

The pragmeme of disagreement and its allopracts in English and Serbian political interview discourse

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The paper explores the disagreement pragmeme as a culture-bound notion (Mey 2016a, 2016b, 2001) in the language use of English-speaking and Serbian-speaking politicians. The objectives are to establish the types, frequencies and cultural specificities of disagreement allopracts in political interviews. Furthermore, the research analyses allopracts in relation to the single and multiple dispute profiles (van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans 2007). The starting assumption is that allopracts will be realised in culturally specific ways despite the fact that the analysed pragmeme belongs to the same communication genre, which is the Immediately Relevant *tertium comparationis* (Krzyszowski 1990) of the research. The hypothesis to be verified is that the Serbian sub-corpus will yield more examples of strong disagreement. Another aim is to classify the obtained allopracts according to their degrees of strength. The analysis is based on the corpus of 50 political interviews, involving 30 politicians and 262 allopracts.

Keywords: pragmeme, disagreement, allopract, political interview, English, Serbian

1. Introduction

This paper is a report on a small-scale, corpus-based, contrastive research undertaken to explore the pragmeme of disagreement as a culture-bound notion (Mey 2001, 2016a, 2016b) in the language English and Serbian politicians would use when interviewed. One of the interests of the study was to discover any cultural differences in the ways English-speaking and Serbian-speaking politicians expressed disagreement, whether the ways of mapping dissent to linguistic form would produce more aggravated disagreement (which enhanced polarity) or mit-

igated (which reduced it) in terms of Goodwin (1983) in one lingua-cultural context than the other. The findings may provide insight into the communication patterns and ways in which meaning is conveyed in these languages by representatives from different cultures. This kind of comparative research could also contribute to better understanding of the specificities and common elements in the communication approach, and thus help overcome potential intercultural misunderstanding and/or stereotypical misconception in the political dialogue. Finally, it may prove beneficial to professionals, politicians, journalists and all those interested in developing more efficient contacts of the representatives of the two cultures and facilitating intercultural communication, particularly at the political level.

Starting from the assumption that disagreement allopracts would be realised in culturally specific ways despite the fact that the analysed pragmeme belongs to the same communication genre of political discourse, the basic hypothesis was that the Serbian corpus would register more examples of strong disagreement than the English part of the corpus. Additionally, the research would endeavour to provide any evidence on the question whether the political tradition of the English-speaking community, as the longer, better-established and better-developed tradition of the two would have a more considerable impact on the use of disagreement allopracts.

The main objective is to establish the types and tokens (frequency) of disagreement allopracts, and determine their cultural specificities in English and Serbian interviews. Being a communicative genre, political interviews indirectly present a “[...] formative element of human communication” (Luckman 1995, 177), and therefrom they stand for the Immediately Relevant *tertium comparationis* of the entire research (Krzyszowski 1990, 32), i.e. the common element of comparison. The Ultimately Relevant *tertium comparationis* is the pragmeme of disagreement in the languages, similarly to that of challenge in Fetzer (2011, 26). For the purpose of comparing and contrasting, a particular classification of disagreement allopracts will be proposed, viewing them according to the parameters of directness and degree of strength/force of the illocutionary point (Searle 1979, 5; Searle and Vanderveken 1985, 15). The initial theoretical framework of this classification is the theory of single and multiple dispute profiles as put forward by van Eemeren and Grootendorst (1984, 1992), and Van Eemeren et al. (2007).

Political discourse, as a prime candidate for pragmatic analysis (Fetzer 2013, 2), and the genre of political interview were used for research data collection as a potentially yielding domain in terms of disagreement expressions and/or difference of opinion phrases within the second part (answer) of the adjacency pairs during political interviews. The artistry of skilful disagreement has been even marked as “an interactional requirement of the debate genre” (Patrona 2006,

2127). The concept of political interview as deployed in the present study is based on the definitions by Fetzer and Bull (2013), and ideally presumes interactive roles on the part of the interlocutors, clear and adequate turn-taking, as well as a neutral-style, unaffected language. It ideally presumes that it is in the interlocutor's interest to listen, to understand and show understanding by responding with adequate turns (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 727–728). The prototypical political interview could be conceived as follows:

[...] a default political interview is defined by (1) clear-cut tasks and purposes, that is asking questions and giving answers, and eliciting information and providing the requested information, (2) clear-cut discourse roles, that is a journalist as interviewer and a politician as interviewee, and (3) a clear-cut use of language, that is non-emotional, neutral language. (Fetzer and Bull 2013, 85)

Whatever falls out of the standard format is considered to be “frame-breaking” (Goffman 1986), and it is mostly within this area of critical incidents (Fetzer and Bull 2013; Kotthoff 1993) that a number of the disagreement instances on the part of the politician interviewee may occur. The reasons for the disagreement occurrence are manifold: from opinion heterodoxy, “positive self-presentation” (Patrona 2006), the type of the question posed, to the implications contained in the question which cannot be completely neutral as it necessarily encodes “points of view and decisions about relevance” (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 30).

The theoretical framework presented in Section 2 addresses the notions of pragmeme, allopract, the pragmeme of disagreement (Capone 2005, 2016, 2018; Fetzer 2000, 2016; Kecskes 2016; Mey 2001, 2016a; Mey 2016b; Wong 2010, 2016), and the pragma-dialectical dispute profiles (van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans 2007), the conversational settings for disagreement allopracts. Even though the corpus analysis, which involves identifying and classifying disagreement allopracts as constitutive of four different dispute profiles, was not based on the postulates of CA proper, it was prompted by the CA “analytic mentality” (Schenkein 1978) and the notion of “the next-turn-proof procedure” (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 728). CA advocates the idea that the more formal understanding of the turn-taking organisation can provide the basis for particular findings in particular social settings (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 699).

