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Deixis in American and British Political Discourse: A Corpus-based Study

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to analyze deictic expressions in American and British political discourse, to draw conclusions about their similarities and differences concerning the frequency of each type of deixis, their means of expression as well as the dominant form used to express each of them in both national varieties of English. Thus, the study aims to identify types of deixis in American and English political debates, to identify linguistic forms of expressing each type of deixis, and to reflect the most frequently used type of deixis in spoken political discourse in both countries. The findings and conclusions are derived from research conducted during two political debates, resulting in a corpus of 32,436 words from American and British contexts. Utilizing qualitative research methods, the study unequivocally reveals distinct differences in deictic expressions within American and British spoken discourse. The analysis highlights significant disparities in the modes of expression pertaining to these types of deixis. The American political debate predominantly employs first-person singular "I" for person deixis, whereas the British counterpart favors first-person plural "we". Additionally, variations exist in expressions used for temporal and spatial deixis across both varieties. American English demonstrates a greater prevalence of social deictic expressions compared to British English. Noteworthy honorifics in the American debate include "President", whereas "Prime Minister" holds similar prominence in the British debate.
Keywords: Deixis, Deictic expressions, American English, British English, Political discourse.

1. Introduction

When it comes to determining the relevance and importance of language as a means of communication, we must take into consideration the grammatical, semantic, and pragmatic features employed to encode and decode a specific oral or textual message between interlocutors. Interlocutors in a dialogue address each other directly, grab their attention, ask questions, receive feedback, and answer each other's questions as needed (Bylykbashi 2023, 412). Mayori, Putra and Suarnajaya (2020) argue that as language serves the purpose of communication between individuals, it is deemed effective and accurate when employed within a suitable context.

The speakers' decision to use specific linguistic forms whose meaning is closely related to the situation or the environment is related to structures which are called deictic expressions (or deixis).

Following Abdulla (2020), a term is considered deictic when it possesses a consistent semantic meaning, yet its referential meaning varies based on the specific time and location in which it is used. Following traditional doctrine, deixis is defined as pointing via language and is related to context, the use of deictic expressions is employed in order to help the addressee to decode a verbal or textual message. Bouk (2018) claims that in the field of pragmatics, deixis emerges as a significant subject, highlighting instances where the full meaning of a deictic term may not be entirely comprehensible solely through contextual information.

The study in hand aims to examine deixis types from a semantic point of view, more precisely the use deixis or deictic expressions in spoken language rather than written one. It aims to identify types of deixis in American and English political debates, to identify linguistic forms of expressing each type of deixis in both national varieties of English and to outline possible differences regarding deixis in spoken American and British English. In order to be able to carry out e research on this topic the following questions ought to be answered:

1. What are types of deixis appearing in American and English political discourse?
2. How is each type of deixis expressed in spoken American and British English?
3. Is there any difference or similarity between deictic expressions used in American and British English political discourse?

2. Theoretical background

From a historical point of view, it is worth noting that deixis has been the subject of many studies in this field of expertise throughout different historical stages of English language development, including Present-day English, too. It is plausible that deixis has aroused the interest of many scholars who have provided various definitions. Huddleston et al. (2002) claim that deixis involves expressions whose reference is determined by specific aspects of the act of utterance, such as time, place, and the individuals involved, namely the speaker or the addressee. Huddleston, Pullum and Reynolds (2022) argue that deixis pertains to the utilization of expressions where the meaning is directly linked to the specific time, location, and the individuals engaged as the speaker and the addressee during the act of utterance.

According to Lyons (1977), the term deixis (which comes from Greek meaning pointing or indicating) is used in the field of linguistics to denote the function of personal and demonstrative pronouns as well as tense and other grammatical or lexical features which are means of interrelation between the utterance itself and environment in which the act of utterance takes place. Moreover, Levinson (1983) asserts that deixis, as a phenomenon, is essentially about how languages incorporate or express elements of the surrounding context during speech or communication events. Following Mey (2009), deixis refers to how language encodes the specific spatiotemporal context and the speaker's subjective experience at the time of speaking, therefore, words like "I," "here," "now," and "this" heavily rely on context and serve as a focal point for the speaker's perspective.

2.1. Person deixis

Lyons (1977) indicates that the grammatical concept of person is intricately linked to participant roles and how they are grammaticalized in different languages and it becomes evident that person deixis, present in all known natural languages, is a fundamental aspect that cannot be explained solely by other linguistic elements.

Valeika & Verikaitė (2010) state that person deixis relies on a threefold classification: first person, second person, and third person (referring to neither the speaker nor the addressee). Cruse (2000) states that gender is encoded in the third person singular, which is not deictic by nature because it is not sensitive to aspects of the speech situation.

However, Allot (2010) argues that third person pronouns may be used diactecally, for instance, (pointing at her husband) 'He's going to drive.'. The pronoun "you" is not deictic when used with the meaning 'one; any person or persons,' as in "You can lead a horse to water but you can't make him drink." Similarly, they have a generalized, non-deictic reference to people in general, especially those in charge of some endeavor or other, as in "They say that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," "They don't make good cider the way they used to." (Kreidler 1998, 145). Following Lyons (1968), the category of person is obviously definable to the participant roles in a conversation, hence, the first person is used to refer to himself as a subject of discourse, the second person is used to refer to the hearer, and the third person to refer to other things and persons excluding the speaker and hearer.

In addition, Palmer (1976) underlines that person plays a clear semantic function that is different in the sense of being deictic, not referring to any general semantic features such as quantity or sex, but to a recognizable item in the context.

