ABSTRACT

JENNIFER BARTGIS SHERIDAN. The Woman’s Mandate: Investigating Stance Constructions and Negotiations of Power in Dynastic Female Congressional Speech (Under the direction of Dr. Agnes Bolonyai.)

The intent of this study is to investigate linguistic expressions of stance (Biber, 2006; Biber and Finegan, 1989), especially how dynastic Congressional women construct an ethos of credibility (Maingeneau, 2002; Roitman, 2014) in order to access inherited political capital and by extension political power (Bordieu, 1991). This study specifically focuses on the variation of, the first-person personal pronouns, “I” and “we.” as a discursive means indexing power. In this study, I will demonstrate that dynastic political women strategically access political by power consistently using “I” epistemic stance constructions over “we” indicating their adoption of masculine strategies within the political androcentric space.