2. Theoretical framework and related research

2.1 Pragmemes and allopracts

The introduction of the term *pragmeme* was motivated by the “indirect speech act problem” (Mey 2001, 111–113; 219–229). The author argues that, as direct speech acts are far less common than indirect speech acts, the notion of the pragmatic act (abb. *pract*) is more adequate in describing speech events as it focuses on the pragmatic, rather than the lexico-semantic aspects of speech acts. This is the term that includes both indirect speech acts and all other ways of doing things with words. Capone (2005, 1355) defines the *pragmeme* as “a situated speech act in which the rules of language and of society combine in determining meaning” or even more briefly as “speech acts in context” (Capone 2018, 91). As Mey (2016b, 355) argues, a speech act cannot be considered to have a unique reference, based on semantic context, so it is impossible to make a classification that unambiguously relates locution with illocutionary force and perlocutionary effect and vice versa. In retrospect, Austin (1962) commented that he was far from equally happy about his classes of utterances based on their illocutionary force. Starting with the formula $F(p)$, the distinction between illocutionary force and propositional content, Searle (1979, 1–8) talks through twelve criteria relevant to the discussion of different types of illocutionary acts, and Searle and Vanderveken (1985, 12–20) highlight seven attributes of illocutionary force. These components can describe countless illocutionary acts in real life, so Searle’s (1965, 1969, 1976, 1979) classification of speech acts should be viewed as prototypes, which is also what Verschueren (1980, 44) advises discussing his speech act verb (SAV) prototypes. These could be seen as the basis for the later developments in dealing with the multilayered nature of speech acts. Mey (2016b, 367) advances the idea that pragmatic acting and *pragmemes* should not be reduced to types (or prototypes) of illocutionary acts, but be observed in the situation, the social setting where they are enacted.

Likewise, Wong (2010, 2932; 2016, 568) defines the *pragmeme* as “a culturally situated speech act”, and this definition underscores “the triple articulation” of language. The triple articulation is predicated on the assumption that language connects form, meaning and culture, and that cultural embeddedness of language cannot be neglected. This reroutes the discussion of speech acts to the lines of theoretical assumptions close to those of Mey, as they are rooted in the idea that “interlocutors are considered social beings searching for meaning with individual minds embedded in a sociocultural collectivity” (Kecskes 2016, 49). In Kecskes’s view, this is the foundation of intercultural pragmatics, where the individualistic intention-based cognitive-philosophical line and the societal context-based sociocultural-interactional line come together. Culture, cultural habits and differ-

ences are not isolated, but embedded in and constructed by interactive processes (Günthner 1993, 16).

Wong (2016, 568–570; 579–580) also defines the pragmeme as a type of linguistic *-eme*. Just like phonemes or morphemes, pragmemes can be realised in different ways, either in free variation or in complementary distribution. These pragmatic variations are called alloprags, or allopracts. The pragmeme can, therefore, be defined as “the embodied realization of all the pragmatic acts (or ‘allopracts’) that can be subsumed under it” (Mey 2016a, 139). For example, the pragmeme of disagreement can be realised through the following pract and/or allopracts (*allo-*, from Greek *allos*, meaning *other*):

PRAGMEME	>	[DISAGREEMENT]
PRACT	>	No, that’s not true.
ALLOPRACTS	>	I don’t agree with you. I am afraid I have to disagree. Absolute nonsense! etc.

Wong (2016, 570–579) tries to describe pragmemes in not such a complicated way, using a terminology somewhat different to explain the same phenomena. The idea is to use a minimally ethnocentric, culturally neutral metalanguage, the natural semantic language (NSM) as the background for describing and comparing pragmemes in different cultures and languages. Pragmemes are seen as consisting of three components: the intention or motivation, which is the reason why a speaker uses a speech act (based on NSM), the dictum (the form seen as representative of a speech act), and the intended illocutionary effect (ideally speaking). The first component is formulated as “someone says something to someone else because they want this someone else to”: (1) know something; (2) think something; (3) want something; 4) feel something; and 5) do something. Wong (2016, 572) states that these categories may not correspond to Searle’s (1979) assertives, directives, commissives, expressives and declaratives, but they are more clearly described and help to understand the pragmeme. As for defining specificities in the motivation part, they are a challenge in the study of pragmemes. Another problem Wong (2016, 575) considers is the dictum, which should reflect the intended, pragmatic meaning. Different forms (allopracts) can express disagreement, and what is said is not always taken literally, which paves the way for diverse interpretations. Finally, the illocutionary effect is what the addressee is expected to think after the dictum has been uttered. The addressee, however, may not behave as expected (unless the social circumstances require so). This is what Austin (1962, 120) named as different kinds of effects of illocutionary acts: securing uptake, taking effect, and inviting responses. The next section proposes a general working

definition of the pragmeme of disagreement based on Wong's three components of the pragmeme.

2.2 The pragmeme of disagreement

The following definition relies on Wong's (2016, 571–575) understanding of the motivation component of the pragmeme. It is general enough to encompass allopracts expressing disagreement in different situations, both ordinary conversation and institutional normative frameworks:

The pragmeme of disagreement:

The agent wants someone else to know that the agent has a different point of view on the same issue from the point of view someone else previously expressed.

The pragmeme of disagreement is related to the semantic prime *know*, and the motivation for the disagreement pragmeme has (at least) two more levels of specificity: it is used to let someone else know what someone thinks about something, and to let someone else know that someone thinks differently on the same issue. Things become more complicated if two types of effects are separated: the agent expects someone else to understand the agent's point of view and the agent expects to change someone else's mindset. The former refers to expressing disagreement without aiming for a particular effect other than that of taking one's stance. Sometimes the speaker does not care whether the audience believes something or not (Sbisà 2009, 235). The latter can also be related to the semantic prime *think*, with the specificity *think differently*, if the agent wants someone else to change his/her mind and think differently. Moreover, unintended effects should always be counted upon because someone else may respond in original ways. All this depends on the conversational setting and the specific situation where a pragmeme is used.