2.2. Temporal deixis

When dealing with types of deixis by reviewing past literature, it is intuitively clear that temporal deixis plays a crucial role when it comes to these deictic expressions and their identification. Two adverbs that form the basic concept of temporal deixis in English are indicated by adverbs "now" and "then" which are related to the time the message is received by the interlocutor.

Moreover, Cruse (2000) points out that temporal deictics rely significantly on calendric concepts, encompassing both clock time and calendar dates, for example, "today," "yesterday," and "tomorrow" refer to "the 24-hour period starting at midnight, including the time of speaking," "the 24-hour period preceding the one including the time of speaking," and "the 24-hour period following the one including the time of speaking," respectively.

However, Kreidler (1998) states that temporal expressions are inherently tied to the time of their usage, but not all words with potential deictic qualities function as such in every context. For instance, "today" and "tomorrow" are deictic in "We can't go today, but tomorrow will be fine," indicating specific days relative to the time of speaking, however, they are not deictic in "Today's costly apartment buildings may be tomorrow's slums," where they denote general temporal relationships rather than specific points in time (Kreidler 1998, 142).

2.3. Spatial deixis

Spatial deixis is related to the concept of distance and identifies an entity by relating it to its place which is established with reference to the deictic centre It also concerns the direction of motion, e.g. She has come (motion towards the deictic centre) or She has gone (motion away from the deictic centre) (Valejka and Verikaite 2010, 18). Diessel (1999) points out that demonstratives, serving as spatial deictics, signal the relative distance of an object, location, or person in relation to the deictic center, also known as the origo.

Following Yule (1996), the concept of distance is relevant to spatial deixis, Modern English uses only the adverbs "here" and "now" to indicate the basic distinctions, whereas in old texts other expressions are used as: "younder" (more distant from speaker), "heither" (to this place), "thence" (from that place); furthermore, some verbs of motion, such as "come" and "go", hold a deictic sence in cases when they are used to mark movement toward the speaker (Come to bed!) or away from the speaker (Go to bed!). Therefore, there are two types of spatial deixis: proximal and distal.

Yule (1996) points out that deixis is indeed a form of reference intimately connected to the speaker's context, where the fundamental contrast lies between expressions denoting proximity to the speaker versus those indicating distance, proximal terms such as "this", "here", and "now" refer to items or moments close to the speaker, while distal terms like "that", "there", and "then" refer to those further away. Lyons (1977) states that demonstrative pronouns "this" and "that", as well as demonstrative adverbs "here" and "there" are primarily deictic and reveal the location of participants in the deictic context.

2.4. Social deixis

As far as social deixis is concerned, it is generally accepted that this type of deixis is related to the social status or relationship of participants or decoders of the speaker's message. Levinson (2004) states that social deixis encompasses the indication of social relationships within linguistic expressions, directly or indirectly referencing the social status or roles of participants involved in the speech event. Levinson (2004) further claims that there are two main social deictic information in language, the relational information which occurs between speaker and referent, speaker and addressee, speaker and bystand, and speaker and setting and absolute social deixis which is absolutely reserved for specific authorized recipients. According to Valeika and Verikaite (2010), the social deixis role is to identify the social status of the addressee, while doing so also identifies the person, e.g. "Professor (Smith), may I ask a question?;" this honorific is often used with proper name, e.g. "Professor Smith", used in this context refers to one such person in cases when it has a unique reference.

Furthermore, in many languages the deictic categories of speaker, addressee, and other(s) are elaborated with markers or relative social status (addressee with higher status versus addressee with lower status), expressions that indicate higher status are described as honorifics (Sugiharto 2004, 142). A widely quoted example to describe the social deixis is the so-called TV distinction, from the French "tu" (referring to familiar addressee), and "vous" (referring to non-familiar addressee), other languages that

make a distinction between the social status are German with the distinguishing pronoun "du" and "Sie", and Spanish with "tu" and "Usted" (Sugiharto 2004, 142). Lyons (1968) points out that honorifics are used to distinguish the use of personal pronouns in certain languages, such instances are known to be found in some European languages (French, German, Russian, Italian, etc), where the second person singular is used to address children and friends and the second person plural is used for more formal reference to the hearer.

2.5. Discourse deixis

When trying to define the term properly, it is worth mentioning that besides the term discourse deixis, some linguists use the term text deixis to describe this special type of deictic expressions. Levinson (1983) states that discourse deixis involves encoding references to specific portions of the ongoing discourse within which the utterance, including the referring expression, is situated. Levinson (1983) further states that instances of discourse deixis are the use of, "that" and "this" in the following:
1. "Puff puff puff: that is what it sounded like."
2. "This is what phoneticians call creaky voice." (Levinson 1983, 63)

Allot (2010) argues that discourse deixis in speech refers to what has been said and what is to come as well as demonstrative pronouns are frequently used for discourse deixis, as in: "I'm glad you told me that" and "This is what I'll be talking about today." Yang (2011) argues that discourse deixis involves selecting lexical or grammatical elements that indicate or refer to specific portions or aspects of the ongoing discourse. An example would be the use of terms like "the former" to reference something mentioned earlier in the conversation. Additionally, Cruse (2000) claims that there is an assertion that specific sentence adverbs, like "therefore" and "furthermore" encompass an aspect of discourse deixis in their meaning.

3. Methods and Procedures

To culminate the research and draw conclusive findings, two pivotal interviews (debates) were selected for analysis. The debates were selected based on the fact that both are the final debates before the elections in their respective countries. The primary segment of this study delves into the final presidential debate between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton, which aired on October 19, 2016. Moderated by Fox News journalist Chris Wallace, the debate spanned 1 hour and 32 minutes. Conversely, the secondary analysis focuses on the 'Seven-Way BBC General Election Debate' broadcast on June 1, 2017, helmed by BBC journalist Mishal Husain and lasting 1 hour and 31 minutes.

