Pronominal Choice as an Interpersonal Strategy

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Abstract

This paper offers a review of the main aspects of address theory and examines the main interpersonal strategic functions of terms of address. In order to illustrate these issues I have chosen some examples from political discourse. Specifically, I selected three political interviews which took place around the same time (21st April 2003, 16th November 2003 and 30th May 2004), and with the same worldwide conflict in the background (the Iraqi war), but which featured three different interviewees of three different nationalities. Nonetheless, these interviewees share a common characteristic: they held the highest political office in their countries at the time. These interviewees are: Mr. José M. Aznar (President of Spain), Mr. George W. Bush (President of the USA) and Mr. Tony Blair (Prime Minister of the UK). I will try to relate the choice of specific pronominal references to the pragmatic nature of the questions being asked. For this purpose, I will borrow the terms "CC (communicative conflict) question" and "equivocation" from Bavelas, Black, Chovil and Mullett (1990).

Keywords: pronominal choice, political strategy, equivocation, communicative conflict question.

1. Introduction

This paper offers a review of the main aspects of address theory and examines the main interpersonal strategic functions of terms of address. In order to illustrate this, I will focus on political discourse. It is well known that politicians do not normally answer all the questions they are asked (Blum-Kulka 1983; Bull 1994; Bull and Mayer 1993; Clayman 1993, 2001; Harris 1991). As Werner (1989: 115) argues "[p]oliticians' bad reputation concerning their political conduct is to a large extent due to the way they use language." Terms of address are one interpersonal strategy that politicians use to create their identities as competent leaders (despite their reputations for not answering questions directly) and negotiate their interpersonal interactions within the public arena.

> According to De Fina (2003)
> (…) by manipulating pronouns speakers can also convey subtle social meanings that relate to their social identities or to their positions with respect to other interlocutors, both present and absent, and to the experiences and topics that are discussed. (De Fina 2003: 52)

My specific goals in this paper will be to discover to what degree the manipulation of pronouns (1) depends on contextual factors and (2) is determined by interpersonal issues. In this paper, I will go through some interpersonal functions of terms of address such as politeness and the choice of marked and unmarked terms of address for social and strategic reasons. For this purpose, I will study all the possible differences and/or similarities in the use of the first person pronoun "we" by three particular politicians from three different countries: Mr. José M. Aznar (President of Spain), Mr. George W. Bush (President of the USA) and Mr. Tony Blair (Prime Minister of the UK). All these televised interviews took place between 16th November 2003 and 30th May 2004. De Fina (2003) will be used as a starting point for my study because she offers an excellent study of pronominal choice and speaker orientation. She focuses on the ways in which narrators present themselves in relation to others in stories of personal experience.

I will also try to relate the choice of specific pronominal references to the pragmatic nature of the question being asked.

I will use the terms "CC (communicative conflict) question" and "equivocation" from Bavelas et al. (1990). According to Bavelas et al. (1990: 54) equivocation is avoidance and they state that "[i]t is the response chosen when all other communicative choices in the situation would lead to negative consequences." When somebody is forced to answer a question to which all possible replies are dangerous, s/he normally equivocates and this question is called a "CC (communicative conflict) question".

In what follows, I will thus first introduce the necessary terminology on address terms (Section 2) before moving to the main approaches to the theory of address (Section 3). This discussion is followed by a focus on the interpersonal functions of terms of address (Section 4). Section 5 will offer an introduction and empirical analysis of strategic uses of terms of address in political discourse, before concluding in Section 6.

2. Terminology

According to Braun (1988: 7) forms of address are "words and phrases used for addressing. They refer to the collocutor and thus contain a strong element of deixis." She explains that in most languages forms of address concentrate on three word classes: (1) verb; (2) noun, supplemented by words which are syntactically dependent on them; and (3) pronoun.

Braun (1988: 8) explains that "[v]erb forms of address are verbs in which reference to the collocutor is expressed, e.g., by means of inflectional suffixes." In languages like Spanish (or Portuguese or Finnish) where the use of subject pronouns is not obligatory, these verb forms are particularly necessary as they are the only bearer of collocutor reference.

Nouns of address are "substantives and adjectives which designate collocutors or refer to them in some other way" (Braun 1988: 9). There are many different types of nouns of address. For example, we can include in this class: names; kinship terms; titles[1] like "Mr/Mrs" in English ("Señor/Señora" in Spanish) or "Doctor" or "Duke"; abstract nouns like "(Your) Excellency" or "(Your) Honour"; occupational terms like "waiter" in English or "*camarero*" (i.e., "waiter") in Spanish; words for certain types of relationship like "Kollege" in German; and highly contextualized and conventionalized terms of endearment like "honey" in English.

Regarding pronouns of address, they are pronouns referring to the communication partner. The most common ones are second person pronouns such as "you" in English or "*tú*", "*vosotros*", "*usted*", "*ustedes*" in Spanish, where we can find the so-called T/V distinction introduced by Brown and Gilman (1960). They used the symbol T in order to designate the simple or intimate pronoun of address (singular "*tú*" and plural "*vosotros*" in the European variety of Spanish) and the symbol V to catalogue the polite and distant pronoun (singular "*usted*" and plural "*ustedes*" in the European variety of Spanish). We can also find this distinction in French (*tu* versus *vous*) and German (*du* versus *Sie*) among other languages. In this chapter, I will try to relate the choice of specific pronominal references to the pragmatic nature of the questions being asked.