Fetzer (2000, 15–20) notes that the negotiation of validity claims in political interviews takes place not only between the first-frame participants interviewer (IR) and interviewee (IE) but also between the first-frame participants and the second-frame audience. In the media, the second-frame audience cannot negotiate the validity claims with the first-frame participants, but within those who belong with the second-frame audience as well.

2.3 Dispute profiles

As disagreement appears in the second pair part of the question-answer turn-takings in the corpus of political interviews, "the next-turn proof procedure" (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 728) is used to check the IE's understanding

of the IR's prior turn. A single question-answer turn-taking is viewed as an example of one of the four dispute profiles proposed by Van Eemeren et al. (2007, 21–62):¹

Table 1. Van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans's classification of dispute profiles

Type	Associated meaning
Single non-mixed (SNM)	expressing doubt about the IR's single standpoint
Single mixed (SM)	opposing the IR's single standpoint
Multiple non-mixed (MNM)	expressing doubt about the IR's multiple standpoints
Multiple mixed (MM)	adopting opposing and/or alternative standpoints towards the IR's multiple standpoints

As Table 1 shows, four profiles are associated with four sub-types of disagreements. The single non-mixed profile is the situation where the IE doubts a single proposition, whereas the single mixed profile is the situation where the IE opposes a single proposition. In the multiple non-mixed type, the IE doubts more than one standpoint, and in the multiple mixed type, the IE adopts opposing and/or alternative standpoints towards the multiple propositions.² All types are subdivided into pairs of weak and strong agreement sub-types. To do this, we use van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans's (2007, 31) "propositional attitude indicators/PAI" and "force modifying expressions/FME" (Table 2), Schiffrin's (1987, 2001), and Maschler and Schiffrin's (2015) classification of discourse markers (to be continued):

Table 2. Van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans's classification of PAI and FME

Propositional attitude indicators (PAI)	Force modifying expressions (FME)
Weak assertives	Weak assertives
I believe that, I find that, I am of the opinion/ take the view that, I think that, I suppose that, I assume that, I expect that, I suspect that, I have the impression that, It seems to me that, etc.	In my opinion/judgement, in my view, to my mind, as I see it, it is likely/probable that (probably), supposedly, It is right/true/the case/ correct that (in fact, indeed)

1. Doubt can be understood as skirting the issue or something said purely for form. Here it is used as an expression of disagreement, as giving someone the benefit of the doubt is still not a full-fledged agreement, but rather a concession until proven otherwise.
2. Van Eemeren, Houtlosser and Henkemans (2007, 24) separate the quantitative multiple mixed type from the qualitative multiple mixed type. Here the classification was adapted and the two types are united into the MM group.

Table 2. (continued)

Propositional attitude indicators (PAI)	Force modifying expressions (FME)
Strong assertives I am sure/certain that, I am convinced that	Strong assertives It is clear/obvious that, it is beyond dispute/ question/a (shadow of a) doubt, there can be no two ways about it/there is no doubt that, it goes without saying that, it is certain that, it is unquestionably/absolutely certain (definite, absolute, real, actual, true, factual)
Semi-assertives I know that	Semi-assertives It goes without saying that (self-evident, of course, natural)

The indicators here join with assertives, one of Searle's (1976, 1979) five prototypes, by which the speaker claims the truth of a proposition, with a weaker or stronger commitment (van Eemeren 2018, 39). Van Eemeren et al. (2007, 31–34) describe weak assertive attitude indicating expressions and force modifying expressions as those that prevent the addressee from thinking that what is said is based on strong evidence, and that the listener accepts the assertion at his/her own risk. When the strong assertive expressions are used, the speaker makes two assertions, the complementary proposition and the assertion that the complementary proposition is correct. Semi-assertive expressions resemble strong assertive expressions in that they express certainty, but the complementary proposition is partly asserted and partly presupposed.

As regards agreements and disagreements, van Eemeren (2018, 40) classifies these acts as commissives by which a speaker undertakes a commitment to do something or refrain from something. Agreements and disagreements can thus be interpreted as assertions by which the speaker undertakes to commit to the truth of a proposition. However, this is not relevant here because the research relies on Mey's (2016b, 367) idea that pragmatic acting and pragmemes should not be reduced to types (or prototypes) of illocutionary acts, but on the situatedness of use.

Table 2 shows that PAI and FME include both lexical (e.g. 'probably') and syntactic units (e.g. 'in my opinion'). This structural division is the starting point in Schiffrin's (1987, 2001) and Maschler and Schiffrin's (2015) classification of discourse markers that are used in the course of transcript analysis. Particular attention was paid to the fact that discourse markers could impart different meaning to the discourse and can be multifunctional, so that the corpus contains only those instances where the markers are unequivocally interpersonal in function and signal the discourse relationship of disagreement with a proposition by the IR.

The IR's question, comment, or constation invites the IE to participate in the conversation by providing an answer to a question or assessment of a situation. The discourse markers used by the IEs would not only be indicative of the linguistic aspects of the language employed in this particular genre, but may be also revealing in the sense of the cognitive, expressive, social, textual (Schiffrin 2001, 67) and cultural competences of the politicians. The following groups of discourse markers of disagreement taken from the corpora could be distinguished:

Lexical:

actually, but, never, no, not, none, nonsense, unlikely, well, etc.

Syntactic:

How can you say that?; How come...?; I am afraid I can't agree; I don't agree; I disagree; In no way...; I totally disagree; It is a huge question...; It is not a good idea; I don't accept that; I don't believe...; I do not think they have realised...; I doubt that; I do not think so; I wouldn't say...; No, but...; On the contrary; That's different; That's ridiculous; That's not true/correct; That's not what I said; That's wrong; Who says so?; Yes, but...; You miss the point, etc.

Phonetic:

Since the interviews were analysed in their non-standardised transcript form, it could not be established whether there was any silence or delay before expressions of disagreement.

