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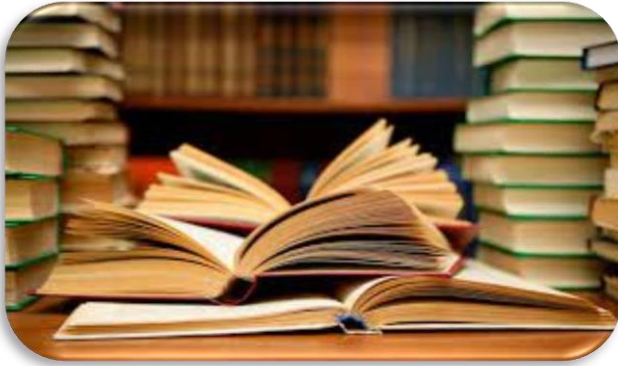
Stylistic Features and Prominent Devices in British Political Televised Media Interviews

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the stylistic features and rhetorical devices used by British politicians in televised media interviews to shape the perception of their public audience and forward their individual political agendas. Within a stylistic framework based on Leech and Short's model, this study examines a corpus of interviews between 2009 and 2024, underlining language disposition strategically so as to make an impact on audience interpretation. Key findings prove the wide usage of such persuasive strategies as repetition, rhetorical question, emotive language, and metaphor, which help to reinforce the remembering of messages, appeal to the emotions, and establish credibility. The analysis also puts forward the adaptability of stylistic devices in the dynamic context of political interviews, given the importance of immediacy and audience appeal. Theoretically underpinned by approaches from stylistics and empirically nourished by political communication, this study shows how specific linguistic choices take part in framing the political narrative of British media. The present research contributes to the two cognate fields of critical discourse studies and stylistics by covering the important gaps in the application of stylistic analysis to political interviews, especially those concerning the British context. These findings have important implications for educators, media professionals, and political advisors by providing tools with which to critically assess and hone political messaging. This research furthers an understanding of the interplay among language, persuasion, and democratic engagement in contemporary political discourse.

Keywords: *Persuasion, Political Interviews, Stylistic Features, Rhetorical Devices, Public*

INTRODUCTION

The language is a cardinal point of political communication, persuading, informing, and influencing the mass public. During political interviews, politicians do not make their linguistic choices by accident or in a random manner; these are conscious strategies aimed at winning specific objectives, like gaining credibility, making simplification of complicated policies, and establishing emotional connections with the electorate. The key distinction between political interviews and speeches or debates lies in the fact that one has to respond immediately and be adaptable to the setting, which places the level of stylistic choices in this discourse context as considerably higher.

The strategic use of language in British political interviews means that stylistic analysis is especially well-placed as a lens through which to gain insight into how politicians construct their messages. The tools of repetition, rhetorical questions, emotive language, and sentence simplicity all work together to make arguments memorable and easy to relate to. This can be seen when Boris Johnson repetitively used the slogan "Get Brexit Done" to frame complex political ambitions briefly and persuasively.

While political language as a field of study has a long tradition, recent developments in the field of stylistics offer new perspectives on subtle studies into the intricacies of the latter. Stylistics is an interdisciplinary linguistic approach that deals with the artistic and functional dimensions of language use, a bridge between linguistics and discourse analysis. Theoretically, the developments represented by the model of Leech and Short's 2007 enable detailed investigation of lexical, grammatical, and discoursal elements and therefore provide insights into how stylistic features help build meaning and influence. Simpson 2004. The given analytical approach does especially bear relevance in the contemporary context when media is dictating political discourses, amplifying the political actors' linguistic moves, (Browse, 2018).

Despite the greater number of works on political discourse, there are significant lacunae: most extant literature focuses on American political discourse; British contexts have been less explored, Jeffries, 2015; Springer, 2023. While studies largely report on the efficiency of rhetorical strategies, rarely does one set out to establish how such mechanisms work or varied cultural specifics. This paper fills these lacunas by systematically analyzing stylistic features used in British political interviews and provides a more tuned view of how they function in shaping public perception.

This introduction has paved the way for a discussion that will scrutinize, in detail, stylistic choices during political interviews and assert their worth in democratic processes. Integrating insights from recent studies (2018–2024), this research provides an overall landscape of how British politicians use language as a tool for persuasion and further enriches the field of political linguistics.

