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Mapping Hansard Impression Management Strategies through Time and Space

DAWN ARCHER

Abstract

Impolite behaviour is thought to be easier to investigate than polite or politic behaviour in diachronic contexts, because of attracting more evaluative comment. But an approach based on such metapragmatic commentary can miss a lot of facework strategies in contexts such as the UK parliament (modern and historical). In this paper, I draw on Historic Hansard datasets (1812–2003) to demonstrate how a (semi)automatic method involving contiguous searches of two-to-four features can better reveal the nuances of these MPs' facework strategies than a focus on metapragmatic terms has afforded hitherto. The (semi) automatic method uses the recently created Historic Thesaurus Semantic Tagger (HTST) to search for *meaning constellations* (Archer and Malory 2017). Meaning constellations relating to facework are made up of sequences of semantic fields and/or parts-of-speech which, when organised in certain ways, achieve im/politeness, politic behaviour, strategic ambiguity, a combination of face enhancement and face threat, etc. This paper discusses a number of these meaning constellations, with a particular focus on those which engage in both face enhancement and face aggravation simultaneously (whilst nonetheless avoiding the label, “unparliamentary language”).

Keywords: Hansard records, parliamentary language, politeness, impoliteness, facework, self-presentation, impression management, semantic tagging, meaning chain, speech act

1. Introduction

An “unparliamentary language” prohibition in the UK Parliament prevents its Members from using ‘insulting or rude language’ or from ‘misrepresenting each other’s words’ overtly (www.parliament.uk). The prohibition has existed in some form since at least 1844: the year Erskine May published his “rule book” expounding acceptable parliamentary practice. As the 24th edition of the latter - *Erskine May: Parliamentary Practice* - makes clear, UK parliamentary practice dating from 2011 can only be judged to be *unparliamentary* today, by the Speaker, if s/he deems something has been said with an ‘abusive and insulting’ intention (Jack et al. 2011: 445). Prior to this, Peers and MPs have needed to avoid using a list of forbidden terms, in addition to the above. Regardless of the exact make-up of the prohibition, Peers and Members of Parliament (MPs) have been finding ingenious ways of ‘get[ting] around the rules’ in order to attack, defend and save face for at least a couple of centuries (www.parliament.uk; Archer and Malory 2017). *Face*, here, is understood to be an interactional phenomenon: i.e., a dynamically-negotiated image of self, which, because it is shaped by interlocutors, can be withdrawn as readily as it is given (Goffman 1967: 5, 10, 14). This paper uses the Historic Thesaurus Semantic Tagger (HTST) (explained in Section 1.1) and (Historic) Hansard data predating the 2011 amendment relating to unparliamentary language use, noted

above (explained in 1.2), to explore Peers' and MPs' strategies – be they to achieve face enhancement, face damage or both (see 2–2.3). My use of the term, *strategies*, is deliberate. It points to facework, which Peers and MPs engaged in consciously, so that they might position self and/or other(s) in a particular way.

Facework – in the sense of ‘actions taken by a person to make what [s/]he is doing consistent with face’ (Goffman 1967: 5) – is not undertaken consciously in all situations. It tends to be more conscious, however, in situations where ‘maintaining one’s face’ is considered to be ‘akin to maintaining one’s credibility in the eyes of others’ (Gass and Seiter, 2015: 90), as here. Indeed, sections 2-2.3 will demonstrate that facework in the parliamentary context often converged historically, as it does today, with self-presentation and/or impression management. That is to say, with participants’ attempts to ‘control impressions of themselves’ and/or ‘shape an audience’s impressions of...other people or entities’ (Schlenker 2003: 492). They might (have) do(ne) so, for example, by contrasting negative other-depictions of an uncaring, power-hungry opposition with positive self-representations of noble fighters prioritising issues (and hence people) over power (cf. Locher 2004; Garcia-Pastor 2008).

This paper explores how Peers and MPs (past and present) sought to convey ‘an impression to others’ (Goffman 1959: 4) in support of their own – as well as their Party’s – interests, when presenting their arguments and contrary positions. Particular attention will be paid to the extent to which demonstrations of their own competence, plans and intentions coincided with or were overridden by attempts to undermine the track-record of their opponents (Fetzer and Bull 2012: 219), whilst nonetheless avoiding the “unparliamentary language” label. Following the descriptions of the HTST and the Hansard dataset in Sections 1.1 and 1.2, I thus outline a related study, which has also used Hansard to study facework over time (Section 1.3), before drawing upon specific Hansard speeches to demonstrate the aforementioned close alignment between facework, self-presentation and impression management (Sections 2–2.3).

