style variation has on the persuasive process. For example, Blankenship and Holtgraves (2005) studied individual components (i.e., tag questions, hedges, and hesitations). In each of that study's powerless conditions (when message relevance was highest), participants reported less frequent message acceptance than in the powerful condition. Finally, Sparks and Areni (2008), interested in how powerless language negatively affects message agreement, found it to be a peripheral rather than a central cue.

Control Attributions

Bradac and Street (1989/1990) and Bradac et al. (1994) were first to provide published insight into control-of-self and control-of-others attributions. Self-control, they explained, suggests that those using powerful language are perceived as being in control of and confident with themselves. Control over others, on the other hand, suggests that powerful speech is evaluated positively because receivers regard these speakers as leaders, although such a speech style may also be evaluated negatively if found unnecessarily authoritative. If no nefarious intent is identified, these authors suggested, positive evaluations of control likely signal attributions of effective interpersonal communicators. Providing initial empirical evidence of the control attribution dimension of speech evaluation was Gibbons et al. (1991).

During factor analysis procedures, Gibbons et al. (1999) identified what they labeled a control factor, which accounted for most of the variance. Items within this factor included evaluations of control, competence, and status. Their data indicated that speakers using powerful language were rated as having more control than speakers using powerless language. This research and other studies (e.g., Hosman & Siltanen, 1994,

2006) sought to better establish a theoretical foundation of the power of speech style and speaker evaluation. A further review of control attributions is reported here.

Based on previous research (e.g., Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman & Wright, 1987; Wright & Hosman, 1983), Hosman and Siltanen (1994) tested assertions (Bradac & Street 1989/1990) that individual components may produce dissimilar attributions of control. For example, people who hesitate may be seen as having a lack of self-control, but a powerful message may be viewed as exerting control over both the self and others. Hosman and Siltanen (1994) created two message sets depicting courtroom exchanges. Participants were exposed to a single message set that displayed either powerful messages or messages individually containing tag questions, hesitations, hedges, or intensifiers. They then completed 25 7-interval semantic differential scales. The researchers conducted separate factor analyses for the control attribution items and the speech evaluation items, stating that these scales are conceptually distinct item sets. These analyses produced a 4-item factor labeled self-control; a 3-item factor labeled control over others; an 8-item factor labeled authoritativeness; and finally, a 4-item factor labeled sociability.

Results indicated that powerful messages and messages with intensifiers consistently produced perceptions of high control over others and self as well as evaluations of high authoritativeness. Tag questions were found to produce significantly lower ratings in all these areas. Hesitations and hedges were mostly rated between these extremes. The ratings of control correlated with the evaluative scales, indicating a positive relationship between these variables.

Study two looked for component interactions. Hosman and Siltanen (1994) replicated study one's methodology in every way except for the addition of seven messages, which combined high and low uses of intensifiers, hedges, and hesitations. Factor analyses for study two produced factors found to be similar to study one. Analysis of this data indicated that participants rated messages with hesitations as displaying a reduced sense of control over others, control over self, and authoritativeness when compared to messages not displaying this component. Hedges produced similar results. Participants rated messages using hedges as displaying a reduced sense of control over others, control over self, and authoritativeness when compared to messages not displaying this component. Although specific components affected control attributions in various ways, the results supported previous research (Hosman, 1989; i.e., additional powerless language components did not increase their effect on message evaluation). In other words, an additive effect was not present.

Hosman and Siltanen (1994) argued that attributions of control operated in a complementary manner, together providing an explanation of message evaluation. Perhaps, they suggested, people have an overarching construct of control, which subsumes control over self and control over others, thus explaining the covariation that occurred between the two measured constructs. They further argued that uncertainty describes an additional way to characterize the effects of powerless language. They suggested that while intensifiers may reinforce the certainty of a statement, hesitations, tag questions, and hedges may mark the uncertainty imbedded within a statement. The certainty-uncertainty explanation, they argued, would correlate with attributions of

control. In summary, they argued that people value another's control of self and others, but powerless language lowers these perceptions.

Control attributes have been further researched. For example, recall that Hosman et al. (2002) included control over others and self as variables in their investigation of power of speech style and persuasive effect. Due to a stronger path within their structural equation model, these authors suggested that control over others served to better illuminate power of speech style effects than control over self.

Working to expand this line of research, Hosman and Siltanen (2006) investigated the effect that tag questions, hedges, and intensifiers have on control and speaker attributions. They also assessed possible effects on message memorability and possible mediating effects of cognitive responses. They measured the number and valence of cognitive responses participants produced after reading a court transcript explaining a defendant's role in a burglary. Respondents also completed several speaker evaluation scales. Separate factor analyses of the control and speaker evaluation items identified six factors. Three control factors were labeled control over self, speech, and others; and three evaluative factors were labeled intellectual-competence, social-status, and dynamism.

Results indicated that respondents rated individual components differently on measures of control of self, control of others, and intellectual competence. Hedges produced lower evaluations of intellectual competency, control over others, and control over self than nearly all other components. Quite differently, intensifiers produced higher ratings on both attributions of control than did tag questions or even powerful messages. A multivariate analysis of variance revealed a significant main effect, which indicated

that speech style produced differing cognitive responses concerning total thought units, net favorability of personal opinion, and net favorability of speaker inferences. More thoughts were produced by the hedge condition than all other conditions, and the powerful and intensifier conditions produced more positive comments about the speaker than did other conditions. Finally, Hosman and Siltanen (2006) assessed the relationship between the cognitive and scale responses. A MANCOVA, used to identify possible mediating effects, indicated that the message condition directly affected scale responses and these evaluations mediated participants' cognitive responses.

Hosman and Siltanen (2006) recognized that their results—the relationship between control attributions and cognitive responses, in particular—might represent a paradox Bradac et al., (1994) described that concerns message evaluation and cognitive responses: People assess powerful language as favorable, but these same people may also harbor negative thoughts regarding power in general. Hosman and Siltanen (2006) hedged slightly in this explanation, however. Perhaps, they suggested, respondents were weary of an individual they perceived to be in control and intellectually competent, yet was involved in a criminal act, and expressed these concerns in the cognitive response questionnaire.

The control studies reviewed thus far have suggested how power of speech style variation engenders different attributions of another's control. However, perceptions of control can affect speech style evaluation in additional ways. The two studies reviewed next treated control as an evaluator characteristic (Hosman, 1997) and then as a contextual characteristic (Blankenship & Craig, 2007). Discussed first is Hosman's (1997) study, which focused on respondents' locus of control and its effect on evaluation

of power of speech style variation. Individuals with an internal locus of control, *internals*, believe that they have control over their behavior, while *externals* believe their behavior is heavily impacted by factors outside their control.

Hosman (1997) responded directly to the sentiment that people have negative connotations toward those with power, yet powerful messages are evaluated consistently and positively. To better understand this paradox, the researcher incorporated locus of control as a hearer characteristic that may affect speech style evaluation. He hypothesized that locus of control will interact with power of speech style, thus affecting attributions of speaker control and evaluation. The context for the stimulus message was a courtroom transcript. Two versions displayed either a powerful or powerless version. The powerless message included hesitations, hedges, intensifiers, and polite forms. After reading the transcript, participants completed Rotter's (1966) locus of control scale, which Hosman (1997) used to separate the sample into groups of internals and externals. Participants also completed a set of semantic differential items, which a factor analysis was interpreted as measuring general control, sociability, and similarity.

Hosman (1997) found that locus of control and message power interacted to affect participants' perception of the speaker's control. Both internals and externals produced similar ratings of the low power message. Consistent with previous control attribution research, externals found high power language to display greater control than powerless language. However, internals deviated from this norm and found the high power message to indicate significantly less speaker control than the low power message. Hosman (1997) provided two possible reasons for this outcome. First, the participants may have felt their autonomy was threatened by the powerful message, thus clouding

their view of the speaker's control. Second, high power language may be viewed as standard, thus low power language may be considered contrived. Internals may believe that speakers using low power language are purposefully trying to "avoid responsibility for the events being testified" (Hosman, 1997, p. 76).

Moving away from effects produced by respondents' perception of their control, Blankenship and Craig (2007) studied how situational control beliefs affected a receiver's evaluation of the message. Specifically, they wanted to know if hedges and tag questions affected a listener's evaluation of a confederate's statements believed to be either forced or volitional. To test this possibility, researchers called upon a common attribution error called correspondence bias, which is "the tendency to infer personal characteristics from a behavior, even when other possible causes for the behavior exist" (Blankenship & Craig, 2007, p. 30). This bias suggests, for example, that communicators required to support or negate an issue would be thought to have attitudes consistent with their behavior. These authors, however, reasoned that the uncertainty suggested by the use of hedges and tag questions (when a message was presented as a forced message) would indicate to receivers that the message was counterattitudinal to the message originator's true position, thus correcting an otherwise inaccurate attribution.

To test this proposition, Blankenship and Craig (2007) created an experimental condition in which respondents were presented with an essay that supported the use of nuclear power. Researchers told all participants that a previous research participant had written the essay. One set of participants were led to believe the writer chose the position he or she would take on the issue, and the other set of participants were told the writer was forced to write in support of the issue. Also manipulated were the use of tag

questions and hedges. All participants completed measures assessing their own attitude toward the message and the degree to which the writer agreed and was confident with written assertions.

The results indicated that participants perceived writers using powerful language as being more supportive of nuclear energy than writers using powerless language. An interaction between the choice and language conditions, however, qualified this effect such that when participants believed the writer could support whatever position they desired, power of speech style differences had no effect on attributions of attitude. However, when raters believed the statement was forced, respondents rated writers using powerless language as less supportive of nuclear energy than powerful writers. The perceived confidence variable displayed a similar interaction such that the ratings for perceived certainty of the position in the no choice condition were higher in the powerful language condition than the powerless language condition. Finally, Blankenship and Craig (2007) determined that perception of confidence mediated the impact powerless language had on perception of attitude toward a topic. All these findings were replicated in a second study with a new population. A third study separated possible confounding effects produced by hedges and tag questions. Using similar methodological procedures, researchers found that tag questions (not hedges) produced the uncertainty in a message recipient's mind powerful enough to supersede correspondence bias.

Much was learned from these control attribution studies. Clearly, powerful language is positively associated with the perception that the speaker is in control of both themselves and others. Individually, intensifiers were also related to positive attributions of control. This component was not only found to produce higher control attributions than

tags, hedges, and hesitations (Hosman & Siltanen, 1994), but they were sometimes rated higher than powerful messages (Hosman & Siltanen, 2006). The Hosman and Siltanen studies (1994, 2006) also indicated that speaker control is positively related to evaluations of sociability and authoritativeness, as well as intellectual competency and dynamism. Finally, Hosman (1997) and Blankenship and Craig (2007) found that power of speech style evaluation depends on both individual and situational characteristics.

Status

An individual's status affects his or her use of language, but it also affects how others evaluate those messages (Bradac & Wisegarver, 1984; Erickson et al., 1978). Initial research has shown that powerless language negatively impacts several dimensions of status including competence and power (e.g., Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Erickson et al., 1978), but only later was status actively manipulated as a variable of interest (e.g., Haleta, 1996; Hosman, 1989; Johnson & Vinson, 1987; Smith et al., 1998). The following portion of this literature review discusses power of speech style research investigating status and its effect on message and speaker evaluation.

In their study of power of speech style, Johnson and Vinson (1987) sought to understand how differing levels of status might interact to affect powerless language's effect on message evaluation. They asked participants to imagine serving on a student government board charged with appropriating student fees among campus groups. Participants then read an introduction of either a club president or faculty club advisor coming to ask for money. Participants then listened to either a low power message, which included hedges, hesitations, and *you knows*, or a message devoid of these components. Also serving as an independent variable was the sex of the participant.

Accordingly, a 2 (high/low status) \times 2 (high/low speech power) \times 2 (sex of respondent) design was employed. Dependent variables included credibility (with sub-dimensions of competence, character, and dynamism), information retention, and the amount of money participants allocated to the group.

The results indicated that regardless of status, powerful speakers yielded higher allocations of money, were rated more favorably on competence, character, and dynamism than powerless speakers. Also, the authors reported that respondents rated low status speakers using powerful language higher on allocation amount, character, and dynamism than powerless speakers. No statistics were reported that might support this claim, however. When the high status speaker used powerful language compared to powerless language, the speaker did not enjoy the same increase in credibility ratings. However, when the speaker used powerless language her ratings were reduced (again, no statistical tests were reported to support these claims).

Johnson and Vinson's (1987) initial concern (reflecting Lakoff's claims) was the possibility that women using powerful language may be "negatively evaluated if they adopt the more assertive forms of talk associated with men" (p. 37). With the lack of a significant effect for sex of the participant, their results indicated that men and women did not differ in their evaluation of powerful speech, which each group evaluated positively. Results also indicated no effect on information retention, thus stimulating further research questions because intuition would suggest, "auditors appear to work harder when listening to a powerless speaker" (Johnson & Vinson, 1987, p. 42).

Hosman (1989) also assessed the effects speech style and speaker status have on listeners' evaluations. He manipulated the status differential by presenting a short

description of a janitor and a successful businessman as speakers of the study's message. Status differences did not affect authoritativeness ratings but did affect judgments of sociability. The results showed that the low status condition displaying low levels of hesitations and intensifiers produced higher ratings of sociability than other component combinations. But when hesitations were added to either level of status, sociability scores dropped significantly. Status affected character ratings as well. Overall, the low status condition produced higher ratings of character, but the data indicated that use of intensifiers by high status individuals further reduced character ratings. To sum, Hosman (1989) suggested listeners reacting to status differences "may have expectations about how high- and low-status speakers talk, and when these expectations are violated, in either a positive or negative way, their evaluations are affected" (Hosman, 1989, p. 403).

Since Hosman's (1989) study, others have more explicitly investigated speaker status effects on speech style evaluations. In one such study, Haleta (1996) assessed powerless language within an educational context. This study measured the effects of a teacher's use of hesitations during the first day of class. Haleta (1996) sought to understand how a teacher's use of hesitations, formal status (professor or GTA), and sex affected speaker evaluations. Participants were asked to complete a 7-item uncertainty measure and a 21-item semantic differential scale, from which a factor analysis revealed the dimensions labeled dynamism, credibility, and status. To provide a qualitative analysis, a separate sample of students completed an open-ended questionnaire after being subjected to the same stimulus.

Quantitative results indicated that the powerful condition (regardless of established status) produced higher ratings of dynamism, status, and credibility. The

results on the credibility measure were further clarified by an interaction between hesitation use and teacher status, which indicated that a professor's use of hesitation in a message could likely reduce ratings of credibility considerably more than if GTAs were to hesitate. Sex of the speaker also produced a main effect on perceived status. Students ascribed a higher status to male teachers regardless of the proscribed formal status. Finally, the powerless condition caused respondents to perceive more uncertainty in the speaker's message than the powerful condition. Open-ended data further displayed this concern. One participant commented that the teacher "seems to be the type of person that never has things ready on time. . . . I bet he's confusing" (Haleta, 1996, p. 26).

Although Haleta (1996) found that status and hesitations only affected ratings of credibility, subsequent research found these variables to also affect evaluations of a speaker's culpability and authoritativeness (Smith et al., 1998). In their study of hedges and hesitations used during a courtroom testimony, Smith et al. (1998) manipulated status by distinguishing three levels of education: high school, bachelor, and doctoral degrees. Their goal was to see how speaker status and the use of hedges and hesitations impacted speaker evaluation and attitude change.

Participants first read a short description of the case and completed a culpability measure. Next, they read the witness testimony transcript in a randomly assigned condition and evaluated the witness on a 22-item scale. A principal components factor analysis of this scale produced three factors labeled authoritativeness, sociability, and similarity. Finally, participants completed the culpability post-test, from which attitude change was computed.

Smith et al. (1998) found that use of hedges reduced ratings of authoritativeness for high- and mid-level experts when compared to the absence of hedges. Additionally, an interaction effect indicated that the use of hesitations by top-level experts in their messages resulted in less attitude change than messages without this component. Like previous scholars (e.g., Haleta, 1996 and Hosman, 1989), these authors called upon language expectation theory and suggested that people have an expectation that higher status individuals do not use powerless language. Powerless language, they suggest, produces a negative violation resulting in significantly reduced persuasive effectiveness.

Despite studying various contexts and status hierarchies, power of speech style research investigating status differentials has produced somewhat consistent results. Johnson and Vinson (1987), using high and low status female speakers, found powerful language to elevate credibility ratings for low status speakers, while high status speakers using powerless language reduced levels of credibility. Hosman (1989) found that speaking without components of powerless language improved sociability and character ratings of low status speakers, but regardless of status, powerless speaking negatively affected evaluations. Haleta (1996) found use of hesitations reduced credibility ratings of the high status speaker, but speaking powerfully did not improve ratings of low status individuals. However, regardless of prescribed status, participants in this study found powerful speakers to be of higher status than powerless speakers. Finally, although Smith et al. (1998) did not find powerful language to help low status speakers, they did find that powerless language had a damaging effect on higher status speakers. Common in all these studies is that powerless language reduced evaluations of even higher status speakers. However, whether or not speaking powerfully elevated evaluations of low

status speakers seemed to be based on the status characteristic emphasized (i.e., both studies using educational differences failed to produce higher ratings in “low status” individuals).

