



Between Words and Deeds: Crisis Narratives of Politicians and Citizens

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Abstract

This study explores the relationship between the culture of political leaders and citizens and the linguistic patterns employed by each group during a crisis event by looking at the research question of: *How does the culture of political leaders and citizens influence their communicative patterns during natural disasters?* In order to study this question, a Critical Discourse Analysis is employed to analyze the statements of political leaders and citizens by identifying explicit performative utterances in the form of personal pronouns and analyzing their function. The case study selected for the exploration of the topic is Greece and specifically two crisis events are examined: Storm Daniel in 2023 and the fire in Mati in 2018, representing two of the most severe crisis examples that took place in the country. The study reveals that there is a close relationship between culture and the linguistic patterns employed by each cultural group, shedding light to a view of the concept of culture which focuses on communicative patterns and their effects during a crisis situation. Moreover, it provides an intriguing perspective with regards to the way key crisis events are portrayed and communicated differently by citizens directly affected and by politicians that need to design a course of action.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Our complex and diverse world requires us to recognize moments when challenges arise and escalate into what we call crises. These crises can take various forms, such as environmental, economic, and social. In our multicultural global landscape, understanding how these crises are managed is an intriguing topic as it can reveal leadership style and potential patterns in crisis management. During these crises, we often expect leaders to design a course of action and typically these leaders are politicians who have the power to make crucial decisions. However, it is common for the actions taken by politicians to differ from what citizens expect or desire. To understand why these two groups react differently during crises, this research project addresses the following question: *How does the culture of political leaders and citizens influence their communication patterns during natural disasters?* This inquiry offers an interesting perspective, aiming to broaden our understanding of "culture" by examining the communicative patterns emerging from the function of the use of personal pronouns within the discourse of politicians and citizens.

To explore this question, the study focuses on the case of Greece and examines the crisis response of political leaders and citizens during two of the most severe recent natural disasters in the country: Storm Daniel (2023) and the fires in Mati (2018). The Greek context is a compelling case study because the crisis responses by political leaders and citizens present similar patterns with regards to the function of personal pronouns within their discourse and reveal key dimensions of the Greek culture including suspicion, lack of trust, and assumption of responsibility. Therefore, by examining the communication patterns of these groups, particularly the use of personal pronouns, this study investigates the relationship between culture and crisis response.

Chapter 2: Exploring Cultural Dimensions in the Crisis Literature

This research question explores the relationship between a group's culture and their response to a crisis situation. Specifically, the study suggests that the culture of political leaders and citizens influences the way they communicate in general, and about natural disasters in particular. Although there are works on political leadership and crisis communication, as well as crisis and public perception, there is little connection between these two areas. In this chapter, key terms related to the research question, such as culture, crisis, and political leadership during a crisis are operationalized to provide a concrete understanding of the way these are defined and understood within this study.

Exploring identity and culture

Defining culture

The term 'culture' constitutes a key aspect of the research question. However, its definition is not universally agreed upon as there are multiple interpretations available. In this research, culture is defined as a set of patterns and behaviors shared by a specific group, influencing the way they behave and think by examining the communicative aspects of the term and exploring these at the discourse of political leaders and citizens. This definition places greater emphasis on how communicative systems shape cultures (Jackson, 2020), which has not been adequately addressed in the literature, primarily in relation to specific social groups, such as political leaders and citizens. Consequently, by investigating the communicative aspect of culture, linguistic patterns such as the function of personal pronouns within the discourse of political leaders and citizens are identified to draw conclusions regarding their behavior and reactions during crisis situations. In order to dive deeper into the notion of culture within the political sphere, which is a main part of this research

question that focuses on political leaders as one of the two main cultural groups, we need to explore the relationship between culture and politics.

Culture in the Political Sphere

The literature has explored the relationship between politics and culture directly related to the focus of this research. Kranert explains that political institutions are “carriers of culture” which affect political discourse and the way that political actors relate to one another, perceiving themselves as “sharing a common destiny” (Kranert, 2019, p. 24). To demonstrate how political actors are “carriers of culture” in this research, the similar patterns traced in their discourse are explored. Chilton also adds to this point by defining culture in terms of ways of relating and suggesting that political culture leads to ways of connecting collectively (Chilton, 1988, p. 431).

In addition to these works, Dai and Chen have also provided certain criteria which lead to the definition of social groups as cultures. These criteria include: (1) having a wide scope of influence on the group’s behavior, attitudes and values (constituting the group’s lifestyle); (2) having practices that must be transmitted from generation to generation; (3) having lifestyle practices that influence group members over their lifespan and (4) having a shared communication system (not necessarily a shared language) (Dai & Chen, 2014, p.119). For this case, the fourth criterion is primarily addressed, since we focus on the communicative patterns of political leaders and citizens and explore the ways that their linguistic choices have an impact on their crisis communication. Kim (2017) also points to communication as a main aspect of social behavior that gives rise to enacted cultural identity. The author expands on this view by stating that our enacted identity is developed, altered and sustained by communication as well as social interaction (Kim, 2017, p.2). Although the literature has raised the point that political leaders and citizens can be viewed as distinct cultural groups and that each group has a shared communicative system, there

is a lack of in-depth research in relation to specific instances and case studies. Therefore, this research aims to provide a real-life case study example where these theories can be explored with the goal of better understanding how linguistic choices could reveal separate identities. Having explained the ways through which political culture is viewed in this research and how the current gaps in the literature are addressed, it is integral to also discuss how crisis and crisis communication are defined based on this research question.

Crisis and crisis communication

Definition of Crisis

Kwansah-Aidoo & George define a crisis as “a major occurrence that can potentially have a negative effect on the individual, organization, or industry experiencing it, as well as its publics, products, goods, services, and reputation” (Kwansah-Aidoo & George, 2017, p. 6). This research focuses on crisis communication during two major natural disasters in Greece, highlighting their negative effects on both parties (political leaders and citizens) and the country itself due to property loss. Consequently, Kwansah-Aidoo's definition is highly relevant to the scope of this research. Schneider and Jordan further elaborate on crises as key political events that serve as “triggering, focusing, or signaling occurrences, influencing political agenda setting” (Schneider and Jordan, 2016, p. 14). Since this research specifically examines crises within the political sphere, Schneider and Jordan's definition is pertinent as it is observed that political leaders in their speeches during crises prioritize crisis management within their political agenda, proposing courses of action and alleviation measures. Thus, in this research a crisis is defined as a major event disrupting social order and directly impacting political agenda setting. During a crisis, the role of political leaders becomes crucial in terms of both crisis communication and public perception. Therefore, the next section examines the specific role of political leadership during crises.