As opposed to conversants in other contexts who tend to express disagreement by means of one form of delay or another (Pomerantz 1984, 70), IEs in political interviews are expected to provide their turn in a relatively short period of time.

3. Corpus analysis and results

The political interview is a formal speech-exchange system where the norm requires the participants to assume one of the two activities: asking questions (IR) or giving answers (IE) (Hutchby 2006, 26). But there is no obvious correspondence between questions as a syntactic form, and asking questions as an activity (Koshik 2005, 1). In the political interview, the IR's syntax is affected by the IR's dual role to ask questions and elicit political stances without expressing personal opinions. Disagreements happen when the IE wants the IR to know that the IE has a different point of view on the same issue. The IR's formulation (which elicits a stance from the IE) and the IE's disagreement constitute a dispute profile identified by means of "the next turn proof procedure" (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 728).

3.1 Corpus

The corpus encompasses 50 political interviews in two sub-corpora of 25 interviews in each section. The interviews have been sourced from British, US, Canadian, Australian and Serbian internet platforms and include text transcripts of broadcast interviews, as well as newspaper and magazine interviews. As for broadcast political interviews, which “have become one of the most important means of political communication” (Elliot and Bull 1996, 49) both news interviews and political talk show interviews were included in the corpus, so as to consider politicians’ argumentation in both “heavy weight” and “feel good” situations (Clayman and Heritage 2002). These political interview forms “incorporate the discourse practice of questioning and answering which, on a structural level, yields question-answer sequences” (Lauerbach 2007, 1392). The sequences start with questions that Lauerbach (2007) takes as semantically incomplete propositions which should be completed on the part of the interviewee, thus forming a single statement produced by two individuals (Bell and van Leeuwen 1994, 6–7). However, when the interviewee does not follow the line of answering the question with an expected outcome, but expresses disagreement instead, the “single statement” status is changed. In this research, 262 such allopracts were gleaned. The allopracts were classified according to the genre-specific strategy of *directness* as strong (direct) or weak (indirect) with reference to the degree of strength/force of the illocutionary point of the allopracts.

3.1.1 *The English sub-corpus*

The English sub-corpus of allopracts is based on 25 randomly selected political interviews with a word count of 150,032. The interviews were conducted with 16 English-speaking politicians over the time span from 2000 to 2018. Four varieties of English are incorporated in the sub-corpus: (a) British English: Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Sir John Chilcot, Nigel Farage, Boris Johnson, Theresa May; (b) American English: George W. Bush, Hilary Clinton, Barack Obama, Michael Pence, Chuck Schumer, Donald Trump; (c) Canadian English: Romeo Dallaire, Justin Trudeau, and (d) Australian English: Malcolm Turnbull.

3.1.2 *The Serbian sub-corpus*

The Serbian sub-corpus is based on 25 political interviews with a word count of 48,805, approximately three times smaller than the English sub-corpus word count. Relying on Bales (1970), Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974, 711) entertain the possibility that the relative distribution of turns depends on power, state, influence, etc., as speaking takes time and attention from other people. The more so in the interview format, a system that requires attention and listening to the

speaker so the next turn can be adequate (Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson 1974, 727–728). The interviews were conducted with 14 politicians over the same time span: (a) Serbia: Ana Brnabić, Mirko Cvetković, Ivica Dačić, Mlađan Dinkić, Zoran Đinđić, Vuk Jeremić, Tomislav Nikolić, Nebojša Stefanović, Boris Tadić, Aleksandar Vučić, Aleksandar Vulin and Zoran Živković, (b) BH: Željka Cvijanović, Milorad Dodik.

3.2 Methods

Hutchby and Wooffitt (1998, 73–74; 91–92) point out that transcripts are treated as *representations* of the data, not as the data per se. Internet transcripts, just like all transcripts, are not “recordings of naturally occurring interactions” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998, 73), however, they are publicly available texts which allow analysts to examine the pragmatic consequences of specific lexico-semantic and syntactic locutions.

The analysis was performed on the ready-made Internet transcripts of 50 political interviews. The media transcripts observed were of the *denaturalised* transcription type (Bucholtz 2000, 1461) and characterised by detailed transcription with light to moderate *editing on the part of the transcriber in the form of potential comments, overlapping or unintelligibility remarks, but also preservation of the discourse markers, interruptions and fragments*. Only the *verbal* qualities of the language within the allopracts have been considered, while any *non-verbal* or prosodic features have been disregarded, as the interviews were taken in their written form. The identification of the type of dispute profile relied on ‘the next turn proof procedure’ and the explicit indicators of disagreement (see Section 2.3. and the beginning of Section 3) which were identified within the second pair part of a single profile/turn taking unit. Standard CA transcription conventions were not used as this is a pragmatic analysis of verbal indicators within the context of dispute profiles (Jefferson 1985, 2004). However, for the sake of clarity, the following basic notation is used in the discussion of the results:

Normal font – original words, English examples

Italics – original words, Serbian examples

Boldface font – allopracts

() – transcriber’s comment

[...] – omitted segment /unfinished expression

[] – Serbian into English translation, normal font

The frequency calculations were used as the basic tool for determining the typical allopracts and for determining the similarities and differences within and between the two sub-corpora.

3.3 Results and discussion

The two sub-corpora contributed differently to the overall results. Even though the number of specimens incorporated into the research was the same, i.e. 25 political interviews per language, the number of IEs and the word count were not the same:

Table 3. Interviewee, word and allopract count in the two research sub-corpora

Origin	No. of interviewees	Word count	Allopract count	Percentage of total word count (TWC)
1. English	16	150,032	150	75.45%
UK politicians	7	69,569	80	34.98%
US politicians	6	58,900	40	29.62%
CAN politicians	2	15,595	17	7.84%
AUS politicians	1	5,968	13	3.00%
2. Serbian	14	48,805	112	24.54%
SRB politicians	12	39,194	92	19.71%
BH politicians	2	9,611	20	4.83%
Total	30	198,837	262	100%

Table 3 exhibits the difference in the way the macro-pragmeme of political interview is realised in the sub-corpora. In the English-speaking community, the interviews amount to 6,000 words on average, whereas in the Serbian-speaking political interview culture they are almost three times shorter and barely reach 2,000 words per interview. The numbers may be suggestive of a corresponding importance given to this communication genre in general, as much as it may also point to a more significant position that interviews involving major politicians have in the speech communities of the pertinent languages. In a culture with well-established institutions and adequate norms within various forms of political life, interviews with political leaders appear to have a more prominent position and allocated space in the media.