Organizational Studies

Few power of speech style studies have assessed evaluative effects found within organizational settings. Although, Bradac and Mulac (1984) used an employment interview as a context of study, it was not their purpose to measure job acquisition. Three studies reviewed here have investigated speech style variation in organizational settings exclusively. Wiley and Eskilson (1985) were the first to identify speech style effects in interview scenarios. Parton et al. (2002) continued this research using real interviewing professionals, and Fragale (2006) further explicated the situational appropriateness of particular power of speech styles in organizational settings. These articles are reviewed in the following pages.

In addition to assessing speech style variation effects in job interviews, Wiley and Eskilson (1985) evaluated the impact of applicant and respondent sex. Guiding their research were two competing perspectives, the socialization and identity perspectives. Socialization suggested that women who spoke powerfully in business settings would be regarded as positively as men with equal credentials. Alternatively, the identity perspective stated that characteristics such as sex, not the situation or context, informed the acceptability of powerful language. Thus, powerfully speaking women would not be successful in interviews or business settings, as it would negatively violate norms. Wiley and Eskilson (1985) also posited that women respondents would be more sensitive to power of speech styles differences.

The authors created two versions of a managerial job interview transcript. One version displayed hesitations, tag questions, intensifiers, and hedges. The second version was free of these components. To indicate sex of the applicant, a picture of either a man or woman accompanied each transcript. After reading the stimulus, participants (instructed to assume the role of an interviewer) completed evaluative scales, with which researchers performed a principal components factor analysis. Wiley and Eskilson (1985) interpreted this factor analysis to measure success in the position, acceptance by coworkers, and a final factor they described as “a measure of liking unrelated to job performance” (Wiley & Eskilson, 1985, p. 998). The final set of dependent variables were gathered using a 40-item measure, which asked participants to identify traits (e.g., dominant, warm, confident) they believed to be most important for the interview context. Participants also assessed the degree to which the purported applicant displayed these traits. With this data, the researchers conducted several separate multiple regressions to determine the impact the independent variables had on individual dependent variables.

The results supported the socialization hypothesis. Regardless of applicant sex the powerful speech style was judged more indicative of organizational success and acceptance than would be indicated by a powerless speech style. Additionally, prioritized acceptable traits in interview settings (as identified by the aggregated frequency of respondents’ ratings) were judged to be more likely present in powerful conditions relative to the powerless conditions. However, a triple interaction between applicant and participant sex and speech style indicated that men liked women less when they spoke using powerful language. Several additional interactions between participant sex and speech style indicated that regardless of speech style, male respondents’ evaluations of

applicants' success, projected organizational acceptance, and level of important interview traits (i.e., reasonability, intelligence, qualification, diligence, organization, and experience) were affected far less by speech style differences than female respondents' evaluation of these same variables. Given these interactions, the Wiley and Eskilson (1985) suggested that not only could "training women to use powerful styles of speech in order to achieve success in management . . . be an empty gesture" (p. 1004), but "acting appropriately for the position [i.e., using powerful language] would likely result in negative personal evaluations of the female applicant" (p. 1005).

Parton et al.'s (2002) study of powerless language in the interview context differed from Wiley and Eskilson's (1985) study in three ways. First, they used only hesitations and hedges in their powerless message. Second, they compared ratings from both undergraduate and professional respondents. Finally, they used audio-recorded exchanges, not written transcripts. These researchers hypothesized that all respondents would find applicants speaking without hedges and hesitations more employable than those speaking with those language components. They also posited that professional interviewers would rate applicants lower on measures of speaker evaluation than would student respondents. Finally, they investigated possible differences in ratings within same- or mixed-sex interviews.

Participants in Parton et al.'s (2002) study first listened to an interview and then completed evaluative scales, which, when factor analyzed, revealed four factors labeled dynamism, social attractiveness, competence, and employability. Although scales measuring control attributions were included, they did not produce a distinct factor. The

authors suggested this was the result of incorporating a non-student population, whereas all previous control attribution research used student volunteers.

Results indicated that the power of speech style variation influenced ratings of social attractiveness, competence, dynamism, and employability. First, female respondents rated powerful language higher on dynamism than did male respondents. Women speaking powerlessly were rated more socially attractive (i.e., sweet, nice, and good-natured) than when using powerful language, but men's social attractiveness ratings did not differ based on language style. Regardless of sex, powerful language led to higher ratings in competence and employability than did powerless language. Parton et al.'s (2002) study did not replicate Wiley and Eskilson's (1985) reported finding that women were more sensitive to speech style differences. Finally, Parton et al. (2002) found that professional interviewers did indeed rate the applicants less favorably in dynamism, competence (i.e., in the powerless condition only), and employability than did the college student sample. Thus, the authors suggested that future studies of interview scenarios use actual professionals to increase ecological validity.

In summary, just over 15 years after Wiley and Eskilson (1985), Parton et al. (2002) also found powerless speaking to affect evaluations of social attractiveness, competence, dynamism and employability. Unlike previous research, however, women respondents were no more sensitive to power of speech style than men were. The employment interview is a crucial moment in the job acquisition process, and this research clearly indicated the role speech style could play in the minds of both naïve and especially professional interviewers. Fragale (2006) extended the study of powerless language beyond the interview process and situated it with varied task-interdependent

contexts. More specifically, she assessed how powerless language affects status conferral.

Generally, Fragale (2006) wanted to know if speech style effects are situational. In other words, in the right context can powerless language be effective? The contextual characteristic chosen for this study was task interdependence (i.e., the degree to which employees must interact, coordinate, or collaborate to complete organizational goals). To explore this question the researcher juxtaposed two competing perspectives that explain how people might ascribe status to one another. The fixed-criteria perspective suggests that powerful language would cause people to ascribe higher status to others, regardless of the context. Alternatively, the contingent-criteria perspective argues that context would affect status conferral. In some situations, Fragale (2006) hypothesized that organizational success may be achieved more effectively with powerless, not powerful, language.

To understand how speech style variation might lead to different status conferrals, Fragale (2006) identified two primary trait dimensions used to process perceptions of others. The first trait, labeled agency, was described as perceiving that the other possesses “self-assertion and mastery of one’s environment, such as ambition, dominance, and independence” (p. 244). The second, communality, was described as “selflessness and nurturance, such as warmth, sincerity, and tolerance” (p. 244). Agency, then, is associated with powerful language while communality is associated with powerless language.

Fragale (2006) hypothesized that powerful speakers and their style of speaking will be successful and valued where agency traits are valued (i.e., individualistic

environments), but powerless speakers and their style will be successful and valued where communal traits are valued (i.e., collectivist environments). She also posited that in low task interdependent contexts, agency characteristics will contribute more to status conferral than would communal, but communal characteristics will be found more effective in high task interdependent contexts.

In study one, participants were told the study involved two phases. In phase one, participants were directed to a computer terminal where they engaged in a decision making activity—purportedly with a partner located in another room. However, their partner was a preprogrammed computer software program created to simulate either a powerful or powerless speaking individual. Messages from the computerized confederate incorporated hedges, tag questions, disclaimers, hesitations, and formal addresses. After a manipulation check, participants were briefed on phase two of the experiment, in which the participant and their partner would be involved with a 4-person group decision-making process. The description of this small group differed on levels of task interdependence. After being informed about the second task, participants first completed a 3-item scale measuring the level of status they believe should be conferred upon their partner and then responded to a 1-item scale measuring how well they believe their partner would accomplish the following task. Phase two was not real, however, and was used for stimulus purposes only.

In Fragale's (2006) second study, participants read a portrayal of an organization depicting either a collectivist or an individualistic culture. Researchers then instructed participants to imagine that they worked in the fictitious organization while they read a phone conversation said to be overheard from a coworker. Similar to study one, both a

powerful and a powerless version constituted one of the study's manipulations. Following the textual stimuli, participants assessed the extent to which the coworker displayed agency and communal traits. Second, they identified the level of status they believed should be conferred upon the coworker. Additional scales served as manipulation checks. Both studies used multiple regression procedures to analyze data in a 2 (high/low power language) \times 2 (high/low task interdependence) between-subjects design.

Analysis of Fragale's (2006) data displayed consistent results from one study to the next, which ultimately championed the contingent- over the fixed-criteria perceptives. In both studies, the level of task interdependence and the confederate's power of speech style affected the status conferred upon the other by the participant. Specifically, where interaction and collaboration were thought to be the norm, participants believed people speaking powerlessly would be more successful and thus, project a more favorable impression. Powerful speech, in these situations produced a reduced rating of status conferral. Conversely, confederates using powerful speech were thought to be more successful in groups and organizations where autonomy was highly valued. Likewise, in this specific context, powerless speech elicited lower status conferrals.

Like Wiley and Eskilson (1985) who questioned the utility of teaching everyone to speak powerfully, Fragale (2006) also expressed caution. Specifically, Fragale (2006) argued that before the value of powerful and powerless language is assessed, one must first identify the level of interdependence existing within the context. In other words, the level at which interactants collaborate, coordinate, and interact with one another affects powerless language's effect on ascribed status. Further, Wiley and Eskilson (1985)

generally, and Parton et al. (2002) specifically, indicated that powerful speaking improved chances for job acquisition while powerless speaking reduced these chances.

Power of Speech Style Summary

Decades of research have clearly displayed the effects speech style variation has on speaker evaluation. These studies have tested these effects in interactions where dominance (i.e., power and control) was a salient factor for the message evaluator. Contexts have included courtrooms (e.g., Smith et al., 1998), classrooms, (e.g., Haleta, 1996), student funding requests (e.g., Johnson & Vinson, 1987), persuasive attempts (e.g., Hosman et al., 2002), and interview settings (Parton et al., 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985). These contexts are characterized by jury members evaluating a witness' testimony, students assessing their teacher's speech variation, budget committee members reviewing funding requests, and interviewers reacting to an interviewee's messages. Even in relationally void contexts designed to focus solely on argument assessment, dominance is still a salient factor as the act of arguing implies an attempt to control or influence. Noteworthy are two studies that have assessed power of speech style variation in contexts where sociability, not dominance, was salient to participants (i.e., Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Fragale, 2006).

Predominantly, power of speech style studies have found that language devoid of language components such as hesitations, hedges, and tag questions elicit evaluations of high credibility (Erickson et al., 1978; Haleta, 1996; Johnson & Vinson, 1987), competence (Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac & Mulac; 1984; Erickson et al., 1978; Johnson & Vinson, 1987; Parton et al., 2002), control over self and others (Gibbons et al., 1991; Hosman et al., 2002; Hosman & Siltanen, 1994, 2006), and authoritativeness/power

(Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Erickson et al., 1978; Gibbons et al., 1991; Hosman & Siltanen 1994, 2006; Smith et al., 1998). Stated simply, this research indicates that when one desires to exude confidence, competence, control, and power, hedges, hesitations, and tag questions must be avoided. Findings from Bradac and Mulac (1984) and Fragale (2006), however, suggest such a claim may require qualification, as this research suggests these components may not always produce adverse consequences.

Data from Bradac and Mulac, (1984) and especially Fragale (2006), have indicated that components of powerless language can sometimes produce advantageous speaker evaluations. In their molecular study of these components, Bradac and Mulac (1984) presented messages from a speaker desiring to be judged either authoritative or sociable, depending on the experimental condition. Participants then rated the degree to which the message “will create [the] desired impression” (Bradac & Mulac, 1984, p. 312). Each goal condition produced nearly identical patterns of component effectiveness. An examination of the means from one goal condition to the next, however, reveal powerless language to be disadvantageous for those with authoritative goals, but such is not the case for those with sociable goals. In other words the use of, for example, hedges and tag questions, are far more effective when one desires to be sociable than if one desires to be authoritative.

Fragale’s (2006) study further verifies the differentiated effects produced when speakers are thought to exhibit authoritative or sociable goals. The study concerned how power of speech style affects status conferral in high and low task-interdependent environments. High task-interdependent environments lead to increased levels of coordination and collective efforts (i.e., more sociable environments), while low task-

interdependent environments lead to high levels of individualism, high self-confidence in one's opinions, and norms that rebuff coworker coordination and sociable interaction (Wageman, 1995). By varying the level of task-interdependence, Fragale (2006) found that powerless language led to high status conferral in high task interdependent contexts, while powerful language lead to a lower conferral in the same context. The opposite effect was found in low task-interdependent contexts.

In her second study, Fragale (2006) found that when conferring status upon others, people evaluate the target's agency traits (i.e., self-assertion, independence, ambition, and dominance) and communality traits (i.e., selflessness, tolerance, warmth, and sincerity), and they rely on the traits applicable to the context in which the status will be conferred. Specifically, this research found that high task-interdependent cultures value communal traits, signaled by components of powerless language, while low task-interdependent cultures value agentic traits, signaled by the absence of such components.

Given the corpus of speech style research displaying evidence that powerless language produces adverse effects on speaker evaluations, one might find Fragale's (2006) results spurious. Close examination of this study, however, reveals carefully constructed theoretical and conceptual arguments, as well as meticulously organized methodological procedures. Additionally, the results were replicated using two very different message delivery methods (i.e., computer-mediated interaction and overhearing a business-related telephone conversation). Further, other studies have found that evaluation of powerless language varies when participants' perceptions are experimentally controlled. For example, Hosman (1997) found that control attributions of powerful language are dependent upon an evaluator's locus of control. Additionally,

Blankenship and Craig (2007) learned that evaluations of power of speech style variation also depend on whether decoders believed messages are produced under a communicator's own volition or through coercive methods.

These studies provide insight in the potential differentiated effects of power of speech style variation in situations where message reviewers perceive differentiated speaker intentions. More research is needed, however. For example, Bradac and Mulac (1984) did not fully address their sociability and authoritative distinction, as this was not the direct intent of their study. Further, Fragale's (2006) study was limited to status conferral in high and low task-interdependent contexts. Therefore, how participants would respond to nuanced measures of speech evaluation (Zahn & Hopper, 1985) and control attribution (Hosman & Siltanen, 1994, 2006) in these specified contexts is not yet known. Relational framing theory (RFT) (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999) provides a framework with which to better understand these effects.

Briefly, RFT posits that people view relational exchanges through either a dominance-submission or an affiliation-disaffiliation frame. Participants assuming the role of a juror, for example, likely view their relationship with witnesses through a dominance-submission frame; while evaluators considering language in highly social environments (cf., Pacanowsky, 1988) likely view messages through an affiliation-disaffiliation frame. Relational framing theory argues that depending on which frame is salient, messages—especially ambiguous messages—are interpreted differently (Solomon & McLaren, 2008). The components of powerless language are ambiguous linguistic features because they carry a variety of meaning (Holmes, 1984a). Through careful consideration of naturally occurring conversations, Holmes (1984a) found that

hedges and tag questions might be used to (1) signal a degree of certainty regarding a statement, (2) facilitate further conversation, or (3) attenuate the impact of an otherwise impolite statement (e.g., criticisms or directives). An RFT perspective of speech style variation explains how message recipients ascribe meaning to these components and thus accounts for differences identified in past power of speech style research. To bolster this association further, the following section reviews seminal works responsible for advancing RFT.

Relational Framing Theory

In a pair of studies, Dillard and colleagues (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999) explicated and established support for RFT. This theory describes the process with which people apply meaning to messages exchanged during interactions. Specifically, the theory proposes that people interpret relational messages through either a salient dominance-submission or affiliation-disaffiliation frame. These messages are affected further by a third non-relational dimension named involvement, which serves as a unipolar intensifier variable. Scholars have used RFT as a framework to study alcohol's effect on the interpretation of sexual messages (Lannutti & Monahan, 2002), the production of influence attempts in task- and normative-centered group decision activities (Henningsen, Henningsen, Cruz, & Morrill, 2003), relational uncertainty in intimate relationships (Knobloch & Solomon, 2005), and the interpretation of sexual messages exchanged in the workplace (Solomon, 2006).

Prior to a review of RFT, the primary research from which the dominance and affiliation frames were derived must be considered. Contributing significantly to this process was a multi-disciplinary review and synthesis of research discussing various

dimensions of relational communication provided by Burgoon and Hale (1984, 1987). Following a review of their work, this section includes a thorough explanation of RFT and its assumptions (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999). This section concludes with a rationale for applying RFT as a theoretical basis with which power of speech style evaluation may be understood.

RFT Foundations

Burgoon and Hale (1984) feared that previous, more simplistic operationalizations of relational communication might not account for the abundance of meaning within typical exchanges. To quell this fear, they worked toward a more detailed definition, and toward this end, they reviewed research from disciplines and perspectives including biology, anthropology, psychology, semantic meaning, sociology, and communication. From this review, they compiled a list of 12 distinct dimensions of relational communication. These dimensions, they argued, carry specific meaning important to accurately characterize and interpret interpersonal exchanges. Accurate interpretation, they recognized, however, is made difficult as the content of relational messages may align with a single or multiple dimensions. Thus, relational communication was described as a highly complex and interrelated process.

