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BRILL

“And All of That”: The Long List in Political Discourse

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Abstract

We look at long lists (i.e., longer than three parts) in political discourse, especially in talk shows from three cultures, the U.S., Pakistan, and the Netherlands, and ask how a long list is accomplished. Long lists are routinely produced in political discourse by extending the typical three-part list. The listing process to create a long list can happen in many ways, explicitly via counting verbally or physically and implicitly through other resources. These resources can also be used to project a list in advance and to create one retrospectively. Last, listing in politics creates two problems for the lister, requiring an artful application of the available listing resources. The audience may orient to only three parts, and the politician is faced with selecting the last item. Thus, we show that politicians use lists to structure their talk, but they also have to anticipate problems regarding the practice of listing.

Keywords

long list – listing – political discourse – discursive structure

1 Introduction*

Listless, according to Merriam-Webster, is “characterised by lack of interest, energy, or spirit.” In this paper, we show that lists are not listless at all. Their general features and specifically their use in politics show that they are complex and potentially difficult to use discursive structures. Previous research has shown that the three-part list is an important resource in conversation (Jefferson, 1990; Lerner, 1994; Selting, 2007, to name a few) and politics (Atkinson, 1984). This paper shows that extended lists, which we call “long lists” (Dori-Hacohen, 2020), are a discursive resource vital to political discourse. However, as the three-part list is sufficient to signal the addressee that one is listing and to communicate the underlying principle of categorisation, constructing a long list is not always a straightforward task. Building a long list requires a speaker to craftily employ various discursive resources, as we will show below.

Given that three-part lists are the expected structure for lists in mundane conversation (Jefferson, 1990) and are used as a claptrap in politics (Atkinson, 1984), we ask how politicians accomplish making a long list. To answer this question, we show the resources politicians use to make long lists, a process we termed “listing,” and two problems which result from doing long listing. More specifically, in this paper, we first review literature on the use of lists in interaction and lists more generally (section 2). Next, after introducing our data and methodology (section 3), we analyze some long lists in political talk shows and illustrate that they are extensions from the three-part list (section 4). Then, we discuss some of the central resources used to do listing and move beyond the typical three items (section 5). Last, we show that politicians face two interactional problems in long listing: the contrast between the audience’s expectation of the three-part list and the political need to advance a long list and the selection of the last element of the list (section 6).

* This paper is written in memory of Shoshana Blum-Kulka.

2 Literature Review

Atkinson started modern research on lists in political discourse (1984). He identified three-part lists as a central tool in generating applause, as claptrap, in political speeches because they project a completion point where the audience can react. These findings regarding three-part lists as claptrap have been confirmed in recent years (e.g., Bull and Waddle, 2021; Bull and Miskinis, 2015). Research on lists in the mundane conversation has also confirmed that the three-part list forms a unit where the third element signals its completion (Jefferson, 1990; Lerner, 1994; Selting, 2007). Jefferson (1990) noted that speakers work to find an appropriate third item or provide a generalised list completer like “and so on,” and hearers may add a third item to two elements listed by a speaker. She, therefore, concluded that “lists not only can and do occur in three parts, but should so occur” (Jefferson, 1990: 66), and this language suggests the three-part list is the expected form in mundane interactions. Lerner (1994) suggested that a list is usually limited to three elements due to the preference for minimisation: sharing three items is the shortest way to indicate that one is providing a list and thus to indicate that one is referring to a class of objects. Selting (2007) argued that through prosody, the addressee could already anticipate a list coming by hearing its first element.

Lists are considered a discursive resource to bring different pieces of information together (Karlsson, 2020). This compilation is often accomplished through prosody, syntax, gesture (e.g., Karlsson, 2020) and rhythm (e.g., Erickson, 1992). Lists may be uttered with gestures marking each list item (Bull, 1986). Yet, even as some scholars would refer to the repetition of the same lexical item as reduplication (e.g., Karlsson, 2020), Jefferson (1990) has argued that a list can be composed of just one item repeatedly (the “triple single,” 75). Lists, as we define them here, are discursive structures that compile (potentially different) elements using various gestural, prosodic, syntactic, or lexical tools (see Dori-Hacohen, 2020). Thus, lists communicate a state of affairs possibly beyond the cases mentioned by invoking a categorisation principle (Mauri et al, 2019). While Selting focused on the prosody of lists, we follow Jefferson to focus more on the syntactic and lexical tools, meaning the interactional, verbal, and structural elements, for achieving them.

There is an argument regarding the objectivity of lists. Scholars who argue that the key feature of lists is categorisation (Schiffrin, 1994) see them, in contrast to narratives, as objective (White, 1980; Schiffrin, 1994). However, the speaker of a list creates its organising principle to bring items together within the uttered list (Mauri et al., 2019; Dori-Hacohen, 2020). The shared meaning of the items is only made relevant because the items are put on a list together

(Dori-Hacohen, 2020). Thus, the list is organised, given the speaker's subjective position. In addition, lists may be meaningful by being embedded within a larger narrative (e.g., Ziegler, 2007), further undermining the traditional view that lists are objective. The subjectivity of lists is also evidenced when speakers move beyond the minimum number of items needed, which we term the "long list." As it is a subjective process, we have argued for an equivalence between listing and telling in interactions (Dori-Hacohen, 2020). Blum-Kulka (1997) suggested that in narratives, a Teller tells a Tale in a Telling process. Similarly, we (Dori-Hacohen, 2020) suggested that a Lister lists a List in a Listing process. Jefferson seemingly has similar thoughts, although she mentioned only "de-listing" as a process (1990: 76). The speaker uses both processes (listing and de-listing) to accomplish subjective communicative goals.