Political leadership and crisis communication

It is crucial for political leaders to convey information to the public in a clear manner to help them understand the situation and explain the measures which will be employed to combat it (Schwarz & Auer, 2016, p. 18). As Schwarz and Seeger mention, based on the clarity of the message the risk of confusion or conflict can be reduced (Schwarz & Auer, 2016). Apart from that, the specific use of words is crucial since as Norheim and Haga explain “rhetoric deals with the art of persuading an audience using words and other means of communication” (Norheim & Haga, 2022, p. 6). Hence, the manner in which political leaders communicate the situation greatly affects the way that the public will understand both the events and the specific measures the leader will employ (Norheim & Haga, 2022; Schwarz & Auer, 2016).

Public Perception and crisis communication

The next stage after the leader conveys information related to the crisis is the assessment by the public. In particular, people judge politicians based on their responses since they perceive them as the leadership figures that need to take responsibility and guide people (Murphy & Dunn, 2012; Akbar & Aldrich, 2015). Based on this assessment, the political leaders can also improve their position by acquiring “political benefits” such as winning elections or suffering from negative criticism that could threaten their current position (Schwarz, Seeger & Auer, 2016; Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p. 6). In this case, the negative criticism by Greek citizens is the main way in which political leaders are assessed since their response is seen as ineffective during the crises. It is evident from the scholarly work available that citizens have expectations regarding who should take responsibility (the government) and how the actor should respond, as a poor response will directly influence the public’s attitude (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012; Schwarz, Seeger & Auer, 2016; Murphy & Dunn, 2012; Akbar & Aldrich, 2015). These expectations are also reflected in their

discourse as this research reveals. However, the leaders are not only limited to presidents/chiefs of state as Atkenson & Maestras explain but also include local political leaders who could be defined as “heroes or villains” based on their response to the crisis (Atkeson & Maestas, 2012, p 7).

Group culture and discourse patterns

This chapter has provided the present literature on the concepts of culture, culture in the political sphere, and crisis communication to both understand how these terms have been explored so far but also to convey how these are defined in this specific research. Although as mentioned alternative definitions of culture pointing towards the communicative aspects have been discussed by the literature, there is still a lack of variety of real-life examples to fully understand the process through which culture manifests through discourse. Moreover, there is a gap in terms of how the culture of political leaders and of citizens affects the way they communicate a crisis event. Lastly, even though the literature has delved into political leaders’ discourse during crises, the discourse of the citizens directly affected has not been equally examined. This would be a useful inquiry to not only grasp how linguistic patterns reveal separate identities but also to identify how communicative patterns shape responses during integral moments by a variety of actors affected and not just the political leaders. The next chapter establishes the theoretical framework that helps explore the gaps identified, along with the methodology employed to test the relationship between culture and communication practices in a real-life context.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

This chapter presents the theoretical framework utilized to analyze the function of personal pronouns in the discourse of politicians and citizens during a crisis. Specifically, Speech Act Theory and the Social Construction of Identity are employed. Speech Act Theory aids in uncovering the intentions behind the linguistic choices of political leaders and citizens, making it valuable for delving deeper into the communicative patterns of both groups. Similarly, the Social Construction of Identity theory identifies elements in speech that reveal aspects of group identity, directly supporting the argument that political leaders and ordinary citizens can be classified as members of different cultural groups based on elements found in discourse.

Speech Act Theory

J.K Austin developed the Speech Act Theory, which suggests that language should be considered in use by paying close attention to its purpose and function. Austin argued that humans use language for specific reasons, which include creating obligations, establishing new social relations and reassuring, promising and apologizing (Austin 1962, as cited by LoCastro, 2011). Based on this premise, he classified features of language acts in 3 main categories: locutionary act, illocutionary act and the perlocutionary act. Specifically, locutionary refers to the actual meaning of the proposition by focusing on the lexico-grammatical meaning. The illocutionary act aims to uncover the intention of the speaker and the way the act can be understood by the audience. Finally, the perlocutionary act focuses on the effect on the addressee which can often be unpredictable (LoCastro, 2011). This research concentrates on exploring the illocutionary act classification as it provides more insight into the intention of the language users and the reasons behind their linguistic choices.

Illocutionary act

Illocutionary acts help reveal the intentions of the speaker (LoCastro 2011). Hence, the act has a particular force or effect which could include giving an order or informing someone. There are five illocutionary forces which include: the force of assertion, force of commitment to a future action, force of a linguistic attempt to get someone to act, force of declaration and force of expression of an attitude (Vanderveken & Kubo, 2001, p.6). Alston has provided alternative ways of naming these five categories, which include: assertives (ways of affirming), directives (influencing/guiding others' behavior), commissives (making a commitment to a specific action), expressives (voicing a specific psychological state) and exercitives (expressing authority, certain actions facilitated by the social status of the speaker) (Alston, 2000). Although these categories appear in the literature with different names, their meaning and effect is the same when identifying illocutionary acts. This research utilizes the five categories listed above to classify the speech patterns identified in the discourse of political leaders and ordinary citizens and analyze their meaning and intention. Moreover, the notion of successful vs defective utterances is also employed to present whether the courses of action stated by politicians were implemented by presenting the statements of citizens who discuss the type of help they received or not. Defective illocutionary acts refer to promises that the speaker does not plan or cannot fulfill. On the other hand, successful illocutionary acts present instances where the speaker has managed to keep the promise made (Vanderveken & Kubo, 2001).

Explicit performative Utterances: Personal Pronouns

“Explicit performative utterances” which make clear that the speaker performs some kind of action are also a key part of this research. The use of the first person for example is an explicit performative utterance which indicates that the speaker is or will take a specific action (for

example “I will come” (Heal, 1974, p. 106). According to the Speech Act Theory, in explicit performative utterances there is a strong performative verb which usually appears in the first person (Andee, 2014). Koschmieder also developed a theory which aligned with Austin’s explanation of performative utterances known as “Koinzidenzfall”, sharing Austin’s views in terms of the use of the first person (Andee, 2014). This theoretical perspective brings to light the importance of understanding the function of the use of pronouns in speech, which has also been discussed by scholars especially in the political sphere which is relevant to this research. Of particular interest is the use of self-reference by political leaders. Specifically, political leaders can make use of personal pronouns for various reasons including accepting, denying, encouraging solidarity and reflecting their own ideologies (Proctor and Su, 2011). The use of the first person allows the leader to demonstrate their quality as well as present their leadership skills (e.g. present their upcoming course of action) which could establish a credible and positive persona to the public (Kranert, 2017; Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019). On the other hand, the use of the personal pronoun “we” is used by speakers to evoke a sense of group identity and group belonging and in many cases the user of this personal pronoun is seen as a representative of the group (Moderg and Eriksson, 2013). This theoretical perspective is significant for this research which analyzes the use and function of personal pronouns alongside discourse used both by political leaders and citizens.