1.1 The Historical Thesaurus Semantic Tagger (HTST)

I have uncovered the strategies to be explored in this paper via *meaning constellation* searches, using the CQP-web interface of the HTST (Archer and Malory 2017). The HTST combines:

- A VARiant Detector (VARD) designed to link variant spellings to their modern equivalent (Baron and Rayson 2008), thereby helping to eradicate tag mis-assignments due to spelling differences.
- The annotation tools making up Wmatrix3, a software package enabling users to engage in corpus analysis and comparison (Rayson, 2008). CLAWS makes use of 137 part-of-speech (POS) categories. The UCREL Semantic Annotation System (henceforth USAS) makes use of 232 semtags representative of different semantic fields, ranging from food (F1) and the weather (W4), to kinship (S4), emotions like anger (E3-) and psychological motivations such as wanting (X7) or deciding (X6).
- Themes (henceforth HT_codes) derived from the *Historical Thesaurus of the Oxford English Dictionary* (HTOED). The HT_codes draw on the HTOED’s 700,000 word senses arranged into 225,000 time-sensitive categories, thereby ensuring that HTST users’ annotation results are demonstratively more accurate over time than when reliant on USAS alone. Example HT_codes include: accusation (AS:06), anger (AU:25), annoyance

(AU:23), contempt (AS:14), denial (AX:24), disorder (AP:03:b), respect (AS:12.b), opposition (AU:22), spitefulness (AO:12:d.), truthfulness (AR:39), etc.¹

Meaning constellation searches are made up of sequences of USAS semtags and/or HT_codes and/or CLAWS POS tags that, when organised in certain ways, realise a range of facework-related behaviour (Archer and Malory 2017). By way of illustration, utterances captured by the HT_codes AS:12.b (respect) and AR:39 (truthfulness) plus USAS semtag Q2.2 (speech act) tend to use polite precludes when commenting upon (and very often evaluating) issues of veracity. Examples include a Peer who stated that a ‘noble and learned Lord did not, with respect, reply to’ the ‘question in any way at all’ before adding ‘The truth is that this Bill is a nonsense, and it is a damaging nonsense’ (S5LV03095P0_03226, 28/07/1978). I discuss additional meaning constellations in detail from Section 2 onwards.

1.2 The (Historic) Hansard datasets

Digitised editions of the official reports relating to the English Parliament (1803 to present) are available via the website, <http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>, for both the House of Commons and the Lords. Following Archer and Malory (2017), this paper focuses on parliamentary speeches drawn from periods that roughly coincide with the:

- War of 1812 (i.e., 1 June 1812 to 1 March 1815)
- 1880 General Election (i.e., 1 April 1879 to 30 April 1880)
- First World War (WWI) (i.e., 28 June 1914 to 28 June 1919)
- Winter of Discontent (i.e., 1 July 1978 to 30 April 1979)
- First phase of the Iraq War (i.e., 23 September 2002 to 16 September 2004)

As Archer and Malory (2017: 32) note:

The War of 1812 was fought by the United States against the United Kingdom, its North American colonies, and its American Indian allies. The 1880 General Election saw British Liberal politician, William Ewart Gladstone, in direct competition with his fierce rival, Conservative Leader Benjamin Disraeli. WWI was a global war centred in Europe. The Winter of Discontent refers to UK-wide strikes by public sector trade unions over ongoing pay caps by the then-Labour government (led by James Callaghan). The Iraq War was a protracted armed conflict, which began with the 2003 invasion of Iraq, led by the United States, and toppled the government of Saddam Hussein.

The political debates captured within these periods do not always relate to, for example, war (in the case of WWI and the Iraq War datasets) or elections (in the case of the 1880 and the Winter of Discontent datasets). Rather, their significance lies in the fact that they represent periods when various emotive topics of national, international, social and/or political import were being debated in the House of Commons and/or House of Lords.

¹ The HTST, and HT_themes, were developed as part of the cross-university, AHRC/ESRC funded SAMUELS project (grant reference AH/L010062/1).

Although Hansard recorders, past as well as present, have been careful to incorporate everything that clarifies or adds to the meaning of a speech or illustrates the argument, in their transcripts, it is important to remember that their records are not verbatim accounts. In fact, a House of Commons Select Committee proposal, dating from 1907 but based upon an earlier 1893 recommendation, effectively encourages Hansard recorders to omit repetitions and redundancies and correct ‘obvious mistakes (including grammatical mistakes)’ (*Official Report* 2010: 2). There are also highly regulated ways of referring to Members, and a policy that Hansard recorders should correct incorrect references, unless the latter is commented upon in the House (Vice, p.c., cited in Archer, forthcoming). These factors, coupled with an absence of parallel audio-visual records via which to check the accuracy of reports prior to 1989,² means that we must always allow for the possibility of interpretative error on the part of the reporters.³ When it comes to the use of certain phrases, such as *with...respect* (see Section 2), we may want to follow Archer’s (forthcoming) suggestion in addition: namely, allowing for the possibility that such usages (as well as changes in use over time) may evidence a particular reporter’s style of editing and not merely the words Members used.

