

# Verbal and Nonverbal Strategies of Political Discourse

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The study of televised interviews is a quite fruitful and interesting area of research and proof of this is the vast amount of literature that exists about it (Bull and Elliot 1998; Clayman 1993; and Greatbatch 1992). In this paper we attempt to analyse the relationship between verbal and nonverbal strategies in political interviews. Nonverbal elements play a very important role in communication in general, and in televised interviews in particular because of the impact of the Media. Two different types of nonverbal devices will be distinguished: those performed consciously and those performed unconsciously. Whereas conscious devices are closely related to what the politician wants to transmit, unconscious devices encode a message sometimes far away from the politician's purposes. The politician is only in control of conscious mechanisms but not of unconscious ones. With this purpose in mind, we have selected a televised interview with the ex-President of the United States, Bill Clinton, which took place in June 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004.

## 1. Introduction

For most politicians mass communication is an important element in their lives because they can reach a huge number of people. But it may also have a disadvantage: if their performance is not good enough, their image can be damaged. Therefore we thought it could be interesting to analyse the relationship between verbal and nonverbal strategies in televised political interviews. For this purpose, we have selected a televised interview featuring the ex-President of the United States Bill Clinton.

Although there is a wide range of literature on televised interviews (Bull & Elliot 1998, Carter & Mccarthy 2002, Clayman 1988, 1991, 1992, 1993, Greatbatch 1986, 1988, 1992, Harris 1986, 1991, and Heritage & Greatbatch 1991), not many authors have taken into account the interplay between words and nonverbal signals such as paralanguage, gestures, posture, visual contact, etc. Some scholars (McNeill 1985, Poyatos 2002, and Richmond, McCroskey & Payne 1991) have already emphasized that it is necessary to include both verbal and nonverbal elements in discursive studies.

It is very important to highlight that broadcast talk is different from ordinary talk in many ways. For example, interviewers (IRs) should limit themselves to asking questions and interviewees (IEs) should refrain from asking questions or initiate actions such as unsolicited comments on prior talk because they only have to answer the questions posed by the IR (Heritage & Greatbatch 1991). As Heritage (2003) points out, a good IR should be both objective and challenging. It

is very important that he/she gets as much information as possible from the IE and for this reason he/she may ask questions which make the IR feel uncomfortable.

Additionally, it is widely recognised that “what people do is frequently more important than what they say” (Hall 1973:2) and politicians know that. For this reason, they pay a lot of attention to their appearances, face gestures, smiles, postures, visual contacts and hand and body movements and try to use them to their advantage. In a televised interview (in contrast to a broadcast radio interview) these nonverbal signals are particularly important (Hellweg, Pfau & Brydon 1992).

Finally, it is worth mentioning that even though nonverbal behaviour can be intentional, conscious and successful, it can also be unconscious and, consequently, unintentionally performed (Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson 1967). This is very important because a politician’s gestures may reveal what he/she wants to hide with his/her words as he/she cannot always control his/her bodily behaviour.

## 2. Method

We have selected an interview broadcast by BBC1 the 22<sup>nd</sup> of June 2004 at 10:35pm. It is a 45:18 minute long interview from a programme called *Panorama* which took place in a New York hotel. The interviewer was David Dimpleby and the interviewee was the ex-President of the United States Bill Clinton. He agreed to speak to *Panorama* as part of the publicity campaign for his autobiography *My Life*.

The speech data we have used has been taken from a BBC *Panorama* Special transcript (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/panorama/3885521.stm>). Afterwards, it has been coded along the following dimensions: (1) numbering and labelling of turns; (2) distinction of turns between “public content” and “private content”; (3) identification and counting of paralinguistic signals along the interview; (4) identification and counting of facial gestures along the interview; (5) identification and counting of hand gestures, posture and body movements; (6) analysis of visual contact between interviewer and interviewee; (7) identification of verbal strategies (3-part list, parallelism, TPCC, oppositeness); (8) synchrony of nonverbal signals with other nonverbal and verbal strategies; (9) rating of emotional state<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The coding for the above mentioned categories turned out to be straight forward. The coders agreed on their annotations, even in the rating of categories considered more subjective (ie. “emotional state”).

### 3. The results

Table 1 below shows Clinton's emotional state (1 = relaxed; 2 = angry; 3 = very furious), as well as the number of verbal and nonverbal strategies used in every turn.