Social Construction of Identity

The construction of identity through language has been widely explored within sociolinguistics. Specifically, based on the social construction of identity theory, social interactions, language use, and communication practices are different ways of expressing identity. The type of language used by individuals is highly influenced by their social backgrounds and

their membership into a larger social group (Kumar & Prakash, 2019). Based on sociolinguistic studies, the choices made by humans in terms of which type of language is utilized in a specific situation is rather patterned, meaning that there is almost a defined “script” used based on the specific social setting (Philipsen, 1992). Moreover, particular differences can be observed by identifying speech patterns across cultures and looking at the symbols, meaning and rules within the culture. These patterns in turn reveal aspects of the group’s identity (Philipsen, 1992; Eastman, 1985). The notion of “social rhetoric” or “group talk” has also emerged within the field to describe the set of language patterns common within a culture, which establish a particular identity.

It is important to note that various identities can be expressed through language which means that an individual can demonstrate language patterns that showcase their membership in different cultures. An example of this phenomenon is the use of sentence final particles in the Japanese culture where the use of the particle “ne” instead of “na” is determined by certain characteristics of the speaker such as age, gender, and social status (Ogi, 2014). As a result, certain aspects of the speaker’s identity such as sex could influence the type of language used in their daily life showcasing their membership in a certain culture or group. This is useful in this research as well since it is argued that elements of the culture of politicians and citizens can be identified in speech even if the two groups belong to the same national identity (co-existence of multiple identities).

The Greek Political Culture

In order to make sense of the data collected from the case study that is explored (Greece), it is important to establish the Greek political culture. The Greek political culture is characterized by ideological polarization, which is linked to historical divisions dating back to the Greek civil war (1943-1945) (Koliatsis, 2022). This division has also fostered constant accusations, disbelief,

a sense of lack of solidarity, and a lack of trust towards others (Malouta, 1990). In recent years, Greece has also endured an economic crisis and measures taken to address it, further exacerbating divisions within the country. Particularly, following the revelation of economic scandals involving politicians, which significantly impacted the current economic situation, the public's trust in political leaders has been eroding. This erosion of trust is evident in the Eurobarometer study, which shows that Greeks have one of the highest percentages in their perception of corruption and disbelief (Eurobarometer, 2023). Furthermore, political abstention in Greece has been increasing over the years, with the most recent elections (June 2023) seeing a participation rate of 47.33% (diagram 1), highlighting the sense of hopelessness and lack of trust people have towards political leaders. This sentiment is depicted in the following diagram from CNN, which presents the percentages of political abstention from the elections of May 2012 to June 2023. Overall, the public is characterized by lack of trust and hope towards political leaders, who are seen as untrustworthy and corrupted, a product of ongoing scandals, the corruption that led to the economic crisis and their lack of effective measures to alleviate people's suffering.

Diagram 1: Political Abstention in Greece from May 2012-June 2023



Methodology

This section includes the methodology selected for the exploration of the research question and also presents the case study chosen for investigation.

Critical Discourse Analysis

Critical Discourse analysis (CDA) is adopted to interpret the linguistic choices made by political leaders and citizens and examine their effects. As Catalano and Waugh explain, Critical Discourse Analysis refers to the study of language and semiotic systems with the aim of identifying “the relationship between language, ideology, power and social structure” (Catalano and Waugh, 2020, p.1). Locke in his work also explores key dimensions of Critical Discourse Analysis which include the view of power that stems from specific status or positions within societies (Locke, 2004). This aspect of the CDA is significant for this research project, which targets political leaders and their rhetoric and thus their position definitely demonstrates the notion of power in their

discourse. Moreover, by employing critical discourse analysis and analyzing discourse, we can pinpoint how individuals showcase their personality and subjectivity through their language use (Locke, 2004).

Identifying the five illocutionary forces

This study aims to identify elements that fall within the five illocutionary forces, which reveal the intentions of the speaker and help us put words into perspective. To be more exact, the illocutionary act categories provided by Alston are utilized as shown in Table 1 below:

Assertives	Directives	Commissives	Expressives	Exercitives
allege	ask	promise	thank	adjourn
report	request	bet	apologize	appoint
insist	beseech	guarantee	commiserate	pardon
claim	implore	invite	compliment	name
maintain	tell	offer	congratulate	nominate
answer	command		express:	bequeath
agree	enjoin		enthusiasm	sentence
concede	order		contempt	hire, fire
remark	forbid		interest	approve
mention	advise		relief	
announce	recommend		desire	
testify	suggest		willingness	
remind	propose		intention	
admit			opinion	
disclose			opposition	
deny			agreement	
complain			determination	
predict			unhappiness	
			delight	

Table 1: Illocutionary Act Categories (Taken from Alston, 2000, p. 50).

The words provided in the table are just examples of each illocutionary force and do not constitute the only possibilities to illustrate each category. Hence, the statements by politicians and citizens are scrutinized to identify words that convey any illocutionary act which could fall under each category and allow for better understanding of what is being expressed. Apart from that,

explicit performance examples are also traced in the form of personal pronouns so that their function can also be explained. Lastly, by comparing the statements of the politicians and those of the citizens one can also draw conclusions as to whether the illocutionary act is defective or successful.

Case Study selection

Greece is used as a case study to explore the research question. Specifically, the political leaders' and citizens' statements during Storm Daniel in September 2023 and the fire in Mati in July 2018 are analyzed. For this research, political leaders and the citizens are viewed as two different cultures within Greece, which is related to the theoretical aspects of Critical Discourse Analysis based on which position alters speech patterns and power conveyed through discourse. Considering the definition of culture provided in Chapter 2, we can identify elements of power in the rhetoric of political leaders, particularly in their emphasis on "action." Due to their positions, political leaders have the authority to determine the types of alleviation measures to be employed. Hence, these power elements can be identified in their rhetoric which directly influences their strategies and behaviors. Conversely, for citizens, elements of limited power and victimhood are apparent in rhetoric. Due to their positions, citizens do not have the authority to make decisions about the actions that should be taken but rather must adhere to the decisions made by political leaders. Consequently, the differing levels of power and the varying degrees to which the crisis affects these two cultural groups serve as the primary factors that distinguish them.

In this case, the Greek context is considered and TV statements from political leaders and ordinary people are gathered and analyzed, since this form of data is available for both of these cultural groups. Statements from political leaders and citizens are analyzed and gathered from the archives of Greek TV news channels from September 4th to September 12th 2023, the period Storm

Daniel occurred as well as from July 23rd to July 26th 2018, the period the fire in Mati took place. In terms of the political leaders, statements from both regional leaders and the prime minister at that time are considered to provide insights on the discourse available from all political leaders expected to act and respond. Specifically, these leaders include: Kyriakos Mitsotakis (prime minister), Achilleas Beos (regional leader) and Giorgos Sakelariou (regional leader) for Storm Daniel and Alexis Tsipras (prime minister) and Ilias Psinakis (regional leader) for the fires in Mati. In what concerns citizens, multiple statements are considered from victims affected by these natural disasters.