1.3 Using Hansard records to study facework over time

The above reservations aside, the Hansard records still provide a useful means of investigating facework, as well as other discursive phenomena, over time. Archer and Malory’s (2017) exploration of the same periods as this paper, for example, has confirmed the parliamentary claim that MPs regularly demonstrate(d) ‘considerable ingenuity’ when circumventing their “unparliamentary language” prohibition (<http://www.parliament.uk>). Indeed, Peers and MPs seem to have regularly framed ‘the character traits, ideas and opinions of and even statements made by others’ for party- and/or self-gain, in line with Locher and Watts’s (2009: 99, n9) notion of *representational frames*. In one instance, from Hansard Lords, the superficially polite prelude *with great respect* was part of an if-clause belittling the target for being no more than ‘a glorified Under-Secretary’, in spite of his impressive title:

- (1) If I may be allowed to say so with great respect to the gentleman who is to be, as I understand, the new Minister, the Minister of Reconstruction is going to be a glorified Under-Secretary of the Prime Minister (S5LV0026P0_00787, 08/08/1917)

In other instances, conventional respect forms were made more poignant because of the Members’ need to address each other by their position and in the third person (Chilton 2004: 105). One MP criticised his ‘hon: Member’ for always ‘throw[ing] cold water upon the stories of atrocities in Belgium’, before retorting ‘why he should always drag in his sneers about the Belgian atrocities...I leave it for the House and country to judge’ (S5CV0068P0_01653, 16/11/1914). Archer and Malory (2017) suggest the retort was a deliberate attempt, on the MP’s part, to frame the target as someone who knowingly *sneered* at a time when people were

² Thanks to the digital channel, BBC Parliament, it is possible to check the audio-visual records of some – but not all – of England’s parliamentary proceedings from 1989 onwards. BBC Parliament provides access to the House of Commons Chamber live, select coverage of the House of Lords, and unedited coverage of about ten committees each week (Rogers and Walters, 2015). Any recordings older than two years are deposited in the National Film Archive.

³ See Vice and Farrell (2017) for an account of how (and the conditions under which) Hansard recorders have created their reports during the period covered by this study.

suffering unjustly. In a second example from the Commons, also replicated here, an MP targeted someone outside of the **immediate** context – George W. Bush (Jnr).

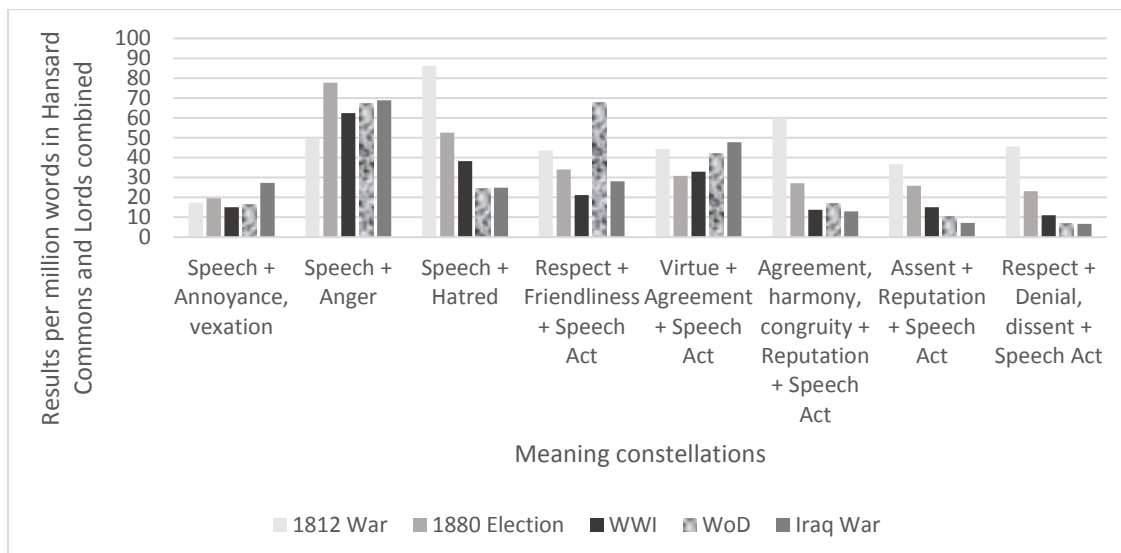
- (2) Genghis Khan was probably sophisticated, but I do not believe that we would want him for an ally: The Foreign Secretary and his colleagues should consider carefully before they appease the United States Administration under President Bush: I am against that because, as Nelson Mandela said, that Government are as dangerous as any other Administration in the world: The sooner the decent people of America, of whom there are so many, are able to elect a President who is not a “moron”; as one Canadian Minister has called Bush; who knows where Iraq is, and who has some ideas behind him, the better it will be for all of us and for the people of Iraq (S5CV0395P1, 25/11/2002).

Archer and Malory used this example – aimed at the then US President – as well as the earlier examples to highlight how politicians will very often *do* ‘politics in and through their acts of communication’ (Fetzer and Bull 2012: 128). That is, they both ‘bring their discourse identities as political agents into a communicative setting, and...bring them out in that setting’ (*ibid.*) for impression management purposes. The MP in (2) presumably wanted to distance himself (and possibly the party he represented) from Bush’s policies in respect to Iraq: whilst simultaneously warning the then ‘Foreign Secretary and his colleagues’ of the dangers of being too closely allied to Bush. The MP opted to do this by inviting others to infer similarities between Bush and the brutal Mongol ruler, Genghis Khan, as well as to infer that Bush was so inept he did not know where Iraq was. Note, though, that the moronic assessment of Bush, and the assessment of the US Government as ‘as dangerous as any other Administration in the world’, were carefully attributed to others (a Canadian Minister and Nelson Mandela respectively). As the derogative use of ‘moron’, in particular, was prohibited under parliamentary rules at this time, the tactic represented a strategic means of ensuring plausible deniability should the MP be accused of unparliamentary language.