As Table 4 shows, the occurrence of disagreement allopracts in English equals approximately 1 per every 1,000 words in a political interview. However, the Serbian-speaking politicians employed an average number of 2.29 allopracts per 1,000 words.

This allows for at least two possible interpretations. The first interpretation is based on the assumption that the Serbian journalists and/or IRs are ever “increasingly adversarial” (Hanlon 2010) and appear to assume a position of greater power

Table 4. Average allopracts occurrence in the two research sub-corpora

	Corpus	Word count	Allopracts	Average percentage
1.	English	150,032	150	0.099%
2.	Serbian	48,805	112	0.229%
	Total	198,837	262	0.132%

with regard to the IEs and thus pose questions that are more provocative in such a way as to elicit a greater number of clear expressions of disagreement. Assuming that face-aggravation of the IE is not the sole intention of such action, this is quite legitimate and may prove beneficial to both the role of the IR and the designated purpose of the interview. The second interpretation rests on the idea that Serbian politicians could be intrinsically characterised by a comparatively more pronounced confrontational capacity in promoting their views and withstanding the ones of others and are therefore more inclined to veering off the default or prototypical model of political interview. Moreover, when all strong disagreement allopracts were considered, the frequency index in the English sub-corpus equals 5.6 strong degree allopracts per 10,000 words, while in the Serbian it is 14.3 every 10,000 words on average. This may serve as an empirical confirmation of the trend that the Serbian-speaking politicians would be using strong allopracts more frequently than their English-speaking colleagues.

Table 5 is an overview of the data in terms of the frequency of the allopracts in the sub-corpora, as well as the percentage of the entirety of sub-corpora taken up by each allopract type, both of the total number of allopracts (TAC) and words (TWC). A common moment in the two sub-corpora is the fact that the multiple mixed (MM) allopracts would account for approximately a half of all the allopracts.

None of the allopracts in the corpus could be classified as strong multiple non-mixed (MNM) allopracts. In CA, single cases such as this one need not be treated as deviant, but ultimately unique (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998, 97–98; 116). *Noticeable absences* can be explained with regard to the conditional relevance of the second pair part, or “the initial condition of a first pair part being uttered” (Hutchby and Wooffitt 1998, 98). If the second part is missing, it can be concluded that the first pair part is not relevant either. As the MNM /weak and strong, and SNM/ strong are the rarest types, it can be concluded that IR constructs turns in a way that minimises non-mixed responses/doubts. Non-mixed responses show that the IE (probably) understands the IR but does not want to engage more, which can be a sign of indifference or irrelevance attributed to the IR’s position. Conversely, the IE’s mixed responses can be regarded as the IR’s successful

Table 5. Allopract count and percentage of total number of allopracts and words according to dispute profiles in the two research sub-corpora

Corpus	SNM	SNM	SM	SM	MNM	MNM	MM	MM	Total
	weak	strong	weak	strong	weak	strong	weak	strong	
1. English	7	3	21	36	3	0	35	45	150
1.1 % of TAC	4.7	2	14	24	2	0	23.33	30	100%
1.2 % of TWC	0.005	0.002	0.014	0.024	0.002	0	0.023	0.030	0.1
2. Serbian	6	1	14	35	1	0	21	34	112
2.1 % of TAC	5.36	0.9	12.5	31.25	0.9	0	18.75	30.36	100%
2.2 % of TWC	0.012	0.002	0.029	0.072	0.002	0	0.043	0.07	0.23

achievement of the illocutionary effect of provoking the IE's more confrontational responses, opposing or expressing alternative views.

3.3.1 *Single and multiple non-mixed profiles (SNM and MNM)*

As regards the single and multiple non-mixed types, there is no significant difference between the two sub-corpora. It is a relatively small portion, which may suggest that neither of the two linguaculturally-based political groups (House 2010) pays any particular attention to using more tactful, tentative modes of expressing disagreement.

It is also evident that it is the weak disagreement that dominates in both sub-corpora. A case in point for the weak MNM allopract would be an extract where an indirect kind of opposition is employed by Turnbull:

- (1) IR: [...] don't we have a responsibility to be transparent about, to make sure journalists can go and report, to provide actual functional oversight.

Turnbull: Well I hear what you say but [...].

The example is classified as a token of weak disagreement because the IE agrees with the IR's positions, but the IE also initiates a repair. The words can be paraphrased as *I understand but I don't have to agree*, following the *yes-but* logic.³ Con-

3. The *yes-but* formulation is classified as weak disagreement because agreement is mixed with doubt. Conversely, the *no-but* formulation is classified as strong disagreement because disagreement is explicit and further explicated.

versely, Johnson's response "I have no evidence" is classified as a token of strong reservation.

In the Serbian sub-corpus, only one instance of the weak MNM disagreement was found (in the English sub-corpus, three examples were identified). Brnabić, the IE from the Serbian sub-corpus, responds with a single-word expression of doubt, Serb. *moguće* [Perhaps/It is possible], and does not express her own standpoint as if the IR's words were irrelevant.

The higher number of weak allopracts (considering TAC) in both sub-corpora within the SNM and MNM profiles may be correlated to the tendency of the participants in political interviews to "blur" the default interview model by "[...] the employment of different semiotic codes and sociocultural practices, for instance the use of informal and emotional language [...]" (Fetzer and Bull 2013, 96).