Chapter 4: Findings & Discussion

In the first case study, the discourse of political leaders and citizens affected by the Storm Daniel (2023) in Greece is examined to identify the language patterns present in the rhetoric of both groups. The second case study looks at the discourse of political leaders and citizens affected by the wildfire in Mati of Greece (2018). In the examples of discourse selected, the use of personal pronouns by both groups is scrutinized by identifying their function and effect in each case.

Part 1: Floods caused by Storm Daniel in 2023

In September 2023, Storm Daniel struck, causing floods and damages in the Southern Balkan Peninsula, Western Turkey, and Eastern Libya (Rafferty, 2023). In Greece, extreme rainfall began on September 4th and persisted for several days, leading to severe floods, particularly in Thessaly and Magnesia, resulting in the destruction of personal properties and infrastructure (Davies, 2023). In this section, the rhetoric of political leaders involved (prime minister and regional leaders) and that of affected citizens is examined to identify and interpret possible patterns that emerge from their crisis communication.

Politicians

In the discourse of politicians, two primary illocutionary acts stand out: Directives (requesting action to be taken) and Commissives (mostly involve making promises/providing guarantees). This section delves into these acts by examining the role and impact of personal pronouns in terms of their function and effect.

Use of Pronouns - Positive self-representation

It is evident that the use of personal pronouns along with other language is used by politicians to create positive self-representation. Specifically, explicit performative utterances such as personal pronouns are often used by politicians to present themselves as leaders and increase

their credibility when addressing the public (Kranert, 2017; Albalat-Mascarell & Carrio-Pastor, 2019) which is present in the statements of all three politicians considered in this case. One of the main reasons is connected to the Greek political culture which is characterized by avoidance of responsibility in times of crisis. In these crisis examples selected for analysis, all political leaders used the personal pronoun “I” to mention the course of action they have taken so far to provide a solution to the current crisis and demonstrate their efforts to the citizens. The following extract taken from the statements of the prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis on September 8th, 2023 serves as a key example:

(2:30– 2:39)

1. Ταυτόχρονα, έχω ήδη ξεκινήσει τις
2. At the same time, **I have already initiated** the
3. σχετικές διαδικασίες.
4. relevant procedures.
5. για να διεκδικήσω από την Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
6. to claim from the European Union
7. τη μέγιστη δυνατή στήριξη.
8. The maximum possible support

The prime minister announces that he has initiated arrangements to ensure support (referring to financial support) for citizens affected by the floods (line 4). The use of the personal pronoun alongside the specific actions he took to claim financial support from the European Union highlights his leadership and places emphasis on his individual role in relation to the crisis. At the same time, by referring to economic support measures specifically, he aims to communicate to the

public his awareness of both the extensive destruction and the resulting financial challenges for those who lost their properties, which is a main concern for Greek citizens already suffering from the economic crisis. It is key to note here that the use of the Greek word “διεκδικώ” (claim) alongside the personal pronoun intensifies the leadership effect. Specifically, “διεκδικώ” (line 5) presents an element of active struggle to achieve a particular goal, which highlights the personal effort of the leader. Moreover, claim is part of an assertive illocutionary act (table 1) used to convey information (the actions the prime minister took). Hence, the prime minister is portrayed as an active leader ready to “fight” to help citizens during this crisis, enhancing the positive representation effect. Moreover, the use of the verb “initiated” (line 2) highlights the commissive element of the illocutionary act, since the prime minister makes a commitment to bring economic alleviation measures. Providing financial assistance during a crisis is crucial for the Greek public, especially given the ongoing economic challenges. Therefore, the economic measures taken by leaders are highly significant to the affected citizens and addressing these aspects in the statement is justified and expected by the public.

The overall function of the personal pronoun in this case still points to the political role of the leader and his role as a policy maker as Mascarell and Pastor also discuss in their work on self-representation through personal pronouns (2019). As the authors explain, self-reference alongside a specific course of action points towards the politician’s role and his effort to provide solutions to the citizens’ problems directly (Mascarell & Pastor, 2019, p 95). Consequently, Mitsotakis is trying to present himself as a reliable leader by pointing towards his political role and the way he can use his authority as a prime minister to resolve the crisis.

Another interesting example is taken from the statement made by the mayor of Volos, Achilleas Beos in September 6th 2023 regarding the floods in Volos.

(0:23-0:34)

1. Είμαι 40 ώρες άυπνος
2. **I have been awake for 40 hours**
3. γιατί είμαι δίπλα στους πολίτες,
4. because **I am next to the citizens**
5. έξω στα προβλήματα.
6. dealing with the problems.

In this example, the mayor emphasizes his commitment to take action by highlighting that he hasn't even slept to stay close to the citizens. This approach differs from that of the prime minister, as the mayor aims to present himself as "one of the crowd," contrasting with the prime minister's explicit reference to particular economic measures, which relates more to his position. Moreover, he uses hyperbolic language by mentioning an excessive number of hours (40) during which he was awake (line 2) to communicate an extensive effort and commitment to address the crisis, almost appearing as he is sacrificing himself to help the citizens. The use of "number game hyperbole" as Abbas mentions (2019) is a very effective strategy used to empower a statement to the audience and was a common strategy also used by other political leaders such as Donald Trump during his presidential campaign. However, Trump used this strategy usually to negatively represent the policies of previous leaders, such as Obama and not to present himself positively as seen in this case. This adds an interesting dimension to Abba's research, since the number game hyperbole could be used to represent a group or person both positively and negatively. Also, by stating that he is "dealing with the problems" (line 6), Beos is making a commissive illocutionary point since there is commitment from his part to stand with the citizens and provide solutions to

the current issues. Despite the differing means of presenting their actions, the function of the personal pronoun alongside powerful verbs and hyperbolic language is consistent in both cases. It underscores their leadership, conveys their proactive stance, and assures citizens that efforts are being made to address the situation which presents the leaders in a positive light.

The mayor of Palamas, Giorgos Sakellariou also made use of the pronoun “I” to refer to the actions he took to address the crisis such as "I have made an appeal", "I have called" "I have spoken”, which can all be regarded as commissive performative utterances promising a resolution through the effort of the mayor to reach out for help. Moreover, he uses action verbs which alongside the personal pronoun present his individual stance during the crisis. In this case, the function of the language used is closer to that of the prime minister since the acts mentioned by the mayor relate to his position and power compared to the mayor of Volos, who tried to present himself as closer to the citizens.