This paper seeks to further the work undertaken by Archer and Malory (2017), by more clearly articulating the close alignment between facework, self-presentation and impression management in parliamentary contexts. Sections 2–2.3, following, thus explore particular meaning constellations quantitatively, before using examples of these meaning constellations as a “way-in” to Peers’ or MPs’ self-presentation and impression management strategies.

2. Meaning constellations, self-presentation and impression management

Graph 1 captures the eight meaning constellations that are amongst the most frequent, when the Lords and Commons subsets for my periods are combined. To allow for comparison, the figures have been normalised so that they represent instances per million words.



Graph 1. Eight most frequent meaning constellations, from Archer and Malory (2017: 42)

The *speech + anger* meaning constellation, made up of two HTOED-derived HT_codes, proved to be the most frequent of the eight in all but the first period. The most frequent meaning constellation of the eight in the 1812–15 period was *speech + hatred* (with 40.66 instances per million words). The high frequency of *speech + hatred* in our first period might be related to:

- Hansard records not becoming immune to libel claims until the ratification of the 1840 Parliament Papers Act.
- This period predating the publication of Erskine May’s (1844) “rule book”.

It should be noted, however, that three additional meaning constellations within Graph 1, capturing Members’ attempts at (superficial) face enhancement and involving the USAS semtag Q2.2, also exhibited high frequencies in the 1812–15 period. Interestingly, such constellations were often used to soften disagreements in context – especially in the later periods. Consider (3)–(5), taken from the Lords subsets.

- (3) I profoundly disagree with my noble friend’s theory (S5LV0021P0_02257, 18/05/1916)
- (4) I wish respectfully to tell them that they have not made up their minds on any single question material to the war: The public have been in advance of the Government on every single question (S5LV0021P0_01683, 19/04/1916)
- (5) With due respect to my noble friend, he is not quite correct (S5LV0395P0_02576, 25/07/1978).

(3) and (5) make use of the term *noble friend*. (4) and (5) make use of *respectfully* and *with due respect*. These conventional respect forms functioned similarly to *with great respect*, discussed in Section 1.3. On the surface, they acted as overt attempts to “do” deference and respect, as a means of attending to the interlocutors’ positive face (Brown and Levinson 1987). However, they varnished what amounted to face-threatening assessments of the targets’ inaccurate/misguided views on a particular issue (Sifianou 2012: 1559. (4) highlighted the Government’s indecisiveness, as well as their decision-making inferiority in comparison to the general public, for instance (see Archer, forthcoming, for a more detailed discussion of (3)–(5).

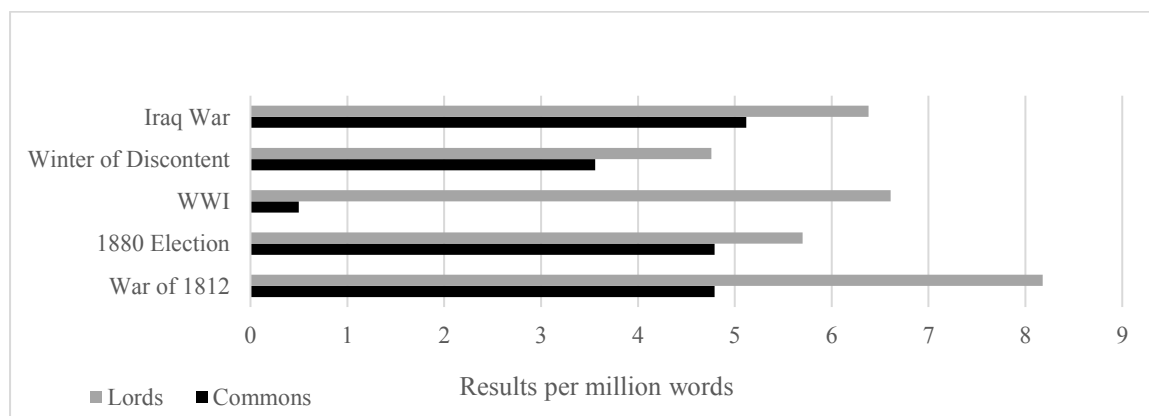
As meaning constellations combining HT_codes with the USAS semtag for speech acts have been found to be an effective means of identifying facework, which served strategic self-presentation and/or impression management purposes, sections 2.1 and 2.2 explore four such meaning constellations:

- *disorder + truthfulness/veracity + speech act*
- *disorder + speech act*
- *bias/prejudice + contempt + speech act*
- *contempt + bias/prejudice + speech act*

These are different to the meaning constellations captured in Graph 1, so as to avoid significant overlap with Archer and Malory (2017).

2.1 Disorder + (truthfulness/veracity) + speech act meaning constellation

The *disorder + truthfulness/veracity + speech act* meaning constellation was used relatively frequently during the 1812–15 period, but only in respect to the Lords (with 8.13 instances per million words). It was used more consistently in the Lords than the Commons in the other periods too. Its highest frequency, in the Commons, relates to the period indicative of the first phase of the Iraq War.