We (Dori-Hacohen, 2020) presented some evidence that the long list may be interactionally necessary (i.e., it deals with an exigency) in current affairs radio call-in shows. This suggestion was given two potential explanations, either (1) the genre of call-in radio shows or (2) the domain of political talk. We pick up on this suggestion and present further evidence that the long list may respond to situational demands in the political domain more generally. For instance, Larson (2019) analyzed #MeToo as a list: each person used the hashtag #MeToo to participate in a collectively crafted testimony. The previous neglect of society to address rape, sexual harassment, and assault required an *immense* list to show the magnitude of the problem and thereby overwhelm people. Hence, this long list is an example of a list that needed to be long to fulfill its political aim. We suggest this is more generally applicable to politics and that politicians recurrently choose to do extra work to produce a long list.

3 Data and Methodology

To understand how making a long list is accomplished in politics, we study communicative practices from different cultures (see, e.g., Blum-Kulka and Olshtain, 1984) and, in particular, talk shows (see Blum-Kulka, 2001). For this study, we created a collection of lists from three data sets: broadcast late-night talk shows during the U.S. 2016 elections and the 2020 Democratic primaries (The Late Show With Stephen Colbert; Jimmy Kimmel Live!; The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon), Urdu Political talk shows from Pakistan (Off the Record; Naya Pakistan; Kal Tak), and Dutch political talk shows from the Netherlands since the start of the corona pandemic (Op1). In the U.S. data, there is a live audience that can respond; in the other data, there is a live audience, but they remain silent throughout the interviews. We used these data sets where

politicians used long lists across three cultures, enabling us to understand how lists are used and produced. To analyze the collection of lists, we transcribed each instance (using verbatim transcripts (Craig and Tracy, 2021), including in-breaths and pauses) and used insights from pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and conversation analysis. Specifically, we looked for ways discursive items are connected and separated verbally and gesturally. We marked the number of each item in the list in square brackets to help the reader follow the list.

4 The Long List as a Discursive Structure on Political Talk Shows

Politicians routinely advance more than the minimally required three items in political discourse in our data. One evidence Jefferson presented for the expectation for the three-part list is the use of generalised list completers (like etc.) at the third position. In our data, we have evidence for the deliberate use of long lists since completers appear beyond the third list item. We first illustrate this observation in the following excerpt from Pakistan. Following a monologue detailing the ongoing political dispute between federal and provincial governments around emerging policies related to COVID-19 in Pakistan, the host begins by asking the Provincial Minister of Punjab for Primary and Secondary Healthcare two questions about the COVID-19 lockdown to.

(1) Kashif Abbasi (H), Yasmeen Rashid (G)

1. H: Aap ka kia khayal hai kai lockdown hona chaheyeh ya nahin?
 H: *You what think, that lockdown there be or not?*
 What do you think, Should there be a lockdown or not?
2. Punjab is wakt kahan khara hai?
 Punjab at this time where standing is?
 Where does Punjab stand ((on this)) at the moment?
3. G: Mera khayal hai kai humain isai jaari rakhna parai ga
 G: *I think that we this continue keep will.*
 I think we will have to continue it,
4. Khasusan hot spot ilaqon main
 especially hot spot areas in
 especially in hot spot areas
5. Jaisai Lahore hai, jahan Corona cases ki tadaad char so chopan tak
 ja pohanchi hai.
 like Lahore is, where corona cases numbers four hundred and fifty four
 till reached has.
 like Lahore, where the number has reached four hundred and fifty
 four corona cases.

6. Isi tarha Rawalpindi [1], Gujrat [2], Gujranwala [3] aur
In the same way, Rawalpindi, Gujrat, Gujranwala, and
Similarly Rawalpindi[1], Gujrat[2], Gujranwala[3] and
7. Jehlum [4], Multan [5], waghaira [6] wo ilaqai hain
Jhelum, Multan, etcetera those areas are
Jhelum[4], Multan[5], etcetera.[6] are those areas
8. Jahan cases bari tezi kai sath burh rahai hain.
Where cases big speed with the increasing are
where cases are increasing very rapidly.

In response to the host's question regarding the need to continue a lockdown (1:1–2) and especially from the Punjabi perspective, a minister from Punjab advances a list of six items. The minister answers that places with a high rate of COVID-19 cases should continue having a lockdown (1:3–4), pointing to Lahore as a specific example (1:5). Then, rather than singling out Lahore, the minister continues by presenting a list of five other cities with similar circumstances. After the first three items, the minister inserts “aur” (and) to extend the three-part list into a six-part list. By giving more illustrations, the minister avoids singling out any city and shows the gravity of the problem. The minister closes the list of names with a generalised completer (1:7). This completer, “waghaira” (etcetera, 1:7), strengthens the non-exhaustivity (Mauri et al., 2019) of the list. The policy is not meant for specific locations but for the whole country to be activated anywhere if case numbers become too high. Hence, using the long list stresses the generality of the proposed policy, further realised by the generalised list completer at the end.

Names are a common resource for constructing long lists, as seen in the following excerpt. While in the previous excerpt, the long list was advanced to avoid singling out a place, in the next excerpt Andrew Yang, during his campaign to become U.S. Democratic party presidential candidate in 2020, lists four states which need similar policies.

(2) Andrew Yang

1. G: we started with millions of manufacturing jobs in
2. Michigan [1], Ohio [2], Wisconsin [3], .h Pennsylvania [4]
3. and now we're going to do the same thing to millions
4. of retail jobs [1], (.) call center jobs [2], fast food jobs [3]
5. .h and truck driving jobs [4],

Yang explains that the U.S. has lost “millions of manufacturing jobs” (2:1) due to automation. He then lists four states which have been particularly hit by this: “Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania” (2:2). The first three items of the first list are hearably produced within one turn-constructional unit (before an in-breath), and being a recitation of state names, Pennsylvania also belongs

to this list. Regarding the second list, using the repetition of the word “job,” Yang creates resonance (Du Bois, 2014; 2:4–5) among the different items resulting in the listing. The word “and” (after an in-breath) signals the end of the act of listing after the third list part.