Burgoon and Hale (1987) subjected these relational dimensions to empirical analysis by developing the Relational Message Scale (RMS)—a measure designed to test the relevance of each relational theme in a common interpersonal interaction. Factor analytic procedures retained seven of the original 12 dimensions. Immediacy and affection each loaded on the same factor because, as the authors suggested, immediacy has been found to produce an affective response in others. Similarity and depth—a factor

that reflected a sense of identification leading to a desire to continue communicating with one another—loaded together, the authors suggested, because people feel comfortable getting to know people whom they perceive to be similar. Next, receptivity and trust also loaded on a single factor because, as they argued, the development of trust naturally occurs for those whom have a greater willingness to interact and reduce uncertainty with others. Further, although the composure and formality dimensions loaded on independent factors, Burgoon and Hale (1987) suggested they may sometimes combine when norms “dictate a relaxed, informal and nonaroused communication style” (1987, p. 39). Dominance also loaded on its own factor, which was not surprising since this dimension has been regarded as “the most widely recognized and studied facet of relational communication” (Burgoon & Hale, 1984, p. 194). Finally, an equality factor emerged in the final analysis, which assessed the degree to which the interactants perceive each other as equal.

Although the specificity offered though Burgoon and Hale’s (1984, 1987) research provided a foundation for keen distinctions among relational dimensions, some scholars have suggested such detail is “unorganized and . . . has the potential to confuse if only because of the large number of elements contained within it” (Dillard et al., 1999, p. 49). Therefore, in an attempt to transform these dimensions into a more usable state, Dillard and colleagues have proposed a more parsimonious and “theoretically inter-related set of concepts” (Dillard et al., 1999, p. 51) constituted by a higher-order, three-dimension perspective of relational communication. This alternative view consists of two substantive dimensions, dominance-submission and affiliation-disaffiliation, and a non-

relational dimension called involvement. Discussed first are the substantive dimensions, referred to as frames.

The dominance-submission frame, they explained, is analogous to control (i.e., “the degree to which an actor attempts to regulate [or acquiesce to] the behavior of the other;” Dillard et al. 1999, p. 53). Alternatively, the affiliation-disaffiliation frame is closely analogous to solidarity and is “the extent to which one individual regards the other positively” (Dillard et al., 1999, p. 53). A frame is activated by contextual cues and works to “simplify the problem of interpreting social reality by directing attention to particular behaviors of the other interactant, resolving ambiguities, and guiding inferences” (Dillard et al., 1996, p. 706). For example, while the dominance frame is enacted in compliance-driven interactions, the affiliation frame is enacted in affinity-driven interactions (Dillard et al., 1996; Solomon, Dillard, & Anderson, 2002). The support for advancing the presence of these overarching relational frames has its foundation set within both evolutionary theory and empirical research.

From an evolutionary perspective, Dillard et al. (1999) argued that a continued human existence depended on a human’s ability to not only compete against other viable candidates for a mate, but the need to affiliate with that mate to ensure the survival of their offspring—both actions of which communication is invariably a part. Additional theorizing also supports the prominence of these frames. For example, the aforementioned work of Brown and Gilman (1960), and later work by Brown (1965), recognized the prevalence of dominance and solidarity dimensions of social interaction. Additionally, cited in Dillard et al. (1999) as providing early academic support of a similar dual perspective of relational communication, Timothy Leary (1957) in his book,

Interpersonal Diagnosis of Personality, argued for the inclusion of a hostility-affection dimension along with the already academically established dominance dimension—a position widely supported in subsequent empirical research (Dillard et al., 1999). To summarize, a dominance and affiliation view of relational communication enjoys the support of a well-established foundation of previous literature.

Seeking empirical support of their own, however, Dillard et al. (1999) hypothesized that a second-order factor analysis of the RMS (Burgoon & Hale, 1987) would produce factors reflecting dominance and affiliation dimensions. They tested this claim by asking participants to recall a recent interpersonal conversation in which the other was trying to either dominate or affiliate with them. Participants then completed the RMS (augmented to include three involvement items). Confirmatory first-order factor analyses displayed factors similar to those found in previous research (i.e., Burgoon & Hale, 1987): immediacy, affect, similarity/depth, receptivity/trust, composure, formality, dominance, equality, and involvement. Items within each factor were then averaged and submitted to an exploratory second-order factor analysis. This analysis produced the predicted two-factor solution where the original dominance scale substantively defined dominance, and all remaining items substantively defined all remaining first-order factors. Items measuring the third, non-relational dimension of relational communication, involvement—represented by such items as, “My partner showed enthusiasm while talking to me” and “How interested or indifferent was your partner”—loaded positively on both substantive factors. This finding and involvement’s role as an intensifier of the substantive dimensions is discussed next as RFT’s assumptions are established.

RFT Assumptions

Based on RFT's multi-dimensional perspective, two assumptions—the *differential salience* and *intensifier* hypotheses—are advanced. Dillard et al. (1996) first proposed the differential salience hypothesis, which states that each frame is diametrically opposed with one another. In fact, Dillard et al. (1999) suggested, “the ambiguity or multifunctionality of many social cues may *require* individuals to focus on only one [frame]” in a given exchange (p. 52; emphasis in original). In other words, when an interaction is viewed through a domination or an affiliation frame, the possible interpretations produced by the opposing frame are no longer used to interpret messages.

Several studies have established initial support for this hypothesis. Participants in Dillard et al. (1996), and again in Solomon, Dillard, and Anderson (2002), assessed the relevance of each relational dimension in multiple scenarios depicting a friend with either a compliance- or affinity-goal. On a 5-interval Likert scale with the poles, *completely irrelevant* and *completely relevant*, participants responded to items representing each proposed dimensions of RFT. Dominance was defined by the items persuade/concede, influence/comply, controlling/yielding, and dominance/submission. Affiliation was defined by the items liking/disliking, attraction/aversion, affection/disaffection, and positive regard/negative regard. Involvement was defined by the items involved/uninvolved, interested/disinterested, active/inactive, and engaged/withdrawn. A factor analysis produced the predicted three-factor solution. Both studies found that the dominance and affiliation frames were judged more relevant to interpersonal exchanges displaying, respectively, compliance and affinity goals. Finally, these findings also provided support for the intensifier hypothesis, discussed next.

Multiple studies have found support for the intensifier hypothesis (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999; Solomon et al., 2002). The intensifier hypothesis concerns the proposed third dimension of relational communication, involvement. Formally, this dimension is described as “the degree to which two interactants engage with one another or their behaviors are mutually dependent” (Dillard et al., 1999, p. 53). Unlike dominance and affiliation, involvement has no substantive content and instead affects the degree to which one perceives a given relational exchange as dominative or affiliation. Dillard et al. (1996) provided initial support with data that indicated involvement was positively correlated with both substantive dimensions. This association signified that despite the interactant’s goal, the level of involvement affected the extent to which each situation was viewed through a dominant or an affiliation frame.

Dillard et al. (1999) corroborated support for the intensifier hypothesis. As previously mentioned, participants in this study evaluated recalled conversations depicting either high or low domination or affiliation conversations. Subsequent analyses verified involvement’s association with dominance and affiliation as a function of the salient frame. Additionally, these authors found that level of involvement was more closely associated with dominance and affiliation poles than with the opposing submission and disaffiliation poles. Likely, the authors suggested, this data shows peoples’ natural inclination to associate themselves with, and recall, dominant and affiliation acts rather than less preferred and potentially face damaging submissive and disaffiliation acts. Finally, this study also found that perceived level of involvement covaried with frame salience, but only the involvement-affiliation relationship was found significant. It may be possible that participants (i.e., undergraduate college students)

downplayed both the significance of dominant-submissive interactions and involvement's role in these interactions due to normative pressure to maintain a collegiate sense of community over competition.

From these seminal studies, scholars have developed a foundation for RFT and, more specifically, an explanation of the process people use to interpret messages. In summary, support for the differential salience hypothesis indicates that relational partners enact dominant frames in situations where varying degrees of influence, control, and persuasion are salient, such as in compliance-gaining settings. Affiliation frames, however, are enacted in situations where varying degrees of liking, attraction, affection, and regard for one another are salient, such as in affinity-seeking settings. Scholars have also suggested that the social norms of the relationship and the prior history of the dyad affect the salience of these frames (Solomon & McLaren, 2008). Finally, the overall support for the intensifier hypothesis indicates that one's perceived level of involvement bolsters the relevance of the salient frame.

Rationale

The rationale for this study first explains how RFT informs the evaluation of speech style variation, through which three hypotheses are presented.

Speech styles and RFT

Years of foundational research clearly display the deleterious effects of messages containing components of powerless language. Scholars have repeatedly found that these linguistic features cause a perceived reduction of speaker credibility (Erickson et al., 1978; Haleta, 1996), control attributions (Gibbons et al., 1991; Hosman & Siltanen, 2006), power and authority (Bradac et al., 1981; Smith et al., 1998), and social

attractiveness (Bradac et al., 1981; Bradac, 1984). Other studies, however, have indicated that such language may not always produce such negative effects (e.g., Fragale, 2006)—especially for social attractiveness ratings (e.g., Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Gibbons et al., 1991; Parton et al., 2002). Relational framing theory's interpretation of dominance and affiliation relational frames provides a theoretical explanation able to account for the evaluative differences reported in the reviewed speech style research.

RFT is an appropriate theory of message evaluation for two reasons. First, the dimensions of power and solidarity—analogueous to RFT's dimensions of domination and affiliation, respectively—are associated with language and language evaluation (Brown, 1965; Brown & Gilman, 1960; Giles & Ryan, 1982; Ryan et al., 1982). Second, scholars have long considered the role a listener's construal of an exchange has on message evaluation (Bradac, 1982; Bradac & Street, 1989/1990; Delia, 1976; Giles & Ryan, 1982; Street & Hopper, 1982). Many scholars agree with Bradac (1982) who argued that, "a listener's perception of situational factors can strongly affect his or her reactions to a communicator's language" (p. 113). For example, if asked to evaluate the appropriateness of an individual's wit, such evaluation would be a function of not only the setting (e.g., work, home, or public), but also whether the person was regarded as friendly and easy-going or as sarcastic and malicious (Delia, 1976). In terms of RFT, the evaluation of a person's wit depends on whether the message was framed by domination or affiliation.

Although the base idea behind RFT's higher-order dimensional interpretation of interpersonal interaction is not necessarily unique (see Brown, 1965; Brown & Gilman, 1960; Giles & Ryan, 1982; Ryan et al., 1982), the theory itself is useful because it

provides an empirically established set of interrelated assumptions that provides a more nuanced understanding of how relational framing affects message evaluation. For example, the differential salience hypothesis suggests that whether an exchange is framed by dominance or affiliation determines how messages—especially ambiguous messages—are interpreted (Dillard et al., 1996). Components of speech style variation are ambiguous linguistic features because they carry various meanings and have many uses (Holmes, 1984a).

Further, RFT asserts that communicators are motivated to employ the most accurate relational frame because accurately decoding messages leads to attaining social goals (Dillard et al., 1999). For example, one can infer that Fragale's (2006) participants considered the salience of dominance and affiliation within a specified context before conferring status upon a high- or low-power speaker. Specifically, Fragale (2006) found that in highly sociable environments (i.e., affiliation framed) the use of hedges, tag questions, and the like resulted in the conferral of a higher status than messages free of these language components. The opposite effect was found in environments where individualism, not sociability, was valued (i.e., dominance framed). Therefore, the relational framing of a communicative exchange could be responsible for affecting the interpretation of speech style variation.

Further investigation of the relational framing affect on the evaluation of power of speech style variation will better illuminate the reason why status, a clear sub-dimension of power (Brown & Gilman, 1960; Giles & Ryan, 1982), was positively affected by supposed powerless, not powerful language. Status, however, represents only a limited view of the evaluative dimension studied in traditional power of speech style scholarship.

Therefore, the study proposed in the current document extends our understanding of speech style variation by assessing a wider array of evaluative dimensions (cf., Hosman & Siltanen, 1994; Zahn & Hopper, 1985). More specifically, learning how relational framing affects speech style evaluation will illuminate more substantially how such language variation affects interpretation of various interactions. RFT's association with speech style evaluation is discussed in more detail next.

Due to the salience of influence, control, and persuasion surrounding message stimuli used in previous power of speech style research, participants' evaluations of speech style variation were likely affected by an enacted dominance frame. Almost exclusively, this research has created power-stratified scenarios, which enact domination-submission frames (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999). For example, participants positioned as jurors are placed in a position of power and control (i.e., the fate of the individual is in their hands) to judge the veracity of the witness's statements. Like jurors, interviewers also have control over interviewees and view the interviewee's goal more as an attempt to gain compliance (i.e., give me this job) than one of affinity seeking (i.e., please like me). While it is possible that both jurors and interviewers might recognize witness and interviewee attempts to affiliate with their interactant, the differential salience hypothesis suggests that given contextual cues, one frame will supersede the other, thus clarifying the interpretation of the message. Similar explanations are relevant in other power of speech style studies as well (e.g., Haleta, 1996: teachers and students; Johnson & Vinson, 1987: budget committee members and fund requesters). Because persuasion, influence, and control are imbedded within these scenarios, participants likely framed the exchange with the speaker through a dominance-submission frame. Therefore, a comparative

analysis of power of speech style effects in affiliation- and domination-framed exchanges is warranted.

Hypotheses

RFT suggests that exchanges framed by dominance cause people to interpret messages in terms of how the message relates to dominance, persuasion, influence, and control. Extending this theory to the current study implies that a dominator's use of powerless language may communicate a lack of confidence toward his or her statement and dampen its effect as a directive, whereas the absence of such language better ensures a perception of dominance. Further, the use of powerless language in this frame may also affect the criteria by which people judge social attractiveness. More specifically, that which may be considered nice, sweet, or good-natured (i.e., social attractiveness as defined by Zahn & Hopper, 1985) in dominance-framed exchanges is likely to be language that conforms to the perceived frame (i.e., powerful language). Hence, a dominance-framed interpretation of powerless language will likely be judged socially unattractive because, as previously argued, such language detracts from the speaker's intention to project confidence and certainty.

RFT suggests that exchanges framed by affiliation will likely cause people to interpret messages in terms of how they relate to affiliation, liking, attraction, and regard. Therefore, whereas powerless language detracts from one's intentions to dominate others, the same language employed in affiliation-framed exchanges would be judged attractive and inviting. More specifically, the affiliation-disaffiliation frame illuminates the ability of messages including powerless language to facilitate affiliation and solidarity goals (Holmes, 1984). Therefore, from a listener's perspective, an interactant's use of

powerless language would communicate what Holmes (1984a) referred to as “a facilitative positive politeness function, expressing solidarity with the addressee” (p. 59). More simply, when compared to powerful language, powerless language welcomes cooperation, not competition. Therefore, due to its inviting nature, powerless language uttered in affiliation-framed exchanges will likely be judged more advantageous than powerful language. At least two studies have reported similar results on both molecular (Bradac & Mulac, 1984) and molar (Fragale, 2006) levels.

To sum, RFT suggests that the relational frame alters what a listener might consider appropriate for the context. For example, language affiliated with and related to perceptions of affiliation is likely to be judged not only socially attractive, but dynamic, superior, and in control. Therefore, RFT provides a cogent explanation for power of speech style effects, as well as a sound bases on which to pose the testable hypotheses stated here:

H1: In dominance-framed relationships, messages containing components of powerless language will elicit lower ratings of dynamism, social attractiveness, superiority, and control than will messages free of such components.

H2: In affiliation-framed relationships, messages containing components of powerless language will elicit higher ratings in dynamism, social attractiveness, superiority, and control than will messages free of these components.

Together the two hypotheses describe a two-way interaction: speech style by relational frame. Verification of these hypotheses would indicate that evaluative effects of powerless language components are dependent on the framing of the relationship perceived by the message decoder.

The ability of RFT to explain the evaluation of speech style variation is further assessed by testing the predictability of the intensifier hypothesis. Recall that involvement, a non-substantive dimension of relational communication, intensifies frame salience. In other words, involvement is analogous to a radio's volume control: "although dominance and affiliation call the tune, involvement references how loudly the music is played" (Dillard et al., 1996, p. 716). Several studies have found judgments of involvement (measured with the items involved/uninvolved, interested/disinterested, active/inactive, and engaged/withdrawn) to be positively correlated with perceived relevance of both dominance and affiliation (Dillard & Solomon, 2005; Dillard et al., 1996). Finally, involvement's effect has also been displayed by measuring the perceived level of enthusiasm, interest, attentiveness, and engagement in an interaction.

The intensifier hypothesis suggests that the more involved one feels with an interaction, the more pronounced the salient frame would be. For example, when conversing about a subject interesting or relevant to each individual, the intensity of a salient frame is strengthened. Further, when one perceives his or her interactant to be highly involved in the conversation, the salience of a frame is also intensified. Under highly involved dominance-framed exchanges, for example, the relevance of control, influence, persuasion, and dominance is further elevated. The evaluation of speech style variation, then, should reflect an intensification of message evaluations. Therefore, the application of RFT's intensifier hypothesis provides a basis for the following prediction:

H3: When compared to the low involvement condition, the high involvement condition will intensify message judgments predicted in H1 and H2.

