LINGUISTIC MARKERS OF INVOLVEMENT IN AMERICAN BROADCAST POLITICS
A case study on TV political interviews

GIANMARCO VIGNOZZI
UNIVERSITÀ DI PISA

Abstract – This paper investigates the phenomenon of involvement in American TV political interviews. The dataset used to carry out the study consists of a corpus of interviews with American leading politicians aired on the most popular US Sunday morning talk shows within a time span of nine years, from 2010 to 2019. Comparisons are made with another synchronic corpus of American TV interviews coming from the entertaining talk show *Charlie Rose* featuring personalities who discuss different issues such as technology, science, the film industry, etc. Corpus linguistics methods are exploited to describe verbal traits associated with involvement in American political interviews, as compared to entertaining-oriented talk show interviews. Therefore, this study ascertains whether, and in which ways, the usage of linguistic involvement characterizes the genre of political interviews.

Keywords: political interviews; linguistic involvement; TV-mediated language; corpus linguistics; American English.

1. Introduction: American TV political interviews

The present contribution conducts a corpus linguistic analysis of involvement markers in American TV-mediated political interviews. Undoubtedly social media have become a very important medium of communication in the contemporary political scenario, yet television is still one of the main sources of information for most people and is still capable of reaching the most varied demographics (Lotz 2018). Given the central position of TV political interviews to get political messages across, the present analysis is based on a corpus of contemporary broadcast interviews aired on American Sunday morning talk shows. Hence, this study should contribute to better defining the genre of American TV political interviews by investigating the use of linguistic features that could work as potential markers of involvement. In fact, an in-depth investigation of this pragmatic phenomenon can help to throw light on the recognized 'hybrid' nature of the language of broadcast political interviews, standing between unscripted and planned discourse (Bruti 2016; Vignozzi 2019). To this purpose, throughout the analysis I have compared and contrasted the data obtained for the corpus of TV political interviews with a reference corpus of entertainment-oriented TV interviews. Furthermore, variation between interviewers' and interviewees' turns has also been considered so as to observe their distinctive usage of involvement strategies.

On the basis of the most relevant literature dealing with involvement in language use (Biber 1988; Chafe 1982, 1985; Tannen 1984, which is dealt with in Section 2) the hypotheses that drive the present research are the following:

- the genre of political interviews is rather detached and impersonal, showing features of a low-involved style as is typical of any other type of formal and institutional

Lingue e Linguaggi

interaction;
- interviewees show more involvement markers than interviewers as their answers tend to be more colloquial than the questions.

TV political interviews in America are generally part of TV newscasts or they feature within political talk shows (e.g., Sunday Morning Talk Shows), in which either they are the focus of the show or they become the subject for further debate. The widespread outreach of the television medium makes political interviews a spoken mass media genre through which the audience can acquire some knowledge of their political representatives, even though it is a mediated communicative situation in which television is a filter and the audience is only a passive overhearer (Montgomery 2007). This is one of the most distinguishing features of TV interviews as compared to spontaneous conversations, in which all the participants can participate and contribute to the dialogue.

Relating the broadcast political interview to the concept of communicative activity types (Levinson 1983), different scholars have isolated interviews from other media genres as the interactional situation they portray is highly framed and repetitive especially in terms of possible types of behaviour, speech roles, and related aims (Bruti 2016; Ekström, Lundell 2010; Jucker 1986; Vignozzi 2019). For example, the roles of interviewers and interviewees are played respectively by a question-asking journalist and an answering political actor, who are in an asymmetrical situation as the interviewer conducts and regulates the interaction, but the interviewee actually holds the power in front of the audience and often resorts to his/her accountability in order to divert the conversation to maximise consensus.

In his comprehensive study on TV interview types, carried out on the basis of the social role of the interviewee, his/her identification by the audience, and the consequent communicative aims that are fulfilled, Montgomery (2007, p. 145) categorizes broadcast political interviews as "accountability interviews". In fact, the interviewed politicians are accountable figures who occupy institutional positions in the eyes of the audience.

Drawing on Vignozzi's (2019) review of the main literature on TV political interviews and taking Bednarek's (2014) classification of talkback radio as a model, the following list summarises the most recurrent situational characteristics of TV political interviews in America:

- Face-to-face (generally one-on-one) interactions
- Interactive and online production (with some possible advance planning)
- Rigid turn-taking conversational structure (i.e., question-answer sequence)
- Asymmetrical power relations between interviewer and interviewee
- Public mass audience reached through the institutional medium of television
- Main communicative purpose: inform the public, persuade and gain consensus

In keeping with these variables, Vignozzi (2019) corpus-assisted study on the language of TV political interviews provides an empirical basis to argue that the genre resides in the middle of the spoken and written continuum, being highly characterised by a language use that juxtaposes some typical elements of spontaneous as well as non-spontaneous discourse.