Yang constructs his long lists beyond the third item. In both lists, Yang takes an in-breath just before the *fourth* part. These in-breaths suggest that the fourth item of each list is added to the more easily uttered three-part list. However, the lists of states and jobs are pre-planned. This preparation of four-parts shows his orientation towards the insufficiency of the three-part list and the need for the list to be longer, hence two long lists. Yang listed four critical battleground states Clinton failed to win in 2016. The list of jobs first lists three jobs which are currently facing issues with automation, the addition of the fourth element – truck driving – opens up the problem more broadly, increasing the magnitude of the problem. Neither list demanded a fourth item for its logic or communicative goals, yet Yang presented one nonetheless. The long list was helpful for political reasons.

The following Dutch data presents a list of political parties and highlights that the fourth element is purposefully added. Below, the Minister of Finance, Hoekstra, talks about always being willing to talk with parties in the opposition, a process he calls a “Dutch tradition.” It follows a question about the three opposition left-wing parties (Labour Party, Green Party, and Socialist Party) announcing they would work together to ensure a more left-wing course by the government. As the government did not have a majority in the Senate, it had to garner support from the opposition.

(3) Wopke Hoekstra

1. G: Hebben we bijvoorbeeld ook gedaan bij het begin
Have we for example also done at the beginning
We have done that for example also at the beginning
2. van het stikstofdossier in december en toen
of the nitrogen problematic in December and then
of the nitrogen problematic in December and then
3. zijn we uitgebreid gaan praten met 50PLUS [1],
are we extensively go talk with 50PLUS [1],
we went into extensive talks with 50PLUS [1],
4. met Jesse Klaver [2], met Lodewijk Asscher [3], ehm
with Jesse Klaver [2], with Lodewijk Asscher [3], ehm
with Jesse Klaver [2], with Lodewijk Asscher [3], ehm

5. hebben we uiteindelijk met Otten goede afspraken
have we ultimately with Otten good agreements
we have ultimately been able to make a good deal
6. kunnen maken [4], .hh dus dat is ook heel Nederlands om
can make [4], .hh so that is also very Dutch
with Otten [4], .hh so that is also really Dutch
7. te kijken of je daar met elkaar uit kunt komen.
to look whether you there with each other out can come.
to look whether you can find solutions together.

Responding to a question about being worried about the left-wing opposition parties teaming up in negotiations with the government, Hoekstra stresses that he is not concerned. To support this position, he raises a “voorbeeld” (example, 3:1): in 2019, the government had to reduce nitrogen emissions and therefore had to negotiate with opposition parties, which they did successfully. Hoekstra then lists the different parties he has talked with to find a compromise: “50PLUS,” the Green Party (led by “Klaver”), the Labour Party (led by “Asscher”), and the Faction of “Otten” (3:3–6). Hoekstra uses names for this list, including the names of the people who stand in for their parties. Then, the agreements (in contrast to talks with the left) he has made with Otten are added to the initial three-part list. Hoekstra advances this long list purposefully, as the fourth item follows an “ehm” (3:4), showing that the speaker is planning their turn (Tottie, 2016) and lacks resonance with the previous items (Du Bois, 2014). For Hoekstra, a center-right politician, mentioning Otten shows that he has talked not only with left-wing parties but also with opposition parties on the right. In addition, the coalition gained Otten’s support as they reached an agreement, and it is thus relevant to be mentioned. This closed long list deals with various political demands in this situation; whereas the speaker could have presented a three-item list,¹ he used a four-part list instead.

The last excerpt we present for demonstrating the importance of the long list in political interactions illustrates the use of an empty completer at the fourth item. In the following Urdu excerpt, the provincial minister for Punjab responds to issues that need to be taken into consideration regarding COVID-19 lockdown strategies. As a representative of her province which relies heavily on agricultural produce, she focuses on issues faced by its local economy.

1 While the Green Party and Labour party have presented themselves as a team, Hoekstra raises them individually in his list. Had he referred to them as a team, his list would have been a three-part list.

(4) Yasmeen Rashid

1. G: Lekin kuch aisi cheezain hain, jin kai barai main humain
But some such things are, whose about that we
But there are some things that we
2. sochna hai kai, kia log mil ker kam ker saktai hain
Think have to that if people together can work do
have to think about such that people can work together
3. Jaisai gundum ki kitaie shuru ho rahi hai,
Like wheat of harvest beginning is the,
Like the wheat harvest is beginning,
4. yeh khuli jagah per hoti hai
This open place at happens is
This happens in open places
5. aur aik doosrai sai faasla rukh ker yeh kam kia ja sakta hai
And one another from distance keep this work can be done
and it can be done at a distance from each other
6. Is tarha sabzi mandi [1]
Like this vegetable markets
And similarly, vegetable markets [1]
7. phul mandi [2] aur pharmaceutical companies [3] waghaira [4],
fruit markets and pharmaceutical companies Etcetera
fruit markets [2] and pharmaceutical companies [3] etc. [4]
8. jin kai baghari tou nizam e zindagi he ruk sakta hai.
which without the system of life can stop is.
without which the system of life can stop.

The minister discusses the problems COVID-19 creates for workers in the same place. The first example, of people harvesting together (4:3–5), is discussed elaborately. The other jobs are mentioned in a long list (4:6–7), which includes the empty generaliser “waghaira” (etcetera) at the fourth position (4:7). Expanding the list in this way illustrates that the initial three-part list (which was added to a stand-alone example) was not enough. Like in excerpt one above, this policy is not meant to be limited to these cases. By adding a generalised completer, the politician stresses that the policy is generally applicable. Thus, the topic discussed has four concrete examples (the first example and then the first three items on the list), followed by an empty completer to turn the list into a non-exhaustive one and fully open up the possible cases being referenced.

We presented evidence for long lists being deliberately used in talk shows about politics. Politicians routinely extend the three-part list, to engage with a political exigency and be comprehensive and inclusive. Next, we move to the listing process, or the resources politicians use to make a list.

5 Listing: Explicit and Implicit Ways

The long list can be constructed in various ways. As we saw above, politicians can use in-breath or the word “and” to continue building a list beyond the third item. A completer may signal the ending of a list (excerpts one and four; we will illustrate below why we use “may” here). However, there may be implicit and explicit resources throughout the listing process, in its beginning, middle, or end. The distinction we make between implicit and explicit points out that some resources show that listing happens directly, while other resources create the listing without pointing to the process.