Table 1: <i>Data throughout turns</i>											
turns	emotional state	non-verbal	verbal	turns	emotional state	non-verbal	verbal	turns	emotional state	non-verbal	Verbal
Q/A 1	1	0	2	Q/A21	3	3	2	Q/A41	2	5	3
Q/A 2	1	0	0	Q/A22	3	2	1	Q/A42	2	11	11
Q/A 3	1	0	0	Q/A23	3	5	5	Q/A43	2	5	6
Q/A 4	1	0	2	Q/A24	2	1	0	Q/A44	2	0	0
Q/A 5	1	0	0	Q/A25	2	1	0	Q/A45	2	6	5
Q/A 6	1	4	2	Q/A26	3	2	4	Q/A46	2	7	3
Q/A 7	1	0	0	Q/A27	1	1	0	Q/A47	2	5	1
Q/A 8	1	7	6	Q/A28	1	2	1	Q/A48	2	0	0
Q/A 9	1	2	1	Q/A29	3	16	9	Q/A49	2	12	5
Q/A 10	1	1	2	Q/A30	3	0	1	Q/A50	2	0	1
Q/A 11	1	0	0	Q/A31	2	2	0	Q/A51	2	5	1
Q/A 12	2	11	7	Q/A32	2	4	0	Q/A52	2	1	1
Q/A 13	2	11	7	Q/A33	3	3	0	Q/A53	2	0	1
Q/A 14	1	0	0	Q/A34	3	4	0	Q/A54	2	8	5
Q/A 15	2	2	5	Q/A35	3	3	0	Q/A55	2	11	4
Q/A 16	1	0	0	Q/A36	3	4	1	Q/A56	2	6	5
Q/A 17	1	0	1	Q/A37	3	8	4	Q/A57	1	1	1
Q/A 18	2	2	3	Q/A38	2	2	0	Q/A58	1	1	2
Q/A 19	2	4	0	Q/A39	2	3	0	Q/A59	1	0	0
Q/A 20	3	4	0	Q/A40	2	3	3	Q/A60	1	2	0
								Q/A61	1	0	0

We have examined correlations between variables in order to see their degree of relationship. For the correlation between verbal strategies and gestures, we have used the Pearson product-moment correlation. However, in order to assess the relationship between emotional state and the use of verbal strategies and gestures, we have used Spearman's rank correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) (a special case of the Pearson product-moment coefficient). The reason for this decision is that Pearson's correlation requires the variables to be measured on interval scales, while Spearman's correlation can be used for variables measured at the ordinal level.

		nonverbal	verbal
nonverbal	Pearson Correlation	1	<b>0,795</b>
	N	61	61
verbal	Pearson Correlation	<b>0,795</b>	1
	N	61	61

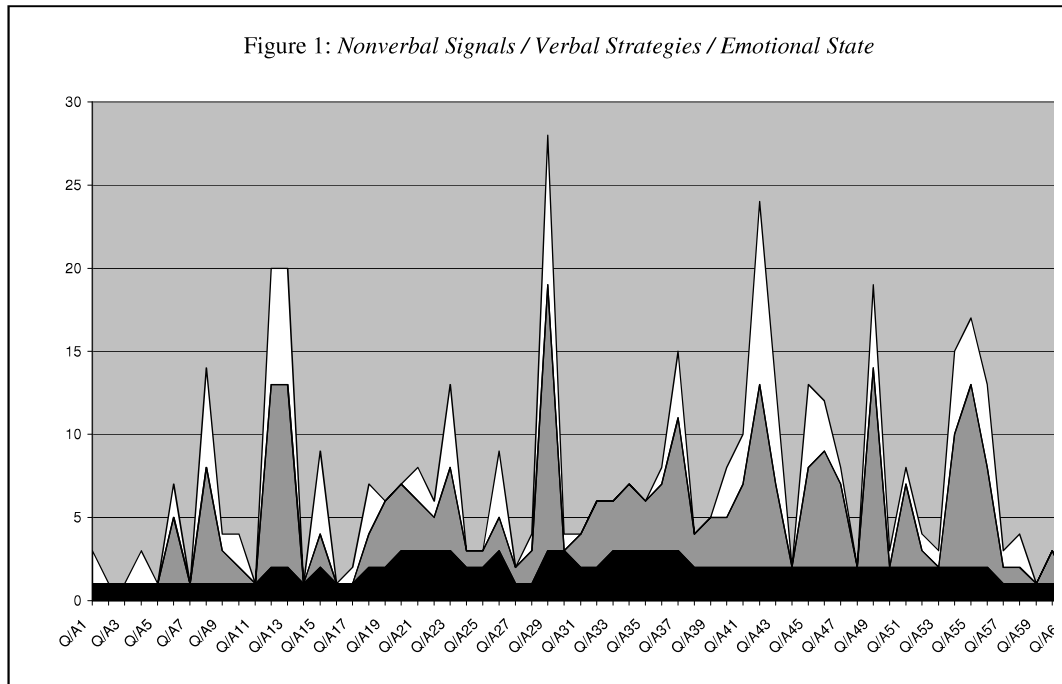
As noticed in Table 2, there is a high correlation between verbal strategies and nonverbal elements (0,795). This implies there is a tendency for the two variables to increase and decrease together. So, the higher the number of verbal strategies, the higher the number of nonverbal devices. These data will be analysed in detail in the Discussion section.