3. Main approaches to the theory of address

The works of Roger Brown and his colleagues Albert Gilman and Marguerite Ford are regarded as the origins of all studies dealing with forms of address in linguistics and they were the first to use a sociolinguistic approach in their research of forms of address.

Gilman and Brown (1958) establish a distinction between "polite" and "familiar" pronouns of address. They first observed this phenomenon in the pronoun ("*vos*") used to address the Roman emperor in the 4th century A.D. They distinguished between a vertical (plural/polite pronoun used to superiors and singular/familiar to inferiors) and a horizontal (plural/polite pronoun used among distant equals and singular/familiar among intimate equals) dimension. They add that this distinction between "polite" and "familiar" pronouns of address can also be found in present day French.

In Brown and Gilman (1960) they introduced for the first time the symbols T (Latin "*tu*") for the "familiar" second person pronoun and V (Latin "*vos*") for the "polite" pronoun. They explain that up to the 19th century pronominal address reflected social structure and semantic power. From that time onwards their selection was expanded to include social factors other than power, such as intimacy or acquaintanceship.

After having interviewed German and Italian informants they concluded that the use of Italian T is largely determined by the addressee's characteristics and German T is mainly used for family relations. Finally, they also observed that changes can occur in the styles of address even within a single community; these differences may be due to ideological differences.

Brown and Ford (1961) focus on the use of nominal address forms in American English, specifically the first names (FN) and titles + last names (TLN). In the second group they include forms such as "Mrs/Mrs", "Dr" or "Senator". They conclude that the more informal the relationship is the more intimate forms of address they use. Finally, it appears that it is always the superior who initiates the movement towards intimate forms of address.

From a diachronic point of view, it is worth mentioning here that Williams (2004), in a study carried out on forms of address and epistolary etiquette in the diplomatic and courtly worlds of Philip IV of Spain, concluded that:

> The system is multi-polar and therefore considerably more sophisticated than the bipolar system described by Brown and Gilman in their otherwise excellent study of second person forms of address. The implications of this are obvious. Whether one is dealing with one's social superior or inferior, care must be taken to select the correct form of address since this is a crucial way of signalling the addressee's position within a highly stratified world. (Williams 2004: 32)

Susan Ervin-Tripp (1972) presents address terms as a case of alternation. She summarizes the regularities included in Brown and Ford (1961) in a diagram in the form of a flow chart and tries to analyse all the factors responsible for variations in the choice of forms of address. She also considers nonverbal behaviour as another means of expressing social relationships, something which is both very innovative and very helpful when analysing address terms.

Friederike Braun (1988) offers an excellent review of the problems of patterns and usage of terms of address in various languages and cultures. First, she goes through the main aspects of address theory. Then she deals with some important methodological considerations and she finally studies in detail two topics of address in interlingual perspective: (1) "the meaning of a form of address" and (2) "address inversion". According to Braun (1988: 265) "address inversion" refers to "the use of a nominal variant which, in its lexical content, implies features suiting the person of the speaker rather than the addressee." She also offers an extensive list of the main publications on forms of address.

According to Braun (1988) there is a major drawback in the studies by Brown and Gilman, and Brown and Ford, which makes it difficult to apply the concepts of address theory to address reality. Braun (1988: 19) explains that Brown and Gilman (and more emphatically Brown and Ford) present two important regularities which "are unaffected by the possibility of variation". Braun (1988) states these two regularities in the following way:

1) Reciprocal use of address variants signals either mutual distance (e.g., with the V pronoun) or intimacy (T pronoun), while status differences are ignored or reformulated into degrees of intimacy/distance.
2) Nonreciprocal use of address variants signals status differences, with the V pronoun or distant nominal forms being used upwards and the T pronoun or intimate nominal forms being used downwards. (Braun 1988: 19).

In relation to Ervin-Tripp's studies, Braun (1988: 19) says that even though she mentions the occurrence of variation in address rules and behaviour, the very fact of presenting "rules in a flow chart is in itself a method of voluntary or involuntary standardizing and leads to reducing behaviour to a single set of rules."

Only a brief summary of the main approaches to the theory of address have been offered here. In addition to this theoretical review, it is also essential to include here some ideas about the interpersonal functions that pronouns of address serve.

4. Interpersonal functions of terms of address

As Murphy (1988) has put it, address forms are socially driven phenomena. Keshavarz (2001: 6) adds that "… linguistic forms that are used to address others can mirror the complex social relations of individuals in a speech community".

In a study about the choice of forms of address in Persian, Keshavarz (2001) explains that variations in the forms of address are not only related to age, sex, and social class but also to setting, intimacy and social distance. He found that whereas age is more significant than sex and social class in determining forms of address in informal situations, under formal circumstances sex is a stronger determiner.