This hypothesis represents an extension of H1 and H2, as guided by RFT's intensifier hypothesis. This hypothesis would be verified with a triple interaction between the independent variables. Such an interaction would indicate that a listener's level of message involvement affects the degree to which power of speech styles are evaluated. For example, in domination-submission framed exchanges, relevant messages free of hedges, hesitations and tag questions will be rated higher on message evaluation variables than would less relevant messages in dominance-framed relationships. Alternatively, in affiliation-disaffiliation framed exchanges, relevant messages including hedges, hesitations, and tag questions will be rated higher on message evaluation variables than less-relevant messages.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the literature for research studies investigating the effects of powerful and powerless speech styles. After reviewing the seminal works in this line of research, subsequent power of speech style studies were organized using four main content areas: persuasion, control attributions, speaker status, and organizational contexts. Seminal research presenting the relational framing theory was also reviewed, as this theory was proposed to explain the evaluative differences of power of speech style variation as it may depend on relationship type. Using RFT, this review of literature and rationale culminated with three hypotheses.

CHAPTER III

METHOD

This study applies a relational framing theory (RFT) structure to assess the evaluation of messages with and without hedges, hesitations, and tag questions. Previous research has indicated that these components are rated unfavorably in most scenarios, yet favorably in others. Relational framing theory suggests these findings are the result of the salience of either the dominance-submission or the affiliation-disaffiliation relational frames. This chapter presents a method designed to test the proposed hypotheses. Specifically, this chapter highlights and discusses the participants, independent variables, dependent variables, procedures, and methods of data analysis.

Participants

Participants were gathered using snowball sampling procedures. The researcher contacted past and present colleagues, friends, and family to ask if they would distribute a link for the study's online questionnaire. This call included the requirement that potential participants must be over the age of 18, speak English fluently, and have been employed in the workforce for at least one year. Only completed questionnaires ($N = 254$) were included in the analysis. Women represented 70.5% ($n = 171$) of the sample. Most of the participants (95.3%) within this sample identified themselves as White. A wide variety of ages were represented in this sample: 13.3% ($n = 34$) of the participants were between 18 and 25 years of age; 71.3% ($n = 181$) of the participants were between 26 and 54 years of age; and 15.4% ($n = 39$) of the participants were over 55 years of age. The median amount of workplace experience was 16-20 years, with 84.6% of the sample ($n =$

215) reporting more than five years experience in the workforce. Finally, 36 of the United States were represented in this sample population.

Relational Frames

Relational frames were induced using hypothetical workplace relationships in an unspecified organizational setting. Specifically, employee-boss and employee-coworker conditions were used to instantiate dominance-submission and affiliation-disaffiliation frames, respectively. By definition, employees are likely to work in power-differentiated environments with their bosses. These exchanges likely evoke the salience of influence, control, persuasion, and dominance. Alternatively, these same employees are likely to experience dramatically different relationships with coworkers. Specifically, affiliation, liking, attraction, and affections are likely to be more salient within the coworker relationship than in the boss-employee dyad. Therefore, RFT suggests that a dominance-submission frame most likely defines the boss-employee dyad, while an affiliation-disaffiliation frame most likely defines the coworker dyad. In both conditions, participants were instructed to assume the perspective of an employee.

A pretest was conducted to ensure these stimuli functioned properly. The following section presents the pretest process and concludes with a summary that displays the verified relationship descriptions used in the main study.

Pretest

RFT suggests that participants instructed to imagine a relationship with a boss would frame those exchanges using the dominance-submission frame. The theory also suggests that participants instructed to imagine a relationship with their coworker (described as a coworker/friend), would frame these exchanges using the affiliation-

disaffiliation frame. Therefore, participants in the employee-boss condition should rate the dominance-submission frame as more relevant than the affiliation-submission frame, and the opposite relationship will occur in the coworker condition. The following paragraphs provide a brief explanation of the method to test this hypothesis.

Participants. Students in communication studies courses were asked to volunteer to participate in this study. Sixty-eight students accepted this invitation. Participants were assigned randomly to one of the study's two independent conditions.

Independent variables. The independent variable used in this pretest was relationship type. Depending on the condition to which they were exposed, the participants were instructed to consider a relationship with a coworker or a superior. Refer to Table 1 to view the text used to describe each relationship.

Table 1

Relational Descriptions

Relationship	Description
Employee-Coworker	Imagine that you and a coworker have been friends for several years. You regard this relationship very positively, and each of you displays high levels of trust and mutual respect for one another. Further, both of you are open to each other's opinions when team decisions must be made. In general, you know you can speak to this individual openly.
Employee-Boss	Imagine that you have had the same boss for several years. Both you and your boss regard this relationship as a strict superior-subordinate relationship and not as a friendship. This boss does not hesitate to use authoritative tactics to influence and control situations. Consequently, when you speak with this boss, you do so with caution by choosing your words wisely and presenting your thoughts carefully.

Dependent variables. The measure used in the pretest was created for and used in the seminal articles that established the relational framing theory (Dillard et al., 1996, 1999). For the purposes of this pretest, however, only the items that measure the relevance of the dominance- and affiliation-frames were used. The resulting measure instructed participants to judge the relevance of eight word-pairs (e.g., liking/disliking, influence/comply, and positive/negative regard) to the hypothetical relationship condition in which they were assigned. The instrument consisted of eight 7-step Likert-type items with the poles *completely irrelevant* to *completely relevant*.

Reliability statistics were run for both sets of items. To improve alpha levels for each measure, one item was removed from each set. Deleting the persuade/comply item from the dominance-submission measure changed the Cronbach's alpha from .74 to .80. Deleting the positive/negative regard from the affiliation-disaffiliation measure improved the alpha from .72 to .76. Using the remaining items, new variables were created, which represented the mean score for each frame.

Procedures. After participants signed the informed consent form, the researcher described the measure aloud. In this description (and following protocol described within relational framing theory scholarship, e.g., Dillard et al., 1996) the researcher first guided participants through a practice scenario that helped participants understand the differences between judgments of relevance and judgments of evaluation (i.e., agree/disagree). See Figure 1 to view the practice scenario shown to participants.

After participants completed the practice survey, they read the description of the workplace relationship (see Table 1). Imagining this relationship, participants completed the main instrument (see Figure 2).

Directions: In the first set of questions, you will be asked to judge the *relevance* of word pairs (e.g., dominance/submission) as they apply to a hypothetical workplace relationship. The following text displays an example of how these questions differ from other surveys you may have completed:

Imagine you have been given several different kinds of materials—**wax paper**, **sandpaper**, **velvet**, **a rubber eraser**, and **a brick**—and asked to feel the surface of each of the different materials. [Your task is to judge the *relevance* of each word pair to making a judgment about the materials.]

	Completely Irrelevant					Completely Relevant	
1. Rough/smooth	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Loud/quiet	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Hard/soft	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. High-pitched/low-pitched	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Most people would say that the rough/smooth and hard/soft word-pairs were relevant to the task and that the loud/quiet high-pitched/low-pitched word-pairs were irrelevant. Note that you are NOT evaluating how rough, smooth, loud, quiet, hard, soft, high-pitched, or low-pitched the surfaces are. Instead, you are indicating whether the word-pairs are *relevant* to evaluating those surfaces. Of course, your judgments might be reversed if the task were to judge sounds rather than surfaces in this example. In that case, the rough/smooth and hard/soft word-pairs would be irrelevant, and you would probably rate the loud/quiet and high-pitched/low-pitched sounds as relevant.

Figure 1. Preparatory Relevancy Questionnaire. This illustration represents the questionnaire (Dillard et al., 1996) used to help respondents understand the evaluation of each item's relevance, given the described context.

Analysis. To test the assumption that participants framed the employee-boss dyad with dominance-submission to a larger degree than affiliation-disaffiliation and that the opposite relationship existed with the employee-coworker dyad, two paired samples *t*-tests were run. Each test compared participants' ratings on the averaged dominance-submission and affiliation-disaffiliation scales. Verification that the relationship

Directions: Please indicate the relevance of the following word-pairs to the relationship just described. Remember, you are judging relevance, not intensity. If you must, reference the description on the previous page.

	Completely Irrelevant					Completely Relevant	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Liking/disliking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Attraction/aversion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Affection/disaffection	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Positive/negative regard	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Persuade/concede	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Influence/comply	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Controlling/yielding	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Dominance/submission	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Figure 2. Main Relevancy Questionnaire. This illustration represents the questionnaire (Dillard et al., 1996) used to measure the relevance of domination and affiliation frames.

descriptions instantiate the intended frames is evident if (assuming the means are in the proper direction) significant differences are found between participants' ratings on the two scales.

Results. Respondents in the boss condition rated the dominance-submission frame more relevant ($M = 5.87$; $t[33] = 8.75$, $p = .0004$) than the affiliation-dominance frame ($M = 3.10$). Respondents in the coworker condition, however did not reliably discern between the two frames ($t[32] = -1.852$, $p = .073$). These results indicate that the boss condition functioned properly, but the coworker condition did not.

Discussion. The significant difference in the perceptions of relevance between the alternate frames showed participants more likely frame an employee-boss relationship

using the domination-submission frame than the affiliation-disaffiliation. The description intended to place participants in an affiliation-disaffiliation frame did not function properly, however. Instead, the respondents reported mixed results after reading the coworker relationship description by conflating both frames. In other words, respondents did not clearly discern between the two alternative frames in the coworker condition.

Second Pretest

Because the data in the employee-boss condition clearly supported the hypothesized relationship frames, the researcher retained the functioning relationship stimulus. The original employee-coworker stimulus, however, was perhaps worded too formally for a layperson population. Therefore, the stimulus was reworded to reflect a more relaxed and organic vernacular. The following statement reflects the revised wording:

Imagine that you and a coworker have been friends for several years. You regard this relationship very positively because you trust and respect each other in the same way. Further, to be successful in the job, you both seek out and offer your opinions, especially when team decisions must be made. In general, you know you can speak to this individual openly.

Procedure. The new relationship description was tested using the same method described in the initial pretest. The new sample of participants ($N = 21$) was drawn from the same population of USM students. Participants of this test did not participate in the first pretest.

Results. The new relationship description yielded a significant difference between an individual's framing of the proposed employee-coworker relationship ($t[20] =$

-3.614, $p = 0.001$). More specifically, participants considering an employee-coworker relationship found the affiliation-disaffiliation frame more relevant ($M = 4.95$) than the domination-submission frame ($M = 4.06$). Although a significant difference was found, one must consider the effect of the means—the differences are not as dramatic as displayed in the employee-boss condition. However, RFT argues that people ultimately champion the more salient frame over the other, thus reducing the number of possible interpretations. In other words, even though both frames may be somewhat relevant, only the more salient frame will prevail. Therefore, the data produced by this sample suggests that the affiliation-disaffiliation frame is more likely the frame through which messages in employee-coworker relationships are interpreted.

Relational Frames Summary

The pretests indicated that the proposed relationship descriptions are viewed with the expected relational frame. Based on these results, participants of the main study were assigned randomly to one of the two approved relational frame conditions (see Table 2). In each condition, participants read a 62-75 word description of a hypothetical relationship they share with either their supervisor or coworker. The coworker condition, for example, indicated that the relationship is marked by high levels of trust and mutual respect and is considered a friendship. Alternatively, the boss condition indicated, for example, that the relationship is marked by a clear contractual superior-subordinate divide and is not a friendship. Both conditions indicated the length of the relationship is “several years” and did not specify sex of the speaker.

Table 2

Approved Relationship Descriptions

Relationship	Description
Employee-Coworker	Imagine that you and a coworker have been friends for several years. You regard this relationship very positively because you trust and respect each other in the same way. Further, to be successful in the job, you both seek out and offer your opinions, especially when team decisions must be made. In general, you know you can speak to this individual openly.
Employee-Boss	Imagine that you have had the same boss for several years. Both you and your boss regard this relationship as a strict superior-subordinate relationship and not as a friendship. This boss does not hesitate to use authoritative tactics to influence and control situations. Consequently, when you speak with this boss, you do so with caution by choosing your words wisely and presenting your thoughts carefully.

Involvement

Following the lead of previous studies incorporating RFT involvement manipulations (e.g., Henningsen et al., 2003), the current study incorporated a hypothetical stimulus. In their study of social influence tactics, Henningsen, Henningsen, Cruz, and Morrill (2003) assembled participants into small groups charged with having to address production issues of a hypothetical company. Participants in Henningsen et al.'s (2003) high involvement condition were told to imagine their goal was to be nominated CEO of the fictitious company. Similar to Henningsen et al.'s (2003) research, the present study also incorporated hypothetical involvement stimuli.

In accordance with RFT, the current study operationalized involvement as a matter of both speaker immediacy and listener interest. Participants exposed to the high-

involvement condition were informed that their hypothetical boss or coworker has just approached their workspace (i.e., high immediacy) to discuss a work related project on which the participant was the lead employee (i.e., high interest). The remaining participants were exposed to the low-involvement condition in which their hypothetical boss or coworker left a voicemail (i.e., low immediacy) concerning a project, on which they had been voluntarily assisting a co-worker who fell behind in their work (i.e., low interest). The wording used to spur this manipulation is displayed in Table 3.

To ensure these manipulations produced the intended effects, a 4-item manipulation check assessed the level at which participants in the main study were involved in the presented hypothetical relationship. By collecting participants' responses on items derived from those used in previous RFT research (e.g., Dillard & Solomon, 2005), this measure assessed the perceived level of involvement participants experienced.

Table 3

Involvement Stimuli

Condition	Stimulus
High Involvement	To answer the following questions, please imagine that this individual has just approached your workspace to speak with you about a project that your superiors regard as your responsibility to make a success. For a moment, visualize this scenario, then respond to the following questions.
Low Involvement	To answer the following questions, please imagine that this individual has just left you a voicemail regarding a project on which you have volunteered some time. Because your time is voluntary, you, your coworker, and even your superiors understand you can back out of the project at any time, if you would like. For a moment, visualize this scenario, then respond to the following questions.

The items used in the current study began with the stem, “If I were in this situation, I would feel . . .” and were followed by a) “involved with what the speakers said to me;” b) “interested in what the speaker said to me;” c) “that the speaker was an energetic communicator;” and d) “that the speaker was an engaging communicator.” Participants then responded to a 7-interval scale with the poles, *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*.

A successful involvement manipulation will be verified when the averaged involvement scores are significantly higher in the high-involvement condition and lower in the low-involvement condition. Scores on these scales were factor analyzed and subjected to mean difference tests. A properly functioning involvement manipulation will produce means in the expected directions with a statistically significant difference between these scores.

Messages

Eight messages comprised the various conditions this study required (see Tables 4 and 5). The kernel message used in this study was originally based on Fragale’s (2006) component-free message. The message for the coworker condition contains 105 words, and the boss condition contains 99 words. These messages are duplicates of one another, except the coworker condition incorporates references that are more inclusive (e.g., “Also, we need to figure out why we haven’t received them yet.”) than the boss condition does, which uses more directive language (e.g., “Also, figure out why we haven’t received them yet.”). This difference in wording was necessary to further instantiate the proper relational frame. Message differences also reflected changes that instantiate the involvement variable, such that each relationship condition reflected either the high- (e.g., a face-to-face conversation) or low-involvement (e.g., a voicemail message)

Table 4

Coworker Message Stimuli

Message condition (involvement)	Stimuli
Component-free (high)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier, it's been hectic lately. The project you asked about is going slowly right now. One of the big problems is that we have yet to hear any feedback. We need to tell them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas. Also, we need to figure out why we haven't received them yet; we've got to find a way to speed up this project. Let's meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further. I'll send you an email later today about the meeting, and we'll finalize a time.
Component-heavy (high)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier. It's been hectic around here lately, hasn't it? Well...the project you asked about is going a little slow right now. One of the big problems is that, you know, we have yet to hear any feedback. I'm thinking we should ask them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas, right? Also, we need to figure out why we haven't received them yet; we've got to find a way to speed up this project, don't you think? Maybe we could meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further? Well...I'll send you an email later today about the meeting and we'll finalize a time.
Component-free (low)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier, it's been hectic lately. The project you asked about is going slowly right now. One of the big problems is that we have yet to hear any feedback. We need to tell them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas. Also, we need to figure out why we haven't received them yet; we've got to find a way to speed up this project. Let's meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further. I'll call you back again later today about the meeting, and we'll finalize a time.
Component-heavy (low)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier. It's been hectic around here lately, hasn't it? Well...the project you asked about is going a little slow right now. One of the big problems is that, you know, we have yet to hear any feedback. I'm thinking we should ask them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas, right? Also, we need to figure out why we haven't received them yet; we've got to find a way to speed up this project, don't you think? Maybe we could meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further? Well...I'll call you back again later today about the meeting, and we'll finalize a time.

Table 5

Boss Message Stimuli

Message condition (involvement)	Stimuli
Component-free (high)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier, it's been hectic lately. The project you asked about is going slowly right now. One of the big problems is that we have yet to hear any feedback. You need to tell them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas. Also, figure out why we haven't received them yet; you've got to find a way to speed up this project. Let's meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further. Send me an email about the meeting, and let's finalize a time.
Component-heavy (high)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier. It's been hectic around here lately, hasn't it? Well...the project you asked about is going a little slow right now. One of the big problems is that, you know, we have yet to hear any feedback. I'm thinking you should ask them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas, right? Also, figure out why we haven't received them yet; you've got to find a way to speed up this project, don't you think? Maybe we could meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further? Well...send me an email about the meeting, and let's finalize a time.
Component-free (low)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier, it's been hectic lately. The project you asked about is going slowly right now. One of the big problems is that we have yet to hear any feedback. You need to tell them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas. Also, figure out why we haven't received them yet; you've got to find a way to speed up this project. Let's meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further. Call me back when you get this, and let's finalize a time.
Component-heavy (high)	Hi, thanks for calling me back earlier. It's been hectic around here lately, hasn't it? Well...the project you asked about is going a little slow right now. One of the big problems is that, you know, we have yet to hear any feedback. I'm thinking you should ask them to hurry things up because we'll need their comments to best incorporate their ideas, right? Also, figure out why we haven't received them yet; you've got to find a way to speed up this project, don't you think? Maybe we could meet this Thursday afternoon in the conference room and discuss this further? Well...call me back when you get this, and let's finalize a time.

stimulus. Although each message type had the same number of words, the last sentence in the messages differed to reflect the change in channel (i.e., the face-to-face conversation: “I’ll send you an email later today about the meeting.” versus the voicemail message: “I’ll call you back again later today about the meeting.”).