The explicit resources can be verbal or physical. Consider how Marianne Williamson, a long-shot 2020 presidential hopeful, presents some of her ideas on *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. She makes a case for why the U.S. needs a department of peace.

(5) Marianne Williamson

1. G: there are [four factors which statistically prove (.)
2. [(holds up four fingers)]
3. that when present, (.) they increase the incidents of
4. peace and they decrease the incidents of violence.
5. *Number one (.) expanding (.) economic opportunities
*touches her pinky finger
6. for women. (.) [number two,=
7. AU: [((cheer from crowd member))]
8. G: =expanding educational opportunities for children. (.)
9. *Number three (.) reducing violence against women. (.)
*touches her middle finger
10. And *number four, diminishing unnecessary human
*moves both of her hands
11. suffering whenever possible.

Williamson starts by announcing her four-part list, projecting the upcoming closed list: “there are four factors” (5:1). This announcement of a long list is further accomplished by her raising four fingers at the same time (5:2). Next, she is explicitly “listing” each of these four facts (5:5,6,9,10) by repeating the word “number” (5:5–10), with each element having a final intonation and followed by a short pause. This verbal listing is supported by her touching first her pinky finger (5:5), then her middle finger (5:9), and last, she supports “number four” by moving both of her hands, indicating the closing of the list (5:10). By announcing the list ahead of time, numbering each element explicitly, using her gestures to accompany her talk, and having short pauses, Williamson seems to have prepared this long list in advance to cover all relevant elements.

Counting both verbally and gesturally results in showing that the items belong together; the moving of both hands at the end of the list and having made the explicit announcement at the start that the list only has four elements closes the act of listing.

Williamson did not use her body systematically to count the list. However, as Elisabeth Warren does in the following excerpt, one can list on their fingers. Warren explains why her ideas motivate her to run, specifically the potential of implementing her proposed wealth tax.

(6) Elizabeth Warren

1. G: we can take that money (0.4) and provide (.)
2. *universal childcare for every one of our Children [1],
*left index finger touches right index finger
3. (0.6)
4. AU: [((cheers and applause))]/(4.1)
5. G: [for *universal pre-K [2],
*left index finger touches right middle finger
6. (0.7) ahm *cut the student loan debt burden [3],
*left index finger touches right ring finger
7. AU: [((cheers and applause))]/(4.2)
8. G: [* (2.1) <build millions> of new housing units [4]=
*left index finger touches right pinky
9. G: =across this country *and [<bring down rents> (0.5)
*two index fingers point down
10. AU: [((Cheers and applause))]/(4.0)
11. G: *and attack racial redlining,
*moves right hand up and down with index finger open
12. .hhh *we could start on a <Green New Deal> [5].
*lift right thumb and wave the hand with it
13. *we could use the money to do the things that help us
*spreads fingers in 2 hands and waves hands minimally
14. build a future,

Warren starts counting when she starts the list of what can be done with her wealth tax. She first moves her left index finger to touch her right index finger when she states the first thing that can be done with money (6:2). She continues to count with her left index finger on the right finger on the second and third items on the list (6:4–6). While the audience cheers after hearing the third item, Warren already shows that the fourth is coming by touching her pinky finger (6:8) before she starts talking. Then, after the fourth item, she breaks the list to talk about additional benefits of building “millions of new housing units” (6:8), which she connects to “racial redlining,” and the

hand gestures and fingers follow suit (6:9–11). Then, she returns to the list by using her thumb to count the fifth benefit of her proposed wealth tax. Last, she concludes the process while opening both hands to stress the benefit for the future (6:13–14), referring to “things” to signal the list’s non-exhaustiveness. Thus, she presents a long list of five items and counts them explicitly on her fingers. She breaks the listing and then returns to it (as an evaluation element), showing the flexibility of listing as a process, similar to narratives (see Dori-Hacohen, 2020). The separate items are connected into one list by Warren’s counting gestures.

The use of explicit, verbal numbering can also turn some talk into a list later by indicating that the speaker has been listing all along, as is done by Gert-Jan Segers, leader of the Dutch smallest coalition party, the ChristenUnie. Due to the war in Ukraine, the participants discussed the rising price of electricity. After a short video summarising the government’s plans, Segers is asked what he thinks are the benefits of the proposals, particularly as he has been trying to ensure such compensation.

(7) Gert-Jan Segers

1. H: Is dit het pakket waar de ChristenUnie op hoopte?
Is this the package where the ChristenUnie on hoped?
Is this the package the ChristenUnie was hoping for?
2. G: Ja een belangrijk e: ehm element voor ons was een wet van
Yes, an important e:ehm element for us was a law of Carola
Yes, an important element for us was a law by Carola
3. Carola Schouten die er al lag, die zei van nou d'r moet
Schouten which here already lay which said like well there must
Schouten which was already proposed, which stated that
4. tweehonderd euro naar de allerarmste gezinnen .h ter compensatie,
two hundred euros to the most poor families as compensation
two hundred euros has go to the poorest families to compensate
((4 lines omitted))
5. Die moeten we als eerste helpe, [1] .hh
Them must we as first help [1]
We have to help those first. [1] .hh
6. Het zou goed zijn als (.) gemeente (.) snel tot uitbetaling
It would good be if municipalities fast to payout
It would be good if municipalities can move to conducting payments
7. (.) kunnen overgaan,
can move to,
soon,
((3 lines omitted))