This hybrid mixture of traits may suggest that at least part of the interview is thought out and rehearsed following a sort of written script (especially on the part of interviewers) in advance. Notwithstanding that, all the markers that place interview interaction near spontaneous language encounters (e.g., reductions, hedges, discourse markers, subject pronouns, etc.) convey a strong sense of authenticity and spontaneity to the interview itself. In effect, these impromptu speech markers smooth out the interaction

and make it more trustworthy for the overhearing watchers at home, who are both potential voters for interviewees and the audience of the interviewers' show. Therefore, with the aim of further investigating the colloquial/informal as well as the institutional and more written-like character of language use in broadcast political interviews, this article focuses on involvement features.

2. Involvement in discourse

The notion of involvement is quite wide-ranging, and, although it has been described in the relevant literature, there have been few studies that have attempted to give a precise definition and delimitation to this pragmatic phenomenon (Barbieri 2015; Besnier 1994; Biber 1988; Chafe 1982, 1985; Gumpertz 1982; Tannen 1984, 2007).

Besnier (1994) argues that involvement was used as a category in two main research strands, i.e., interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982) and in discourse analysis, especially while trying to account for the differences between spoken and written discourse (Barbieri 2015; Biber 1988; Chafe 1982, 1985; Tannen 1984).

Gumperz (1982), drawing on Goffman's (1963) studies on social interactions, combined the findings of anthropology, linguistics, conversation analysis and pragmatics and stated that speakers in a conversation have to "respond to what transpires by signaling involvement, either directly through words or indirectly through gestures or similar nonverbal signals" (Gumperz 1982, p. 1). In his view, these contextualization cues that create involvement must be shared among the interlocutors who cooperate to keep the conversation going.

In discourse analysis, involvement especially refers to "linguistic variation across spoken and written modes of communication" (Besnier 1994, p. 279), this is the approach that is mainly followed in this research. Chafe (1982) first noted that involvement, together with fragmentation, is a key feature of spoken interactions, whereas detachment and integration define written discourse. According to his study, involvement can be traced in different linguistic markers such as first-person references, the reference to a speaker's mental processes, the monitoring of information flows, the use of emphatic particles, and the use of vagueness and hedges. All these features are the result of face-to-face interactions between speakers and hearers. In contrast, written discourse favours the usage of nominalisations and passive constructions in function of the kind of indirect interface that holds between the writer and the reader. Tannen (1984), while studying face-to-face conversation, classified involvement as a stylistic strategy and distinguished between low involvement and high involvement style, which can be seen as two points of focus along a continuum. Involvement is, therefore, created by a series of devices aimed at establishing rapport between speakers and at keeping the conversation open. Among the features that she attaches to a highly involved style there are topic, pacing and narrative strategies, and also expressive paralinguistics.

Within the field of corpus linguistics and English register variations, Biber (1988) used the concept of involvement to describe one of the functions of language use and employed this broad notion as a tag for one of his dimensions defining spoken and written English. In his large-scale work, based on the statistical significance of the co-occurrence patterns of linguistic features, involvement is especially embodied by the overuse of private verbs, "that" deletions, contractions, present tenses, etc. This framework was also used by Quaglio (2009) to test the authenticity of the dialogues in the TV series *Friends*.

The present study follows previous corpus-assisted studies (Ädel 2008; Barbieri 2015; Bednarek 2014) that take Chafe's (1982, 1985) approach to the evaluation of involvement markers. Thus, involvement is intended as the relation that a speaker holds with his/her audience inasmuch as the hearer expresses involvement by showing understanding and asking for explanations or referring to his/her own experience, whereas the speaker shows involvement by asking questions or through self-references (Chafe 1982). In particular, Chafe (1982), in his analysis of face-to-face conversations, described involved spoken language as marked by the significant occurrence of first and second person references, references to the speaker's mental process, discourse markers, emphatic particles and vague language. As Bednarek (2014, p. 8) clarifies, "all of these features are the result of face-to-face interaction between speakers and hearers (as opposed to writers/readers), and are hence grouped together under involvement".

A further and more detailed classification of these phenomena that also takes the communicative context into account is offered in Chafe (1985). In this second work on the topic, the author divides involvement into three major subcategories i.e.: *i*) the involvement of the speaker with himself (ego involvement), *ii*) the involvement of the speaker with the hearer (interpersonal involvement) and *iii*) the involvement of the speaker with the subject matter. The presence of ego involvement is especially made evident by the use of verbal phrases with first-person pronouns, e.g., "I mean", "I suppose", "as I say", and in particular by references to the speaker's own mental process e.g., "I think", "I don't think", etc. Interpersonal involvement "concerns the dynamics of interaction with another person" (1985, p. 116) and is determined by linguistic markers such as second person pronouns, asking for confirmation ("right", "ok", "you know"), asking questions and addressing the interlocutor by name. Finally, the involvement with the subject matter is evident in exaggerations, exclamations, the usage of expressive vocabulary, and in the occurrence of emphatic particles like "just" and "really". This is the classification that is followed for assessing TV political interviews in this paper.

Since the aforementioned research demonstrated that the degree of involvement varies along the spontaneous–planned cline, it is particularly interesting to concentrate on this phenomenon when studying the TV political interview, a genre that is well recognized for its linguistic similarity with both a colloquial/conversational style and a more institutional and integrated language planning.