Both the mayor of Volos and the prime minister first ask for citizens to cooperate with the authorities and then state that they are “standing with the citizens.” To be more precise, the prime minister states that “We are here, standing beside the citizens,” while the mayor of Volos states that “We continue to stand by the citizens.” These statements are almost identical in terms of both structure and meaning and reveal the use of the pronoun “we” with the goal of reducing distance with the citizens and emphasizing an element of both understanding and commitment to them especially due to the use of verbs that convey support and collectiveness such as “stand.” The use of the pronoun is most closely related to the effects of the use of the personal pronoun “I” in the case of the mayor of Volos, who was trying to present himself as one of the people. Hence, both leaders, in this case use the pronoun “we” with the same function. This function of the “we” pronoun has been observed in other instances within the political sphere, such as in Sweden.

Specifically, when four political parties were forming the Swedish government in 2006, the party leaders were heavily using the pronoun during press conferences to show unity despite differences (Moberg and Eriksson, 2013). This demonstrates an interesting dimension with regards to the use of personal pronouns by politicians as a shared strategy and not only as an element of Greek political discourse.

Citizens

Use of Pronouns: Express of hopelessness/ Lack of Action

Expressives are the main type of illocutionary acts that stand out in the linguistic patterns of citizens, revealing their frustration and emotions during the crisis. By examining this act, the use of personal pronouns is also discussed to uncover its effects and function. An example of the use of personal pronouns is taken from the statements by one of the citizens in Volos affected by the floods on September 6th, 2023:

(2:42-2:50)

1. Εχθές κάλεσα την πυροσβεστική
2. Yesterday, **I called the fire department**
3. άπειρες φορές.
4. countless times.
5. Ήταν συνεχώς κατειλημμένη, και κάποια στιγμή που
6. It was constantly busy, and at some point, **when I**
7. κατάφερα να πιάσω γραμμή, δεν το σήκωσε κανείς.
8. **managed to get through, no one answered.**

In this case, the use of the personal pronoun demonstrates the actions taken by the citizen to emphasize the lack of action taken by the authorities. Specifically, the personal pronoun “I” alongside the action verb “call” underscores that the citizen had to take matters in her own hands by reaching out to the fire department with no result. The use of the phrase “countless times” alongside the personal pronoun highlights the element of repetitive action taken by the citizen, which places extra emphasis on the lack of presence of the authorities which were not responsive not just once but “countless times.” This creates an interesting contrast with the statements of all three politicians who referred to the variety of actions that have been taken by all the departments to help citizens in need. As a result, the statements of the political leaders can be characterized as defective utterances as the citizen reveals that the promises made have not been fulfilled. The citizen continues by switching from the personal pronoun “I” to the personal pronoun “we” in the following statement:

(5:15-5:28)

1. Έχουμε αγανακτήσει.
2. **We are fed up.**
3. Δεν υπάρχει αυτή η κατάσταση.
4. This situation is intolerable.
5. Δηλαδή, αυτές οι δύο ημέρες μας έχει θάψει η λάσπη και
6. I mean, **these two days have buried us in mud and**
7. το νερό.
8. **water.**
9. Και από πουθενά να πω ότι είδα κάτι,

10. And from nowhere can I say that I saw something,
11. ὅτι ἦρθε κάποιος.
12. that someone came.

The use of the pronoun “we” also allows the speaker to express a sense of group identity and they can be seen as representative of a whole (Moderg and Eriksson, 2013). It can be observed that when describing the struggles caused by the floods, the citizen is using the pronoun “we” such as in line 2 when they explain their emotions: “we are fed up.” The use of the phrase “we are fed up” also communicates a sense of continuous suffering especially when considering the original Greek word used “αγανακτώ.” In Greek, “αγανακτώ” communicates exhaustion from the speaker due to ongoing injustice and prolonged suffering. This is important in this case, as the citizens convey that they are not just tired because of the disaster that was caused but that they are unjustly treated by the authorities having been waiting for a response for too long and giving rise to feelings of anger and injustice. Additionally, in line 6 a sentiment of hopelessness and suffering is communicated through the vivid use of the following metaphor: “these two days have buried us in mud and water.” This metaphor points towards the political leaders who have done so little that the citizens themselves are starting to “get buried under the mud”, communicating once more an element of inaction from the government.

Hence, in this case personal pronouns alongside the vivid descriptions are used to express lack of action from the government (when the pronoun “I” is utilized) and the hopelessness of the citizens (when the pronoun “we” is utilized). At the same time, the citizen heavily utilizes expressive utterances throughout their statement by revealing their psychological state and expressing their emotions during the crisis. The function of the personal pronoun “we” in this example closely captures the discussion in Pavlidou’s (2014) research who explains that the

employment of “we” could demonstrate the existence of multiple memberships in different groups that might be constructed in discourse itself. Specifically, the citizens in this case became part of the exact same group (people affected by the crisis) as they connected through their shared experience of the catastrophe and became “we.”

A similar pattern is identified in the statements made by a citizen in Thessaly on September 7th 2023:

(0:36-0:48)

1. Είμαστε σε απόγνωση.
2. **We are in despair.**
3. Περιμένουμε βοήθεια από χθες το βράδυ.
4. **We have been waiting for help** since last night.
5. Δεν έχουν στείλει τίποτα.
6. They haven't sent anything.
7. Θέλουμε να φύγουμε από δω. Δεν μπορούμε άλλο.
8. **We want to leave. We can't take it anymore.**
9. Είμαστε νηστικοί, νερό δεν έχουμε.
10. **We are hungry, and we don't have water.**

In this excerpt, the citizen uses the pronoun “we” to present the shared experiences of those affected both in terms of mental state “we are in despair” (line 2) as well as physical one “we are hungry” (line 10). This use of the pronoun showcases the element of group identity since all citizens experience the same level of suffering while also highlighting the severity of the situation since it is not just one citizen but entire groups of people that do not have access to necessary

resources. In this example, there is a different function of the pronoun “we” compared to the first citizen. Particularly, the lack of action taken by the authorities is expressed through the pronoun “we” alongside with a detailed description of the mental and physical state of the citizens (in a state of despair, hungry and thirsty). Moreover, by mentioning the length of time for which the citizen has been waiting for help “since last night” (line 4), the lack of action from the government and the hopelessness of the people is illuminated. This is another great example of the way that the personal pronoun “we” empowers the language used (descriptions of the situation), since the pronoun points to collective suffering and conveys the overall message of inaction by the authorities who have abandoned the citizens. In this excerpt as well, there are multiple expressive illocutionary points made since there is a constant reference to the emotional state of the citizens including “we are in despair” (line 2) and “we can’t take it anymore” (line 8).