The current study incorporated the components most frequently used in previous organizational research (Fragale, 2006; Parton et al., 2002; Wiley & Eskilson, 1985): hedges, hesitations, and tag questions. Three components of each type were included in each component-heavy condition. The number of components used was based on a ratio of one component type per 30 words of kernel message text, which is consistent with prior research (e.g., Erickson et al., 1978; Hosman, 1989; Parton et al., 2002). Hedges were operationalized by the phrases, “a little,” “I’m thinking you should,” and “maybe we could.” Hesitations were operationalized with the utterances, “well...” and “you know.” Finally, tag questions were operationalized with the phrases “hasn’t it?,” “don’t you think?,” and “right?” The inclusion of these components increased the word count to 114 words in the boss conditions and 120 words in the coworker conditions.

Dependent Variables

Participants responded to 23 7-interval semantic differential scales (see Figure 3). Nine of these items were from Zahn and Hopper’s (1985) speech evaluation instrument (SEI) designed to measure dynamism (i.e., active/passive, talkative/shy, and aggressive/unaggressive), social attractiveness (i.e., sweet/sour, nice/awful, and good-natured/hostile), and superiority (i.e., literate/illiterate, educated/uneducated, and upper-class/lower-class). The final 14 items were employed in several studies (Hosman et al., 2002; Hosman & Siltanen, 1994, 2006; Parton et al., 2002) and intended to measure two

Directions: Place make space between each of the items according to your reaction to the speaker's statement. Respond carefully but quickly.

The speaker's statement seemed:

1.	Active	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Passive
2.	Talkative	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Shy
3.	Aggressive	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Unaggressive
4.	Sweet	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Sour
5.	Nice	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Awful
6.	Good natured	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Hostile
7.	Literate	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Illiterate
8.	Educated	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Uneducated
9.	Upper-class	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Lower-class
10.	Self-controlled	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Not self-controlled
11.	Composed	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Unplanned
12.	Confident	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Insecure
13.	Effective leader	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Ineffective leader
14.	Influential	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Not influential
15.	Domineering	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Compliant
16.	Appropriate	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Inappropriate
17.	Planned	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Impulsive
18.	Certain	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Uncertain
19.	Powerful	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Weak
20.	Manipulative	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Fair
21.	Oppressive	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Open-minded
22.	Strategic	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Sporadic
23.	Intentional	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Unintentional

Figure 3. Speech Evaluation Instrument. This illustration represents the questionnaire (Zahn and Hopper, 1985) used to measure respondents' evaluations of the presented message.

types of control attributions (CA): control over self (i.e., self-controlled/not self-controlled, composed/unplanned, confident/insecure, strategic/sporadic, intentional/unintentional, appropriate/inappropriate, planned/impulsive, and certain/uncertain) and control over others (i.e., effective leader/ineffective leader, influential/not influential, domineering/compliant, manipulative/fair, oppressive/open-minded, and powerful/weak).

Procedure

As described previously, potential participants were contacted using either email or Facebook.com. Individuals accepting the invitation clicked the link provided within the email. These participants were directed to an online survey hosted by Qaultrics.com. After the link was selected, the first page displayed was the informed consent form. Those who did not accept the stated terms were directed away from the experiment when they clicked the “I decline” button. Those accepting the terms of the agreement (indicated by selecting the “I accept” button) were placed randomly into one of eight conditions that manipulated the study’s three independent variables.

The webpage that followed the informed consent form instructed participants to first read a description of the relationship they were to imagine sharing. Next, participants read a description of the level of involvement they were to imagine. Finally, participants were asked to complete the 4-item involvement manipulation check. When these items were completed, participants clicked on the button labeled, “click here to proceed.” The next page presented the message that corresponded to the specific condition in which the participant was placed. After reading the message, participants again clicked the “click here to proceed” button, which directed them to a webpage that instructed them to complete a 23-item semantic-differential speaker evaluation scale in response to the message they just read (see Table 4 and 5). The last page asked demographic questions including sex, age, race, state of residence, and years in workforce. When finished, the participants clicked the “click here to proceed” button, and were directed to a screen that thanked them for their participation in the study.

Analysis

Participants were placed randomly into one of eight conditions. Conditions were defined using a 2 (relational frame) \times 2 (speech style) \times 2 (involvement level) design. Means on the dependent variables, dynamism, social attraction, and superiority were examined using a full factorial between subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). Following the precedence set by the research reviewed in the document, an alpha level of .05 was set for all statistical tests, unless otherwise indicated. For example, where multiple dependent variable comparisons were made, Bonferroni corrections to the prescribed alpha level were considered. Meyers, Gamst, and Guarino (2006) and others (e.g., Cabin & Mitchell, 2000; Field, 2009; Rice, 1989) warn against committing a type I error when making multiple comparisons, and thus suggest applying such a correction (i.e., the designated alpha level \div the number of univariate effects). For example, the adjusted alpha for an ANOVA preceded by a MANOVA assessing the effect on three dependent variables would be $.05 \div 3 = .016$.

One more note regarding reporting analysis of variance results is warranted. When SPSS is used to process analyses of variance, the effect size statistic the software produces is partial eta squared. Levine and Hullett (2012) discuss this fact and warn researchers not to misrepresent partial eta squared as simply eta—an action that would cause a systemic error in effect size reporting and render subsequent meta-analyses invalid. Therefore, care was taken to accurately denote the use of partial η^2 and η^2 .

Before the analyses were conducted, the SEI and CA scales were formally verified using confirmatory factor analytic procedures. Toward that end, the computer software package, SPSS AMOS version 20, was used to verify the factor structures

hypothesized in the each measure. The confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) employed the maximum likelihood method for estimating coefficients, the results of which were assessed using multiple fit indices. The first and most commonly reported index is the chi-squared statistic. However, because this test is sensitive to large sample sizes, scholars (e.g., Brown, 2006; Byrne, 2010; Holbert & Stephenson, 2008) suggest using a combination of fit indices. Therefore, in addition to chi-square, the current analysis employed additional goodness-of-fit indices.

Three additional indices were consulted to assess goodness of fit, which included χ^2/df , the normed fit index (NFI), the comparative fit index (CFI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA). Because the chi-squared statistic is sensitive to large sample sizes, chi-square can be divided by the degrees of freedom within the model to help correct the inflated effect (Byrne, 2010). Most scholars suggest that values of less than 5.0 indicate an acceptable fit (Byrne, 2010). Both the CFI and the NFI indices reflect a comparison of fit between the hypothesized model and a hypothetical model with zero relationship among the observed variables. The important difference between these indices is that the NFI is prone to reject models when the sample size is low, but the CFI corrects this issue. Based on Hu and Bentler's (1999) study dedicated to identifying cutoff criteria for fit indices, scholars (e.g., Byrne, 2010; Brown, 2006) still argue that CFI and NFI values greater than .90 indicate an acceptable fit, while models producing values below .90 should be rejected. The RMSEA is an assessment of the model's fit given the relationship between the parameter estimates and the covariance matrix of the population. Scholars argue that RMSEA values less than .05 reflect an excellent fit and values around .08 indicate reasonable fit (Byrne, 2010; Hu & Bentler, 1999). The range

between .08 and .10 is described as indicative of moderate (Loehlin, 2004) and mediocre (MacCallum, Browne, & Sugawara, 1996) fit. Values that are higher than .10 are indicative of an unacceptable fit (Brown, 2006; Byrne, 2010; MacCallum et al, 1996; Meyers et al., 2006).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The previous chapter outlined the method used to investigate the effect relationship type (i.e., relational frame) has on the evaluation of hedges, hesitations, and tag questions. Three hypotheses were derived from the review of literature presented in Chapter Two. The results of these hypotheses are reviewed in turn, but addressed first are the involvement manipulation results. Next, the result of the confirmatory factor analyses on the speech evaluation instrument (SEI) and the related MANOVA are presented. Finally, following a report of the confirmatory and principle components factor analyses (PCA) conducted on the control attribution (CA) items, results from a set of separate and final analyses of variance are presented.

Manipulation Check

Hypothesis three required a manipulation of the level of involvement participants perceived in their given experimental condition. A high level of involvement was instantiated by informing participants that their hypothetical boss or coworker approached their workspace to relay a message about an important project. A low level of involvement was instantiated by informing the participant that the boss or coworker left a voicemail about a relatively unimportant project.

To assess the effectiveness of this manipulation, a 4-item measure assessed two dimensions of involvement: topic interest and speaker immediacy. The items each began with the stem, "If I were in this situation, I would feel . . ." and were followed by (a) "involved with what the speakers said to me;" (b) "interested in that the speaker said to me;" (c) "that the speaker was an energetic communicator;" and (d) "that the speaker was

an engaging communicator.” On each of the four items participants responded to a 7-interval scale with the poles, *strongly disagree* and *strongly agree*. Together, these items measured the level at which participants in the main study were involved in the presented hypothetical relationship.

The involvement items were factor analyzed to identify the posited subdimensions within the involvement variable. Because this scale is new, exploratory factor analysis is more appropriate than a confirmatory method. The data displayed a strong negative skew on the two items measuring interest (i.e., items a and b), which means that most scores were higher than the sample’s mean, whereas a normally distributed dataset would have about the same number of scores higher and lower than the mean. Therefore the data were analyzed using principal axis factoring with a varimax rotation (a process more appropriate for data skewed in this manner; Fabrigar, Wegener, MacCallum, & Strahan, 1999). The number of factors extracted was based on a scree plot and an eigenvalue criterion of 1.0. An item loaded on a factor if the larger loading was at least .60 and the secondary loading did not exceed .40. This analysis produced two distinct factors. The first factor was labeled interest in topic and defined by items a and b (.89 and .90, respectively; $\alpha = .90$). The second factor was labeled engagement and defined by items c and d (.89 and .88, respectively; $\alpha = .92$).

A one-way MANOVA was run to identify differences between the high and low involvement conditions on the two involvement scales. MANOVA assumes normal distributions for each dependent variable within each manipulation. Upon inspection of standardized skewness and kurtosis statistics (i.e., $\frac{\text{skewness or kurtosis}}{\text{standard error}} = \text{pseudo-z}$), histograms, and Q-Q Plots, the engagement dimension was normally distributed, but the

interest dimension was negatively skewed. However, Finch (2005) showed that MANOVAs are robust against violations against assumptions of normality, and others (Field, 2009; Meyers et al., 2006) advocate judicious use of transformations as they can make data interpretation needlessly complex. Inspection of Mahalanobis distances revealed no problematic outliers. Finally, based on these inspections, a nonsignificant Box's M test of equality of covariance matrices (Box's $M = 5.694$, $p = .130$), and a significant result on Bartlett's test of Sphericity (i.e., a test to identify sufficient correlation among the dependent variables; $X^2[2] = 45.099$, $p = .0000000001$), a MANOVA was warranted.

Using Wilks' criterion, no main effect of involvement was found, Wilks' $\lambda = .998$, $F(2, 249) = .208$, $p = .812$. In other words, regardless of the involvement condition to which participants were exposed, their responses did not differ significantly from one another. Despite the lack of a main effect on the dependent variables, subsequent analyses will include the involvement condition to more appropriately partition the variance generated by this manipulation attempt.

SEI Confirmatory Factor Analyses

Three models were tested and compared to validate the SEI. The first CFA tested and verified SEI Model I, the hypothesized three-factor structure implied in the speech evaluation instrument. The chi-square was significant $X^2(24, N = 254) = 70.119$, $p < 0.001$, but the X^2/df was only 2.92, well below the criterion of 5. The RMSEA was .087, which is within range of a model fitting moderately well. Finally, the CFI was .956 and the NFI was .935, each value exceeding the minimum criteria of .90. All indices indicated that SEI Model I demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data.

Inspection of the modification indices revealed several possible modifications that may improve fit. Two guidelines for respecification decisions are noteworthy, however. First, model fit may be improved by creating meaningful coefficient paths between error terms that would result in a substantial decrease in the chi-square statistic as indicated by the modification index provided by the AMOS output (Byrne, 2010). A meaningful path exists when the error terms' observed variables each reflect highly analogous constructs (Byrne, 2010; Meyers et al., 2006). Second, observed variables that produce non significant parameter estimates "can be considered unimportant to the model [and] in the interest of scientific parsimony . . . should be deleted from the model" (Byrne, 2010, p. 68).

Only one suggested modification (i.e., adding a coefficient path between the active/passive and the talkative/shy error terms) was theoretically appropriate. This modification resulted in a significant change in the chi square, $\Delta X^2(1) = 9.577, p < .01$. The overall chi square test for SEI Model 2 was still significant, $X^2(23) = 60.542, p < .000$, but all other fit indices improved (i.e., $X^2/df = 2.632$; CFI = .964; NFI = .944; RMSEA = .80). No additional modifications were appropriate or necessary. These CFA results provide substantial support for the validity of the SEI, particularly with the additional coefficient path.

To further validate the instrument's proposed factor structure, the results were compared to an alternative single factor structure, SEI Model III. In other words, this structure posits the presence of one overarching dimension of speech evaluation, not three. In this model the chi-square was significant $X^2(27, N = 254) = 589.9622, p < 0.00000$, which reflects a substantial difference between the two proposed models, ΔX^2

(3) = 529.4202, $p < .001$, though the change was for the worse. Although all parameters were significant ($p < .001$), all additional fit indices indicated an extremely poor fit of the data (i.e., $X^2/df = 21.85$; CFI = .462; NFI = .462; RMSEA = .287). One suggested modification was appropriate, but it did not meaningfully improve the model's fit to the data (i.e., $X^2/df = 14.290$; CFI = .670; NFI = .657; RMSEA = .229).

Finally, the Expected Cross-Validation Index (ECVI) was inspected on both models. The ECVI calculation produces a value with which to compare alternative models imposed on the same dataset. After all structures are assessed, the smallest ECVI value indicates the model most likely to be validated in newly derived samples (Byrne, 2010). SEI Model I ECVI score was .443, which is considerably smaller than SEI Model II ECVI score of 2.474. SEI Model III had the smallest ECVI score of .420, however. Therefore, based on comparative model structures and the goodness-of-fit values, the originally hypothesized three-factor model was accepted, but was slightly improved with a small modification.

Upon initial validation of the three-factor model of the SEI, individual parameter estimates were inspected. All estimates were significant ($p < .001$), which indicated a strong association between the observed and latent variables. Also, the standardized beta weights were all above .40, ($M = .76$). See Table 6 for further detail of the parameter estimates. Therefore, Zahn and Hopper's (1985) speech evaluation instrument will serve as an acceptable proxy for the message dimensions of dynamism, social attraction, and superiority.

Table 6

Standardized and Unstandardized Coefficients for SEI Model I

Latent construct (scale reliability)	Observed variable	b	β	SE
Dynamism ($\alpha = .68$)	Active – Passive	2.296	.632	.404
	Talkative – Shy	.330	.415	.069
	Aggressive – Unaggressive	3.028	.855	.630
Social Attraction ($\alpha = .88$)	Good Natured – Hostile	1.409	.882	.102
	Sweet – Sour	1.237	.904	.087
	Nice – Awful	.808	.743	.057
Superiority ($\alpha = .84$)	Educated – Uneducated	1.095	.918	.070
	Literate – Illiterate	.913	.850	.059
	Upper Class – Lower Class	.611	.645	.055

Note. All coefficients are significant ($p < 0.001$).

SEI Analyses of Variance

A 2 (relationship) \times 2 (speech style) \times 2 (involvement level) between subjects multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted on the dependent variables dynamism, social attraction, and superiority. Prior to running the analyses MANOVA assumptions were inspected and potential outliers sought.

Assumption Testing

Upon inspection of normality tests (i.e., skewness and kurtosis statistics, histograms, and Q-Q plots), the dependent variable distributions within all conditions were within an acceptable range, except dynamism. Although MANOVA is robust against violations of normality (Finch, 2005), the results for the dynamism variable are reported for expository purposes. The metric commonly used to assess normality is the pseudo-z, which standardizes skewness and kurtosis scores creating a type of z-score. Applying the criteria set forth in z-distributions, scores exceeding ± 3 may indicate a non-

normal distribution. However, because the pseudo-z calculation contains n , the statistic is subject to type I errors, and should be interpreted with caution. Using this criterion, dynamism was skewed (positively) in four conditions. Three problematic pseudo-z scores fell between 3.405 and 3.665, and the boss condition produced a score of 4.324, all which suggest a strong positive skew. Although one could transform these data to normalize the data, such action may make results unnecessarily complex (Field, 2009; Meyers et al., 2006). Therefore, because of MANOVA's robustness against normality and the few conditions in which the data may be skewed, the data were retained and used in the subsequent analyses.