3. The *PolIntCor AmE* and the *ChaInt*

The corpus I have used for this study is a spin-off of the *PolIntCor* (Vignozzi 2019), which is a self-compiled synchronic corpus of British and American TV political interviews aired on Sunday morning talk shows between 2010 and 2016. To study involvement in American interviews in particular, I have isolated the American section of the corpus and expanded it by adding other interviews with American politicians up to May 2019. This new edition of the corpus was called *PolIntCor AmE*. The following table (1) offers a brief overview of the corpus.

Linguistic markers of involvement in American broadcast politics.
A case study on TV political interviews

319

Source	Number of interviews	Running words[1]
State of the Union (CNN)	31	62,123
Meet the Press (NBC)	32	78,778
This Week (ABC)	14	25,394
Face the Nation (CBS)	22	34,098
Fox News Sunday (Fox)	30	75,418
Total	129	275,811

Table 1
PolIntCor AmE composition.

The *PolIntCor AmE* comprises 129 interviews with leading American politicians who were interviewed by the hosts of the main American Sunday morning talk shows. The interviews were collected in the form of orthographic transcriptions that were retrieved from the websites of the TV channels and then carefully checked and integrated by watching the corresponding videos. The texts were also standardized to some norms for orthographic transcription (Bonsignori 2009) that do not take prosodic features into account, but that consider marked pronunciation variants such as gonna (for "going to"), contractions (e.g., "I'd") and discourse markers (e.g., "oh"). Each interview included in the study has four corresponding files, the first is a Microsoft Word document file (.doc) featuring the turns of the speakers organized in a table with their names in a separate column. The second is a text only file (.txt) featuring the speakers' turns without their names, and the third and the fourth contain respectively the turns of the interviewers and those of the interviewees alone (in a .txt text only format). On the basis of the text only complete files (i.e., featuring both interviewers and interviewees), the *PolIntCor AmE* was compiled, tagged and annotated by means of corpus software *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2014), which is also its web host. This version of the corpus counts 275,811 running words and it keeps the dialogic structure of the political interview. The third and the fourth files produced for each interview and featuring interviewers' and interviewees' turns in isolation were also uploaded on *Sketch Engine*. In this case, the files were annotated with an attribute (i.e., 'role of speaker') and a corresponding value (i.e., either 'interviewer' or 'interviewee'). This allowed me to obtain two subcorpora of the *PolIntCor AmE*. The interviewees subcorpus (*PolIntCor AmE Interviewees*) counts 192,851 tokens and the interviewers' (*PolIntCor AmE Interviewers*) 82,960. This organization made it possible to query interviewers' and interviewees' sections of the corpus either separately or together in their original dialogic structure. The first file that included the name of the speakers was kept so as to be able to retrieve the speakers' names when necessary.

In order to draw comparisons with a slightly different type of TV interview, I have also compiled a reference corpus of TV interviews with American showbiz people interviewed by Charlie Rose in its homonym entertaining talk show. This corpus (henceforth *ChaInt*) represents a non-specialised and less institutional body of comparison. Overall, it counts 41 interviews spanning across 2010 to 2019. The total size of this comparative dataset is 168,089 running words. The same modular structure that

---

[1] Numbers are given according to *Sketch Engine* (Kilgarriff *et al.* 2014).

distinguishes between interviewers' and interviewees' turns given to *PolIntCor AmE* was followed when building the *ChaInt*.

Therefore, the following analysis deploys the methodological tools of corpus linguistics in investigating involvement markers in the main corpus and in the reference corpus. More specifically, the methodology adopted blends corpus-driven and corpus-based considerations, as well as quantitative and, to a lesser extent, qualitative analyses. This approach should help to map, when relevant, word forms with pragmatic functions (cf. Partington 2004 on corpus-assisted methodology).

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Potential linguistic markers of involvement in single- and multi-word lists
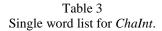
With the aim of starting the investigation with a corpus-driven inductive approach, the single-word list for the *PolIntCor AmE* was created thanks to *Sketch Engine* and then potential involvement markers were mapped and evaluated according to Chafe's (1985) taxonomy. Next the tables were compiled of the top 20 most frequent single words in the *PolIntCor AmE* (Table 2) and in the *ChaInt* (Table 3). In the first column the rank and the single words are sorted by frequency. The second column features the raw frequency of each word, and the third the normalised values x 100,000 words. Normalisation is an essential step in corpus-assisted studies in order to have comparable results between corpora of different sizes. Potential involvement markers are signaled in the tables with (e) for ego involvement, (i) for interpersonal involvement and (s) for involvement with the subject matter.

PolIntCor AmE	Raw Frequency	Normalized frequency (x 100,000 words)
1. the	13,916	5,045
2. I (e)	9,270	3,998
3. and	7,868	2,809
4. to	7,750	2,786
5. that	6,200	2,247
6. of	6,168	2,236
7. we (e)	5,878	2,231
8. a	5,518	2,205
9. you (i)	4,960	1,997
10. think (e)	4,518	1,741
11. in	4,248	1,540
12. is	4,114	1,491
13. have	2,906	1,053
14. this	2,856	1,035
15. do	2,524	915
16. for	2,258	818
17. on	2,194	795
18. what (i)	2,182	791
19. it	2,146	778
20. he	2,024	733

Table 2
Single word list for *PolIntCor AmE*.