Li (2006: 71), in a study about the functions of metaphorical use of address terms, explains that there are six factors which influence the choice of address terms: (1) monoglossia or heteroglossia; (2) the relationship between the participants (power or solidarity); (3) the affect of the speaker towards the hearer (positive feeling or negative feeling); (4) the appropriateness of the address terms in terms of the context; (5) the style of the speaker (formal or informal); and (6) the ways of expressing (direct/explicit or indirect/implicit). Li (2006) also points out that:

> … in addition to the principal functions of addressing or referring, address terms also function in marking the speaker's identity, reflecting the speaker's attitude toward the hearer and indicating the relationship between the speaker and the hearer either in direct/explicit ways or in indirect/implicit ways. (Li 2006: 71)

This means that "variation in address is not an exception but rather a rule" (Braun 1988: 23) and we can observe this variation both cross-culturally and among members of the same culture. For example, Janner (1977: 19) states that Britons are "very touchy about their forms of titles and addresses." Scott (1998) explains that speakers in the UK have always placed a high value on the use of correct forms of address and adds that:

> In relatively formal communication settings, the use of titles and surnames is generally sanctioned, although there are some notable exceptions. In relatively informal communication settings, the use of first names or appropriate substitute expressions is generally sanctioned. (Scott 1998: 50).

Regarding this variation among members of the same culture, we can say that although there is common agreement about the fact that "*usted*" (V) is a polite pronoun in the European version of Spanish, Marin (1972) indicates that this does not always apply. He explains that this is highly contextual and there are instances in which "*usted*" may be inappropriate and disrespectful. For example, when a father addresses a child as "*usted*" he does not pretend to communicate politeness but reproach. Another deviation from this norm (T pronouns for intimacy and V pronouns for politeness and distance) has been pointed out by Almasov (1974), who indicates that "non-polite" forms of address may express respect and solemnity. This is the case of Spanish "*tú*" used by two priests addressing each other when officiating in church[2].

However, there are hardly any linguistic phenomena such as address terms in Spanish that have changed so drastically since the 1970s (in Spain as well as in varieties of American Spanish). In fact, the use of pronouns and address terms is one of the most discussed topics in Spanish linguistics (from a morpho-syntactic, sociolinguistic, pragmatic and geolinguistic perspectice, diachronic and synchronic). There are numerous articles and volumes; for example, from a pragmatic perspective, the monograph "Los tratamientos en español" by Carrasco Santana (2002) comes to mind. There is also a bibliography on the topic from 2006 that comprises 52 pages of references (Fernández 2006). While the array of contexts examined by these researchers is broad, all agree that the use of personal pronouns is influenced by a complex set of factors and pronoun choices made by interlocutors may be used to achieve a variety of interpersonal goals. In what follows, I will concentrate on the use of terms of address in political discourse and the ways that politicians' pronoun choices intersect with their interpersonal communicative goals.

5. *Strategic uses of terms of address in political discourse*

As Li (2006: 73) explains "[i]t is obvious that the creative (metaphorical) use of the address terms can achieve special effects, such as persuading, warning, praising, complaining, joking or can establish solidarity between the speakers." It is also true that "[i]n pragmatic terms … it is possible to use a pronominal form within context with the intention of manipulating the meaning per se" (Wilson 1990: 47). In order to illustrate this point, Wilson includes an example taken from Churchill's classic speech following the Dunkirk evacuation in 1940.

Wilson (1990: 47) also says that "[w]hat I am suggesting is that where pronominal choice affects, or reflects, certain social facts about the speaker, this is not necessarily a consequence of the meaning of the particular form in context, but rather a matter of paradigmatic choice." Authors like Bull and Fetzer (2006) or Jaworski and Galasinski (2000) have carried out interesting studies about politicians' strategic use of forms of address. Jaworski and Galasinski (2000) analysed the strategic uses of forms of address by participants in political debates when they want to gain legitimacy for their ideologies. They claim that it is through discourse and other semiotic practices, that ideologies are formulated, reproduced and reinforced (Jaworski and Galasinski 2000: 37).

According to Bull and Fetzer (2006) the meaning of personal pronouns can shift as the status of the participants shifts in interaction. In their study they use both the theory of equivocation of Bavelas et al. (1990) and Goffman's (1981) concept of footing, identifying question-response sequences in which politicians make use of pronominal shifts as a form of equivocation.

Wilson (1990) also highlights that the meanings of personal pronouns are not either something fixed or they form neat categorical divisions. He explains:

> [T]he pronouns of English do not form neat categorical divisions; 'we' can be used to designate a range of individuals moving outwards from the speaker him/herself to the speaker plus hearer and the whole humanity … With such manipulative possibilities provided by the pronominal system as it operates in context, it is not surprising to find that politicians make use of pronouns to good effect: to indicate, accept, deny or distance themselves from responsibility for political action; to reveal ideological bias; to encourage solidarity; to designate and identify those who are supporters (with us) as well as those who are enemies (against us); and to present specific idiosyncratic aspects of the individual politician's own personality. (Wilson 1990: 76)

In order to illustrate the strategic interpersonal use of terms of address (in particular the first personal pronoun "we"), examples from political discourse have been chosen. The remainder of this paper thus examines the relationship between the choice of specific pronominal references with the pragmatic nature of the question being asked. This will be analyzed in the context of the theory of equivocation of Bavelas et al. (1990).

5.1 Methodological approach: Equivocation

In order to analyse the strategic and interpersonal functions of specific pronominal references in three different political interviews, I will use a methodological approach based on equivocation theory. As Clayman (2001: 403) points out "[t]here is a widespread perception that politicians are frequently evasive under questioning from members of the news media, and this perception is not without merit." Of particular interest is the coding procedure developed by Bull and Mayer (1993) for analysing politicians' failure to reply to questions. Based on eight televised political interviews recorded during the 1987 British General Election campaign, it compared Margaret Thatcher (Conservative Minister, 1979–1990) and Neil Kinnock (Leader of the Labour Opposition, 1983–1992). Bull and Mayer show that both politicians failed to reply to a large proportion of the questions put to them (Thatcher 56%, Kinnock 59%).