		emotional state	nonverbal	verbal
emotional state	correlation coefficient	1,000	<b>0,500</b>	0,221
	N	61	61	61

From Table 3 above, we see a different relation between emotional state and nonverbal signals, on the one hand, and between emotional state and verbal strategies, on the other. While the correlation between emotional state and use of nonverbal signals has proved to be moderate (0,500), the correlation between emotional state and use of verbal strategies has proved to be low (0,221). Even though further discussion shall follow in the next section, one of the reasons for this difference may be that verbal strategies are conscious devices intentionally used, whereas nonverbal signals are mainly unconscious when related to emotion. This means, in most cases, Clinton's gestures will show the way he feels. If the politician is furious, we will easily know that by paying attention to his nonverbal behaviour.

Graphic 1 illustrates the three variables 'nonverbal', 'verbal' and 'emotional state' together, so that we can compare their co-occurrence throughout the whole interview. The black area indicates emotional state, the grey area shows the number of nonverbal signals performed, and the white area illustrates the number

of verbal strategies used in the interview (all of them referred only to the interviewee and not to the interviewer).



Finally, we have also used contingency tables to analyse the relationship between the variables “emotional state” (ordinal) and “private/public” (nominal). The contingency table showing the frequencies of occurrence of the two variables mentioned above is illustrated below (Table 4).

Table 4: <i>Contingency table emotional state / public-private</i>					
		emotional state			total
		relaxed	angry	very furious	
private/public	private (family matters)	1	0	0	1
	private (family matters)	8	0	0	8
	private (sexual affair)	1	6	7	14
	Public (international politics)	0	15	0	15
	Public (domestic politics)	3	1	0	4
	private/public (politics/sexual affair)	5	6	5	16
	Public/private (politics/family life)	3	0	0	3
	total	21	28	12	61

Then, the contingency coefficient of the data in the table above is 0,687.

#### 4. Discussion

As far as structure is concerned, and according to the data from the results above, we can divide the interview into different sections, as shown in Figure 2. These sections correspond to different stages of the interviewee's emotional state when answering the questions addressed by Dimbleby. The first section corresponds to an introductory stage, a kind of warming up, which goes from the beginning of the interview until Q/A8. Then, there is a clip in which Clinton and Monica Lewinsky appear together at the end. This clip is a kind of bridge between the relaxation of stage 1 and the tension of stage 2 (from Q/A9 to Q/A19). Then, stage 3 goes from Q/A20 to Q/A37, which is the stage where more tension is found. Stage 4 starts at Q/A38 and finishes at Q/A56. Finally, stage 5 goes from Q/A57 to Q/A61.

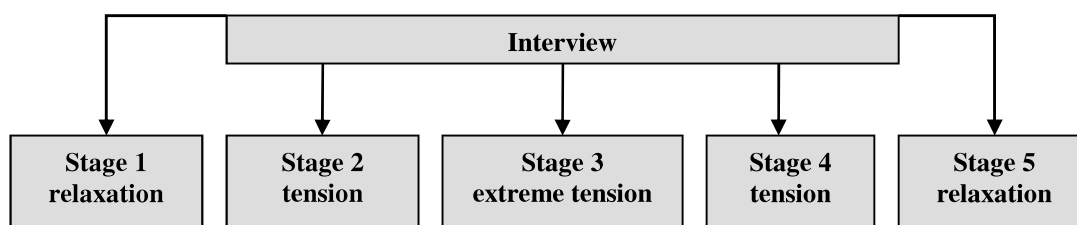


Figure 2: Interview structure

Regarding nonverbal signals in the interview, it is worthwhile mentioning that most of them are not really communicative strategies used with a persuasive purpose but unintentional elements which show Clinton's exasperation in many of his answers to Dimbleby's mischievous questions.

One of the most important nonverbal elements is *paralanguage*. By paralanguage we refer to vocal qualities and qualifiers such as pitch, rhythm, intensity, loudness, tempo, etc., as well as to a full repertoire of vocalizations such as coughing, laughing, crying, yawning, etc., that accompany speech or occur in isolation and which show relevant information about the participants in the interaction. Harris and Rubinstein (1975:263) state that our voice is

[...] an unusually sensitive barometer of how we feel, the particular "mood" we are in at the moment of speaking. [...] We learn to exude expression of this kind and to perceive it in the speech of others according to a set of shared expectations prescribed by our culture. The basis of most of our intuitive impressions of this kind often turns out to be some conventional combination of the use of pitch, loudness, tempo, and duration.