ChaInt	Raw Frequency	Normalized frequency (x 100,000 words)
1. you (i)	6,396	3,805
2. to	5,202	3,094
3. and	4,862	2,892
4. the	4,510	2,683
5. I (e)	4,098	2,248
6. a	3,578	2,128
7. is	3,554	2,114
8. what (i)	3,300	1,963
9. of	2,710	1,612
10. for	2,006	1,193
11. in	2,004	1,192
12. that	1,742	1,036
13. do	1,446	860
14. want (e)	1,274	757
15. this	1,218	724
16. have	1,196	711
17. so	1,114	662
18. but	1,058	629
19. was	1,054	627
20. just (s)	940	559

Table 3
Single word list for *ChaInt*.

When starting to evaluate the *PolIntCor AmE* word list, we can observe that ego involvement triggers are the most frequent category of involvement markers. This is confirmed by the first person singular pronoun "I" (2nd position), the first person plural pronoun "we" (7th position) and the mental verb "think" (10th position), which all occur within the top 10. Albeit generally being less frequent, potential triggers of interpersonal involvement are present as well, for example the second person pronoun "you" (9th position) and the interrogative adverb "what" (18th position). By examining the *ChaInt* list, it can be noticed that interpersonal involvement markers are foregrounded, with "you" in the 1st position and "what" in the 8th. Ego involvement is evidently less present, "I" being only in the 5th position and the verb "want" in the 14th. Furthermore, the private verb "think", which is one of the most evident signals of self-involvement according to Chafe (1985), is not present at all within the top 20 list. Interestingly, in this list there are also potential traces of involvement with the subject matter, such as the emphatic particles "so" and' "just" respectively in the 17th and 20th position.

In order to further explore what the frequency lists can tell us about involvement features, clusters of words (i.e., n-grams) were also calculated and analysed. Table 4 and 5 record the top 10 2-3-4-5 grams in the *PolIntCor AmE* and in the *ChaInt* listed by their rank.

Rank	*PolIntCor AmE* 2-grams	*ChaInt* 2-grams	*PolIntCor AmE* 3-grams	*ChaInt* 3-grams
1.	of the	you know (i)	I do n't (e)	I do n't (e)
2.	in the	do n't	a lot of	you have to (i)
3.	I think (e)	to be	the United States	Do n't know (e)
4.	do n't	in the	I think that (e)	a lot of
5.	on the	you are (i)	the American people	how are you (i)
6.	that we (e)	of the	do n't know (e)	you think to (i)
7.	I do (e)	you see (i)	thank you very (i)	I did n't (e)
8.	you know (i)	I think (e)	and I think (e)	you want to (i)
9.	thank you (i)	and I (e)	we have to (e)	I think it (e)
10.	to the	I was (e)	I think we (e)	want to do (i)

Table 4
2-grams and 3-grams in *PolIntCor AmE* and in *ChaInt*.

If we look at 2-grams, in the *PolIntCor AmE* we may notice that clusters suggesting traces of ego involvement are the most frequent kind, with the verbal phrase "I think" (3rd), and the two clusters with plural and singular first person pronoun "that we" (6th) and "I do" (7th). Interpersonal involvement markers are present as well, although in lower positions. This is testified by the fixed expression "you know" (8th) and the conversational routine "thank you" (9th). In the *ChatInt* corresponding list, the situation is exactly the opposite, with interpersonal involvement markers ("you know" 1st, "you are" 5th, and "you see" 7th) all occurring in higher positions than ego involvement markers ("and I" 9th and "I was" 10th).

As for 3-grams, in the political interviews corpus ego involvement markers prevail with six items versus just one suggesting interpersonal involvement. However, in the entertainment interviews corpus interpersonal involvement markers are clearly again foregrounded (five items for (i) vs. four items for (e)).

Rank	*PolIntCor AmE* 4-grams	*ChaInt* 4-grams
1.	I do n't think (e)	I do n't know (e)
2.	I want to do (e)	if you look at (i)
3.	I do n't know (e)	I do n't think (e)
4.	to make sure that	you want to do (i)
5.	a lot of people	at the same time
6.	a bit of people	let me ask you (i)
7.	welcome back to (i)	you have to be (i)
8.	would you like to (i)	do n't want to (e)
9.	make sure that we (e)	at the end of
10.	we need to do (e)	I did n't know (e)

Table 5
4-grams in *PolIntCor AmE* and in *ChaInt*.

The situation that surfaces when taking longer clusters (4 grams) into account is very similar to that described above. Thus, it is confirmed that potential ego involvement markers (e) are more typical of the *PolIntCor AmE* and interpersonal markers (i) of the *ChaInt*.