As was previously stated, Bull (2003: 592) explains that a Communicative Conflict (CC) question is "a question to which all the possible replies have potentially negative consequences, but where nevertheless a reply is still expected" and according to Bavelas et al. (1990: 28) equivocation is defined as: "… nonstraightforward communication; it appears ambiguous, contradictory, tangential, obscure or even evasive." Bavelas et al. (1990) indicate that in any communicative situation an individual is faced with a "communicative field", that is, a set of possible paths or options s/he can follow. Additionally, this "communicative field" is determined by the social factors that shape communication (i.e., other people and the context in which the interaction takes place). The authors point out that "[e]ach of the paths or options that make up the field has a consequence for the individual. It changes the field irreversibly" (Bavelas et al. 1990: 56). In some situations the individual is faced with only negative alternatives; this is called an "avoidance-avoidance conflict" situation and the best thing s/he can do is to equivocate. A very common situation in which people equivocate is the "hurtful truth" conflict: the individual has to decide between saying something false but kind or something true but hurtful. It can also happen that someone is caught between offending either of two people (or groups) who want opposite replies.

A variation on the "hurtful truth" conflict which is highly related to our goals here is the case where a truth may be against one's own self-interests. It is common knowledge that politicians normally have to decide between saying something which is true but risky or saying something which is false but advantageous. In this paper I will try to discover to what extent the choice of some pronominal references is related to the characteristics of the specific communicative situation the politician is faced with.

5.2 Pronouns of address in English and Spanish

As we can see in tables 1 and 2, Spanish (like English) has a singular first person pronoun "*yo*" ("I") and a plural first person pronoun "*nosotros/nosotras*" ("we"). For the second person, Spanish speakers have two alternatives: informal "*tú*" ("you") and formal "*usted*". These have two possible plural forms: "*vosotros/vosotras*" (neutral, plural "you") and "*ustedes*" (formal, plural "you"). The difference between second plural *vosostros* vs. *ustedes* (polite) is only valid for Spain; in all other countries in Latin America *vosotros/as* (and therefore the differentiation between T/V) is non-existent. The third person singular is usually expressed by "él" ("he"), or "ella" ("she") for the singular, and "ellos"/"ellas" ("they") for the plural.[3]

Table 1: Personal pronouns in Spanish

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	yo	tú	él
		usted (polite)	ella
		vos (regional or social alternative to "tú")	uno (indefinite)
Plural	nosotros/as	vosotros/as	ellos/as
		ustedes (polite)	

Table 2: Personal pronouns in English

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	I	you	he
			she
			one/you (indefinite)
Plural	we	you	they

In my analysis I have taken into account not only explicit pronominal references, but also verb agreement and possessive pronouns, since Spanish is a null subject language where direct pronouns can be omitted and reference can be derived from morphology. Subject personal pronouns are explicitly used (i.e., no omission) in two cases: (1) when the referent is not clear and there could be some misunderstanding; and (2) for emphatic reasons. Nevertheless, the address pronouns "*usted*/*ustedes"* are something of an exception and are often used explicitly.

When talking about "negative politeness strategies",[4] Brown and Levinson (1987) include one strategy called "give deference". They explain that:

> There are two sides to the coin in the realization of deference: one in which S [the speaker] humbles and abases himself, and another where S raises H [the hearer] (pays him positive face of a particular kind, namely that which satisfies H's want to be treated as superior). In both cases what is conveyed is that H is of higher social status than S. (Brown and Levinson 1987: 178)

As Íñigo-Mora (2004: 35) points out, "[t]he vagueness which characterises the first person plural has led Biber et al. (1999) to declare that most of the times it is the addressee who has to decide who is included in the reference of the pronoun". In this sense, the theory developed by Kamio is very useful (1994, 1995, 1997, 2001). Kamio explains that when an individual considers that some piece of information is inside his/her territory s/he will use different linguistic strategies than when it is outside. Taking into account this theory of information, Kamio (2001) has studied the differences between English and Japanese generic and non-specific uses of personal pronouns. First of all, Kamio establishes a distinction between P_2 and D_2 where P_2 refers to a proximal area and D_2 to an area distant to the speaker. Then, this author describes a subarea in P_2 which is designated "the conversational space" (i.e., the speaker and his/her surrounding space). And finally, this subarea is divided into P_1 and D_1, which represent the speaker's and the hearer's territories respectively. I have used this division into areas in order to describe the pronominal references I have discovered in my data.

Finally, Brown and Levinson (1987) also add that "[d]eference phenomena represent perhaps the most conspicuous intrusions of social factors into language structure, in the form of honorifics" (Brown and Levinson 1987: 179). They also highlight that the same is true of the use of titles and names as address forms outside of greetings, hails, or attention-gainers. They even mention the form "Mr. President" in political discourse. In Table 3 we can see a list of the most common titles normally used in Spanish and English.