Graph 2: *disorder + truthfulness/veracity + speech act* meaning constellation

(6), below, is one of 112 instances of this meaning constellation in the Lords dataset relating to the Iraq War period (this equates to 6.38 instances per million words). As this example reveals, many of these instances had nothing to do with the Iraq War itself. In this case, the topic of debate was the Northern Ireland Act and, in particular, whether Northern Irish ministers ‘denied financial assistance within the precincts of Northern Ireland’ should still be ‘allowed to claim it in the United Kingdom’:

- (6) It seems to be very unfair: the people who are subject to the order in Stormont are not subject to it here in the United Kingdom: It has been reported in the press; although it has been vehemently denied by many sources; that Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness were members of Sinn Fein and the IRA: As I said, that has been denied but the people of Northern Ireland can make up their own minds as to its veracity: It seems a contradictory position for the Government to take if the top spokesmen of Sinn Fein in Northern Ireland; Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness; are to be denied financial assistance within the precincts of Northern

Ireland but are still allowed to claim it in the United Kingdom (S5LV0661P0_04559, 20/05/2004).

Notice that the Peer's focus was not merely on raising the issue of – so that he might complain about – the possible misuse of government finances by Adams and McGuinness, and the government's carelessness in allowing this to happen. He also sought to depict Adams and McGuinness as 'dissembling and fraudulent' (cf. Combs 1994: 20). Hence, his mention of their purported membership of a terrorist organisation, and his stating that 'the people of Northern Ireland' should 'make up their own minds as to' the veracity of this link (even after 'many sources' had 'vehemently denied' it).

(7), below, was found using the *disorder + speech act* tags only (i.e., with the *truthfulness/veracity* tag omitted). This particular meaning constellation occurred 986 times, which equates to 293.64 instances per million words.

- (7) In my right honourable Friend's reply to the right honourable Lady the Leader of the Opposition, was he not rather unsympathetic, especially now that she appears to be the last pro-Marketeer in Britain? Is not this disturbance manifested by her use of the word 'abrasiveness'? For the right honourable Lady to protest a dislike of abrasiveness is rather like Count Dracula professing a distaste for blood (S5CV0964P0_02037, 15/3/1979)

Neil Kinnock's suggestion that his fellow Labour MP, Molloy,⁴ had been *rather unsympathetic* towards the Leader of the Opposition was not a supportive pro-Thatcher move on his part. Rather, he was using superficial politeness as a potency-boosting prelude to an upcoming positive face attack. Hence, his presentation of 'the right honourable Lady' using the ideologically undesirable functionalisation, 'the last pro-Marketer in Britain', and his rhetorical question concerning Thatcher's use of 'abrasiveness', which alluded to her well-known propensity for inflexibility. As a further potency-boosting move, Kinnock then went on to liken Thatcher's 'protest [for] a dislike of abrasiveness' with the fictional vampire, Count Dracula, 'professing a distaste of blood' – when his very life source was the blood of others.

The *Dracula* naming strategy has been used more frequently than we might imagine in recent times: that is, seventeen times in the Lords datasets outlined in Section 1.2, from 1981 to 2003, and fifty-three times in the Commons datasets, from 1955 to 2004. Most of these instances negatively compared an individual, company or organisation with the fictional Count – as in (7). One usage by Lord Williams of Mostyn therefore stands out because of its positive, albeit tongue-in-cheek slant towards Dracula:

- (8) I am not sure about Dracula, a much-maligned person: Perhaps it is time for the revisionist historians to conclude that Dracula, just like the Home Office, was perfect in every way: I certainly agree that we ought not to seek for refuge by simply saying, "This is national security and is within the remit of the intelligence agencies:" I am bound to say, from my own experience

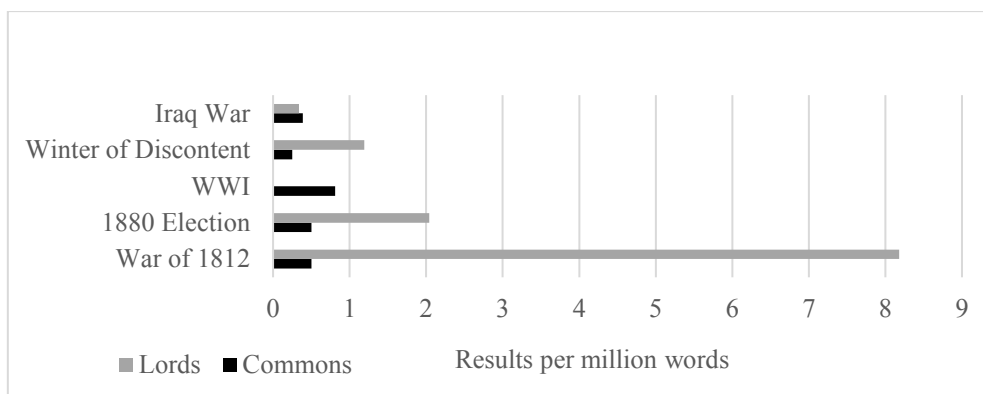
⁴ Minutes earlier, the Labour MP for Ealing North had stated that, 'If, by some tragedy, she [i.e., Thatcher] came to power, recent industrial skirmishes would appear trivial'. Note the use of *skirmishes* as a means of downplaying the difficulties faced by Callaghan and his government. Note, too, Molloy's use of *tragedy* to describe (what, at the time, was still) a hypothetical world where Thatcher was Prime Minister, and his prophetic implication, via *trivial*, that industrial turmoil would consequently ensue.

of talking generally to one director of the intelligence services, that I was agreeably surprised to see the way in which they deal with their public duties (S5LV0601P0_022864, 24 May 1999).