Potential outliers were also inspected. Possible multivariate outliers were investigated by calculating Mahalanobis distances. Extreme values on this statistic would exceed the chi-square statistic for three dependent variables, $X^2(3) = 16.266$ (Meyers et al., 2006). Because the highest observed Mahalanobis distance was 15.438, no multivariate outliers were identified. Upon inspection of box-plots no univariate outliers were deemed unusual or extreme to justify deletion (i.e., SPSS displays an asterisk to signify problematic outliers and no box-plots displayed an asterisk). Therefore, no cases were deleted from subsequent analyses.

MANOVA also assumes homogeneity of variance-covariance matrices, which means that the variances of each dependent variable in each experimental condition should not differ significantly. Although Box's M test suggested this assumption was violated (Box's $M = 90.102$, $p = .00006$), Meyers, et al. (2006) explained that "when sample sizes are fairly equal [a significant Box's M] produces minor consequences" (p. 378). Because the experimental conditions in the current study are near evenly

populated, the multivariate assumption of equal covariances was upheld. Nevertheless, in this circumstance, these same authors suggest using Pillai's trace (i.e., denoted by V) for the critical statistic to evaluate the multivariate effect, as opposed to the more commonly reported Wilks' lambda. Finally, Bartlett's test of sphericity indicated the MANOVA was warranted, $X^2(5) = 75.721, p < .001$.

Multivariate Analyses

The three-way between subjects MANOVA was conducted on the three dependent variables: dynamism, social attraction, and superiority. Significant results indicated by Pillai's trace revealed that the combination of dependent variables was affected by the main effects of relationship ($V = .123, F[3, 244] = 11.428, p = .0000004$, partial $\eta^2 = .123$); speech style ($V = .126, F[3, 244] = 11.711, p = .0000003$, partial $\eta^2 = .126$); and an interaction between each ($V = .057, F[3, 244] = 4.902, p = .002$, partial $\eta^2 = .015$). The involvement condition did not produce a significant main effect on the dependent variate ($V = .006, F[3, 244] = .481, p = .695$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$). Likewise, no involvement interactions were significant: involvement \times relationship, ($V = .015, F[3, 244] = 1.237, p = .296$); involvement \times speech style, ($V = .007, F[3, 244] = .585, p = .625$); involvement \times speech style \times relationship ($V = .013, F[3, 244] = 1.076, p = .360$). Univariate effects for each significant main effect are explored next.

The significant MANOVA results indicated differences among the levels of the independent variables on one or more dependent variables. Follow-up ANOVAs were run to identify where exactly these univariate differences lie. The univariate analyses revealed a significant main effect for relationship on social attraction ($F[1, 244] = 33.538, p = .00000002, \eta^2 = .115$), which indicate that the type of relationship affected

participants' overall rating of the speaker's level of social attraction. Specifically, the coworker condition produced higher social attraction ratings ($M = 4.50$, $SD = .90$) than the boss condition ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.03$). This effect was qualified by an interaction between relationship type and speech style and will be interpreted in turn.

The speech style main effect was significant for the variables superiority ($F[1, 244] = 18.130$, $p = .00002$, $\eta^2 = .067$) and dynamism ($F[1, 244] = 23.002$, $p = .000002$, $\eta^2 = .081$), which indicated that the style of speech affected respondents' overall ratings of the speaker's level of each variable. Regarding superiority, the powerful condition produced higher superiority ratings ($M = 4.91$, $SD = 1.02$) than the powerless condition ($M = 4.35$, $SD = 1.05$). Regarding dynamism, the powerful condition produced higher dynamism ratings ($M = 5.63$, $SD = .83$) than the powerless condition ($M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.33$). The speech style main effect on dynamism was qualified by an interaction between speech style and relationship, however. The interactions are interpreted next.

Applying the aforementioned Bonferroni correction, the interaction between relationship type and speech style neared significance on social attraction ($F[1, 244] = 5.72$, $p = .017$, $\eta^2 = .019$), but will be interpreted nonetheless. The interaction was also significant on dynamism ($F[1, 244] = 8.888$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2 = .031$). On each interaction, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to identify differences between specific independent conditions. The effect on social attraction is reported first. The main effect of relationship indicates that coworkers were rated more sociable than bosses, but the interaction indicated that bosses using hedges, hesitations, and tag questions were rated more sociable ($F[1, 126] = 5.72$, $p = .018$) than when these same components were not used. However, no significant differences were observed between coworkers using or not

using hedges, hesitations, or tag questions, $F(1, 128) = .826, p = .365$. See Table 7 for closer inspection of the means and Figure 4 for a graph of this interaction.

The main effect of speech style on dynamism indicated that messages containing hedges, hesitations, and tag questions were rated lower than messages free of these components. When the type of relationship is considered, however, the speech style main effect is only applicable to the boss condition, not the coworker condition. Specifically, bosses using powerless language were rated lower in dynamism ($F[1, 126] = 27.67, p = .0000006$) than bosses not using the components, but speech style did not affect the evaluation of messages from coworkers ($F[1, 127] = 1.812, p = .180$). See Table 8 for closer inspection of these means and Figure 5 for a graph of this interaction.

Control attribution factor analyses

In addition to the nine SEI items, participants also responded to 14 additional items intended to measure two dimensions of control (i.e., control over self and control over others). To verify this dimension structure the data were subjected to a CFA. Ultimately, the initial CFA did not validate the proposed model, however. Therefore, five additional attempts were made to reconfigure the model and improve fit. Although each reconfiguration was based on each item's previous performance in earlier published research, validation of the control attribution factors was not found. Therefore, following the control attribution CFAs, a PCA is presented and a dimensional structure identified.

Control Attribution CFAs

CA Model I consisted of two factors labeled control over self and control over others. As indicated within the literature review of this document, multiple CA items

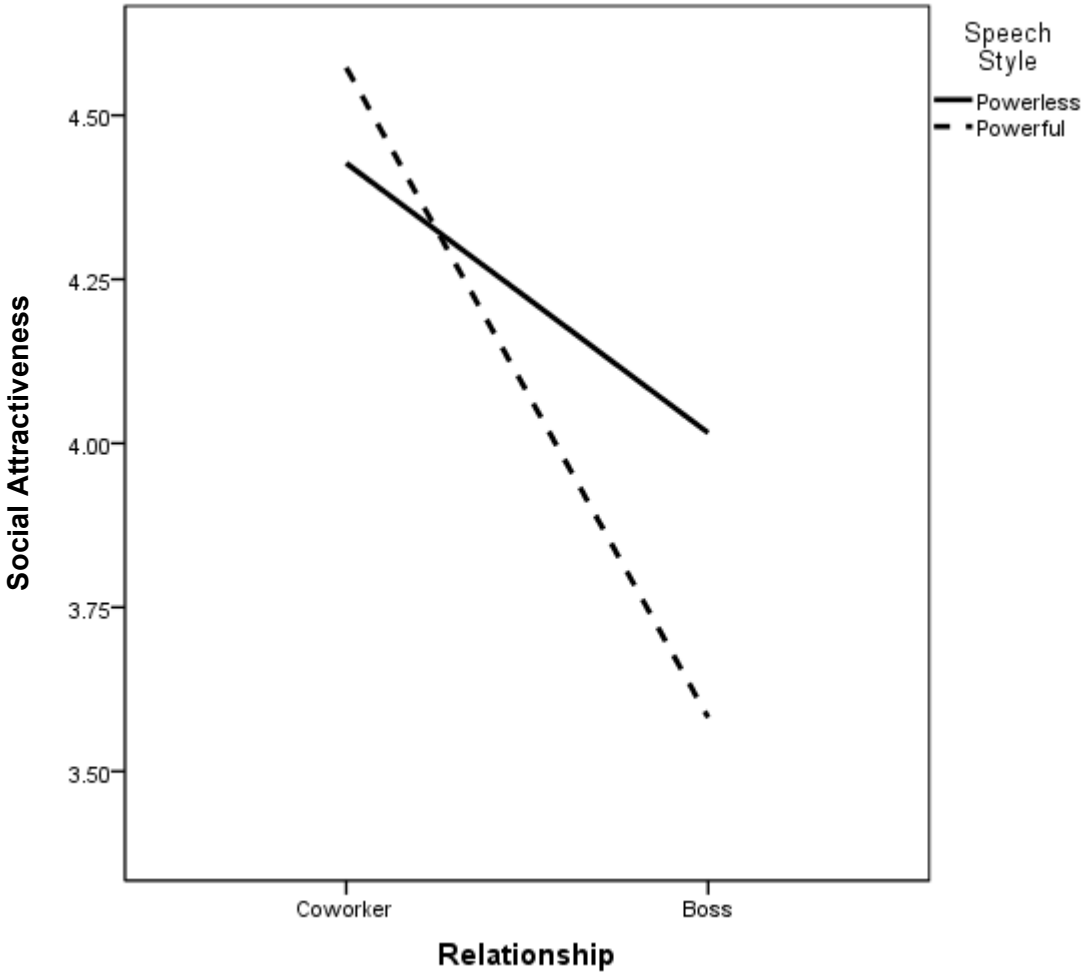


Figure 4. Relationship x Speech Style Interaction on Social Attraction.

Table 7

Means for the Interaction of Relationship Type by Speech Style on Social Attraction

Relationship	Speech Style	
	Powerless	Powerful
Boss	$M = 4.01_a$ $SD = 1.05$	$M = 3.58_b$ $SD = .98$
Coworker	$M = 4.42_c$ $SD = .89$	$M = 4.57_c$ $SD = .92$

Note. Row means sharing common subscripts do not differ.

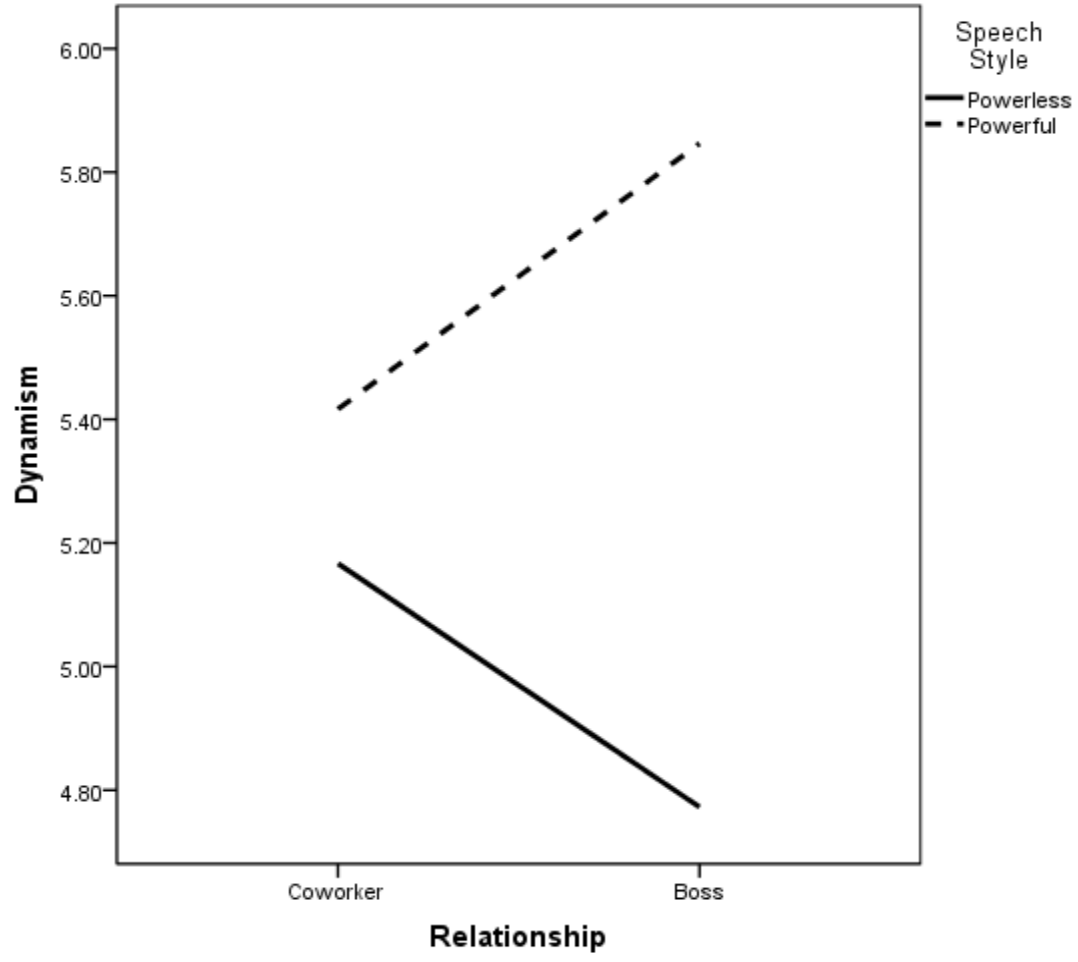


Figure 5. Relationship x Speech Style Interaction on Dynamism.

Table 8

Means for the Interaction of Relationship Type by Speech Style on Dynamism

Relationship	Speech Style	
	Powerless	Powerful
Boss	$M = 4.77_a$ $SD = 1.45$	$M = 5.84_b$ $SD = .70$
Coworker	$M = 5.16_c$ $SD = 1.18$	$M = 5.41_c$ $SD = .89$

Note. Row means sharing common subscripts do not differ.

have been included in previous exploratory factor analyses. All these items were included in CA Model I and each were associated with its intended factor. The first CFA did not support the model's validity, however. Specifically, the significant chi square and all other fit indices suggested the model was a very poor fit to the data (see Table 9).

The attempt to improve CA Model I began by first deleting the item manipulative/fair (i.e., the only nonsignificant parameter; $p = .147$). Although excluding this parameter resulted in a significant change in the overall chi-square, $\Delta X^2(10) = 220.084, p < .001$, and a smaller ECVI score, Model II did not sufficiently improve the fit indices. The modification index for CA Model II ultimately suggested correlating two sets of error terms (i.e., domineering/compliant with powerful/weak and strategic/sporadic with intentional/unintentional), which also resulted in a significant change in the chi-square, $\Delta X^2(2) = 103.356, p < .001$, between Models II and III. However, improvement to the ECVI was small, and the corresponding fit indices indicated the modified model was not an appropriate fit to the data. Therefore, CA Models I, II, and III were rejected (see Table 9).

Table 9

Control Attribution Fit Indices Results

Model	X^2	df	X^2/df	CFI	NFI	RMSEA	ECVI
I	891.972*	76	11.736	.712	.695	.206	3.755
II	671.888*	64	10.498	.768	.751	.194	2.869
III	568.532*	62	9.170	.807	.789	.180	2.476
IV	116.904*	8	14.613	.881	.875	.232	.565
V	134.310*	9	14.923	.863	.856	.235	.626
VI	101.701*	8	12.713	.898	.891	.215	.505

Note: minimum criteria for acceptable fit— $X^2/df < 5$; CFI and NFI $> .90$; RMSEA $< .10$; low ECVI values indicate better fit, relative to other values in the same column.

* $p < .001$

While the previously tested CA models incorporated all items intended to measure control attributions used in previous research (i.e., Hosman et al., 2002; Hosman & Siltanen, 1994; 2006; Parton et al., 2002), few of those items ultimately loaded on their respective factors with any consistency. Therefore, CA Model IV included only the items that loaded on their respective factor in a minimum of at least two studies. Application of factors designed in this manner resulted in both factors defined by three items each. The control over others factor was defined by the items domineering/compliant, effective/ineffective leader, and influential/not influential. The control over self factor was defined by self controlled/not self controlled, composed/unplanned, and confident/insecure. This model (i.e., Model IV) did not produce data indicating an acceptable fit, however (see Table 9). All parameters were significant ($p < .001$), and based on the modification indexes, no suggested changes were theoretically appropriate. Given these results Model IV was rejected as a viable model.

Perhaps these final six items represent a single factor solution. After all, it was Gibbons et al.'s (1991) single control factor that initially drew scholars' attention. This new configuration (i.e., CA Model V) was subjected to CFA, and although significantly different from CA Model IV, $\Delta X^2(1) = 17.406$, $p < .001$, the change was for the worse. Unsurprisingly, none of the fit indices produced favorable results (see Table 9). All parameter estimates were significant, indicating that each item was sufficiently related to the latent factor and should be retained in subsequent models. The modification indices suggested pairing one set of error terms (i.e., self controlled/not self controlled with composed/unplanned), thus defining CA Model VI. This final model resulted in a significant improvement in the chi-square from CA Model V, $\Delta X^2(1) = 15.203$, $p < .001$.

Additionally, CA Model IV produced the lowest ECVI value of all proposed CA models (ECVI = .505) indicating that when compared to all other tested configurations, this model would have the best chance of replication in a new sample. However, none of this model's fit indices indicated it was viable, thus CA Models I-VI were rejected.

Control Attribution PCA

The evidence did not support the validity of the control attribution scales. Perhaps these hypothesized CA models are appropriate to only initial interactions within the specific contexts originally investigated (e.g., jury-witness interactions in a courtroom settings). Accordingly, the possibility remains that participants construed alternative types of control separate from, or in addition to, the previously identified CA factors. Therefore, an EFA was conducted on the CA items, the results of which are presented now.