To ensure the reliability of our results, this study encompasses a corpus comprising 32,436 words. The corpus of the American political debate consists of 16.378 words, whereas the British political debate consists of 16.058 words. The initial phase involves transcribing both interviews verbatim. Subsequently, the AntConc software is utilized to conduct a detailed analysis of deixis types and their expression within our corpus. The study first identifies various forms of deixis in both interviews, subsequently comparing their prevalence in American and British political debates. This comparison involves a meticulous

examination of the frequencies of use in American and British English, highlighting their similarities and differences. The study's comprehensive findings are visually presented through figures.

4. Findings

This section of the study endeavors to present reliable data concerning deictic expressions utilized in political debates, extracted from the aforementioned corpus encompassing two interviews.
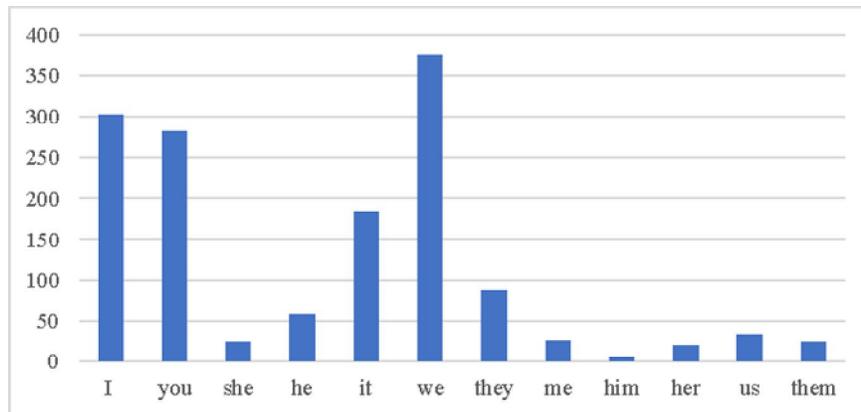
4.1. Person deixis

The initial segment focuses on person deixis within the American political debate and its associated grammatical categories used for representation.
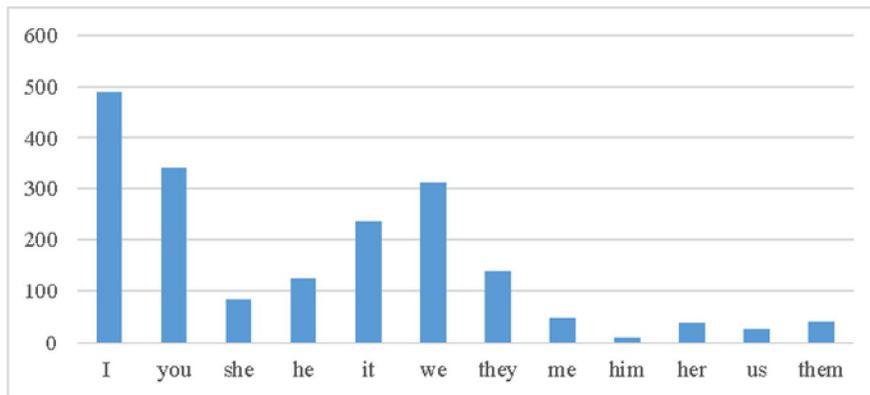
Figure 1: Person deixis in American political debate

However, it's crucial to note that in the case of grammatical structures employed to convey person deixis in British political debates, the findings do not exhibit a direct correlation in percentages for each structure associated with the aforementioned deixis type.
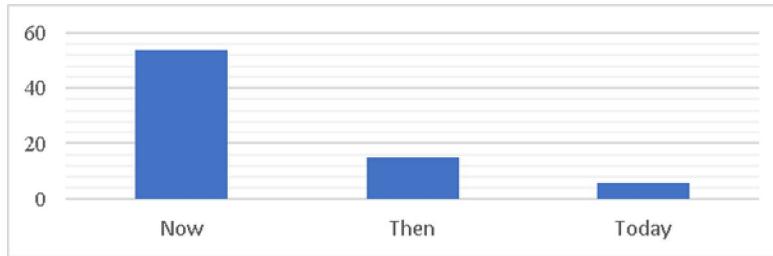

Figure 2: Person deixis in British political debate
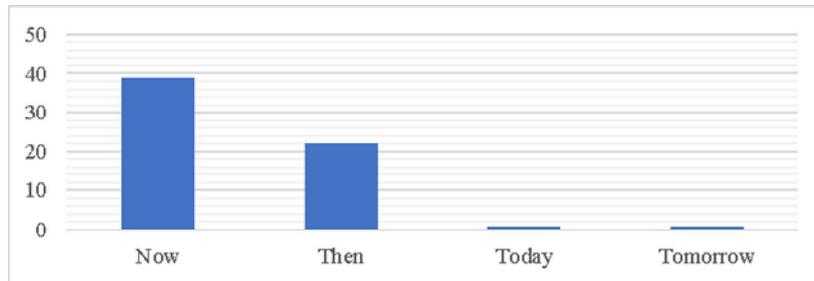
4.2. Temporal deixis

In determining the temporal context of an action—whether it occurred in the past, present, or is slated for the future—temporal deixis serves to pinpoint the time of occurrence. To offer a clearer

depiction of the structures employed in indicating this deixis type, two figures will be presented. The initial figure outlines the usage of temporal deixis in American political debate, followed by an illustration depicting its usage in British political debates.

**Figure 3:** Temporal deixis in American political debate

The figure below depicts the temporal deictic expressions used in British political discourseand their means of expression in British political debates.