Therefore, in the case of the citizens, the use of the pronouns "I" and "we" work alongside the description of the people’s personal experiences and their state during the crisis to strengthen their point. Particularly, they both express the lack of action by the government, highlighting the individual actions that the citizens had to take with the absence of help (Citizen 1) and communicate their suffering and dissatisfaction (Citizen 2). The discourse of both citizens when compared to the discourse of political leaders also reveals wide differences in terms of the reality they convey with regards to the crisis. Specifically, political leaders explain the measures they have taken and the help they have sent to the citizens, while citizens express that there was no governmental support during the crisis. As a result, two completely different realities are presented depending on the speaker's point of view making us conclude that the utterances used by politicians were defective with the promises made not being fulfilled.

Part 2: Wildfire in Mati 2018

On July 23, 2018, a devastating fire began in Mati (Greece's east coast) leading to one of the deadliest fires in Greek history with 102 dead, 250 injured and 2,500 houses burned (BBC, 2019). This section focuses on the use of personal pronouns by both the political leaders at the time (prime minister and regional leader) and the citizens affected.

Politicians

In the discourse of politicians, three main illocutionary acts are identified: Directives (requesting action to be taken), Assertives (mainly stating facts) and Commissives (mostly evolving making promises/providing guarantees). Within these categories, the use of personal pronouns is considered in terms of their function and effect.

Use of Pronouns- Positive self-representation

Similar to the Storm Daniel event, politicians use personal pronouns accompanied by the course of action they have taken primarily to highlight their efforts and maintain a positive image by presenting themselves to the public as active leaders. An example of this is found in the following extract from the statement made by Alexis Tsipras (prime minister at the time) about the fires in Mati on July 24, 2018:

(0:00-0:20)

1. Διέκοψα το ταξίδι μου όταν πληροφορήθηκα ότι
2. **I cancelled my trip** when I learned that
3. η κατάσταση στην Αττική ήταν εκτός ελέγχου.
4. the situation in Attica was out of control.
5. Και πράγματι, η εικόνα που αποκόμισα τόσο
6. **Indeed, the image I gathered**

7. από τον αέρα όσο και από τις πληροφορίες
8. both from the air and
9. που μου έδωσαν εδώ στο συντονιστικό κέντρο
10. the information provided at the coordination center
11. είναι μια εικόνα ενός ασύμμετρου φαινομένου.
12. is a picture of an asymmetric phenomenon.

Through the use of personal pronouns in this example, the prime minister demonstrates a form of urgency and quick action taken since he explains that he “cancelled his trip” (line 2) as soon as he was informed of the situation, which shows to the public that he is a responsible leader concerned about taking fast action to resolve the crisis. Moreover, he continues by stating that he gathered information from multiple sources both by air and by the people in the coordination center (line 10) which also highlights his interest to understand the situation by getting access to as much data as possible. All these verbs are active ones and show the steps he took to resolve the crisis. Alongside the use of the pronoun “I”, the prime minister aims to project himself as a leader who is both willing to solve the crisis (cancelled trip) and also makes an active effort to do so (currently gathering information from different sources). Hence, he uses assertive illocutionary points such as “image I gathered” (line 6) to present the information he has gathered and the actions taken so far. This role of political leaders as sense makers and meaning makers has also been presented by McLean and Ewart (2020) in their study where they explain that during crisis events political leaders communicate with the public and act while conveying the necessary information to understand the crisis. Similarly, Tsipras passes on all relevant information while presenting a course of action as his main communicative strategy.

(01:57-2:05)

1. Αυτήν την ώρα, εγώ θέλω να απευθύνω μια έκκληση
2. at this moment, **I want to appeal**
3. προς όλους και όλες.
4. **to everyone.**
5. Να ενώσουμε τις δυνάμεις μας για να καταφέρουμε
6. **To unite our forces and achieve**
7. ό,τι καλύτερο γίνεται
8. **the best possible outcome.**

In the second part of his statement (as seen above), he directly addresses the public in an effort to promote solidarity and encourage collaboration through the use of a directive illocutionary act: “I want to appeal to everyone to unite our forces” (line 2, 4, 6). He is making a direct statement to the public while also including a call to action (unite our forces), giving emphasis to his overall statement. The prime minister uses empowering verbs such as “unite” and “achieve” to call people to action. Moreover, by including the personal pronoun “I”, he places emphasis on his individual efforts and appears as an inspiring leader who aims to work and resolve the situation. He also maintains the formal tone, while making his statement through the use of the more advanced Greek vocabulary and his reference to the actions he has taken as a prime minister. Two examples of more formal Greek vocabulary used is “απευθύνω” (address) and “έκκληση” (appeal), which are more sophisticated ways to communicate with the public, as there are simpler terms in Greek to express these words. Hence, the call to unite in this case still maintains the distance between the citizens and the politician, showcasing that they are part of different groups. Another example where the

actions taken by the political leader is highlighted through the use of the personal pronoun alongside vocabulary entailing action is found in the statement by Ilias Psinakis (mayor at the time) about the fires in Mati on July 24nd, 2018:

(0:50- 0:55)

1. Εγώ αυτήν την στιγμή δουλεύω με τα παιδιά, τρέχουμε,
2. Right now, **I am working with the guys**, running around,
3. βρίσκουμε ανθρώπους που πρέπει να βρούμε.
4. finding people we need to locate.

In this excerpt, the mayor is using personal pronouns and active verbs such as “work” and “find” to underscore his involvement in the crisis and his efforts to address it. He chooses to refer to himself as a separate entity through the usage of “I” and by mentioning that he works with the rescue teams instead of using “we”, which would have indicated an effort made as a group. In this way, he is still pointing towards his political role, which is to demonstrate leadership and action during a crisis. At the same time, it draws an us vs them distinction since he positions himself as someone separate from the whole by stating: “I am working with the guys” (line 2). It could be said that these statements are part of commissive illocutionary acts, revealing his commitment to find missing people and help combat the effects of the fire.

Another interesting excerpt from the statements of the mayor is the following:

(02:50-03:01)

1. Κάηκε το σπίτι μου, ευτυχώς.
2. My house burned down, **fortunately**.
3. Ευτυχώς, γιατί όταν καίγονται εκατοντάδες σπίτια όλων,
4. Fortunately, since when hundreds of houses are burning
5. φανταστείτε να μην καεί το δικό μου.
6. imagine if mine didn't burn.
7. Μετά θα έλεγαν ότι την έβαλα εγώ τη φωτιά.
8. **Then** they would say that **I** started the fire.

In this excerpt, the mayor mentions that he is glad his house was burned as well, so that citizens won't connect him with the incident (line 2), which is an unexpected statement because political leaders in Greece do not usually express their real thoughts this openly. The use of the personal pronoun functions as a means to deflect responsibility and avoid any association with the event. Additionally, the "us vs. them" dynamic (line 8) suggests that he views himself as part of a distinct group compared to the citizens referring to them as "they" (line 8). Overall, his statement is particularly intriguing as it reveals an important dimension of the Greek political culture: the public's demand for accountability and the politicians' efforts to distance themselves from it.