3.3.2 *Single and multiple mixed profiles (SM and MM)*

As Table 5 shows, within the mixed profiles, the IEs more often opted for strong, not weak allopracts. Most conventionally, disagreement would implicate the negative particle *no* or *not* and any enclitics thereof in connection with the context-dependent verbs. The use of repeated negative particles appears to be a culture-specific trait, as the corpus yielded almost three times more examples of compounded disagreement in the English segment (22 instances) than in the Serbian (eight instances). It presents a remarkable difference particularly bearing in mind that the Serbian language standard allows for double negation, e.g. *nikada nisam to rekao* [I did not never say that], whereas the English language does not. Furthermore, the answers within these profiles are generally not so evasive as in other profiles where they can take a more "roundabout trajectory" (Clayman and Heritage 2002, 243), and the disagreement is expressed in a rather immediate and 'to the point' way. However, other semantic-syntactic resources can prove helpful, such as, for example, Clinton's reaction:

- (2) IR: [...] But in a sense, many in India actually feel [...] Do you think the Trump administration has actually done more [...] than the Obama administration did?

Clinton: Oh I don't know how you can say that. Certainly at this point, they haven't really done anything except [...]

In (2), the IE disagrees with multiple standpoints, expressed in the IR's declarative introduced with "many in India [...]" and in the IR's question "Do you think that Trump administration has actually done more [...] than Obama [...]".

When a question would involve multiple propositions, the IEs would much more often resort to open opposition and/or alternative propositions. Other intentions than protecting one's political integrity may be perceived in the incli-

nation to disagree with the IR, such as, for example, forcing IRs to feel accountable and guilty for their role and to desist from further inconvenience through questions (Bull and Mayer 1988, 44–45). As for the Serbian sub-corpus, there were almost twice as many allopracts in the domain of weak multiple mixed type per TWC, while even more than twice as many in the strong multiple mixed type. However, TAC results show that the numbers are similar (see Table 5). Both sub-corpora register more strong single mixed and multiple mixed types allopracts.

Strong single mixed allopracts were identified by means of the following devices: the indicator *I don't agree*, straightforward negation of the IR's explicit or presupposed standpoint, derogatory remarks, intensifiers, prohibitions, generalisations, and negating emphasising questions. The negating emphasising questions are typical of the Serbian sub-corpus. The illustration is taken from the interview with Dodik:

(3) IR: *Ne pričate ni Vi sa gospodinom Izetbegovićem.*

[You do not talk with Mr Izetbegović either.]

Dodik: *Ko kaže, [...]*

[Who says so, [...]]

A very challenging way of posing a question for the IR is to use negative interrogatives, which are “routinely treated as assertions more than as questions,” so that they are “perceived by interviewees as stating an opinion” (Kantara 2012, 173). As shown, what is readily noticeable is the discrepancy in percentage (per TWC) between the two sub-corpora in the columns SM/weak and SM/strong. The Serbian segment registered three times more instances of the SM/strong profile than the English one. This may lead to another generalisation supporting the idea that Serbian interviewees are liable to using more direct ways of opposing their interlocutors. The ratio of strong and weak allopracts with the English-speaking politicians in general is more balanced (with the caveat that the strong profile is in the lead, 0.056 to 0.044, TWC).

In the English sub-corpus, the following devices were used to identify strong single mixed allopracts: the indicators *I don't agree*, *I can't agree*, *I disagree*, straightforward negation of the IR's explicit or presupposed standpoint that can be intensified with the sentence substitute *no*, intensifiers, generalisations or specifications. Trump's reply illustrates the negation of presupposition:

(4) IR: [...] I would recommend you watch less of them.

Trump: **I don't watch them at all. I watched last night.**

As for the strong multiple mixed type, in the Serbian sub-corpus, the following devices were found: straightforward negation of the IR's explicit or presupposed

standpoints, intensifiers, derogatory language, the *no-but* alternative, the emphasising question alternative. Cvetković uses the last type:

- (5) **IR:** *Zašto ste onda tolerisali Iliću?*
 [Why did you tolerate Ilić?]
Cvetković: *Kako sam tolerisao[...]*
 [How come I tolerated him [...]]

In the English sub-corpus, similar indicators were identified: straightforward negation of the IR's explicit or presupposed standpoints, intensifiers, derogatory language, the *no-but* alternatives, the phrases *hold on/hang on* introducing alternatives.

With regard to the less frequent weak single mixed allopracts, the indicators found in the Serbian sub-corpus were the negative form of the verb *think*, the restrictive use of *quite*, modal verbs, indicators specifying the meaning and scope of the proposition, the *yes-but* formulation (cf. Table 2). The example (6) illustrates weak disagreement indicated by the negative form of the verb *think*:

- (6) **IR:** *Ali ako Nebojša Ćirić [...], onda [...]?*
 [But if Nebojša Ćirić [...], then [...]?]
Cvetković: *Ne mislim baš tako. [...]*
 [I do not think quite that way. [...]]

In the English sub-corpus, similar indicators were used: the negative form of the verb *think* (or the positive form that opposes a negative standpoint), the restrictive phrases such as *not so much that*, *not really*, *on the assumptions*, modal verbs, indicators specifying the meaning and scope of the proposition, a simple negation.

As for the weak multiple mixed allopracts, the following indicators were recorded in the Serbian sub-corpus: the negative form of the verb *think*, modal verbs, indicators specifying the scope of propositions, the *yes-but* formulation, requests for clarifications, if-alternatives. The use of the if-alternative is illustrated in (7):

- (7) **IR:** *Ko je [...], a ko [...]?*
 [Who is [...], and who is [...]?]
Dinkić: *Ako je i [...], o njihovom uspehu ne možemo govoriti .*
 [Even if [...], we cannot talk about their success.]

In the English sub-corpus, these indicators were registered: the affirmative and negative form of the verb *think*, modal verbs and expressions, the *yes-but* formulation, expressions introducing alternatives. The *yes-but* formulation is used in (8):

- (8) **IR:** [...]it takes more than five years to do something substantial, and it's very hard to get a constituency behind it?