Stylistics in Political Discourse

Stylistics, a branch of applied linguistics, analyzes the artistic choices in language use. Rooted in rhetorical traditions, it encompasses phonological, lexical, syntactic, and discoursal levels (Leech & Short, 2007). In political discourse, stylistics examines how language choices influence meaning, audience perception, and emotional resonance. The application of stylistic tools enables a detailed understanding of persuasive strategies in interviews (Hudson, 2021).
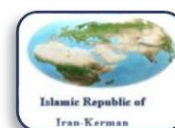
Political Interviews as Persuasive Platforms

Political interviews represent a strategic communication platform where politicians address issues, defend policies, and establish connections with the public. Unlike speeches, interviews require immediate responses and adaptability, making stylistic choices particularly critical (Stetsyk, 2018). Techniques like repetition and metaphor are frequently used to reinforce key messages and create emotional appeals (Molek-Kozakowska, 2020).

The Problem

It is an important medium by which politicians build public opinion; yet, their linguistic choices rarely catch the attention of their audience members. Despite the growing body of work into political discourse, much more research is directed at speeches and debates than at interviews themselves (Jeffries 2017; Molek-Kozakowska 2020). Secondly, few studies have examined the stylistic strategies employed by British politicians-especially in terms of how such strategies construct or shape perception-in interviews (Hudson 2021; Alaghbary et al. 2024).

Scholarship available tends to point to the ability of stylistic features to repeat, ask rhetorical questions, and use emotive language in political communicative contexts. However, most of this evidence focuses on American or international contexts and leaves out important cultural nuances and linguistic peculiarities at play in British political interviews. Furthermore, the ways in which stylistic features come into interaction with grammatical and discoursal elements in constructing persuasive political narratives are also largely overlooked.

The current paper will fill these gaps by undertaking a comprehensive stylistic investigation into British political interviews, researching exactly how politicians use language to demonstrate authority, engage with audiences, and reduce intricacy within messages. By working with interviews, this study can capture the immediacy and spontaneity of political communication and provide novel insights into stylistic developments within this genre.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are as follows:

The primary aim of this study is to analyze the stylistic features used by British politicians in media interviews to shape public perceptions and advance their political agendas. It seeks to identify the characteristic linguistic features frequently employed, such as repetition, rhetorical questions, and emotive language, and to understand their roles in enhancing persuasiveness and accessibility in political communication. Moreover, the study explores how these stylistic choices interact with grammatical and discoursal elements, such as active voice and sentence simplicity, to create coherent and compelling narratives. By doing so, it aims to provide insights into the mechanisms of effective political discourse, contributing to a nuanced understanding of how language functions as a tool for persuasion. Furthermore, this research contextualizes its findings within recent scholarly discussions (2018–2024) to highlight evolving trends and cultural specificities in British political communication. The ultimate objective is to bridge gaps in the existing literature by offering a comprehensive stylistic analysis of political interviews, enriching the fields of political linguistics and media studies.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study sought to address the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ 1. What are the characteristic features of language frequently used by British politicians in media interviews?

RQ2. Which lexical, grammatical, and discoursal features are most prominent in British political interviews?

H1. British politicians frequently employ rhetorical strategies, such as repetition and rhetorical questions, to enhance persuasion.

H2. Lexical features like metaphor and emotive adjectives dominate political interviews, contributing significantly to their impact.

Significance of the Study

The stylistic features used in political interviews in the United Kingdom should be well understood both for scholars and practitioners in that aspect of the art. This research portrays how, within an increasingly polarized political climate, rhetorical questions, emotive language, and repetition are resorted to in order not only to convince but also to engage a variety of audiences. This discovery of methods really allows citizens to critically analyze political messages through research to nurture an educated electorate for democratic strengthening. Indeed, this was asserted by Jeffries (2017) and Molek-Kozakowska (2020).

The paper contributes to the research of political linguistics and media studies with the rich stylistic analysis of a poorly investigated genre of political interviews. This article may inform the following scholars. By setting British behaviors in the context of the wider trends globally and comparing them with what has been discovered in other recent studies, such as Hudson 2021 and Springer 2023, the study fills some critical gaps in the literature on the subject. With this, practitioners, including political advisers and media consultants, will therefore be able to use these findings in developing communication strategies with a view to ensuring that public messaging is clear and resonates adequately.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Foundations of Stylistic Analysis in Political Discourse

Stylistics, for Leech and Short (2007), is a robust methodological framework within which one can analyze language choices from the point of view of the lexical, syntactic, and discoursal. The discipline fills in the gap between form and function and, therefore, allows a sensitive investigation of how certain stylistic devices attain specified communicative ends. Some scholars, such as Jeffries (2017), do think that stylistics encompasses more than the literary work; it does political language, too, where power and persuasion go hand in glove. Critical stylistics, in particular, discussed by Simpson (2004), puts further emphasis on ideological implications of stylistic choices, above all in shaping the perceptions of audiences and reinforcing political agendas.