8. Maar dan helpen we de mensen die nu t t allerhardste worde
But then help we the people who now the most hard become
 But then we help the people who are now hit the
9. (.) getroffen[2]. Maar we kijke ook naar(.) middeninkomens,
hit [2]. But we look also at middle incomes,
 hardest [2]. But we also look at the middle incomes.
 ((4 lines omitted))
10. We kijken dus naar de energierekening voor iedereen,[3] ehm
We look thus at the energy bill for everyone, [3] ehm
 So we look at everyone's energy bill. [3]
11. **En ehm een eh vierde punt**, eh niet onbelangrijk, en dat is
And ehm a eh fourth point, eh not unimportant, and that is
And a fourth point, not unimportant, and that is
12. naar mede dankzij eh Hugo de Jonge, isolatie versnellen.
to also thanks to eh Hugo de Jonge, insulation accelerate.
 also thanks to Hugo de Jonge, insulating faster.
13. Dus ehh energie wat je eh niet besteed, wat je niet nodig
So eh energy which you eh not spend, which you no need
 So energy which you are not using, what you do not need,
14. heb, ja da- daar hoeft je ook niet voor te betalen. Dus
have, yes there need you also not for to pay. So
 yes you also do not have to pay for that. So
15. eigenlijk de goedkoopste vorm van van van besparing. [4]
actually the cheapest form of of of saving. [4]
 actually the cheapest form of saving money. [4]

At first, the listing is implicit. Segers is positive about giving the poorest families an extra 800 euros as compensation for the increased energy costs (7:2–5), as this is more than their initial proposal of giving them 200 euros. Then, he moves to the practical component of getting the money to those families through the municipalities, which is also essential to help the poorest families (7:6–8). Next, Segers moves from talking about the poorest families to the middle class, stating that he wants to look at the “energierekening voor iedereen” (7:10, “everyone’s energy bill”). So far, Segers’s talk could have been interpreted as a political narrative. Yet, he talks about “een belangrijk element” (7:2, “an important element”) and has a pause between “helpen” (7:5) and “het zou goed zijn” (7:6), his first and second element. The third element is marked by “maar” (“but”) and “ook” (“also,” 7:9), suggesting that this is a different point he is making to overcome the energy crisis. With the fourth element, this list becomes explicit, as Segers raises “een vierde punt” (7:11, “a fourth point”), which is also “niet onbelangrijk” (7:11, “not unimportant”) and is presented as

“de goedkoopste vorm van besparing” (7:14–15, “the cheapest form of saving money”). It also follows “ehm,” a pragmatic marker showing the planning of the subsequent discourse (Tottie, 2016), suggesting that the list is an extension of the basic three-part list. Each item on the list is marked as important to be mentioned, showing the aim to be comprehensive through advancing a long list. This segment illustrates how explicit listing is a resource in creating lists even retrospectively: by numbering the last item explicitly, all the items are retroactively put together into a single list structure.

Explicit numbering, either verbally or physically, may create problems for a lister because it may require them to follow through with the listing.² Therefore, a listing can be done implicitly, for instance, by using repetitions. Consider the following list advanced by Warren to defend the possibility of bringing about real change through politics.

(8) Elizabeth Warren

1. G: What did they say, (0.3) to the suffragettes (0.6) don't
2. even try (0.2) it's too hard, (0.3) quit now. [1] .hh
3. (0.2) what did they say (0.5) to the (.) early s-
4. civil rights workers the foot soldiers in the civil
5. rights movement? .hh too hard give up now. [2] .hh to
6. the early union organisers. (0.3) too hard give up
7. now. [3] .hh to the LGBTQ activist, (.) too hard, give
8. up now. [4] .hhh (.) but they didn't give up, they got (.)
9. organised [1], they persisted [2] (.) and they changed
10. Amer[ica the history. [3]
11. AU: [((applause))]

Warren defends through this list why she believes she can change the U.S. to refute the argument that it may be too hard (not shown here). She uses a long list of groups that changed the U.S. by repeating many elements in the listing, replacing just the references to people who made the changes. The different elements are the “suffragettes” (8:1), “civil rights workers” (8:4), “early union organisers” (8:6), and “the LGBTQ activist” (8:7). The resonance (Du Bois, 2014)

2 That being said, politicians at times start a list explicitly, and do not follow through, as Kamala Harris does:

G: Yeah, that's right. It's one of the biggest issues facing our students. Here's my plan. **One**, we need to have debt-free (0.4), college [1]. We need to have free community college [2]. And I'm also (0.3) uhm prepared to make sure that we provide interest fee- free loans [3].

Harris presents her plan about reducing the cost of higher education. After introducing her plan, she starts with the explicit listing “one,” and then she presents the three parts of her list without continuing the explicit listing process.

which achieves the listing are the utterances: “too hard,” “quit now” or “give up now.” The third and the fourth part resonate with the first two elements but are presented in an elliptic form. Warren then moves to a three-part list of how these groups brought about change in a chain of lists (see Dori-Hacohen, 2020). Whereas in her long list she uses hand gestures in a repeated motion to stress each element of the list, but not to count or to do the listing, in her three-part list, she uses her right fingers, minimally moving the middle, ring, and pinky, to count each action (“got organised,” “persisted,” “changed America”). The long list is constructed within a contrast (Atkinson, 1984) and ends with a three-part list (Atkinson, 1984), ensuring that the audience can anticipate the end of the listing. This long list itself is put together as a coherent unit through repetition.

Repetition as a listing device can also be seen in the Urdu data by federal minister Ali Zaidi, but this time regarding sound (i.e., rhyme).³ In this turn, federal minister Ali Zaidi responds to a question concerning the mutual accusations being made by provincial and federal governments regarding inefficient COVID-19 policies. The federal minister accuses the leaders of the provincial government of stealing credit for all the work that the federal government does while they do not do anything.

(9) Ali Zaidi

1. G: sara kam ap ker rahai hain ya wafaq?
all work you is doing or federation?
are you doing all the work or the federation?
2. yeh TV per aaker Ali Baba ka bhi credit *lai rahai hain* [1].
they T.V. on coming Ali Baba's even credit taking of
they are coming on T.V. and even taking credit of Alibaba, [1]
3. paisa bhi hum rahain hain [2]
money also we giving are
we are also giving the money [2]
4. aur doctoron ko bonus bhi hum *dai rahai hain* [3]
and doctors to bonus also we giving are
and we are also giving bonus to the doctors, [3]
5. bijli kai charges bhi hum dain [4]
electricity of charges also we giving
we are also giving electricity charges, [4]

3 We broke down the original text so the reader can see the repetition more clearly, since it is not easily translatable, as a repetition/rhyme, to English.