The Peer initially used humour to address concerns respecting a (draft) Freedom of Information Bill (which would allow Governments to withhold material from the public, when deemed likely to be prejudicial to them). The Home Office Minister’s framing of the ‘much-maligned’ vampire, and in particular his suggestion that it was time for Dracula to be deemed ‘perfect in every way’ by revisionist historians, ‘just like the Home Office’ may have been an attempt to enhance his own likeability via a humorous self-presentation (i.e., ingratiation: see Cooper 2005). Humour is also known to be a useful ‘remedial control strategy’, alongside ‘qualifications of various kinds’, when individuals must manage impressions, knowing rejection is a possibility (White and White 2008: 156). It may be significant, then, that Williams’ use of humour coincided with his own favourable experience of one intelligence service director’s performance of ‘their public duties’.

2.2 The *bias/prejudice + contempt + speech act* meaning constellation

The *bias/prejudice + contempt + speech act* meaning constellation is very infrequent in all but the Lords dataset relating to the 1812–15 period, where it occurs 8.13 instances per million words (see Graph 3, below).



Graph 3: *bias/prejudice + contempt + speech act* meaning constellation

The following examples representative of the *bias/prejudice + contempt + speech act* meaning constellation demonstrate that self-presentation and impression management can involve both complaining at the reported treatment of self by others, as well as criticising the behaviour of others, in such parliamentary contexts:

(9) I was denounced by the Mover of the Resolution on Burials, as an intolerant bigot and fanatical enthusiast (S3V0229P0_00962, 15/05/1876)

(10) I deprecate the fact that my hon: Friend should have thought it necessary to import prejudice into the discussion of this Bill (S5CV0088P0_05114, 18/12/1916).

The 1876 Lords example (see 9) is taken from a longer speech by Earl Granville, which debated proposed amendments to the Law of Burial. The 1916 Commons example (see 10) relates to a

speech by Mr. Reginald McKenna (then Chancellor of Exchequer), concerning an extension to the Government War Obligations Act (1914). The aim, in both cases, was to present others in a negative light, whilst *exemplifying* self as “the better person” (Jones and Pittman, 1982: 248). For example, Granville went on to highlight that he could only be guilty of the allegations of bigotry and intolerance if:

[...] it be bigotry and intolerance to proclaim and hold fast the principle which has ever been enunciated by the greatest divines of the Church of England, such as Richard Hooker and Bishop Andrews (S5CV0088P0_05114, 18/12/1916)

In so doing, he drew on authoritative sources (‘the greatest divines of the Church of England’) to give his own position more gravitas. McKenna also highlighted that his own position was supported by authoritative others – albeit ones closer to home – namely, MPs within the then Government:

[...] The late Government—and I believe the bulk of its members are in the Government of to-day—at the time believed, as I believe still, that this measure was of great value in the War, for cementing trade relations now and hereafter between this country and one of her most important Allies. It is a policy which was fully declared at the time, and it met with the full approval of this House.

It prompted Sir Henry, the honourable Friend accused of ‘import[ing] prejudice into the discussion’ (relating to the Government War Obligations Act) to counter that McKenna ‘ha[d] not quite seized [his] point’, at best, or was ‘misrepresent[ing] what [he had] said’ at worst. Sir Henry then went on to emphasize that, ‘What [he] did say was that this was not a sound commercial transaction’ (S5CV0088P0_05114, 18/12/1916).

(11), below, is from an 1813 debate respecting Mr Grattan’s motion. Grattan was a protestant member of Ireland’s parliament who pushed for legislative independence and equal rights for Catholics. His motion specifically sought the establishment of a committee to consider the claims of the Roman Catholics, that is, the punitive laws (connected with allegiance to the Crown) which discriminated against Irish Roman Catholics specifically but also British Roman Catholics more generally. The Peer in (11) – Richard Ryder – did not share Grattan’s view of equal rights for Catholics: a point he made explicit, by reminding the House that he was ‘one of those who ha[d] uniformly opposed concession to [any Roman Catholic] Claims’ (S1V0024P0_01897, 1/03/1813). He also stated the following (captured using the ordering, *contempt + bias/prejudice + speech act*):

- (11) To censure that proceeding not from the manner in which the right has been exercised, but because it has been exercised at all, savours not a little of that spirit of intolerance and bigotry which has been at various times, too justly imputed to the professors of that religion whom it is sought to admit to a share of political power, hitherto deemed inconsistent with the laws and the constitution: How far, Sir, the conduct of the Roman Catholics in Ireland has contributed to produce this expression of the public opinion, to increase the jealousies and fears of every class and description of the Protestant community, I will not now enquire, because I am unwilling to enter into any discussion, or even to utter an expression, that can hurt the feelings of a large and respectable part of our fellow subjects (S1V0024P0_01897, 1/03/1813)