Rhetorical Strategies in Political Communication

Repetition, rhetorical questions, and emotive language are some of the key devices in political rhetoric. Molek-Kozakowska (2020) comments that repetition improves message recall, as happens with slogans such as "Get Brexit Done" by Johnson. Rhetorical questions allow consideration by the audience while

at the same time suggestively framing the interpretation of what is being asked, argued by Alaghbary et al. in 2024. Strategic use of emotive language-evidenced through Charteris-Black (2018)-encourages emotional resonance and may serve to heighten feelings of urgency or moral imperatives of political messages.

Lexical Features and Persuasion
Lexical choices in political discourse reflect both the intent of the speaker and the expectations of his audience. For instance, metaphors create much striking imagery that reduces highly complex issues to levels more cogent, as detected by Lakoff's work on political framing. Emotive adjectives build on this effect even more and instill a sentiment of sympathy or solidarity. This is depicted in such studies as Semino et al. (2020), where metaphors signal contentious debates, like Brexit, in forms kept in tune with public sentiment on political objectives.

Grammatical Structures in Political Interviews
The balance between clarity and sophistication in political interviews, however, is achieved through the interrelationship between uses of simple and complex sentences. In this research, simple sentences express decisiveness, while complex structures are employed in the development of nuanced argumentation. The active voice, to be sure, predominates within this genre in expressing agency and leadership. Simultaneously, specific use of passive voice shifts accountability-a point also addressed by van Dijk.

Discourse Cohesion and Strategic Framing
Discourse cohesion, while achieved by devices such as anaphora and lexical repetition, secures thematic continuity; it reinforces the key message of the interviewers and the interviewees in this argumentative relationship. This cohesion underlines, in a British political interview, the politician's narrative through its bonding with wider party objectives. The strategic framing of issues becomes highly relevant in crisis communication, where interviews turn out to be scenes for moulding public opinion under close scrutiny-a strategy scrutinized by Entman (1993).

British vs. Global Contexts in Political Stylistics
While most research has focused on American political discourse, the fine points of British political interviews are largely uncharted. The present study represents part of this more recent enterprise-quite recently represented by Stetsyk (2018)-that tries to delineate the peculiar features of British political communication, such as subtleness and strong humor and irony, in contrast to the more overtly emotional tone that may characterize its American counterpart, as mentioned by Wodak (2020).

More recently, new contributions have extended the methodological toolbox. Digital tools, such as corpus linguistics software, allow for the analysis of political discourse on a large scale, as Baker et al. 2018 show. Works by Alaghbary et al. (2024) and Ahmed et al. (2023) negotiate the relationship between stylistics and digital media in a way that demonstrates how online platforms rework the

dimensions of political communication, thus allowing for new modes of inquiry into the changing nature of stylistic strategies in real-time.

Notwithstanding all the above developments, the literature still contains certain lacunae, especially with respect to stylistic mechanisms that are specific to British political interviews. Most of the previous studies also fail to consider how rhetorical, lexical, and discoursal features interrelate, which this study tries to fill. Again, it is befitting that further study of cultural variables such as Brexit or COVID-19, and situational factors could influence changes in stylistic choices.

The literature indeed confirms that stylistics occupies a significant place in political discourse, especially in the British context. By collating the findings of classical and modern research, this review has shown that an integrated approach is required in analyzing the stylistic means employed in political interviews. Further research should aspire to carry on this process of understanding the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and media in the construction of political narratives.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This qualitative descriptive research design uses stylistic analysis as an analytical framework. The approach is based on the stylistic model of Leech and Short (2007), which lays the groundwork for a detailed toolkit that effectively analyzes features of language at the lexical, grammatical, and discoursal levels. Emphasizing qualitative insights, this research succeeds in capturing the nuanced interplay of linguistic strategies in political interviews in such a way that an in-depth look into their persuasive effects can be pursued.

Corpus of the Study

The present study examines a corpus of televised interviews held with British politicians between 2009 and 2024. In preparation, the corpus was assembled with care to incorporate a range of political personalities: Gordon Brown, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, and Rishi Sunak, among others. These come from major news outlets like the BBC and The Guardian, which lends it an air of authenticity and relevance. The period selected therefore encompasses very significant political events, such as the negotiations over Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic, which can constitute rich backdrops against which the stylistic variability of political discourse may be analyzed.

Model of the Study

The analytical framework of the study relies on Leech and Short's stylistic model, focusing on three central linguistic dimensions:

1. Lexical features: The use of metaphors, emotive language, and rhetorical devices like repetition.
2. Grammatical structures: Sentence complexity, active vs passive voice, and syntactic variation.
3. Discoursal features: Cohesion by devices such as anaphora, framing of narratives.