Citizens

Use of Pronouns- Express of hopelessness/ Lack of Action

In the discourse of citizens, the expressive illocutionary act is highlighted when they communicate their emotions of hopelessness due to the lack of action by the government and their despair during this crisis. An example where this act is presented through the use of personal

pronouns is taken from the statement made by a citizen affected by the fire in Mati on 24th of July, 2018.

(0:38-0:41)

1. Έπαιρνα συνεχώς το 199
2. **I was constantly calling 199**
3. που είναι της πυροσβεστικής,
4. which is the fire department's number
5. κανένας δεν το σήκωνε.
6. but no one was picking up.

In this excerpt, the use of the personal pronoun by the citizen functions as a way to demonstrate the lack of presence of any type of help during the crisis. The citizen states that despite reaching out to the fire department constantly, there was no response. The use of the word “constantly” here underscores the element of repetitive action and highlights the lack of state presence. This runs contrary to the statements by the prime minister who mentioned that all the relevant departments have been mobilized to address the situation, revealing another defective utterance. The element of lack of action is also found in the statements of another citizen from Mati:

(0:02-0:07)

1. Τι να πούμε εδώ, χθες δεν υπήρχε κρατικός μηχανισμός,
2. κανένας.
3. What can **we** say, yesterday there was **no state**

4. **mechanism**, none.
5. Σήμερα το πρωί ήρθαν όλοι με τα κοστούμια τους.
6. Today in the morning, **everyone came in their suits**.

In this case, through the use of the pronoun “we” the citizen presents himself as part of a larger group sympathizing with this feeling of hopelessness and inaction since as mentioned “there was no state mechanism” on the night of the fire. Moreover, he uses imagery when stating that “everyone came in their suits” (line 6) to refer to the politicians that went to observe the situation the next day. Through the use of imagery, the citizen is drawing an us vs them distinction, since it conveys a notion of division and makes clear that the ones wearing the suits and the citizens suffering are completely different groups. It also communicates an element of irony since the citizen suggests that the politicians invest themselves in their looks and in their image (appearing as strong and dependent leaders) while the people are in a moment of despair. In this case, there is an indirect reference to the expressive element of the utterance as the citizen is criticizing the government for its lack of presence while expressing their anger towards the situation.

The lack of any help and action by the state is also expressed in the last excerpt from the statements of another survivor of the fire:

(0:42-0:48)

1. Παντελής απουσία της πολιτείας, δηλαδή, σε όλη αυτή τη
2. Complete absence of the state, meaning, during
3. φυγή από το μάτι, εγώ δεν είδα ούτε ένα περιπολικό,
4. the escape from Mati, **I didn't see a single police car**
5. ούτε ένα πυροσβεστικό.

6. **nor a single fire truck.**

In this case, the use of the personal pronoun “I” emphasizes the lack of action taken by the government during the crisis, which caused chaos. Specifically, the personal pronoun could indicate that the citizen was left alone to deal with the situation but also functions as a means to present their personal experience, giving credibility to their statements. Moreover, through the double use of “not a single”, the citizen emphasizes the lack of help and clear instructions from the government. The element of inaction and allocation of responsibility to the government is clear in all three cases where citizens expected more help to arrive but instead had to take the situation in their own hands by calling or even volunteering themselves to save others. This response of the citizens captures the notion of solidarity during crisis as explored by Bock (2022) in his research on citizens’ responses following the L’Aquila Earthquake. Bock explains that government response was too late and for some people it never arrived, leading to a stronger response by the citizens themselves, who rescued others and provided them with necessary supplies. Similarly, the Greek citizens describe a situation where they had to step in to save themselves and others as the state support was non-existent.

This case is another example of two distinct realities presented according to the speaker. The politicians present a situation where every unit is mobilized and efforts are being made while the citizens provide a point of view where they have to do everything without any support by the state. Therefore, in the second crisis example, it is evident that the utterances used by politicians are defective ones since the plan they communicated was not executed. It is interesting to note here that compared to the previous case of the floods, the expressive illocutionary utterances are communicated indirectly. Specifically, there is no exact reference to emotions but elements of

hopelessness and anger towards the government are revealed through the descriptions of the citizens with regards to the inaction of the government. Hence, this is a good example of the way true intentions of speakers can be uncovered through utterances by examining what is said and why, which ultimately reveals the expressive element of the statements as seen in the examples above.

Part 4: Greek politicians vs Greek citizens: Bringing everything together

Based on the data presented, we can draw some intriguing conclusions regarding the speech patterns of politicians and citizens and their connection with the overall Greek political culture. This section focuses on providing an analysis of the results from both of these events and their connection with the elements of Greek political culture, and with the definition of culture that this research follows.

Political leaders

The personal pronouns were used alongside active verbs and hyperbolic language, creating two main effects. The first one was to present a course of action either taken already or one that will be taken in the future (use of pronoun “I”) through the use of commissive utterances with the goal of achieving a positive image. The political leaders in both of these crisis events emphasized economic measures as well by mentioning that the victims will be compensated for the loss of their property and by referring to their active struggle to gain support from the EU. This seems to be of utmost interest to the public judging from the economic condition in Greece and is always an element of concern for citizens during a crisis event.

The second effect was evoking a sense of collectiveness and making themselves appear as closer to the citizens through the use of verbs and sentences promoting unity such as “stand with” and “let’s unite our forces” along with the pronoun “we”, which emphasized these and revealed

the directive aspects of their statements. An important observation in this case was the way the prime ministers vs the regional leaders presented the concept of unity. Specifically, in the case of the prime ministers, the leaders maintained their formal tone even when they used the personal pronoun “we”, making the distance with the citizens still evident. On the other hand, regional leaders utilized the personal pronoun “we” along with a more informal form of the Greek language, reducing the distance between themselves and the citizens

This difference in terms of distance between the leader and the citizens created through linguistic choices was also evident through the crisis management plan each leader was suggesting. Specifically, the prime ministers referred to measures that highlighted their power and position, such as mobilization of all units and organization of rescue teams. Conversely, the regional leaders highlighted measures that made them appear as “one of the citizens”, such as going to rescue missions alongside the citizens and being present on the crisis sites. Hence, although the function of the personal pronouns is the same among political leaders, the difference in the level of power they hold is apparent, which is sensible judging from their place in the political hierarchy.