Censure alluded to an earlier statement Ryder had made relating to the censoring of petitions ‘from the [Protestant] clergy’, because of being deemed ‘improper’ petitions (i.e., non-neutral). According to Ryder, such censoring of the Protestant clergy ‘savoured...of that spirit of intolerance and bigotry’ that, for him, could ‘justly [be] imputed’ to Roman Catholicism. Hence his reference, in (11), to ‘that religion whom it is sought to admit to a share of political power’. In terms of impression management, then, Ryder was engaging a representational frame (Locher and Watts 2008) that had the express purpose of creating credibility issues for Roman Catholics and/or their cause. This was achieved, in part, by consistently associating Protestants with positive terms – such as *respectable* – and consistently associating Roman Catholics with negative terms – such as *intolerance*, *bigotry*, *jealousies*, *hurt* and *fears*. The latter, moreover, were part of what is referred to today as a fear appeal: namely, ‘trying to get a target audience to adopt a course of action’ or, in this case, to maintain a status quo, ‘by portraying the...alternative as some horrible disaster’ (Walton 2013: 2). This explains Ryder’s intimation that ‘the Roman Catholics in Ireland’ were the agents who had brought about negative consequences for all protestants. In particular, they were the agents of the ‘increas[ing] jealousies and fears of every class and description of the Protestant community’. Notice, however, that this blaming tactic was part of Ryder’s assertion that he was not going to delve into this, as to do so would ‘hurt the feelings of a large and respectable part of [his] fellow subjects’, i.e., Protestants. Apophasis – the tactic of introducing something, and then stating that it will not be discussed – is a well-known rhetorical strategy within political contexts. It provides politicians with a means of point scoring, whilst being seen to adopt the moral high ground. Harré and Moghaddam (2003: 6) describe ‘establishing and occupying the moral high ground’ as a self-positioning technique. Other-positioning, in contrast, includes speakers attributing mental, moral and/or characterological traits to their interlocutors. The Bush example (in 2.1) provides an example of all three in action, in that Bush was portrayed – in this case, negatively – as an inept, tyrannical moron (capable of attacking countries without knowing their location). In the penultimate section, following, I explore another example of other-positioning, this time based upon characterological and moral traits attributed to Aneurin Bevan.

2.3 The *oafishness* + *you* part-of-speech meaning constellation

Meaning constellations do not have to be made up of the Q2.2 semtag (relating to speech acts), as the meaning constellation *oafishness* + *you* reveals. Given the practice of referring to Members using the third person (Chilton 2004: 105), meaning constellations made up of *you* are unlikely to be used frequently in any period (in the Commons or the Lords). In fact, this meaning constellation occurs a mere seven times across the Hansard datasets used for this investigation: in 1905, 1918, 1928, 1932, 1946, 1960 and 1981. All but the first of these relate to the Lords. As (12) reveals, they are worth investigating, nonetheless, given my interest in the use of facework to manage interlocutors’ impressions of self and other(s):

- (12) No one who has done any ordinary grass-roots canvassing, would deny that at least four out of every five votes are cast against something or somebody, rather than for anything: This is how we have to behave under an electoral system which was described yesterday by The Times as "a lethal gamble": This rough, oafish game depends essentially upon fear: You have to frighten people into believing that the other lot are going to be even worse than you

have already shown yourselves to be, and in order to pull off this propaganda trick you need bugaboos or bogeymen: You need a name to make the flesh creep: The late and very much respected Aneurin Bevan served the party opposite in that capacity very well for some time (HL, S5LV0417P0_01590, 11/02/1981)

This turn was part of a speech in which Liberal supporter, Lord Clement McNair, claimed the UK electorate were having to vote ‘negatively against that which they’ found ‘the most repulsive’. Here, McNair made the point that, when it comes to this ‘legal gamble’, ‘at least four out of every five votes are cast against something or somebody, rather than for anything’. This ‘sadly familiar search for the lesser of two evils’ is then framed as an ‘oafish game’ dependent on fear, and as a ‘propaganda trick’ reliant upon ‘bugaboos or bogeymen’ such as Aneurin Bevan. McNair’s other-depiction of Bevan is particularly interesting, in facework terms: he described Bevan as ‘very much respected’, for example, and as someone who had ‘served the party opposite ... very well for some time’, thereby engaging in positive politeness (Brown and Levinson, 1987). Indeed, the impression given is of a consistent and capable politician. However, McNair’s face enhancement occurred in the larger context of Bevan being negatively depicted as a monstrosity, whose remit was ‘to make the flesh creep’.

3 Concluding comments

This paper has explored not just whether but also how Peers and MPs (past and present) sought to convey ‘an impression to others’ (Goffman 1959: 4) in support of their own – as well as their Party’s – interests, when presenting their arguments and contrary positions. To enable both quantitative and qualitative explorations, I have identified their strategic facework via meaning constellations (see Archer and Malory 2017).⁵ As explained in the Introduction, strategic facework equates to the interactional work Peers and MPs engaged in as a means of positioning self and/or others in a particular way (cf. Beech’s 2008 notion of interpersonal identity work).