This combination of the use of pitch, loudness, tempo, and duration helped us to identify the point of greatest tension: Q/A29. This is a clear example of the power of paralanguage to reveal somebody's mood. In this specific example we do not need to understand Clinton's words to perceive his feelings of tremendous anger and fury. The interviewer had been asking him about the Lewinsky sexual affair

from exchange Q/A13 but it is now (Q/A29) when Clinton cannot hide his feelings for any longer:

- (1) Clinton:           Wasn't as I saw it sir, we had several years of evidence.  
                               We had several years of evidence. Kenneth Starr would not be  
                               allowed to be prosecutor against me as a defendant in any decent  
                               court in the land.
- Dimbleby:            You obvious[ ly ]
- Clinton:               [And], and let me just say this. One of the reasons he  
                               got away with it is because people like you only ask people like  
                               me the questions. You gave him a complete free ride (...)

It seems that Clinton has just said all he wanted to say when he states "Kenneth Starr would not be allowed to be prosecutor against me as a defendant in any decent court in the land" and so it is Dimbleby's turn. Contrarily to our expectations, Clinton changes his mind and, very quickly, interrupts Dimbleby. Clinton raises his voice and uses a high pitch because he cannot hide for any longer his innermost feelings of anger and fury. The repertoire of vocal qualities present in this extract is unintentionally performed as a result of his discomfort to talk about his sexual affair with Lewinsky. Consequently, in this case, we can say it is an unconscious use of paralanguage.

Clinton also uses paralinguistic elements intentionally. Sometimes his speech slows down with different purposes:

- (1) to have time to think what to say (Q/A47);
- (2) to emphasize his words (Q/A49);
- (3) to give the impression he is relaxed (Q/A6), etc.

In relation to the first one (Q/A47), Clinton had just been asked a very tricky question (whether he urged Tony Blair not to support President Bush) and he has to decide what to say. There is a silence and then a 'linguistic delay' in the sense that even though he articulates words (*Well I have sa... I don't... you're asking me a question and I'm not sure exactly...*) he says nothing. This 'linguistic delay' is uttered very slowly:

- (2) Clinton:           *Well I have sa... I don't... you're asking me a question and I'm  
                               not sure exactly* when I was at Chequers, vis a vis the Iraq date.  
                               I've been there several times since I left office...

In exchange Q/A49 (still talking about his relationship with Blair regarding the invasion of Iraq) Clinton slows down in order to emphasize his words. As a matter of fact, these words are so important for him that he even repeats them two lines later:

- (3) Clinton: But here's the problem Tony Blair faced. *Blair had a problem unique in Europe* and that's why I went to the Labour Party Conference in Blackpool and defended him ...he had a problem unique in Europe (...)

His speech also slows down in order to give the impression he is relaxed (Q/A6). He is talking about anger and he is trying to make us believe that he is not an angry man and for that reason he talks quite slowly, just to show he is a very calm person:

- (4) Clinton: ...If you go round mad you can't, you don't think very well, and you wind up doing things that you shouldn't do. And I think there are numerous points in my life, where I really was angry and I, it bothered me. I also think a lot of anger is quite healthy and I've bent over backwards because I tried to be a peace maker in my home; I bent over backwards not to be angry, and never to show anger and I think there's a price for that as well.

In other occasions he consciously uses paralinguistic vocalizations such as laughing to soften an unpleasant situation. This is the case when the interviewer asks him about the way he felt when he had to deal with Al Qaeda and at the same time sleep on the sofa because he had been kicked out the marital bed. Clinton knows the interviewer is trying to show he was unable to solve the terrorist problem because of his own personal problems and private life. So, he laughs even though the situation is not funny at all (A40). In some cases it is just a nervous laugh, as in A34 and A35. What is important is that the three of them (A34, A35 and A40) occur in turns which are considered of extreme tension, or tension, something quite apart from any feeling of 'happiness'.

So, by means of paralinguistic signals we are told of the speaker's emotional state, the speaker's relation with other participants, the speaker's intentions to go on speaking or to finish his turn, the speaker's attitude, etc. In Bolinger's words (1986:338): "Intonation is important for who is speaking, for who will be taking the next turn, for how the act is to be understood ..., for how the speaker will be evaluated..."

As it was previously mentioned, in the sequence A28/Q29/A29 there is a confusing situation: Even though Clinton's intonation in A28 shows that he has concluded his turn, he interrupts Dimbleby when he has just started to ask another question. As it was stated above, Clinton has been refraining from showing any sign of anger but he cannot hide his feelings for any longer and there is a kind of 'emotional outburst'.

In the same way as voice and its qualities are important, the lack of voice is also relevant. We may distinguish two main types of situations where there is no voice: on the one hand, we may find silences, which are spaces with no voice or noise at all (also called unfilled pauses by Knapp 1980); on the other hand, we may find pauses which are filled with vocal segregates (*uh-huh, ah, oh, etc.*) or



characterizers (crying, coughing, laughing, etc.). Knapp (1980:222) analyses pauses in the following way: “[...] the two major types of pauses are the unfilled pause (silent) and the filled pause. A filled pause is simply filled with some type of phonation such as “um,” “uh,” [...] Some people associate filled pauses and repetitions with emotional arousal and others feel that filled pauses may reduce anxiety, but jam cognitive processes”.