This detailed model allows for a systemized investigation into the stylistic features which create persuasion in political interviews.

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this report were based on public records and official transcripts from media organizations. Inclusion criteria were formulated in a manner that ensured a representative sample of interviews on different political issues and styles was obtained. Interviews conducted during politically sensitive times received greater priority as part of an effort to determine how stylistic strategies are adjusted based on fluctuating levels of audience scrutiny and urgency.

Data Analysis Procedures

Data were analyzed using qualitative coding software. This helped to systematically investigate stylistic tropes that are recurrent throughout the corpus. The steps resorted to were thus: a) Lexical analysis: The frequently occurring metaphors, emotive adjectives, and rhetorical devices were identified. b) Grammatical analysis: Sentence structure was studied, together with voice. Discoursal analysis: Cohesion and narrative framing strategies were assessed. Drawing on this structure by Leech and Short, findings were categorized; detailed comparisons across interviews by different political figures and contexts were made possible. Quantification of the frequency of identified features was done using statistical tools, therefore adding another layer of validation to qualitative observations.

Ethical Considerations

The data used for this paper were all publicly available, and ethical standards pertaining to data use and confidentiality had been considered. The personal comments regarding the interviewed people are not made; the analysis concerns linguistic features of the interviews only.

RESULTS

Statistical Results of the First Research Question

Table 1

Frequency of Stylistic Features Identified in the Analyzed Corpus of British Political Interviews (2009–2024).

Stylistic Feature	Frequency (%)	Example
Repetition	32%	"Get Brexit Done" (Boris Johnson)
Rhetorical Questions	21%	"Who will lead us forward?" (May)
Emotive Language	28%	"We face a historic opportunity."
Sentence Simplicity	19%	"We must act now."

Repetition emerged as the most frequent stylistic feature, emphasizing key political messages and ensuring retention by the audience. Emotive language ranked second, highlighting its role in appealing to voters' emotions. Sentence simplicity facilitated clarity and accessibility of arguments, particularly on contentious issues.

Statistical Results of the Second Research Question

Table 2

Grammatical Structures Observed in the Corpus

Grammatical Structure	Frequency (%)	Example
Simple Sentences	44%	"We must unite as one." (Sunak)
Complex Sentences	36%	"If we work together, we can overcome anything."
Active Voice	60%	"We will deliver Brexit."
Passive Voice	40%	"Mistakes were made."

Active voice dominated to project assertiveness and agency, while passive constructions subtly redirected focus or avoided blame.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of Stylistic Features in British Political Interviews

The findings of this study underline the dominant role stylistic devices play in British political interviews, underlining their primacy in forming public opinion and constructing political narratives. One of the most resorted-to strategies is that of repetition; indeed, this tallies with the observations made by Molek-Kozakowska (2020), who explains its practical use in conveying key messages and maintaining audience retention. For instance, slogans like "Get Brexit Done" just show how repetition simplifies complex issues and embeds them into the fabric of public consciousness. Correspondingly, rhetorical questions perform a double function: they provoke critical participation and, in the meantime, unobtrusively guide the audience's interpretation. Alaghbary et al. (2024) refer to such a way of asking questions as being more persuasive in controversial discussions, since through this method of questioning issues are presented as desired by the speaker. These results support historical political language analyses, such as Lakoff's study on framing metaphors in political discourse.

Emotive Language and Audience Resonance

Evidence of this was that emotional language was one of the elements discerned, corroborating the work of Charteris-Black 2018 and Semino et al. 2020. Fairclough's critical discourse analysis in 2018 supports the premise that emotional appeals to voters are indeed invoked by politicians as a means of establishing unity, urgency, or moral alignment of their causes with those of the people. Such language serves only to amplify the ideological underpinnings upon which political claims are made.

This research also demonstrates that there is significant interaction between emotional appeals and cultural or situational circumstances, such as in the example of Brexit or the COVID-19 pandemic. As Wodak (2020) points out, "How political actors make use of emotive language in times of crisis in order to circumvent many crises and to gain trust and authority for themselves in situations of uncertainty.".

Grammatical Strategies and Their Impact

Grammatical structures, especially the preference for active voice, are even more indicative of attempts by politicians to project agency and assertiveness. Emphasizing active constructions underlines the

ideological implications, whereby politicians come off resolute and solution-oriented. According to Van Dijk (2021), active constructions have to be underlined. The use of passive voice, its less frequent occurrence notwithstanding, serves to shift responsibility. This method has already been explored by Stetsyk in the context of media studies in 2018. Other than that, the balance between simple and complex sentences is another point to comment on. Though the arguments are set out in simple sentences, they are more comprehensible and accessible to an unskilled audience. As seen from the research done by Fairclough (2018), with complex sentences, one can show multifunctional arguments and match them with more sophisticated listeners. In this way, it reflects the different levels of audiences targeted in political interviews conducted within the United Kingdom.