Lastly, a key observation is that none of the leaders took any responsibility for the events but merely deemed them as unprecedented or even “acts of god” as Mitsotakis stated with regards to the events in Thessaly. Although it would be expected that the use of the personal pronoun “I” would be accompanied by a statement that would reveal some form of accountability, this was absent in all cases. One interesting observation is connected to the statements by Psinakis regarding the fires in Mati. He mentioned that he was relieved his house was burned, as it would disconnect him from the events. This demonstrates that political leaders are aware of the underlying culture wherein people tend to hold politicians accountable and expect them to take responsibility during such crises.

The absence of any expression of responsibility also reveals an interesting dimension of the use of utterances. Specifically, in the majority of the statements from the two cases, the utterances used were commissive ones, which are usually associated with undertaking responsibility as Ilić & Radulović (2015) discuss in their research. The authors explain that politicians avoid to use commissive utterances in their discourse since they want to distance themselves from responsibilities and making promises. Hence, politicians decide to make what the authors refer to as “implicit expressions of commitment”, referring to general promises and plans without clear courses of actions. This phenomenon was also observed in this case where the politicians promised to take action and pointed to elements such as economic support but made no specific reference to the exact steps that will be taken nor assumed any responsibility for the destruction. The implicit aspect of the utterances was further highlighted through the perspective of the citizens, who revealed that the promises made for action were not actually followed through meaning and that the politicians only made the statements to achieve positive self-representation and not to actually resolve the situation.

Citizens

In the case of the citizens, the personal pronouns were used along with metaphors and vivid descriptions of the events, creating two different effects and giving rise to primarily expressive utterances. The first one was to present the lack of actions taken by the government, which was expressed through the use of descriptions and reinforced with the personal pronoun “I.” Specifically, the citizens used active verbs to present their own actions while conveying the lack of action taken by the government either by stating that they had to call for help multiple times with no answer or by illustrating situations where they had to rescue others since nobody would have done it otherwise. The interesting contrast here is that all of the politicians in both of the cases

emphasized that multiple actors had been mobilized for help while all of the citizens in both the events explained that there was no help throughout, revealing the defective aspects of politicians' utterances.

The second pronoun used ("we") helped highlight the hopelessness shared by all citizens who were suffering during the crisis either because they had no supplies or because they had lost their property and loved ones. In this way, the citizens were also presented as a unified group that had the same experience and sentiments during both of these events, which highlights the element of group identity. Another sentiment shared in relation to hopelessness was that of accountability. The citizens described that their feeling of hopelessness was a product of government neglect. A key example is in the case of Mati where the first citizen explained that the lack of state presence led to panic and ultimate chaos, resulting to more lives being lost. Thus, the personal pronoun intensified the experience by presenting it as a unified suffering and not just as an individual experience. Hence, the citizens primarily used expressive illocutionary acts to reveal their emotions during the crisis and communicate their hopelessness and anger towards the government.

The citizens blamed the government in both of the events and expected them to take responsibility for them. This is quite common within the Greek culture where people not only distrust politicians but also always judge their actions and level of response during a crisis. As explained, this is something that the politicians are aware of and that is why in their discourse they aim to communicate that they make a big effort to address the crisis with the goal of limiting the negative response they would receive from the public. It is interesting to note here that there were two main ways through which the expressive illocutionary acts manifested themselves. In the first case, there was explicit reference to the emotional state of the citizens. However, in the second case, there was implicit reference to their emotional state, which was revealed primarily through

their constant allusion to the lack of presence of the government revealing their frustration and anger.

This observation relates to the work of Ajiboye & Abioye (2019) who explain that language users can express their views implicitly or explicitly during communication. At the same time, the language users can also represent another group positively or negatively through their descriptions, as discussed by the authors through their case study of citizens' voices in Nigeria during a crisis. In the case of Greece, the citizens in both of the crisis events portrayed the leaders as deceptive and uncaring through the use of the expressive utterances. To be more precise, by putting the two perspectives together one concludes that the politicians were only concerned about creating a credible and positive image and not about resolving the crisis, since the citizens explained that no help ever arrived as initially promised. As McLean & Ewart (2020) also explain in their research, during crisis situations, citizens have certain expectations about the way the government should respond and if there is an expectation gap then the attitude of the public towards the leader is influenced. This is quite obvious in both of these examples presented, where it seems that there is an expectation gap between the course of action citizens were expecting the government to take and the actions that were taken leading to a negative portrayal of the political leaders by the public in both of the crisis examples.

Political Leaders vs Citizens: Two cultures?

Based on the findings of the two cases as well as the explanation of the Greek political culture, it can be deduced that indeed political leaders and citizens use different communication patterns to present a crisis situation. The political leaders relied on commissive and directive utterances (with commissive ones being more prevalent) while citizens relied on expressive utterances. Specifically, the political leaders aimed to emphasize positive self-representation and

avoid accountability by using commissive utterances and by adding the personal pronoun “I” in their discourse, evoking a sense of unity by using directive utterances along with the personal pronoun “we.” At the same time, the citizens expressed lack of action by the government through the use of expressive utterances and the personal pronoun “I” and a shared feeling of hopelessness through the personal pronoun “we.” These data reveal that those two groups have their own communication patterns which give rise to their separate group identities (Kim, 2017, p.2). At the same time, they also conform to the political Greek culture since political leaders are highly concerned with taking responsibility while the citizens are characterized by a sense of distrust and dissatisfaction towards the political leaders which is a fundamental aspect of the Greek political culture.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has delved into an alternative perspective on culture, focusing on the shared linguistic traits among individuals and the functional aspects of rhetoric. Through this analysis, a view of culture that focuses on communicative patterns was presented by looking at the discourse of two different cultural groups. Apart from this, some interesting observations were made which are worth exploring in future research. Specifically, the power dynamics revealed through differences in tone between prime ministers and mayors suggest the importance of understanding communicative patterns in relation to authority. As evident, linguistic choices can also convey the level of power the speaker holds, demonstrating the way power influences communicative patterns. Furthermore, it is important to further evaluate the disparity in perspectives between politicians and citizens. As observed, it seems that each group was presenting a different perspective of reality of the situation, which highlights the significance of critical evaluation of information presented based on the speaker. This is worth exploring from an intercultural communication perspective since this work showcased that indeed each cultural group has diverse communicative patterns which could lead to the presence of diverse narratives around a single event as it was observed in this case study. Moreover, it is suggested that further research should be carried out in additional facets of discourse, such as metaphors and body language to deepen our understanding of communicative behaviors and cultural distinctions.

Overall, this research highlights the interplay between language, culture, and power dynamics, urging continued exploration into these complex relationships. At the same time, it prompts us to consider culture in a less essentialist manner and engages us in reflection on its various possible definitions. Culture is both a complex and contested term, as there is no widely accepted definition for it. Thus, the best approach is to continue its exploration by offering

alternative views and interpretations that broaden our understanding not only of the term but also of our daily interactions.

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Appendix

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