A principal components factor analysis with a varimax rotation was used to identify underlying dimensions within the CA data. Investigation of the normality of these distributions revealed no concerns using this factor analysis method. An eigenvalue of 1 was set as the factor extraction criterion, and an item loaded on a factor if its primary loading was at least .60 with secondary loadings less than .40. This analysis produced a two-factor solution. Only one item, appropriate/inappropriate had a secondary loading greater than .40 and was excluded from subsequent analyses. The first factor was an overall control factor ($\alpha = .94$) defined by the following items and their loadings: confident (.86), certain (.85), effective leader (.84), composed (.84), strategic (.83), influential (.83), powerful (.81), intentional (.78), planned (.77), and self-controlled (.66).

High ratings on the averaged general control variable indicate the participants perceived the speaker displayed high degree of control over his or her actions and speech.

The second factor ($\alpha = .80$) was named control over outcome and defined by manipulative (.86), oppressive (.84), and domineering (.79). This factor seems to reflect a narrower dimension of control, project outcome—the amount of project control a speaker retained. High ratings on this variable indicate participants perceived the speaker to exert an active control over the outcome of a workplace project. Upon initial assessment of the items loading on this factor some readers may judge the factor as representing control of a nefarious nature. However, when classifying each factor, one must also consider the dialectical nature of each semantic differential continuum employed in the instrument. For example, opposing the stated pole descriptors are fair, open-minded, and compliant, respectively. For this factor to represent a malicious type of control, the items would have to measure degrees of manipulation, oppression, and dominance specifically. Therefore, judging the continuums employed in this study, the factor was deemed representing a speaker's intention to welcome or rebuff outside perspectives, thus the description, control over project is employed.

Control Attribution Analyses of Variance

A nonsignificant finding on Bartlett's test of sphericity, $X^2(2) = 1.214$, $p = .545$, indicated that a MANOVA was not warranted. Therefore, each dependent variable was analyzed using separate 2 (relationship) \times 2 (speech style) \times 2 (involvement level) between subjects ANOVAs. The analyses revealed only three significant effects, none of which included effects from the involvement manipulation. The first univariate analysis revealed a significant main effect for speech style on general control ($F[1, 245] = 28.249$,

$p = .0000002$, $\eta^2 = .10$). Specifically, the powerful condition produced higher ratings of general control ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 1.29$) than did the powerless condition ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.23$). Next, relationship type (i.e., the proxy for relational frame) affected ratings of control over outcome ($F[1, 254] = 28.985$, $p = .0000007$, $\eta^2 = .10$), such that the coworker condition produced lower ratings of control over outcome ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.20$) than did the boss condition ($M = 4.75$, $SD = 1.20$).

The main effect of relationship on control over outcome indicated that coworkers were rated as having less project control than their bosses. However, the relationship main effect on this variable was qualified by a relationship \times speech style interaction ($F[1, 254] = 7.48$, $p = .006$, $\eta^2 = .026$). Specifically, bosses using hedges, hesitations, and tag questions were rated lower in control over outcome ($F[1, 124] = 11.031$, $p = .001$) than bosses not using these components, but speech style did not affect the evaluation of messages from coworkers ($F[1, 126] = .543$, $p = .541$). See Table 10 for closer inspection of these means and Figure 6 for a graph of the interaction.

Table 10

Means for the Interaction of Relationship Type by Speech Style on Control Over Outcome

Relationship	Speech Style	
	Powerless	Powerful
Boss	$M = 4.40_a$ $SD = 1.27$	$M = 5.09_b$ $SD = 1.03$
Coworker	$M = 4.01_c$ $SD = 1.19$	$M = 3.88_c$ $SD = 1.21$

Note. Row means sharing common subscripts do not differ.

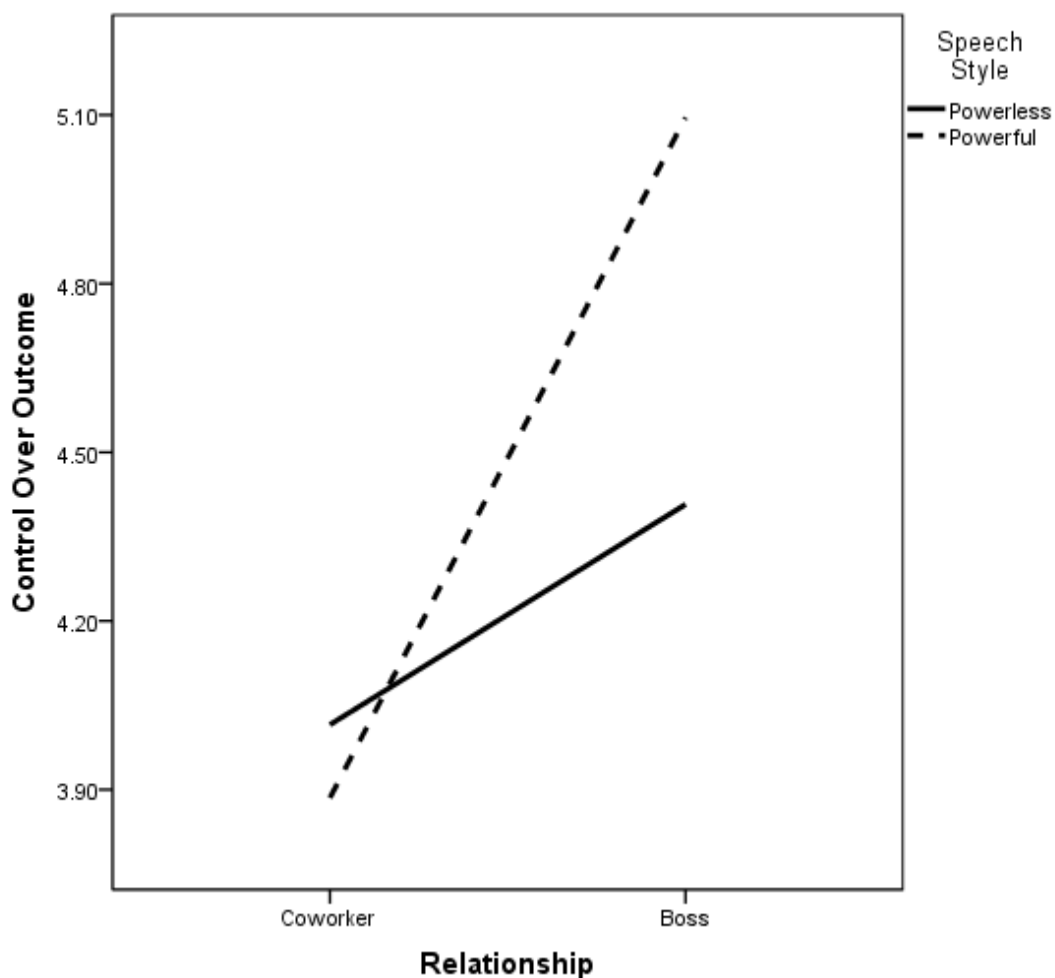


Figure 6. Relationship x Speech Style Interaction on Control Over Outcome

Conclusion

This chapter presented data derived from the current study. From these analyses several conclusions were drawn. First, the involvement manipulation did not form as intended, and accordingly, the independent variable did not seem to affect participants' assessment of power of speech style variation. Second, regardless of the relational frame, powerless language negatively affected participants' ratings of superiority and overall control. Third, participants in the dominant-framed condition rated powerless language lower on almost all dependent variables, except social attractiveness, which was rated

higher than in the powerful language condition. Finally, on all variables, except for sociability and general control, the participants in the affiliation-framed condition produced data indicating no statistically significant differences when compared to the dominant-framed condition.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The study of language components such as hedges, hesitations, and tag questions spans three decades. The present study sought to expand this research further still by considering an evaluator's relational frame when making judgments of a speaker's social attraction, dynamism, superiority, general control, and control over outcome. The results and implications of these tests are discussed in this chapter. Therefore this chapter is arranged into five sections. First, each hypothesis is discussed in turn, followed by the implications of these findings. Next, the study's limitations are described and potential directions for future research discussed. Finally, this chapter concludes with a brief summary of the study's rationale, results, and outcome.

Hypotheses

Results of this study indicate that regardless of relationship type, speakers using components of powerless language were rated lower in superiority and overall control than speakers not including these components. However, depending on the relationship one shares with an interlocutor, powerless language differentially affected two speech evaluation variables (i.e., social attraction and dynamism) and one control attribution variable (i.e., control over outcome). Finally, the reported analyses revealed no significant involvement effects. Therefore, these results indicated strong support for hypothesis one, tentative support for hypothesis two, and inconclusive support for hypothesis three. Concluding this section is a brief discussion of two additional statistically significant main effects not directly related to the stated hypotheses.

Hypothesis One

The first hypothesis predicted that powerful language interpreted in a dominance-framed relationship would rank higher on speech and control evaluation variables than would powerless language. This hypothesis was upheld on superiority, general control, dynamism, and control over outcome. These findings support previous power of speech style research, which has repeatedly found that powerful speech styles produce more favorable speaker evaluations than does a powerless style, thus bolstering the claim that speakers ought not include powerless language in their messages.

Although avoiding a powerless style of speaking yield advantageous superiority, dynamism, and control evaluations for bosses, doing so yields comparatively lower scores on social attraction. Although counter to the RFT based hypothesis, this finding is not altogether unique. Parton et al. (2002) found that interviewees using powerless language were perceived more sociable than speakers avoiding these components. Earlier research also displayed similar effects (see Gibbons et al., 1991; Hosman & Wright, 1987). Gibbons et al. (1991) reported that participants exposed to a weak argument infused with powerless language judged the message more socially attractive than the powerful message. Perhaps, the authors suggested, participants found powerful language in a weak argument to be “deceptive or fraudulent” (p. 129), thus producing the positive result on social attractiveness for powerless language. Hosman and Wright (1987) suggested that perhaps powerless components produced high social attractiveness ratings “because listeners see [the speaker] as similar to themselves and are positively evaluated” (p. 182). Parton et al. did not further discuss their related finding. Despite these somewhat countertheoretical results, each of these studies found that powerful

language helped stimulate high evaluations on other evaluative dimensions (e.g., dynamism and superiority).

Both Gibbons et al.'s (1991) and Hosman and Wright's (1987) explanations are cogent explanations of the social attractiveness result found in the current study. As previously stated, however, the result is counter to the RFT derived hypotheses. Several explanations are possible. First, a conservative interpretation of the data would classify this result as potentially spurious because the statistic used to identify particular result may have been the result of familywise error. Recall that some (e.g., Cabin & Mitchell, 2000; Field, 2009; Meyers et al., 2006; Rice, 1989) have warned against making multiple comparisons on dependent variables due to the potential of a type I error. To curb against such an error they suggest employing a Bonferroni correction, which in the current context would mean the speech style by relationship interaction effect on social attractiveness only neared significance. However, given that this result was only one one-thousandth from technical significance and is not a unique result, further discussion is justified.

The second possible explanation concerns the effectiveness of the relational frame manipulation. More specifically, the application of RFT may be more appropriate and applicable during initial interactions, not established relationships. Recall that both relational frame conditions described a relationship spanning several years. Perhaps the extended duration of a relationship typically framed by dominance begins to incorporate into the message interpretation process relevance of dimensions otherwise relevance to the affiliation frame. In other words, through time the relationship has become more complex than what a simplified dichotomized framing perspective might explain.

Alternatively, the issue may not be one of statistics nor relationship type, but rather the application of the theory. Hypothesis one stated that a salient dominant frame would alter what people consider socially attractive. Accordingly, participants were asked to respond to scales measuring social attractiveness. However, social attractiveness is a dimension of the affiliation frame, not the dominance frame. Therefore, perhaps the study's instrument guided participants unnaturally toward evaluations of social attractiveness by forcing consideration of a dimension that otherwise was not salient. Further, results of those judgments may have been evaluations of a dimension that—as indicated by the differential salience hypothesis—would not ultimately contribute to the final interpretation of the message. As a result, although RFT may not be able to provide an accurate prediction of social attractiveness ratings within dominance-framed relationships, such predictions may be inappropriate regardless. Echoing a conclusion by Gibbons et al. (1991), the results reported for the current study provide “evidence that the evaluative dimensions of [power] and sociability are in some cases affected dissimilarly by particular speech and language features (e.g., Brown 1980; Giles & Ryan, 1982)” (p. 129).

Hypothesis Two

The second hypothesis predicted that speakers using powerless language in affiliation-framed relationships would be ranked higher on speech evaluation and control attribution scales than if they used powerful language. The data did not support this hypothesis, however. Specifically, on no variable were coworkers using powerless language rated higher than coworkers using powerful language. In fact, like superiors, coworkers using powerless language were judged to have less superiority and overall

control, not more as predicted. The result on superiority, in particular, was counter to Fragale's (2006) major finding that powerless language yielded higher status conferral in interdependent workplace—and arguable more affiliation- than dominance-frame salient—cultures than did the use of powerful language. Instead, the results of this study's second hypothesis indicate that even though one might recognize the salience of the affiliation frame in the experimental conditions to which participants reacted, factors constituting the dominance frame were not simply ignored. This finding is counter to RFT's differential salience hypothesis.

Given the lack of support for this study's second hypothesis, one might conclude that RFT does not provide a tenable explanation of power of speech style interpretation. Rejecting RFT outright would be too hasty, however. The evidence also indicates that the type of relationship one shares with another does affect how powerless language is evaluated on several speech evaluation and control variables. Specifically, reliable differences were found only in the dominance-framed conditions, suggesting the possibility of differentiated effects in the affiliation-framed condition. Therefore, although the hypothesis was not supported, the use of RFT to explain power of speech style effects still deserves attention due to inconclusive results in the affiliation-framed condition. Potential reasons for these inconclusive results are discussed next.

Perhaps the predictive power of RFT would be more evident in relationships where the relational frames are more distinctly different from one another. Although the coworker relationship was described as a friendship characterized by trust, respect, and open communication, it was still a workplace relationship. Perhaps regardless of the affiliation evident in workplace friendships, issues of dominance are ever-present and

simply unavoidable—a perception that potentially weakened the salience of the friendship. Some evidence for this claim can be derived from the relational frame manipulation pretest. The pretest found that participants responding to the description of the employee-employee relationship indicated that factors of affiliation were more salient than factors of dominance. Although the means on these measures were statistically different, the actual mean difference between the conditions was relatively small. The study progressed as reported, however, because RFT's differential salience hypothesis argues that even small differences are consequential. Specifically, this hypothesis states that people use only one frame per interpretation to avoid deciding between numerous alternative interpretations. Therefore, the prediction offered by the differential salience hypothesis may be overstated. It may be that in situations where both frames are in tight competition with one another, interlocutors cannot discern between each, thus conflating competing message interpretations.

Despite the lack of evidence needed to verify the second hypotheses, the study does still add to the understanding of power of speech style variation effects. Although not to the degree predicted, this study demonstrated that relational framing affects researchers' ability to make predictions concerning power of speech style effects. Specifically, this study verifies previous research that differences in speech style are evident in dominance-framed relationships, but power of speech style effects in affiliation-framed exchanges requires more attention. Future research should use more dramatic and contextually distinct relationships to instantiate RFT's affiliation frame. Such a distinction may be why Fragale's (2006) study produced the results it did—her participants perhaps perceived a more stringent differentiation between affiliation- and

domination-framed interactions. To better instantiate these frames future studies could, for example, measure participants' interactions with a police officer or a social friend, which might more clearly instantiate the intended frames. Perhaps in these dyads power of speech style will interact more clearly with the relational frame. Should this possibility be the case, subsequent research should then identify the point at which a frame's salience over the other affects how a message will be interpreted.

Hypothesis Three

The third hypothesis predicted that increased levels of participant involvement would amplify the effects predicted in the first two hypotheses. Unfortunately, due to a poorly functioning involvement manipulation the study was unable to support this hypothesis. Specifically, the manipulation results indicated that the hypothetical scenario participants read, did not affect their perceived level of involvement with the speaker and the speaker's message. Two possibilities can explain this failure. First, the manipulation did not instantiate a sufficient distinction between high and low levels of involvement. The relational framing theory identifies two dimensions of involvement (i.e., level of listener interest and speaker immediacy), and the manipulation directed participants to consider high or low levels of each. Unfortunately, the results of the manipulation check indicated that participants in the two conditions did not differ in their perceived level of involvement. A stronger manipulation may produce the additive effect the RFT intensifier hypothesis predicts.

Also contributing to the poor functioning of this manipulation may have been the ecological validity of the manipulations. Perhaps the participants could not accurately consider a situation in which involvement is manipulated hypothetically. In other words,

it may be that people are more adept at considering hypothetical relationship roles (e.g., bosses and coworkers) than hypothetical contextual cues such as proximity and topic relevance.

Future tests of the involvement hypothesis should create a situation in which a participant can experience the intended involvement level. For example, if a student population was accessed, researchers could incorporate manipulations similar to those used in elaboration likelihood research. Petty and Cacioppo (1979) manipulated message relevance by presenting student participants with a statement arguing for a change to a dearly held university policy on their campus (i.e., high message relevance), or on a different campus (i.e., low message relevance). The second dimension of involvement, speaker immediacy, could be manipulated in this scenario as well. Perhaps contrasting a face-to-face interaction (e.g., a confederate stating the message directly to the participant) with an overheard conversation (e.g., a confederate stating the message to another confederate—all which the participant is positioned to overhear) would effectively manipulate this variable. When using snowball sampling, as was the method used in the current study, identifying a common interest with which to manipulate a feeling of involvement is improbable, however. Future research involving RFT's intensifier hypothesis should consider using homogeneous groups like those used in ELM research to better manipulate the desired involvement effect.