Figure 4: Temporal deixis in British political debate

4.3. Spatial deixis

It is worth noting that spatial deixis is expressed using different frequencies of the same grammatical structures in both main varieties of the English language. As far as the analysis of the data is concerned, the following figure indicates the percentage of each lexical category used to denote this type of deixis in the American debate.
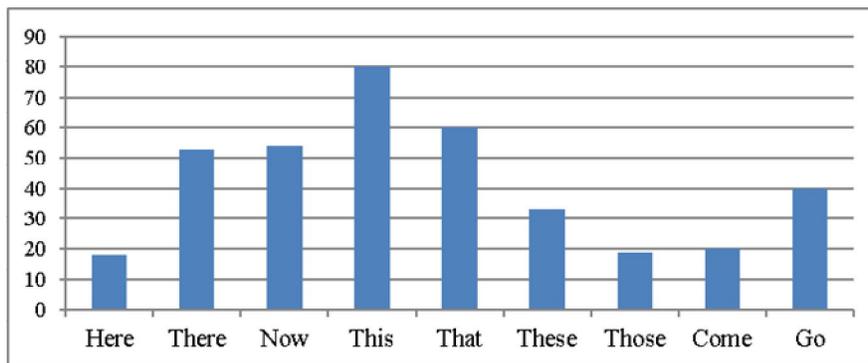
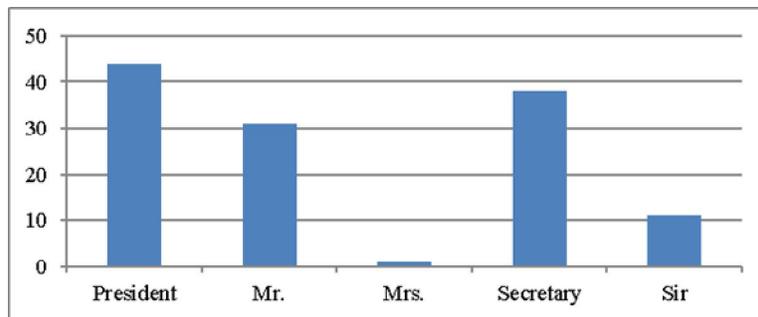**Figure 5:** Spatial deixis in American debate

Given that this paper analyzes and compares spatial deixis in two primary variants of the English language, the figure below illustrates the frequency of usage and spatial deictic expressions in British English debates.
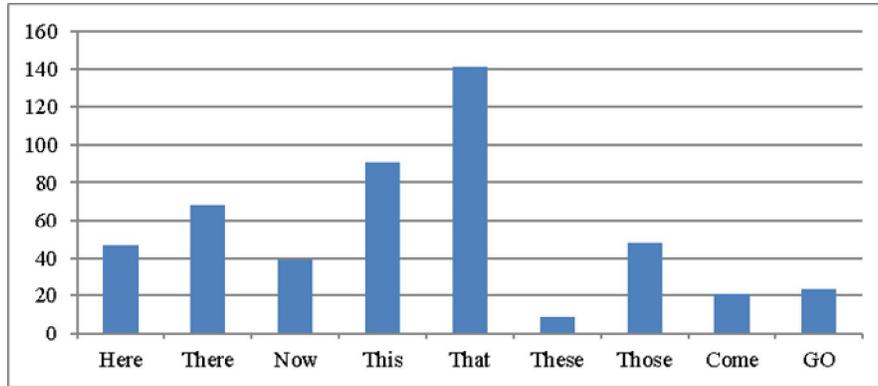
Figure 6: Spatial deixis in British political debate

4.4. Social deixis

In conversations, interlocutors often employ various expressions denoting each other's position or social status. These expressions, which signify a person of higher social standing, are commonly referred to as honorifics. This section of the research findings is going to show some of these honorifics identified within our corpus.

Figure 7: Social deixis in American political debate

Social deictic expressions and their frequency as far as British English political debate is concerned are shown in the figure below. A detailed analysis as well as discussion is going to be provided in the next section of the study.
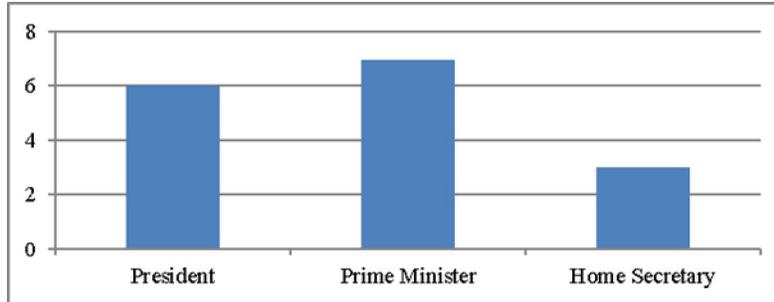
Figure 8: Social deixis in British political debate

4.5. Discourse deixis

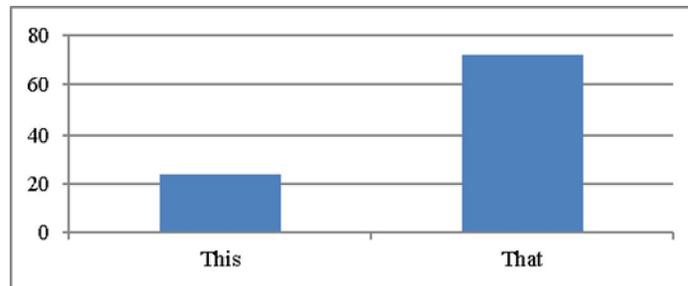When addressing this particular type of deixis, it's vital to highlight that discourse deixis finds expression through demonstrative pronouns. Our data analysis has yielded the following results:

Figure 9: Discourse deixis in American political debate
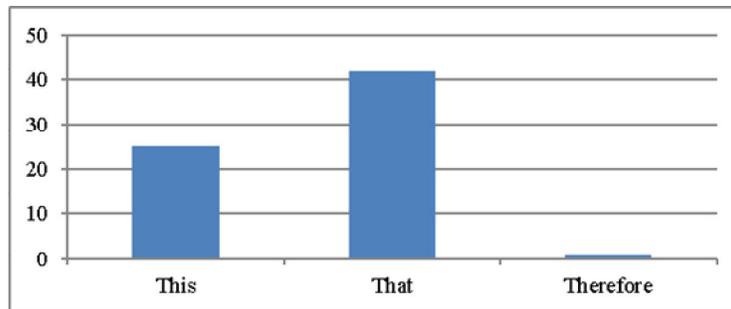
Figure 10: Discourse deixis in British political debate

In order to be able to draw distinctions between American and British usage of deixis, a detail analysis of all types of them is going to take place.

5. Discussion

To facilitate a comprehensive discussion of the research findings, this section aims to provide an overview of the utilization of all deictic expressions in American and British political debates.

5.1. Person deixis

As far as the person deixis in American debate is concerned, the first person singular prevails in usage since 26% of all possible structures used to denote person deixis were of the first person singular *I*, e.g:

*"Well, first of all **I** support the Second Amendment, **I** lived in Arkansas for 18 wonderful years **I** represented upstate New York, **I** understand and respect the tradition of gun ownership..."*

The use of the first-person singular pronoun "I" in American English is driven by social motivations such as cultural norms, societal values like individualism, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and authority.

Furthermore, 18% of the overall usage of person deixis in this paper is expressed by the second person singular and plural *you*, e.g.: *"**You** have thousands of mothers and fathers and relatives all over the country... and that's what **you** get when **you** get her.",* 4% of person deixis is expressed by the third person singular *she*, e.g.:"**She**'s raising the money from the people **she** wants to control…", 7% are expressed by the third person singular *he*, e.g.: " I wonder when **he** thought America was great and before **he** rushes and says…, 13% are expressed by the third person singular *it*, e.g:" **It** really raises the central issue in this election namely what kind of country are we going to be".

The use of the second-person singular pronoun "you" varies across cultures. In American English political discourse, it is often used to denote informality, create a connection with the audience, and transcend boundaries of social positions or hierarchy. On the other hand, the third-person singular pronoun "he" appears at a higher frequency compared to "she," reflecting a gender imbalance in political discourse, where men are more commonly represented than women.

When it come to the first person plural *we*, 16% of deictic expressions belong to it, e.g.: "**We** will be doing very much better with Mexico on trade deals …", 7% are expressed by the third person plural *they*, e.g.: "**They** don't want Isis but **they** have other things because…", 3% are expressed by the first person singular *me*, e.g.: "For **me** that means that we need a Supreme Court that…", 1% are expressed by the second person singular *him*, e.g.: "He said the Republican primary was rigged against **him** then Trump University gets sued for fraud.", only 2% are expressed by the third person singular *her*, e.g.: "Now, we cannot take four more years of Obama and that's what you get when you get **her**.", just 1% are expressed by the first person plural *us*, e.g.: "We stand up for the rights of people in the workplace that we stand up and basically say the Supreme Court should represent all of **us**.", and 2% are expressed by the third person plural *them*, e.g.: "I've named 20 of **them**, the justices that I'm going to a point will be pro-life…"

The first-person plural pronoun "we" in American English political discourse is used to convey a sense of unity, aiming to minimize social distance and unify diverse audiences. Unity and inclusivity are also expressed through the use of the third-person plural pronoun "they" or the pronoun "us," while opposition is conveyed through the use of pronouns such as "her," "them," or "him."

Nevertheless, when discussing person deixis in British political debate, the most used is the first person plural *we* (27%), e.g:

*"**We** had one of the largest peacetime recessions, **we**'ve managed to rebuild the economy since then but my party is focused on making sure that **we** help people like Nicola which is why **we're** going to continue to take people out of taxes."*

The social motivations behind the dominant use of the first-person plural pronoun "we" in British English political discourse are closely tied to cultural norms, formality, shared traditions, and inclusivity. It is used to signify shared goals and reinforce group identity.

Moreover, the first person singular *I* is used in 22% of the cases, e.g.: "**I** believe in British values, **I** believe in our way of life…", the second person singular *you* is used in 20% of the cases, e.g.: "Angus Robertson, how would **you** help working people like Nikola?", the third person singular *she* is used in 2% of the cases, e.g.:"You are resolving to give Tereza a permission to do what **she** likes and not with education...", *he* is used in 4% of the cases, e.g.: "**He**'s not dipper right the folks about how you make things …", *it* is represented by 13% in the corpus, e.g.: "**It** will build on our commitment to having a country that works for everyone.", followed by the third person plural *they* used in 6% of the cases, e.g.: "**They** are going to cost a lot of money.".

The first-person singular pronoun "I" is used in British English political discourse to denote commitment, establish relatability with the audience, emphasize personal responsibilities, and differentiate oneself from political opponents. "You" is used to criticize opponents or adopt a formal tone. "He" and "she" are employed to refer to an opponent, often highlighting their political roles and responsibilities.

The first person singular *me* is used in 2% of the cases, e.g.: "How are you going to help people like **me**?", the third person singular *him* is used only 1%, e.g.: "Jeremy Corbyn has had a no-confidence vote against **him** which four out of five of his MPs wouldn't support **him**.", *her* is also used only 1%, e.g.: "Jeremy Corbyn with his money tree wish list manifesto and no plan for Brexit or Theresa May and **her** record of delivery with **her** clear plans for Brexit and the strong team behind **her** who can make sure the country gets to that brighter future.", *us* is used in 2% of the cases, e.g.: "It is time for **us** to move on to our second question of the evening…", and *them* is used in 2% of the cases, e.g.: "What we need to do is recognize the human rights and justice of people all around the world and be prepared to support **them** not just go in and bomb.".