On the whole, this first inductive exploration of word lists, which were analysed by pointing out Chafe's (1985) potential involvement markers, seems to indicate that person pronouns (i.e., "I", "we" and "you") and private verbs (i.e., "think", "know" and "want")

Linguistic markers of involvement in American broadcast politics.
A case study on TV political interviews

323

are the most prominent potential markers of involvement and, very interestingly, seem to vary across the two corpora. That is why it is worth exploring them in more detail in the next sections.

4.2. A focus on person pronouns and private verbs

As the frequency data showed, person reference is a distinctive trait signaling different types of involvement. Given the predominance of first (singular and plural) person pronouns and second person pronouns emerging from the corpus-driven analysis, table (6) collects the normalized frequencies of the results obtained when searching the three pronouns in the *PolIntCor AmE* and in the *ChaInt*. The statistical significance[2] (log-likelihood) of these values is also added.

Person pronouns in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*			
Person Pronouns	*PolIntCor AmE* (normalized frequency x 100,000)	*ChaInt* (normalized frequency x 100,000)	Log-likelihood
I	3,998	2,248	+ 596.4
you	1,997	3,905	- 628.5
we	2,131	580	+ 943.5

Table 6
Person pronouns in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*.

The normalized frequencies of the three person pronouns show that in the *PolIntCor AmE* the first person pronoun "I" is twice as frequent as in the *ChaInt* and the first person plural pronoun "we" is even three times more frequent in the first corpus than in the second. This implies the foregrounding of self-involvement in political interviews. Nonetheless, the second person pronoun "you" is almost twice as frequent in the *ChatInt*. This points to a preference for interpersonal involvement. The salience of the results is strengthened by the log-likelihood values, according to which there is an overuse of "I" and "we" and an underuse of "you" in the *PolIntCor AmE*.

The other potential triggers of involvement that emerged as being worth exploring in more detail are verbs recalling mental processes. These verbs are identified by Quirk *et al.* (1985) as private verbs or by Biber *et al.* (1999) as mental verbs and are recognised by Chafe (1985) as tools deployed to create involvement at different levels. In particular, through the top 20 frequency lists analysis, three private verbs seemed to be particularly recurring, i.e., "think", "know" and "want". These are, in fact, the most common verbs that make reference to mental states in spoken British English (Leech *et al.* 2001) and in American English (Vignozzi 2019).

Therefore, the two corpora were queried using *Sketch Engine* and the normalized frequencies of "think", "know", and "want", as well as their inflected versions "thinks", "thought", "knows", "knew", "wants" and "wanted" are gathered in the next table (7). In

---

[2] Log-likelihood values were calculated by using an automatic calculator developed at Lancaster University, which is available here: http://ucrel.lancs.ac.uk/llwizard.html. In short, log-likelihood value tells us about the statistical significance of the results by comparing the values obtained for the two corpora we are comparing. If the measure is positive (+) it means that the value is significant in the first corpus (*PolIntCor AmE*); if it is negative (-), instead, it is more salient in the reference corpus (*ChaInt*).

order to delete non-verb uses (e.g., "a thought", "a think") the concordances of the searched verbs were evaluated manually.

Private verbs in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*			
Verb form	*PolIntCor AmE* (normalized frequency x 100,000)	*ChaInt* (normalized frequency x 100,000))	Log-likelihood
think	1,619	521	
thinks	24	3	
thought	98	46	
total think*	1,741	570	+ 621.7
know	1,440	379	
knows	52	8	
knew	40	4	
total know*	1,232	391	+ 457.7
want	395	448	
wants	153	46	
wanted	126	192	
total want*	674	768	- 16.7

Table 7
Private verbs in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*.

On a surface level, we can observe a significant overuse of private verbs in *PolIntCor AmE*, in which they are twice as frequent as in *ChaInt* (3,647 vs. 1,729). In more detail, "think*" is the most recurrent private verb in *PolIntCor AmE* and is three times more frequent than in *ChaInt*. A similar situation applies to "know*". The verb "want *", instead, is slightly more frequent in the reference corpus.

In order to evaluate to what extent these verbs were used to create ego involvement (the speaker's own mental process), their colligations with the person pronoun "I" were explored thanks to the concordancer tool of *Sketch Engine*. Table 8 summarizes the result of this search.

Private verbs in combination with "I" in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*			
Verb form	*PolIntCor AmE* (normalized frequency x 100,000)	*ChaInt* (normalized frequency x 100,000))	Log-likelihood
I + think	399	38	
I + thought	9	6	
total I + think*	408	44	+ 338.4
I + know	60	16	
I + knew	2	2	
total I + know*	62	18	+ 37.2
I + want	15	39	
I + wanted	9	6	
total I + want*	24	45	- 40.6
Total I + private verbs	494	97	+ 324.7

Table 8
Private verbs in combination with "I" in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*.