Given these results, the question remains: does the level of a speaker's immediacy and a listener's level of interest in the topic affect power of speech style evaluation? Although the main analysis is inconclusive, post hoc analyses on the manipulation check data provide some insight. Recall that an exploratory factor analysis conducted on the

four involvement scale items identified a two dimensional structure representing the level of the reviewer's interest in the topic and his or her perceived level of speaker immediacy. In this post hoc investigation of perceived involvement, the a priori involvement condition was replaced with a median split of both involvement dimensions (i.e., as derived from the manipulation check data), using the Rank Cases tool in SPSS. In other words, participants' original placement in an involvement condition was disregarded and now based on their responses on the manipulation check data. These data were initially treated as continuous, but were separated at the median because the analysis of the continuous data did not identify an involvement effect. Using the dichotomized data, the independent variables were organized into a 2 (relationship type) \times 2 (speech style) \times 2 (high/low perceived interest) \times 2 (high/low perceived immediacy) full factorial design. A significant effect found on either involvement variable would help justify further investigation of the intensifier hypothesis. Due to the post hoc nature of these analyses results will only be reported, not interpreted. Any significant results may be verified with an additional research.

Potential effects on the three speech evaluation variables and two control attribution scales were analyzed with two separate MANOVAs. The first MANOVA was conducted on the SEI variables, and had a significant Box's M test ($M = 160.040, p = .002088$), which indicated multivariate tests should be interpreted using the Pillai's trace statistic. Regarding the two involvement factors, the interest main effect was significant, ($V = .073, F[3, 234] = 6.145, p = .0004, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .073$), and the immediacy factor interacted with relationship type ($V = .038, F(1, 234) = 3.059, p = .029, \text{partial } \eta^2 = .039$). A second MANOVA was run with the two control variables and produced a

nonsignificant Box's M test (Box's M = 56.363, $p = .261565$). Regarding the involvement factors, this test revealed an interest main effect ($\lambda = .966$, $F[2, 235] = 4.185$, $p = .016$, partial $\eta^2 = .034$) and an immediacy main effect ($\lambda = .966$, $F[2, 235] = 4.124$, $p = .017$, partial $\eta^2 = .034$). Finally, a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 2$ interaction between relationship, speech style, interest, and immediacy was also significant, $\lambda = .989$, $F(2, 235) = 5.650$, $p = .004$, partial $\eta^2 = .046$.

The significant results produced with the new involvement variables provide evidence that justifies further consideration of the RFT's intensifier hypothesis. The data gathered with the manipulation check provided insight into the level of involvement each participant perceived, and using this information to divide the sample into high and low involvement groups did reveal significant results. These effects indicate that involvement may in fact affect how people and messages are evaluated. Future study of this variable should induce stronger involvement manipulations to better instantiate the intended conditions. Finally, such research should consider looking at both dimensions of involvement, as the post hoc analyses suggests each produced independent effects on the multivariate.

Other Significant Main Effects

In addition to the effects just discussed, two more main effects were statistically significant. Though these effects are not directly related to the stated hypotheses, the findings nevertheless, deserve attention and clarification. Stated simply, coworkers were judged more sociable and having less control over the outcome of a project than bosses. These findings should not be surprising, however, the relationship descriptions used to instantiate the relational frame likely produced this effect. For example, coworkers—

described as friends that engage in positive team decisions—are likely to engender perceptions of a sociable person relative to the boss description, which describe the speaker as unambiguously not a friend and clearly authoritative. Similarly, due to the power differences in organizational settings, bosses will more often than not have final say on a project's outcome. Additionally, because the coworker messages incorporated inclusive language, and the boss message did not—an intentional design to instantiate the competing relational frames—one can reasonably predict that the two groups would produce different social attraction and control over outcome scores. The difference in inclusiveness within the message does not confound this study's findings, however, as the distinction is arguably characteristic of the roles enacted by coworkers and bosses.

Implications

Four implications are drawn from this study. First, the study's diverse sample population increases the generalizability of power of speech style research. Second, this study extends our understanding of power of speech style effects into established relationships. Third, the study provides evidence that relational framing affects how powerless language components are evaluated. Finally, this study is the first to confirm the factor structure of Zahn and Hopper's (1985) speech evaluation instrument (SEI). Each of these implications is discussed in turn.

Increased Generalizability

With few exceptions (e.g., Parton et al., 2002), most power of speech style scholars solicited university students only. While many researchers continue to use undergraduate participants, those who investigate such practices (e.g., Henry, 2008; Sears, 1986) continue to warn that this population may not accurately represent the wider

population. To assuage this concern, Henry (2008) argued that “the inclusion of nonstudent sources can serve to reassure [researchers] of the generalizability of [previous] findings” derived from undergraduate samples. Accordingly, the study presented in this document solicited participation using the snowball sampling technique. As a result, the participants completing this study represent a diverse sample of the U.S. workforce. This diversity was evident in gender, age, years in the workforce, and geographic location. Because this study replicated many results of past research, confidence in the ecological validity of these past findings is further substantiated (Henry, 2008).

Established Relationships

To date, power of speech style research has presented stimulus messages in various contexts including initial interactions (e.g., courtroom testimony; Erickson et al., 1978) and observations of interactions (e.g., overhearing workplace conversations; Fragale, 2006) “where respondents have no or very little prior knowledge of the communicator” (Bradac & Street, 1989/1990, p. 201). No studies have investigated power of speech styles in established relationships, however, thus leaving a gap in the literature. Bradac and Street (1989/1990) characterized this gap as “a serious limitation of [speech style] research, to be sure” (p. 201). Although the sentiment was expressed over 20 years ago, it was until this study that the issue was addressed directly.

Advancing past power of speech style research, this study asked participants to evaluate messages communicated within an established relationship. Although the relationship instantiated in this study was only hypothetical in nature, the description provided detailed information about the relationship itself (i.e., the stimuli defined such

details as duration of relationship, level of trust, respect, authoritativeness, and openness). Importantly, this study provides evidence that powerless language can have a similar effect during both an initial interaction and a relationship of several years—at least in power dominated workplace contexts. Although the duration of the relationship may not affect how power of speech style variation affects a reviewer’s evaluations, the type of relationship does. This contribution to the literature is discussed next.

Relational Framing

This study was the first to manipulate the relational frame through which participants interpret and assess power of speech style variation. As predicted, the frame through which message reviewers interpret interpersonal interactions interacts with language variation to alter evaluation of speech and control perceptions. The research presented in this study supports past research as well as extends understanding of power of speech style effects. Within dominance-framed interactions, the study found that components of powerless language produce unfavorable evaluations on multiple dimensions (i.e., dynamism, superiority, general control, and control over outcome). These findings correspond well with past power of speech style research. However, powerless language components uttered in relationships framed less by dominance and more by affiliation produced unclear results. Specifically, on several of these dimensions (i.e., control over outcome, dynamism, and social attraction), components of powerless language showed no statistical difference when compared to a message devoid of powerless language. In other words, the results indicate that researchers and practitioners should not assume that components of powerless language produce only adverse effects (cf. Holmes, 1984a).

To sum, this study signals a need to further study power of speech style variation in various types of relationships, affiliation-framed relationships in particular. Regarding relational frames, the effects of powerless language on message evaluation are reliably found in dominance-framed interactions, but the effect in affiliation-framed interactions is less clear. Relational framing did not affect evaluations on superiority and overall control, however. Nevertheless, this study provides the initial evidence needed to indicate that relational framing might differentially affect how people react to powerless language.

The first chapter of this document questions the notion that speakers should always avoid powerless language. The application of a relational framing perspective suggests that such advice is especially important in dominance-framed interactions. However, the results also indicated that bosses could also increase their social attraction ratings when using powerless language components, though such gain would be at the expense of attributes regarded important to most workplace leaders, (i.e., superiority, dynamism, and control). The results of this study were not conclusive for affiliation-framed interactions. More research is required to assess how exactly hedges, hesitations, and tag questions affect speaker and message evaluations in non-dominant salient exchanges.

Scale Validation

This study provides important evidence that helps to validate Zahn and Hopper's (1985) proposed three-dimensional structure of the Speech Evaluation Instrument. Although power of speech style researchers employ instruments comparable to the SEI (e.g., Gibbons et al., 1991; Parton et al., 2002), scholars continue to subject data to

exploratory factor analytic tests to identify underlying dimensions. Such practice is problematic, however. EFA assumes no a priori dimensional structure, and thus identifies the most likely structure, given a specific sample of data. As a result, two studies can claim to assess the same construct, even though the items representing the variables might be different. Such practice complicates cross-study comparison of results and does nothing to help validate the measured constructs. Contemporary scale validation procedures prescribe confirmatory factor analyses (CFA).

CFA assumes a specific dimensional structure represented by individual items within the scale. Instead of identifying the best possible arrangement of scale items that would account for the most variance, CFA tests the a priori structure as applied to a specific sample population. If the proposed model is found to fit the dataset sufficiently, the scale and the proposed factor structure may then be considered valid. Such was the case for the SEI. As more power of speech style researchers use confirmatory procedures in their studies, cross-study comparisons can be made more confidently and accurately.

Limitations

This study was not without limitations, of which there are three. The first limitation concerns the mode through which participants were delivered the stimulus message—written text of oral speech. Erickson et al. (1978) established this methodological precedence when they found written and audio messages produced similar effects. This precedence is evidenced by the many studies that have used (e.g., Bradac & Mulac, 1984; Hosman, 1989; Johnson & Vinson; 1987) and still use written stimuli (e.g., Blankenship & Craig, 2007; Fragal, 2006; Hosman & Siltanen, 2011). However, several studies have presented messages using audio recordings (e.g., Haleta

1996; Holtgraves & Lasky, 1999; Parton et al., 2002; Sparks et al., 1998). In fact, Sparks et al. (1998) reported that persuasive effects of speech style variation were found in audio, but not written conditions, though subsequent research has found power of speech style effects regardless of message modality (Areni & Sparks, 2005). Despite the apparent success of written messages, however, the internet technology available today (e.g., YouTube.com and Surveymonkey.com) makes possible randomly distributing video of actors delivering a study's manipulated messages. To be sure, written texts are much simpler to create and they provide a more stable environment in which to manage internal validity. However, the improvement in the ecological validity of video recorded messages may be worth the additional effort.

The second limitation concerns the ethnic diversity of the sample. The sample population represented diverse membership across several demographics including sex, age, years in workforce, and geographical location. Despite this success, less than five percent of the sample represented an ethnic minority. Although no research has reported or investigated potential ethnicity interactions with power of speech style research, due to the large number of Caucasians represented in the study, the generalizability of the results across all American English speakers should be done with caution. Future research should better diversify the sample population across all relevant demographics, including ethnicity.

The final limitation concerns the validity of the control attribution construct. The failure to validate the a priori structures of the control attribution construct suggests the need to more closely investigate these concepts. One must note, however, that most control attribution research has been conducted in courtroom settings (e.g., Hosman &

Siltanen, 1994, 2002). Perhaps the control attribution concept is valid in courtrooms, but not the workplace. Further supporting this claim is Parton et al.'s (2002) study of workplace interviews, which failed to produce a representative control dimension during their EFA procedures. Regardless, better defining the control attribution construct could help researchers better understand how powerless language affects this perception of a speaker.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study provided insight into power of speech style variation effects.

However, as scholarship is designed to do, this study also raises questions future scholars should address. Several suggestions are provided.

The first suggestion concerns addressing the discussed methodological limitations by replicating and improving the design of the current study in two important ways. First, a follow-up study that more clearly and distinctly instantiates the affiliation relational frame would provide more definitive evidence regarding powerless language's effect on message evaluation. Second, this follow up study should better manipulate the level of involvement participant experience when presented with the message. Despite this study's failure to induce the desired level of perceived involvement, post hoc analyses indicated that further research of RFT's intensifier hypothesis might be warranted. Verifying the presence of an intensifier effect would provide additional insight into power of speech style effects not yet investigated in the current available research. Additionally, it might be fruitful to rule out the possibility of a scenario effect. The current study advances the notion that relational frame determines the manner in which message reviewers interpret powerless and powerful language. However, to verify

these effects are not unique to the workplace only, additional research should vary the setting in which the stimulus messages are uttered.

Another suggestion for additional research concerns the applicability of RFT's differential salience hypothesis to power of speech style interpretation. According to this hypothesis the salient frame will be the frame by which messages are assigned meaning. The results of the manipulation check verified that when interacting with coworkers, participants likely found the affiliation frame more relevant than the domination frame. However, despite this verification, the salience of the frame was not dramatically more salient than the domination frame. Because power of speech style superseded the effect of relational framing on the superiority and the overall control variables, one can argue that the differential salience may not be as absolute as RFT researchers suggest (c.f., Dillard et al., 1996, 1999). Perhaps there is a tipping point at which the frames become conflated with one another and clear message interpretation compromised. Such research would further clarify both the relational framing and power of speech style effects.

The third suggestion for future research concerns the degree to which power of speech style may affect relational framing. The question remains, which plays a larger role in the framing of an interaction, the relationship the interlocutors perceive, or whether hedges, hesitations, and tag questions are used. After reading a relationship description of a prototypical relational frame, researchers could have participants complete the RFT relevancy measure, read a power of speech style manipulated stimulus message, and complete the relevance measure again as a posttest. Consistency between these tests would ensure the stability of the initial framing of the exchange. If these tests are not consistent, however, then researchers could further investigate the degree to

which powerless and powerful language affects these frames. Such research could be conducted on both a molecular and molar level of power of speech style variation.

The final suggestion concerns the control attribution scale. As previously mentioned, although the control attribution construct did not perform well during the study's confirmatory factor analyses, the failure to identify an appropriate fit between the proposed factor structure may have been due to the context described in this study. Most control attribution studies presented participants with messages purportedly from courtroom settings, and perhaps the specific control over self and control over others factors are only applicable in those contexts. Investigating the validity of the control attribution construct would help better explain the effects power of speech style variation has on evaluations of speakers and their messages.

Conclusion

Researchers have studied power of speech style effects for over three decades. Despite Robin Lakoff's (1973, 1975) initial claim that certain components of language (e.g., hedges, hesitation, tag questions) were unique to women, Erickson et al.'s (1978) empirical research found such components were not specific to women, but rather to individuals of relatively low social status. Erickson et al. also found that these components negatively affected perceptions of credibility and power. As evidenced in this document, subsequent studies supported more specific claims about individual components and their effects on persuasion, control attributions, and several other speaker evaluations.

This study advances understanding of powerful and powerless language effects by incorporating a relational framing perspective. Traditionally, power of speech style

literature has focused on dominance-framed interactions only. Relational framing theory suggests that when messages are interpreted using a dominance frame, issues regarding persuasion, influence, and control become salient. Alternatively, the theory suggests that in exchanges framed by affiliation issues of liking, attraction, and regard become salient. The results of this study provide only partial support for RFT's application to speech style research.

In kind with previous literature, the current study found that powerless language negatively affected speakers' superiority, general control, dynamism, and control over outcome when the exchange was framed by domination. When the exchange was framed more by affiliation than domination, however, the effect was less evident. Specifically, when the relevance of domination diminished and the relevance of affiliation increased, powerless language's negative effect was much less evident. However, regardless of the relational frame, powerless language affected evaluations of control and superiority negatively, and for bosses powerless language improved social attraction ratings. Admittedly, this study indicates the application of RFT's logic to explain power of speech style effects was imperfect. Nevertheless, the findings warrant further investigation into what exactly differentiates powerless and powerful language effects across various relationship types.

In the opening pages of this document, the notion that speakers ought to avoid the use of powerless language components was challenged. This study directly addresses this claim and confirms that the use of powerless language will do more harm than good. The study also justifies additional attention to the relational frame through which interactions are viewed and messages interpreted.

APPENDIX

IRB VERIFICATION



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NOTICE OF COMMITTEE ACTION

The project has been reviewed by The University of Southern Mississippi Institutional Review Board in accordance with Federal Drug Administration regulations (21 CFR 26, 111), Department of Health and Human Services (45 CFR Part 46), and university guidelines to ensure adherence to the following criteria:

- The risks to subjects are minimized.
- The risks to subjects are reasonable in relation to the anticipated benefits.
- The selection of subjects is equitable.
- Informed consent is adequate and appropriately documented.
- Where appropriate, the research plan makes adequate provisions for monitoring the data collected to ensure the safety of the subjects.
- Where appropriate, there are adequate provisions to protect the privacy of subjects and to maintain the confidentiality of all data.
- Appropriate additional safeguards have been included to protect vulnerable subjects.
- Any unanticipated, serious, or continuing problems encountered regarding risks to subjects must be reported immediately, but not later than 10 days following the event. This should be reported to the IRB Office via the "Adverse Effect Report Form".
- If approved, the maximum period of approval is limited to twelve months. Projects that exceed this period must submit an application for renewal or continuation.

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Lawrence A. Hosman, Ph.D.

Institutional Review Board Chair

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