Cameron: *That's true but* I would argue that [...]

Generally speaking, both Serbian and English politicians exhibited a tendency to employ strong allopracts. This can be corroborated by the results that almost 62.5% of all the allopracts in the Serbian sub-corpus and 56% of all the allopracts in the English sub-corpus (TAC) were marked by this effect. However, the total percentage of the weak allopracts was 37.5% TAC for the Serbian and 44% TAC for the English, which may speak in favour of the more 'tangible' sense of responsibility on the part of the English-speaking politicians who were not disposed toward more intensive verbal means of disagreement, but looked for less conflicting modes of publicising their positions.

If political interviews are understood as a negotiation of validity claims between individuals with different roles and intentions in mediatised contexts (Fetzer 2000; Weizman 1998; Weizman 2006), Table 5 shows that, in terms of TWC, Serbian IEs are still more confrontationally-minded than their English-speaking colleagues when ascertaining the validity of their arguments (strong types taken together, SRB: 0.144, ENG: 0.056). However, these instances never overstep the line of verbal aggression, which would otherwise be sanctioned by both the IR and the public/audience (Hanlon 2010).

3.3.3 *Personal styles across cultures*

Tables 6 and 7 show the results obtained by analysing the contributions of each of the interviewees, which provides the possibility to examine the politicians' personal styles and strategies. In terms of the number of allopracts, the most prominent politicians proved to be Blair (14), Farage (14) and Cameron (17), the former and the current US presidents, Obama (10) and Trump (14), and the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau (15).

As it seems from the corpus examples, strong disagreement can be expressed at positions where interruptions occur, particularly on the part of IEs when they disrupt the turn of the IR, as shown in (9). It should be noted here that the exact location of interruptions/overlaps could not be ascertained as the transcripts were analysed in the form provided by the media which need not conform to the rules of conventional CA notation.

- (9) **IR:** [...] There is no previous experience in our history of a migrant [...]

Farage: (speaking over) *Woah, woah, woah.*

IR: (word unclear, 'group?') *coming to Britain that wants to change who we are.*

Farage: *I haven't talked about the Muslim religion like that [...]*

Table 6. Allopract count according to dispute profiles with individual political IEs in the English sub-corpus

Origin	Interviewee politician	SNM weak	SNM strong	SM weak	SM strong	MNM weak	MNM strong	MM weak	MM strong	Total
English										
UK	Blair	1	0	2	3	0	0	6	2	14
	Brown	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	6	12
	Cameron	0	0	2	2	0	0	3	10	17
	Chilcot	0	0	1	2	0	0	3	2	8
	Farage	1	0	0	6	0	0	1	6	14
	Johnson	1	2	2	1	0	0	0	2	8
	May	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	1	7
Total		3	2	8	17	0	0	21	29	80
US	Bush	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	4
	Clinton	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	3	6
	Obama	0	0	2	1	1	0	5	1	10
	Pence	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Schumer	2	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	6
	Trump	1	0	0	7	0	0	2	4	14
Total		3	1	5	9	2	0	10	10	40
Canada	Dellaire	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Trudeau	0	0	2	7	0	0	3	3	15
Total		0	0	2	9	0	0	3	3	17
Australia	Turnbull	1	0	6	1	1	0	1	3	13
Total		1	0	6	1	1	0	1	3	13
Sum total		7	3	21	36	3	0	35	45	150

That it is not a matter of style of a single politician can be supported by another instance of disagreement expressed by Cameron:

(10) **IR:** The margins in which you'd be renegotiating[...] There is not very much you could win from this, [...]

Cameron: I don't accept that. [...]

This affinity between disagreement and interruptions of the interlocutors has been noticed by Bull and Mayer in their study of interruptions in political interviews:

The fact that interruptions are associated with disagreements is again not surprising. Disagreements are best expressed at the very time the other person is saying something with which you disagree, rather than later on when the conversation may have passed on to a different topic; to disagree effectively it may be necessary to interrupt. (Bull and Mayer 1988, 42)

The Serbian corpus shows that the IEs appear to be balanced in the use of disagreement allopracts. However, the number of instances tends to increase with the rise in the power of the individual, either institutional, factual or assumed. Thus, the IEs who scored the largest numbers of allopracts were Serbia's current president, Aleksandar Vučić (22), Serbia's Prime Minister, Ana Brnabić (11) and the former president of the Republic of Srpska Milorad Dodik (14). Simultaneously, President Vučić is by far the most prominent IE with strong allopracts, obviously a consequence of the political position and support of the electorate he has been enjoying since 2014:

Table 7. Allopract count according to dispute profiles with individual political IEs in the Serbian sub-corpus

Origin	Interviewee politician	SNM	SNM	SM	SM	MNM	MNM	MM	MM	Total
		weak	strong	weak	strong	weak	strong	weak	strong	
Serbian										
SRB	Brnabić	0	0	3	2	1	0	4	1	11
	Cvetković	0	0	4	1	0	0	0	3	8
	Dačić	1	1	0	4	0	0	1	1	8
	Dinkić	0	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	5
	Đinđić	1	0	0	2	0	0	2	3	8
	Jeremić	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	3
	Nikolić	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	3	7
	Stefanović	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	2	5
	Tadić	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	3	5
	Vučić	2	0	3	8	0	0	3	6	22
	Vulin	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	4
	Živković	1	0	1	2	0	0	1	1	6
Total		6	1	13	29	1	0	16	26	92

Table 7. (continued)

Origin	Interviewee politician	SNM weak	SNM strong	SM weak	SM strong	MNM weak	MNM strong	MM weak	MM strong	Total
BH	Cvijanović	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	6
	Dodik	0	0	1	6	0	0	2	5	14
Total		0	0	1	6	0	0	5	8	20
Sum total		6	1	14	35	1	0	21	34	112

To add some final points, in the English sub-corpus, 23 different discourse markers are almost equally distributed between lexical and syntactic ones. When it comes to the lexical markers, the straightforward, negative adverbial particle *No* is the most frequent expression, a third of all the examples of disagreement in English. Another pronounced part is composed of weak disagreement markers such as *I think...*, *I don't think...* and *I don't believe...*, often in combination. Another finding is the difference in the use of the discourse marker *well* in English/ *pa* in Serbian, typical of spoken discourse. In the Serbian corpus, only two instances were found (but instances of *pa* were also found at the beginning of the interviewer's question), whereas 28 examples were found in the English sub-corpus. The following example illustrates the use of *well* introducing an alternative view:

- (11) IR: And in an emotional sense, having your own personal mandate rather than one inherited from David Cameron?