Table 3: Titles in Spanish and English

	Spanish	English
Masculine	Señor (Sr.)	Mister (Mr.)
	Don (D.)	Sir
Femenine	Señora (Sra.)	Mrs.
	Señorita (Srta.)	Miss
	Doña (Dña.)	Ms.
		Madam

According to Braun (1988: 256), "[f]rom a synchronic point of view, some forms of address have only a faded literal meaning, or none at all, and do not function as terms of reference. But their meanings can be reconstructed in a diachronic approach." For example, this is the case of Spanish "*Don*/*Doña*" (from Latin "*dominus*"/"*domina*"). "*Dominus*" means "master" and nowadays "*Don*" is used as a deferential title. The same is true for the feminine counterpart: "*Doña*". (Compare Williams [2004], who offers a list of the forms of address used in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in Spain.)[5]

In order to illustrate the main interpersonal strategic functions of pronouns of address in English and Spanish, I have selected three political interviews which took place around the same time and with the same worldwide conflict in the background (the Iraqi war).

5.3 The interviews

The data selected for this study comprises transcriptions[6] of three interviews which took place between 21st April 2003 and 30th May 2004. Table 4 shows the details for each of the three interviews:

Table 4: Description of interviews

Interviewee	Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair	President of the USA, George W. Bush	President of Spain, José M. Aznar
Interviewer/s	Sir David Frost	Sir David Frost	Alfredo Urdaci, Baltasar Magro, Manuel Ventero
Date	30th May 2004	16th November 2003	21st April 2003
Channel	BBC1	BBC1	TVE 1
Words	5.263 words	5.063 words	5.532 words
Time	25' 03''	27' 14''	31' 42''
Turns	48	41	26

It was thought that the best way to obtain a corpus that would be as homogeneous as possible would be to find interviews which dealt with the same topic. Taking into account that (1) all these interviews devoted a great deal of time (an average of 15 minutes) to the Iraqi conflict and (2) these three politicians formed a well-known coalition against terrorism, I have decided to focus my study on the Iraqi topic. Table 5 illustrates the specific details of my data:

Table 5: Description of the selections on the Iraqi conflict

Interviewee	Prime Minister of the UK, Tony Blair	President of the USA, George W. Bush	President of Spain, José M. Aznar
Words	3.086 words	3.114 words	2.858 words
Time	15' 19''	16' 45''	15' 57''
Turns	24	24	16
Questions	15	18	12

Finally, it should be highlighted that the selection of two English and only one Spanish interview was based on a socio-political reason rather than a merely linguistic one. These three politicians played a very important role during the Iraqi conflict and it was thought that it would be interesting to compare the main discursive strategies related to terms of address used by each of them.

5.4 Results and discussion

In order to relate the choice of specific pronominal references to the pragmatic nature of the question being asked, I will borrow the terms "CC (communicative conflict) question" and "equivocation" from Bavelas et al. (1990). Table 6 shows the percentages of CC questions and equivocation found in each extract. These percentages have been calculated by taking into account the total number of questions uttered by the interviewers. By testing the percentage of CC questions and equivocation I can determine two different things. On the one hand, I can discover the threatening level of the interviewer's questions: more CC questions means more risk for the interviewee's face. On the other hand, I can also bring to light the level of evasiveness displayed by each interviewee: the more questions the politician equivocates, the more evasive he is. If he does not answer the question being asked, he will be considered evasive. In this way, I can identify possible relationships between the interviewees' strategic interpersonal behaviours and their selection of personal pronouns.

Table 6: CC questions and equivocation

	Total # of questions	CC questions	Equivocation
BLAIR	15	53% of all questions	87% of all CC questions
BUSH	18	55% of all questions	70% of all CC questions
AZNAR	12	50% of all questions	83% of all CC questions

Regarding the frequency of CC questions, it seems that there are no striking differences: 53% (Blair), 55% (Bush) and 50% (Aznar). In relation to the percentage of equivocation to those CC questions, there are no important differences either. Nevertheless, it seems that Bush was the one who equivocated the least (70% in contrast to 87% and 83%). One possible reason for this difference may be due to the fact that Blair was interviewed by a British journalist for a British TV channel and Aznar was interviewed by three Spanish journalists for a Spanish TV channel but Bush was interviewed by a non-American (i.e., British) journalist for a non-American (i.e., British) TV channel. It may be assumed that when a politician is being interviewed by a fellow countryman and s/he knows that s/he will be mainly viewed by his/her voters, the psychological pressure is greater because his/her performance should be brighter. A politician is normally trying to capture his/her citizens' votes and that is why domestic politics is so important.

In order to illustrate the main interpersonal strategic functions of terms of address, I looked for instances of "we" used by Blair, Bush and Aznar. A total of 156 examples were found (for a breakdown into the different functions of 'we', see Table 8 below). I distributed them into two separate groups: those uttered in equivocation answers and those used in non-equivocation answers. Subsequently, I calculated the rates of "we" per equivocation answer and per non-equivocation answer. Table 7 summarizes the results:

Table 7: Rates of "We" reference in answers

	Equivocation	Non-equivocation
BLAIR (N= 52)	3.4 per equivocation	3.5 per non-equivocation
BUSH (N= 35)	2.6 per equivocation	1.5 per non-equivocation
AZNAR (N= 69)	3.8 per equivocation	7.1 per non-equivocation