6. sub wafaq kerai laikin credit aap lain [5]
everything federation do but credit you take!
 let the federation do everything but you take credit for it! [5]
7. chalain bhalai aap credit bhi lai lain! (.) [6]
let's go whether you credit also take!
 alright you may even take the credit! [6]
8. mager kam tou kerain [7]
but work the do
 but do the work [7]
9. wo aap kertai nahin [8]
that you proper do not
 that you do not do properly [8]

Zaidi uses a long list to present this position, and he constructs it using the repetition of the sound “*ain*” in different verbs and words: “*lai rahai hain (taking)/ dai rahai hain (giving)*” at the end of every element of the list. In the list, he contrasts what the opposition claims to do and what the government is doing and finishes up with the conclusion of the list (item 5). Yet, due to the rhyming beyond this element, the structure of the list continues, linking all items through resonance (Du Bois, 2014). The last three elements of the list create the opposition between the speaker and the other political side to finish the long list using contrast (Atkinson, 1984).

Repetition as a listing strategy is used in the next Dutch segment by Housing minister Hugo de Jonge. The end of the listing is marked by a shift away from this repetition (like with prosody as described by Selting, 2007). In this excerpt, he explains how he plans to deal with the housing crisis the country is facing.

(10) Hugo de Jonge

1. G: moeten we afspraken maken, prestatieafspraken maken
must we agreements make, performance agreements make,
 we have to make agreements, make performance agreements,
2. op (.) alle niveaus. Op niveau van de provincie [1] op niveau
on all levels. On the level of the province [1], on the level
 on all levels. On the level of the province [1], on the
3. van de (.) regio's [2] op niveau van de gemeente [3]
of the (.) regions [2] on level of the municipality [3]
 level of the regions [2], on the level of the municipality
4. met woningcorporaties, [4] (.) om te zorgen dat
with housing corporations, [4] (.) to ensure that
 [3], with housing corporations [4], to ensure that

5. aantallen gehaald worden maar ook dat die woningen
numbers met become but also that those houses
numbers will be met, but also that the houses
6. die we gaan bouwen dat die ook betaalbaar zijn.
which we go build, that those also affordable are.
which we will build, that those are also affordable.

As there is a shortage in available housing, de Jonge stresses that various political levels need to cooperate and follow up on their agreements to solve the problem (10:1). The first governmental levels are marked through the repetition of “op niveau van” (10:2–3). Last, when he raises the collaborations with “woningcorporaties” (10:4), he stops using “op niveau van,” marking the difference between the fourth item to the rest of the list. Through repetition, the listing of the first three items is accomplished, but as the last item can be relevantly added within the established category, it belongs to the same discursive unit as it works towards describing the same state of affairs as the other items. Through the linguistic contrast, the end of the list has been communicated.

According to Selting (2007), another way to successfully list without using explicit numbering is to place all items within a single turn-constructive unit. Alternatively, Jefferson (1990) suggested that a list can be embedded within another list. Similarly, a long list can be embedded within another structure, like a contrast (Atkinson, 1984). These suggestions can be seen in the following excerpt from Pakistan, where the host contrasts places where the COVID-19 lockdown will be eased and will continue in the form of two lists.

(11) Javed Chaudhry (host)

1. H: government choda tareekh kai baad naram ker dai ge.
government on fourteenth date after soft will do.
the government will soften the(lockdown)after the 14th.
2. wo industry [1] khol dai ge.
they industry [1] open will do.
they will open the industry. [1]
3. wo bazaar [2] khol dai ge.
they bazaar [2] open will do.
they will open the markets. [2]
4. wo mandian [3] khol dai ge.
they market (mandian) [3] open will do.
they will open wholesale trading markets. [3]

5. wo malls [4] khol dai ge
they malls [4] open will do.
 they will open the mall. [4]
6. government ka plan ye hai kai choda tareekh ko sakhti zara kum ker di jaye.
government of plan is this that fourteenth date to hardness a bit soft will be done.
 the Governments plans to soften the strictness a bit after the fourteenth.
7. laikin yeh jo sarkari daftar [1] hain wo bund rahain,
but this the government offices [1] are they closed remain,
 but the government offices [1] will remain closed,
8. colleges [2], universities [3] bund rahain aur
colleges [2], universities [3] closed remain
 colleges [2], universities [3] remain closed and
9. is kai ilawa Jahan social gathering [4] ho sakti hai,
this than except where social gathering [4] can happen
 apart from that where there can be *social gathering [4]*
10. shadi halls [5] hain.
marriage halls [5] are
 there are marriage halls [5].

The interviewer asks a question that uses two long lists. The first list is about places the government decided to open. The interviewer builds the list using repetition of the “*khol dai ge*” (it will open) after the content elements of the places that are about to open (industry, two different markets, and shopping malls, 11:2–5). All the elements in this long list are inserted into one extended turn, strengthening their construction as a list. Then the speaker repeats the easement and its date (11:6) before embarking on a new list of places where the easement will not happen: government offices, colleges, universities, and social gatherings in marriage halls (11:7–10). The listing resource here is the repetition of “*bund rahain*” (“remain closed”) after the first and third items. Thus, the host moves from one long list to another to build his question. The two lists are embedded within a contrast structure, here an overarching discursive structure, to present the host’s question. The repetition of items with similar meaning on the first list and the elaboration on the second list demonstrates how long lists are taken as necessary by the host in this case, and repetition was the main resource for listing.

In this section, we presented resources for listing to create a long list in political discourse: explicit listing, either verbally or physically, and implicit listing, using resources like repetition. Through these resources, speakers can

help the audience orient to their discursive structure, the long list, as they connect items. Next, we discuss two problems of the long list, one of which results from its being more expansive than the mundane list.

6 Problems with the Long List in Political Discourse

Before presenting the two problems, we want to clarify the use of the word “problems.” Following the ethnomethodological perspective, we focus on problems that the participants face when constructing a long list. First, the audience often orients towards a three-part list, as this is the typical structure, which may cause the audience to experience difficulties identifying the transition relevance point. While this first problem is unique to the long list, the second is faced by every lister. There is a marginality problem, as a lister will have to select which item will be the last item on the list, but the final item could be perceived as an afterthought.