May: Well I think times have changed. [...]

What can be construed as a cultural trait is a contingent of markers announcing weak disagreement not found in the Serbian portion of the corpus. The markers that also introduce a disagreement turn by the speaker without outright opposition include *you know what? look, wait a minute* and *I'll tell you what*. As stated, the English-speaking politicians appear to be less straightforward in expressing disagreement in the corpus analysis, in which respect they are closer to the cultural pattern of speech communities such as Chinese and Japanese, as contended elsewhere (Tannen 1998). As for the Serbian sub-corpus, what seems to be a cultural specificity of the Serbian socio-political context is expressing disagreement with counterclaims/ emphasising question alternative. When the corpus is viewed in its totality, a great majority of the disagreement markers would be syntactic in structure. Sometimes the expressions of disagreement rely on counterquestions like [And which provocations [...]?], [Who says so [...]], [Whoever mentioned [...]?] and irony [I am very much afraid of him] in showing opposition to the

proposed statement, the interpretation of which may be conditioned by adequate knowledge of the context.⁴

4. Conclusion

All things considered, disagreement expressed by means of language may not be a distinctive but rather a shared feature of the observed cultures, and therefrom the pragmeme of disagreement is not typical of any one of the studied sub-corpora, even when viewed through the prism of the eight different dispute profiles. However, irrespective of the fact that the pragmeme is not exclusively embedded in one of the lingua-cultural segments, the research focused on investigating any potential points of difference in realising the pragmeme in real-life language of politics. As Capone (2018, 91) puts it, “to understand the pragmeme, we need information about the form of the interaction and the social norms and praxis that are applicable to it.”

In that sense, the starting assumption that the pragmeme of disagreement would be manifested in the language of English-speaking politicians and their Serbian counterparts in culture-specific ways has been confirmed by the empirical data obtained through analysing the corpus. Although the findings for the most part verified the qualifications that political interview discourse would be typified by such properties as clear-cut, neutral and non-emotional language, weak degrees of strength (ENG: 44% TAC vs. SRB: 37.5% TAC) and the like, a difference has been noted in the manners English and Serbian interviewees expressed their disagreement.

The expected results have been substantiated by a quantitative analysis of the 262 examples registered from the corpus of 50 interviews by 30 political leaders and statesmen. The number of the allopracts of all types and sub-types per word count tends to be double with Serbian-speaking politicians in comparison to the allopracts counted from interviews by the English-speaking politicians, which may be indicative of different degrees of political assertiveness with one and the other members of the political elite, respectively. However, this fact may be also brought into relation with the constataion that the Serbian-speaking IEs have been exposed to independent media monitoring only since the late 1990s, when IRs started acting from positions of neutrality, which also meant voicing opinions and views not necessarily personal, but contrary to the professed ideas of

4. This is similar to the findings referred to in Kakavá (2001, 655) on Kuo (1991) whose studying of parliamentary interpellations in Taiwan resulted in adding sarcasm and accusatory questions to the types of disagreement.

the IEs. Thus, as Clayman and Heritage (2002) and Emmertsen (2007) noted, the interviews presented no longer “deferential and carefully scripted questioning” of the powerful members of the establishment, but rather a more “direct and unrehearsed event that no longer served as a mere platform for the uncritical and unconstrained announcement of IEs’ facts and views”, as may have been the case in the Socialist era and the time of President Milošević’s rule. Moreover, more than double the frequency of allopract instances with strong disagreement as produced by the Serbian politicians in comparison to the English ones (SRB: 0.144% TWC vs. ENG: 0.056% TWC) potentiate the different confrontational tendencies, making the Serbian politicians more than twice as much prone to direct and verbal opposition to the propositional content expressed by the interlocutors that is contrary to their convictions. Again, the interpretation may be founded on the sheer fact that the English-speaking politicians, at least those in the UK, have had an almost four-decade head start in acquiring the adroitness of responding to this “aggressive line of questioning” by IRs whose role has become more proactive and who “investigated” and “cross-questioned” the IEs’ claims (Emmertsen 2007, 571).

The three features relative to the Serbian sub-corpus, more frequent disagreement in general, strong disagreement, and the emphasising question alternative in disagreeing may be construed as more inherent in the political discourse of a culture with a significantly shorter democratic or parliamentary tradition and politicians therein with somewhat lower levels of professional expertise and experience. Conversely, a culture with higher levels of political etiquette and professional responsibility of its exponents in a cultural climate of greater political correctness would emanate communication patterns based on the avoidance of unmitigated disapproval and resorting to alternative arguments and argumentation. Finally, the results of this research seem to reflect the tendencies of relating cultural differences to those of linguistic or more precisely pragmatic nature (Wierzbicka 1985), based on such parameters as directness, intimacy and spontaneity vs. indirectness, distance and tolerance.

Lastly, it should be noted that this is not a complete reality-check of disagreement praxis in the observed situations, as the typology is a general framework which has been designed to recognise regularities in the use of allopracts with reference to cultural specificities. Alternatively, a close-up of each dispute profile would produce an additional valuable insight into features of disagreement, which would lead to the enhancement of analysis quality.

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