The least-used deictic expressions to indicate person deixis in British political discourse, such as "me," "him," "her," and "them," are employed to express sympathy, engage in self-presentation, highlight individual actions, and imply criticism.

5.2. Temporal deixis

In aiming to draw distinctions between American and British political debate, one of the commonly analyzed types of deixis is the temporal one. Therefore, in American political debate temporal deixis is marked in the highest percentage by the adverb of time *now* (72%), e.g:

*"We are going to make America strong again and we are going to make America great again and it has to start **now**. I'm gonna create tremendous jobs and we're bringing GDP from really one percent which is what it is **now**."*

The use of the temporal deixis "now" in American political discourse enhances the urgency for immediate change. It is also employed to express national solidarity with the audience and to promise prompt improvements.

Despite the adverb of time *now*, other adverbs are used to denote temporal deixis, such as: the adverb *then* used in 20% of the cases, e.g.: "**Then** they have given that information to WikiLeaks for the purpose of putting it on the Internet." and the adverb *today* used in 8% of the cases, e.g.: "No cop **today**, no time…"

In American political discourse, "then" is used to criticize the past, emphasizing the need for change in the future, while "today" highlights the importance of addressing current challenges.

Different results are displayed in the usage of temporal deixis in British political debate. The representative adverb mostly used is again the adverb *now* (62%), e.g:

*"**Now** more than ever we need a strong opposition to hold the Tories to account the SNP will be that strong voice for Scotland. It's time **now** for our speakers closing statements they are just 30 seconds each."*

The deictic expression "now" in British political discourse is used to emphasize the need for national unity and to contrast the present with the past, thereby fostering historical awareness.

Distinctions are drawn when comparing American temporal deictic expressions to the British ones, the adverb of time *then* is used in 35% of the cases, e.g.: "First of all the thing you do is to stop wasting money and **then** you have a principle…", the adverb of time *tomorrow* is used in 2%, e.g.: "On June the 8th, let's unlock that door together fearless green MPs and opposition to the Tories independent green MPs holding Labour's feet to the fire, pioneering green MPs to make our economy fit for **tomorrow**. " and the adverb *today* is used only in 1% of the cases, e.g.: "It's also appalling leadership on behalf of the Prime Minister who can't even be bothered to come here and answer these questions for herself **today**."

Other temporal deictic expressions are used to craft persuasive narratives about past experiences, present events, and future possibilities.

5.3. Spatial deixis

When comparing these varieties of English taking into account spatial deictic expressions, a number of distinctions are shown. In American English, the most used expression to mark space is the demonstrative pronoun *this* (21%), e.g.:

*"It really raises the central issue in **this** election namely what kind of country are we going to be? I believe if my opponent should win **this** race which I truly don't think will happen."*

The spatial deictic expression "this" in American political discourse is used to convey the proximity of a situation, emphasizing the need for immediate action.

In addition, other deictic expressions used to denote spatial deixis are: the adverb of place *here* which is used in 5% of the cases, e.g.: "I will defeat Isis and some of it is we have to up our game and be much smarter **here**.", the adverb of place *there* is used in 14% of the cases, e.g.: " **There**'s no doubt that I respect the Second Amendment that I also believe there's an individual right to bear arms.", the adverb of

time *now* is also used in 14% of the sentences, e.g.: "**Now**, you can say that that's okay and Hillary can say…", the demonstrative pronoun *that* is used to denote space in 16% of the examples, e.g.: "**That**'s how I see the court and the kind of people that I would be looking…", the demonstrative pronoun *these* is represented by 9%, e.g.: "**These** espionage attacks, **these** cyber attacks come from the highest levels of the Kremlin and they are designed to influence our election.", the demonstrative pronoun *those* is represented by 5%, e.g.: "I do not think the United States government should be stepping in and making **those** most personal of decisions…" , the verb *come* is used in 5% of the cases, e.g.: "I have a feeling how they **came** I believe it was her campaign that did it just like if you look at what **came** out today on the clips where…", and the verb *go* is used in 11% of the examples extracted from the corpus of the study, e.g.: "I contribute, the money **goes** 100 percent, 100 percent **goes** to different charities including a lot of military…"

"Here," "there," "these," and "those" are used to indicate proximity or distance and to signify group unity or opposition. The verbs "come" and "go" are employed to convey an urge for action, encouraging people to join the cause.

However, when analyzing this type of deixis taking into consideration the British corpus, it's mostly represented by the demonstrative pronoun *that* (29%), e.g.:

*"It is only Theresa May that can deliver **that** leadership. Theresa May is a vote for Jeremy Corbyn **that** coalition. Thank you to all our speakers for their responses to **that** final question!"*

The deictic expression "that" is used to signify distance, highlighting difference or detachment.

Moreover, there are other deictic expressions that denote space, such as: the adverb of place *here* which is identified in 9% of the cases, e.g.: "What we have is lots of rhetoric around **here** about helping for example those EU nationals who live **here** who raise their children's **here** who work…" , the adverb of place *there* identified in 14% of the examples, e.g.: "**There** has to be a managed migration that isn't designed to undermine working giving…" , the adverb of time *now* is identified in 8% of the examples, e.g.: "**Now**, will you roll then or are you wrong **now** because we can't trust you on this what you are **now** …; , the demonstrative pronoun *this* is represented in our corpus by 19%, e.g.: "Theresa May called **this** election because she's taking you for granted…", the demonstrative pronoun *these* is represented by 2%, e.g.: "She won't turn up to **these** debates because her campaign of sound bites is falling apart…", the demonstrative *those* is represented by 10%, e.g.: "Can you respond specifically to the point that you're using **those** people…", the verb *come* is represented by 4%, e.g.: "It's time to bring in our next question and this one **comes** from Rhiannon Buckley." , and the verb *go* is used in 5% of the sentences, e.g.: "I want to live in a country that protects the right of people to **go** out and enjoy themselves at any town."