There seems to be almost no difference between equivocation and non-equivocation answers in the case of Blair (3.4 versus 3.5). In contrast, the tendencies are the opposite in the case of Bush and Aznar: Bush preferred to use more "we" in equivocation answers (2.6) and Aznar favoured the use of this pronoun in non-equivocation answers (7.1). Again, these differences may be due to the specific characteristics of the interviews: Aznar is being interviewed by Spanish journalists on a Spanish TV channel and Bush is being interviewed by a non-American (i.e., British) interviewer on a non-American (i.e., British) TV channel. This is an important contextual difference which should not be ignored. It could be possible that an interviewer may change his/her behaviour when interviewing a politician from another country. This is only a suggestion which should be tested using more contrasting studies. The personal political power of Bush in the UK is minimal; his legitimacy is based on his political relationships with Blair and Aznar in their fight against terrorism, which may account for his more frequent use of "we"; it may be advantageous for him to use a "we" that offers him "political shelter" and so counterbalances an equivocation. In the following example, David Frost questions Bush about the search for weapons of mass destruction, (which would provide justification for the war):

(1)   FROST: No, but we really need the big discovery, don't we?
        BUSH: (…) and we had to deal with him [Saddam Hussein], and we did in a way, by the way, that was a compassionate way. We spared innocent life, we targeted the guilty, and we moved hard and fast, and very little of Iraq was touched in toppling Saddam Hussein.

As we can see here, the repetitive use of the personal pronoun "we" offers him "political shelter" in his equivocation to Frost's question. This question is a CC question because it presupposes that the big discovery of weapons of mass destruction had yet to be made. Bush cannot answer yes because that means acceptance of a poor intelligence service and a negative answer lacks credibility (i.e., they obviously do need the big discovery to justify the war). Instead of answering the question, Bush simply avoids the issue.

The data shows three main types of "we": (1) Existential "we" (N=6), (2) Generic "we" (N=14), and (3) External "we" (N=136). The first is relatively rare in this data sample and does not appear to be important in this context. This "existential we" could be paraphrased for a sentence of the type "there is/are":

(2)   BLAIR: It is. I mean we've got a principle now of two states, Israel and Palestine, and the Palestinian state has to (…)

In this example, "we've got a principle now of two states" could be substituted for "there are two states" without considerable change in the meaning of the original utterance. Due to the fact that (1) I found only six examples and (2) that the indexical properties of this type of "we" are very poor, I will not analyse the use of this type of "we" in depth for reasons of space.

Generic "we" has the broadest scope of reference because it includes the whole of (threatened) humanity. In the Example (3), Aznar talks about a general wish shared by humanity as a whole: a non-military solution to the Iraqi conflict.

(3)   AZNAR: (…) *a todos nos hubiera gustado una solución distinta. A todos nos hubiera gustado que* (...)
             '(…) we all would have liked a different solution. We all would have liked that (…)

In this example Aznar talks about a "we" who includes the whole (threatened) humanity. For this reason he uses the intensifier "*todos*" ("all") in his speech.

Finally, external "we" has as its scope of reference a "non-conversational space". In contrast to generic "we", this external "we" has a narrower scope of reference in the sense that it does not include the whole of (threatened) humanity. This is a distant area to the speaker and his/her surrounding space. Depending on the nature of the referents, we discovered six minor subtypes of external "we" in our data:

    Political "we" ("Pol.We"): I + my political group (in all these cases the government).
    Coalition Forces "we" ("Co.For.We"): I + countries fighting against terrorism.
    Nationalistic "we" ("Nat.We"): I + all British/American/Spanish people.
    Blair & Bush "we" ("Ton.We"): George Bush + Tony Blair.
    United Nations "we" ("UN.We"): I + United Nations.
    European "we" ("Eu.We"): I + all Europeans.

In Table 8 we can see the distribution of the different types of "we". They have been divided into two groups: equivocation versus non-equivocation. The first group embraces all those instances of "we" uttered in an answer classified as "equivocation" and the second group those used in a "real" answer (i.e., non-equivocation).

Table 8: "We" typology and distribution (N=156)

	Type	Equivocation	Non-equivocation
BLAIR	"Pol.We"	0 (0%)	**13 (46%)**
	"Co.For.We"	**13 (54%)**	4 (14%)
	"Nat.We"	5 (20%)	3 (10%)
	"Gen.We"	3 (12%)	6 (21%)
	"Exist.We"	3 (12%)	2 (7%)
	Total	24	28
BUSH	"Pol.We"	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	"Co.For.We"	**14 (77%)**	**14 (82%)**
	"Nat.We"	2 (11%)	2 (11%)
	"Gen.We"	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
	"Exist.We"	1 (5%)	0 (0%)
	"Ton.We"	0 (0%)	1 (5%)
	Total	18	17
AZNAR	"Pol.We"	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	"Co.For.We"	0 (0%)	8 (16%)
	"Nat.We"	8 (42%)	**31 (62%)**
	"Gen.We"	0 (0%)	4 (8%)
	"Exist.We"	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
	"UN.We"	0 (0%)	1 (2%)
	"Eu.We"	**11 (57%)**	6 (12%)
	Total	19	50

It is worth noting that these results are focused solely on the interviewees' responses. It would be desirable to include an analysis of interviewers' discourses but for reasons of space this is not possible here. Nevertheless, it would certainly be the focus of further studies.

The first singular peculiarity of this corpus is the total absence of the so-called inclusive "we": There were no instances in which "we" referred exclusively to the interviewee and the interviewer in the interviewees' answers. This contrasts with the results found in Iñigo-Mora (2004) in her analysis of parliamentary discourse. She found that up to 14 percent of the uses of "we" were inclusive "we". As indicated above, this type of "we" corresponds to the "conversational space" and so it seems that it makes an important difference if a politician is talking to another politician in the House of Commons or to an interviewer in a TV studio. The reason is obvious: when dealing with political issues in the House of Commons both parliamentarians have a lot to say and decide, so both of them are extremely involved. On the other hand, the interviewer has no political power at all and so his/her role is minor in that sense. Another possible reason could be related to the influence of the audience.