As Jefferson (1990) suggested, the three-part list is the expected list in everyday interactions. According to Atkinson (1984), it is also often used as a claptrap in political speeches for an audience of ordinary people. As shown above, however, politicians sometimes deliberately use a long list. When they use it, the ordinary audience may instead orient towards a three-part list. This orientation leads the audience to understand the projectability of the end of the list to happen after the third part and applaud (Atkinson, 1984), even when the politician enacts a long list. Such an occasion occurs in the following data, where Clinton explains what she hopes to improve in the U.S. if elected president.

(12) Hillary Clinton

1. G: And I wan a country where (.) barriers are knocked
2. down, (.) and (.) little girls and little boys can
3. feel like .hh they can go as (.) far as their hard
4. work will take them, without regard to race [1] and
5. ethnicity [2] and religion [3] [and gender [4] and
6. AU: (((applauding and
7. cheering))
8. G: (.) sexual orientation [5] and all of that [6].

Clinton invokes a long list when discussing the current limitations of children’s futures. She uses the repetition of “and” as a listing between the different elements of the list (12:4–8). However, once she finishes the third part, “and religion,” the audience starts applauding and cheering. These reactions suggest that the audience orients to a three-part list, and when the politician

reaches the third part, the audience sees it as a projectable ending and claps. However, Clinton continues the list. This continuation leads to more clapping as the politician and audience compete for the floor. These long lists thus cause an orientation problem: how can speakers, when uttering a long list, ensure their audience orients successfully to their communicative construct? A politician may have to effectively employ the listing resources discussed above to help the audience orient towards a discursive structure longer than the three-part list.

Clinton's list also presents what we call the marginality problem. When making a list, one must put an item in the last place. Yet, an item on a list may seem less important when put last. The mundane idiom suggests how to counter this problem: announcing it is "last but not least," as we saw in various excerpts above (3 and 7). Moreover, since politicians often use fillers to show the list is comprehensive on top of the content items in it, they can use empty generalised list completers to avoid putting a concrete item as the last element on the list. However, such fillers may go against the point of the list itself, as happens in Clinton's list.⁴

Recall her list: "race [1] and ethnicity [2] and religion [3] and gender [4] and (.) sexual orientation [5] and all of that [6]." Clinton's list attempts to be inclusive regarding social identities. After presenting the different identities she would like to have included, Clinton adds "and all of that," but while introduced to cover any category she may have forgotten, thus creating a comprehensive (read inclusive) list, this final filler does not accomplish achieving an inclusive list, and therefore contradicts the logic of the list. First, Clinton's filler derides all the other elements since the "that," a demonstrative pronoun, is seldom used for people. Hence, it dehumanises them by excluding all the groups listed from being referred to as humans. Second, the "all" imposes all these different groups together as if they were one, obliterating their differences and uniqueness, which inclusive discourse should celebrate. Third, "all of that" seems to take the inclusivity of the list as a chore that needs to be taken care of and may sound insincere.

Last but not least, fillers cannot solve the closing problem for lists of identity categories. While the specific elements of the list have a determined content, the fillers are empty. Therefore, these words are structurally different (Others) from the earlier parts (i.e., unmentioned). Thus, the filler creates an Otherness that the list is supposed to oppose. Whereas in most lists, this structural difference is not problematic (Jefferson, 1990), when it comes to lists of identity categories with a stated goal of being inclusive, the filler element at the end of the

4 We may be generous to Clinton and suggest that the competition with the audience led to this list completer.

list will always point to the impossibility of the complete and total inclusion of human identity categories. However, the filler may diminish the lack of importance of the last-concrete-mentioned content element and move it to the filler.

Clinton was similarly trivialising the causes she was fighting for in the following long list.

(13) Hillary Clinton

1. G: I want to be president because I want to build on the
2. progress that we've been making and make it possible for
3. more people in our country, particularly young people,
4. to live up to their own God-given potential. And that
5. means we've got to get back to providing opportunities.
6. We've got to get back to making the economy work for
7. everybody. And we have to defend the progress
8. we've made in women's rights [1] and gay rights [2] and
9. we have to protect voting rights, [3]
10. [and immigrant rights [4] and everything else [5].
11. AU: [((applause))]

Clinton answers the question of why she wants to be the president. She starts with one reason (13:1–4). Then she gives two ways of achieving this first reason, which seems to compose a list (13:5–7), via the repetition of “we've got to get back to.” Then she switches to a different list of rights that need protection.

She uses a long list in her turn. The list seems to be groups of people, at first, “women” and “gay” (13:8), before switching to “voting rights” (13:9) which is not specific to an identity group of people. As we saw earlier, after this third item, the audience applauds, following the three-part list as a normative structure. Clinton continues with another right of another identity group, immigrants (13:10), during the overlap with the applause, and finishes with a filler “and everything else.” This filler seems to make a list comprehensive, but it is unclear if it exhausts the list of rights that needs defending or the list of economic measures that Clinton advocates for since “everything else” is not grammatically tied to “rights” and is uneasily connected to the first very partial list. Hence, Clinton finishes the list in a problematic manner, using an empty completer to make it sound more exhaustive than it is without clearly pointing to the specific content which achieves this completeness.

The problem of the list's last item can be seen differently in the following Dutch list by right-wing politician Joost Eerdmans. He criticises Marriëtte Hamer, tasked with forming a government, for having a left-wing agenda. He argues she tries to advance typical left-wing issues.