In British political discourse, the spatial deixis "here" is used to express national unity and establish a connection with voters. "There" is employed to signify future change, while "now" conveys proximity, emphasizing the need for immediate action. "This" and "these" are used to indicate closeness to the audience and are often employed to criticize opponents.

5.4. Social deixis

As far as social deixis in English is concerned, the most used honorific in American political debate is *President* (35%), e.g.:

*"When **President** Obama came into office, he inherited the worst economic disaster since the Great Depression. **President** Obama has moved millions of people out, nobody knows about it, nobody talks about."*

The social motivations that lead to the use of the social deixis "President" in American political discourse are related to the fact that this honorific represents leadership, decision-making authority, and respect for the institution.

Furthermore, other deictic expressions used to denote social deixis are: *Secretary* (30%), e.g.: "We welcome the Democratic nominee for president, **Secretary** Clinton…", *Mr.* (25%), e.g.: "The Republican nominee for president, **Mr.** Trump.", *Sir* (9%), e.g.: "**Sir**, let me finish my question okay…", and *Mrs.* (1%), e.g.: "He went after Mr. and **Mrs.** Kahn, the parents of a young man who died serving our country…".

The other social deictic expressions in the American political discourse corpus are used to indicate social status by creating a social distance between the speaker and the addressed person or people, as well as to indicate gender distinctions and marital status.

When it comes to social deixis in British political debate, the one that prevails is *Prime Minister* (44%), e.g.:

*"I'm afraid the **Prime Minister** has done for the last seven years first as Home Secretary and then **Prime Minister** set… The **Prime Minister** didn't have the guts to come along this evening to tell us."*

The social deixis "Prime Minister" is used to denote respect for the office, the democratic government, the head of government, and authority.

As far as other deictic expressions to express social deixis are concerned, terms used in the same function are: *President* (37%), e.g.: "The **President** Trump has walked away from a global approach to one of the biggest challenges…; **President** Trump is pulling out of the Paris climate change agreement, how would the panelists deal with that?", and *Home Secretary* (19%), e.g.: "As **Home Secretary** for the past year, I've seen the evidence...; As **Home Secretary**, she delivered 35 different opt-outs she knows how to negotiate and deliver for the European Union…"

The use of the social deictic expression "Home Secretary" in British political discourse denotes respect for the position in government and reflects the hierarchy in the political system.

5.5. Discourse deixis

Based on past literature, discourse deixis is mainly expressed by the demonstrative pronouns, in American debate the one that prevails is the pronoun *that* (75%). For instance:

*They're running millions of dollars of ads against me and I regret **that** because what I would… Well, if **that** would happen because I am pro-life and I will be appointing pro-life judges.*

The other percentage of the data is represented by the demonstrative pronoun *this* which is used in 25% of the cases, e.g. "That employers can't exploit them and undercut Americans wages and Donald knows a lot about **this**.; Donald knows a lot about **this**, he used undocumented labor to build the Trump Tower…"

As a matter of fact, when discussing the finding from the British corpus, discourse deixis is mainly indicated by the demonstrative pronoun *that* (62%), e.g.:

*You're going to hear me say **that** a lot tonight because the worst outcome would be if we're not able to negotiate a strong deal. I think the time has come for **that** to end and politicians can make different choices.*

Moreover, other deictic expression used to indicate discourse deixis are: the demonstrative pronoun *this* (37%), e.g.: "Bernie you remember the host of one of your absolutely sure that they add up absolutely clearly about **this**.; I would say **this**, I think we are right to question our intervention in different parts of the world, in Afghanistan, in Iraq in Liby…", and the adverb *therefore* in 1% of the cases.

For the sake of simplicity, the type of deixis that dominates in American political debate is the person deixis which is basically indicated by the first person singular *I* (74%). In contrast, person deixis dominates in British political debate as well, but is indicated by the first person plural *we* (69%).

In aiming to compare temporal deixis in both varieties of English, in American and British English only 3% of the deictic expressions were temporal, and in both cases the adverb of time *now* is ranked the first in regard to usage. As a matter of fact, different from 24% of the deictic expression used in British political debate that are spatial and expressed by the demonstrative pronoun that (29%), in American political debate only 14% of the deictic expressions used are spatial and are demonstrated by demonstrative pronoun *this* (21%). As far as social deixis is concerned, the distinction between both varieties relies on the fact that 5% of deictic expression used in American corpus are social which are marked by the honorific *President* (35%), on the other hand only 1% of the deictic expression form the British corpus pertain to social deixis which are marked by the honorific *Prime Minister* (44%). Taking into account discourse deixis, the conducted research come up to this result, based on American and British corpus, 4% of the American deictic expressions belong to this type, whereas only 3% of British deictic expressions belong to this type and in both cases are denoted by the demonstrative pronoun *that*.