As we can see, contextual factors do play a role in determining the interpersonal function of personal pronouns and in their selection as a political strategy.

It is interesting to note that there is a straightforward relationship between the topic dealt with and the type of "we" mostly used: in order to deal with an international conflict politicians prefer to use a type of "we" which has as scope of reference a "non conversational space", that is a distant area to the speaker and his/her surrounding space (i.e., external "we").

The first issue to note about the distribution of these six subtypes of "we" is that Blair and Aznar made different selections depending on the nature of the answer. For evasive answers, Blair preferred to use "Co.For.We" (54%) and Aznar opted for "Eu.We" (57%). On the other hand, when they really offered the information they were being asked for, Blair mostly used "Pol.We" (46%) and Aznar "Nat.We" (62%). Again, it seems that Bush "deviates" from the norm and does not have a different strategy for equivocation and non-equivocation answers. This seems to support our previous argument: he is not talking to an American interviewer and is not being screened by an American TV channel. In this case, I would argue that, since he has no direct power in the situational context he "looks for shelter" in his allies and uses "Co.For.We" in most of his answers. In Example (4), Frost has just told Bush that the situation in Iraq could be called a "guerrilla war" and Bush answers:

(4)   FROST: It's almost a guerrilla war there, really.
       BUSH: Well, I would call it a desperate attempt, by people who were in - totally in control of government through tyrannical means, to regain power. This is nothing more than a power grab.
       Now there are some foreign fighters - Mujaheddin types or al Qaeda, or al Qaeda affiliates involved, as well. They've got a different mission; they want to install a Taliban-type government in Iraq, or they want to seek revenge for getting whipped in Afghanistan. But nevertheless, they all have now found common ground for a brief period of time, and what we will do is we will use Iraqi intelligence, we will use Iraqi security forces (…).

As we can see here Bush uses three instances of "Co.For.We" in the same line in order to look for support from his allies. This is a CC question: if he agrees, that would imply that this will be a long drawn-out conflict (guerrilla wars usually are) and he cannot disagree because he would lose credibility (it is obviously a guerrilla war). Bush equivocates through an implicit reply which modifies the question. He implicitly seems to disagree with Frost's characterization as a guerrilla war.

In contrast to Bush's preference for Co.For.We in both equivocation and non-equivocation contexts, when Blair and Aznar equivocate they seem to prefer an "international we" such as "Co.For.We" and "Eu.We" and they "domestic we" such as "Pol.We" and "Nat.We" for straightforward answers. Previously to example (5), Aznar had been told that he had been accused of having destroyed the unity of Europe:

(5)   MAGRO: *Pero con relaciones de conflicto, Señor Aznar, a usted se le acusa de haber producido una división en Europa, de haber metido una cuña que va a dificultar precisamente esa, esa unión que no sea solamente de:: de:: mercado.*
       'But with relations of conflict, Mr. Aznar, you are being accused of having caused a division in Europe, of having driven a wedge which is going to obstruct precisely that, that union which is not only a union of:: of:: market.'
       AZNAR: (…) *Sobre eso hemos cimentado nuestra estabilidad, nuestra libertad y nuestra prosperidad. Ojalá lo sigamos haciendo porque nos va en ello nuestra propia seguridad y nuestro propio interés.*
       'On that we have cemented our stability, our freedom and our prosperity. I hope we continue to do so because our own security and our own interest depend on it.'

In this instance, Aznar has used "Eu.We" eight times when talking about the foundations of Europe's security, freedom and prosperity. It was a CC question because (1) he could not disagree with it because it was well known that Europe was divided and Blair and Aznar were the "dividing agents" and (2) if he agrees with this, his face would be in jeopardy. Aznar ignores the question and, instead of answering it, he talks about the "history" of the European Union but does not even mention the veracity (or falsehood) of the criticism entailed in the question.

There is a historical-political reason which explains why Blair uses "Co.For.We" in his equivocations and Aznar "Eu.We". Whereas Britons in general have always felt a connection with the USA, Spaniards in general have always thought that the more similar they are to Europe, the more "Europeans" they are. Due to historical-political reasons, Spain has always felt apart from the rest of Europe and its biggest wish has always been to completely belong to Europe. So, a good strategy for Aznar in order to counterbalance the danger of a CC question and the obscurity of an equivocation is to resort to these "pro-European" feelings and appeal to the popular desire for a "European" identity.