As previously stated, Clinton’s pace slows down in Q/A47 in order to have time to think what to say. There is an unfilled pause (silent) and then two filled pauses (false starts). He had been asked a very difficult question (whether he urged Tony Blair not to support President Bush) and he needed some time in order to think what to say.

As regards visual nonverbal devices, *facial gestures* are the most noticeable ones. The face is probably one of the most outstanding nonverbal elements since it is always visible and, consequently, it is always a source of information for the other participants.

Within facial gestures, one of the signals politicians generally use to their advantage is the smile. The smile is a very important and complicated facial gesture. Its main function may be that of showing happiness but it may also serve other purposes.

If we analyse some of the smiles performed by Clinton throughout this interview, we will notice many of them serve a very specific purpose: masking his anger, discomfort and uneasiness. At the beginning, when answering the first questions, Clinton was more relaxed but, after the questions on the Monica Lewinsky affair, Clinton has to fight against his emotions. He tries his best to look calm and nice but his face says the opposite. In this respect, Ekman, Friesen and Ellsworth (1972:2) state: “Although smiles may be a reliable index of pleasure or happiness, a person may also smile to mask a feeling he wishes to conceal or to prevent a feeling when he has no emotion at all. Is the face like an involuntary system or is it subject to voluntary activation and thus vulnerable to purposeful control and disguise? Clearly, it is both”.

Regarding *posture*, it gives us important information about Clinton’s attitude. For Mehrabian (1972), there are two dimensions of posture which are associated with communication of attitudes: the factor of immediacy and that of relaxation. “Forward lean is suggestive of greater immediacy, as in the presence of someone liked. Asymmetry of arms and legs plus sideways and backwards lean is indicative of relaxation that may be present, for Americans, with another of lower status. While these dimensions may have crosscultural validity, it has not been clearly shown that the postural variables indicative of a particular dimension are universal”. (cited in Ramsey 1979:120). In this interview we have observed that whenever Clinton leans forward he either wants to manifest his attention to what Dimpleby was asking him or he wants to intimidate the interviewer because he has been asked a tough question.

A posture typical of Clinton is the one of his hand in his chin. He uses this posture to manifest his attention to what the interviewer is saying. Apart from this classic posture we have found two variants of it:

- (1) his hand grasping eagerly his chin and
- (2) his hand on his cheek.

The first one is used in moments of extreme tension (he is trying to control himself) and the second when he feels exhausted after an episode of agitation.

*Visual* contact or eye contact is also an important element in nonverbal communication. It can be used to regulate communication but also as an indicator of dominance. When Clinton gets really angry (third stage) he looks at the interviewer with contempt and disdain (A29). His threatening eyes say everything about Clinton's stance and attitude towards the interviewer's question. In addition to the expression of his eyes, we can also notice the swollen volume of his carotid artery.

Regarding verbal strategies, a detailed analysis of the most relevant ones found in the interview follows below:

#### 4.1 3-part list

This is a well-known rhetorical device used by many politicians as a persuasive strategy. Clinton uses it many times in this interview. In the following extract he has just been asked why he offered the opposition "on plate" a good reason to attack him: Lewinsky affair (lines 198-203).

- (5) Dimbleby:           You say, then along came the Lewinsky affair and you offered it to them on a plate in effect. How did you come to do that?
- Clinton:                ...It happened at a time when I was angry, I was *under stress*, I was *afraid* I was going to lose my fight with the Republican Congress...

Clinton is explaining the motives which drove him to do it and he has to sound convincing. For that reason he uses a 3-part list: "I was angry, I was under stress, I was afraid". In order to draw attention to that list he even uses his fingers to enumerate them. In relation to this type of strategy Atkinson (1984:57) explains that:

In speeches, conversations and most other forms of communication, the most commonly used type of list contains three items, and an example of such a list has just been used to start this sentence. One of the main attractions of three-part lists is that they have an air of unity or completeness about them. Lists comprising only two items tend to appear inadequate or incomplete.

Three is the minimum number in order to offer a pattern. If you are given two elements of a sequence (3/9/?) you can guess more or less the third: 27 (nx3) or

15 ( $n+6$ ) or 81 ( $n^2$ ). But if you are given the third (3/9/81), you can establish the pattern ( $n^2$ ).

#### 4.2 Extreme Case Formulations (ECF)

This term was introduced by Pomerantz (1986). Edwards (2000:347f.) explains they are "...descriptions or assessments that deploy extreme expressions such as every, all, none, best, least, as good as it gets, always, perfectly, brand new, and absolutely". Clinton uses them quite often to indicate that something is definite and conclusive.