(14) Joost Eerdmans

1. G: die Marriëtte Hamer, dat is natuurlijk iemand die
that Marriëtte Hamer, that is of course someone who
2. the Marriëtte Hamer, that's of course someone who
the Marriëtte Hamer, that's of course someone who
3. al een agenda had opgesteld he, dat was natuurlijk
already an agenda has drafted, that was obviously
4. already has drafted an agenda, that was obviously
already has drafted an agenda, that was obviously
5. de agenda van multi- .hhh culti he [1] inclusiviteit
the agenda of multi culturalism [1], isn't it inclusivity
6. the agenda of multi-culturalism [1], isn't it, inclusivity
the agenda of multi-culturalism [1], isn't it, inclusivity
7. [2] internationalisering [3] enzovoort [4]
[2] internationalisation [3], etcetera [4],
8. [2] internationalisation [3], etcetera [4],
[2] internationalisation [3], etcetera [4],
9. duurzaamheid [5],
sustainability [5].
10. sustainability [5].
sustainability [5].

Eerdmans starts his list of criticisms by raising “multiculti” (14:3), but in the middle of the word, he takes a deep breath, and after using “hè” (used to solicit agreement), he follows up with the three other items of “inclusiviteit, internationalisering, enzovoort” (inclusivity, internationalisation, etcetera, 14:3–4). Thus, the basis of his list is again a three-part structure with a completer in the fourth position. Immediately after this list, Eerdmans adds the fifth item: “duurzaamheid” (14:5, sustainability). This addition expands the listing principle from cultural acceptance and globalisation to the broader left-wing agenda. By putting the last item after an empty filler, Eerdmans may indicate that the last item is as meaningful as the item before it, a filler; therefore, the last item is nothing more than an afterthought. Yet, this afterthought radically changes the categorisation principle of the list. Thus, he may be using this item in its position to mock or dismiss the entire list as a list of empty clichés, each of them akin to an, etc., and exploit the marginality problem as a mocking device of the agenda of the other political side. This rhetorical maneuver, however, requires further research.

The list by Eerdmans and Clinton’s “and everything else” and “all of that” shows that the last item of a list can turn all elements into well-rehearsed empty causes.⁵ In contrast to Clinton, Harris uses a more straightforward solution to the marginality problem: go with it.

5 We do not argue that the left’s agenda is a “well-rehearsed list of empty causes,” we claim that Clinton’s unfitting fillers and Eerdmans’ long list portray them as such.

(15) Kamala Harris

1. G: I took on predators be they transnational criminal
2. organisation that preyed on women or children, [1] hh or
3. the big banks that preyed on homeowners, [2] hh
4. pharmaceutical companies, [3] (.) for profit colleges[4]

Harris presents a long list of criminal actors she prosecuted as a general attorney in California. She uses the “preyed on” as a listing device in the first two items (15:1–3), and then presents items three and four (15:4). The last element in the list is the least severe, for-profit colleges harm their clients by defrauding them out of their money, unlike human trafficking, creating homelessness, and making people lethally addicted to drugs, in the previous items. Thus, the last item on this long list *is* the least. Yet, in this case, Harris does not face pressure to be inclusive as the listed entities are not her audience.

Another solution is to present the last item and then explain why this last item is important (the “last but not least”-strategy). In similar data, of political debates, by Hillary Clinton, we can observe this solution as well:

(16) The 2016 U.S. presidential debates, Hillary Clinton

1. HC: I want us to invest in you. (0.2) I want us to invest
2. in your future. .h (0.3) That means jobs in
3. infrastructure, [1] in advanced manufacturing, [2] .h
4. (0.4) innovation a:nd technology, [3] (.) clean
5. renewable energy [4].hh (0.3) a:nd small business [5]
6. **because most of the new jobs will come from small**
7. **business.**

In this case, Clinton explicates through a list what she thinks “invest[ing] in you” (16:1) means. She claims that jobs should be created in various places (16:3–5). The last item is, however, raised in importance through an extension. Clinton claims that “most of the new jobs will come from small business” (16:6–7). Hence, she makes sure that the last item is not seen as the least important.

7 Conclusion

In this study, we analyzed the use of long lists that politicians use in talk shows from the U.S., Pakistan, and the Netherlands to better understand the dynamics of listing as a discursive practice. We have shown that the long list is routinely used in political discourse – it is deliberately employed to deal with a political exigency, and we presented some evidence that it is sometimes pre-planned.

We have observed that politicians add to three-part lists, stress the importance of the last Nth list item, and add generalised completers beyond the third item. We also have shown how politicians accomplish listing. Politicians can count the elements of the list in a continuous or non-continuous way. The listing is announced by starting to count (without necessarily finishing the list or the counting); by ending with a numbered list item, the preceding discourse can be retroactively portrayed as a list. Alternatively, politicians can embed their long list within a turn or mark it by repetition. These practices suggest that long lists in politics can be necessary to represent a comprehensive state of affairs and that long lists are structures that have to be constructed through various discursive resources.

We have also shown that listing results in two discursive problems for speakers: speakers have to make sure the audience is oriented to hearing a long list and determine how they can best finish the list. These problems can be solved through the resources for listing. The orientation problem can be solved in several (more than three) ways. First, politicians may explicitly announce how many elements their list contains. Second, politicians can embed their long list within another structure to which the audience can orient. We often see that in long lists, some items are grouped as a group of three, which can help the audience anticipate a transition relevance point. Third, lists can be closed through a post-expansion, indicating that the act of listing has ended. Fourth, in line with previous studies, using a generalised list completer is another method politicians may employ. Once a list is complete, it (usually) cannot be extended further (Selting, 2007). However, we have also shown that the problem of ending a list can be used to mock an opponent. While recurrently necessary, the long list requires politicians to employ various discursive resources to do listing skillfully.

In conclusion, the long list is an important discursive and rhetorical resource in the political domain. Indeed, lists can be as powerful as narratives in advancing a particular point of view or dismissing it. We discussed lists from three different cultures and languages. We focused on their similarities, but future research can look for differences in the usages of lists and their potential role of linguistic differences in the rhetorical functions of lists, taking into account different structures of languages and cultural-rhetorical inclinations (see, e.g., Johnstone, 1989) and how these elements may affect lists and listings. We have shown that lists can both be used to build a position and attack the opponent. However, it requires speakers to carefully employ various discursive resources. Therefore, we stress that lists are not listless and that it is important that more academic attention is devoted to their discursive employment.

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