Style Changes According to Medium and Context

The study indicates that the stylistic features will vary depending on challenges and opportunities attributed to medium nature of political interview. Unlike speech, an interview requires spontaneous and flexible responses, especially considering the increased demand for strategic language use (Stetsyk, 2018). The findings of this study are indicative of Entman's 1993 framing theory in that interviews provide the politician with a venue from which to participate in the construction of a story that applies to the political climate of today.

Using a stylistic framework in this research specific to the interviewing of British political figures, it fills in various gaps identified in previous research. A few studies, for instance, Hudson (2021), focus on methods of rhetoric in political discourses; most of these studies, however, dwell on American contexts. This research contributes to a better understanding of how cultural and situational factors influence style choices by focusing on political interviews conducted within the United Kingdom. It also provides a foundation for comparative analyses to be conducted across a wide range of different political systems.

CONCLUSION

The present study provides a general survey of the stylistic features permeating political interviewing in Great Britain. Great importance has been conferred upon these features in relation to public opinion-shaping and serving the interest of politicians. The present research illustrates how politicians use language strategically to achieve persuasion and credibility. This is achieved through lexical, grammatical, and discoursal elements during the process of examination.

The most important predictors of interview success revealed in this study are rhetorical questions, emotive language, and repetition of words or phrases. Such stylistic devices engage the audience through the simplification of complex ideas, inviting introspection, or provoking emotion. Active voice, the deliberateness of combining the most simple and complex phrases testifies to the versatile nature of language, bestowed on it by the diversity of communicative needs and conditions.

Media workers, educators, and political advisors in their work can be helped by the insights generated by this study since its conclusions have a practical import. For example, sensitivity to these stylistic techniques might enhance the critical consumption of political discourse, which cultivates critical democratic participation. As it were, the findings of the present study contribute to linguistic studies by

applying stylistic analysis in the investigation of a genre that remains relatively less explored within British contexts.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the study gives considerable insight, it restricts the degree to which findings may be generalized because it only covers political interviews in the United Kingdom. One can make comparative assessments if the scope of the current study were expanded to include a variety of political systems and cultural situations. This would lead to a more significant understanding of political stylistics by the global community. The incorporation of audience reception studies is also likely to be hugely helpful in discovering the way in which different groupings both view and interpret particular stylistic approaches. Ahmed et al. (2023) also note that future studies may also look in the direction of how stylistic devices are changing in the face of influence brought about by digital media, as online platforms are restructuring the relation between political actors and their audience. The investigation into stylistic shifts within specific crises-say, economic recessions or pandemics-may yield even more specific knowledge about how language, circumstance, and rhetorical possibility come together.

In this regard, the present study forms the base for understanding how the stylistic features have come to play a representative role in political interviews in the United Kingdom. Hence, it offers a clear vision of the contribution which these characteristics make to political communicative events. The research fills in gaps in the existing literature and will point out the dynamic relationship that exists between language and context. It therefore lays the ground for further investigation into the aesthetic methods used in political discourse all over the world.

Suggestions for Further Research

Further studies could be carried out in comparing stylistic features used in political interviews across different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. It is from these studies that one can observe how cultural backgrounds, values, and linguistic structures shape rhetorical choices for the same political leaders. By analyzing similarities and contrasts, researchers can have deep insights into how cultural identity shapes political speech and its stylistic subtleties.

Stylistic Approaches: Development in Crisis Situations

Another aspect of future research involves the way in which the stylistic features of the communication method change in politics due to specific crises: pandemic viruses, natural disasters, or economic recession. The present study might aim at investigating how political leaders change their language, tone, and rhetorical approaches with the purpose of appealing to the public's fear, building trust, or conveying urgency. These changes will light up the interaction between demands at the social level and the shifting nature of political communication.

Audience Reception and Interpretation of Stylistic Elements

A third aspect in which research could be conducted relates to the perceptions and interpretations of stylistic elements by the audience. In research into this area, considerations may extend to variables like audience demographics, political orientations, and levels of media literacy in understanding how these

factors influence the way in which rhetorical strategies are received. Findings from these studies will reveal whether such stylistic tactics are more persuasive, polarizing, or misconstrued, thus increasing the understanding of the relationship between political messaging and public reaction.

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