Linguistic markers of involvement in American broadcast politics.
A case study on TV political interviews

325

The table showcases that co-occurrences of "I" with private verbs are markedly more represented in political interviews (494 vs. 87, LL + 314.77), where they are five times more frequent than in entertainment interviews. The most pronounced divide can be singled out for the combination "I" with the present tense "think", which is nine times more frequent in the *PolIntCor AmE* (408 vs. 44, LL + 338.74). In effect, "I think" in political interviews often performs specific discourse functions e.g., working either as an intensifier, as a hedging downtoner, or as a parenthetical (Vignozzi 2019). According to Chafe (1982, 1985), these clusters communicate a sense of the self-involvement of the speaker. Also the other private verb of cognitive meaning "know" is more represented in political interviews, being almost four times more frequent. This veridical verb in combination with "I" generally implies the truth of the embedded proposition for the speaker, marking his/her the cognitive attitude towards what he/she is saying, and also its personal involvement. Differently from "think", the verb "know" signals a high level of certainty on the part of the speaker. The only cluster being twice as recurrent in the *ChaInt* is "I want" (45 vs. 24, LL – 40.6) as politicians seem to avoid, when possible, directly claiming their needs (Fetzer 2014).

To get a fuller picture of the usage of private verbs in the two corpora, their co-occurrence with the second person pronoun "you" was also evaluated (Table 9).

Private verbs in combination with "you" in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*			
Verb form	*PolIntCor AmE* (normalized frequency x 100,000)	*ChaInt* (normalized frequency x 100,000))	Log-likelihood
you + think	62	68	
you + thought	2	3	
total you + think*	64	71	- 9.3
you + know	205	418	
you + knew	1	2	
total you + know*	206	420	- 84.6
you + want	17	54	
you + wanted	2	12	
total you + want*	19	66	- 28.5
Total you + private verbs	289	557	- 96.3

Table 9
Private verbs in combination with "you" in *PolIntCor AmE* and *ChaInt*.

The pattern "you" + "private verb" is more defining of the *ChaInt*, marking the more colloquial conversational nature of entertainment interviews, in which speakers are more prone to directly address each other. Interestingly, the fixed phrase "you know", which is often a discourse marker (Schiffrin 1987) and, according to Chafe (1985), one of the main triggers of interpersonal involvement, is significantly more frequent in *ChaInt* (420 vs. 206, LL -84.6). This may unveil the more conversational and colloquial nature of the entertainment interview in which involvement is especially established with the present hearer.

4.3. Involvement in interviewers vs. interviewees turns

Moving now to the second point of this study, i.e., to test whether interviewees' turns, being overall more spontaneous and less institutional than the interviewers' (Vignozzi 2019), would also contain more involvement triggers, the top 20 keyword list of the interviewers' and interviewees' subcorpora of the *PolIntCor AmE* were created (Table 10) and then manually assessed. By resorting to the *Sketch Engine* keyword generator, the two subcorpora were used against each other as the reciprocal reference corpora. This allowed me to determine the most significant words distinguishing the turns of interviewers and interviewees.

	Interviewers	*Interviewees*
1.	your (i)	our (e)
2.	you (i)	we (e)
3.	Senator (i)	people
4.	ask (i)	I (e)
5.	do	their
6.	week	think (e)
7.	is	very
8.	all	and
9.	said	know (e)
10.	What (i)	the
11.	Republican	they
12.	let	them
13.	morning	can
14.	How (i)	want (e)
15.	thank	every
16.	President	well
17.	Mr. (i)	work
18.	Why	all
19.	right (s)	and
20.	about	just (s)

Table 10
Keywords for interviewers' and interviewees' turns in *PolIntCor AmE*.

The two keyword lists show some clear differences in the usage of involvement strategies by interviewers and interviewees. The keywords defining interviewers' vs. interviewees' turns appear to denote that interviewers are keener to create involvement with the hearer rather than with themselves. This is testified by the keyness of the second person pronoun "you" (2nd) and of the second person possessive adjective "your" (1st), which are directly targeted towards the interviewee. In fact, interviewers act as the moderators of the interaction and take the side of the overhearing audience at home and directly address the interviewed politician to keep the dialogue open and to get as much information as possible (Lauerbach 2007). Their willingness to get the hearer involved is also evident in question words such as "What" (10th), "How" (14th) and "Why" (18th), and in the terms of the appellation they use to address their interlocutor, e.g., "Senator" (3rd) an honorific usually followed by a proper name and "Mr." (17th), which is generally accompanied by the title of the interlocutor. Figure 1 and 2 illustrate a sample of the concordances of these two terms of address.

Figure 1
Concordances for "Senator" in interviewers' subcorpus.

Figure 2
Concordances for "Mr." in interviewers' subcorpus.

The situation for interviewees is exactly the opposite containing many markers of self-involvement. The first person plural and singular pronouns "we" (2nd) and "I" (4th), as well as the first person plural possessive adjective "our" (1st), all contribute to create a sense of involvement with the self, which becomes a defining characteristic of the language of the interviewed politician. This is in line with his/her position in the interview, as he/she is the protagonist of the interaction whose aim is to communicate a certain degree of self-confidence and to affirm their stance on the issues they are discussing (Furkó, Ágnes 2014; Furkó 2017). Also private verbs are more salient in interviewees' turns, "think" being the most recurrent one (6th) followed by know (9th) and "want" (14th). These forms generally point to an involvement with the self, inasmuch as a reading of the concordances produced for each of these verbs shows that the most frequent pronoun collocating with them in the interviewees' subcorpus is "I". As Fetzer (2014) suggests these combinations of "I" + "private verb" in political discourse may be seen as an attempt by politicians to reduce distance and project more equality, or even intimacy in front of the audience. In this light, interviewees' inclination towards self-involvement contributes to the creation of involvement with the overhearers with whom they try to establish an indirect rapport of trustworthiness.