On the other hand, in straightforward answers Aznar and Blair could possibly feel self-confident using "Nat.We" and and "Pol.We" respectively. In Example (6), Blair is talking on behalf of the government in his response to Frost:

(6)　　　FROST: (…) perhaps, we should just start with the news from yesterday of what went on in Saudi Arabia, linked with al-Qaeda by some of the accounts and so on, what, what's the latest you know about it?
BLAIR: The latest we know is simply that the situation is being resolved but obviously there, there's been loss of life (…) [emphasis mine]

And in Example (7), we can find eleven "Nat.We" which Aznar has used in an attempt to look for support from Spanish citizens. Magro (the Spanish interviewer) has just said to him that the relationship between Iraq and terrorism is not so clear as it has been portrayed by Aznar. In response, Aznar turns to nationalistic values and adopts a patronising position, behaving as if he were "the father" and the "protector" of all Spaniards. He positions himself as one who has to defend all Spaniards against dangerous menaces:

(7)　　　MAGRO: *Señor Aznar, usted ha insistido muchísimo en la vinculación de Irak con el terrorismo pero eh ... tampoco es tan patente eso*
AZNAR: *Lo que yo he insistido e insisto mucho es que el terrorismo es nuestra principal amenaza y es la principal amenaza del mundo y un país como España no puede ser insensible a eso ¿Cómo vamos a pedir nosotros cooperación internacional en la lucha contra el terrorismo y cuando otros necesitan nuestra ayuda decir que nosotros no estamos dispuestos a ayudar? Eso no es posible. Cuando nosotros necesitemos, que necesitamos cooperación internacional, cuando necesitemos de nuestros aliados, que necesitamos de nuestros aliados, pues podremos decir 'también hemos contribuido, no solamente hemos estado a las duras, a las maduras, hemos estado también a las duras en los momentos difíciles'* (…)

MAGRO: 'Mr. Aznar, you have insisted a lot about the link between Iraq and terrorism but eh … that is not so obvious
AZNAR: What I have insisted and I insist a lot is that terrorism is our main menace and is the main menace in the world and a country like Spain cannot be insensible to that. How are we going to ask for international cooperation in the fight against the terrorism and when others need our help we say that we are not prepared to help? That not is possible. When we need it, and we need international cooperation, when we need our allies, and we need our allies, then we could say 'we have also contributed, have been through thick and thin, we have also been through thick in the difficult moments' (…) [emphasis mine]

As I said before, Aznar turns to nationalistic values and adopts a patronising position in this answer. He says that "terrorism is our main menace" and that means that terrorism is a menace to all Spanish citizens and he, as an "exemplary" father, is supposed to offer solutions, help and shelter; and that is what he does in the following lines.

I am going to finish this paper by offering an interesting example of pronoun shift.[7] As De Fina (2003: 54) explains "pronominal choice and alternation convey particular kinds of speaker involvement, but may also index particular views about the self and its role in the social world." In Example (8), David Frost has just asked Blair about the damage we all have sustained as a consequence of the Iraqi conflict:

(8)   FROST: And how much damage have we sustained, and how much "lasting   damage", from all the troubled stories of what's been going on in the prisons in   Iraq? I mean obviously we're losing the battle on the streets, Arab streets now, but how much damage have we sustained?
        BLAIR: Well it's been damaging. Because they were absolutely ghastly and unacceptable and they revolted any normal and decent human being (…)

This is a CC question because (1) Blair cannot say "a lot of damage" because it would be hurtful and negative for Blair's government and (2) he cannot say "only minor damage" because it is widely known by everybody that there has been a lot of damage. Blair equivocates, he only acknowledges that there has been damage but he does not say how much, then he goes on to explain all the good things they have done in favour of Iraq. The interesting thing about this exchange is Frost's insistence on "we" as sufferers and Blair's shift to "they" as culprits. There is a shift of focus from sufferers to wrongdoers, which helps Blair to equivocate and to save his (and his government's) face.

6. Conclusion

It is undeniable that language varies according to the speakers' age, class, education, religion, ideology, sex, etc. and so do terms of address. But the examples provided here indicate that another key factor of variation has to do with the speaker's goals (manipulating, persuading, warning, praising, complaining, etc.). Terms of address may be selected within interaction for reasons beyond those reflected at a purely formal or categorical level. As the above examples indicate, pronoun choice seems to be more a matter of paradigmatic choice rather than a purely semantic one. The meanings of terms of address are manipulated in context and are "negotiated" through interaction. For this reason we can say that they represent a very important interpersonal strategy.

In order to illustrate this strategic nature of terms of address, different examples from political discourse were analysed. They came from three different scenarios (a British, an American and a Spanish political interview) and they revealed cultural differences manifested in and constructed by the negotiation of the first person pronoun "we". This cross-cultural study also helped us show to what extent the linguistic strategies used by politicians from different countries (1) depend on contextual factors and (2) are largely determined by their personal interests: to indicate how close/distant the speaker is to the topic under discussion, or to the participants involved in the discussion.

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[1] According to Braun (1988: 9) these forms (i.e., "Mr/Mrs" in English) "need not be regarded as particular titles and are in common use." Instead, she includes in the group of titles those forms which are achieved by appointment ("Doctor") or are inherited ("Duke").

[2] See Almeida at al (2006), Alvear-Madrid (2002), Carricaburo (2000), Congosto (2005), Soler Espiauba (2000) for more information about the use of "*tu"/"usted"*.

[3] For more information about the use of Spanish pronouns, see Andión Herrero (1998), Fontanella De Weinberg (1999), Keller (1975), and Morín Rodríguez (2002).

[4] Negative face is the desire to remain autonomous and negative politeness strategies are designed to protect the other person when negative face needs are threatened (Brown and Levinson 1987).

[5] For more information about titles in Spanish, see Almeida and Mendoza (1994), Alonso (1930) and Arcelus Ulibarrena (1980).

[6] The speech data I have used has been taken from a BBC transcript.

[7] See Bull and Fetzer (2006) and De Fina (2003) for more information.