When Clinton was asked about his family's behaviour after the Lewinsky affair, he explains that even though "he was getting a whipping at home" he deserved it. This is a strategic answer in the sense that it is a way to recognise his mistakes publicly. He uses an ECF to strengthen this recognition of this big fault (lines 416-424):

- (6) Clinton:                   ...I thought whatever they wanted to say or do to me, Hilary and Chelsea, they had *an absolute right* to do so the fact that I was still able to stay under the same roof does...

This ECF co-occurs with a gesture indicating something definite: palm down and movements to the right and to the left. This gesture reinforces the persuasive effect of this ECF. Pomerantz (1986:227) summarises the three main uses of ECFs in the following way:

- to assert the strongest case in anticipation of non-sympathetic hearings,
- to propose the cause of a phenomenon,
- to speak for the rightness (wrongness) of a practice.

It is really interesting to note that these ECFs are very weak in the sense that it is very easy to refute them. If somebody mentions just one counterexample, the validity of the ECFs is in jeopardy. For this reason, it is very common to find a softer version ('a softener') right after the attack to an ECF. The order is: ECF–challenge – softener. It is also interesting to note that even though there is a 'weakness' to ECFs, a study carried out by Edwards (2000) discovered that the use of ECFs is very popular and widespread, because most of the times people accept them and admit their non literal interpretations.

#### 4.3 Parallelism (repetition)

Sometimes Clinton uses parallel structures to reinforce an idea. He either repeats the same structure or even the same words. When talking about repetition Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992:131) explain that "This is probably the major resource of schematic rhetoric and the one with closest affinity to the spontaneous expression of emotion".

In the following extract Clinton wants to emphasize that he was fighting against political enemies during the Lewinsky trial. One of these enemies was Kenneth Starr and he insists on the fact that the proofs which support what he is saying are well-known because they belong to the past (lines 310-312):

- (7) Clinton:                   Wasn't as I saw it sir, *we had several years of evidence. We had several years of evidence.* Kenneth Starr would not be allowed to be prosecutor against me as a defendant in any decent court in the land.

In order to bolster this repetition he points backwards as referring to something past. According to Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992:131): "The pattern created by a repeated word, or the rhythm created by a repeated phrase, validate Coleridge's remarkable insight about 'striv(ing) to hold in check the workings of passion'<sup>2</sup>."

#### 4.4 Script formulations

A widely used persuasive strategy is to lead somebody to believe that you share the same feelings and ideas. This is the main goal of the so-called script formulations (Edwards 1994, 1995, 1997): To construct a common socio-psychological reality based on a set of beliefs and experiences shared by speaker and listener. Edwards (1995) names a series of grammatical scripting devices to describe a script formulation: iterative present tenses, the use of the modal *would*, expressions such as *you know*, etc. When a speaker uses these script formulations in his/her discourse, his/her accounts are not framed as a specific, witnessed episode, but as a known and predictable pattern.

Clinton uses two script formulations in turn 13. Dimpleby had just told him that he had offered his enemies a gift with the Lewinsky affair. Clinton answers he had already been asked that question before and for that purpose he uses a script formulation: *But you know when people ask me this question*. That means that he is used to that type of questions and for that reason the interviewer and the audience are induced to think that he is going to provide a good answer. A few lines later he uses *And you know* in an attempt to look congenial in order to get the interviewer's alliance because he knows that the interviewer is about to start a touchy issue (i.e., the Lewinsky affair).

- (8) Clinton:                   Of course I did, and was it rational? No. So I do my very best to explain why I think it happened. *But you know when people ask me this question*, well how could you do something so stupid, when you knew they were after you ... *And you know*, it's hard to think straight when that's going on.

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<sup>2</sup> S. T. Coleridge (1956:206).

According to Edwards (2003:38): "... formulating events as regular makes them both factually robust and also somewhat knowable in advance without having to wait and see for any specific instance. Script formulations are presented as if based on lots of instances, and perhaps lots of people's repeated (consensual) experiences of instances".

#### 4.5 Use of pronouns

Clinton also uses personal pronouns to his advantage for strategic reasons. In the following example Clinton explains that Starr had turned a private issue into a legal one. Then, the Dimpleby asks him whether he thinks that was wrong and Clinton answers "Of course". Right after that, the following exchange takes place (lines 209-218):

- (9) Dimpleby: Did you think it was dangerous at the time?  
 Clinton: What *they* were doing?  
 Dimpleby: What *you* were doing. Did you think it was risky?  
 Clinton: *I* don't know that *I*, *I* don't – *I* can't answer that. *I* don't know what *I* thought about it. (interjects) It didn't last very long and ...and the accounts are not entirely accurate of what did happen; so *I* don't want to talk about that. *I*'ve said, all *I* have to say about that in the book. *I*'m not saying any more about that.