6. Conclusion

The conducted research successfully met the anticipated expectations, outlining various types of deixis in English sourced from the literature review on this discussed topic. The study highlights significant differences among the types of deixis influencing the diverse frequency of deictic expressions observed in both American and British English. Regarding the usage frequency of each deixis type, person deixis dominates in American political debates, followed by spatial, social, discourse, and temporal deixis. Conversely, the panorama differs in British political debates, where person deixis leads in usage, trailed by spatial, temporal, discourse, and social deixis. The dominance of person deixis in both national varieties of English is related to the fact that person deixis is essential for creating a relationship between politicians and their audience. Commitment to fulfilling promises, demonstrating responsibility,

asserting authority, and fostering inclusivity are all expressed through the use of person deixis. It is worth emphasizing the fact that the study succeeded to justify the hypothesis that most frequently used type of deixis is person deixis. Nobody can deny the fact that the use of grammatical persons is mandatory in order to be able to utter semantically accurate sentences.

As far as person deixis is concerned, the results from the conducted research indicate that person deixis in American English is most frequently expressed by the first person singular "I", the second person singular "you", and the first person plural "we". There are social motivations influencing the use of the first-person singular pronoun "I," which are tied to cultural norms and societal values such as individualism, personal responsibility, self-reliance, and authority.

However, the most frequently used lexical or grammatical form to denote person deixis in British English is the first person plural "we", followed by the first person singular "I", and the second person singular "you". The social motivations behind the dominant use of the first-person plural pronoun "we" in British English political discourse are closely tied to cultural norms, formality, shared traditions, and inclusivity. For the sake of argument, an interesting distinction arises in American English, the use of the first person singular "I" is prevalent, indicating a less formal approach in expressing personal opinions or attitudes. In contrast, British English favors the first person plural *we* presenting a more formal communication style compared to American English.

The study offers indisputable evidence of differences regarding the use of temporal deixis and the lexical or grammatical forms used to mark temporal deixis in political discourse. Hence, temporal deixis in American English is expressed by the adverbs "now", "then" and "today", whereas in British English is expressed by means of four adverbs such as: "now", "then", "today", and "tomorrow". The dominance of the temporal deixis "now" in American political discourse enhances the urgency for immediate change. It is also employed to express national solidarity with the audience and to promise prompt improvements. Nevertheless, the most frequently used deictic expression "now" in British political discourse is used to emphasize the need for national unity and to contrast the present with the past, thereby fostering historical awareness. Notably, the deictic expressions (adverbs) used in American English are associated with referencing the past and the present. In contrast, the adverbs extracted from the British English corpus encompass references to the past, present, and future.

The study also reflects the more commonly used deictic expression to mark social deixis in American and British English debates. The results of the conducted research indicate that the most used deictic expression in American spoken discourse is the demonstrative pronoun "this", whereas in British English, the demonstrative pronoun "that" prevails. Hence, the proximal type of spatial deixis is more used in American English debate, on the other hand, the distal type of spatial deixis is more used in British English debate. The findings derived as a result of a spoken discourse research point out that the participants in the American deictic context are situated near the speaker, in contrast to the participants in the British deictic context that are positioned away from the speaker.

In addition, the results offer compelling evidence that more deictic expressions to express social deixis are used in American English rather than in British English spoken discourse. The most used

honorific in American spoken discourse is "President", followed by the honorific "Secretary", "Mr.", "Sir", and "Mrs.". The social motivations that lead to the use of the social deixis "President" in American political discourse are related to the fact that this honorific represents leadership, decision-making authority, and respect for the institution. However, the most used honorific in British English is "Prime Minister", followed by "President", and "Home Secretary". The social deixis "Prime Minister" is used to denote respect for the office, the democratic government, the head of government, and authority. These distinctions reflect the differing political systems and forms of government in each state. Regarding discourse deixis, American English predominantly employs the pronouns "this" and "that", whereas British English utilizes "this" and "that" pronouns alongside the adverb "therefore" to convey discourse deixis.

The article urges further research to be done on the topic, especially in describing the similarities and differences between different varieties of English language by utilizing a larger size as the corpus to generalize the collected data and to fortify the reliability of the achieved results.

الإشاريَّات في الخطاب السياسي الأمريكي والبريطاني: دراسة مستندة إلى المدونة اللغويّة

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الملخص

الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو تحليل التعبيرات الإشارية في الخطاب السياسي الأمريكي والبريطاني لاستخلاص استنتاجات حول تشابهاتهم واختلافاتهم، وتتم النتائج والاستنتاجات استناداً إلى البحث الذي أُجري خلال ندوتين سياسيتين، مما أسفر عن مجموعة بيانات نصيَّة تتألف من 32,436 كلمة من السياقات الأمريكيَّة والبريطانيَّة. وباستخدام أساليب البحث النوعي، تكشف الدراسة بوضوح الفروق المميزة في التعبيرات الإشاريَّة داخل الخطاب اللفظي الأمريكي والبريطاني، ويسلط التحليل الضوء على اختلافات كبيرة في طرق التعبير المتعلقة بهذه الأنواع من الإشارة، إذ يستخدم النقاش السياسي الأمريكي في الغالب التعبير الأول من الشخص المفرد "أنا" لإشارة الشخص، في حين يفضل النظير البريطاني التعبير الأول من الشخص المتعدد "نحن". علاوة على ذلك، توجد اختلافات في التعبيرات المستخدمة للإشارة الزمانيَّة والمكانيَّة عند الاثنين. وتظهر اللغة الإنجليزيَّة الأمريكيَّة أكثر انتشار للتعبيرات الاجتماعيَّة مقارنة باللغة الإنجليزيَّة البريطانيَّة، وتتمثل الشهادات الملحوظة في النقاش الأمريكي في "الرئيس"، في حين يحتل "رئيس الوزراء" مكانة مماثلة في النقاش البريطاني.

الكلمات المفتاحيَّة: الإشارة، التعبيرات الإشاريَّة، اللغة الإنجليزيَّة الأمريكيَّة، اللغة الإنجليزيَّة البريطانيَّة، الخطاب السياسي.

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