As a final step, in order to check whether the same traces of involvement that appeared for interviewers and interviewees in political interviews would hold for non-specialised interviews as well, interviewers' and interviewees' keywords were also extracted for the *ChaInt* (Table 11).

	Interviewers	*Interviewees*
1.	What (i)	My (e)
2.	Your (i)	I (e)
3.	You (i)	really (s)
4.	How (i)	like
5.	is	was
6.	here	Very (s)
7.	Martha (i)	Just (s)
8.	do	and
9.	this	we (e)
10.	did	but
11.	say	think (e)
12.	Tell (i)	our (e)
13.	look	then
14.	yourself (i)	so (s)
15.	table	always
16.	about	know (e)
17.	is	sometimes
18.	sense	out
19.	pleased	want (e)
20.	Why (i)	together

Table 11
Keywords for interviewers' and interviewees' turns in *ChaInt*.

Apart from all domain specific terms and linguistic features peculiar to the domain of politics[3], the keywords collected in the table (11) exhibit great similarities with those found for the *PolIntCor AmE*. The engagement of the direct hearer is still the main endeavour of the interviewers and self-promotion that of the interviewees. This appears to suggest that the genre tenets and the format structure of the TV-mediated interview have a pivotal role in determining how involvement dynamics are organized between the two speakers contributing to the interaction.

5. Concluding remarks

This study was meant to explore how, and to what extent, potential markers of linguistic involvement are present in TV political interviews, drawing comparisons with a reference corpus of non-specialised interviews and also between interviewers and interviewees. In conclusion, the results of the frequency and comparative analyses amply showed that TV political interviews are a highly involved form of spoken mass media discourse. This challenges the assumption that the regulated, mediated and institutionalized nature of the political interview (as described in Section 1) inevitably calls for a detached style with low involvement.

The analysis also showed that the linguistic differences in the use of involvement markers vary according to the type of interview, as the results obtained for the *PolIntCor*

---

[3] For example, in *ChaInt* plural pronouns and adjectives such as "we" and "our" are still present as keywords but they are found in lower position as in political discourse they have the pragmatic meaning of promoting a sense of inclusion.

AmE and for the *ChaInt* are markedly different. More specifically, it could be observed that ego involvement (i.e., involvement with the self) is the most significant type of linguistic involvement present in the *PolIntCor AmE*. This is especially expressed by the overuse of first person pronouns as well as their combinations with the private verbs "think" and "know". This trend could hint at the tendency of politicians to demonstrate that they have strong positions and are engaged personally in what they claim.

On the contrary, interpersonal involvement (i.e., involvement with the hearer) is the form of involvement that characterizes entertainment interviews the most. The significance of this kind of involvement could especially be traced in the overemployment of second person pronouns and phatic communication particles (e.g., question words). Overall, the effect implied by a strong presence of interpersonal involvement is a higher level of informality (Bednarek 2014) as well as the more friendly and conversational nature of interviews of this type.

Comparing the analysis of interviewers' turns to the interviewees', it emerged that interviewers generally attempt to get their direct hearer (the interviewed politician) involved. As hosts, they wish to be perceived as the nation's friends and facilitators. Interviewees, instead, display involvement with themselves, which could be interpreted as a strategy to get the audience at home involved and convince the largest number of people of the truthfulness of the viewpoints that they are presenting. While looking at the *ChaInt* from the same perspective, it was possible to observe that the results were almost the same, thus implying that the involvement strategies adopted by the two participants to the conversation tend to remain alike across different discourse domains.

As a last remark it is also worth adding that the ongoing trend of mixing genres and the influences of the new media and communication platforms, which are nowadays amply deployed by politicians (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, Instagram), could have had a role in the so called "conversationalization" and "mediatization" (Fairclough, Wodak 1997, p. 265) of broadcast political interviews and in the consequent higher level of involvement of a genre that is prototypically little involved and rather detached.

Future work in this direction will be aimed at expanding the qualitative analysis. For example, I aim to distinguish in more detail the different discourse functions of involvement markers (e.g., the case of hedging) and to expand the comparative analysis by also including printed interviews in order to evaluate the role played by this channel of communication.

Bionote: Gianmarco Vignozzi is a post-doctoral researcher in English linguistics at the University of Pisa, where he is also teaching English language and linguistics. His main fields of research lie in the area of ESP and corpus linguistics, ranging from political discourse and filmic/televisual discourse analysis, to corpus stylistics and audiovisual translation. Some of his latest publications include a monograph on the language of British and American tv political interviews (Cambridge Scholars 2019) and another on the representation of formulaic language in Disney animated movies (Odoya 2019).