It is clear that Dimpleby is asking Clinton whether what he was doing was dangerous but he pretends not having understood the question. He tries to avoid that question because he does not like it. When he answers the question he averts gaze and shows a complete rejection. Clinton feels it was a very personal (he uses 10 times the personal pronoun *I*) and dissenting (he uses 7 negations) question.

#### 4.6 Rhetorical questions

Rhetorical questions are highly strategic in the sense that they raise the audience's level of awareness. Clinton knows this and for that reason he uses them quite often. It is particularly remarkable the following extract (lines 446-456):

- (10) Clinton: ... And then could I have... would I have done more after the USS Cole in October two thousand. And could I have if, that's one big if. If the government intelligence agencies in this case the FBI and the CIA had agreed with me even though my term was almost over and had told me that they agreed for sure that Bin Laden and Al Qaeda were responsible for the USS Cole, a finding they did not make until after I had left office, I would have done more then. Would it have succeeded in getting Bin Laden, would it have prevented 9/11, I don't know...

Previous to that answer the interviewer had told Clinton that he had given the action against terrorism and against Al Qaeda a low priority. He uses four

rhetorical questions (all of them with conditional tenses: *would*, *could*, *would* and *would*) in order to show that no one can know what could have happened and for that reason no one can blame him for anything. Zillman (1972:161) summarises the strategic use of this type of questions in the following way:

It may be argued that the assumed covert agreement response elicited by a rhetorical agreement question, as compared to the relatively passive decoding of an assertion in statement form, raises the individual's level of awareness. It makes him cognizant of his position on a particular issue, and it may activate issue-related cognitions to consolidate and bolster his evaluations, thereby facilitating his involvement with the issue, and possibly producing some self-commitment.

#### 4.7 Oppositeness (contrasts)

Another strategy used by Clinton is related to the way he presents something. The interviewer and the audience are shown the two sides of the coin, there is no mid point. In the following extract (lines 145-162) the interviewer and the audience are offered positive against negative alternatives:

(11) Clinton N:                   ...I was interested, to me, the way I kept score in my Presidency was, *Did more people have jobs or not? Did more people move out of poverty or not? Did the crime rate go down or not? Were more kids breathing clean air and fewer getting asthma? What was our record in the world? Did we advance peace and prosperity and security or not?* That's how I kept score. Others kept score in a totally different way. You know, *are we hurting the other side or not?*

Right before this question Clinton had just watched a video about Monica Lewinsky and he knows he is about to be asked about her. He tries to focus his answer on exclusively political issues and that is why he reveals his political achievements in an attempt to counterbalance what he knew he was going to be asked about next (his sexual blunder). Clinton uses rhetorical disjunctive questions in which the interviewer and the audience are forced to choose only one option, they are offered no other alternative.

#### 4.8 Comparisons

At times Clinton uses comparisons in order to highlight his achievements or stress his uniqueness. In the following answer (lines 87-94) he compares himself with the rest of Presidents and he defends that he is different from all of them because of his loyalty, support and determination (3-part list) of his personal friends:

(12) Clinton:                   (interrupts) It, if, when you live ...my life has been both selfish and selfless. I mean if you live the kind of life I live, I've lived, you're running for office – it's almost impossible, as I say in this book, *I may be the only person* who got elected President ever,

because of the loyalty, support and determination of his personal friends, who just wouldn't let my campaign die...

This uniqueness which he defends here is supported by a nonverbal strategy: He touches his heart when uttering this.

#### 4.9 Metonymy

When it is not advantageous to Clinton to address something directly, he uses a metonymy. In 1999 Clinton and Blair bombed Iraq for four days. Instead, Clinton says (lines 483-514):

(13) Clinton: ... he's not a good man he's getting older and eh, as long as we don't lift the sanctions and let him rebuild his military power, that eventually we'll get a change there. Then in ninety eight when Saddam kicked the inspectors out to try to force us to lift the sanctions. *Prime Minister Blair and I bombed him* for four days and we bombed the sites where thought the chemical and biological materials would be...

It is not advantageous to Clinton to admit that he bombed a country full of innocent people, instead he says that he bombed Saddam. Cockcroft and Cockcroft (1992:120) explain the persuasive use of this tool in the following way: "Through a common association, or 'compact reference' within the minds of author and audience, an idea put into words metonymically represents unexpressed or implicit ideas and associations. This will have obvious implications for persuasion in general, and advertising in particular".

#### 4.10 Delays

When Clinton is caught between the devil and the deep blue sea he takes his time to answer the question. In a previously offered extract (lines 446-456) Clinton does not start answering the question till the 11<sup>th</sup> word:

(14) Clinton: *Well because, I mean in theory we could have but* we would have been all alone everybody would have thought we were crazy based on that. And then could I have...