There has been much debate, within the (im)politeness literature, as to the extent to which facework can be consciously undertaken, not least because much facework has been argued to be undertaken sub/un-consciously. It is possible, further, that, in certain settings, interlocutors also pay less attention to self-presentation and/or impression management issues: that is to say, how they are presenting themselves to and/or are being perceived by others. I have sought to show, nonetheless, that, in contexts such as the Commons and the Lords, facework was and is undertaken more deliberately for self-presentation and impression management purposes. Simply put, politicians of times past, like politicians today, appear to have been acutely aware of the impressions being created, as they made their observations, and actively engaged in interpersonal identity work in consequence: be it for self-interested reasons and/or party-motivated gain.

Within the impression management literature, it is common to discuss particular impression management strategies, be they assertive or defensive, tactically speaking (Eder and Fedor 2013: 327; Ellis et al 2002; Jones and Pittman 1982: 248; Sieber 2007: 209). Assertive strategies are to do with ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification and/or supplication. Defensive strategies involve signalling accounts that provide reasons, justifications or excuses, disclaimers disowning responsibility, apologies expressing remorse/regret, and/or restitution/promising to make up for or correcting X. Some of these

⁵ Thanks to Archer and Malory’s (2017) meaning constellation method, I have also been able to provide evidence of strategies differing across the two Houses and/or over time (see especially 2.1-2.3).

strategies were used in our parliamentary contexts. For example, in section 2.2, I discuss the example of Richard Ryder: the Peer who sought to present Catholics and/or their cause in a negative light – to the point of engaging in blaming strategies – and then exemplified himself as the better person offering the better political choice. Catholics were framed as being the agents of the ‘increas[ing] jealousies and fears of every class and description of the Protestant community’, for example. Ryder’s use of Apophasis then afforded him the means of adopting the moral high ground (Harré and Moghaddam 2003: 6). A closely-related strategy to Apophasis is also evident in the Hansard datasets: that of highlighting X as problematic, and then explicitly stating that a group of interested others must ultimately decide on its legitimacy. The most obvious example, in this case, is that of the MP who criticised his ‘hon: Member’ for always ‘throw[ing] cold water upon the stories of atrocities in Belgium’, before retorting ‘why he should always drag in his sneers about the Belgian atrocities...I leave it for the House and country to judge’ (S5CV0068P0_01653, 16/11/1914). As highlighted in section 1.3, Archer and Malory (2017) note this as a framing strategy, such that the target becomes someone who knowingly *sneers* at a time when people suffer(ed) unjustly. Representational framing is also a feature of a second example, where ‘the people’ (of Northern Ireland, in this case) were invited to ‘make up their own minds as to [the] veracity’ of Gerry Adams’ and Martin McGuinness’ denials in respect to their misuse of government finances. Indeed, I argue (in 2.1) that this focus was not merely a ruse to complain about them (and the Government) but, rather, a means by which he might depict Adams and McGuinness as ‘dissembling and fraudulent’ (cf. Combs 1994: 20).

Such tactics point to the need to look beyond the more common impression management strategies listed above, so that we might also pay attention to how such strategies can be achieved linguistically using, for example, representational frames. As highlighted in 1.3, representational frames enable interlocutors to ‘represent the character traits, ideas and opinions of and even statements made by others’ (Locher and Watts 2009: 99, n9): in our case, for self- and/or party gain. Indeed, in my Hansard dataset, representational frames were used both to underline Peers’ and MPs’ competence, plans and intentions, and more particularly to undermine the track-record of their opponents (in line with Fezter and Bull 2012: 219). We thus have examples (in Sections 2.1–2.3) where individuals, nations and political systems were framed negatively in respect to their treatment of others and/or their lack of credibility. The same sections 2.1–2.3 provide instances, in turn, of speakers seeking to get their ‘target audience to adopt a course of action’ and/or to maintain a status quo, ‘by portraying the...alternative as some horrible disaster’ (Walton, 2013: 2). Ryder, mentioned above (and discussed in more detail in 2.2), provides us with one example of using such fear appeals. Lord Clement McNair (discussed in 2.3) provides us with a second, albeit different use of fear. He went as far as to frame UK politics as an ‘oafish game’ dependent on fear, and as a ‘propaganda trick’ reliant upon ‘bugaboos or bogeymen’ such as Aneurin Bevan. Bevan, in turn, was depicted as a consistent and capable politician whose monstrous remit was ‘to make the flesh creep’.

The fact that the Commons and the Lords were and remain contexts where ‘maintaining one’s face’ can be ‘akin to maintaining one’s credibility in the eyes of others’ (Gass and Seiter 2015: 90), thereby resulting in a close alignment between facework, self-presentation and impression management, means, in turn, that face enhancement and face threat is – and was – often intertwined. I have already noted the example of Bevan, who was represented positively, but

within a frame that represented him as a monster. More common examples involved the use of superficial face enhancement to varnish face-aggravating acts (see 1.3, 2. and 2.1). We thus see a high occurrence of conventional respect forms such as *with [great/due] respect* and *respectfully* (see 1.3 and 2; and also Archer forthcoming). As Section 2.3 highlights, it can be fruitful, in turn, to pay attention to the use of pronouns, especially where they provide a relational-rhetorical means of positioning self and others. The latter focus must nonetheless allow for the parliamentary “norm” of addressing Members by their position and in the third person (Chilton 2004: 105).

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