Author's address: gianmarco.vignozzi@fileli.unipi.it

*L*ingue e
*L*inguaggi

References

Ädel A. 2008, *Involvement Features in Writing*, in Gaëtanelle G., Papp S. and Diez-Bedmar M.B. (eds.), *Linking up Contrastive and Learner Corpus Research*, Rodopi, Amsterdam/New York, pp. 35-53.

Barbieri F. 2015, *Involvement in University Classroom Discourse: Register Variation and Interactivity*, in "Applied Linguistics" 36 [2], pp. 151-173.

Bednarek M. 2014, *Involvement in Australian Talkback Radio: A Corpus Linguistic Investigation*, in "Australian Journal of Linguistics" 34 [1], pp. 4-23.

Besnier N. 1994, *Involvement in Linguistic Practice: An Ethnographic Appraisal*, in "Journal of Pragmatics" 22, pp. 279-299.

Biber D. 1988, *Variation across Speech and Writing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Biber D., Johansson S., Leech G., Conrad S. and Finegan E. 1999, *Longman Grammar of Spoken and Written English*, Longman, Harlow.

Bonsignori V. 2009, *Transcribing Film Dialogue: From orthographic to Prosodic Transcription*, in Freddi M. and Pavesi M. (eds.), *Analysing Audiovisual Dialogue. Linguistic and Translational Insights*, CLUEB, Bologna, pp. 185-200.

Bruti S. 2016, *Gender-related Communication in Political Interviews: A Multimodal Analysis in Meaning-making in the Obama/Clinton Interview of 2013*, in Bonsignori V. and Crawford Camiciottoli B. (eds.), *Multimodality Across Communicative Settings, Discourse Domains and Genres*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle Upon Tyne, pp. 166-188.

Chafe W.L. 1982, *Integration and Involvement in Speaking, Writing, and Oral Literature*, in Tannen D. (ed.), *Spoken and Written Language: Exploring Orality and Literacy*, Norwood, Ablex, pp. 35-53.

Chafe W.L. 1985, *Linguistic Differences Produced by Differences between Speaking and Writing*, in Olson D.R., Torrance N. and Hildyard A. (eds.), *Literacy, Language, and Learning: The Nature and Consequences of Reading and Writing*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 105-123.

Ekström M. and Lundell Å. 2010, *Beyond "the Broadcast Interview": Specialized Forms of Interviewing in the Making of Television News*, in "Journalism Studies" 12 [2], pp. 172-187.

Fairclough N. and Wodak R. 1997, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, in van Dijk T.A. (ed.), *Discourse as Social Interaction Vol.2. Discourse Studies: A Multidisciplinary Introduction*, Sage Publishing, London, pp. 258-284.

Fetzer A. 2014, I Think, I Mean *and* I Believe *in Political Discourse: Collocates, Functions and Distribution*, in "Functions of Language" 21 [1], pp. 67-94.

Furkó P. 2017, *Manipulative Uses of Pragmatic Markers in Political Discourse*, in "Palgrave Commun" 3. https://doi.org/10.1057/palcomms.2017.54 (23.1.2020).

Furkó P. and Ágnes A. 2014, *English Discourse Markers in Mediatised Political Interviews*, in "Brno Studies in English" 40 [1], pp. 45-64.

Goffman E. 1963, *Behavior in Public places: Notes on the Social Organization of Gatherings,* Free Press, New York.

Gumperz J. 1982, *Discourse Strategies*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Jucker A. 1986, *News Interviews: A Pragmalinguistic Analysis*, Gieben, Amsterdam.

Kilgarriff A., Baisa V., Bušta J., Jakubíček M., Kovář V., Michelfeit J., Rychlý P. and Suchomel V. 2014, *The Sketch Engine: Ten Years on*, in "Lexicography" 1 [1], pp. 7-36.

Lauerbach G. 2007, *Argumentation in Political Talk Show Interviews*, in "Journal of Pragmatics" 39 [3], pp. 1388-1419.

Leech G., Rayson P. and Wilson A. 2001, *Word Frequencies in Written and Spoken English*, Pearson Education, Harlow.

Levinson S.C. 1983, *Pragmatics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Lotz A. 2018, *We Now Disrupt This Broadcast: How Cable Transformed Television and the Internet Revolutionized it All*, MIT Press, Cambridge Massachussets.

Montgomery M. 2007, *The Discourse of Broadcast News*, Routledge, London.

Partington A. 2004, *Corpora and Discourse, a Most Congruous Beast*, in Partington A., Morley J. and Haarman L. (eds.), *Corpora and Discourse*, Peter Lang, Bern, pp. 11-20.

Quaglio P. 2009, *Television Dialogue: The Sitcom Friends vs. Natural Conversation*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia.

Schiffrin D. 1987, *Discourse Markers*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Tannen D. 1984, *Conversational Style: Analysing Talk among Friends*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Tannen D. 2007, *Talking Voices,* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Vignozzi G. 2019, A*ssessing the Language of TV Political Interviews: A Corpus Assisted Perspective*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Newcastle Upon Tyne.