Clinton had just been asked why he did not invade Afghanistan based on the African Embassy bombings. It is a very touchy question and for that reason it is delayed. It is interesting to mention here the use of 'well'. Schiffrin (1987) suggests that 'well' is used almost exclusively at the beginning of a response, to signal that an upcoming contribution is not fully consonant with the set of possible responses implied by the question initiator. According to Byron and Heeman (1997), 'well' is "[...] typically used to correct a misconception or to suggest an alternative plan. It is found not only at the beginning of responses, but

also after the other speaker has just stated a fact or drawn a conclusion with which the current speaker is about to disagree.

Byron and Heeman (1997) say that when a speaker starts a turn with 'well' it makes us expect that the speaker is about to disagree with or correct information (implicitly or explicitly) from the prior turn. According to Schiffrin (1985) 'well' prefaces insufficient answers and attributes to 'well' the role of a coherence marker (Schiffrin 1985:650):

... *well* is more likely to be used when respondents cannot easily meet conversational demands for response because the informational content of their response will not fit the coherence options just opened by a prior referent.

In this study she reveals that clear confirmative or negative responses to yes-no questions are rarely prefaced by 'well' whereas nearly half of the unspecified answers to yes-no questions are prefaced by 'well'. Similarly, the answers to wh-questions tended to be prefaced by 'well' when they did not offer the required information.

Although, for an expository convenience, in some cases we have made reference to specific verbal strategies or nonverbal devices, we know communication is a multi-channel process where both verbal and nonverbal signals are in close relation. As we have seen in the results section above, after calculating Pearson's coefficient for 'verbal' and 'nonverbal', we can observe there is a positive high correlation between variables (0,795). This implies not only that verbal and nonverbal devices tend to appear together, but also that they increase and decrease together. At first sight, this may seem logical and we can interpret that Clinton uses both verbal and nonverbal strategies in order to achieve his purposes. But, if we analyse the meaning and function of elements in detail, we will notice that the fact that they appear together does not imply they coincide in meaning or function. We find two different situations:

- Speech and gestures coincide in meaning and purpose.
- Speech and gestures do not coincide in meaning and purpose.

The first case is the one we have mentioned as a logical interpretation, because it means when Clinton has a purpose in mind he makes use of both verbal and nonverbal strategies. For example, when he is talking of 'anger' and he is saying he is not an angry person, he uses a verbal strategy (a contrast of concepts) and, at the same time, he slows down his speech so that the audience can perceive he is a relaxed person (that is to say, he is not angry). Consequently, verbal and nonverbal signals have a common meaning and function, both of them being used consciously and intentionally.

The second situation is completely different because it implies Clinton's words and his gestures mean different things. That is to say, he uses different verbal strategies with a specific purpose but the nonverbal signals co-occurring with speech are not really part of a strategy but the expression of unconscious



signals. For example, in turn Q/A36, Clinton wants to sound definitive when answering “no” but, at the same time, we can notice there is no visual contact at all with the interviewer because Clinton does not want to look into Dimpleby’s eyes. Because of that, what we perceive is that he is lying. Something similar happens in Q/A42 where Clinton uses lots of rhetorical questions to sound convincing but his too slow speech, the use of very long vowels, etc. show he does not really know what to answer or what to say.

As mentioned above, the use of unconscious nonverbal elements by Clinton has to do with his emotional state. By Spearman’s coefficient, we can see there is a moderate correlation between the use of nonverbal signals and his emotional state (0,500). One of the reasons why this correlation is not higher may be just because he is a politician and, although his gestures are a barometer of his feelings, he still has some control over them.

The main cause for Clinton’s emotional states is the content of the interviewer’s questions. The contingency correlation between the variables ‘content public/private’ and ‘emotional state’ has proved to be high (0,687). Clinton gets more furious when questions have to do with the Monica Lewinsky affair. Relaxation tends to appear in those turns where Clinton is answering questions about his private family life. But we also find turns whose content has to do with Clinton’s public and private lives. In Q/A33 Dimpleby knows Clinton has lost his temper with the previous questions about Monica Lewinsky, and the interviewer wants to follow on this line but he has already said he does not “intend to talk endlessly about her”. So he introduces a new theme which has to do with Clinton’s public life, Al Qaeda, but at the same time Dimpleby is interested in knowing the way in which Clinton’s private life could have affected his public life decisions. That is why we say this section contains questions whose themes are a mixture of the two parallel lives, private and public.

Data gathered in the present study have shown that the use of nonverbal signals is conditioned by the interviewee’s emotional state. At the same time, the interviewee’s emotional state has proved to be determined by the nature of the question asked by the interviewer. Finally, we have also found there is a positive correlation between the use of verbal strategies and the use of nonverbal signals: the more verbal strategies, the more nonverbal devices.

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